

N'APA 249

November 2020



The Official Organ

#249

Next deadline: January 15, 2021

The official collator is George Phillies - phillies@4liberty.net.

The official preparer is Jefferson P. Swycaffer - abontides@gmail.com

Procedure: Please Read:

George Phillies will collate and mail, but submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer. No harm is done if submissions get sent to George, but the process should be to send them to Jefferson.

N'APA is the Amateur Press Alliance for members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). As it is distributed in PDF format, there are no dues or postage fees. It is open to all members of the N3F. If there are members interested in joining who have no computer access, special arrangements may be possible. People who only want to read are welcome to ask to be added to the email list. Check with the official collator, who is George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609; phillies@4liberty.net; 508 754 1859; and on facebook. To join this APA, contact George.

We regularly send a copy of N'APA to the accessible (email address needed) N3F membership, in the hope that some of you will join N'APA. Please join now!

Currently the frequency is every other month, with the deadline being on the fifteenth day of odd-numbered months. The mailing will normally be collated in due time, as the collator is retired and the preparer has a full-time job. Publication is always totally regular, though some readers question my interpretations of "is", "always", "totally", and "regular". N'APA has been in existence since 1959, but has transitioned from being a paper APA to an electronic one.

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Super thanks to Jose Sanchez, who sent us a lot of art for use as covers!

Ye Murthered
Master Mage

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N'APA was occasionally used many years ago to discuss what the N3F should be doing. I will spend a few paragraphs on that topic.

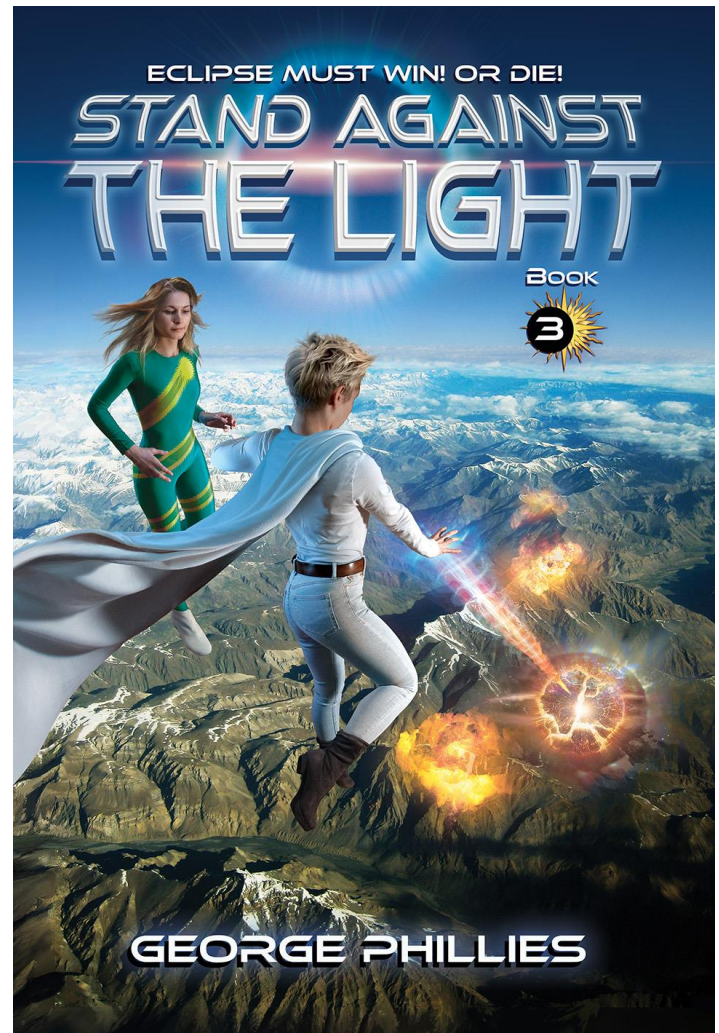
We are currently up to 50 dues-paying members, and about 200 public members who receive our zines. Mindful that in decades past most of our members apparently read the zines, perhaps wrote a letter, but not much else, our size has substantially recovered from the time in which we had dozens of members. We seem to have run out of steam on recruiting new members, so that membership numbers are rather flat. Our Facebook page has a lot more readers on it, so perhaps it could be mined for additional public members.

There is gradual turnover in who is running different bureaus, which to my mind is a good thing. There are some aspects of what we are doing that could be improved; I occasionally look for anyone to help with technical issues related to our Facebook Page.

Folks here are all active supporters of the N3F, which is much appreciated.

In other notes, I recently received the cover of what should be my next novel, namely *Stand Against the Light*. As always, Brad Fraunfelter did a superb job.

The cover follows:



Comments on Issue 248

This time, congratulations on a 35 page issue. That's solid progress. Hopefully we can keep it up.

The Contents of a Good Life: Will, as always you find the most remarkable images. A city with a network of underground tunnels? Which city? I was quite unaware of places like that.

Reviews of esoteric works are certainly welcome. Poetry volumes are particularly notable. Your own poetry is haunting.

Archive Midwinter: Good point about Adara. She might get a bit more upset with people than she has so far. Harry Truman got the job of VP because a certain number of Democrats realized that Roosevelt was clearly on his last legs, and informed him that he could dump Vice President Wallace or they would split the party and ensure that he lost. He accepted Truman as VP. With respect to the atom bomb, from his perspective it was another way to cause Japanese cities to burn down. He likely did not emphasize that it was much more expensive than the conventional alternatives that we were already using. However, it seems – may not be true – that there was a captured fighter pilot who convinced the Japanese that we actually had another 50 of them ready to drop.

Quantum computing may at some point leads to great advances. It has been used to do a calculation that would take forever by brute force on classical machines, though the calculation appears to be pointless except as a demonstration that quantum computing can do effective calculations.

Synergy: Nice opening art. What were the first eight fandoms? Yes, it is better that the N3F has more fanzines. We are doing more fannish things. And you are pursuing the activities that interest you, which is also excellent. An occasional extended article on the fanac project would be good, to show how it is seen other than by the fine people who run it.

Your critique of computers as a possible danger to fandom is well taken. It appears to me that computers make life easier for fen. If I were magically to appear at WorldCon 1 and hand out copies of the latest Tightbeam, even if I appeared in 1960 and did the same, people would be astonished, because TightBeam would

appear to them to be a lavish prozine with massive uses of full color, something that even Astounding did not do. They would also be baffled by a lot of the cultural references, though 1939 fan Hugo Gernsback would realize that we were reviewing television programs, and he had done the first commercial station TV broadcast in the US, back in 1923.

Bored Games: An a musing example of archeological misinterpretation.

You raise an interesting question, namely printing and mailing our zines. The short answer is that the folks who pay \$18 a year do receive a papermail issue of TNFF every month. I print one copy of every zine, all nine of them, and ship the copies off to our archivist, Jon Swartz. I did once upon a time ask people if they would be willing to volunteer to print and mail copies of our other zines for the benefit of people without computers, but never had any volunteers for the print, collate, and mail steps. Those, by the way, for all the zines we publish, would rapidly get decently expensive. TNFF is 12 pages, Tightbeam is 32 pages, the N3F Review is 40-50 pages, N'APA is recently three dozen pages albeit bimonthly, Eldritch Science is perhaps 60 pages, but only twice a year, and so forth. You know the page counts for your own two fine zines. That averages well over 100 pages a month. Good work finding a modern poem.

Notes from a Galaxy...meme's on violet paper. Color looks fine to me. Someone got married twice in the same year, to two different people. Nice cat...is that stairs she's on?

Samizdat: Thanks for returning. "...almost reads like a sociological study..." That's a fine description of a very different writing style. However, the style was used by Olaf

Stapledon in *First and Last Men*, a work that was enormously influential on much later SF.

I changed which novel I was snippeting from. They are all being written at this point, some more rapidly than others.

What is the canon? The November Tightbeam will have a different approach, an interview with someone who proposed to write and collect a 'Dangerous Visions of the 2020s', had to change the name because the estate complained, and decided that current dangerous visions are very different than Harlan Ellison's *Dangerous visions* of a half-century ago.

The N3F Review of Books would like to publish an extended review of every SF novel, including older ones, but we would need a lot more reviewers to make that possible.

I recall when Lafferty was writing, though my memory mostly links to a few of his strange but poetic short stories. Your review of the *Ivory Apples*, a book I would likely not otherwise have heard about, was most appreciated.

Adara at Dorrance Academy, continued

"Ah, difficulties. Actually, after Brennan's letter, I thought you'd be here this morning," he answered.

"Letter," I asked, my brows wrinkling. "Was there a letter? I haven't seen it."

"Should have been in your morning mail," he said.

"Student townhouses get evening mail," I answered.

"I get morning mail." He looked surprised.

"Justly earned rank deservedly enjoys its privileges," I answered, quoting the aphorism. "Is there a copy I could see?"

"It should be right here," he said. His desk was covered with stacks of paper neatly crissed and crossed. He stopped. "Wait. You mean you walked into his class this afternoon, with no idea that anything was wrong?"

"Yes, sir," I answered. "Professor Brennan handed back papers, finally reached mine, and started screaming. Then he threw me out of his classroom, and threatened to summon lictors to beat me if I didn't move fast enough." Jackson rolled his eyes.

"Here's the letter," he announced. He waved a single sheet of paper. "You'd better read it first. Please note that I'm only the messenger."

"Understood." For the first time since fleeing Brennan I broke into a smile. The letter, neatly printed by a voice-to-text spell, was three paragraphs of vitriol, and a final paragraph of school rules being invoked. The school rulebook was ten volumes, that before you got to the precedents; I certainly had not read them.

"He seems to be upset about something," I observed. "He never says what. He claims that the Pass grade doesn't affect my grade average, means that I satisfied the ethics requirement, and means that I don't get charged for taking the course."

"Correct," Jackson answered. "And I have the copy of the Recorder of Grades form,

filed with the Records Office, confirming his claim.”

“Do you have any idea why he’s so upset?” I asked. Jackson shook his head. I suppose I could ask Brennan what his problem was, but after he threatened me I had no interest in speaking with him again. Then I saw the obvious. “But I paid for a standard academic load,” I said. “I’m entitled to another course. Can I register late?”

“Yes. With permission of whoever is teaching it.” He held up a hand. “Today is eight-day. You need to ask the Faculty member on four-day, meaning you have a three days to prepare. Except you need my signature, and I will not be back until five-day. What do you want to take?”

I frowned. The needed memory took a while longer to surface. “Ethics was the same time as Schools of Magical Thought, which I wanted to take and couldn’t, because Ethics was in the way.” Ethics was a requirement, by reputation a challenging course, so like any sensible person I was working to get the difficult requirements out of the way as fast as possible.

“Let me check the Index,” Jackson said. I politely told him the course number. He leafed through a battered copy of the course listings. “Right time. No prerequisites. Instructor permission required. My note to myself says ‘permission not trivial to get’. OK.” He reached into a drawer and pulled out a form. Amazing, I thought. His desk drawers were in as good order as the tool crib in our House machine shop. I’d learned something else from him. He filled in a few lines and handed it to me. “Word to the wise: Find his reserve shelves; this weekend, do a lot of reading. As a final practical matter, unless you are entranced by a particular course, in which case we might

talk, I suggest avoiding the History and Ethics people. Word of your expulsion will surely have travelled around his Program, and that crew tends to stick together. We are History, but we do not teach undergraduate courses. If you decide you are interested in some historical issue, after this I can get you a pass to our library.”

A library pass to the History Tower was a big deal, or so Dad had told me. “Thank you,” I managed. “That’s very kind of you. Does this turn into a feud, or is this a clean break?” I asked.

Jackson looked very surprised. “Feud? No. Just avoid him. Not hard; stay out of his building. Then it’s a clean break. Contact me if anything arises. That’s why I’m here.”

“Thank you again,” I said as I stood. Brennan had done me a favor and didn’t realize it.

I returned home, to find someone moving into the suite at the far end of my row of townhouses.

I waved hello. “Hi,” I called. “Welcome to Dorrance Academy! I’m Adara, Adara Triskittenion.”

“Lawrence,” he answered, “but call me Larry. Larry White.” He smiled. “I’ve actually been here for a couple weeks, but took until today for Housing to clear up who’s renting this unit. Now I get to move in, and the place is a mess. Gross. And all the porters have been taken. You don’t know anything about housecleaning spells, do you? Dad said I should get a book on them, but I didn’t.”

“I can get you started,” I said. “I need to change to work clothes first. You might

want to, too; the good housecleaning spells are a bit messy, even if you're careful."

"Would thirty minutes be good?" he asked. "I have to find which crate has my clothes. And I should open all the windows. The place smells a bit." Organized, I thought, he is not.

I thought my unit had been dirty. His was filthy. 'Smells a bit' was a great understatement. I did open and clean the drains for him. He had no idea how to do that; fully clogged drains can be a challenge to open without damaging the pipes.

I persuaded him to start by levitating all the trash and garbage out of the basement and dropping it in the community receptacles across the lawn. Once he'd done that, he was not going to hurt the cast-stone basement floor and walls when he practiced the cleaning spells he should have learned ten years ago. The basement already needed a lot of cleaning, including the floor joists. No, I do not understand how you can get mud on a ceiling. Fortunately his family house's inclination was to wand magic, so he could get started immediately with safe versions of the spells I showed him. Even more fortunately, he was a very good student, so he could readily cast the housecleaning spells I gave him.

After a bit I was back in the basement, helping him clean that so he could get his worldly goods inside. While we were doing that, we could talk.

"What are you majoring in?" I asked.

"I'm going to study moons," he said, "and stars. Except no one can agree which major I'm in."

"Moons?" I asked. "Stars?" Yes, almost everywhere you go, there are points of light in the sky. There are often bright objects, one or two or many, that show crescents or disks, and that rise and set at different times. Every so often, someone tries to shallow or deep gate to a moon, as though a moon were a physical place like an island. These people are never heard from again, no matter how well prepared they were for a trip to a strange clime.

"At Dorrance, there are four moons. Above my family's Hall, sometimes as many as eight can be seen. A few places have no moons at all." I nodded. "So is it ever true that the same moons can be seen in places that are very distant from each other? Stars form asterisms...constellations. Are these all different? Then there's the Maelstrom of Stars, which you can see from a lot of places, but it doesn't look quite the same when you change where you are standing. Finally, there are the point moons. They look like stars, but they move ever so slowly across the sea of heaven."

Point moons? I wondered. That didn't ring a bell. "Is there...." I bit my tongue. I almost asked him if there's a practical use to what he wanted to study. I bit my tongue again. Anyone interested in Ettore's Paradox has no business asking that question. "And you think they're interesting because?"

"They're thaumaturgically inert," he said. "Every so often, not so much recently, someone tries to measure their aura, but there's nothing there, as though they were just balls of light. That would explain why no one can gate there; there's no there there."

"But what can you study about something that has no magical part?" I asked.

“For starters, you can catalog them,” he said enthusiastically. “You can capture their pictures. Well, you should be able to. It’s like natural history, listing all the different fish in the seas.” I did know how to fish, and was perfectly aware that each time you went to a new place, the types of fish you could catch would be very different. “So I spoke to the people in Natural History. They do plants and animals and rocks, but none of them are interested in stars. I was sent here and there, but never found anyone interested in stars.”

“So what courses are you taking?” I asked. Maybe he should have figured out this problem in advance, but it was too late now.

“There are eight courses required for every degree,” he said. “I’m taking four of them. Next term I’ll take the other four. By then I should find out what my major should be. Hopefully the rest of the term will be more interesting than my first day of classes was. Except I’m just as happy I’m not in that other History and Ethics class. I hear Professor Brennan was about to kill a student for giving the wrong answer.”

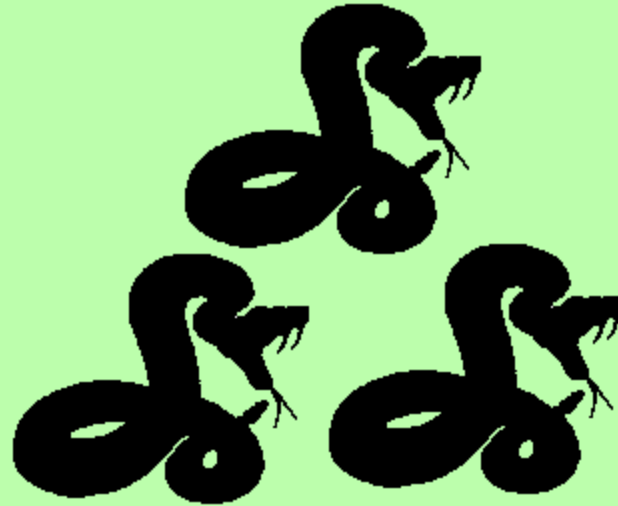
“That was me,” I interjected. “I don’t think he was about to kill me, though I ran from the classroom. And I don’t know which answer was wrong, or why, because he didn’t say.”

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 249

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22 September 2020



Comments:

Jose Sanchez: Cover: A Mars Colony! Cool! I do not expect to live to see it, but I believe the human species will live to see it -- to do it! As an internationalist, I like that the station is flying many flags. I do suffer from a mild case of American Exceptionalism, but I have a much greater fondness for international cooperation, something I remember well from the (literal!) high point of Detente, the Apollo-Soyuz link-up. Today's International Space Station also gives me shivers of pure joy. Here's to happier days!

Will Mayo: A fun set of photographs to start us off -- is that Saint Mark's in Venice? And is that your own happy face greeting us from the photo on page 2? I've never run a selfie in N'APA, but I might just follow your example and give a smile!

Our tastes parallel, that's for sure! I watched Dark Shadows after school. I have to confess, I didn't quite "get it." Dark Shadows never really seemed to me to have a cohesive plot or concept. It always seemed to have the loveliest motifs -- the ideas were just top notch -- but I could never figure out what was going on. They'd play games with the viewership, such as having a little girl -- ghost? -- who'd run across the scene, but wouldn't be explained until later. But the more I watched the show, "later" never seemed to come.

The Night Stalker was good, although perhaps just a little too close to "horror" for my wimpy little tastes. I still can't cope with horror, even when it's leavened with comedy. The "Doctor Phibes" movies are too much for me; they hurt. I can't watch 'em.

I definitely celebrate the human joy in "make pretend." I jumped into the hobby of role-playing-gaming with both feet when it first popped up in 1973, and enjoyed every single moment of it ever since. Alas for this deuced pandemic, all my role-playing adventures have gone over to web-based virtual meetings, something I'm not able to embrace. So much for the hobby that sustained me in hard times!

Super cool that you discovered a network of tunnels! That's taking "Dungeons and Dragons" to a real-world realization! There, too, our lives parallel, as one time a group and I prowled the steam tunnels beneath UC Irvine. We got trapped, at the end, in the library, and burst out through the main doors, setting off all the alarms. Like so many of my stories, the ending is, "...And then we ran like hell."

John Thiel: Lovely cover art! Wonderfully surreal!

What is the meaning, in rough terms, of "Ninth Fandom?" I'm not at all up on the names of generations.

I definitely favor fandom as a way of life, and a means of celebrating the fun we find in our arts and literature. You say computers have absorbed fandom, but I would say it's the other way around! Or maybe even both at the same time. Much of the joy of the information age is that it is easier to be an active fan, easier to write a blog, draw and share pictures, write and publish fan fiction, and connect with others. I remember, many years ago, trying to make contact with a "Man From U.N.C.L.E." fan club. I sent letters, and got "non-answers" back, as if the guy I'd reached was, yes, the right guy, but he didn't seem interested in my participation. In modern slang, he was jerking me around. Today, U.N.C.L.E. fandom is on-line, easy to find, easy to join, and fun and relevant. We have a much greater ability to find each other -- and, in the end, to find ourselves!

Jeffrey Redmond's story is fun, if narrative-only in construction. Turn that lad loose on characters and dialogue, and he'll be unstoppable. He is certainly a master of concepts and ideas, and can pop up with a twist ending as well as anyone since R A Lafferty!

rect me re social advances, one of the sad inherent limitations to Democracy is that we don't all actually like each other. The ideal of liberty must always include freedom from one another, because of our natural human tendency to want to remake society to suit ourselves...but it also must include an obligation to tolerate that which we do not like. Just as one minor example, right now, outside my window, some guys are playing Rap Music...really loudly. I hate this. It just makes me thoroughly unhappy. But I accept it -- I must accept it. It's the cost of living together with others in a society that, otherwise, gives us so many wonderful things.

Fun closing art of the cat in front of an earth-sphere, and I love the graphic of the two groups of people rushing toward each other in harmony and agreement. The ideal of "unity" without losing individualism is at the heart of enlightenment and progressivism. It's hard to say it better than Gene Roddenberry did, celebrating Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations.

(Again, some of that diversity is going to be unpleasant, even ugly, to some of us. But that's a strength, not a weakness! Find what you like, and simply leave behind that which you do not!)

George Phillis: Interesting idea of the "Resident Hermit," such as America's Thoreau, and, aye, Poe might have served that role. Does J.D. Salinger count? Even J.K. Rowling has some degree of reserve, not acting quite as publicly as other authors of her stature. (And, alas, when she does get involved, it sometimes doesn't go well...) My own personal favorite hermit was Charles Valentin Alkan, a composer and pianist, a contemporary of Chopin. He lived very much by himself and kept the world away. Once, when the city fathers of Paris came to his door to present him with an award for his music, he told them, "Pardon me, but at this hour, I digest." That has always struck me as one of the most elegant possible ways to say, "Get lost!"

Alas, on your point that we don't have very good records from the earlier incarnations of N'APA, or even full records from this incarnation, which ought to be wholly archived given that it is digital. Many years ago, in the paper-and-staples N'APA, George Wells wrote one of the funniest things I have ever seen -- and now I don't have a copy, and wouldn't have a hope in hades of finding one. George doesn't have a copy. And even if some trove of physical N'APA issues popped up, it would be a months' worth of hard labor searching them for the one contribution.

(I did make that investment of labor and discovered the "Addams Family Choose Your Own Adventure" game I wrote for

the fanzine "Intercepted," run by Kay Shapero from Los Angeles. I will append it to this subby, just for fun. Y'all won't get many of the references and allusions...but you'll get some of 'em just fine!)

re Amazon print-on-demand, the interface, at Amazon, is incredibly harsh and frustrating. Their interface to submit a story as a Kindle Ebook is great! It's one of the friendliest interfaces I've ever seen, highly professional, easy to use, intuitive, and even fun. But when you move on to try to creat a p.o.d. paperback, all that goes to hades in a handbell, and the process is misery incorporated. I have succeeded at the former a couple dozen times...and at the latter not even once. Miserable experience.

Fun segment of "Practical Exercise." As always, I'm struck by the "high entropy" of your fantasy: you comfortably portray energy and information densities that would instantly overwhelm a real-world human mortal. This works well in your superhero fiction, and it works well in fantasy literature too.

Lorien Rivendell: Fun meme art! Loved the one about an odd number of people getting married, with the coda -- actually from real life -- about someone marrying a tree. That's an Indian (Hindu) custom, and is pleasantly humane. The Walmart parking lot joke was also fun, and funny, and very, very true to real life!

Samuel Lubell: Only in the ideal is there a middle ground between optimism and pessimism -- realism -- but it's something that is only obtainable in the abstract. Real-world porridge is always too hot or too cold: it is never "just right." In the physical world, $2 + 2 = 3.9999+$

(I remember the lesson in engineering taught me at my old workplace. An engineer had designed an enclosure, and had not allowed for "tolerances." His measurements were exact. As it turned out, the enclosure fit in the rack-mount...but you had to hammer it in with your fist, and it made a nasty scraping noise.

Memo: leave a little room when designing something for "the real world.")

It breaks my little heart to read that over a quarter of us haven't read a book in over a year. Ow! I take so much of my pleasure-of-life from reading!

I don't know if there is a SF canon any longer...but I definitely believe there should be! A "core" of classics is good for a field. Dickens and Shakespeare are good for English Literature.

Oh, how I love R A Lafferty! Love him to little pieces! Well, that's what he writes: little pieces, shorts and short-shorts. My first exposure to him was "Thus We Frustrate Charlemagne," which was brilliant, and "Among the Hairy Earthmen" which is so far surpassing brilliant as to require entirely new superlatives. I know of no story, ever, that is more clever or more haunting. Everything the man wrote was brilliant. Ah, where is his like today?

Hate

I do suffer a little from anger issues. Nothing that spills out into real life; I can keep a still tongue. But deep within, there is that volcanic reservoir of hatred.

Who? You know, the usual: the guy who cut me off in traffic, the celebrity who said something offensive, the guy on the internet who, dripping with smugness, promoted an idea that is palpably false. (Apollo landing hoax believers come easily to mind...) As Indiana Jones said, "Nazis. I hate these guys."

Once, someone threw a bottle at my car. I was infinitely angry. What does that mean? It means that, for about half an hour, it would have been impossible for you to propose a torture or torment so hideous that I would have said, "No" to inflicting it upon

that guy. Drawing and quartering? Asphyxiation? Dissolving in fluoric acid? I was mad enough to say, "Yep. Do it."

I'm reminded of the great Ray Walston, in the movie musical Popeye, as "Poopdeck Pappy," growling, "Hate! Hate has been good to me!"

Hate has not been good to me. It hurts. As Dan O'Neill, the cartoonist who created the Odd Bodkins comic strip, said, "Hostility is a Loco Motive. Don't step in front of it."

I remember a cute exchange between Bruce Banner (the Hulk) and Wolverine. Banner said, "You wouldn't like me when I'm angry." Wolverine just shrugged. "I don't like you now."

Anger is a two-bladed dagger with no hilt. You cannot wield it without injuring yourself. Anger actually has physiological effects that are unhealthy: blood pressure is raised, hormones are secreted, one's very lifespan is shortened.

Cognition is impaired. We don't think well when we're thinking angry. Decisions are less wise, less contemplative, more emotional and more impulsive. Act in wrath and repent at leisure.

Even in wartime, even in combat, anger is ill-advised. The warrior who fights with determination, yet keeps his head clear, is more likely to be the victor. Among other things, severe anger can cause the limbs to tremble, which will interfere with aiming a bow or a rifle.

I once designed (or, rather, outlined) a video game, of the Donkey Kong or Mario Brothers epoch, called "Rage Racer." The little figure moved faster when he got angrier, but he was harder to control, and would veer and jink when you tried to steer him. He was faster -- and deadlier! -- when he was enraged, but accuracy deteriorated. I think it is a metaphor for reality.

1. You arrive at the Addams' Family Mansion, and are greeted by Lurch. If you speak nicely to Lurch, and tip him a few pence as he drags your hat off your head, go to 33. If you glare at him in surly disgust, go to 10.

2. The fox does some utterly astonishing things to your body, things you didn't know your body was capable of. The sensations you once knew as pleasure and pain no longer have any meaning or relevance, with the sold distinction that you rather do enjoy it, overall. If you want more, go to 2. If you've had enough, go to 16.

3. "I say, old chap, how do you like the party?" Gomez Addams claps you heartily on the back, causing you to come back, rapidly, to reality. Gomez leans close. "A lot of odd people here," he confides. He pushes a foaming green concoction into your hands. If you drink it, go to 17. If not, go to 29.

4. The bite is, of course, poisonous. Go to 17.

5. A giant robot leans over the mess of the mashed slug-man, and introduces himself as Gigantor. In a gravelly voice, he says, "Well done. Was it self-defense, or was it murder?" If you say it was self-defense, go to 39. If you admit to murder, go to 25.

6. Lurch accepts your bribe with ill grace. Go to 10.

7. Lurch puts you out into the dark, where wolves howl and far, far away you see the comforting lights of the city. Will you make it through the swamp and back to civilization? As a matter of fact, no.

8. "What?" Gomez mutters, looking at you over his glasses. "Come on, man, this is a serious trial, can't you see that?" He takes you by the shoulders. "Present a defense, or all will go poorly, I assure you." If you insist on your right to be tried by a real jury, and not the kangaroo court, go to 45. If you change your mind and accept the court as fit to rule on your case, go to 35.

9. Tollander puts his gun against your forehead. "Bye, sucker." ***BLAM!!!***

10. Lurch boots you roughly in the rear, and you land in the fireplace with cousin Itt. Itt looks at you and says, "Ibibble bibibbbilebig bibibieggie beb." If you respond, "And so's your aunt fanny," go to 40. If you look at Itt cross-eyed and say, "Huh?" go to 12.

11. Morticia eyes you with suspicion. "A true guest of the Addams' would never turn down food!" Her eyes blow. "Drizzle, Drazzle..." Gomez interrupts her. "Wrong incantation, my sweet." "Oh, right," she says brightly. "Panak P'threureum!" If you respond, "Mueruerht'p kanap!" go to 20. If you respond, "Hey, don't do that! Hey!" then go to 22.

12. Wednesday saunters in. "Do you like my dolly?" If you say yes, then go to 37. If you say no, then Wednesday screams for Thomson and Thompson. Go to 15.

13. A large dripping slug comes up to you and whispers in a voice like air gushing loose from a slashed tire. "Hey, dude, y'wanna try some star drops? Pretty good shit, yakow?" If you give him money for the star drops and take them, go to 23. If you tell him to go and pollinate himself, go to 43.

14. Two luscious cuties of your favorite sex make themselves available to you: one is a bunny, but has all of the right things in all of the right places. The other is a fox, and a fox the likes of which you

have only seen in rare and very pleasant dreams. If you choose to bed down with the bunny, go to 42. If you choose to roll in the hay with the fox, go to 24.

15. Thomson hits you in the stomach. You double over. Go to 41.

16. The Addams' parties always seem to end like this: you have a raging headache, you're covered with bruises, and your hat has been crushed. Your hangover won't go away until November, you have a tattoo you don't know about yet, and a social disease for which the cure will be discovered to be soaking your body twice daily in ice-water. Oh, and you've signed adoption papers for an ugly child named "Little tug more" who leaps into your arms and shouts, "Mommy! Daddy! Mommy! Daddy!" endlessly and with great delight, whereas you can't even tell what species he is.

17. It was the antidote. You expire, your molecules all drying up, and you fade away on the breeze, enriching the soil around the Addams' mansion.

18. You're alive. Count your blessings. Morticia invites you to come back to the next party, because you're so much fun. Granny harrumphs, and sets your leg.

19. Morticia looks over her shoulder in distress and sees Gigantor about to mash Gomez into little bits. She glares at it, and it glows red hot with embarrassment. You take the opportunity to sneak away. Go to 13.

20. Morticia is taken aback. She rings for Lurch. "Eject this person!" If you bribe Lurch, go to 6. Otherwise, go to 7.

21. "Don't be foolish," Morticia says, and begins a new incantation. Just then a crush-squish is heard, and Gomez is rather distressed to be stepped on by Gigantor. Morticia ignores you, and you can make your escape. Go to 34.

22. "Why ever not?" Morticia wonders. "Because," you say, "there's a giant robot behind you who's about to step on Gomez." Make a Charisma or Fast-Talk check. If you succeed, go to 19. If you fail, go to 21.

23. Wow, man, like, this is incredible! Best high you've ever had. Oh, wow! Like, colors! I dream a phlegm bag of myself. I got rainbow eyedrops. Feet below my knees! A fox comes along and gently affixes handcuffs to you. If you resist, go to 32. If you dig it, grooving on the experience, go to 2.

24. The fox, alas, is an agent of the House Un-American Activities Committee, and slaps the cuffs on you for your perverted audacity. "Go you this time, sweetcakes." Then the fox pulls out a whip, and you get an inkling that maybe the fox isn't as innocent as might seem. If you play along with the whips and handcuffs, go to 2. If you protest, break or wriggle loose from the cuffs, and run away, go to 36.

25. Gigantor stands to his full eight meter height, and frowns down at you. "Murder is wrong. I will need to send for the detectives Thomson and Thompson." Go to 15.

26. You've found the Addams' Treasure Room! riches galore! Wealth! Jewels! Gems! Magic Items! Blocks of gold; bars of silver; amazing and astonishing amounts of mobile wealth! Blueprints for ffl drives! Star charts! Treasure maps! You're a very wealthy party-goer!

27. "Innocent!" Gomez thunders. "By golly, I knew it all the time." He takes you aside and gives you several stockbroking hints as told him by Blucher the Broker. You quickly grow bored with his sagacity and find more mischief. Go to 14.

28. "Oh, goody, a trial!" beams Gomez. He quickly assembles a jury of the weirdest pack of murderers, cut-throats, and interstellar mercenaries you have ever seen. Morticia sets herself to do the task of being the clerk and court-recorder. Tollander steps forward, his largest pistol at the ready, to serve as bailiff. If you denounce this sham of justice as a farce, go to 8. If you accept the court's competence to judge you, go to 35.

29. First your arm swells up to the size of an inner tube for a large farming tractor, then you go blind, and finally you being to convulse and vomit into the rug. Several other party-goers, thinking this is the "in" thing to do, crawl down beside you and vomit also, so that the last minutes of life are embarrassing, even humiliating, as well as fatal.

30. You failed to run in time. The cute elfin vampire lich drains all the life and power out of you and you become a dead, empty husk. Lurch finds you at the last, and uses you to polish the woodwork. (Dead husks are excellent for wood finishing...)

31. "Fight!" Suddenly you and the giant slug are surrounded by dozens of excited folk who place bets, jump up and down, and shriek and whistle. If you fight the slug (STR 45, DEX 28, DON 40, BODY 50, 15 points in all-PD armor, 15 points in stretching, 15 points in Entangle), decide who wins. If you beat the slug, go to 5. If the slug beats you, go to 18.

32. You're now in charge of your own defense. Fester sits back and cleans his blunderbuss, and eyeballs the members of the court. Morticia buffs her nails, and looks at you with her cutest, friendliest expression. Make a legal skills roll, or, at your option, an oratory or fast-talk roll. If you succeed, go to 27. If you fail, to go 47.

33. Lurch growls a deep, "Thank you, sir," and trips the lever that plunges you into an interdimensional void. If you struggle, trying to keep from whirling down to the bottom of the void, go to 34. If you allow the void to claim you, go to 38.

34. The Addams' family dining room is full of furverts having endless bouts of heady recreational sex, in some of the most astonishing conjunctions of members and orifices imaginable. If you take off your clothes and participate, go to 14. If you leave in disgust, go to 13.

35. The "trial" is reminiscent of Alice's in Alice's Adventures Underground. Uncle Fester is appointed to defend you. He whispers to you. "You should'a shot him in the back." You spread your hands. An Altani from the Legal Branch of the Hegemonic Overgovernment presents the case against you: it is watertight. They have tapes, photos, and eyewitness testimony. Uncle Fester relaxes, and declines to cross-examine. If you choose to take a hand in your own defense, Fester will warn you that you've a fool for a client, but will allow you to speak; go to 32. If you let Fester handle your defense for you, go to 44.

36. "Is this fox bothering you?" Asks Thomson. "To be precise, are you bothering this fox?" asks Thompson. The fox, all contribute, says, "No, it's all a simple mistake," and smiles at you. The fox offers you a drink. If you accept the drink, and drink it, go to 16. If you say to Thomson and Thompson, "This fox tried to molest me," go to 15.

37. "Thank you." Wednesday pirouettes prettily and gives you a nice spider. The spider bites you on the hand. If you shriek in pain and smash the spider, go to 4. If you smile through your tears and go to find help, the spider venom starts to get to you. You blink, but your vision remains blurred. Is that an otter, making furious passionate love to a serving-maid? Are those eyes on the end of stalks, growing out of the flower-pot? Go to 3.

38. You're in Morticia's parlor. "Oh, you look dreadful," she compliments you. You feel awful, and wonder if you ought to be complimented. She offers you a crumb-bun, which looks dreadfully dry. If you eat it, go to 3. If you refuse, delicately, go to 11.

39. "Self defense, indeed!" says a large-voiced being whose long, rubbery neck comes out of a fish-bowl several diameters too small. "It was assault and... and..." He is a long, green, loud sea-serpent. He looks to his small friend who wears a propeller beanie. "What's the word, Beanie?" "Battery, Cecil Battery!" "Yeah!" Cecil looks at you. "You bad guy you!" If you protest your innocence, go to 28. If you admit guilt, go to 46.

40. "He said 'watch out for the bibibbelbebble,'" a cute little Pini-Elf says. "What does that mean?" you ask. "I don't know..." You see depths of amazing evil behind the innocent elfin face. If you stay, go to 30. If you run for your life, go to 13.

41. Thompson hits you on the head. You straighten up. Go to 15.

42. Bliss. Endless bouts of happy, joyous, sensual bliss. You never thought it could be so good. The bunny likes to make whoopee, make whoopee, make whoopee, and the party will be two years over before either you or the bunny notices.

43. "I'm a dangerous man!" the slug insists. "I'm wanted on seventeen star systems!" He offers you the star drops, and some other weird tablets and pills. If you take the star drops, go to 23. If you smash the invertebrate right in his chops, go to 31.

44. Fester speaks in your defense. "This clown is surely a buffoon, but, hey, think of the defendant's mommy. That's right, behind this face that would stop a clock is the loving memory of -- Mom!" Fester breaks down in tears. "Can you let the defendant go to jail, leaving mommy behind? Can you break the heart of an old woman, who leaves a candle burning every night, waiting for her poor child to return?" The jury listens carefully. Go to 47.

45. "Too bad for you," Tollander giggles. Gomez shrugs. "We were only trying to do what was right, my boy. But remember, dead or not, you'll always be welcome at our parties." "Now?" Tollander asks. "Not just yet," Gomez says, smiling brightly. He pulls an already-lit cigar out of his pocket. "The condemned man deserves a smoke and a blindfold." If you accept the smoke and the blindfold, go to 9. If you refuse the smoke and the blindfold, go to 9.

46. "We thought so," Says Thomson. "To be precise, so you thought," Says Thompson. Go to 15.

47. "Obviously Guilty," The Altani sums up. The court agrees, having been paid very well by him in Hegemonic Land Grants. Go to 45.

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This issue features emphasis on the unification of Synergy, that being the associated consciousness or the soul fusion with other beings.

EDITORIAL



What Is Synergy?

It's been rather foolish to have a zine named Synergy without making any very clear reference to what synergy is. It's as if I wasn't paying any attention to what my title was, or having the hubris to think that my fanzine was accomplishing synergy. Well, when I make it clear what synergy is, you'll see that I have been referencing it considerably in my editorial policy.

Synergy is the soul-merging of people, as with the followers of the philosophy of the Cosmic All, or the Love Generation, or the followers of Togetherness among the mundane. Some call it Social Fusion. It is distinct from normal social behavior in that it has a mystique, and those followers of it look for ways to achieve oneness of spirit. Where there's a will there's a way, and people who engage in syzygy, as the practice of synergy is called, find different ways of relating, sometimes experimenting with transfer of instinct, hypnotic suggestions and other forms of transference, making use of the passage of feeling which occurs in crowds or when there is a lot of fast activity going on, or intuitive faculties; whatever one person might have is transferred to others as they learn of the others—a spiritual unification based upon mutual searching, as with the *gestalt* group entity, where talents and abilities are shared to make use of one another's pluses and make up for their lacks, increasing the survival potentiality of the individuals involved. The gestalt mode of social existence was described in Theodore Sturgeon's novel MORE THAN HUMAN, and he went on to describe a vast social consciousness in his novelette "To Marry Medusa", and a new way of life in "The Skills of Xanadu". With modern tendencies Synergy is given a forward impetus, for example with the Consciousness Expansion people or Psychedelic Culture, with the followers of astrology promoting the dawning of the Age of Aquarius, with the followers of Zen Buddhism—not very popular scientifically, but let's give mystics their chance. There's fantasy as well

as science fiction, and truth to be found in both. I've seen people on the net referring to the Hive Mind—not a very appealing term, but that is what is meant. So synergy is becoming known, although scoffed at by science—but as they say, science is not all or everything, and looking upon it thusly is as superstitious as anything else. As Arthur Clarke said, advanced technology is not much different from magic anyway, in answering questions relating to the difference between magic and science, and whether they cancel each other. Synergy suggests that they merge, and that is the significance of my title, the merging of fantasy and science fiction, rather than their simply being literary companions due to the similarity in their both being fantastic in comparison with the literature of normality and commonplaceness. Fantasy, says science, is not the truth. But science is not the truth either; it's circumstantial observation and should not be considered to relate to the truth of any matter. Scientific truth does not set man free, it enslaves him. "You'd better free your mind instead", as the Beatles have sung. This is apt to be a major philosophical position in the coming century, and somewhat a solution to the problems of existentialism. "Freeing...and the mind to liberation", as the song "The Age of Aquarius" promises. The song "Xanadu" also promises a better culture, one that liberates the consciousness. Strict and uncompromising belief in anything leads nowhere. "Stamp Out Reality", as another song says? That's too much like warfare, too doctrinal. But "reality" is, as they say, a conceptual enslaver of man. What is actually real is a never-ending argument; perhaps dreams have their reality too, if we define the word "reality" correctly.

So my policy in this fanzine is one of being more in tune with the things that we feel, and the things that actually bring us together. That is where both science fiction and fantasy are at with me.



Upper Management by Jeffrey Redmond



War leads to nothing but war.

From the ancient Er-Dan manuscripts (Codex 11257), as translated by Ed-Mon:

On the planet of the three moons, on the island in the middle of the smaller fresh water sea, the trading colony of the merchants there prospered for a long time. They traded with others from many lands, and they had a competent, well-capable, and experienced staff of island government administrators to oversee their operations. Everyone made a profit, taxes were kept low and paid on time, and the families which owned and ran the businesses made a comfortable living for themselves.

During the season of the eclipses of all three moons, a large invasion fleet from the Western Continent was sent out across the smaller fresh water sea to conquer a part of the Eastern one. On its way it stopped at the island for rest and supplies, and the admiral decided to leave a part of his force on permanent occupation duty there. The islanders had very mixed emotions about this, because the invaders were foreigners and unsolicited. But they were disciplined, and they spent their pay freely, and, as the new occupation commander told the inhabitants, they would protect the islands from any further invasion from any of the other continents.

Trade in the islands continued as before, and the islanders had to pay only a small increase in taxes to finance the new military garrison. The Western troops respected their customs and females, and life for the inhabitants went on basically as before. In

time the garrison troops were withdrawn to be used as replacements for all of the battle casualties in the Eastern fighting. And they were replaced by wounded survivors of the many battles, or by troops unfit for combat altogether.

The previous commanders and staffs were then replaced by other less experienced ones, often chosen for their family ties and loyalties to the civilian leaders rather than their personal abilities. They came and went, until finally a commander was appointed who was the grandson of the prime minister himself, and this was to be a more permanent assignment. He brought with him his own group of assistants, and these were from his sports team playing days at the national academy. He, Rab-Ay, knowing next to nothing about government or administration, delegated all of his authority to his newly-appointed subordinates. And they in turn, knowing next to nothing about the conditions, culture, or situations of the islanders themselves, were all hopelessly confused. Thus competent and skilled personnel were all passed over for mere friends and relatives, and they found themselves being considered as completely disposable by their superiors.

These new administrators decided that they needed larger and more opulent places in which to administer, as well as live. Taxes upon the inhabitants were increased to pay for newer and bigger office and home buildings. The new commander's subordinates all gave themselves "promotions" by increasing their own staffs, and creating more duties and responsibilities for them to do. Often, because there was actually little or nothing for them to do, their new job titles had to be imaginative ones in order to remain impressive. And these assistants were given assistants, more offices, and more assistants, and the island's occupational bureaucracy thus grew. More and more Western administrative personnel were sent there, all at the grandson's personal request, to fulfill all of the new governmental fantasy.

New trade laws were enacted which were deliberately designed to make extra profits only for the Western system. All trade with other places was forbidden, and only goods and products needed by the Western Continent would then be processed. Business owners who did not comply were arrested, imprisoned, and had their business properties confiscated. In this way the new commander and his much-increased staff all found that they could please the leaders in the Western capitol, as well as increase their own personal wealth and power.

In time the islanders became more of a permanent working and lower class of native laborers, while the new occupiers became a permanent middle and upper class of

administrators, managers, and rulers. Taxes on the islanders were further increased, and protests and dissent dealt with by increases in arrests and imprisonments. More and more businesses were confiscated, and the families who had owned them were then impoverished and destroyed. And eventually the economy collapsed, and the profits from the islands diminished greatly. The leaders in the capitol were then very disappointed with their occupation administration. They ordered the commander, Ray-Ay, to take personal and full responsibility for running everything on the island, and he then began to tell his subordinates everything to specifically do.

The fighting on the Eastern Continent began to fare badly for the Westerners, and the prime minister and the military leaders began to take harsher measures to rule and win the war. The island was permanently annexed and governed directly as a colony. The inhabitants were made into unpaid slave labor, and they worked long throughout each and every day to provide goods for the Continent and the military. And, at first, this renewed and revived the new colonial economy, at least from the Western capitol's point of view. The leaders were once again pleased with the grandson, Ray-Ay, and his staff, and they gave them promotions, medallions, and pay raises as rewards for all of their loyal, dedicated, and patriotic services to the homeland.

However, as time went on, even the slave labor economy of the island began to collapse. There was no incentive of profit for the inhabitants, and no reward or reason to hope or strive for anything in their lives. The leaders in the capitol were once again intensely displeased. The prime minister, Wal-Tar, then sent his son, the military chief of staff Ra-Bart, to go to the island and meet with the commander, his nephew. The grandson, Ra-Bay, was threatened with the personal humiliation of recall and demotion if he did not improve the economic viability of the island as before. But he, in turn, blamed his many assistants and subordinates for their total incompetence, mismanagement, stupidity, ignorance, and disloyalty. He himself knew what to do, but they kept making all of the mistakes, Ra-Bay assured his uncle. The chief of staff then returned to the capitol, and he reported all of this to the prime minister. Wal-Tar, in turn, had no reason to doubt his own grandson, the offspring of his favorite daughter. The commander was left in command, but he terminated his numerous staff members, one by one, despite their only having followed each and every one of his specific orders, word for word.

As time went on, the fighting on the Eastern Continent ended with a Western defeat and withdrawal of the remnants of their forces. The grandson and his new staff were

ordered to withdraw from the islands, and they did so. But before they left, they looted and loaded their ships, and they thus took everything of any kind of value on the island with them. The Easterners later arrived to find it a place totally depleted of all resources, the inhabitants emaciated and impoverished, and the economy and society completely destroyed.

In later times the prime minister was often blamed for losing the Eastern war, and permanently wrecking the colony on the island. Wal-Tar, in turn, blamed his son as a failed military leader. Ra-Bart, in turn, blamed his generals who were on the Eastern Continent. They, in turn, blamed the lack of supplies from the island colony due to the failures of the commander. Ra-Bay, in turn, blamed his ever-changing staff members. And they, in turn, blamed their subordinates. These ones usually blamed the island natives for having been so primitive, lazy, stupid, unruly, untrainable, and ones who should have been disciplined and punished way more than what they were. They all complained about the lack of loyalty in their various subordinates, and none of them could understand why this could have happened.

In actuality the grandson, Ra-Bay, had run a profitable system of island exploitation throughout his command of the occupation. But he had continued to operate the trade systems he himself secretly owned parts of, regardless of whether or not they were needed for the Western war effort. He had actually been a somewhat competent and capable business manager, but he had not seen any real reason to provide for any greater cause than just his own.

After the old prime minister, Wal-Tar, died, he was succeeded by his son, Ra-Bart, the former military chief of staff. The grandson, Ra-Bay, expected a promotion by his uncle, but he was not given one. So Ra-Bay took his secretly amassed fortune, and he began to finance political campaigns and movements to undermine the new prime minister. And, in time, he succeeded.



Mailing Comments

WILL MAYO: You're one of the champions of the pessimistic attitude, I think, but you show flashes of optimism from time to time, as you have in this issue. Pessimism, I think, is the prevailing order of the day, and, as you point out, why not? There is very little we can see about us nowadays which could contribute to a positive attitude. But still there is such a thing as maintaining a happy outlook—which we can do as individuals. What's happening is determining too much about us and how we feel or look at things.

JEFFERSON SWYCAFFER: Unforgettable in the matter of literary pulling of the rug is Donald Wandrei's "Sonnets of the Midnight Hours"—"They caught me in the wasteland in the West, with safety but a half a league away..." In the series of poems, published in August Derleth's Arkham House anthology of fantasy poems DARK OF THE MOON, the first person character is subjected to nameless tortures, then after escaping, the same people recapture him just short of a safety the reader is left to imagine. Returned, they give him curious food to eat, "to make my sufferings worse if I should dine".

Civilization surely has reached its epoch; you see skyscrapers in formerly backward countries, heavy traffic in Arab countryside, and hear from computers in Borneo and New Zealand. The result seems to be to make every part of the world look similar.

SAMUEL LUBELL: If optimism and pessimism are proposed for consideration, there should certainly be established also a middle ground for those who are neither, or both from time to time, or have a balanced outlook. But I have been noting a national pessimism where a neutral ground should exist. In my editorial in Synergy this issue I point out that realism should not be attributed to pessimism and dreaming to optimism, if both attitudes are intelligent. Having an "ism" after the words makes them refer to thought rather than moods.



COOLER OF DREAMS by Betty Strøtger

What does it feel
Putting feet
on cold ice
You draw back
What does it feel
Bare feet
On a hot pavement
You draw nerves
Cooler of dreams
You pulled a lot
Of body strings
In a cooler of dreams
It's touch
all nerves
Within you.

UNCLOG THEM by Betty Strøtger

Can't catch dreams
Some to far gone
Some not even real.
Dreams. Sometime
You reach out, and feel
Dreams
Like escape for a day
Dreams
A moment
To find yourself
Dreams
Don't have no appointments.



OUR COUNTRY'S DYING

by Dr. Mel Waldman

**Our country's dying,
pelicans covered in oil,
Who will save the Gulf?**

**Our country's dying.
A dead dolphin sprawled on the
rocks at Bird Island.**

**An oil-drenched seagull
sits on its rotting corpse that
slowly turns to yellow.**

**Death is everywhere
in the Gulf of Mexico.
You can see strips and**

**Shreds of reddish-brown
oil stretching for hundreds of
miles. And if you look**

**Closely, you will see
the hidden death, marine life
covered in crude near**

**the oil-filled shore of
Bird Island and throughout the
Gulf of Mexico.**

**Our country's dying.
Who will save the Gulf?**



end of this issue

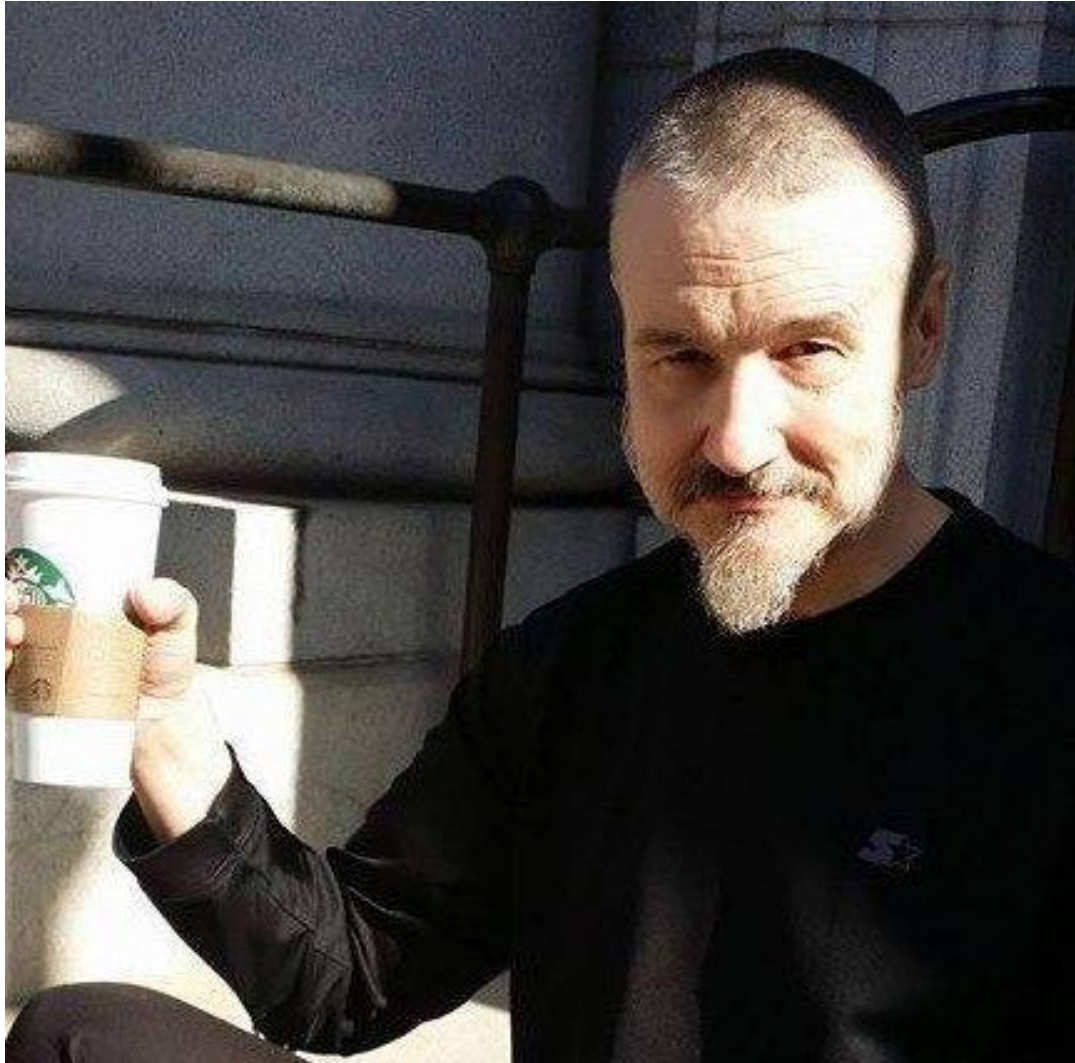
THE CONTENTS OF A GOOD LIFE #15



N'APA MAILING 249

November 2020

**Will S. Mayo. Apartment 9B, 750 Carroll Parkway, Frederick,
Maryland 21702. wsmayo@yahoo.com .**



The Weinberg Center For The Performing Arts, site of the former Tivoli Theater here in my town, is closed on account of the ongoing plague, its marquee reading “Come back when the world is open again,” but, ah, behind its doors the ghost of a ticket taker stands

ready as always and upstairs the phantom projectionist still plays those old silent movies that were favorites back in the day (“Phantom of the Opera”, anyone?) and the “Amazing Wurlitzer” organ plays on into the autumn nights all by its lonesome. In the seats, all ready for the show, are the long departed dead of my town, calling for “Encore!” And if ever a lonesome soul among the living should by chance wander into the premises (say, a homeless fellow seeking shelter from the cold) he is apt to die of fright from the sight of these wraiths carrying on so. Only the break of daylight should see all disperse like so many dust motes in the air. But the story goes on, for these are the dead that will not rest, not now and not ever....

I started out several decades ago to tell tales of the extraordinary, only to get detoured by poetry for most of my life. It’s primarily over the last few years that I’ve returned to telling tales of ghosts and other worlds, and though I continue to write the occasional poem, my main efforts seem drawn to the strange, the weird and the wonderful. They call to me. Especially on nights like these.

I live in what my father would have called a genteel poverty. There are two large spacious rooms here, one with two sofas and several bookcases, the other with an antique bed that is hand-carved to the finish and that belonged to some cousins of my grandmother’s. Also in that other room are yet more books. It sounds rather grand in some ways, yet the adjoining kitchen is empty of dishes and I find myself eating off paper plates and my wallet is often empty of cash. An aide, paid for by my family, stops by here a couple of times a week to fetch me some food and to report on me to her betters. Otherwise I am often without company of any kind except for my black cat. Except for a world of pen-pals on this somewhat magical device. It is a strange life. It is a solitary life. It is a precarious life. I call it my own. Alone here but for my dreams, I call up my tales. May they be never-ending.

In the center of my town, where one hill gives way to another, there is a museum devoted to the business of healing the Civil War dead. And within the halls of that building (once an undertaker’s shop) there is said to be a ghost by the name of Annie that wanders back and forth through the wall, mourning the loss of a lover centuries gone now

to all but her waiting eyes. Back and forth, she wanders, and her moan can be heard on an autumn night like this one and what became of her lover no one knows. Still she will have no rest. And so will no other. Her cries fill the town like so much wind but still no one answers. Just another lost soul among many tonight.

Charles Baudelaire, the dandy of Paris, sat at the café in his ill-fitting clothes, writing verses on scraps of paper. One to a whore. One to a corpse. And one to the night. All the people mocked and made fun of Baudelaire, he with his verses and his whores and his run-down ways of life. They said that he would come to no good. When his FLOWERS OF EVIL came out in print they only laughed all the harder and continued to despise the poor man. In the end, he went home to his mother and died. In time, the people of France who had mocked him passed away as well. But his verses lived on, survived. He won out.

Although I've built up a rare bit of notoriety over the Internet the past few years, what with telling naughty stories and posting naked pictures, that is, believe me, all talk and no action. My only real vice is that I drink far too much milk and to add onto that I read out of the way stories between trips here to post all my show and tell. And, for all my flirting with women across the globe over this newfangled device, if I've been on any date at all within this century I don't know about it. All in all, my closest adviser has it best when he calls me a literary monk. I'm here to learn words and write them down. Anything beyond that is, well, beyond that. I'm just happy sitting back and watching the world go by and imagining things. And so that's what I do.

I find people hard to know—the way they find no pleasure in a flower, a pretty girl, a moonlit night. I'm better off with my cat.

If only people could see. We don't have heaven or hell. We don't have other lives. We don't have tomorrow. We only have today.

Some people say that there is a paradise in another place, a heaven or a Shangrila. Me, I can't imagine such a thing. Save once perhaps when I was a child some fifty years ago lying among the green grass of home, thinking the thoughts that only a child can think as I dreamed my dreams beneath the Southern sky, and imagined for all the world just what it might be like to be free...

How do you take the measure of a man? Some by prayer, some by action, some not at all. All as our lives burn away. While the gods quarrel among themselves we mortal men get by as best we can. Daily, I sit here and fill my timeline with naked pictures and crazy talk of other people. Anything to take my mind off this awful reality I call my own. In which my country inches closer to dictatorship and the preachers cheer the fools on. In which a man's life is nothing and money is everything. In which all the talk is of heaven while every day this earth more resembles the damned's own hell. This is certainly not the life I once dreamed of. It is certainly not the life I would want for anybody else either. But, hell, this is America, right?

I'm pretty much an outcast in my country. I can't stand Trump, the Republican Party is a disgrace and I refuse to wave the flag or Bible in anyone's face. If this makes one unwanted so be it. I have had it with hypocrites. The world's full of them.

This life is too damned crazy to take seriously. Just laugh at it all. Sooner or later it'll all roll by with us in it.





Views of Frederick. Last is Carroll Creek Park.

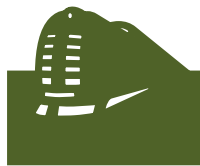
Reviews

Atul Gawande's *BEING MORTAL: MEDICINE AND WHAT MATTERS IN THE END*. This is a book about the end of life, about the limits imposed by our biology and by time, and it is a book about life itself. Here, Dr. Gawande ponders cases he's had during his career as a medic and the lives they've touched including his own, and he also includes questions of mortality important to him and his family, including his terminally ill father. While he admits that there is a place for assisted suicide, he notes that those places that have it as a legal option, including here in the United States, are sadly lacking in hospice care and other palliative remedies. When he spreads his father's ashes on the Ganges River in India, achieving eternal reunion for his father with all the souls that have come before, his take on a thorny problem confronting our world comes to an end and the reader is left pondering life itself, when to hold on to it and when to let go. Recommended for all readers, young and old, considering the mundane and the eternal in a mortal life.

William Shakespeare's *MACBETH*. This play, said to be based on actual events, is one of Shakespeare's finest and, whereby a Scottish lord murders the Scottish king for the right to royal rule, lies firmly in the Greek tradition whereby a life of pride leads to ruin as ordained by the gods. When Macbeth says, with the rightful king's forces closing in upon him, that this life is but "a tale of sound and fury told by an idiot signifying nothing", he

could well be echoing the thoughts of many of us in this plague year centuries after Shakespeare penned his tale for the stage. The end with Macduff bearing the head of Macbeth signals well the start of a new era. Recommended reading for all.

THE SHELLS ENCASING OUR NOTHINGNESS a new book by Will S. Mayo . From [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Samizdat...



...Letters of Comment on N'APA 248)

Good Life #14 - I like the combination of Venice with Frederick, MD. Hey Will, if you're in Frederick, have you thought about joining the Washington Science Fiction Association? www.wsfa.org. You're not too far away. I've read enough sf to know that things could be a lot weirder than they are here on Earth. I'm glad you've been able to achieve your dream of being a writer. I prefer to think of it as worlds of the imagination or an infinity of probability rather than pretend or make-believe.

Archive Midwinter - Jefferson, you are right that the cult of the individual has resulted in worse health care at a higher cost. I'm sorry you lost a friend to Covid. I'm a historian by training, but I'll have to skip that Truman book. Have you read the David McCullough massive biography of Truman? That might give you more depth.

Synergy - Fantastic cover. Easily magazine quality. I'm not sure what you mean by Ninth Fandom. I think the way fandom has responded to the

pandemic, by moving conventions online and trying, as much as we can, to replicate the in-person con experience, shows the power of fandom and our desire to share the things we love with our fellow fans. So does, as you mention fanac.org which is trying to preserve fanzines of the past. I think one of the weaknesses of current fandom is how we are divided into separate group - filkers, Trekers, Jedi (Star Wars fans), comic fans, Whovians, and literary fans. I'm not into board games much, but I think those who are would like the Bored Games story. To me, a lot of it read like telling, rather than showing. On your comment to me, I strongly disagree that the response to the pandemic has been well handled and with the utmost intelligence. I think Trump has mishandled the response, never developed a plan, and has been asserting that it would just go away. Even when he caught it, he claimed his quick recovery proves that the virus has been cured.

Master Mage - For the roster idea, can we take a survey and ask when people first joined N'APA? I'm glad you caught the pun in my zine's name. The scene from Practical Exercise looks interesting. Where was it published?

Notes from a Galaxy - I liked your meme asking how the number of people who got married could be an odd number. I suppose if someone got married, divorced (or got widowed), and remarried all in the same year the result would be an odd number.



...Happy Holidays

America claims to separate Church and State. In reality, this separation is frequently violated in the pledge of allegiance, national motto, oaths in court etc. under the claim of ceremonial deism, which basically means it is not unconstitutional if we do it so often that the mention of God becomes meaningless. Also, by

not naming the God, this usage is acceptable to Christians, Jews, and Muslims, the three largest religions in the country (although atheists still feel violated.)



An even more obvious violation is when the nation, including schools and governments celebrate Christmas. While some people claim Christmas is both a religious and secular holiday, this is even more transparent than ceremonial deism. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of the Christian savior/messiah/son of God/part of the Trinity that is God. It is in the holiday's very name. Yes, not all the ways the holiday is celebrated emphasize the religious nature, but the cause of the celebration is still religious. So it is a particularly egregious example of

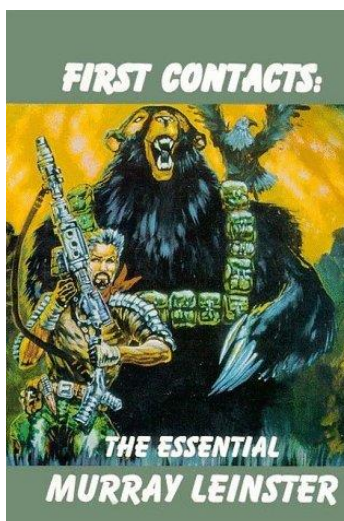
Christian privilege to claim that a Christian holiday is somehow a national secular holiday simply because so many people celebrate it.

I am fine with Christians celebrating the holiday in their homes, churches, and stores. But the constitutional provisions of separation of church and state should still apply; schools should not have students sing religious songs (read the lyrics to Silent Night) or put on performances of the Christmas story based on the Christian bible. And towns should not put up crèches of the baby Jesus, even if secularized with Santas and candy canes nearby. These could just as easily be put up on church lawns or other private property where they would not communicate the message that in this town everyone celebrates Christianity.

And many Christians feel their holiday is under attack at the mere suggestion that no everyone celebrates it. Many actually become offended when they hear people say 'happy holidays' instead of 'merry Christmas' or Starbucks puts out a red holiday cup instead of a Christmas cup. It seems odd that anyone could think Christmas is being snubbed when the entire month of December (and increasingly most of November) is an endless series of Christmas specials on television, Christmas music on the radio, and Christmas parties at school and work. A small acknowledgement that there are other holidays this time of year seems to be a step toward greater inclusion rather than a rejection of Christmas, since of course happy holidays includes Christmas.



So happy holidays to everyone whatever you celebrate!



...Mostly Forgotten Writers: Murray Leinster

Murray Leinster, real name William F. Jenkins (June 16, 1896 – June 8, 1975) was a writer in many genres, including science fiction. His first story appeared in a literary magazine in May 1916, while he was still a teenager. His first SF story, "The Runaway Skyscraper", did not appear until the February 22, 1919 *Argosy*. He wrote mysteries, romances, Westerns, jungle adventures, and horror as well as general mainstream. Except during the two world wars he supported himself almost solely through his writing and he was still being published into the 1960s, long after the pulp era had ended. He wrote 40 SF novels (some as under his real name) including tie-in novels for the television shows *The Time Tunnel* and *Land of the Giants*. He only won one Hugo, in 1956 for his novelette "Exploration Team" (although he did win a Retro Hugo for "First Contact").

Leinster got his start in the pulps and his writing always retained a directness

of style. Today he is probably best known for his short stories and his “Med Ship” books. “First Contact” was one of the earliest stories of an accidental first contact in space, as opposed to aliens landing on Earth. He invented the universal translator in that story. “A Logic Named Joe” is one of the earliest predictions of the Internet, complete with Google-like searches. He also was an early pioneer of the popular “alternate history/universe” subgenre with “Sideways in Time” in 1934. The Sideways award for best alternate history took its name from this story. The television show “The Time Tunnel” was loosely based (meaning the studio bought the rights and then changed almost everything) on his novel *Time Tunnel* and he found himself in the odd position of writing tie-in novels to a TV series based on his own novel.

Most of his work is long out of print. NESFA Press has a collection *First Contacts: The Essential Murray Leinster*, published in 1998, which has 24 stories. More recently, Eric Flint edited a collection of his *Med Ship* books, as well as story collections titled *Planets of Adventure* and *A Logic Named Joe*. These are published by BAEN Books and are still in print. Project Gutenberg has almost 50 early stories of his that are in the public domain (many of which are available in Amazon Kindle collections for a dollar or two).

...Review: *Feed* by Mira Grant (pen name of Seanan McGuire)

I had avoided reading *Feed* for years because it had zombies and I don't like horror, even though everyone told me it was really a SF novel. They were right. *Feed* is really a SF novel about medical cures gone wrong, creating a virus that animates corpses (and infects others) in a way that mirrors movie zombies. But it is also about journalism, devotion to the truth, and politics (which continue even after the end of our world). And this novel about bloggers covering a presidential campaign during a zombie pandemic feels very current.

The author has chosen to set the story several years after the initial pandemic outbreak. In *Feed*, most of the populace lives in fear with tons of security protocols and blood tests that still have most people afraid to go outside, gather in large groups, or do much of everything. Bloggers have become the most trusted news, due to the mainstream media originally not believing reports of zombies until long after the bloggers were telling the truth. *Feed* is about a team of bloggers – a newsie, an Irwin (named for Steve Irwin, people who go out looking for thrills) and a fiction-writer (who is also their techie) who win a chance to cover a presidential campaign only to discover a huge conspiracy and people dying all around.

Shaun and Georgia are great, realistic characters with a fabulous brother/sister relationship (basically each is the only person the other trusts) and a real dedication for telling the truth. The two joke around with each other but know the other has his/her back. They are especially close because their parents have treated them as props for the parents' own media careers. Buffy, their fiction writer who also serves as their techie, is realistically flawed. The only character I found unrealistic is the Senator running for president who seems too good to be true (and to be fair Georgia comments on that).

The three bloggers win the right to be embedded in Senator Ryman's presidential campaign right when things start to go wrong as zombies keep attacking the campaign, somehow breaking through security and the Senator's daughter is killed when a horse goes zombie. Georgia soon finds out that these are not accidents; a human is using the zombies to try to stop the Senator from becoming president. But who? So part of the book is actually a mystery with zombies as the murder weapon.

While the author has put a lot of thought and research into the idea of medically induced zombies, she also has fun with the idea. Her future society considers George Romero a savior of the human race because his movies showed people what to do with the zombies actually appeared. There are lots of zombie chase scenes and fights. A mystery. Politics. And interesting characters. What more can one want in a book?

Note: All opinions expressed in these articles are those of Samuel Lubell and not any employer, client, or organization.

