

# N'APN 224



The Avalon Wall (A small part of my game collection)  
From here arose Dungeons & Dragons and all later  
roleplaying games (though note the spice rack of  
miniatures; they played a part, too.)

# The Official Organ

## #224

**Next deadline: November 15, 2016**

N'APA rises again from the dead. Like the Vampire Nostradamus, it just keeps coming back.

The official collator is George Phillies [phillies@4liberty.net](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net)

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 within the restrictions stated below in the Rules and Regulations. If there are members interested in joining who have no computer access, special arrangements are 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](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net) 508 754 1859 and on facebook.

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. Publication has always been totally regular, though some readers question my interpretations of "totally" and "regular".

N'APA has been in existence since 1959 and recently transitioned from being a paper APA to an electronic one.

#

In this issue:

**Cover Art...**The Avalon Wall - Image courtesy George Phillies (look carefully for SF games)

**The Official Organ #223** George Phillies - 1 page

**Robot Octopus vs. Beatnicks from Mars #3** Jeff Barnes - 5 pages

**Notes from a Galaxy Far, Far Away** Lorien Rivendell - 4 pages

**Synergy #2** John Thiel - 7 pages

**The Murdered Master Mage #6** George Phillies - 4 pages

**Robot Octopus vs. Beatniks from Mars #4**

**For N'APA #224**

**Jeff Barnes**

**1907 Constitution Drive**

**Fairmont, WV 26554**

**[jjon31@yahoo.com](mailto:jjon31@yahoo.com)**

It's after Labor Day so, as far as I am concerned, it is officially Halloween season. So I offer the following verse in the spirit of the season:

**Zombie Doughboy**

We all know that Poppin' Fresh  
would never eat human flesh,  
but when he became undead  
he developed an appetite for bread. – Jeff Barnes

And here are a few limericks:

I made a monster from the dead,  
sewed him together with cheap thread.  
Next time I'll use sense  
and spare no expense,  
for he came home missing his head!

.....

In choosing a victim for ingestion,  
a werewolf showed no discretion.  
He swallowed my boss,  
but at a high cost.  
He got the worst case of indigestion!

.....

His first victim was toxemic  
and the next one was anemic.  
That night was so rough  
it was quite enough  
to make a vampire bulimic!

.....

A zombie bit into the brain  
of a person who was quite insane.  
He ate his fill  
but then became ill,  
suffering the effects of ptomaine!

### **Comments on N'APA 223:**

Lauren Clough: I love the cover!

John Thiel: Not only did my fiancée watch *The Call of Cthulhu* with me, but she also watched the documentary, *H.P. Lovecraft: Fear of the Unknown* and let me hang up my prints of Cthulhu and a Lovecraft portrait by artist Robert Parkinson, plus let me display my Cthulhu bank and bobblehead on the living room shelves. And she still plans on marrying me (September 24<sup>th</sup>). I guess we are soulmates!

I'm sure we are all friends now. I do remember you name, possibly from when I was in the N3F in the 1980s.

Kevin Trainor: Since you have been, as you said, running around like a headless chicken, you might want to venture up to Fruita, Colorado on the third weekend of May for the annual Mike the Headless Chicken Festival.

Lorien Rivendell: Aww, you didn't like *Minions*? I thought it was a hoot. But hey, at least we agree on *The Munsters*!

I need to read *Harvest Home*, I guess. My older sister (now deceased) read it back in the 1970s (she also read Tryon's *The Other*) and liked it. I did see the TV movie based on it years ago and thought it was wonderfully creepy. Aside from that, my only experience with Tryon is when he was an actor and starred in *I Married a Monster from Outer Space*, a nifty b-movie from 1958 that I highly recommend.

Jefferson Swycaffer: Yes, I grew up with *Famous Monsters of Filmland*! The photos scared me, too, but I loved them! I liked the term you used, "comfortably thrilling." That is now how I think of the monster movies I watched on TV as a kid. They scared me then but now they are like old friends!

George Phillies: Well, my fiancée is used to her brother's obsession with Godzilla, so I didn't have to twist her arm to get her to watch the Gamera movies with me. This past Friday night I got her to watch *Iron Sky* (a science fiction comedy about present-day Nazis invading Earth from a moon base they had established in 1945) and she got a kick out of that!



## NOTES FROM A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY #6

September 2016

For N'APA 224

Lorien Rivendell

(Lauren Clough)

[Lorienrivendell99@gmail.com](mailto:Lorienrivendell99@gmail.com)

### END OF SUMMER

Summer is slowly winding down here. We had a long, hot, dry summer, which is unusual here in New England. Some areas are in extreme drought. Usually we don't get the extremes of weather that other areas of the country have.

The summer was a good one, despite the sweltering heat. I spent a lot of my time reading by the river, in the shade of a tree. It was too hot to take long walks most days. I really should get back into that habit now that it's cooling off again.

I'm in two community bands, and only the first concert, all the way back in June, was canceled due to rain (we play outdoors, in parks). A couple of other concerts were iffy, due to the threat of storms, but nothing happened while we were playing. I attended a concert on a Friday evening in July, though, that started late due to technical difficulty and ended after one piece due to a sudden deluge.

A high point of my summer was getting to attend the taping of the National Public Radio show, "Wait, Wait...Don't Tell Me," at Tanglewood in Lenox, MA. I love the show and seeing it live was even better.

### Reviews (or Ramblings)

#### Movies

*Phenomenon* (1996): This movie starred John Travolta. I saw it once back in the 1990s and again recently on Netflix. It was okay, but nothing spectacular. The basic premise is an ordinary man suddenly gains extraordinary brain power.

*The Matrix* (1999): I somehow managed not to have seen this before now, so when I saw it on the new movies list on Amazon Prime, I jumped at the chance to watch it before it disappeared (I don't know if things come and go on Amazon Prime as fast as they sometimes do on Netflix). Just about everyone in the world loves this movie and



thinks it's fantastic. I think it's rather weird. It's about people who...run a virtual reality for humanity? I don't know what it's about, and maybe that's the charm to most people.

*Jurassic Park* (1993): I originally saw this in the theater, a short time after I read the book. This time around, it was on Netflix. I liked it better the first time around. I wanted to slap most of the characters this time around. "How stupid can you be? How greedy can you be? Stop! Just stop!"

*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1990): This is another movie I just never got around to seeing. It finally made it to Netflix (or was it Amazon Prime? I think this one was on Amazon Prime). It was okay, kind of cheesy, but I'm well outside the demographic.

*Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* (1999): Does no one find it creepy that a boy of 9 and a girl of 17 fall in love? Okay, so they don't actually fall in love yet. But...has anyone considered that maybe people age at different rates on different planets? That has to explain the strange attraction a few years later when they have their clandestine affair. And the ending of all the *Star Wars* films - the theme music that launches the credits - has spoiled me for all space movies. I expect all the *Star Trek* movies to end with the *Star Wars* theme and am disappointed when they don't. Anyway, I have this one on DVD, as all the original 6 *Star Wars* movies. I love them all, but this is the only one I have rewatched recently. I was checking out a new DVD player, which cost about \$30 (my first VHS player cost something like \$200!).

#### TV Shows (or, more accurately, Streaming Shows)

"True Blood" is on Amazon Prime. I've seen 2 or 3 episodes and find it okay. I'm giving it a chance. I gave the first book in the series a chance and lost interest after the first couple chapters. I am finding the series a bit better. We'll see if I keep watching for the duration.

"Between" is a show exclusive to Netflix, apparently. I've seen 1 of 12 available episodes. I'm not too sure about this show, but I may give it a chance after binge watching everything else. A mysterious disease inexplicably kills everyone over the age of 22. Okaaaay. How does the disease discriminate by age? I think the premise is pretty silly.

"Stranger Things" is another show on Netflix. There are 8 episodes so far and I have seen them all. I have heard Netflix has picked up another season, which makes me and all the show's other fans very happy. Just who is Eleven? Just what is the Upside Down? We want more!

“Star Trek” (TOS): Sorry, but I find the acting and everything else to be so bad it’s funny. Who knew it would become a 50-year, multi-movie, multiseries enterprise (see what I did there?)? It’s fun to see it predict the future: flip phones, electronic readers, etc.

“Lucifer”: This is my latest binge watch, and it’s on Hulu. I’m about 5 episodes into the series and I am hooked. Lucifer left Hell and lives on earth. He’s got no filter and blurts out whatever is on his mind. He’s very open about being the Devil, but nobody really believes him. He complicates things for Chloe, the lady detective he obsessively follows around. For a crime show, it has a pretty good slant.

### Comments

Cover Art: In case no one recognizes the models in the photo, they are infant CPR manikins. I teach CPR through my job and had taught a class just before the last ‘zine was due and plan to teach another tomorrow, if enough have signed up.

John Thiel, Synergy: I have been here and back a couple times myself. It sounds as if you were here before me. I was a member of N3F and N’APA in the 1990s. So...welcome...?

As I understand it, N’APA is distributed to its members and anyone else who wants to check it out, so *can* be available to everyone in N3F, but isn’t.

I don’t have copies of N’APA zines from the 1990s when I was active. Or maybe I do but they are buried in the piles of stuff I have. I really need to declutter around here, but I’m having too much fun reading and writing and binge watching Netflix. I do have copies of all the N’APA zines from the time I rejoined, and they are stored - for better or worse - in Google Drive.

Jeff Barnes, Robot Octopus v. Beatnicks from Mars: I think my education is lacking. I haven’t seen *Fantastic Planet* nor any of the “Gamera” movies. Someday. Maybe someday. I’ll watch for it on one of the streaming channels I subscribe to.

When I was 10, I *loved* “Batman.” Well, actually, I loved Robin, and I *had* to watch the show every afternoon after school. I haven’t seen the show recently, and I haven’t found it streaming anywhere so I can watch it.

Kevin Trainor, The Silver (State) Age: I would imagine Uber would offer a good part time - or even full time - income in Las Vegas. While I have never been there, I get the impression there are lots and lots of people there, mostly tourists.

Jefferson Swycaffer, Archive Midwinter: I can play movies on my Kindle Fire, but I haven't. I read books (of course) and magazines and play games. I have a Roku streaming device for watching Netflix and other platforms. I like that I can watch on a TV, but it's also convenient to be able to watch movies or stream music through smaller devices if I'm away from home.

Congrats on the story sale. From the brief excerpt, it sounds like a fun story.

George Phillies, The Murdered Master Mage: I managed to miss that Eclipse is 12 years old. She seems rather independent, so I figured she was 18 or 19 and in college. It does seem clear from the most recent excerpt that the kids in the Wells family are pre-teen to early teen. It looks like, from their dinnertime discussion, three girls and one boy, and all are different ages and in middle school, with at least one above grade level. And they all have some special powers they must hide for now. Am I reading it right? I'm guessing all this will come into play later on in the novel. I may be off base, but I'm expecting a battle royale.

# **SYNERGY #2**



**PRODUCED FOR N'APA'S 224<sup>TH</sup> MAILING**

**In this month of September**

**2016**

**With faith given to the ghods Roscoe and  
Ghu  
and not a total lack of cognizance of the  
numbered fandoms.**

Editor is John Thiel, with the ground mail address of 30 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904, and the email address of [kinethiel@comcast.net](mailto:kinethiel@comcast.net) (That's not where I'm really at, if I were AT Comcast I'd be asking for some of my money back.)

I will here provide a link also for my netzine Surprising Stories: <http://surprisingstories.thiels.us> will get you there any day of the week.

I used to like the way a dittograph would change color and thought maybe I'd like that better than a mimeograph, which is what I had. A mimeograph would change its color if you had a troll to help you change things around, but a ditto (also called a spirit duplicator) would change colors easily, all you needed to do was use a different color on the master. And no worry about the paper feed, it was all on the same master, but you would need one stencil per color with a mimeo and the paper feed might not be perfect, leaving you with a work of futurism to look at on your art, and Dada on your print. Nor would a mimeo deliver a solid color; colored-in areas had to be achieved with use of dots *a la* Finlay. I looked at photo-offset equipment with some wistfulness, too, all this was when I was a child, and then an adolescent. That equipment would print dang near anything, you might not even have some of what it would print. Now I have all these printing possibilities, but it is too late to satisfy my early dreams of better printing, for now I am a mature individual and then some and I can take it or leave it, and have not the rash

impulses of youth. The changeover to this last named form of printing was subtle; it was, “well, here’s this proto-printing equipment at long last, that’ll give me some good copy” rather than “I’ll print art that will look like Eichenberg and Dore!” Back when I was a mimeo faned, if I’d printed something like the cover I have on this issue of Synergy, I’d have been wanted to attend a convention, but everybody’s gotten ahead in today’s world. Could this be a philosophical principle?: As we acquire, we lose enthusiasm for what we acquire. –Well, I’ve got some printing processes now that will usher me into an afterlife, so I’m not complaining. What I’m saying is basically, when I was a child, I looked through a mimeoscope, darkly.

With good luck and a fine printer, people could now print out the perfect fanzine, one that would put **INSIDE**, **HARMONY**, **SF TIMES**, and many another giant to shame, and more, do the whole thing pretty cheaply, but now that we’ve got it, who is using it? It’s a shame to see great possibilities go to waste, but I’m not the man to correct it, just to point to it. The call has lapsed while the technology developed.

### Answering the Call

And now it is time to give a look at the other zines, to speak of their contents.

N’APA 223. Very nice Dada effect with the dolls on the cover. I don’t know what the Stepford Infants are (or was this an episode of Dr. Who?) though.

JEFF BARNES: Hm, what did I think when I saw Batman being televised? At first I didn’t think I’d like it, but I was told it had some funny effects—basically it was its camp that was being described. So I saw an episode, and it was indeed humorous. My interpretation of the show being televised was that it showed the rise of dark forces in America to be televising such a show, with more or less amoral doings and fantastic things. (I’d seen part of an enormously dull movie about Batman also, which was why I didn’t have much interest in the TV series at first.) Also it was a very active placement of fantasy on TV.

KEVIN TRAINOR: You certainly sound busy, and living in a very busy place, too, which I imagine Las Vegas is. Watch that \$50 a night. Lenny Bruce had his theoretical comedian call that city “Lost Wages”. No reason a comedian would be off target.

LAUREN CLOUGH: I imagine that breeze must have annoyed you by rustling the pages of your tablet as you worked. I never try for anything much outdoors, just sit and fan the insects away.

Around here we have had a heat wave that lasted so long and was so tropical that the global warming theorists were getting respect. Every once in awhile we have a tornado alert too, which I was at one time guaranteed would never happen in Indiana.

Techno-nightmare—one who’s paid up doesn’t have permission to operate? The computer system has its own way of being insulting.

JEFFERSON SWYCAFFER: Did your display of a watercolor at your high school give you a sense of existential claim on the place, the feeling that there had been a happening there that relates to development in your life?

I was surprised to see that you spelled cacaphony the way I had thought it was spelled, rather than with an o, with which my spell-check agrees, but I just don’t think it would be spelled with an o, being one of those words, what are they called, that have a sound in common with what they reference.

A road runner is a fantastic sight, I think. But they are humorous, as is an auk or an ostrich. It’s fun that there should be such an animal.

GEORGE PHILLIES: “The Murdered Master Mage” sounds like an overly pessimistic title; I’ve not been able to find an explanation of its meaning.

People using this inclusion to count the number of members In N’APA should remember that I also am a member.



I've been around a bit, done things, seen things. But I've always found out there were more things to do or see than I had time for. So I learned to look for the essence of things in what I did see. And I am not regretting having acquired this viewpoint, because it has given me an opportunity to look further into the mysteries of life, which of course could be asked of other people if they were available to ask. This same attitude led me, or at least revealed the way, to an interest in science fiction and fantasy, wherein other people who might share this outlook or just have it themselves were expressing their interpretations of life, their take on the things around them as it may also be said.

I have said much the same thing to people from time to time, and my observation was that it seemed to bore them. So I should say "I hope I'm not boring you", but I follow the adage "keep it short", and in doing so I have made it impossible to be boring, as duration is required for a real case of that to develop. Biographical material seems to have a tendency to be boring, unless a biographer puts



some real oomph in it, but I would somewhat demur when asked if I agreed to this. I found the biographies I read of Poe and George Washington to be quite interesting. But the biography I read of General Sherman did not hold any interest for me. I guess overall I'm wrong when I say that biographies probably bore people. It's just an idea I got when I read the one of the General. But if there is boredom attendant upon biographical material, I would refer back to my statement that no matter what it is that interests you, it's sure to trace to other people—you just can't do without them, bless 'em. I don't agree with Sartre's "Hell is other people", but rather Dostoyevsky's "Hell is being unable to love."

Und nun, singen wir? Now a poem of my own creation, fills space..and time.

### SCAN

An empty scan is the wind  
the trees seem static in the great array  
the rooftops peek mightily into the shared presence of the natural  
over hill and gone, the fire station  
shows a single eye, unpopulated.  
the noontime alert siren is this setting's only action  
*dramatis personae* sit and play cards.

This is coincidence, as just fifteen minutes ago the noontime alert siren started up. It's located a block away from my house.

It's sounded each Saturday at this time to keep in practice for a real alert. I still recall the time they failed to turn it on when a tornado took out some of the south end of town. Tornadoes are supposed to be what those sirens are about.

This verse has been displayed at A Writers Group, wherein are found Jay Werkheiser and Dave Creek, their aim is to bat things around and then send their manuscripts off to Analog or Asimov's. The group was started at the Dell Forums. There have been three other Dell-successful writers in the group. This poem had a lot of favorable compliments from the group, unlike the stories I tried out there, which drew a "might as well give up writing" from them, although they were nicer about "Stone Age Radio" and "The Genius"

than about the space opera I tried out. No, I don't think that space opera would have a chance with Planetary Stories either. It was based on a wargame I had at Planet SF, where I drew all aces in the first hand and then lost everything in the next round.

That brings to mind how most of the numerous SF sites I was at no longer exist, and when I google around I don't find much that would replace them. Things used to swing more; hard action now.



Signing off for the present.

## **The Murdered Master Mage #7**

### **for N'APA 224**

**George Phillies**

**48 Hancock Hill Drive**

**Worcester, MA 01609**

**phillies@4liberty.net**

NAPA 223 Comments:

Comments on 223: The source of the Stepford infants assembly line photograph can explain what they actually are. They certainly look scientific, though.

Official Organ: we were briefly up to six contributors, but alas for this issue we are back to four. I keep proofreading the official organ statement, and to my great dismay keep finding minor errors.

Synergy 1: Welcome back to John Thiel after a modest absence. As it happens, two of our original members from 1941 are still alive and with us. I have never heard before of the Fan-Pro Coordinating Committee or of Ionosphere. It shows there are many things we have done over the years that have faded into desuetude and need to be revived. I am attempting to do this as your President, but it is quite challenging. The support of all members will be greatly appreciated.

N'APA in general only goes to contributors. Every so often, I send an issue to all of our members for whom we have email addresses. This is by no means all of our members. I did send the recent Fandbook to all members via paper mail. That was a significant project, and that it required printing the thing, loading it carefully into envelopes, and determining the correct postage. The process was also not entirely inexpensive, since postage was \$1.70 an issue. I am aware of the challenges of printing paper copies in full color, but it happens that I own a Xerox Phaser 8560 printer which does near photographic full color printing at a rather minor cost. It is a wax printer. Approximately speaking it prints using melted crayons. In fact one of the specifications on the printer wax, a specification I have very certainly not tested personally, is printer wax must be edible in case some small child gets its hands and digestive system on it.

You have however made an excellent comment, which gives me an idea: if contributors here do not mind, I will add a list of N'APA subscribers who will get all the issues and will hopefully become interested in it.

I am sorry to read of the attitude of the N3F President those many years ago. In a large fan organization, everyone will not be interested in all activities, and will not want to have their mailbox cluttered with things they don't care about. My objective, quite truthfully, is to turn the N3F into a huge fan organization to which most fen belong. After all, a successful modern science fiction convention now has 70,000 or 120,000 attendees. The number of people who can attend such a convention is far smaller than the total number of fen. I realize the chances of my being successful in the subjective are less-than-perfect, but it seems to be a highly meritorious effort.

I have the recent electronic issues of N'APA, the ones I created. If you have any old issues, and would be willing to allow them to be scanned and put up in any of the archives that currently exist, I think that would be a good thing.

I have much enjoyed your artwork. There is a peculiar spatial distortion applied to it, but perhaps that was the original artist.

Robot Octopus: having not seen all of the Gamera movies, I shall ask why Gamera the Brave is not seen more often. Is this simply a misfortune, or are there good reasons for this deficiency. After all if you go to science fiction conventions, and attend the film program, you will with some frequency see Earth Versus Flying Saucers, and may see Rocky Jones Space Ranger, but you are less likely to see The Deadly Claw or Attack of the Saucer Men. There are reasons for this deficiency.

The Silver Age: On the bright side, you make money as a result of the income tax. I am in the reverse circumstance namely the income tax means that I must send the federal and state governments their money. As I am retired, and subsisting on my investments and my (microscopic) book royalties, I must actually send them all of the money personally, so I feel every bit of it when it leaves. Sorry to hear that the Fabulous Thunderbird Hotel disappeared. At least you had some good memories

of it. Best of luck driving for Uber. I am seeing the reverse problem every so often I fly to one place or another. The Paranoia Support Agency (TSA) will not allow cabs or SuperShuttles or the like to wait in front of airport buildings. You are supposed to telephone. The Drug Addiction Support Agency (DEA) has worked vigorously to destroy the distribution of pay telephones. I arrive in an airport and it is (several words that Eclipse's mom would not approve of my using in public, even though she would understand that I was in the Army and had the rank that is now called Sergeant) an interesting challenge to find a pay telephone so that I can call the SuperShuttle that I have reserved or the hotel arrangement that I have reserved.

Notes from a Galaxy Far Far Away: a truly funny bit of cover art. With respect to Pokemons, I am amused to note that someplace there is a farmer whose land was infested with these who was suing the creator of the Pokemon lunatic driving telephone application for trespassing. He claims that they are actually there, even though they are only visible through the telephone, people wandering across his property to catch them have become a destructive nuisance, and therefore he is entitled to major damages. The legal implications are remarkable. He is, however, far more plausible than the woman in Moscow who claimed to the Moscow police that she had been raped by a Pokemon.

New England has had a drought for over a year now. We are a good solid foot short of the rain we really need. With some luck one of these hurricanes instead of meandering up the coast will break up into a storm, roll inland a small distance, and park over central Massachusetts until we have had our foot of rain.

My experience with wireless keyboards, mice, and other such things has been entirely negative. I am however reminded of the time that I had the repair people here for the Internet cable (and other good things) system, the fellow had some gadget, did things to the gadget, and announced that I did not have working Internet. I endeavored to explain to him, politely because he was a nice person, that if you want to connect to the Internet you need to run a cable from the gadget he was holding to the plug on the wall that is connected to the ethernet cable that is connected to the router. He became confused. I am also reminded of my misfortunes with that

invention of Satan, Windows 10. If I need to reboot my computer, with shy do on occasion because I'm doing some somewhat demanding and exotic things, I need around 30 minutes. The (several more words) will not let me reboot unless I also update. With great regularity there is something it is unable to figure out how to update so it must then take updates out, including multiple restarts, and other bits of misery.

A mysterious disease: I am reminded of several novels in which the mysterious disease kills everyone who has attained the age of puberty. The outcome is unfortunate. Have I done any reading recently myself? I did read the most recent Destroyermen volume. It appeared to me that the series is getting slightly stale. On the other hand, I also read in electronic form David Weber's most recent volume of the Honor Harrington series. It was a little different in that the volume mostly filled in pieces to catch everything up to what I gather will be the final book of the series, which will appear in 2018. I have sitting waiting to be read the most recent Emberverse volume which looks somewhat interesting. I am supposed to read books for Bookwyrm. I may also read the recent Hugo winner, though I have read what was available on Amazon and realized that the last time I heard sentences this terrible was at the Readercon Bulwer-Lytton contest. If the rest of the book is as bad as that, I will do a review to save the rest of you from the misery of having to attempt to read it.

Eclipse is in fact 12 years old, and is still physically young enough that for much of the current book she passes herself as a boy without anyone being suspicious. Well, Aurora's twin brother eventually realizes that that is not what is happening, because he is really as bright as his sister is, just that his brightness appears in different ways.

Archive Midwinter: as it happens, I actually knew Gary Gygax when he was at board game designer, far before he created, with Dave Arneson, Dungeons and Dragons. Actually, as you can read in Jon Peterson's *Playing at the World*, I played a minor role at the front end. Gary and Dave invented modern fantasy role-playing games. I discovered them. I did a review of their game in *American Wargamer* and pointed out that what they had written was not a new set of rules for playing battles with toy miniatures, it was an entirely new branch

of the hobby to be lined up with miniatures and what we would now call hex-and-counter board wargames. My claim that it was a new branch of the hobby was not immediately well-received, but I was right.

A Darwin award thwarted. The excerpt from your story is peculiar.

## **The Girl Who Saved the World**

“Not your coach?” Abigail Wells asked. “Lafayette? Who is he?”

“Champion?” Brian asked.

“She,” Patrick corrected. “Morgana Lafayette. Works at Rogers Tech. In biochemistry. She showed up at the back door, right after Janie and Trisha were almost kidnapped.” Abigail looked perplexed. “Human female, gold-blond, blue eyes, not nearly as pretty as you are, dear.” Abigail broke into giggles, then nodded. Patrick was describing the persona Sunssword, but using her private persona name, the name Abigail had never heard.

“But why, Janie, didn’t you just say Sunssword?” Abigail asked.

“Sunssword doesn’t want her public persona to be tied to us,” Janie said, “She’s real careful where she coaches us. We never name her private persona. I thought you knew who she was, Mom. But Daddy knows Professor Lafayette. They both work at Rogers, so no one is surprised to see Professor Lafayette being my champion.”

“In particular,” Abigail said, “Sunssword never told me who else she was, and has that garb which doesn’t let you see most of her face. And you were polite to Sunssword, not telling me who her private persona was.” Sunssword, Abigail considered, had done the mental checks that Janie and Trisha had not been hurt when they were kidnapped. And now Sunssword was coaching the three Wells children on using their gifts.

“Besides being a persona,” Patrick said, “Morgana Lafayette is also one of the country’s leading biochemists. She mostly gave up trying to keep her public persona a secret. She’s a member of the Stars

Over Boston. Or was, anyhow. They had another stupid argument about theology. GR, opinions on the Speaker’s request?”

“I think we’d better,” Abigail said. “If it makes Janie safer.”

Trisha shrugged. “Sunssword is a nice person. We go flying sometimes. But I’ve only met her public persona. To me she’s Sunssword. She taught me cloud-diving. In fact, Janie, you knew she was Lafayette, but you never told me. That’s really gifttrue.”

“Incredible bragging rights,” Brian announced. “Grandmasters come here to learn City of Steel from Janie.”

“I think we agree,” Patrick said, “unless Janie has really strong objections.”

“Just so they don’t ask me about my other variants on that move.” She paused, thinking. “No, I can tell them about some variants. And champion,” Janie explained, “Means a government persona shows up to talk. You get a persona to watch your back. It’s exactly like a lawyer.”

“Yes, they would be asking Janie about City of Steel, wouldn’t they,” Patrick said. “Having said that, these people are my guests in this house, and you will treat them politely.” He stared at his son. Brian nodded vigorously. “Janie, I’ll phone Morgana. It’s more polite.”

A few minutes later, there came a knock at the back door. “Lafayette is here!” The speaker’s voice was a rich soprano. “You called, Professor Wells?”

Patrick stepped through the vestibule and opened the door. “I did indeed, Morgana.” Patrick stood aside to admit the tall young woman. She wore a baggy royal-blue sweater and loose blue jeans, but seemed unbothered by the blinding snow, gale-force winds, and below-zero weather. Nor had snow lodged in her hair or clothing. Patrick turned to his family. “I believe you all know Professor Morgana Lafayette, under one name or another.”

Morgana took Patrick’s hand, just for a moment. “I’m not in garb, so Morgana is good.” She glanced at Patrick’s children as she swept around the table. “Have you three been staying out of trouble?” For

Abigail Wells she had a firm hug. "It's been way too long. We should really get together to talk. Soon. I can always be free at lunch." Patrick decided not to notice his twin children looking furtively at each other, let alone his older daughter staring at the ceiling.

"There's more Indian pudding if you'd like some," Trisha announced.

"You have to ask? Please? I know your mom's cooking. Or is it yours? However, we have almost no time," Morgana said. "I know it's not polite, but, Janie, please give me a fast update mind-to-mind of what they all know." The two women stared at each other.

"That was just what you've all heard," Morgana said. "GR, have you folks ever had a champion before? It's like having an attorney. What mostly matters is that at the end Krystal North wants mentalic contact with Janie, to confirm that what Janie said was true. That's, well, it's not dangerous, but while that was going on Janie would be relatively open to someone trying to tamper with her mind. I'm here to stop that. Also, Krystal is well behaved, but sometimes you find persona who try to shout or bludgeon people into submission. Worse, our friends across the waters have some very different opinions about good manners. Some idiot from over there might try to kidnap Janie and interrogate her about her hypothetical contacts with the Bearer. That's *forcibly* interrogate. I'm very definitely here to stop that."

"What is the issue?" Patrick asked. "Janie, you didn't have time to tell us everything."

"They think I know who has the Namestone," Janie answered. "Or I have the clue! The clue tells them who has the Namestone. It's all that City of Steel move. The one I was going to spring at the Nationals. But Eclipse used it first!" Once again a delicate fist pounded on the breakfast room table. "Speaker Ming, when I was speaking to him before you heard him, said 'If your parents will consent to having you questioned by the American Persona League, we can say that you have been questioned, everything that could be learned from you has been learned, and therefore you should be left alone.'"

"Did you ever tell anyone about the move?" Morgana asked. "That's what they want to know."

"I never used it in a match," Janie said. "I was saving it for National. Now Eclipse used it! Well, I have friends my age who come over to play Steel. We try all sorts of moves, but we don't record."

"Actually, these days it's mostly one friend," Abigail said. "Joe Cartwright is a very polite young man, well, boy, he being about your age, Janie. You said he was a good player."

"He got a lot better," Janie said. "And he's barely one year older than me." She turned at her brother. "Don't say it, Brian." Her tone of voice held a touch of steel.

"I wasn't going to say he's your boyfriend," Brian rushed out. "Honest! You think I want you and Trisha to kill me, just because I deserve it? Besides, he's not. Your boyfriend, I mean. And I wasn't going to say the other thing you told me, either. Or what Trisha told me."

"Brian!" Janie and Trisha did not quite shout at their brother.

"Oops!" Brian managed.

"And this would be, Brian Arthur?" Patrick asked.

"Joe asked me not to bring it up, Dad," Janie said. "Because it didn't matter, and I knew that you knew it already. He's the guy who saved Trisha and me. Except I thought you and mom and Brian and Trisha knew. Or did you only meet Joe's mom?"

"He's the young man who saved you? He is an extremely polite, well-brought-up boy. It's very nice of you, Janie, to reward him by playing City of Steel," Abigail said. Especially, she thought, very nice by comparison with some of the other ways young girls sometimes thank young men who risked their lives to save a young lady.

"And you, Trisha?" Abigail asked.

Trisha blushed deeply. "Umm, Joe and I, we went cloud-diving a couple of times. Cloud-diving! Nothing else!"