

NAPA 272

September 2024



The Official Organ

#272

Next deadline: November 15, 2024

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Procedure: Please Read:

Submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer, abontides@gmail.com

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

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For more art by Jose Sanchez, go to www.cosmofunnel.com/user/50125

INTERMISSION #145

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, för EAPA, N'APA and some non-APAn apes. Follow newstweets from @SFJournalen (updates very slow now, alas). "Spavilafk ikav Sve" isn't a typo (see this # to find out why) but Typo Brahe observed the stras! Late July 2024.

Editorially: Prosecutor Vs Felon + First Sf Author!

Much have happened since last! I had to re-edit this editorial when some juvenile idiot tried to shoot Mr D Trump. And now I have to re-write it as US President Biden drops out of the US presidential election. On top of that, while researching something else, I stumbled upon Sweden's possibly *first sf author*. Rush to the History Corner for more on this sensation and what "Spavilafk ikav Sve" means!

I've been clear about Donald Trump: I never liked him. He's an unbalanced narcissist, full of "alternate facts" (lies), a criminal and a danger to international stability and security. Apeasing that mass-mudering international criminal Putin won't work. And he can't be serious about leaving NATO! This defence pact has been a pillar of US foreign policy for 3/4 of a century. His many legal battles reveals he has no moral compass. And anyone who isn't a diehard redneck drunk on moonshine knows that Trump was the very centre of the January 6 shameful attack on the Congress. He stood there rallying the troops just before it happened.

But as a presidential candidate and also former president he was under the protection of the US Secret Service - that goofed badly! Always check the roofs, dammit! The rally attendees even saw the gunman *in advance* climbing the roof. Was the Secret Service on a coffee break? They reacted only as bullets began to fly and Trump was ushered away waving his fist. But no matter what, politics shall be decided *by debate and ballot boxes - not bullets*.

I hope the US constitution's system of "checks and balances" will find ways to mitigate Mr Trump's excesses if needed. An assassination attempt should get him sympathy votes. Joe Biden did well stepping down. Over all, he's done some good (far from "the worst president in US history" as one orange-haired moron bellows). I thought Biden seemed rather OK until maybe half a year ago. But then he began mumbling through debates and speeches worse than ever, forgot and mixed up things and called president Zelensky...Putin!

Kamala Harris has made a good start, but last I saw Trump still leads in the polls, though margin is shrinking. Are US voters ready for a female president? Ms Harris has three months to pile, knead, slice and fry Trump (I hear she likes cooking). I hope Trump loses, not mainly because this anti-Washington can never tell the truth but he could become very bad for Ukraine and good for Putin. That must not happen! I fear coming autumn's presidential race may become very nasty. Polarisation widens. To me it seems that as the woke crowd gets more aggressive, more people are thrust towards people like Trump. It's the same in Sweden: the more "correctness" the PC crowd cries for, the better the Sweden Democrats (narrow-minded dunces) do in the polls.

A Trump win would not only mean trouble for both the US and Ukraine, but for *all* of us. Putin can't be allowed to get anything out of his aggression. Else he'll just re-arm and in the near future test NATO's article 5 and China will be encouraged to implement the final solution to the Taiwanese question. Iranian ayatollahs and Kim Jong Un, the fat little rocket man, will continue to build rockets and nuclear weapons. As I understand it, 70% of the US population supports US aid to Ukraine, incl a majority of the republicans. Support to Ukraine should be a *major* issue in the election race! If you're contemplating which candidate promises most for your purse, remember that if Ukraine lose *you'll really see a economic disaster*.

The European economy is about a dozen times bigger than Russia's, so we can pick up any slack Trump leaves, but it'll make the path to kicking Putin's ass longer and bloodier. For every day it looks more likely that the war will end with a Russian collapse. The Rouble is picking up inflation as the cost of war increases and no one wants to trade in rouble.. Half a million mostly poor farmboys from Russia's Eastern parts are dead or seriously wounded thanks to the Kremlin's stupid metwave tactics. A million of the most productive young men have fled the country. Russia's central bank is raising

interest rates and emergency funds are emptied. Russia's corrupt, incompetent army is running out of armour, out of rusty tanks from the Stalin era in Siberian outdoor storage. Most troops along the Finnish border have been regrouped to the war. Ukrainian drones have hit 50% of Russia's oil refineries and its discussed how to stop Putin's "shadow fleet" of old rusty tankers (being an environmental hazard). Putin can anyway only sell oil to China and India at a discount. Many Russian towns have been flooded as funds for maintaining dams had been embezzled. Russian officers replace ballistic plates in body armor with wood and sell the stolen goods on Ebay. Russian oligarchs are only held back by fear, fear of poisoned tea or falling out a window (as I wrote I hear that the director of the Moscow stock exchange has been found drowned). It's a mess and it will get worse.

A dictator seems secure in his position until the very moment he isn't. Oligarchs may gather strength and dare a palace coup. There may be a military uprising (Prigozhin came a long way) or a popular one. Ukraine has only to keep fending off invaders, make them pay a high prize and wait. Legendary military analyst Carl von Clausewitz stated that the purpose of fighting is to *target the enemy's will to fight*. That's what Ukraine is doing. And we must and will help them with it! For all our sake.

NATO Goes to Space

As mentioned before, the defence alliance NATO (with Sweden and Finland as new members) as a part of its 75th anniversary announced it planned a "graphic novel" about NATO in the year 2099, and asked for ideas towards it. I wrote a piece and was one of ten selected contributors (receiving €500 for the trouble!). NATO 2099 has now been published. Go to:

<https://www.ndc.nato.int/nato2099/read.php> See the cover and a page from it below. I also have a PDF you can get if you just ask me (compressed a bit so resolution isn't the best). In this story NATO establish itself in space, with bases on the Moon and everything. I remember my ideas covered



Ryska rymdspioner hot mot svensk satellitbas

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Nato pekar ut den svenska rymdbasen Esrange som en avgörande förmåga. Men intresset från militäralliansen gör att hotbilden växer.

Russian spies may find this space dish at Esrange, Lapland. Satellites RSN!

space too, but one thing they didn't use was my idea to let Earth be hit by comet fragments, and letting NATO be helping with evacuations, rescue operations etc from the comet impact. I thought that it would be close to the effects of war, but wouldn't involve people killing each other - which I have some reservations against - but something NATO could do well.

Whatever you think, there's no doubt that NATO today has an important role. NATO states give the Ukrainians the tools to repel and later beat the Russians -

something we must continue with. *We cannot let Putin benefit from his senseless, braindead, criminal war!* NATO is eg also the factor that keeps Putin away from the Baltic states.

But there's more about NATO and space. As *Intermission* has mentioned, the Swedish Space Corporation has built capacity for launching satellites from its space research base Esrange in Northern Lapland (it now looks like the first satellites from there, the first from European ground excluding Russia, will come in 2025). The papers write that Esrange now is seen as a strategically valuable asset for NATO. The only other European space base with satellite capacity is in French Guiana, in South America. That's fine for traditional satellites, but launch sites towards the poles are



advantageous for satellites in polar orbits, needed for spy and surveillance satellites that have to "sweep" the surface of the planet North to South as Earth rotates.

But the fear is...Russian spies! Dagens Nyheter wrote July 5, "*Russian space spies a threat to Swedish satellite base*"! I don't doubt Putin's guys would be interested to know what happens there in reindeer country. We'd better beware. There is even suspicions about Russian saboteurs! There have been unexplained de-railings on the important iron ore railway to Narvik. There's no proof that Russians are behind it, but it's a possibility. Russian agents have otherwise been caught around Europe doing or preparing arsons, assassinations, organising fake demonstrations, bribing and much more. They planned to murder the boss of Rheinmetall, big weapons producer, there are fires in weapon's factories and even fire in an IKEA warehouse in Lithuania. They have a hand in many incidents.

From Russia with glove, it seems.

Sweden...borg!

Researching this article I found a hitherto possibly "unknown" early sf story by Swedenborg's friend Christopher Polhem - but that's for the History Corner later.

Last year I wrote about a visit to the Swedenborgians. During the Stockholm Culture Night (20th April) the Swedenborg Forum & Library (51 Oland Street) this year once again held open house with lectures and films. So I went there. Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was a scientist and mysticist who designed a "Machine that Flies in the Weather", constructed different machines, thought he had mental contact with beings on other planets and believed he knew true Christianity - upon which he founded his own New Church. He wrote a lot about his visions - more than 20 000 pages it's claimed.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_Swedenborg

I'm not into religion or mysticism, but Swedenborg seems like an interesting person. And it was an interesting evening. Swedenborg is actually more known outside Sweden. There are about 200 Swedenborgians around their Stockholm HQ. The Swedenborgian Church of North America in Massachussetts has more than 2000

members, and there are other Swedenborgian groups around the world, though they aren't much of missionaries. Swedenborgians are more of introverts.

BTW, the name Swedenborg has nothing to do with the country of Sweden. The country word "Sweden" is connected to one of the original "tribes" forming the nation, known as the "Suiones", or "SVEar" in Swedish. "Sweden" in the name "Swedenborg" is a word referring to burning the undergrowth of a forest for later cultivation, in Swedish called "SVEdjebruk". The two words are false cousins. "Borg" just means castle. Or Wimbledon champion.

Beside being a mystic talking to aliens (even intelligent people may have hallucinations and weird ideas) he was a scientists, eg editor of Sweden's first scientific journal, *Daedalus Hyperboreus* 1716-18 and influenced many during and after his lifetime, among them William Blake, CJL Almqvist, August Strindberg, Charles Baudelaire, Honoré de Balzac, William Butler Yeats and Carl Jung. Read more on the scientist Swedenborg:

<https://swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/scientific-writings> or



Swedenborgian Susanna Åkerman lectures about her Great Master.



Swedenborg notes, with a drawing of his "flying machine". The elliptical wing was aero-dynamically on the right track and he understood that centre of gravity must be low. But it would take a couple of centuries of tests and finding a light enough power source for real flying.

<https://swedenborg-philosophy.org/the-new-philosophy/current-issue/>

There you may find the Swedenborgian journal *The New Philosophy*. There are many documentaries about Swedenborg on Youtube. Try:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UR-ik9JQT0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThXhj2oclQU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEa0e8AcS78>

In Swedenborg's *Other Planets* (translated from Latin, the language he used for his notes) he tells about life on the planets of the Solar system which he claims to have had spiritual contacts with. He wrote it around 1758 when he visited England (where he met the famous astronomer Edmond Halley). You can download the English translation for free here: https://swedenborg.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NCE_OtherPlanets.pdf

But as it is quite tedious reading, I'll make some summaries:

The climate of *Mercury* isn't too hot due to a thick atmosphere. The spirits of its people "*roam throughout the universe...Swedenborg's Mercurians have...a custom of not giving direct answers to questions...a distaste for verbal speech /and they are/ completely uninterested in earthly and bodily things*". Mercurians have a "*wealth of knowledge*". Venusians on the other



Audience at the Swedenborg Forum & Library.

hand, on the side facing Earth, are "*are savage and almost feral /and/ stupid, with no interest in heaven or eternal life*". But Venusians on the side that faces away from Earth are "*gentle and humane*". One wonders how Swedenborg thought one side of Venus could constantly face Earth, like the Moon? (But he was right in that Venus rotates extremely slow.) Jupiter is also populated: "*inhabitants of Jupiter seem somewhat apelike...They do not walk upright like the inhabitants of our planet...but help themselves along with their hands*". (An effect of more gravity? Was Swedenborg thinking of that?) Beings from Saturn are "*upright and modest...and profoundly modest in their worship*". Our Moon is of course inhabited, with people like small boys, and they make "*booming sounds exactly like the thunder that comes from the clouds after lightning.....belching the sound out of their abdomens gave it this thunderous quality...this practice arose out of the fact that the inhabitants of the Moon do not speak from their lungs like the inhabitants of other planets, but from the abdomen and therefore from some air that is stored there*".

Those were the planets known at that time (Uranus was discovered 1781 and Neptune in 1846). In his contacts with the spirits of these people, Swedenborg learns there are inhabited planets around other stars too. Cosmos is teeming with life! From

<https://swedenborg.com/swedenborg-and-the-plurality-of-worlds-astrotheology-in-the-eighteenth-century-part-1/> we learn:

There was also a lively extraterrestrial life debate in Swedenborg's native country. Two dissertations were defended in the 1740s in Uppsala with the astronomy professor Anders Celsius chairing the proceedings, of which one refuted the idea of a habitable moon, while the other defended the idea of the plurality of worlds. Of more relevance for Swedenborg was a short story about traveling to the moon written by the inventor Christopher Polhem with whom Swedenborg collaborated closely for a couple of years. Polhem's Nyia tiender uthur månan (News from the moon) from



An organ Swedenborg built and composed music on..



Swedenborg's gazebo.

the 1710s tells about a Sami who travels to the moon (Dunér 2013). A Sami had been engaged by some learned men in Uppsala to use wings to fly in the air, but after several unsuccessful flight attempts, another Sami, who was a magician, suggested another way of traveling to the moon. With the help of his magic drum, he could travel there. After spending seven months on the moon, while learning the language of the Lunarians, he returned to earth and told about everything he had seen and heard on the moon.

Swedenborg never talks about advanced science and technology among the aliens, because it was irrelevant. He's only interested in spiritual matters. His aliens all have a relationship with a God, basically the Christian God.

Up to the age of 44 Swedenborg was a run of the mill scientist and inventor. He wrote to his brother describing inventing (on paper, some were never built):

- A flying machine ("a machine, with whose aid a man could rise into the air and travel aloft")
- A submarine ("a kind of boat in which one could travel underwater wherever one wanted")
- A machine gun ("a gun machine that will shoot ten or eleven thousand shots an hour")
- A system of sluices that could be used to transport boats across land
- Several types of water pumps (which he would later put into use when he worked for Sweden's Board of Mines)
- A universal musical instrument ("by the aid of which the most unskilled in music can play all kinds of harmonies that are found in the score")

The last could refer to the organ with 45 pipes that he later built.

But enough about rationality. In 1743 he had an episode when he fell into unconsciousness and began having the mental visions. Many such episodes followed and he spent the last 28 years of his life having visions och contact with other beings in the solr system Some of his time was spent in his gazebo. which he had built in his garden in Stockholms southern district, on Horns Street. In there he could play the organ, he had a library where he often took out a book to read. His Gazebo has been restored and moved to the Skansen outdoor museum, where it is today. He even sometimes composed music on the organ he had constructed himself. Here's an example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5BCG5bVuv8>

Finncon + Critique of Pure Conning

Early July, 5-7, I took the ferry over to Finncon as usual. Not much to report. Things were about the same as usual. Maybe 1 000 mostly Finns (8 Swedes present) gathered at the Jyväskylä university. Most program was in Finnish. I went to just four program items (GoH interview, Fin-Swe panel, fancy dresses, film) and spent most time walking along the book tables - very little in English this year - or placing myself somewhere outside in the sun, reading and sipping taxfree bheer from the ferry. Other bheer outlets are too expensive for me! I'll present some photos with captions so you get a gist of Finncon 2024, but else I take the time to talk about *cons in general*.

Sf cons have become more boring and stiff in later years. So time for some critique of how the conventions, that used to be fun and lively and good,

have become a drag. This is about *all* sf cons (Finncon too, but also eg Eurocon in Uppsala last year). Someone claimed that cons way back were like "badly organised parties"...wrong! They were *well* organised parties, because they *were* parties! Today cons are becoming bureaucratic hellholes.

I'll present the critique in separate points points.

Bureaucracy has taken over! The Secret Bureaucrats of Fandom even have their own con-running (con-destroying?) cons, to invent new ways to disappoint the jolly fan. They invent "Codes of



GoH interview with Ursula Vernon (aka T Kingfisher),



Swedish is an official language of Finland, so there were three program items in Swedish. Here two Finland-Swedes discussing books. About 10 in the audience.

Conduct" when common sense and ordinary social rules is all we need. These "CoCs" are biased and then misused. A US fan was kicked out from a Worldcon because he successfully chaired a panel (what it boiled down to). Cons

today have a whole cadre of yellow vests walking around, patting their beloved walkie-talkies, thinking they are important. "Security" staff has so little to do that they out of boredom will harass folks for the tiniest reasons, just to motivate their existence.

Apropos beaucracy, GRR Martin was turned away from the program of coming Scottish worldcon. The reason: he hadn't logged into and used the con's program site! Instead he had called and mailed them and said he was available, which was no good. I understand him: I tried their site program forms and they weren't exactly streamlined.



Some of the book tables. Few books in English, alas. Few second hand books.

No fannish program! Cons used to have a fan room, with fanzines, fan-history walls, typewriters (in the old days) for writing fanzines, a program of games, fandom memories, quizzes, etc. You may find it on a Worldcon today (but scaled down a lot!) but on ordinary cons: no. The fannish side of fandom is forgotten. And the reson may be...

A substantial lack of humor! Sf is a serious literatur, most of the time, so we need things to ease up when it comes to conventions. Fun stories from the annals of fandom. Jokes. Puns. Parodies. "Crazy" things. Things that make you laugh have always been important in fandom. Remember that people who lack humour are dangerous. Joking is a sign of health, though you today run the risk of being silenced and cancelled if you're not careful! Jokes must be approved by the central committ  . Don't challenge any taboos in jokes! Damn you if you make a joke happening to imply something about ethnicity, sex, religion, etc. The bureacrats running things have no humor (conclusion: they are dangerous). John Cleese has noted that starting Monty Python would impossible today.

The Polically Correct routine... Oh my, the Scottish con home page asked people if they wanted to be adressed Mr, Ms or "They" - the last wasn't for a travel group. Why not let sexual orientation be a private matter, like most people would like it to be? Some cons have destroyed banquets by letting the meal be vegetarian. It was a real scandal when someone from the main stage of the 2019 Worldcon claimed John W Campbell was a "bloody fascist" (the man who created modern skiffy was staunchly anti-Hitler, anti-



The entrance to Finncon 2024.



A Batman fan-made film was shown. Technically very good, and the acting was OK. but the manu-script lacked something. A teaser <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knR-dJY95WA>

Mussolini etc). It was a flagrant breach of their "Code of Conduct" which banned such outbreaks. For some reason (a virus causing partial blindness perhaps?) this stupidity wasn't acted upon. More: The Scottish con gives half price for membership to "historically underrepresented groups" but refuse to say how on Earth this defined. It's seems as just a way to arbitrarily give perks to favourite ethnic and "minority" groups, and let the rest of the attendees pay for it.

Oh no, not another panel! Con program today lack imagination. The concom produces a number of toipics - the PC ones have priority, of course - and then assigns it to a...panel, over and over and over again. 80% of con programs today are boring panels. In them we find uninteresting (many of them) people who think they are so interesting. So they talk and talk and talk, afraid to lose the word if they stop. The tempo is slow and all the panels soon merge into a big constant humming. Can't you find other things to fill the program with? For my part I usually find a simple lecture by *one person* best, one who has worked with/studied the topic. Works better than mumbling panels. Cons don't have film shows any more - but try to find intersting films to show! There are thousands on Youtube, I know there are lots of films among amateur film makers. Have live demonstrations of robots, unusual science phenomenon, AI, etc. And of course, don't forget fandom and have a decent fan program!

Academic, whackademic... Yeah, some cons have an "academic" program. The universities are available, so why can't "academic" stuff stay there? We have in later years seen increasing problems with degrading higher education. The academy is becoming superficial, non-knowledge oriented, fooling around with this shit called "post-modernism", keen of cancel culture. Universities are rotting and become much less relevant. Why give smart asses another forum, like sf cons, to feel important in, to flash around with impressive sounding, empty merits?



The Finncon masqueraders lining up.



A strange face catching the sinking sun on the ferry back. Bheer was enjoyed.

Where's the bar? Earlier the cons would put a lot emphasis on having a decent and not too expensive bar. The concom would even negotiate the bheer price, so it was a little bit lower for the con attendees. Not so anymore. The last cons I've been to have at most had "cafés", though with beer rights. However, the cafés have often been more than half empty, the atmosphere silent and stiff and bheer prices of 7 euros per half litre or pint keep fans away. Cons need a better blog policy. Bheer and science fiction go together. Ask Poul Anderson who founded *Ølförbundet* with the slogan *Ned med øled!* (Down with the bheer, in Danish.)

Fandom isn't a teetotaler body. Since sf is a literature of breaking boundaries and playing with new ideas, it is by its nature anti-authoritarian. Fans don't like politicians telling them what they can and can't do. *Fandom is anti-totlitarian and anti-teetolitarian.*

History Corner

Scientist and inventor Christopher Polhem (1661-1751) was very well-known in his own time. His machines for instance made huge improvements to the Falun copper mine: hoists, water pumps, water wheels and other ingenious contraptions. He thought out machine guns and submarines. Polhem founded the first engineering school, *Laboratorium mechanicum* in Stockholm in 1697, which later became today's Royal Technical Institute. He built the Stockholm sluice connecting the Baltic Sea with Lake Mälaren. He became head of the Science Academy, created a "Mechanical Alphabet", built a watermill-powered factory that produced clocks and locks and did lots other things. His portrait landed on the SEK500 bill and he has been called "Sweden's Archimedes" as well as "The father of Swedish Mechanics". Polhem is

a major figure!

But now it's quite possible that

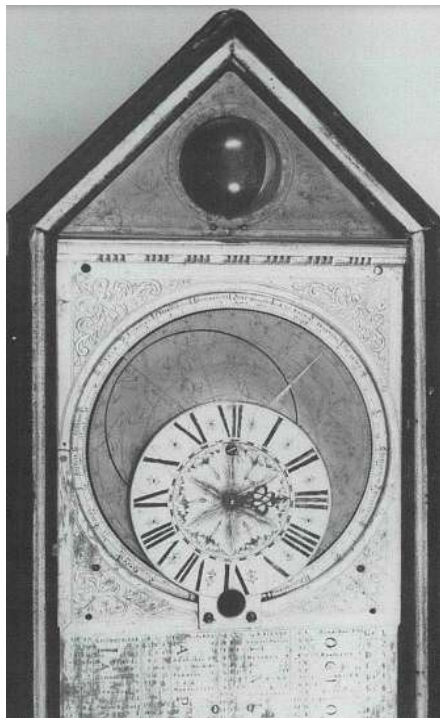
Polhem also was Sweden's first science fiction author!



An entry of Polhem's mechanical alphabet, dealing with how every type of motion can be transformed to another type.

I hadn't bumped into the 1710 "News from the Moon" story before. It's not in Bertil Falk's mighty history work *Faktasin*, which he spent lots of time researching (which the halfwits of the Eurocon Grand Master award were ignorant of). In the published collected papers of Polhem, vol 5, there is the space travel tale *Nyia tiender uthur månan* ("News from the Moon"). A Sami - the reindeer herding people in the North - uses a magic drum to go to the Moon and reports back to some wise men. The story centres on something as interesting and odd as...linguistics!

In master Falk's Magnus Opus *Faktasin* we see other candidates of the first Swedish sf writer. One Olof Rydbeck murdered historical science in his *Atlantica* (1677) where he tried to "prove" that Sweden was behind



Clocks was an early speciality of Polhem. Here's an astronomical clock he built in Uppsala.

Greek mythology, the original Atlantis and other silly stuff. Some will call it sf, but it was more "fake news". Around 1700 one Olof Verelius wrote the utopian *Trip to the world city*, but it was in Latin and was probably a rip-off from an earlier Spanish piece. About the same time one Gunno Dahlstierna wrote a long, fantastic...poem. We want prose, like in *Astronomia* by Anders "Thermometer" Celsius, but from later (1735) and already covered in *Intermission* (in Feb 2013). The famous Olof von



Christopher Polhem on the 500 krona bill.

Dalin had several pieces oozing of the fantastic in his magazine *The Swedish Argus* 1732-34. Both being much later, as well as Johan Krooks *Thoughts About Earth's Creation* 1741 and CM Bellman satirical *The Moon*, 1760 (which your editor transcribed and sent to Projekt Runeberg <https://runeberg.org/manan/>). So Polhem may have been first writing original sf prose in Swedish.

Unfortunately I can't find Polhem's Moon story on the net, but there're snippets and lots of info in professor Göran Rydén's essay anthology *Sweden in the Eighteenth-Century World - Provincial Cosmopolitans* (2013) which I found as a PDF. In the essay "The Language of Cosmos: The Cosmopolitan Endeavour of Universal Languages" by David Dunér, also professor, we read:

There are forests, lakes and plains on the Moon, and animals, birds, fish and people. There is a language, totally perfect and crystal clear. And the mechanic Christopher Polhem (1661–1751) knows its grammar. In the manuscript Nyia tiender uthur månan ('New tidings from the Moon'), which could have been written at the middle of the 1710s at the earliest, Polhem, the Swedish inventor known for his mining machines and his pre-industrial activities, tells of a Saami with magical knowledge who travels to the Moon, and how he talks to the Moon inhabitants and learns their language.

A Sami going to the Moon! The magic drum could perhaps be interpreted as invoking some sort of teleportation. Polhem wrote what's perhaps the first sf prose in Swedish, and speculating about something as odd and interesting as linguistics:

The strange thing about the language on the Moon is that it is completely regular and easy to learn. We do not have to use an infinite number of words; instead, each word in the lunar language contains entire sentences and phrases in concentrated form. Nor are we forced to plod through irregular and complicated grammar, as in Latin. This language can be learnt by anyone, irrespective of origin, and whether people come from the Moon, the Earth or the most far-flung environs of the Universe. It is a universal language, the language of the Universe, the Cosmos, a truly cosmopolitan language that can be understood by all rational beings, independent of culture and nationality.

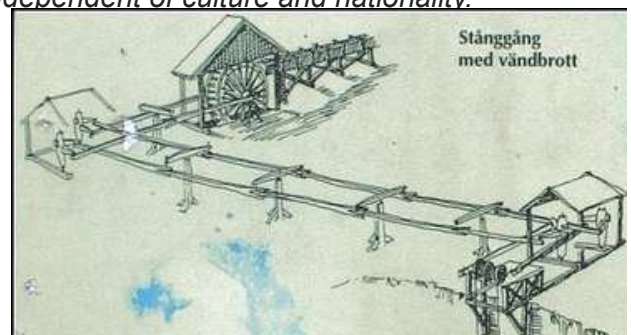
Polhem writes:

I have investigated and observed the strange figures and shapes of the planets using telescopes. The Moon, which is the closest and apparently largest celestial body, has been particularly scrutinised and been seen to be covered by forests, lakes and plains. As it has forests and lakes, Polhem further reasons, there must also be animals, birds and fish. And as there are plains, there must be people, as no plains can exist without people having cleared the forests...A Saami, who had been given the task thanks to his knowledge of magic, tied his magic drum on his back, flung himself flat on the ground and asked that no one touch him until he rose again (Figure 3.1). Some hours passed.

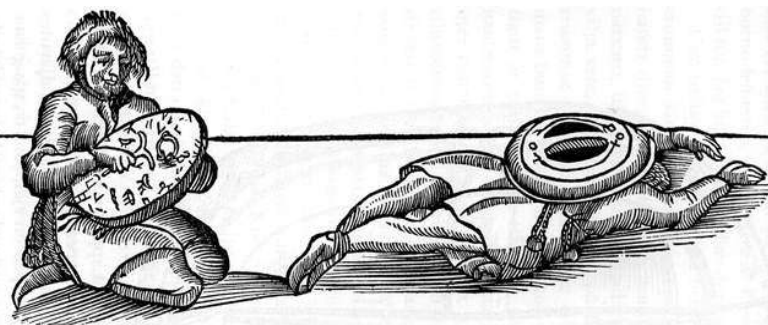
When he woke up, he started to tell what he had seen on the Moon. It turned out to be a country almost like here, with animals, birds and people. The wise men who had witnessed the event were not entirely satisfied with the tale, as they suspected that it might be a fabrication. So they asked him if he could not travel there again, but this time against a greater payment. They particularly requested him to learn their language, and to stay there a longer time to acquire more knowledge and give a more detailed description. The Saami did not have to think long about the offer. Soon, he started his second trip to the Moon. This time he was gone for all of seven months. When he came back, he gave such a detailed description that it was difficult to think that all could be pure lies and invention. Whatever the facts of the matter were, he soon started telling about the language of the lunar inhabitants. 'It was impossible for me,' said the flying Saami, 'to learn their language in their company, as they were frightened of me as of a troll or a ghost.' They had never seen anything like his body, face or clothes. 'I therefore made myself invisible, in order to listen to their conversations unnoticed. I flew from one place to another, and finally arrived at a school, where the lunar children were being taught a language that their learned people used.' One of the curious gentlemen then interrupted and asked whether it could have been Latin? 'I do not



A machine for making cogwheels invented by Polhem.



Polhem could transfer hydropower hundreds of yards with connected rods in a "stånggång".



Contemporary woodcut of a Sami with a magic drum

know whether it was Latin or any other language, as I do not understand Latin,' answered the Saami. Latin, but this language of the Moon you could learn quickly, nor do you need as many words, as each word expresses a whole sentence.' Here, the Saami's account started to be slightly It was a pity that he had never studied or understood grammar, as this would have made it possible to learn a bit more about the lunar people's language. But the curious gentlemen carefully recorded all the words the Saami had heard there on the Moon, and tried to bring order to them.

It was rather serious linguistic speculations. We read further:

It was then discovered that it was not a language like ours; a language that appears to originate among children and unlearned people; that lacks a solid foundation, and is improved a bit as time goes by, just like when an old, irregular city is turned into a regular one without moving the old houses. The lunar language, on the other hand, originates with learned people, who have built it on a new foundation. In more detail, the lunar language is built on the following bases. Syllables in their language correspond to whole words in our language. For example, abasaba means: 'the great space of the universe stretches out endlessly on all sides'. Breaking this down, ab means 'spatium' (space), ba 'universale' (the great universe), so that aba means 'spatium universale' (the great space of the universe). And further, sab is a verb that means 'expendere' (stretch out), ba is an adverb that means 'continuè or indefinitè' (endlessly on all sides), and from this we get abasaba 'spatium universum expandit se indefinitè'. From this, we find that the general rule is that when a consonant and a vowel are put together this takes on a special meaning, irrespective of whether it is an adjective, adverb, noun or verb. This differs from our language, where words are used more metaphorically or allegorically and not in their real fundamental sense.

Interest in artificial languages was on the rise at this time, "as a result of gradually decreasing international role of Latin" Wikipedia notes. Rosicrucians and alchemists were interested in "magical languages". Philosophers and mathematicians thought of constructing languages to be able to express things with greater precision. Polhem had learned Latin and encountered foreign languages on his trips in Europe, all of which must have lead him into linguistic speculations. In later years he worked with constructing an artificial language called lingua philosophica. Why it didn't become a success may be obvious from this article by David Dunér:

In a collection of fragments bearing the label "Attempts at a new and brief art of writing", Polhem tries to translate the first verses of Genesis into a universal language.³² He had an idea about an artificial language: a perfect language that could be understood by everyone, no matter from wherethey came or what natural language they spoke. As the greatest and the most perfect of spirits, God must be called - according to Polhem's universal language - "Spav", and if we say that he "created", it must be "ila." "Heavens" is "f" and "earth" is "k." And "earth was" is "ika", and "formless and void", is "v." God's spirit must be called "Sve." Thus, the two first verses of the Bible are, according to Polhem's universal language: "Spavilafk ikav Sve."

Spavilafk ikav Sve, indeed! As clear as "Kkaatu barada nikto". But hey! This about every syllable being a word and every word a sentence reminds me of something? Checking... Yes, Robert Heinlein had the same idea in the story "Gulf" (1949), where he introduced Speedtalk:

Speedtalk was a structurally different speech from any the race had ever used. Long before, Ogden and Richards had shown that eight hundred and fifty words were sufficient vocabulary to express anything that could be expressed by "normal" human vocabularies, with the aid of a handful of special words - a hundred odd - for each special field, such as horse racing or ballistics. About the same time phoneticians had analyzed all human tongues into about a hundred-odd sounds, represented by the letters of a general phonetic alphabet. On these two propositions Speedtalk was based.

To be sure, the phonetic alphabet was much less in number than the words in Basic English. But the letters representing sound in the phonetic alphabet were each capable of variation several different ways - length, stress, pitch, rising, falling. The more trained an ear was the larger the number of possible variations; there was no limit to variations, but, without much refinement of accepted phonetic practice, it was possible to establish a one-to-one relationship with Basic English so that one phonetic symbol was equivalent to an entire word in a "normal" language, one Speedtalk word was equal to an entire sentence. The language



The AI came up with this when asked to do an illo to Polhem's News from the Moon

consequently was learned by letter units rather than by word units - but each word was spoken and listened to as a single structured gestalt... All other languages made scientific, multi-valued logic almost impossible to achieve, in Speedtalk it was as difficult not to be logical. Compare the pellucid Boolean logic with the obscurities of the Aristotelean logic it supplanted.

I have my doubts about "Speedtalk" and similar schemes. Such languages would a) be difficult to learn, b) be unusable since we don't think as fast as speedtalking goes, and c) forget the reason why natural languages are slower and redundant: the redundancy is a way of error checking, meaning that when you hear a message garbled you may still get the message due to the grammar error coding. Another thing: it's doubtful you can build a language in a way that it's impossible to be illogical in it. If a language is "complete" it can express anything, but if it isn't...it's useless.

Have you had an airship trip? I have. In the mid-1980s *Teknikmagasinet* magazine was invited to take a tour onboard a Goodyear blimp, and I was assigned to dare it. We started from Bromma Airport and circled around Stockholm a sunny spring day. Magic!

As aeroplanes improved, interest in fragile airships died in the 1930s especially after a series of accidents (Hindenburg in 1937 was the nail in the coffin).

I remember an old mockumentary by Lars Helander, early fan and later TV producer, where we



Joe R Strully had a tour on this.



Already in 1898 saw the musical comedy "The Air Ship" We saw ideas about a flying aircraft carrier in *Modern Mechanix*. *Popular Science* envisioned a future zeppelin with a huge gondola. Last a poster of fantasy airships.

heard Michael Moorcock claim that zeppelins had never existed. But they certainly existed in the Dagens Nyheter article Sep 14, 1916, "Zeppelin attack on steamer Nordland. Ship bombed by two German airships. The steamers could escape only through skillful navigation":

Reuters has received these details from authentic sources about German airships a while ago unmotivated attacks on steamer Nordland, belonging to a firm in Gothenburg. While the steamer was enroute from Middlesborough to Narvik the captain heard shots fired ca 33 miles from Tyne, which he thought was from an English patrol boat. Shortly after, time was 2:20 am, a zeppelin was observed. Without making the faintest attempt to find out Nordland's nationality, the airship dropped 7 bombs, that fell into the water beside the steamer but all within 20 feet. The captain ordered all lights out. And the voyage continued. Half an hour later another airship was observed, from which 9 bombs were dropped towards Nordland. Two of these fell just two feet from the ship, and Nordland escaped destruction only through skilled navigation. A number of shrapnel fell on the deck of Nordland, but luckily without anyone being injured. And neither was the ship damaged.

That was more from my stash of 1916 newspapers.

Since we're speaking of languages, it may be of interest to introduce you to some Swefandom "fanslang" and concepts. I've looked into the *Fandboken* ("The Fandbook") fancyclopedia and selected a few entries.



(The Fandbook is full of names of sf clubs, fanzines, pseudonyms fen have used, convention listnings, descriptions of events and so on, and unique Swefandom slang is just the tiniest fraction of it. A lot of originally English-language fanspeak of course there.) The Fandbook formally covers Swedish fandom 1945 to 1995 - fifty years! Sometime in the 1990s our local fandom began to wither, besieged by mediafandom, silly costumes, superheroes and cons slowly turning boring. Fanzines stopped coming almost entirely. From the mid 1990's there hasn't been much fannish creativity, not much of interest happening so it was logical to stop 1995, and much below is from the 1980s, the golden era of Swedish fandom.

Autarkatet - "The Autarchy", a state in southern Sweden in the 1960's Fannish War lead by The Autarch (Dénis Lindbohm) who in mail, fanzine articles, tape recordings etc battled with the Hyboria, lead by Lord Theo (Sam J Lundwall). This living satire of real world politics went on for several years. Others eventually proclaimed their own states and joined the Fannish War, but as things became complicated the war ebbed out.

Brungangol - A fan who often does his duty with blog (ie down with it!). The expression was never common, but so interesting I'll include it here... Brungangol is old Norse meaning "He who often goes to the well". Bheer and blog (there's even special words and spellings) have a long connection to fandom, as expressed by eg Poul Anderson founding Ølførbundet - Bheer Federation - with the maxim Ned med øled!

Bytteabbo - Trade as in trading fanzines, short for approx "exchange subscription". The tradition that faneds exchange their fanzines with each other has been very important in our local fandom. (If you're curious, you may mutter a little "botto ibo?" as on a Salingsåsfandom cassette zine.)

Chairman Larsson - Nickname for Stieg Larsson at the time he was chairman of the Scandinavian SF Association.

Den fanniska råkraften - "The Fannish Raw Power", the superstrength that can overwhelm you when you do fannish things. It makes you manage 24 hours behind the keyboard. It's the force that magically finds you more bheer when desperately needed. The force fields that stops the stencil stylus rolling off the table...

Det finns mycket - "There is much", the universal answer to any question.

Dumska - "Stupidness", except that the word "dumska" doesn't really exist in Swedish. From the Froggy Gordon cartoons by Lars LON Olsson.

Faktasi - "Factasy", alternate term for science fiction. Another one is "vetsaga", used by Harry Martinson scholar Tord Hall.

"Fandom är egentligen något mycket större än oss själva" - "Fandom is actually something much bigger than ourselves". Famous quote from one of the Salingåsfandom kazzines.

Fanilsen - "fan greetings", from Danish/Norwegian "fanhilsen", also used sometimes in Swefandom.

Fanweek - When the rest of the household is away or the house/flat is otherwise empty, just announce a fanweek, an open house when any fellow fan may turn up 24/7 (related: a fannish weekend, the same but just over the weekend).

Fanzineblockad - If he refuses to trade or if you're angry with someone, you can declare that he's under fanzine blockade. The first fanzine blockade was announced in the autumn of 1978 by one Marvyn de Vil against Anders Belly. The international cultural magazine Intermission presently maintains a strict fanzine blockade against that inter-galactic villain Vlad Putin and his cronies.

FATT-fan - Fandom's Answer to a Twelve-ton Truck, a fan that can carry a lot. One example is when the Scandinavian SF Association's new printing press was carried into the SF-Bokhandeln on Atlas Street in the late 1980s.

15 September - Not really fanspeak, but the day (1945) when the club Atomic Noah was founded, wanting to build space ships to save mankind from the atomic war. To be considered as the first Swedish sf club.

Frusen metanhockey - Tabletop ice-hockey. But as sf fans we don't play on ice, but have frozen methane hockey. There have been tournaments for it, eg on Finncon (but they don't call it frozen methane hockey). Methane BTW freezes at -182C...

"Gnugga sin käcka rokokorumpa i morgongröten" - Can't say this became very widespread, but worth mentioning because it made it to the fanzine column of Amazing SF (ca 1980). They got hold of a bunch of Swedish fanzines and thought it was fun that the hero in a space opera parody to get out of a fix began to "gnugga sin käcka rokokorumpa i morgongröten" ("rubbed his dashing rococo ass in the morning porridge").

Gurka - Cucumber, the first and most influential of the early 1980's small carbon-copied APAs, half a dozen members, ca 50 mailings. Many more in the same style followed, most lasted a short time only.



Frozen Methane Hockey is played on this.

Gösta - A figure used by Uppsala-fandom. If they like someone they claim "Gösta will nail someone like you!".

"Hur, men vart?" - "How, but where?", a motto from Borås fandom in the early 1980s.

Gårdagens värld idag igen - "Yesterday's World Today Again", motto of the newszine VÄ, inspired by the slogan "Tomorrow's World Today". A newszine should tell what has just happened ("yesterday") so it must present the yesterday today. Again.

"Helvetes förbannade fittbastarder" - "Damn cunt bastards from hell", as phrase used by the "typesetter" or what to call him, Mr Belly in the Börje Crona novel World in Danger. He often smuggled on his own questionable jokes in books. No big deal he claimed, just fun, but it was big enough for Mr Crona to be forced to take out an ad in the biggest Swedish morning paper offering excuses that his book had been sabotaged.

"En hörnsten i varje sf fans bokhylla" - "A cornerstone in the book shelves of every sf fan", a common phrase used by reviewer Roland Adlerberth, reviewing tons of books for decades in both Håpna! and JVM. He used an informal style with many linguistic innovations, known as adlerberthian.

INS - (Sensitive readers beware:) "Ignorant Neo Shit", what some used to call neofans...

It sveri good - Alternate Swefandom phrasing of "It's very good". "Sveri" is from the country's name in the local incomprehensible lingo: SVERIGE (local fandom thus often calls itself "Sverifandom").

Jordnötsloppet - "The Peanut Race", inspired by British fandom's Great Pork Pie Race: use imaginative means to transport a peanut 2 metres. (Peanuts were the staple food of sf meetings, provided by Lars-Olov Strandberg.)

Kazzine - A fanzine made as recordings on a Philips sound cassette. The best ones came in the 1980s, from Salingsåsfandom (David Nessle, Martin Kristenson & co from Sala, and Erik Andersson & Co from Alingsås.) Others, like skiffy author Bertil Mårtensson, also did kazzines. (Today people imitate this and call it "pods". Copycats!)

Meteorboll - The game of rounders, somewhat like baseball, but instead of shouting "burnt!" you shout "Disintegrated" to take a player out. As this word is longer it gives the outfield team a slight advantage, as they otherwise usually are at a disadvantage. (There are several variations of rounders. Meteorball uses these Swedish rules: <https://www.piffl.se/activity/rounders>)

"...många goda enskildheter, but..." - "...many good singularities, but...". Phrase used by Sam J Lundwall when he rejected a story for Jules Verne Magasinet.

Pontonjörgatan 45 - 45 Pioneer Street, the address of the Scandinavian SF Association and the first SF-Bokhandeln, 1977-1980, a place of intrigues, myth-making, minicons, many meetings, a tornado of fannishness (perhaps resembling the 1940s LASFS Bixelstrasse a bit?). The original Swedish "Pontonjär" refers to what the military in English call "pioneer troops" (who build bridges and other installations). There was a pioneer regiment on that street in older times. Stieg Larsson was there, and you and me and John-Henri and all of us.

ql - Alternate spelling of "kul" (fun). That and other abbreviations and slangwords were a part of the peculiar informal "appeltofftian", used in eg correspondence by Alvar Appeltofft, perhaps a bit similar to ackermanese.

Robban Heinlein - What RAH sometimes is called here ("Robban" being a nickname of "Robert"). Comes from a faaanfiction story with one Ture Storm who had a T-shirt exclaiming "Heja Robban Heinlein!"

Samuel Delany - In the early 1980s the myth flourished in Stockholm fandom that Chip Delany had a secret passion: to jump on a plane to Stockholm to be a driver of a Metro train for a few days!

SEFF-skandalen - The 1987 scandal when misters JH and AB faked 34 fan fund votes to embezzle its funds, \$3500-4000 in today's worth. The deed had devastating effects on Swefandom.

StF - StockholmFandom (yeah, we know it also stands for "scientifiction"), sometimes thinking of itself as "The Squares of StF" (think of Irish Fandom and "The Wheels of IF").

Stora mossen - Metro station in Stockholm (the one closest to Sam J Lundwall when he lived on Storskogs Way) giving name to a this dialogue game, inspired by the similar game Finchley Central known in British fandom. Take turns naming Stockholm metro stations and the first to say "Stora Mossen" wins...

Sverifandom - What Swedish fandom calls itself.

"There are only three bookstores in New York" - A claim by Sam J Lundwall in a famous interview in 1979 by the newszine VÄ (the first incarnation of SFJ). Lundwall always had a double-edged relationship to this bastion of bloody capitalism called the US of A. The quote was an attempt to pin down Americans as uncultural. ChatGPT says "there are over 200 independent bookstores across the city of New York".

Vita prickar i ett svart mörker - "White dots in a black darkness", from an interview with fan Wolf von Witting in big newspaper 1980. Wolf knew so much and was so in awe of the magic of space, just imagine...white dots in a black darkness!

Witter (adjective) - fun or fannish - which is the same thing... There's the existing word "vitter" meaning well-read. The "w"-spelling was picked up from the fan group WDFV. From this comes that exchanging "v" for a "w" is considered fannish spelling. Witter is probably related to witty.

The Mechanical Butcher, 1895



Just a selection of words, concepts, quotes etc from local fandom and not known internationally...yet. Beside this, Swefandom has also always used the most common English language fanslang: BNF, Gafia, LoC, mimeo, trufan, etc. *The Fandbook* of course doesn't include many words relating to eg gaming, masquerading, film/TV (eg the Star Trek-specific) since such doesn't belong to true, traditional fandom. Sorry, but for me and many others fandom is connected to literature and text and things that build on the almost 100 years of fannish history. Folks who don't talk about "sci-fi"...

"The X-Rays", 1897



What was the first sf film? Let's look at some candidate. Wikipedia claims this film by George Méliès is the first sf movie, "The Mechanical Butcher" (1895), about a pig brought into a machine that automatically makes sausages and things from it (rather cruel!):

<https://youtu.be/X6PNgbOxNDg>

I have my doubts about classifying it as sf, since such a machine is quite near what could or is done in reality... Méliès made another perhaps-sf film in 1897, with a clown and a mechanical man, but Wiki says it's lost. Not lost is George Albert Smith's "The X-Ray" from the same year: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gMCKFRMJQQ>

showing a couple becoming half-transparent skeletons after being exposed to x-rays. Perhaps skiffy? George Méliès made a similar film "The Röntgen Rays" the same year, but Wiki says it's also lost. But in 1898 he also made "The Astronomer's Dream", where an astronomer is visited by a series of strange beings in his dream, incl a giant moon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8SMliQZUcs>

As it's a "dream" a dream fantasy may be more appropriate?

"Astronomer's Dream", 1898



The Moon was central for several of the first skiffy films! But George Méliès's "A Trip to the Moon" wasn't the first moon film (but perhaps the best!). It came in 1902, but we find a short film of a ukulele-playing Moon from 1901, "Mister Moon": <https://youtu.be/LRYSuuXUZ2Y>

Back to Méliès, "The Impossible Voyage" (1904) was another masterpiece by him: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZVgCTQFKXo> Scientists go to

strange places using different transports, incl a visit to the Sun and ending up in a submarine. See the beautiful hand-coloured version!

The Moon appeared also in this quite entertaining roll, "The Motorist"

(1906): <https://youtu.be/Gnu02WeQ44>. This fun film

illustrates the idea of "cut to the chase"! A motor car - at a time when few of such things were around! - is chased, and drives up on house walls, on clouds, around the moon, using the rings of Saturn as a roundabout, etc.

More films. I found this 1916 ad about (did some googling) the film "The Suspect" (Swedish title "From New York's Secret Police") shown on cinema Drott:

"Mr Moon", 1901



"The Impossible Voyage", 1904



"The Motorist", 1906



basic norms of young people. Kids aren't intellectually equipped to evaluate anything about sex and gender, for instance.)

With AI coming, we could expect that any remaining barriers against showing anything will crumble. You ask what you want and AIs produce it. What shall we think and do about that?

Mailing Comments

Henry Grynsten: the robots /as/ just machines, then they would be just - machines. Humans are machines too, biological machines. they would not accept being treated as anything less than humans Oh, just program them to like being treated in this or that way! Remember that humans are programable too, through eg the school (programming takes longer and is more uncertain, but still).
☞☞ "I remember earlier you had problems with the word processor and an entire issue was lost" It was almost an entire issue. The text was overwritten with ##### ☞☞ What is Swedish fandom today? Dying. So is traditional fandom everywhere, to be replaced by mediafans who dress up in silly costumes, play games, superficially adore sillyTV series or films. To keep some knowledge alive about *real* fandom is a reason to do the "History Corner".) ☞☞ (About genre development.) Genres develop, not drastically, not fast, but a little. A crime story today is quite a bit different than one from the 1960s. The same goes for skiffy. I generally tend to think the older stories and writers are better. ☞☞ No matter how many lines we add, a trillion lines, it will not develop consciousness. It will, at a certain complexity consciousness will pop up. Not ready and running from the very start, but ready to accept and process information (like a child does). Most scientists connected to neurology, brain, electronics say it's a matter of complexity. (And common sense says it MUST be so.) ☞☞ I have come to believe that consciousness is an embodied phenomenon that requires a body and senses. It certainly requires input! It may come from senses and a body, but from any type of sense and body, not just biological ones. Information processing - and consciousness is that - is medium independent. You can build a system of cogwheels that add 1001 and 0010. You can build an arrangement of rolling marbles that does the same. You can build electronics to do it. Biological cells can be arranged to do it. ☞☞ (About zombies.) I agree that belief in zombies, as portrayed in popular culture, is irrational. But I know there are drugs that may have effects that mimic *some* behaviour of that kind of zombies. In the future we will get computerised zombie-like programs, using AI to "revive" deceased loved ones so we can communicate with them.

William McCabe: I hope your health tests will be positive, oh, I mean negative, eh...well, showing no worries. ☞☞ A RAF pilot sf/f club in Brum? Very interesting. You should contact Rob Hansen who is the premiere chronicler of British fandom history. ☞☞ I know that Archive.org has a lot of bootleg recordings. Fine thing. ☞☞ I think we will get Asimovian robots, based on AI. The thing is that such creatures will be so useful that we can't avoid them. Most things in our society is designed for the human form and shape, so it's practical to build such robots.

Heath Row: Interesting article about "Nonfic for SF Readers". I read a lot of nonfic: history, science, technology, culture, biographies (recently I've read a couple of books about the interesting physicist Richard Feynman and one about Freeman Dyson). ☞☞ I have made a PDF of the complete run of Vår Rymd ("Our Space"). It's not very pretty since it's from photos snapped with a mobile and not scanned, but it is complete and readable (with a little difficulty for some parts).

Garth Spencer: Interesting speculations about "Third, Fourth, or Fifth-Level complexity", but I'm not sure I understand it all... ☞☞ I do have an external HD, which by now is full with a backup which I did 2-3 years ago (it took forever to make that backup). Since I have purchased sets of USB-sticks of up to 64 GB also used for backups, as well as a "cabinet" where I put an old SSD disk for daily use. Yeah, I think a lot about how to store data. Generally, storing and handling data, new and old, is often confusing and takes a lot of time...



(Batman has the bat signal. Froggy Gordon has...) Colonel Armourymarshal is desperate: "I must call for Froggy Gordon." / Most are unaware of that to the left of the entrance to the Royal Armoury's southern hall - next to a display of 16th century weapons - is a secretive little button. The direct alarm for "Froggy Gordon. Ring Pling Klingeling" "Oh well, Mankind is in dire straits again." ("Swedish original character name "Blixt-Grodon" is a wordplay on "Flash Gordon" and "frog", so we interpret it to "Froggy Gordon".)

Слава Україні!

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 272

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Comments:

Cover: Alan White: very spiffing! Thank you!

Heath Row: What a lovely lot of reading you're doing! I throb with reading envy! I seem to have much less time for reading these days, and I regret it terribly! Read on, and enjoy!

Rct John Thiel, you ask, "Does Science Fiction bring readers - or viewers - comfort?" I would say "Not if it is done right!" SF should be challenging, engaging, inspiring, and most of all, unsettling. It exists, not quite so much to entertain, as to stimulate. Of course, a lot of SF is just dreck -- Sturgeon's Law! -- and is nothing more than low entertainment.

Ahrvid Engholm: Very sorry to hear you had a computer melt-down! I've been there, and it isn't pleasant in any way. I was very luck in not losing much in the way of data, and I hope you, too, have safety backups in place so you don't lose files. Grim! The good news is that computers are faster, better, and yet also cheaper. Moore's Law, as revised downward just a little, continues in effect.



Fun history-of-fandom offerings! The future of our past, and the past of our future continues to fascinate. We have been lucky in having truly great creative literary progenitors!

George Phillies: Fun intro and summary of the Eclipse novels, with truly luscious cover images! I can't remember: where did the covers come from? They appear perfectly suited to the novels' content, so they must have been commissioned. How pricey was that? The two covers that I have commissioned cost me \$50 each, but the results came out quite nicely. Self-publishing on Amazon may be a fool's game, but, as Gomez Addams grandly declared, "I am that fool!"

Ahrvid Engholm: An uncomfortable sense of comfort in knowing that Putin is not doing well in his criminal war. I dread the future, but, for the moment, Ukraine stands firm.

More fun history in the History Corner. A grim story of the fan whose parents burned all his fanzines -- for his own good. What a ghastly thing to do. Parents all too often don't comprehend their children's needs. And fun page on Barbarella, a dopey but fun movie, with a bit of skin and some amusing semi-naughty sequences.

I'm still keen to try out some (free) AI image generating software, but I don't know an app or website. Any suggestions?

George Phillies: I'm fond of fanfic, although I don't have a good source for it. There are characters from published fiction that I'd enjoy reading more of, even if it is "just" fanfic. A gentleman named Michael Shea has been writing "Jack Vance" fanfic and publishing it professionally, licensed by the Vance estate. "The Quest for Simbilis" follows Vance's character and antihero Cugel the Clever, and Shea does quite a good job counterfeiting Vance's writing style.

Rct me, I will track down Phillips O'Brien's "How We Won the War." It sounds like it might be just my cuppa! Later: oops, looked it up on Amazon, and it's too pricey for me. Drat!

Rct Garth Spencer, I cited a college professor I once met who held exactly that position: we can only "know" what we perceive directly with our senses. So, yeah, he would claim that those of us who wear eyeglasses are seeing an "artificial reality," a viewpoint that is, in part, created by our lenses, and that we do not truly "know" what we see. I agree with you that this is a pointlessly sterile epistemology, and, further, we can actually test ^many^ observations made via lenses. We can look at a distant mountain through a telescope -- and then drive up to that mountain and look at it directly. The telescope's view is confirmed. Easily. This is, of course, a lot harder to do with high-powered microscopes and astronomical telescopes. There is a certain kind of nebbishy "purity" to this man's ideal of knowledge, but, then, there is a similar purity to solipsism, the claim that we can never know ^anything^ about the universe outside of our own conscious awareness. Some ideas are essentially dead-ends, promoting no useful insights and no promise for enlightenment or advancement.

Mark Nelson: It's always pleasant, in a guilty sort of way, when one's beliefs/views/opinions/prejudices are backed up by popular opinion. It has been my opinion since 1968 that 2001: A Space Odyssey is the best science fiction movie ever made -- frankly, the best movie ever. Fun that I'm not totally alone here, even if your own view was slightly more lukewarm. I certainly agree that

Terminator and Alien are in the Top Ten. I personally believe that Aliens is slightly a better movie than Alien, but Alien is more iconic and more "important" in terms of film history.

Rct Ahrvid Engholm, as you've heard the name of Stanislaw Lem, but hven't read anything of his, let me suggest "Tales of Pirx the Pilot." It's a collection of stories about a space pilot, with some remarkable concepts and ideas. The stories are just a little haunting, and definitely some of the most thought-provoking SF I've ever read.

Re political and socioeconomic cycles, I believe there are such things, but they're very hard to identify, especially early in the growth of the cycle. I also believe they can be short-circuited by historical events. A big cycle of liberalism was aborted when Lincoln was murdered. I believe in "influential times" theories of history slightly more than "influential persons" theories, but, at the same time, it's hard to discount the huge effect the right person can make at the right time. I believe that FDR altered the course of history in a very large way, almost entirely for the better (and that Ronald Reagan altered the course of history, almost entirely for the worse.) If they hadn't been around, would someone else have stepped into the void? A lot of historical analysis has to be relegated to "nonsense" in that there is no way of determining the answer.

George Phillies: Fun section of fanfic. I do not recognize the characters or the world; what is it based on? As so often with your writing, the characters are pleasant and likeable, more inclined to cooperate than to compete, and you portray diplomacy very convincingly. The characters here, while in a sense competitors, get along with each other very nicely.

Adrian Kresnak: Hello, and welcome to our deliberations! It's a chaotic little band of philosophers here, and I think you'll fit in comfortably and happily! If anything bugs you, or perplexes you, or causes you existential doubt, you can email me anytime and I'll muddy the waters!

Thank you for your kind comments on “The Stupid Equations.”

I can’t place the story you described, but it does sound like a very typical 1960s “John Campbell” kind of story. Some of those were truly great -- and some were groaning with cliches!

Samuel Lubell: Fun interior cover art! It looks like you’re getting good results from AI! I really need someone to guide me through the first steps. How do I find openart.ai? I’ve always been a tech “trailer,” just about the last in my social circles to adopt new tech. I was late in moving to word processing, and late in connecting to the internet, and I guess I’ll likely be late in playing with AI images!

Glad that Balticon went well! You speak words of great wisdom when you note, “There’s always a delicate balance between micromanaging and being too hands-off.” The ideal military officer, it is said, is “Tough but fair.” The ideal con chairman is “detail oriented” but also “takes in the big picture.” It’s a little like parenting: how much discipline is “just right?”

Fun notes on Joe Haldeman. I read “The Forever War” when it was new, and enjoyed it. It was fun to see it as a part of a “dialogue” between novelists, as it was definitely a “response” to Heinlein’s Starship Troopers. There is a kind of meta-discussion there -- and others have also been involved -- and it is an engaging form of dialogue.

Nifty that you’re making so much progress on your various projects! As I said above, I’m dreadful, these days, at reading. The time just seems to have vanished. I look at my library, here in my home, and am astonished that I ever had the time to read all of those books! I couldn’t do it today! Re Project Shakespeare, MacBeth has always been one of my favorites! I’ve read it a handful of times, but never seen it performed. James Thurber has a cute story about someone treating MacBath as a “murder mystery,” where you only

think that MacBeth is the murderer because he’s the most likely suspect. It was really someone else, which you don’t learn until the end. Thurber wrote some truly lovely nonsense!

Garth Spencer: I’m quite sorry for the loss of your friend. The passage of time, and the transition of our dearest friends from the here-and-now to the gone-forever is one of the saddest, and ugliest, of all of the “facts of life” we must live with. Some of us are getting up there in years, and, alas, this happens more often now. “Be to her virtues very kind; Be to her faults a little blind.”

“The Jade Ring” was fun. It seemed to be two separate stories, spliced together in the middle. The first is about fans trying to organize fan conventions, and it seems very realistic indeed. I feel like I know these guys! (Heck, I ^am^ one of these guys!) The treatment is satiric, but not unfriendly. It isn’t a savage parody -- such as we have all certainly seen -- but more of a loving and nostalgic visit, a celebration of our youth. The second is where it suddenly becomes a Star Trek fan-story! This seems totally unrelated to the first part, but it is certainly fun. Haven’t we all had this daydream? What would we do if beamed aboard the Enterprise to meet Kirk and Spock? (It would be fun to get drunk with Scotty!)

I’ve always believed that fandom tends to be ^slightly^ more neurodiverse than the population at large, but I think that might be true of any group that self-selects by reading. Reading appeals, just slightly to people who are shifted just a little toward one end of “the spectrum.” Fandom rewards a slightly “obsessive compulsive” mental attitude. A devoted collector -- say, of comic books, or trading cards -- definitely benefits from a slightly obsessional mind-set.

Re fan feuds, alas, they can be bitterly, poisonously, and libellously real. I’ve been in a couple, and the haunting thing is that you can’t just “ignore” them. They come after you. I won’t pollute this issue with more detail...

Re “Crank Theories,” I have one I’m fond of: “Dante’s Divine Comedy is actually ‘Revealed Truth’ and needs to be added to the Bible.” I also subscribe to the “Ultimate Anthropic Principle,” which says, essentially, reality depends upon ^your^ personal viewpoint. You don’t live in the same “reality” that I do. The “Many Worlds” interpretation is correct, and we all have our own!

Heath Row: Fun trip report. I’ve never been to Chicago, but my sister lived in Waukegan for a few years and would visit Chicago on occasional weekends.

Rct me, I certainly respect your hesitation to embrace “fan fiction” -- in the sense of fiction written by fans utilizing established and copyrighted characters. In legal terms, we’re on safe ground, being within the “fair use” envelope. No money is changing hands. Personally, I’m in favor of indulging in this, as exemplified by Garth Spencer’s “Jade Ring.” I believe there is a kind of “immaturity” involved in this kind of fan fiction. I’ve even heard it referred to as “masturbatory,” which is quite a hearty condemnation! But for beginning writers, especially, it is a wonderful learning-tool, sort of like training wheels on a bicycle. It allows a new writer to develop skills in plotting, narrative, description, and dialogue. The dialogue is easier, because we all already know pretty much what Kirk and Spock would say. Original characterization can come later, when the training wheels are removed. But I certainly would agree that this kind of fanfic is “lesser” than proper original fiction. Personally, I would welcome it here -- as well as original fiction too!

Thank you for your kind comments on “The Stupid Equations.”

Rct Mark Nelson, I, personally, believe there really are such things as war crimes. The Nazis shooting the American soldiers who had surrendered, during the Battle of the Bulge, is a very pronounced example. It was unjustified in any meaningful military way. It did

not advance the offensive, nor did it relieve a threat to the offensive. It wasn’t even retaliation for a previous offense, such as (alas) the American troops began, immediately once the news got around of the murder of the surrendered Americans. Retaliation, at least, is understandable, in human emotional terms, but, of course, it is no less a crime than the original inspiring act.

Rct Mark Nelson, agreement re libraries and books. The modern wave of censorship is not intended to “protect children,” but to “other” groups of people that some other groups of people dislike. Censorship Cucks.

INTERMISSION #146

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and others wishing it was a stencil and not a PDF. Try @SFJournalen's newstweets (updates slow now, alas). "Read directly after reports on Putin's Ukraine war, Intermission doesn't seem like an anticlimax..." First use of "typo", short for typographical error, is from 1890s. From Greek "typo(s)", meaning type. Late Aug 2024.

Editorially: Worldcon, Eurovision, Ukraine Offensive

This summer has been eventful. The US presidential election, candidates coming and going or being shot at, and it now looks like the Democrats are picking up speed, slowly overtaking the Weird One.

We had the Olympics in Paris and I think the French did rather good games (*J'aime Paris!*). The Swedes won 11 medals (pre-games goal was 10), incl four golds: beach volleyball, pole vaulting (Mondo Duplantis even took a new world record, 6m25*), and double swim sprint (50+100m) golds by the world's fastest H2O rocket, Sarah Sjöström. Her surname fittingly translates to... *Seastream!* Other medals were for table tennis, judo, sailing and bicycling.

Ukraine, I'm glad to say, managed 12 medals, more then the other yellow-and-blue but fewer in gold. Considering training under threats of

missile attacks, some athletes being in the army, some even injured or killed, it was a good achievement which I hope inspires the Ukranian home front.



Expression of king Carl XVI Gustaf the moment Sweden's outstanding pole vaulter Mondo Duplantis set a new world record at 6m25 at the Paris Olympics. Seems he is 0.5m over. He'll do 6m50 one day...



Aug 17. Centre for Photography celebrated 25th anniversary. In a park with a jazz band, photo show, wine. At • behind me is Lars Säfström who worked for old Teknikmagasinet. Just as me he likes older sf, and as a kid the translator of the Space Books he loved, Börje Crona, sat and translated in a flat in his suburb - but he didn't know about it. We chatted about old times.

Another inspiration is that the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) pulled down the pants of Vlad P by pushing into Russia! They completely surprised a weak defence consisting of conscripts and have taken by now 1500 square kilometres. Their intention isn't to stay permanently, but most likely to give Vlad a noseburn to erode his regime and obtain a bargaining chip in



Aug 18, Queen's Street book table day. Here's sf/f author Sten Rosendahl. <https://forfattarformedling.se/forfattare/sten-rosendahl/>

further dealings with the Orcs. The cries from Mordor sound: "How dare you invade a neighbour!" Those hypocrites have neither mirrors nor shame. Give Ukraine all the weapons they need and skip usage restrictions, dammit!

*Sorry. He just broke it again in a competition in Poland. New record 6m26. Reaching for the stars, that guy!

I try to follow war tidings as much as I can. Putin's war will end when the Putin regime collapses. The Russian economy is diving because of the war. So say eg eight European Finance Ministers (incl Sweden's Elisabeth Svantesson) in a Guardian article: "Russia is lying about its economic strength: sanctions are working - and we need more"

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/jul/24/russia-economic-growth-western-sanctions-vladimir-putin-moscow> (many economists more than agree - google it!). Old-time media is unreliable. Some Russian troll factory propaganda, some even parroted in the US Congress by trumpian "MAGA" folks. A shame! But not even that can hide huge Russian losses. If "things go according plan" the plan was garbage! The second army...in Russia, has now lost 600K+ soldiers, 25K+ tanks/armoured vehicles, near half its Black Sea navy: <https://index.minfin.com.ua/en/russian-invading/casualties/> Some reliable Youtube channels for Ukraine news: UATV, TVPworld, Combat Veteran Reacts, Denys Davidov, Anna from Ukraine, Starsky, Jake Bro.

It looks like Kamala Harris may have a chance against the Weird One. She made a good choice for VP candidate with Tim White, who has the gift of gab. But the far left have pushed many to the Trump camp, with "identity politics" and all that crap, so the final result of the election is yet unpredictable.

--Ahrvid Engholm

Crash Landing for the EBU

Remember how the Netherlands contestant Joost Klein was disqualified from the Eurovision Song Contest this spring after "assaulting a camera woman". The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) produced press releases about this vile attack, stressing how Swedish police had opened an investigation, that the young woman was getting therapy for post traumatic stress or whatever, hundred of millions of viewers got the story one way or another (eg with TV commentators explaining the startup changes).

All very interesting. Except it was all air. Putrid air.

The Netherlands delegation had at once told us all how it really was. Klein was provoked as the photographer followed into a stage area where filming was banned, doing some "threatening moves, but didn't touch her". This was easy to validate as there were many witnesses, tapes (eg from the camera woman herself) etc, so the Dutch couldn't be wrong. Since we *know* the police throws any reports of a quarrel without physical contact into the Round Floor Archive, involving them was a distraction trying to bolster a weak "narrative".

But most of the media didn't care. Cheered by press releases made up by EBU, directly and indirectly they conveyed a picture of patriarchal brutality against an innocent girl. ESC has over 200 million viewers and all commentators one way or another had to go into why why the Netherlands was missing and the Dutch boycotted the voting.

In August came the turnaround. I saw it in an inner column on page 6 in a Stockholm morning paper (TV and radio mostly ignored it) and here what e g the *Glasgow Times* reported,

<https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/national/24513033.sweden-drops-probe-joost-klein-expelled-hours-eurovision-final/>

"Sweden has dropped its investigation into a backstage altercation in May involving the Dutch contestant in the Eurovision Song Contest who was expelled from the competition hours before the final. After fan favourite Joost Klein was booted out, organisers said the reason was a probe by Swedish police into "a complaint made by a female member of the production crew"."

The EBU replied with yet another press release, claiming e g:

"Like all responsible employers, we do not tolerate inappropriate behaviour and will always respond to any workplace issues that are reported to us. The decision to disqualify Mr Klein from this year's event was made

GlasgowTimes

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Sweden drops probe into Joost Klein, expelled from Eurovision final

12th August



By PA News Agency

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No Comments

in strict accordance with Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) rules and governance procedures, after an internal investigation."

A weird spin. It's "appropriate" to break into a no-filming zone, but "inappropriate" to react to such a provocation! The claimed "strict accordance" works only one way... That's *irresponsible*.

Besides, their rash decision to punish Klein came within *hours*, without any time for claimed investigation. Responsible? Their later "internal investigation" was a kangaroo court only serving to come up with pretexts for the already decided verdict.

The Netherlands delegation described events correctly from the beginning. They suggested several solutions to the situation. All was rejected by the EBU, that instead went through with their unprecedented, extreme measure to disqualify a contestant just before the show - for *a verbal quarrel!* In the present ideological climate we unfortunately have to put up with a negative burden of proof: guilty until proven innocent. She's always a victim, he's always a perpetrator.

But the EBU must have know that the whole thing was a trifle in a legal sense. ("He shouted bad words, so 12 years to life without the possibility of parole"...seriously?) Instead they deliberately issued statements implying otherwise. Responsible people, with a spinal cord somewhat stronger than jelly, admit to their mistakes. Cowards try to hide them and distract. The collapse of the EBU case-that-wasn't was delayed several months in the hope people would have had forgotten this huge embarrassment.

The victim here is the Dutch artist Joost Klein. He was provoked by a filmer who ignored an off-camera area, he waved his arms and probably invented some creative verbal expressions, but that's all. For this he was robbed of the pinnacle of his artistic career and a realistic chance to win the world's biggest music contest (he was a favourite in polls, remember) and before hundreds of millions portrayed, at least indirectly, as a violent thug. The Dutch are considering boycotting ESC, and I understand them.

Such things happen when ideology replaces common sense. The EBU must acknowledge their mistakes, apologise and offer Mr Klein a substantial sum in damages.

But they most certainly won't.

Glascon - Books, Bags, Bagpipes and Beanies

I'll begin my report from "A Worldcon for Our Futures" with a number of complaints...and it begins already: You don't give an sf con *the name of a slogan!*

An sf con name *isn't a phrase, it's something like "Xyzcon"* (or possibly "Xyzention", or something related to the word "convention"). You need a short, snappy con name that works as one word. A phrase is difficult to use in ordinary prose as a word. What happens if you don't follow this, is that people for the sake of ease invent a nickname - like for the first Worldcon which was never officially named Nycon, but got that name afterwards.

So I suggest we simply call the 2024 Worldcon *GLASCON*, and that all future worldcons abstain from trying to make their slogan the official very convention name.

My second complaint is those *damn, tiring, privacy invasive checking of bags* every time you wanted some fresh air outside the con venue! It's an intrusion on your personal integrity, damn irritating, it takes time and the concom should really have tried to do something about it. It was the idea of the venue, I'm told. They had perhaps looked at and equalled our literary con with media cons like Comic Con, which I understand has a more rowdy, juvenile crowd. That our attendees are totally different should have been made clear. You feel a certain reluctance passing the constant bag checking, so beside intrusion of personal integrity it also becomes an unwanted obstacle against moving around on the convention. Bad, bad, very bad, Glascon!



Old Glasgow doubledecker tram.



Glascon's registration. Shows part of my NASA t-shirt.

My third complaint is that the *WiFi didn't work*. All I spoke with had similar problems I got it to work short periods on Sunday - but basically it was non-functional. And this at a time with *lots* of news you wanted to follow: the Olympics, the US presidential election, Ukraine starting a successful offensive... The period of Glascon was unusually news heavy and of course you want to keep in touch with what happens. And on top of that, you have your own communication needs. I would eg gladly have tweeted news from the

con for @SFJournalen, but that was impossible. As I understand a big majority of the attendees were foreign, and we foreigners rely on a local WiFi! (Else, you'd have to obtain a local SIM which costs extra and is cumbersome. I wouldn't even know who sells them and which SIM would be best. Making a whole market survey for just a few days is asking too much.)

My fourth complaint is that *the con print material was absent*, until Saturday evening when I suddenly saw a program book and a program guide appear. For half the con you had no printed guidance! Good luck to those who hadn't downloaded the program to the cellphone (I had, luckily - though it's hard to follow things on a small phone screen) as the WiFi didn't work.

To this I'll add some complaints that are more general, for many sf cons of today:

- *Scrap those biased "Codes of Conducts"!* They are misused to stop certain opinions and promote the Politically Correct. Why imitate communist dictatorships and suppression of free speech? On the 2019 Worldcon despite the CoC very clearly demanding no slander others, no calling names etc - it was to be perfectly OK by some idiot on the con's main stage to claim a famous, influential editor to be a "bloody fascist". Complaints about the violation lead to nothing. CoCs have also been used to oust people from cons for not agreeing with feminism or other ideologies. It's dysfunctional, biased private laws. The Law of the Land is enough.

You wouldn't believe the several pages of "codes of conduct" Glascon invented. Check eg at https://glasgow2024.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/glasgow_2024_pr5.pdf. Just one example: banned are "*comments that are intended to reinforce social structures of domination*". No one knows what such "social structures" are. It's the vocabulary of a Central Committee. Just *one* idiocy in several pages of stupidity. Many fans correctly oppose the dictatorship in China, and imposing stuff leaning the same way on an sf con is unacceptable. **GET RID OF THIS BLOODY SHIT!**

- *We shouldn't have a con "for everybody"*. These things are too big as it is (attendance was 7200, if I remember). I'll gladly get rid of gamers for instance, who took up one third of hall 4 (one of two main halls), people who have regressed to be fans of the Dark Medieval Ages, who spits out the imitating fanfiction, who adore Star Trek and other TV series, and so on. Mediafandom has very little with real fandom to do. If we do our best *not* to attract those, the Worldcon could perhaps become more manageable in size.

- *Morgage-Your-House Bheer Prices...* OK, admittedly this is a general problem for the times we live in. Still. (When craving blog, I found a Lidl grocery shop a mile away. Bought some cider there and sausage rolls and pork pies. I like British pub snacks. And Lidl had a WiFi that worked!)

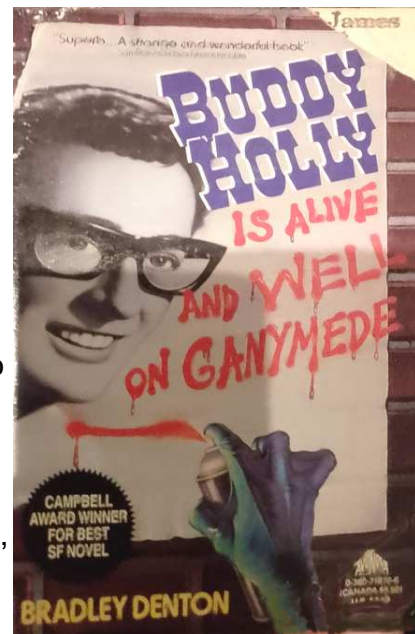


A Glasgow tram, from the horse-drawn era.

■ There nowadays tend to be *very few second-hand book tables* among the hucksters. There are now many small publishers, since electronic brains and laser /g/u/n/s printers make Small Press Publishing easier. And the numerous small press understandably only want to expose their own production. This does away with the second hand books. I used to love going through long stretches of reasonably cheap used paperbacks. You could find the strangest titles. But not this time, alas.

■ *Too many blasted panels!* I'm tired of panels. It's an unimaginative way to do a con program. The panels are slow. Panelist talk too long, afraid of losing the word if they don't. Many panelists are surprisingly unprepared. And if you've been in fandom for 48 years, you've heard all panels before. It all melts into one big, boring mumbling! I don't think cons should skip all panels, only half of them. By reducing the number of panels you could, for starters, cut down on the number of parallel programs. And create other types of program. I've often found that a lecture by someone who works with and knows a topic is far more value than a panel. How about more films or visual presentations? Perhaps short films with a commenting lecture? There are hundred of thousands of films on Youtube about science, space, literature, technology - they are never on regular TV. What about practical science demonstrations? Assembling some tech device on stage? Try a general debate on a topic where the audience is the "panel"? Space poetry slam? Write a story live? Many things may replace boring panels.

■ Hello, here's a fan *seeking the fan room, with a fan program!* (I know the Brits want to have it "programme", but I'm stuck in the mid Atlantic.) We need a planned, light-hearted fan program. There's one type of games I approve of, what we used to call Silly Games - games of fannish type. I



Have you read this JW Campbell Memorial winner?



The Huckster Hall. Unfortunately there weren't many second hand books.

once invented "meteor ball" for this, and copied Britfandoms pork pie race with peanuts.

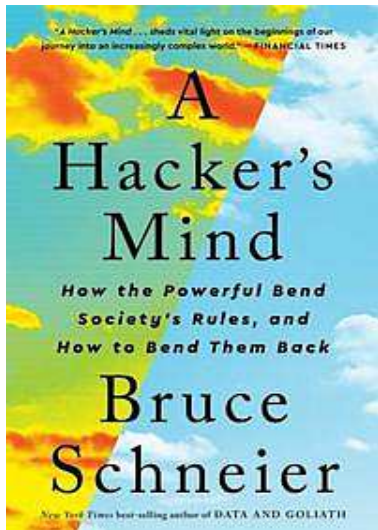
That said, over to my unsorted notes about Glascon. I counted to over 400 pictures on my phone after the con, and after long deliberations I have selected over 30 of them, a bit randomly, with captions that hopefully will lead us through Glascon. As the pics are sorted by time they are approximately chronological.

But it's impossible to cover everything. You forget some things. I'm generally bad with names and I was usually busy with missing most of the program. I think Glascon was too big, so it was difficult to find folks. There were several I knew or suspected were present who I never bumped into but would have liked to meet. And having a dozen program lines to choose from meant you choose nothing (or very little). Smaller cons are better.

I flew to Glasgow via Dutch KLM and had to spend some hours on the Schiphol airport to make the Glasgow connection. This airport is *huge*. I probably had to walk 3-4 km between the gates. I somehow lost my reading glasses on Schiphol but luckily I found that by eyes are still good enough to read without them. I had a half-read Swedish crime novel with me, that I threw away when finished to save weight. The luggage check - I only had a cabin sized backpack and another smaller bag - was really thorough. They wanted to check my belt, shoes, inside of my pockets, phone and computer had to be taken out. A preliminary exercise to the later game of How To Enter Glascon! I was constantly conscious about the luggage weight (expecting to have lots of books on the way back) but they never checked the weight.



The Press Room. An oasis, you could charge your phone and get coffee.



As I stepped off the airport bus, rather early, with plenty of time before Glascon, I took the wrong turn to the SEC venue, only having a hard to use Glasgow map on my phone. So I happened to stroll into a museum of the city's history. Entrance was free and as I inside found an interesting display of old Glasgow trams. I didn't mind since I like trams (they are building more tram routes in Stockholm these days). Because of the mishap I



Me and Bruce Schneier.

now knew exactly where I was and could get to the SEC easily - though it became a longer walk.

Glasgow has two tubes. First the city has an underground, with one (1!) line running in a circle. Why haven't they build more? Secondly, they have a looong walkway to the SEC inside a big tube. I went through it many times getting to a Lidl grocery for supplies. One could imagine it sa connecting tube between two space stations. It strikes me that modern event venues in fact tend to look like the inside of space colonies. (Stockholms new, huge Mall of Scandinavia was actually used as settings of the recent space film "Aniara".)

There wasn't a long line outside the SEC, because the long line was *inside* leading to the registration. Fortunately that line moved surprisingly fast. The the first thing I did after getting my badge fastened to my NASA t-shirt was to seek out the press room. I was registered as press (called having press



From the opening press conference.

credentials, not the type being TV and the big papers, but actually for "semi-pro"

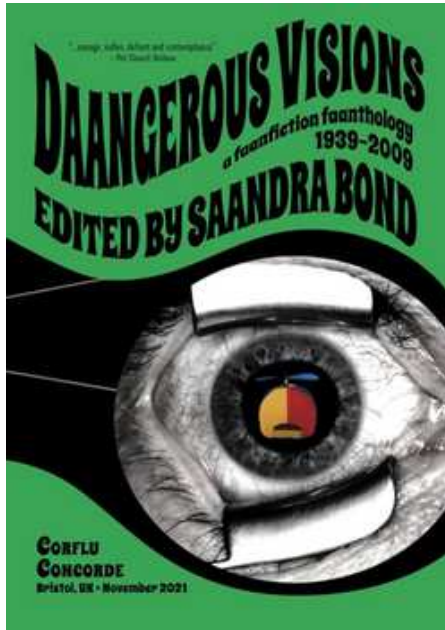


Snapped by coincidence. Background guy with "interesting ideas" of obtaining fan fund votes. (Accomplice Mr Belly missed the con.)



"Help Yourself" shelves. There were more books there from start.

DAST Magazine, abbreviation of Detective Agent Science fiction Thriller). I found a rather small but cosy press room. You could get coffee, tea and candy there, charge your phone, relax a little, leave your bag (somewhat better than leaving it elsewhere) and get some news about the con. I visited the press room often. I never went to many program items, maybe 1-2 per day (by chance or something that looked *really*



interesting), that plus 3-4 book releases and the convention bidding parties in the evenings and the Hugos was it for me. Some items were marked as being recorded to watch afterwards, and it's possible I have a look at some (it'll be on Glascons homepage., but why not put it on Youtube too!). I spent much time simply walking around, constantly bumping into people, faces I recognised or they recognised me. We would talk for a few minutes and move on, but it was a possible we would bump into each other again. Imants from Latvia, Jörgen Jörälv, Tommy Persson, Niels Dalgaard and others were among bump into fen (there were more but I'm bad with remembering names). Some I saw only in haste and never again. Poor people if they tried to endure all of the program...

After getting acquainted with the press room, I went to the special pre-opening press conference they had. The main people of the convention were presented there, so I didn't see any idea to go to the official

opening ceremony later. They presented Glascon for mundane media. There weren't many there. I saw very little about Glascon in the Mundane competitors to our fanzines. (If you have news clippings about Glascon, scan and send it to me!)

I went to the hucksters hall as soon as it opened. As mentioned there were very little second-hand books but a lot of small press publishers. I looked around the tables thoroughly but only bought one book, Sandra Bond's faanfiction collection *Daangerous Visions* (note spelling!), ie funny adventures with fans and entertaining fannish tales. This is the *original* fanfiction, but as mediafans stole the concept to make untalented imitations of TV-series and similar, the real fanfiction had to change spelling to faanfiction (or faaanfiction). A "faan" as opposed to a regular fan is a diehard 102% trufan!

In the middle of the hucksters was the art show. It had restrictions against bringing in big bags (like my backpack) but since it was surrounded by only a low metal fence I saw most of the art show from the outside. It seemed to have many talented artists, but was "nothing special". There seem to be so many people having a talent for drawing and painting. We will never run out of sf & fantasy art...

I spent a lot of time in the next hall, an exhibition hall for convention tables, some space and science societies,



Danish fandom mourns Carl-Eddy Skovgaard.



From one of the book releases, I believe So many new authors testing their luck these days.



Bill Higgins, space worker! I wore a NASA T-shirt during Glascon.

foreign fandom representatives, fandom clubs (Fanac.org, the Heinlein Society, fan funds, etc), activity corners for kids and teenagers (a huge swat of it dedicated to gamers), general info tables with lots of flyers and other printware, food outlets with tables with people eating.

<https://fanac.org/> was somewhere with their fanzine scanner. They claim they've

up to know scanned at least 500 000

(!) pages of sf zines, to be available on their website! That's faantastic!

Somewhere in the were middle were tables for unknown activity or rest (don't know exactly) surrounded by bookshelves where you could leave and take books. "Help yourself!" signs said. Most of the books I got on Glascon came from these freebie shelves. I looked for odd books, space and/or science oriented sf, humour, or books that for arbitrary reasons just caught my eye.



Bill Higgins had an interesting lecture, for a full hall, about the DART probe, that crashed into an asteroid to measure how much its orbit could be changed. A good test for a possible asteroid defence! It showed a probe could change an asteroid's orbit - something like 5% (in speed). It's a tiny change but useful if the object is dfiscovered early. (My NATO contest entry deals with an object hitting Earth. Something we should look out for!)

One of the strangest book titles was *Buddy Holly is Alive and Well on Ganymede* by Bradley Denton, "illogical, uproarious, yet ultimately memorable", says one review. Apparently it won the John W Campbell Memorial

Award in 1992 (something else than the Politically Correct Award

that really should continue to be the JW Campbell Award for Best New Writer!). Wiki says it has since been released free (as a CC), so you can check it for yourself eg here: <https://annas-archive.org/md5/59eab2d66fa025d003efa2da25753b75>

I found a handful of "regular" sf paperbacks from the 1970s, but avoided fantasy (I find fantasy increasingly repetitive and bland) or anything bragging about "gender" issues. Going back my backpack was more than full with ca 25 books. (I was worried about the weight, but once again weight wasn't checked on the way back.)



Had a chat with old-time fan and famous wood-figurine artist Urban Gunnarsson. His shop on Queen's Street was legendary, but now closed - Urban isn't getting younger, unfortunately. He still keeps a little wood-carving workshop at home. (Inserted is Urban's Harry Harrison in wood.) We talked eg about the attempt to revive the old Futura club in the early 1980s. I was a bit involved, helping out with the local "community" radio station Radio Futura.



Imants of Latvia. I tended to bump into him a lot at Glascon. Publisher, translator, long time fan. I've meet him on foreign cons for something like 25 years. Once a fan, always a fan.



Must be the Finnish party. We see Jukka Halme (2017 Worldcon chair) in charge.



The Finnish info table. with Jukka.

Another interesting book I found there was *A Hacker's Mind* by Bruce Schneier, discussing general non-computer "hacks" in the daily live, economics, law, etc. A "hack" is a trick within a system to create a result that wasn't intended but the system will allow. Any complex system will have built-in contradictions, which Kurt Gödel discovered already in the 1930s. Schneier is very well-known for his computer security work, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Schneier#:~:text=Bruce%20Schneier%20\(%2F%CB%88%CA%83n,%2C%20privacy%20specialist%2C%20and%20writer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Schneier#:~:text=Bruce%20Schneier%20(%2F%CB%88%CA%83n,%2C%20privacy%20specialist%2C%20and%20writer). As I had

grabbed the Hacker's Mind book I went to the press room, there was a bearded man in a flat cap, I lowered my eyes to read his badge, which read...Bruce Schneier! Oh Roscoe! I had just obtained his book and there was the author. He had himself put the book in the freebie shelves. I could hardly believe the coincidences involved. Schneier is obviously an sf



Dave Lally was there. Of course.

fan - otherwise he wouldn't attend Glascon - but as far as I know, many in computer circles like science fiction. The first primitive micro computer was named Altair (from a Certain TV Show), the world's first E-mail list was SF-Lovers, the creator of Sweden's first E-conference system Kom, Mr Jacob Palme, was a fan, We have Ulf Westblom publishing the world's maybe first computer printed fanzine *Mentat* (1967-70). I have personally met many

hackers how read sf.

Naturally I got *A Hacker's Mind* signed, and I read it ASAP and sent Mr Schneier some views (got a reply too). It's very worth reading.

I bumped into fen I knew all the time, and sometimes they bumped into me. Of the 7000+ attendees (far too many for the convention being comfortable, if you ask me) 100 were Sverifans, according to the press room data. Finnfans present were said to be...101. I didn't ask official stats on Danish fen there, nor for Norwegian fen, but Niels Dalgaard guessed Danes were perhaps 25 Danfans, and there was probably more Norway fen attending. The Danes had a gathering in memory of the local BNF Carl-Eddy Skovgaard who passed away just prior to Glascon. He was the



"Hello!" he said. Somehow he remembered me from earlier worldcons, but he'd slipped out of my memory. James Styles says the badge, and Google adds fanzine engagements. Remember fanzine fans, before we go extinct...

major craft behind the Danish SF Circle's extensive book publishing, and will be missed. I spent some time at their table, training my ears to pick up Danish. While Danish and Swedish are closely related (85% common vocabulary) Danish speech is a minor challenge, as Danes swallow parts of words and "push" certain syllables. I remember meeting Harry Harrison a few times. He'd lived in Denmark and still spoke some Danish (beside speaking Esperanto as a native)



I had quick peek into the meeting of the World SF Society biz meet. They have some cleaning up to do after China and the Communists.



Ellen Anderesen (I hope I remember the name correctly) of Norway.



Kristina Knavring (If I spelled the surname correctly) with husband. She's from the Linköping fandom originally. Used to attend the Confuse conventions.



No Scottish convention without bagpipes. These performed at the entrance to the SEC.

As said, I didn't attend much program - the Hugos, closing ceremony, an international fandom panel, a lecture on smashing



Another evening party. Could this be the Dutch one? Not sure.

asteroids, a panel on 1940's fandom, a fast visit to the WSFS business meet - but I did go to the different bidding parties in hall 4 as well as 3-4 book releases, usually by small publishers, in the auxiliary program site in the form of Crown Plaza Hotel. All these had blog to offer. An sf con is after all, or should be, a big party! Being a (minor) writer myself I still found it a bit difficult to connect to these new writers. It is as if most don't realise they are minor.



Original first Hugo from 1953, to Forry Ackerman. (No Hugos 1954, but resumed in 1955.)



JHH looked a bit raddled. J Jörälv (middle) showed me the LON Olsson volume he collected. Myself (right), an old fan and tired. Greybeard, Aldiss would say.

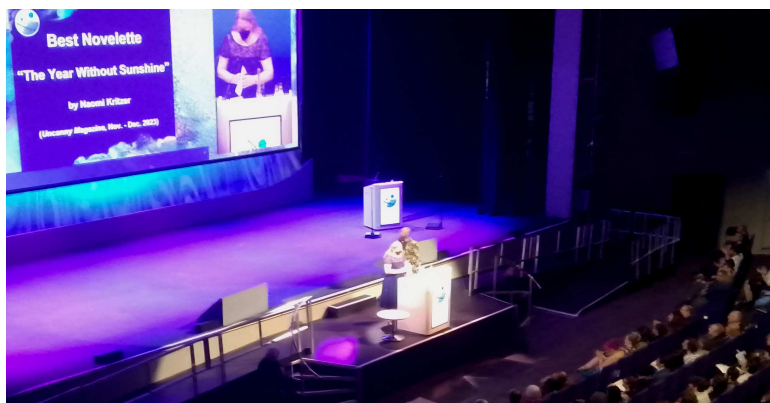
Few new writers reach stardom, but the Swedish and British markets are different. What goes over here is fantasy and "feelgood" and audiobooks are taking over.

You can could up with some missing program afterwards. The program listing marked that some was recorded and will be available on Glascon's homepage (I'm told until the end of this year). One missed item I may look up was a discussion about the 1940's New York Futurians (re: books by Pohl and knight). I'd be a misunderstanding to call them "Marxists". The Futurians were young, naive left-wingers affected by the Depression,

bouncing to the middle later in life. (The only Marxism you could count on America at the time came from certain Brothers M.)

The Crown Plaza had the advantage it didn't demand the darn bag check and they had an independent WiFi that actually worked! Alas, only a small minority of the program was there. The big events, like the Hugos, was in a special huge hall looking like and called the Armadillo.

There were reserved press seats for the Hugo ceremony but I missed it, as the press room liaison person forgot to send me the E-mail about it. I saw an



From the Hugos. Middle-aged white male writers, don't bother. Below the long line getting into the Hugos.



Per C Jörgensen, now working for the Norwegian Foreign Department, but also a long time fan. He has eg been guest editor of SFF Bulletin when some of my faanfiction appeared there.





Long lines to get in early one morning - due to the annoying bag checks.

enormous line outside the Armadillo gathering more than an hour in advance. Forgotten for a press seat I thought the place would be filled to capacity. Still, the heck with it I thought, and joined the line as one of the very last persons - and not only got in, but also had rather good seat on the first gallery maybe 20 metres from the stage. Not bad. Perhaps I would have been able to see the masquerade? (Which I skipped due to seating concerns. But I have over the years also become much less interested in people pretending to be princesses or barbarians.)

However, the Hugos were not that exciting (check <https://www.thehugoawards.org/>). Ca 3800 ballots were counted, which excepted 377 votes being declared illegal as they were block votes bought from China (who for wasn't disclosed but probably some Chinese writer who had happened to come in English translation).



From an international fandom panel, fen from - if I remember - Japan, Croatia, Poland and India.



From the panel on late 1940s fandom: Sandra Bond, Mark Plummer, Bradford Lyau (moderator's name right eluded me, with name label outside picture). Early fandom is very interesting! You should read books about it by eg Moskowitz, Warner, knight, Pohl, Hansen (some, like Moskowitz and Hansen, are free to download).

. I have for many, many years noted how both nominations and final winners heavily *discriminate the big majority of white, middle-age male writers*. I'm against the unfair plague of so called "affirmative action".

Male writers constitute ca 85% of all sf/f writers* but get less than half of that level of nominations

or awards. That a big majority is left out of recognition and awards and nominations goes to some who otherwise wouldn't be there, may partially explain why science fiction in later decades have become more uninteresting and boring (in *my* opinion, some may disagree). Another explanation is that the arrival of word processors have made authors lazier and more babbling. If you snub a hug, important category of writers and unfairly elevate another out of populist ideologies, the genre becomes tedious and uninteresting. Sf must be counter-mainstream and disobedient!

*Yes, have checked. I counted all authors mentioned under two letters of the SF Encyclopedia, and noted the sex of all below 80 years of age and not dead (finding active writers). I googled more info if anything was unclear. Result: 85% are male. They are since long systematically discriminated. It's very likely a big majority of them are also white and middle-aged, but as names don't give clues it'd be more difficult to check.



From the closing ceremony. The Armadillo auditorium is full.

Most evenings there were parties in hall 4. I remember eg the Finnish party, the Dutch party, a US party (must have been for Boskone), the Japanese party (which had some oddf Japanese food) and of course the Nordic party Friday evening. All had wine, beer, even stronger blog...but in nano tiny glasses. I tended to take several tiny glasses. I miss the old room parties.

The last program items started around 10 pm and around 11 the SEC site began looking rather empty and Glasgon was dead until next day. There were usually more late activity in the Crown Plaza hotel, having the bar and lobby and restaurant rather full. I never stayed long enough to know how long it went on. Basically I have the impression Glascon didn't go on long into the night, and it started early with first program items 9 or 10 am. As I came around 10 one morning I saw a long line outside, an effect of the annoying bag checks which



A cute mini display from Glascon, recreating an US 1940s naws stand with dolls and pulp mags (and the mags had all pages printed in mini format!). However a real 1940s news stand looked like the inserted b/w picture.

make getting inside and moving around take longer. Future Worldcon bids should declare where they stand on bag checks (so fen can vote against cons with bag checks).

My flight back began on Tuesday. The plsne Glasgow-Netherlands became more than an hour late, and Schiphol airport in Amsterdam is gigantic. Though I ran and ran - it must have been several km - I missed the connection flight to Stockholm with probably less than five minutes... So KLM offered a hotel for the night, with pizza and a bottle of bheer as night cap, so I instead had to catch the first very early shuttle bus Wednesday morning. I had about 25 books with me (the weight of the luggage

wasn't checked), most of it from the Help Yourself shelves mentioned.

This was my eighth Worldcon, that is all in Europe since Seacon 1979. It was not the best. The constant bag checking was damn annoying, no WiFi, too big (I probably missed several fen I'd like to meet), no fannish program, too many panels (an



From the Dead Dog Party at the crown Plaza. I don't remember much happened. Many had already left.

overrated form of programming), I miss the old style of parties, but after all I did meet a number of interesting people, the press room was a calm oasis, there were some interesting displays, some parties were OK (within their limitations).

BUT At least, Glascon wasn't held in China...

HISTORY CORNER

Your favourite history department will this time deal with beanies and faanfiction (sometimes spelled faanfiction) which is stories about and with fans. It was originally, starting 90 years ago, called fanfiction. But those suspicious mediafans stole the term in the late 1960s, so we real fen had to change the spelling. The earliest of their "fanfiction" was stories about a TV series with a flying saucer shaped spaceship. Today there's "fanfiction" about anything: Harry Potter, vampires, furry animals, games, talking ponies...

But first a revelation about the symbolic sf headgear that sf-fandom invented: *the propeller beanie!* I thought that the beanie that fan Ray Nelson made popular was something being around and he just picked it up. But Nelson actually invented it, made the first beanie himself for a minicon he arranged and made it popular through his cartoons - and the idea magically spread. I stumbled upon:

<https://todayinsci.com/Events/Patent/UlimatePropellerHead.htm>, "History of the Propeller Beanie and The Ultimate Propeller-Head Geek":

It is generally accepted to have been first improvised in Cadillac, Michigan, using a beanie (a visorless cap) in 1947, made by Ray Faraday Nelson. It quickly became an icon for science fiction fans to identify themselves, and a national fad. In a published interview, Nelson described how "In the summer of 1947, I was holding a regional science fiction convention in my front room and it culminated with myself and some Michigan fans dressing up in some improvised costumes to take joke photographs, simulating the covers of science fiction magazines. The headgear which I designed for the space hero was the first propeller beanie. It was made out of pieces of plastic, bit of coat-hanger wire, some beads, a propeller from a model airplane, and staples to hold it together." Shortly thereafter, it was worn by George Young of Detroit at a world convention, where it was an enormous hit. Nelson thereafter frequently drew cartoons for fanzines portraying science fiction fans wearing propeller beanies...it was further popularized by a television program, "Time For Beany". The show was hugely popular with children, and even adults. The title

character was a propeller beanie-wearing puppet named Beany whose sock-puppet friend called Cecil the Seasick Sea

Serpent was voiced and controlled by an unknown Stan Freeberg!) Starting in 1949, it ran five times a week for five years. It was hugely popular with children, and even some adults (including Albert Einstein, according to a Stan Freeberg reminiscence)

Toy makers that saw the popular TV show were soon to offer propeller beanies. In 1948 there were ads (above) in *The Billboard* magazine. Similar adds followed in coming issues, as more toy makers produced propeller beanies:

The targets of these advertisers in *The Billboard* magazine included parks, skating rinks and carnival workers. No doubt with these propeller beanies given as prizes on the games, at county fairs many children were seen walking along the midway with



Ray Nelson's cartoons popularised the propeller beanie.

THE NEW SENSATION!
SELLING LIKE WILDFIRE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

Whirling Beanie
PROPELLER HATS

ALL COLORS-TWO TONE-ALL FELT-FIRST QUALITY
\$3.50 Per Doz. — \$33.00 a Gross
Immediate Shipment.
25% Deposit Required—Balance C. O. D.

HARRIS NOVELTY CO.
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HATS

Assorted Bright
2-Tone Colors.
1st Quality
Felt.

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25% Deposit—Balance C. O. D.
Immediate Shipment.

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Phone: MU. 3-2324

JET PROPELLER BEANIE CAPS
IN COLORS!

The Best in the Market!

1 Doz. **\$3.60** 6 Doz. **\$21.00**
1 Gross **\$39.00** Lots of 5 Gr. **\$36.00**
Per Gr.

A DEPOSIT IS REQUIRED WITH ORDER
Send for FREE Illustrated Catalogue of
1000 Hot Items

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THE WAR IS ON!
ATOMIC
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(1st Quality Felt)

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Doz. Gr.

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WILL NOT BE
UNDERSOLD
BY ANYONE

Beautiful 6 1/2" Parisian Dolls, movable
hands, complete with Feather Backs, \$24.85
Gr. We manufacture the finest Feather
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Send \$1 for complete line of samples.
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propellers on their hats turning in the wind. By 1958, the propeller beanie had become established in American life as demonstrated as part of the U.S. pavillion exhibit of "How America Lives" at the Brussels Fair... The giant cereal manufacturer Kellogg's joined the fad, offering a propeller hat as a premium kids could obtain by mailing in the requisite number of box tops.

Also have a look at: <https://potrzebie.blogspot.com/2010/04/in-article-by-dale-killingbeck-ray.html>

And from there on, the propeller beanie was unstoppable. And it's ours!

Now faanfiction. I have myself written a little of it. I'm not counting "tuckerised" stories using names of fen (like eg the stencilled novel *Blodets brödraskap*, 1982, "Brotherhood of Blood") but eg the first story about Ture Storm, from 1978, and the same year I also wrote "The Day Mundane Stood Still". Both were rather crappy stories, but I have continued to use the Storm figure. In the early to mid 1990s I did the two Swede Ishes fanthologies, which had some faanfiction (my own and by others) and later that decade I told about "The Man from LOS", ie Worldcon GoH Lars Olov Strandberg who was portrayed as a visiting alien documenting Earth life with his eternal camera. In the early naughties I let my old faanfiction character appear in "Storm Over Fantarctica", where Ture Storm comes to the South Pole - he aimed for South Poland - by accident and has to solve a murder after finding red blood in the snow (it showed to be corflu...). It was in the APA SFF Bulletin here:

<https://percjorgensen.com/hobby/fanziner/sff134.pdf>



In the mid-naughties the same zine had my most ambitious faanfiction, novelette "Yesterday's World Today Again" (my old newszine slogan). A fan much like myself is thrust back in time to the 1940s, kickatstarts a Swedish fandom, saves Jules Verne Magasinet and engages several well-known fen in their younger years. Involving fans and fandom makes it fanfiction, but it has also been professionally published:

https://www.bokus.com/bok/9788726787443/gardagens-varld-idag-igen/?srsltid=AfmBOopVxQYiMKfIHAE5qjPhHE_bIE8x3oLYfCJ1998w36162rAE-q9t



Ture found mysterious red stains in the Fantarctic snow. Had there been a murder? "I should call in DI Frost!"

My interest in faanfiction got an extra push when I on Glascon saw (and acquired) Sandra Bond's *Daangerous Visions* (spelling!) fanthology from 2020, <https://www.amazon.sg/Daangerous-Visions-faanfiction-faanthology-1939-2009/dp/B09JDWT1V3> So I began writing a new faanfiction story myself, and dug up a couple of fancient stories, and thought: Let History Corner go into faanfiction! So this time you get two 1930s faanfiction examples, by none other than HP Lovecraft (as co-author, at least probably) and a tale by the legendary Bob Tucker. To this I add my own newer story, which however will have many history references.

The first story is often cited as the very first fanfiction (as it was spelled before Potter and furries) and beside one Barlow none other than HP Lovecraft is claimed to be co-author. Howard Philips had a certain knack for writing lighter stuff too. This story went around in his "circle", a group of correspondents to HPL (who was a very frequent letter writer) constituting something like a proto-fandom. Harry Warner gives due attention to the Lovecraft Circle in his fandom history study *All Our Yesterdays*.

We'll finish with the modest faanfiction attempt by your Hard-Working Editor, but before that Huge Waste of Electrons you get Bob Tucker writing as Hoy Ping Pong, in a story from the LoCol of *Wonder Stories* in the 1930s.

If you're interested in faanfiction and other fun fanzine stuff, check the Ansible Editions at <https://ae.ansible.uk/>, the fanzine repository <https://fanac.org/> or the Rusty Havelin collection at the university of Iowa <https://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/hevelin>

(In both the HPL and the Tucker stories below, some pictures are by AI. But AIs seems to have big difficulties understanding fandom. AIs fail to produce propeller beanie ans don't understand mimeos...)



The Battle that Ended the Century (or Ms Found in a Time Machine)

By R H Barlow an (probably) HP Lovecraft

(<https://www.hplovecraft.com/writings/texts/fiction/bec.aspx>, originally from an anonymous letter circulated in the Lovecraft Circle around 1934)

On the eve of the year 2001 a vast crowd of interested spectators were present amidst the romantic ruins of Cohen's Garage, on the former site of New York, to witness a fistic encounter between two renowned champions of the strange-story firmament - Two-Gun Bob, the Terror of the Plains, and Knockout Bernie, the Wild Wolf of West Shokan. The Wolf was fresh from his correspondence course in physical training, sold to him by Mr. Arthur Leeds. Before the battle the auguries were determined by the venerated Thibetan Lama Bill Lum Li, who evoked the primal serpent-god of Valusia and found unmistakable signs of victory for both sides. Cream-puffs were inattentively vended by Wladislaw Brenryk - the partakers being treated by the official surgeons, Drs. D. H. Killer and M. Gin Brewery.

The gong was sounded at 39 o'clock, after which the air grew red with the gore of battle, lavishly flung about by the mighty Texas slaughterer. Very shortly the first actual damage occurred - the loosening of several teeth in both participants. One, bouncing out from the Wolf's mouth after a casual tap from Two-Gun, described a parabola toward Yucatan; being retrieved in a hasty expedition by Messrs. A. Hijacked Barrell and G. A. Scotland. This incident was used by the eminent sociologist and ex-poet Frank Chimesleep Short, Jr., as the basis of a ballad of proletarian propaganda with three intentionally defective lines. Meanwhile a potentate from a neighbouring kingdom, the Effjay of Akkamin (also known to himself as an amateur critic), expressed his frenzied disgust at the technique of the combatants, at the same time peddling photographs of the fighters (with himself in the foreground) at five cents each.

In round two the Shokan Soaker's sturdy right crashed through the Texan's ribs and became entangled in sundry viscera; thereby enabling Two-Gun to get in several telling blows on his opponent's unprotected chin. Bob was greatly annoyed by the effeminate squeamishness shewn by several onlookers as muscles, glands, gore, and bits of flesh were spattered over the ringside. During this round the eminent magazine-cover anatomist Mrs. M. Blunderage portrayed the battlers as a pair of spirited nudes behind a thin veil of conveniently curling tobacco-smoke, while the late Mr. C. Half-Cent provided a sketch of three Chinamen clad in silk hats and galoshes - this being his own original conception of the affray. Among the amateur sketches made was one by Mr. Goofy Hooey, which later gained fame in the annual Cubist exhibit as "Abstraction of an Eradicated Pudding".

In the third round the fight grew really rough; several ears and other appurtenances being wholly or partially detached from the frontier battler by the Shokan Shocker. Somewhat irritated, Two-Gun countered with some exceptionally sharp blows; severing many fragments from his aggressor, who continued to fight with all his remaining members. At this stage the audience gave signs of much nervous excitement - instances of trampling and goring being frequent. The more enthusiastic members were placed in the custody of Mr. Harry Brobst of the Butler Hospital for Mental Diseases.

The entire affair was reported by Mr. W. Lablache Talcum, his copy being revised by Horse Power Hateart. Throughout the event notes were taken by M. le Comte d'Erlette for a 200-volume novel-cycle in the Proustian manner, to be entitled *Morning in September*, with illustrations by Mrs. Blunderage. Mr. J. Caesar Warts frequently interviewed both battlers and all the more important spectators; obtaining as souvenirs (after a spirited struggle with the Effjay) an autographed quarter-rib of Two-Gun's, in an excellent state of preservation, and three finger-nails from the Wild Wolf. Lighting effects were supplied by the Electrical Testing Laboratories under the supervision of H. Kanebrake. The fourth round was prolonged eight hours at the request of the official artist, Mr. H. Wanderer, who wished to put certain shadings of fantasy into his representation of the Wolf's depleted physiognomy, which included several supernumerary details supplied by the imagination. The climax came in round five, when the Texas Tearer's left passed entirely through Battling Bernie's face and brought both sluggers to the mat. This was adjudged a finish by the referee - Robertieff Essovitch Karovsky, the Muscovite Ambassador - who, in view of the Shokan Shocker's gory state, declared the latter to be essentially liquidated according to the Marxian ideology. The Wild Wolf entered an official protest, which was promptly overruled on the ground that all the points necessary to technical death were theoretically present. The gonfalons sounded a fanfare of triumph for the victor, while the technically vanquished was committed to the care of the official mortician, Mr. Teaberry Quince. During the ceremonies the theoretical corpse strolled away for a bite of bologna, but a tasteful cenotaph was supplied to furnish a focus for the rites. The funeral

procession was headed by a gaily bedecked hearse driven by Malik Taus, the Peacock Sultan, who sat on the box in West Point uniform and turban, and steered an expert course over several formidable hedges and stone walls. About half way to the cemetery the cortège was rejoined by the corpse, who sat beside Sultan Malik on the box and finished his bologna sandwich - his ample girth having made it impossible to enter the hastily selected cenotaph. An appropriate dirge was rendered by Maestro Sing Lee Bawledout on the piccolo; Messrs. De Silva, Brown, and Henderson's celebrated aria, "Never Swat a Fly", from the old cantata *Just Imagine*, being chosen for the occasion. The only detail omitted from the funeral was the interment, which was interrupted by the disconcerting news that the official gate-taker - the celebrated financier and publisher Ivar K. Rodent, Esq. - had absconded with the entire proceeds. This omission was regretted chiefly by the Rev. D. Vest Wind, who was thereby forced to leave unspoken a long and moving sermon revised expressly for the celebration from a former discourse delivered at the burial of a favourite horse.

Mr. Talcum's report of the event, illustrated by the well-known artist Klarkash-Ton (who esoterically depicted the fighters as boneless fungi), was printed after repeated rejections by the discriminating editor of the *Windy City Grab-Bag* - as a broadside by W. Peter Chef, with typographical supervision by Vrest Orton.. This, through the efforts of Otis Adelbert Kline, was finally placed on sale in the bookshop of Smearum & Weep, three and a half copies finally being disposed of through the alluring catalogue description supplied by Samuelus Philanthropus, Esq.

In response to this wide demand, the text was finally reprinted by Mr. De Merit in the polychromatic pages of Wurst's *Weakly Americana* under the title "Has Science Been Outmoded? or, The Millers in the Garage". No copies, however, remain in circulation; since all which were not snapped up by fanatical bibliophiles were seized by the police in connexion with the libel suit of the Wild Wolf, who was, after several appeals ending with the World Court, adjudged not only officially alive but the clear winner of the combat.

Real identities of characters in the story (you'll recognise some names, and try to google the others).

Two-Gun Bob - Robert E. Howard
 Knockout Bernie, the Wild Wolf of West Shokan - Bernard Austin Dwyer, of West Shokan, N.Y.
 Bill Lum Li - William Lumley
 Wladislaw Brenryk - H. Warner Munn
 D. H. Killer - David H. Keller
 M. Gin Brewery - Miles G. Breuer
 A. Hijacked Barrell - A. Hyatt Verrill
 G. A. Scotland - George Allan England
 Frank Chimesleep Short, Jr - Frank Belknap Long, Jr.
 The Effjoy of Akkamin - Forrest J. Ackerman
 Mrs. M. Blunderage - Margaret Brundage (artist for *Weird Tales*)
 Mr. C. Half-Cent - C. C. Senf (artist for *Weird Tales*)
 Mr. Goofy Hooey - Hugh Rankin (artist for *Weird Tales*)
 W. Lablache Talcum - Wilfred Blanch Talman
 Horse Power Hateart - Howard Phillips Lovecraft
 M. le Comte d'Erlette - August Derleth (author of *Evening in Spring*)
 J. Caesar Warts - Julius Schwartz
 H. Kanebrake - H. C. Koenig (employed by the Electrical Testing Laboratories)
 H. Wanderer - Howard Wandrei
 Robertieff Essovitch Karovsky - Robert S. Carr
 Teaberry Quince - Seabury Quinn
 Malik Taus, the Peacock Sultan - E. Hoffmann Price
 Sing Lee Bawledout - F. Lee Baldwin
 Ivor K. Rodent - Hugo Gernsback
 Rev. D. Vest Wind - Unknown
 Klarkash-Ton - Clark Ashton Smith
 Windy City Grab-Bag - *Weird Tales*
 W. Peter Chef - W. Paul Cook
 Smearum & Weep - Dauber & Pine
 Samuelus Philanthropus - Samuel Loveman
 Mr. De Merit - A. Merritt (author of *The Dwellers in the Mirage*)
 Wurst's *Weekly Americana* - Hearst's *American Weekly*



An AI's impression of HP Lovecraft.

Report of th 196th Convention

By Hoy Ping Pong (Bob Tucker) - SFL Member No. 12345678901

(LoCol of Wonder Stories, Nov 1934, https://archive.org/details/Wonder_Stories_v06n06_1934-11/)

The 196th annual convention of the Science Fiction League was held the week of Juno 45 to 51, 2132 A.D., or 197 SFL, at Ackermanville, California. A goodly crowd was there, nearly tripling the original population, but all delegates were comfortably soused. I mean housed, with the exception of three Hindoos from Skindoo, who had brought their pet elephants along. As Mayor Ackerman doesn't allow elephants in houses, the boys from Skindoo were forced to sleep in the park with their pets. The first day was spent in seeing the model city of Ackermanville. It even boasted of a large printing house, where STFICTION STORIES and MACABRE TALES, F. J. Ackerman, editor, were published. Free copies were given all delegates, but I think Headquarters later got the bill.

The second day, the convention formally opened in Ackerman Hall. Promptly at nine o'clock. President Ackerman banged his gavel on the tabletop. Unfortunately, however, a delegate from Peru had gone to sleep on the table, and the gavel descended on his head. The victim didn't complain, so after he was taken away still unconscious, the meeting progressed.

First up was Delegate Foozle from Australia. The Australian gentleman complained that he had talked 345 people into joining his chapter, but each of the 345 wanted to be Director. The gentleman wanted the President to refuse the newcomers admittance, because he wanted to be Director himself. It was a bad situation, and strategy was needed. Everybody waited with bated breath for the President's decision. To pacify the whole mob, the President formed 346 different chapters, allowed each of the 345 to join one chapter, and be Director rather loose? of it. The first gentleman was allowed to keep his Directorship, and everybody was happy, because each chapter contained one member, who was Director of that chapter. Applause was rendered.

Then two travellers from Mars took the floor the floor and gave a very vivid account of the conditions on Mars. They said that the Martians were actually starving! A motion was made to take up a collection for them, and such was done. Later the Treasurer announced the sum of the collection: 3 dimes, a plugged penny, and 2456 shirt buttons. Applause was again rendered.

The Special investigation Committee interrupted here to inform the house that last year, after a collection had been taken for starving Martians, the Treasurer had spent the money on ice cream sodas. The President ordered the committee down however, for he had consumed some of the aforementioned sodas, and didn't want it known.

As it was lunch time, the entire house walked out then, and made for the "Ye Ackerman Cafe" across the street, where a very excellent meal was served them. Somebody suggested saving the scraps for the starving Martians, but was thrown out. Then President Ackerman presented the diners with their bills and he was thrown out.

Once started, there was no stopping. The rest of the second day was lost in revelry. A coupla delegates from Egypt found a cache of rare wines in the Presi- dent's cellar, and informed the town. Everybody got drunk, including the elephants.

The Ackerman Special Police, expecting just such an emergency, boarded themselves up in the city hall and stayed there until dark. Meanwhile, the merrymakers had discovered the printing plant, and breaking in just as the latest issue was going to press, proceeded to change STFICTION STORIES and



Tucker's faanfic started the LetterCol in a 1934 issue of Wonder stories. Below two AI pictures, but the story connection seems



Did the AI put a dildo on the femmefan's table? Naughty.

MACABRE TALES, F. J. Ackerman, Editor, to suit themselves. Recent reports indicate that those two magazines never enjoyed a bigger sales boom than that issue. In fact they boomed right out of existence.

However, to get back. The delegates went about the town, shooting it up with their rocket guns and light-pistols. It required the next four days for the police to gather up the stragglers and deposit them in Ackerman Hall for the final session.

This time, remembering the accident of the first day, the President first put his hand down on the tabletop and felt for any heads that might be there. There was none, so he brought the gavel down right on his own hand. Time out was taken for ten minutes while the President informed the delegates how he felt. The Ackerman Fire Dept. was called in to extinguish the smoking rafters, so warm were the President's words.

When order had again been restored, the Missionary Reports were asked for. Five minutes were wasted trying to get Missionary Gadzook on his feet. He reported that the missionary work of converting heathen Saturnites into respectable Science Fiction Leaguers was progressing fine. He said that only last month, he alone had converted four, and out of the four only 3 later deserted. When asked what became of the fourth, he said that the unfortunate wretch died of fright, upon viewing the SFL officials for the first time.

Somebody arose and made a move that the officials mentioned be rewarded, but was booed down.

Next Missionary Ka Plump arose and reported that his work on Pluto was going fine, altho "he could use a little more money." (Applause here.) He said that he had only lost two converts out of the last hundred. When asked how he lost them he said that they had refused to kick in with their weekly salaries, and he chopped their heads off. A medal of honor was given Missionary Ka Plump.

As this ended the missionary reports, time was taken out for lunch. Remembering the skinning they had got before, the delegates shunned the Cafe, and went down street to "Ye Olde Coffee Pottee Inne, F. J. Ackermanee, Propee." One of the Skindoo elephants tried to get in also, and was stuck in the door, penning the delegates in for nearly an hour, until the Ackerman Derrick Co. came to the rescue.

Once more back in Ackerman Hall, for the closing session, the delegates sat quiet, waiting for the President to speak. He arose and began:

"Gentlemen (somebody snickered) this year's convention has been very profitable. I have a bill here for \$850.12 which I will send to Headquarters and let Charles D. Hornig the IX worry about it. This covers all damages you boys have done here. I hope you all have had as fine a time as I have had, and I want to see you all out to the convention next year, which will be held in Ackermanville, North Carolina. In closing, let me say that next year's password will be 'Fugwump,' and that the last train leaves tonight at 9:30. Don't miss it!"

Applesauce, I mean applause, was given at this point. True to his word, Engineer Ackerman pulled the Ackerman Flyer out of Ackermanville that night at nine-thirty, with one delegate aboard. Nobody seems to know how that one got there, but somebody suggested that he might have wandered aboard unknowingly while drunk.

Reports have since reached Headquarters that it took the Ackerman Special Police two full months to round every last delegate and send him home. The last was finally found at the Ackerman Zoo, playing Tarzan, nearly two and one-half months after the convention closed. Somebody else left his elephant, and as the freight bill to Skindoo is too high, the elephant is still wandering around Ackermanville, eating Ackerman grass.

The Last Fan

by Ahrvid Engholm (original for this issue)

After the Big Postage Raise fandom was dead. No more *ka-chunk!* in the mailbox. No more ethereal fragrance of corflu. The Last Fan sat alone in a bar.

There was a Spock on the door.

Into the almost deserted bar entered a strange character in a primary-colour shirt. He was visible in the big bar mirror of The White Hedgehog (announced in a Futura typeface). The Last Fan saw the visitor looking around through the mirror. The figure had some plastic applied to the ears to make them pointed and was



What is Forry doing with this girl in underwear?

unusually pale. Being indoors all day watching TV perhaps. The character made a double-V sign with a hand as he approached and Spock...eh, spoke:

"Live long and prosper!" the dressed up jester said. "I'm here to..."

"Leave me alone!" Last Fan said. He was actually named Robert. It was unclear if his parents named him after a Certain Author, but he had a t-shirt saying "Cheers for Bobby Heinlein!" nonetheless.

"So you can be proud and lonely..."

"...and be a fan," Bobby said with a sigh. "But there is no fandom to be a fan in anymore, no true trusty trufandom at least. You folks destroyed it, you know. You are just like Yngvi. A louse."

The masqueraded visitor remained silent as if he didn't wholly grasp the accusation. Bobby kept silent too, depressed over that even if he emptied his bank account - meager as it was - he couldn't afford the postage for a new issue of *Stupefying Stories of Explosive Space Yarns*. Perhaps it was because of this he was so harsh to the trekkie who had tracked him. He wanted to suffer in solitude.

He had recently received several messages from former fannish friends about that they were ready to give up and gafiate. And the Worldcon was kidnapped by folks dressed like Spiderman, issuing new "Codes of Conduct" that would have made the Chinese communists envious. On top of all the Hugos was taken over by "graphic novels" and "games or interactive work". Bobby was sure he was the last true fan around.

"Your crowd is masquerading clowns! You copy TV series, plagiarise the 'universe' of others, sew superhero costumes," he exclaimed. "You cherish pieces of plastic and waste days and weeks on beeping computer games...you destroyed fandom! Lowbrow effect-seeking media kidnaps all kids so there's nothing left for us who can read and write. We who unlike you have fun and dwell in serious speculations about science and the future..."

They and the new postage killed fandom, Bobby thought. And internet too, limiting people to express thoughts in 240 characters max. Some gafiators also had the silly excuse that they died, as the core of fandom was over 80. But hadn't you heard? Death will not release you!

"Blogtender!," Bobby hollered. "More rocket fuel! Are you having any 'Mr Spock'?"

Blog doesn't refer to a diary homepage, of course, but something better and liquid. Something pan-galactic gargle-blasting

"No thanks. I'm on duty. Captain Kirk wants us on the wagon in the spaceship."

The blogman at the counter was used to the rocket fuel request, and filled a glass with a liquid that if concentrated and combined with LOX (not LoCs, Liquid Oxygen) would indeed work as rocket fuel.

"Hey, 'on duty'?", Bobby said. "'On duty' where? Do you really believe you're part of a spaceship crew? This is a bar in an ordinary city, not USS Intercourse or whatever your worshipped warship is called."

"What's wrong with liking a TV show?", Spock said.

"Look, you not only 'like' it. You literally try to live in it, want to be a part of it. You imitate the clothes, create made-up drawings of all decks of the imagined spaceship, construct false languages, memorise every word of the adventures... You try to erase the border between reality and a fantasy. It's sick!"

The Last Fan was so upset that his blog splashed. It was the most upset he'd been since the last supplier of twiltone had ran out of his stock.

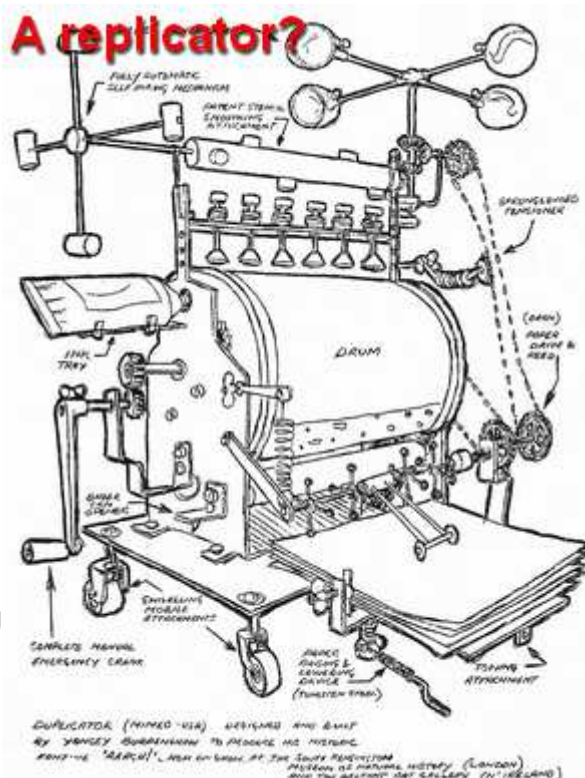
"You sound like a damn Klingon..."

"Typical. You sound like those 'Klingons' actually exist! Let me explain: to have a healthy interest you need a realistic angle to it. You must be able to see it from the outside. But trying to become *a part of it* is the opposite. To dive into it makes it impossible to separate what's real from imagination. Aiming for being a fantasy is unhealthy."

The fake Spock took up a small plastic box and studied it.

"My tricorder doesn't register any illness..."

"Sure? No Nydahl's Disease? Come on, there are no 'tricorders'! That's a stupid piece of plastic."



The wannabe Spock looked stunned and became silent for a few moments. He then shook the piece of plastic to get it to work again.

"But what about you and your silly fanzines!" he finally said.

"There is nothing silly in expressing yourself. Fanzine publishing is quite creative. Lots of groups have picked up the fanzine idea - even believing they invented it themselves - and most of all fanzines exist, or at least used to exist. They represent communication between real living people in a real world. Whatever you say, we trufans dealt with things that exist. There are fanzines, the sf magazines are real, there were persons named Hugo Gernsback and Harry Warner, and so on. The fanzines would sometimes glide away into humorous skits, but we always knew what what it was all about. Fandom had a certain intellectual level. You media types, on the other hand, don't care if you can put five letters together without misspelling. And you lack humour. When you imitate something it must be a true copy. Deviations or twists, what makes humour, are scoffed..."

"Your analysis is highly illogical! I have a cosmic mind..."

"So what do you do? Pfui! People without humour are dangerous, as they lack self-awareness and perspective. This Spock figure you try to be doesn't exist. There's logic for you! Get out of your self-deception. Fandom on the other hand is about literature all things textual. Writing stories, fanzines, LoCs...at least, it was so earlier. There is no fandom anymore, alas. Childish toys have taken over. The stuff you call 'sci-fi'."

"But all this *is* sci-fi," the Spock pretender protested.

"Perhaps. But it's not *esseff*. We even used to call it stf, from scientifiction, never 'sci-fi'. Already in the 1960s newspaper columnists who didn't know better picked up the term almighty Forry invented and glued it to flying saucers invading Earth and similar idiocy..."

"Ah, sweet idiocy!"

"You said it! LASFS in fancient times. Quarrelling but also filling the clubhouse with creativity. The mimeos must roll! They were real fans back then, with all their pros and cons. Evans, Ashley, Daugherty, Laney and the rest. "

"Never heard of this 'Laney'. What episode did he appear in?"

"No Star Trek episode, stupid. Francis T Laney was a fan. Have you heard of Willis?"

"Ah, Hal Willis from The Original Series, episode The Doomsday Machine!"

"No, Walt Willis, from Ireland, the most famous fan at his time, well known in all of fandom, fandom's leading expert and critic. He who did The Enchanted Duplicator..

"You mean he constructed the Replicators our ship has on board?"

"No. Duplicator, dummy! Stencils. Corflu. And once more, there are no replicators, your 'ship' doesn't exist! It's a TV studio. Get a life! You media types never create anything original. You imitate superheroes from the comics. You build models of spaceships from movies and TV. You write 'fanfiction' to mimic Rowling and Harry Potter, and Tolkien and the elves, and Jordan, and others. Real fanfiction was something else. Not that Rowling is popular now with some crowds, as she has dared to observe that women are real women, men are real men..."

(And furry creatures from Alpha Centauri are real furry creatures from Alpha Centauri, Bobby thought, and then added:)

"And what on Earth is wrong with those nincompoops that dress up in polyester fur and believe they are animals? I saw an interview with one of those 'furries'. The guy confessed that he had an intense urge to be a sheep! Baa! I guess that would at least rise his IQ level... Blogtender, I need more rocket fuel! How about the Sevagram!"

The Blogtender remembered past days when Bobby and his friends enjoyed enough bheer for it to become a bheer can tower to the moon. The man who ruled the bar understood this obscure Van Vogt reference as he had hosted slans for a long time.

"Seagrams is on its way!" the blogtender echoed. "On the rocks?"

"No, in some sort of container. Where was I..."

"You were in this bar," the blogtender said. "Nothing for your friend?"

"He isn't exactly my friend. Claims he is from the planet Vulcan. He just walked in here looking for me... Hey, spaceman. What did you want with me?"

"Well, we heard you were here and want to interest you for our Comic Con XXVI..."

The whiskey landed, Bob took a sip and it tasted smooth!



"Why do you call it 'Exexwhy'? There's nothing 'comic' in your sad gatherings, by the way. You sell 'tickets' and not memberships. You invite B actors who have autograph signings for hefty sums. The kids stand in endless lines. There is heaps of plastic junk exhibited behind glass. Sometimes a confused real sf author is invited as an alibi and just like Asimov lies about how much he loves Star Trek. There's something deeply superficial over it and it's all on commercial terms. There's little or no connection to the history and traditions of science fiction or sf fandom on those cons. The mediacon hucksters sell posters with fake signatures, embroidered scarves, necklaces of cheap brass, spaceship models, overpriced boxes with dolls, plastic 'rayguns', masks and clothes in disharmonic superhero colours. But no books."

"Come on, there are books..." Spook interrupted.

"Perhaps comic 'books' so you can look at the pictures. I've often wondered why thin booklets with insane fantasies are called 'books'. But did you know that Dr Wertham who warned against the insane comics, wrote another book where he praised - as the best thing since sliced hydrocarbons - the world of fanzines! That fandom's fanzines showed valuable creativity and was a unique form of communication. Dr Wertham, come back - all is forgiven! Media cons meanwhile make true the child's play uncreative goshwowboyohboy attitude *Time* magazine described already about the 1939 Worldcon."

After a pause, Bob added: "And you came here because you want me as a hostage for your feeble gathering..."

Spock looked confused. He had tried to order "Romulan Ale" but had to settle for a glass of water. (Weakling!)

Bobby meanwhile sat and dreamed. He remembered the room parties decades ago before cons degenerated to "event centres" and postmodern universities and still used hotels. Some parties went totally 770, with fans climbing over each other, having breaths so ethanoled that a cigarette risked releasing a fire-eating dragon. There were a two fen per square metre and a bathtub full of bheer. In a corner someone tortured a stencil on a portable "typewriter" (a mechanical laptop that creates the printout as you write).

Compared to this, what would Comical Con Exexwhy have to offer? Perhaps he could find fan material there he could turn away from the Dark Side? Oh no, not thinking Star Wars...! If I go there, Bobby thought, it's more like Know Your Enemy. And if I go there I could at least tell them of the good old days. His hand touched his hip pocket, where the latest issue of *Analog* was nonchalantly tucked in. Mr Campbell should have kept the name *Astounding*, Bobby reflected. Bad luck that things *digital* proved much more future than things analog. But how would the advocate of the Hieronymus Machine and Dean Drive know?

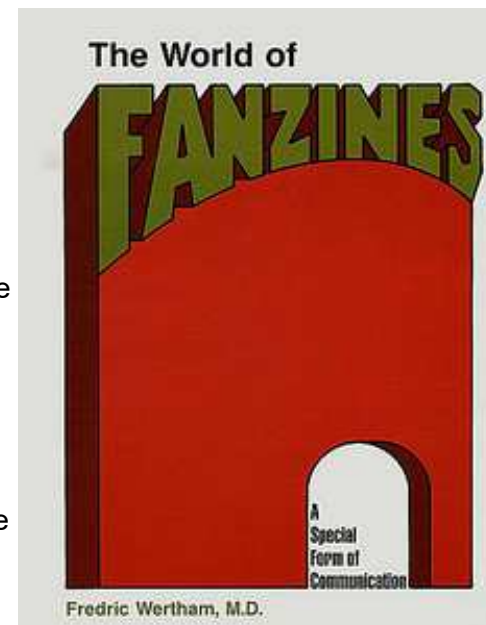
"I have to think about your comical con", he told 'Spock'.

"Fine," the trekkie replied. "Get me on my communicator, when you have decided. Last I heard our transporter is being adjusted today. I'll check but otherwise I leave the ordinary way. A pleasure to meet you."

"My displeasure," Bobby muttered and waved to the barman. "More rocket fuel!"

The Spock figure took out his "communicator", made by Samsung and fittingly named...Galaxy. He asked for someone called Scottie to be "beamed". And then he went to exit The White Hedgehog

The door didn't dilate.



He hated comics but praised fanzines! <https://annas-archive.org/md5/7689230182b1c8423ee2c3ea366a36fe>

Mailing Comments

As this superior literary product also goes to some APAs (ask Your Editor for How To Join - we need you!) time for boring mailing comments. (BTW, thinking hard about changing not publishing LoCs... Problem is that the zine already tends to be too long. But if you have anything really witty with high IQ content to share, try it.)

William McCabe: It sounds like there may be hope for your health. Let's hop so! ABBA did about five tracks in Swedish, including "Waterloo" (for the Swedish pre-ESC selection show, here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUUh6Fi9ds>). They might have won in Brighton even if they sang in Swedish. The song itself was very catchy and different and the band did a good show. Interesting about the use of the term and status of science fiction in the 19th Century. There's much lesser or unknown history of the genre (I've often found that out myself). But it was when the mighty US publishing industry (Gernsback and followers) became engaged it exploded, like a Big Bang creating the science fiction universe as we know it.

Heath Row: Yeah, Henry G used to write fiction, back in the 1980s in fanzines. I and many others thought it was rather good. He even had a little book published, causing a some scuffle in the culture pages of a

newspaper. Personally, I think Henry's *absurd humour* is his best, as shown in 200+ issues of his zine ALHASH! When talking about his writing he's too modest. Henry is among the very best behind the keyboard!

Henry Grynsten: There are limits to any development, and these limits are called the Natural Laws. Eg I'm very sceptical that the speed of light can ever be broken or even achieved. In fact, it'd be difficult to even come close. The energy needed to push just 1 kg (2 pounds) of mass up to only 10% of C equals about 500 tons of oil! I don't think it's inevitable to develop religion. There are indications that "religious experiences" are dependent on quirks in the homo sapiens brain. Other intelligent beings may have brains of a different design and could be free of those quirks. Talk about "unlimited progress" is a straw man. Progress for the *foreseeable future* is the relevant concept, and we may surely have progress for the foreseeable future! As for the the Eurovision, I tend to follow "big events", because they are things generating news and talk. I followed the recent Olympics a bit. I have followed the war in Ukraine quite a lot. Etc. The Eurovision is like a camp fire. "Just because AI gives life-like results doesn't mean it gets life." We have the Duck Principle: If it looks like a duck, swims like a Duck etc. BTW, intelligence and consciousness are information operations and thus independent of the media performing it, as I said before. Argument for that consciousness can appear in machines: If it couldn't it'd mean magic exists - and we can't believe in magic. If there exists some advanced phenomenon that we can't explain or describe it must mean magic exists. It'd mean things happen without reason and that's magic or the supernatural. If we on the other hand can explain it, we can also describe and construct it. And if it can be constructed it can be constructed in a machine, since information operations are media independent. I have no opinion about pig brains, but we should note that pigs and humans have totally different lines of evolution, different environments etc. I see a minor mystery in that human brains have shrunk (a little) up to now, including fairly recent times of rough conditions. Only perhaps the last 200 years have been more easy living, and that's a far too *short* period for evolution to work! Our brains haven't had *time* to shrink due to being lazily used. Though we now need intelligence less evolution works much slower. But whatever is going on, we can always artificially improve ourselves, by editing our DNA. We don't need to go downhill. Schools could improve, health too, we could have Peace On Earth, if we decide we want to and enough of us agree. "You may achieve a simulation of yourself, but it won't be conscious." Again: the Duck Principle! "Other animals could perhaps become conscious and intelligent". Sure. Just meddle with their DNA... Among brainy animals, I wouldn't rule out ravens, crows and parrots.

Some of those birdies are pretty smart. The insult "bird brain" is misleading. I have big doubts about that psychedelics leads to anything but confusion of no value. What it does is just to rattle around with the workings and connections of the brain. But the brain's original configuration has evolved to be optimal, as efficient and useful as possible. Rattling around with it can only degrade it. (There is a debate about psychedelics having useful effects in *micro* doses, far below to feel affected. I've read about it, but my jury is out on this.)

Garth Spencer:

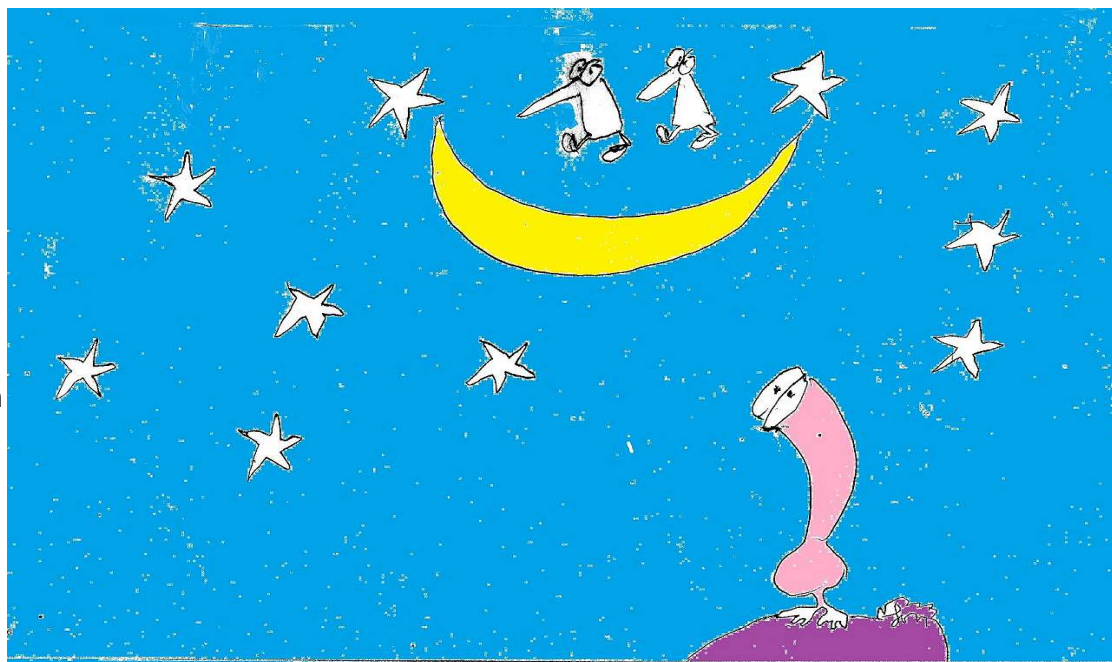
Very sad to hear about Taral's death. I had some contacts

with him through the years. Around 1980 he and a fanne named Victoria did a newszine named DNQ, which I happened to obtain. I thought it was rather good and supplied them with local news (of which they used some). We later lost or had very little contact. But a few years ago I stumbled upon Taral once more and we had some E-mail contact, eg around my *Intermission*. Very talented guy! A great artist and he seemed like a fine person. He sounded a bit bitter in later years, however. RIP buddy!

You may connect a "lose" SSD to a computer by getting a small external "cabinet" to put the SSD in. They aren't very expensive. (See pic of a cabinet.) Make sure the cabinet takes your type of SSD

SSD cabinet

and connect it with a USB cable to the computer. Fannish fandom is very thin, unfortunately. There's too much mediafans and Secret Masters of Bureaucracy. (See my con critique in my Glascon report.) It's fannish fandom and fanzines that have created what's unique with fandom - the legends, the recursiveness, the humour, the history. Fandom isn't games or TV, it isn't academia, it isn't populist correctness - it's individualism, "fanarchy", creatvie fun. As I see it, at least.



Artist Lars LON Olsson sticks out this neck for Lunarians. (Re: Last issue with Sweden's first sf author, scientist Christopher Polhem, with "News from the Moon"...)

Слава Україні!

**Ye Murthered
Master Mage 272**

**George Phillies
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester, MA 01609**

Commentationes

N'APA 271

Cover: As usual, Alan White art is spectacular.

Snow Poster Township: To save or perhaps make you some work, the File 770 web site announces an extremely large number of awards including SF fandom. Skimming through a few years of its pages would likely find most of them.

You found some exotic short stories, and reviewed them from a very different perspective than I would have. It's always interesting to read different perspectives on reviewing. Your internal artwork is fascinating.

The Murdered Master Mage – This is the zine I sent to Alarums and Excursions, announcing that I had completed the Eclipse cycle of four novels.

Intermission 44 – Spent 40 years on a book project. There were long periods, years, when I did not go near it, and then at the end spent much more time on it. I also write a number of other novels in between.

Archive Midwinter – Who will win the election? Ask me in six months. I agree on Hemingway. I had to read several pieces in High School, and they were pretty awful. On the other hand, we also read Wuthering Heights, and I still have no idea what was going on in that tale.

I hope that the short story contest is doing better. Shepdon Heights could be seen as Midwich Cuckoos FanFic. There was a UK TV series loosely based on this, not the original book. The TV people considered doing a second year, but realized that the plot – kids appear, they become annoying, they are explodiated – was stale, and had no idea what else they might do with the plot line. I am offering a solution.

Ye Murthered Master Mage – I am more curious as to how long there has been phony vote counting for the Hugo ballots, especially at the nominating end.

Martian War Machines, a Facebook Page, a recent post of mine: Today, Monday, your Admin had the opportunity to preview a new Martian War Machine model, soon to be released by AresCorp, LLC, a division of Three Eyes, Inc. I must say that the model is absolutely amazing in its fidelity to the originals. The hull is hardened beryllium bronze. The top heat ray rotates and elevates under automatic control. The remote camera deploys and records moving images in accurate MarsColor (not quite our colors, as Martians use a different set of dyes in their eyes). The landing hatch raises and lowers.

As called for in the original script, the front of the cockpit is sufficiently transparent that you can watch three MarsBot 1:12 replicas of real Martians as they control their war machine. Control panels have vast numbers of switches and dials, all labelled in Old High Martian. Computer displays are active-- the font is a tad small, so viewing through a medium power microscope is advisable.

Furthermore, this is a fully working model, not a plastic replica with internal lights and noisemakers: All systems actually function.

The electromagnetic legs display glowing beams of radiance and elevate the machine to a height of three feet. A safety device (with override) does not allow the legs to activate inside a building, as the legs will tend to set on fire carpets and wooden floor elements, and vitrify ceramic tile.

The heat ray really works. In antiaircraft mode, it readily kills all mosquitos and other annoying insects over a fifty foot radius. In fire mode, it does wonders in igniting a charcoal grill or fire pit, giving you hot coals in a matter of seconds. The high power mode is ideal for hobbyists whose construction projects require sectioning steel I-beams with thicknesses up to 15".

The meson disintegrator cannons will readily eliminate objects up to the mass of a small automobile. Never again will small children trample your gardens, at least more than once.

Finally, the force field projectors activate automatically. I cannot confirm that they will protect the machine against an atomic blast, but they happily bounced rounds fired from an 0.50 rifle.

The model will be delivered to your door in a 1:12 replica of a Martian War Cylinder. The cylinder has a transparency option, so that you can watch as the MarsBots and their handling machines assemble the war machine from its component parts.

This is a model no serious collector can do without. While the exact price has not been set, Three Eyes advises me that you can reasonably expect something in the middle eight-digit range.

Brandy Hall Issue 7 – Top ten SF movies: Interesting list. The absence of films from 1920 to 1970 is noteworthy. Forbidden Planet, War of the Worlds, and This Island Earth come to mind.

N'APA had been down to two people exchanging doubtless entrancing letters. As new President, I tried reviving it, inserting this zine as my contribution. It is the title I have been using for half a century.

Fan Fic 3

George Phillies

I will do a bit more of this, primarily to see if I develop any interest from people who are not regular contributors in publishing their fan fiction in N'APA.

Shepdon First

"You knew that I am Professor Thornberry-Thistlewaite, which I had not mentioned." He grinned.

"Spy, I am not. Close, but not through the hoop," she answered. "One of the workmen who moved you into your cottage knew who you were. And why you were such an important person. Don at Cambridge."

Thornberry-Thistlewaite frowned. "Bad tradecraft, I think. Mind you, I never went through their spy college, so I could be wrong."

"Bad tradecraft," She said firmly. "Don't ask me what I know."

"His Majesty's government was actually extremely grateful to someone," he said. "Something about foreign spies. But you asked me to summon the waitress. You didn't just force her to come here."

Charlotte recoiled in horror. "No! I've heard very bad things about the other English nests. No wonder they were bombed. Look, if I control someone, they hate it, and maybe learn I did it. If they find out, I've got a new permanent enemy."

"But you, on me..."

"My Duty to Protect. Your thoughts. We had no idea what happened to John, were afraid if you were there it would happen again. And not letting you see me – well, that was what was supposed to happen—I had to get in earshot to ask you to listen to me. Please? To explain about John, and hope you'd understand."

"Fair enough."

"Besides," she paused and smiled, "you're the only person I know of who saw how to use psionics to send a message to me. Hop, skip, jump?"

"Another point," she continued, "The other nests, here and in America. They thought they were going to conquer the world. That was crazy. It might have been possible in ancient Rome, because there were very few people at the top, and they'd've had great difficulty stopping us, even if we were noticed, but now? There'd need to be hundreds of thousands or millions of us, not, what, a few dozen, counting nests elsewhere? A few drones controlled from Australia, and we're all dead. No, we're very aware that we're at your mercy, and want to earn your trust."

&&&

Thornberry-Thistlewaite stared again at the note. He'd found it when he got up that morning, seemingly slipped through the door's mail slot

while he slept. Meet me, it read, at Brook Point at three this afternoon. A clear map had been scrawled below the unsigned message.

Now he sat on an old brick wall whose base touched the water's edge. The brook was wide, but looked not too deep. The wall outlined a shallow inlet. He'd already spotted minnows swimming in the sun, but suspected that any local anglers were doomed to disappointment.

Modest concern tinged his thoughts. Exactly what was he about to get into? A secret villager plot to eliminate the visitors? A visitor wanting a private chat?

Footsteps could be heard a distance behind him on the graveled path. He considered looking over his shoulder, and found resistance. Very well, he thought, he was perfectly able to be patient. And there in the mirror was one of the visitors. He prodded his enemy. The red scarf identified the visitor, if he remembered correctly, as Edward. Not looking into the mirror again, he folded it up and slipped it into his carryall.

The footsteps were now quite close behind him.

"Hello, Edward," he said, still not looking over his shoulder.

The steps stopped. To his ears there had been a light stumble of surprise.

"Hello, Professor." The boy's voice was a sweet tenor. "May I join you?"

"Absolutely. That's why I'm here, isn't it?" Thornberry-Thistlewaite asked. He opened a small bag of milk chocolate digestives, and set it on an adjoining rock. The lad took a seat on the other side of the bag.

"You knew who I was," Edward asked. "And you didn't look."

"I cheated. A parlor trick. Before we go any farther, I'd appreciate it if you'd agree to one ground rule."

Edward's eyebrows lifted.

"I promise to respect your confidences, and you promise that if you and your friends want me to go away, that I get to pack up and leave, rather than you killing me the way you – one of you – seem to have killed the last trio my employers sent. By the way, they were very concerned about those deaths. They were well away from here, supposedly out of your mentalic range, and wondered what the issue was."

"They kidnapped Penelope," Edward answered. "They were going to rape and kill her, making videos while she was drugged. It was really sick."

--- My actual fiction writing recently was a tale for Chris Nuttall's Fantastic Schools series of short story collections.



R.A.I.L. #2

September 2024

Renovation And Innovation Letter #2

By Adrian Kresnak for the September 2024 NAPA

published also on Itch.io under my art zine label OleandrsStudio

railfanzine@gmail.com



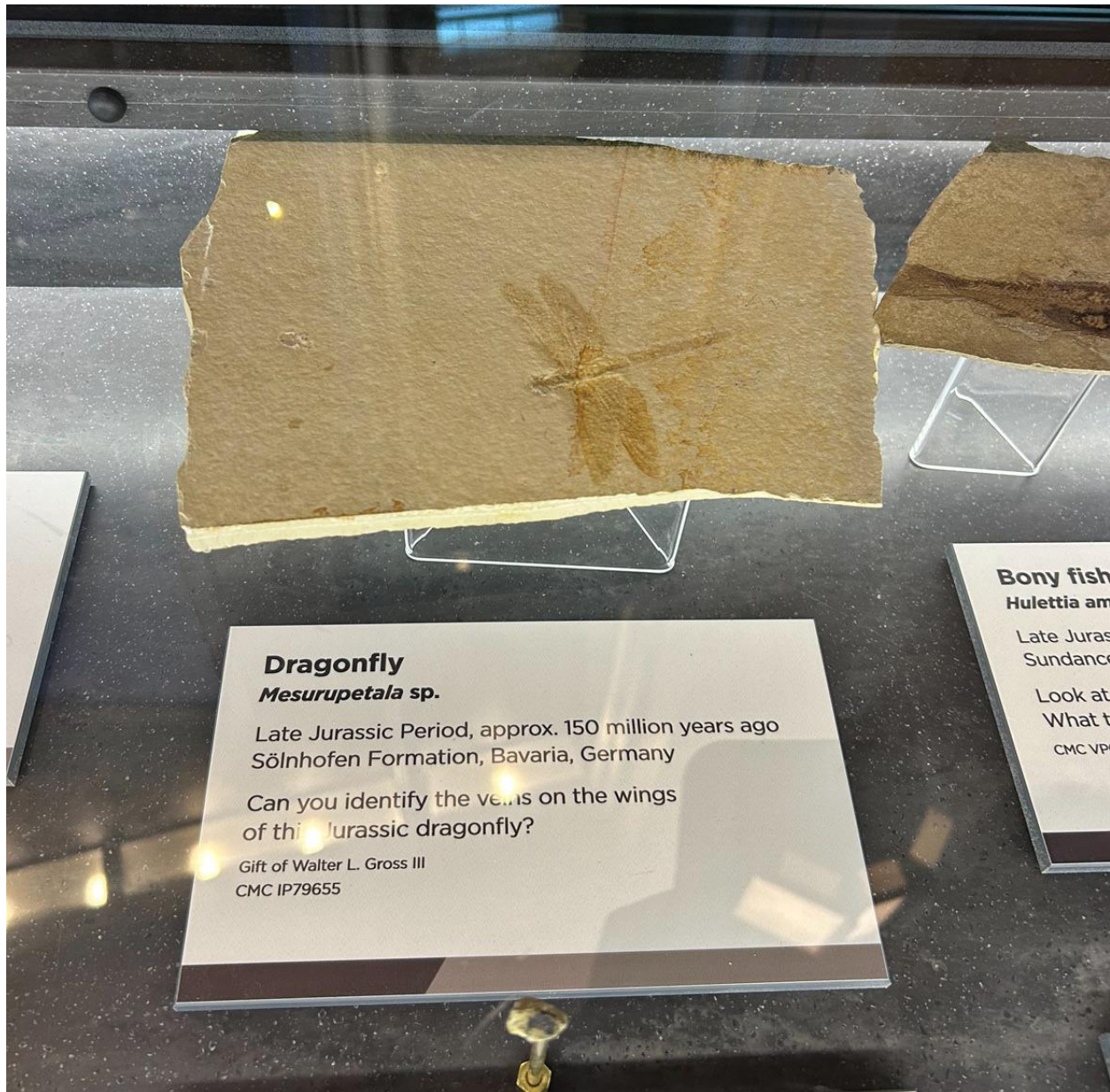
Cincinnati Museum Center, in the Union Terminal, Museum of Natural History & Science side

Hello All,

The cover art is me as seen through a temperature camera at the Cincinnati Museum Center. All the photographs in this issue will be of that center (taken by me of course). The Cincinnati History side consists of a multi-story model train layout. It shows various parts of the city's history, complete with sections where you can hear and smell things!

The Natural History & Science side feels bigger. The part that stuck out to me was this ocean exhibit, with replica fossils of creatures who lived in a time when oceans covered more of the planet. It had this dreamy blue lighting that I enjoyed. Very calming.

There was also a cave exhibit, which I did not enjoy. I knew I didn't like closed spaces or getting lost, but at the same time, I had to know what was in the cave! I guess that's the motivation of a lot of cave exploration. A family with a small child had also gone in. I was turning a corner when – a scream! – of course I jumped. It was the kid, trying to scare her family but mistakenly getting me instead. I laughed it off. No harm done.



Dragonfly
***Mesurupetala* sp.**

Late Jurassic Period, approx. 150 million years ago
Sölnhofen Formation, Bavaria, Germany

Can you identify the veins on the wings
of this Jurassic dragonfly?

Gift of Walter L. Gross III
CMC IP79655

Bony fish
***Huilettia* am**

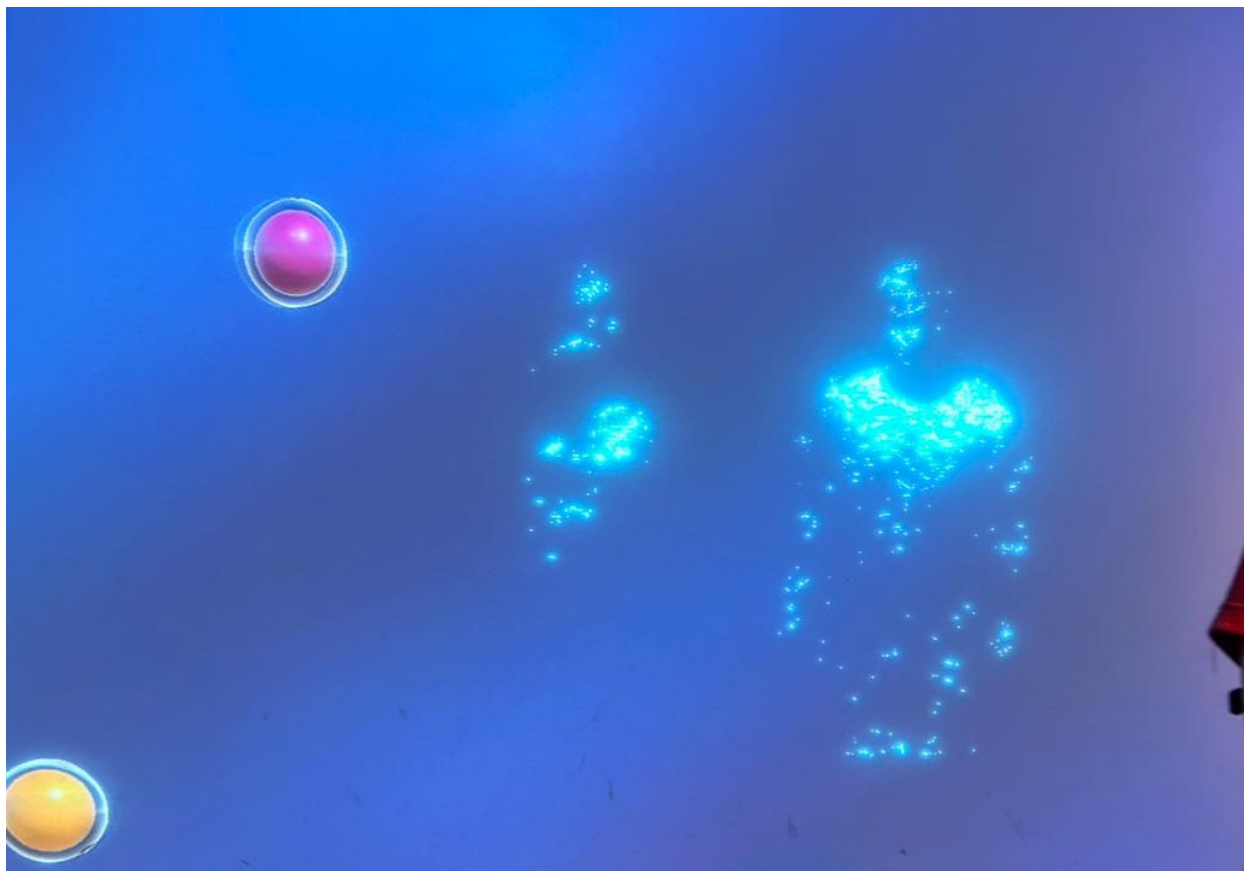
Late Juras
Sundance

Look at
What t
CMC VPI

Going by my phone's location tagging, this is from the museum center. I could be wrong though.

In other news, I'm including the first part of an original story here. I thought this would be a good place to practice writing serial fiction. I'll include a short summary at the beginning of the following pieces of course.

I read Angela Booth's *Plan, Write, and Publish Serial Fiction in Four Weeks*. It was good for pointing me in the right direction. It's very specifically about serial fiction, though, so it may or may not be helpful to you as well. "Formulaic" gets used negatively, but I enjoy the neatness of a well-constructed formula story. I hope my story later on is satisfying in a similar way.



I believe this picture was from the science museum's temporary exhibit "Health".

Comments

Heath Row (Snow Poster Township #16-17) - Thank you for telling us about the short stories you've read! Recently I read *Sins of the Children* by Adrian Tchaikovsky in Asterisk Magazine. It's about some corporate biologists studying an alien ecosystem. The story does a great job of building the tension, right up until the end. (I can't say anything about the magazine as a whole because that was the only thing I've read from it. The magazine seems to focus on nonfiction, rarely publishing fiction.)

Ahrvid Engholm (Intermission #143.5-144) - Sorry to hear about your string of bad luck. I'm impressed that you found the publisher of *Vår Rymd*. Thanks for sharing art from the zine.

George Phillies (Murdered Master Mage) – Adara's position is tenured but unsalaried? I feel like she would deserve better than that!

Re: fanfiction – I saw a post online talking about how the modern (online) conception of "fanfiction" grew out of modern intellectual property rights. "Fanfiction" became a way of signifying "unofficial" or "lesser" stories, which is interesting to see when official, authorized stories like the *Star Wars* tv shows are described as "fanfiction" in a derogatory way.

Jefferson P. Swycaffer (Archive Midwinter) – Spiral! I love the Mojo-related characters and how they meta-comment on superheroes-as-intellectual-properties. My favorite stories featuring

her are the ones with the X-Babies. Also, if you like characters with multiple arms, Marvel has reintroduced the *Agents of Atlas* character Shri. She's the incarnation of the Hindu god Durga.

Mark Nelson (Brandy Hall #7) – I haven't seen *Nope* either (I'm too much of a scaredy-cat), but my friends say it's good. Have you seen *Arrival*? The one about trying to learn the alien's language. I loved how it made the aliens and the language seem very unfamiliar but still logical.

Samuel Lubell (Samizdat... Ish #26) – Re: *Progressive Capitalism* – would you happen to recall if the book talked about Effective Altruism or Accelerationism? I'm not a follower of either philosophy, but I find them both fascinating to watch.

Garth Spencer (Brownian Motion #9) – *The Jade Ring* is intriguing! You are really good at writing dialogue. I'm looking forward to seeing where these conversations go next.



Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati History Museum side



The Foxhaven Disaster
by Adrian Kresnak

Part 1: Foxhaven, IL, three months before the earthquake

The meeting was taking place on the top floor of a skyscraper. Laurie waited in the glass hallway, trying not to get distracted by the view of the river below. The light reflected on the muddy-brown water in a sparkling pattern, like a diamond bracelet on the city's wrist. He'd like to fly over it if they had time later.

At the end of the hallway, the door slammed open. Laurie's team leader Fable stomped out.

"What happened?"

She scowled. "Marco showed up."

Oh, that guy. Laurie nodded sympathetically, though he'd never really interacted with Marco before. He had the impression that the others rejected the man's calls.

Fable kept talking: "Most people are reasonable. Even if they don't care about saving lives, they know it makes them look good to pretend they do. If their priority is saving money, I tell them how much the liabilities will cost. If they're too proud to accept direction, I can frame things so that they think they're the ones calling the shots. But Marco – ugh."

She stopped pacing, stepping next to Laurie and looking out the glass. The water below them was still glittering. He hoped it would help her re-focus.

Their jobs were split into two parts. The superhero stuff, the rescuing people and fighting supervillains, happened mostly in the "disaster response" part. What they were doing now was

disaster preparedness: identifying at-risk areas and bolstering them before the worst could happen. It didn't sound like this time would be successful. They still had to try.

"Is there anything I can do to help?" Laurie asked.

"Just wait here. Probably nobody's gonna bother you, but if they do, just give them the speech. I'm gonna go call Auralyn."

She pulled out her phone and walked away.

It felt a little awkward to be on the outside of these discussions. Laurie was the junior member of the team, only twenty-three years old. His teammates were in their thirties (or so he guessed), and he gathered that they'd been in the superhero game since they were teens. He considered himself lucky to learn from them, but at the same time...

He looked at the door to the meeting room.

It couldn't hurt, right?

He opened the door. "Hi, nice to meet you. My name is Laurie—"

He'd been expecting a small group to be here, representing the city. Instead, there was only one person. The man sat at the head of the table. He looked to be around Fable's age, with freckles and sparkling brown eyes. His suit was trimmed with a golden fabric.

The man grinned. "I'm Marco de Moura. The pleasure is all mine. So what do you do?"

"I'm a Disaster Response Agent. I help—"

"No, not your *job*." The man stood up. He was taller than Laurie. "What are your powers? What do you *do*?"

It was a rude question, but if answering would help... "I manipulate moisture. I can make things dry or damp."

Marco burst out laughing.

Yeah, people did that a lot. Laurie forced a smile and said: "The city is in a high-risk zone for flooding. A majority of residential buildings here aren't prepared for natural disasters, let alone unnatural ones. We are asking you to consider some renovations—"

"Yeah, Fabs talked me through it. It's pretty expensive. I don't know if it would be worth it for something that might not happen."

"It will happen." He tried not to speak too quickly, though it was getting annoying how Marco kept interrupting him. "It may not happen for five, ten, twenty years, but it will happen. If we act now, we can save lives. Please consider it."

Marco stepped up close. He put an arm around Laurie's shoulders and said, "Do you wanna know why I'm here? Why me, and not the mayor or the city council or the dweebs from the Health Department?"

"Do you want to tell me?"

"Because I own those 'residential buildings.' I make a lot of money off of them. I'm paying a lot of money to insure them all. *I* do it. *Me*. So, I'll be honest, I don't really care about preparedness. Fabs has to try harder than that. *You* have to try harder than that."

His arm was heavy. Laurie resisted the urge to shake him off.

This had to be personal. That had to be why Fable couldn't persuade him. The question was, was Marco the kind of person who would defiantly do the opposite of anything Fable requested? Or could they come to an agreement?

Laurie thought about it for a moment. Then, slowly, he lifted his own arm and patted Marco on the back.

"She doesn't think about you when you're not around," Laurie said.

"Everyone thinks about me when I'm not around."

"You're one of a gazillion people she meets with over a year. If we don't have any success in Foxhaven, we'll move on to the next city and try again there. Sorry. That's just how it is."

Marco tensed up. With a robotic motion he took his arm off Laurie's shoulders. He stood across from him with crossed arms.

"You know, Laurs, this city was just a small settlement when the first storm hit. The first one that we know about, I mean. The settlers had never seen auroras before. They wrote about how it looked like foxes dancing across the sky. Of course, most of what they knew about *foxes* was how to hunt them."

Most of what Laurie knew about them came from wildlife rehab videos.

"I'm a bit of a hunter, too," Marco continued. "So I'll tell you what. I'll do your 'recommended renovations.' But you and Fabs had better stick around. Just to make sure I'm doing them right, you know?"

"I'll tell her."

Laurie slipped by him and left. Out in the hallway, he grinned to himself. The others might yell at him for this later, but so what? He'd won. He'd won, and something good was going to happen.

They'd stay, or at least people from their agency would. The renovations would happen. They'd do some more community outreach with the people who lived here. Then the team would move on. If everything went well, the city would never need to call them back in.

Brandy Hall Issue 8 (September 2024)

Brandy Hall 8 is produced for N'APA mailing 272 (September 2024) by Mark Nelson.

Mark Nelson, School of Mathematics and Applied Statistics, The University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW 2522, AUSTRALIA. E-mail: mnelson@uow.edu.au

This is West Riding Press Publications ??? This is West Riding Press Publications (Australia) 26

In my first issue I followed in the spirit, if not the flesh, of Garth Spencer (*BROWNIAN MOTION* 1, mailing 263), by discussing my involvement in non-SF fandoms. In my second issue I followed Garth more directly by discussing my interactions with SF fandom. In my third issue I discussed my involvement with APAs. In the fourth and final instalment, appearing in issue five, I reminisced about attending science fiction conventions. In the sixth issue, inspired by Ahrvid Engholm, I reprinted two articles from the Australian newspaper *The Age*. The first was published on Saturday 19th March 1932 with the title ``The Automatic Pilot. George The Robot in the Air''. That article was a red herring. The article that Ahrvid quoted from was published on Friday 20th September 1935 with the title ``Meet Mr. Robot. Not Forgetting His Master''. In the seventh issue there was a shorts spin on a YouTube video with the title `Top 10 Best Sci-fi Movies'.

How I became a fan of science-fiction

I started watching science-fiction before I knew the word. Even before I knew the words science and fiction. On the 23rd November 1963 my parents watched the first episode of Dr Who. Although they would not describe themselves as fans of Dr Who, let alone science-fiction, they continued to watch it. Now, in 1963 there wasn't very much to watch on British TV: there were three channels which aired programs for a only a few hours. But evidently they enjoyed it as they continued to watch it. I suspect that another factor was that it was shown at the `right' time of the evening for them.

It was only natural that I would start watching Dr Who with my parents as soon as I was considered to be old enough. I was born in 1968 that must have been sometime in the early 1970s. My parents told me that I used to hide behind the sofa when Dr Who became too scary to watch. Despite watching Dr Who from a tender age, or perhaps because I started watching Dr Who from a tender age, the only John Pertwee serial that I can recall watching is *The Green Death*, broadcast on BBC1 from 19th May to 23rd June 1973. John Pertwee's final Dr Who serial was Planet of the Spiders, broadcast in six parts, nor the regular four, from 4 May to 8 June 1974. I was almost six years old when this finished. I remember thinking at the time that John Pertwee would always be my favourite Doctor. I must have watched many Dr Who serials before he retired.

My other strong Dr Who memory is reading the front page of the newspaper, maybe on 19th June 1973, and learning that Roger Delgado (1st March 1918- 18th June 1973) had died in a car accident in Turkey. Who was Delgado? He was the first actor to play the role of The Master. Just as John

Pertwee is my favourite Doctor, then Roger Delgado is my favourite Master. Now, these are impressions made on a delicate young mind. Doubtless if I had started watching Dr Who later in life they would not be my favourites. For one reason, the BBC didn't believe in repeating episodes of Dr Who so I would not have had a chance to watch them.

Pertwee, my favourite Doctor. Delgado, my favourite Master. How about my favourite companion? I must have watched a number of series featuring Katy Manning's Joe Grant. For her last appearance was in the aforementioned *The Green Death*. However, my favourite companion from the original run of Dr Who straddled both the Pertwee and Tom Baker eras: Sarah Jane Smith.

The second pillar on which my interest in science-fiction was built was *Star Trek*, which we now have to call *Star Trek: The Original Series*. I don't remember when I started watching it. I suspect that when I started viewing it I did not know the word science-fiction. I only knew that I enjoyed it. At least in my memories I don't remember a time in the 1970s when it was not being rerun on BBC2. At one time I remember that I would arrive home from school and watch almost an entire episode before we had our evening meal (tea time); almost always missing the last minute. I don't suppose that I watched ever episode, or least if I did I know that I've forgotten many. At some point I need to buy the complete series' and watch them. I suspect that I'll be watching many of the episodes through new eyes. The DVD for *Star Trek: Brave New Worlds* season one contained, as a bonus, the *Star Trek* episode *The Balance of Terror*. I have no memory of seeing this before, which isn't to say that I definitely didn't watch it in my childhood. Just that my childhood was so long ago.

The third and final pillar, cementing my interest in science-fiction TV series', was *Blakes 7*. As the BBC didn't rebroadcast the episodes I can be definite when I watched it. The first episode aired on 2nd January 1978 and the final episode on 21st December 1981. Many years later, when I was a post-graduate student, I discovered that *Blakes 7* was being reissued on VHS. Unlike today when you can buy a *whole season* of a show in one box, or even *all seasons* of a show, in the early 1990s a VHS tape contained a mere *two episodes* of a show. Each season of *Blakes 7* contained 13 episodes, which I assume meant 7 VHS tapes. Therefore the four seasons of *Blakes 7* must have come to 28 tapes, bought at the rate of one tape a week for just over half-a-year. What did I make of the show, watching it for the first time in over a decade? Some of the special effects may have been wobbly, but the stories held up. It was still a riveting show.

When I went to New Zealand in 1997 I passed my TV set and all my VHS tapes onto my brother. I presume he still has the tapes somewhere, but I no longer have the technology to watch them. If I want to rewatch *Blakes 7* I'll have to track down a version that's been released on DVD. At least it won't take up as much space as 28 VHS tapes.

Dr Who, *Star Trek: The Original Series*, and *Blakes 7* are the three series that made me into a fan of science-fiction, at least after I added science-fiction into my vocabulary. They were not the only science-fiction series that I watched before the age of thirteen, my age when *Blakes 7* finished. But they were the ones that made the strongest impression upon me. What other series can I recall? I remember watching *Star Trek: The Animated Series*. This aired in the US between September 8th 1973 and October 12th 1974. I assume that it was broadcast in the UK shortly afterwards.

(According to one web page the first season of *Star Trek: The Animated Series* was broadcast in the UK from 31st August 1974 to 22nd December 1974, “with the second season being incorporated into a broadcast run the following year”.) I was not particularly fond of it. At the age of six, during the 1974 broadcast, and maybe seven, during the broadcast the following year, I thought that the animated series was a flimsy excuse to include very unlikely looking alien species. However, looking at reviews the critics were generally positive about it. Several episodes are singled out for treating ideas that would have been impossible to film in the live-action series. Nearly fifty years later, is it time to give the show a second chance?

One take away from my thoughts on *Star Trek: The Animated Series* is that I must have been already familiar with *Star Trek: The Original Series*.

I have strong memories of seeing adverts for the British series *Space: 1999* (two seasons, broadcast from 4th September 1975 to 12th November 1977). I even had an eagle transporter toy. However, if I watched it then it did leave a strong impression. I have stronger memories of seeing adverts for the BBC series *Survivors* (three seasons, broadcast from 16th April 1975 to 8th June 1977). I didn't watch this because it was broadcast after my bed time (Sunday evening?). However, I do remember seeing one episode set in a power station in which there's an argument about whether the power should be turned out. There's a skeleton in the power station, presumably of someone who tried to turn the power on earlier. This is possibly the final episode of season three. For reasons unknown the BBC decided to remake *Survivors* in 2008. This lasted two seasons before it was cancelled. (I see on wikipedia that the BBC claimed that they weren't remaking the 1970s show, rather that the 2008 show was “loosely based on the novel of the same name that ((Terry)) Nation wrote following the first series of the 1970s programme”).

Somewhere between the 1970s and 2024 I realised that one of the great problems of watching SF series is that they are almost invariably cancelled before the conclusion of the show. Very frustrating!

My memories of watching other shows are limited. In my memories repeats of *Thunderbirds*, like those of *Star Trek: The Original Series*, are ubiquitous. However, I never cared for it. *Sapphire and Steel* (four seasons, 10th July 1979-31st August 1982) was a show I remember being broadcast but not one I remember watching. Doubtless other science fiction series will spring to mind as soon as I submit this, but for the moment my mind has gone blank on what might have watched in this period.

From later in the 1980s I remember *The Tripods* (two seasons, 15th September 1984-23rd November 1985). Due to poor viewing figures the final season was not made, cancelled before the end. I'll never know how the story ends, unless I read the books. I didn't watch this from the beginning, possibly because it was broadcast as a “children's TV series” and it took me a while to turn my attention towards it. Another series I didn't get into was *V*. I remember my brother visiting me during my first year as an undergraduate and filling me in on the story. It seemed a bit silly... Finally, we must go back a few years to 1981 and a BBC TV series that I really enjoyed. This was *The Day of the Triffids* (10th September - 15th October 1981). The wiki page for *The Day of the*

Triffids mentions another BBC SF series from earlier in 1981: *The Nightmare Man* (1st May to 22nd May 1981). I don't remember the title, but the sketchy outline of the plot seems familiar. (However, I don't remember the big reveal at the end. I thought the big reveal that it was an alien what done it.)

The Mathom House

Snow Poster Township 16 (Heath Row)

"In any event, watching the movie and APA-L #3068's Ignorable Theme on genre soundtracks led me to listen to Graeme Revell's score for the 1990 Child's Play 2".

Obscure fact. The first commercially available movie soundtrack was the score to the SF classic *Things to Come* (1936). It was written by Arthur Bliss, recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra, and released by Decca Records in 1936. (At least according to Sloan De Forest's *TCM (Turner Classic Movies)) MUST--SEE SCI-FI: 50 Movies that are Out of this World*. I saw this in the local library on our last-but-one visit. Horrible title.) I've not watched this movie and really want to. I've been informed that it's recently been issued on Blue-ray, though I doubt it'll appear in any of the local shops.

Ryctm

"Your mention of British Science Fiction Award winners and Australian Ditmar award winners makes a fair point. If we're global citizens, perhaps we should consider All the Awards. What other awards exist? That's a listicle waiting to happen..."

That would be an interesting read, particularly if it gave the eligibility criteria were for each award. Then it would be fascinating to see a cross-table of the winners.

Ryct Garth Spencer (Brownian Motion #7)

"When a faned doesn't number their fanzine issues, I am grateful when they date them."

Stephen Agar is a well-known British postal diplomacy fan who is been active, off-and-on, since the late 1970s. He has an interest in "Hobby" history. (We use "Hobby" as a shorthand for British postal diplomacy.) He's written any number of Hobby history articles. A while ago he mentioned his annoyance every time he reads a postal diplomacy fanzine from the 1970s, it was not uncommon for editors then to not date their issues. Much research is then involved in trying to estimate the date of publication. I carefully looked at the issue of Stephen's zine in which these comments appeared. To my amusement, it was not dated...

Ahrvid Engholm (*Intermission* 143.5)

Congratulations on tracking down the publisher of Sweden's first fanzine (was that hard?). Another feather in your cap.

George Phillies (*The Murdered Master Mage*)

Do you know when you first appeared in *N'APA*?

“Currently working on a scientific review article (yet again, the standard polymeric fluid modelis rejected by the data)”

In my ‘old’ age I’ve come to realise that I enjoy writing literature reviews more than I do standard research articles. It’s fascinating, to me at least, to investigate how ideas have been developed, to identify ‘gaps’ in the literature and to speculate on future directions.

Ahrvid Engholm (Intermission 144)

“Here's a strange piece in Dagens Nyheter Jul 13, 1916: "Fänomobile and tram colliding". What the heck is a "fänomobil"? Did some digging and it shows that it's what a three-wheeled car was called [...] Those were rather popular at the time and but the term "fänomobile" was later lost. Those were rather popular at the time and but the term "fänomobile" was later lost.”

My paternal grandfather drove a three-wheel car. I think the reason was that you didn’t need to have a full driving licence in order to drive it. Well... I just looked that up and wikipedia says that a “full motorcycle or car licence is required”. I wonder if my grandfather only had a motorcycle licence? His car must have been a Reliant, as mentioned by you. I would never have guessed that “For a period from the 1970s until the 1990s, Relient was the UK’s second biggest British-owned manufacturer, behind British Leyland”.

Archive Midwinter (Jefferson P. Swycaffer)

Ryctm

“I put Ernest Hemingway at just about the top of my personal list of examples. I consider his work to be perfectly unreadable, tripe of the most rotten variety”.

Ernest Hemingway is currently on the list of authors that I’m considering reading when I retire. I know that he’s very influential and revered and perhaps in consequence I feel the need to read him. (I caught a little bit of the Ken Burns documentary series on Hemingway and that has also piqued my interest.) Studying H.G. Wells’ “*The History of Mr Polly*” (1910) for two years at school, over the ages of 14-16, put me off reading Wells. I wouldn’t say that Mr Polly was unreadable, but very dull and uninspiring. At least for me when I was 14-16. It took me about thirty-five years to overcome my aversion to Wells and to read *The Time Machine* (1895). That was when we were in Jakarta and I’d run out of reading material. We found a shop selling a small selection of English-language novels and that was one of two that I purchased.

Ye Murthered Master Mage 271 (George Phillies)

Ryct Archive Midwinter

"I am, however, reminded of a friend who was attached to one of our military services and got to review as the relevant officer the design for a what we would now call a reconnaissance drone. It was a marvel of efficiency. The groups in charge of each operation had done everything possible to optimize performance and had carefully used all of the space within the craft. At this point, the friend pointed out that there was no group in charge of sending data back home and therefore there was no sending back home observations by the drone."

Here's my favourite operations research story, a classic application of operations research from WW II. The British Airforce collected data on the planes that made it back from bombing missions. From this they produced a density map of bullet marks on each type of plane. This told them which areas had most often been hit on returning planes. To decrease the number of planes being shot down, the Air Force chiefs decided that they should place extra armour on the areas where planes were most frequently hit.

When Patrick Blackett saw the data, he said that they had it wrong. There was no point reinforcing areas with a high hit density. The fact that planes with damage in these areas made it back showed that these areas were not critical. Instead, they should reinforce the areas which had never been hit. His interpretation of the data was these must be very crucial areas: planes hit in those areas did not return.

I read this story in Nye (2004). Blackett (1897–1974) served as an officer in the Royal Navy during WW I. After the war he studied Mathematics and Physics at Cambridge. After graduating he spent ten years working with Ernest Rutherford (Nobel Prize in Chemistry, 1908) over which he became the leading expert on antimatter.

Blackett served as director of Operational Research with the British Admiralty from 1942 to 1945. Amongst many other things, he developed strategies for improving the survival odds of convoys. He produced the unpopular opinion that too many resources were going to RAF Bomber Command for their area bombing offensive; his studies led him to conclude that these were ineffective. His opinion was vindicated by the post-war Allied Strategic Bombing Survey.

In 1948 Blackett was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for his work on cosmic rays.. He was also a pioneer in the application of magnetic evidence for the theory of continental drift.

"Blackett was also denounced as a Stalinist apologist for opposing American and British development of atomic weapons, subjected to FBI surveillance, and named as a fellow traveler on George Orwell's infamous list."

(blurb for Nye's book)

M.J. Nye (2004). *Blackett: Physics, War, And Politics in the Twentieth Century*. Harvard University Press.

(I have also seen the airplane story ascribed almost verbatim to an American scientist analysing data on American planes...)

Going off on a tangent. From Freeman (1997) I recently discovered that the word blurb is an eponym.

Belinda Blurb was a fictional character who appeared on the dust jacket of a book written by Gelett Burgess (1866-1951) titled *Are you a Bromide?*...

The publisher of the book, B.W. Huebisch, in the summer 1937 issue of the publication *Colophon*, to report the history of the word *blurb*, wrote, in part: "It is the custom of publishers to present copies of a conspicuous current book to booksellers attending the annual dinner of their trade association, and as this little book was in its heyday when this meeting took place I have it to 500 guests. These copies were differentiated from the regular edition by the addition of a comic bookplate drawn by the author and by a special jacket which he devised. It was the common practice to print the picture of a damsel --- languishing, heroic, or coquettish --- on the jacket of every novel, so Burgess lifted from a Lydia Pinkham or tooth-powder advertisement the portrait of a sickly sweet young woman, painted in some gleaming teeth, and otherwise enhanced her pulchritude, and placed her in the center of the jacket. His accompanying text was some nonsense about "Miss Belinda *Blurb*," and thus the term supplied a real need and became a fixture in our language."

Morton S. Freeman. (1997). *A New Dictionary of Eponyms*. Oxford University Press.

Ryctm

"mailing comments are good. Mailing comments are always welcome."

What I only discovered the other day is the following. (I assume this is well-known to some.)

((Jack Speer)) popularized mailing comments, with Dan McPhail, introducing them in the third mailing of FAPA.

From the Fancylopedia entry on Jack Speer.

Contrary to popular opinion, mailing comments are not an invention of fandom's --- they were introduced to FAPA by Dan McPhail, who picked up the practice from his participation in mundane amateur press associations.

From the Fancylopedia entry on Mailing Comments.

Thanks for providing a short history of *The Murdered Master Mage*.

Rennovation and Innovation Letter (Adrian Kresnak)

Welcome to *N'APA*! I'm looking forward to learning more about your interests in future issues. Sorry, I don't know the name of your short story. I suspected that the twist would be that there were no humans in the future.

Ryctm

“I didn’t know tungsten was from the Swedish language — cool!”

I to would never have guessed that Tungsten was a Swedish word.

Samizdat 26 (Samuel Lubell)

I liked your table showing the number of attendees at WorldCons from 2016 to 2022. As a way to make the same point in a different way... There were 3,574 attendees at the 2022 WorldCon. How far back in time do you need to go to find a WorldCon with a smaller delegate list (excluding the 2021 WorldCon!)?

Ryctm

“However I question your claim that Princess of Mars almost won a Hugo...”

Just to clarify. That wasn’t my claim. That’s what Brian Aldiss wrote. I also printed this quote in my contribution to ANZAPA mailing 339 (June 2024). The claim was demolished by several members in mailing 340 (August 2024).

Brownian Motion 9 (Garth Spencer)

I don’t usually read fan fiction, not even faanfiction, but I was hooked by the opening two paragraphs and then I had to read *The Jade Ring* all the way through. A thinly disguised story based upon everyday fans? I never realised that fannish fandom was a reaction to an earlier stage of fandom, I’ve always assumed that’s the way that it has always been. Or that it evolved very quickly from the first newsletters.

Ryct Samuel Lubell (*Samizdat* #25)

“I’ve sometimes wondered what the vague and nebulous mystique about “literary” fiction revolves around; you have given me a working definition, although I still don’t see what’s so great about a focus on style and character, and neglect of story and plot.”

Reflecting on your comment I’ve realised is that I am incapable of defining literary fiction. Certainly, some literary fiction seems to be devoid of story and plot (in which case I generally dislike it). But neglect of story and plot doesn’t define the genre. I’ve spent a few years gradually reading my way through winners of the Booker Prize. There’s plenty of story and plot in many of the winners.

I saw one definition of literary fiction that defined it in terms of what it is *not*. That seems a very poor definition. It said that literary fiction is everything that you have left after you have removed genre fiction, for example science-fiction, fantasy, thrillers etc. Could that have been a reasonable definition at one point in time, such as in the 1950s? But there have been literary writers who have written science-fiction novels. Is their science-fiction work to be deemed non-literary because it has been sold as being science-fiction? From the other end, some

science-fiction authors have written using a very literary style. Is this work also to be considered non-literary because it has been packed up and sold under the label of being science fiction?

Snow Poster Township 17 (Heath Rowe)

I first heard about Chris Ferrie's book series for babies when I attended a meeting of the New South Wales ANZIAM branch at the University of Technology Sydney. Chris was the invited speaker. I don't remember what he talked about, maybe the mathematics behind quantum computing?

"I'm not sure how meaningful the book would be for preschool and kindergarten readers, but I love that this book exists."

That was my feeling, they are there to provide fun for the parents. Or at least a parent with some background knowledge of Physics. I'll think about buying a couple of these when our two-year old is somewhat older. Chris said that he'd written the first couple of books for the benefit of his own children. He set them up as print-on-demand books on amazon as that was the easiest way for him to produce decent hardcopies for his own use. He was not anticipating them becoming big sellers!

Ryct Garth Spencer (*Brownian Motion* #8)

"Finding my first issue of Maximum Rocknroll led me to Factsheet Five, which showed me you could make your own magazines and music. Imagine my pleasure, when I saw your name in early issues of F5 while going through Marty Cantor's fanzine collection".

There's a title from the past – *Factsheet Five*. It was a serious endeavour to read it from cover-to-cover trying to find fanzines that you might follow up on.

Ryct George Phillies (*Ye Murthered Master Mage* #270)

"Despite your interpretation of the reasons for their leaving, I quite miss David Speakman and R-Laurraine Tutihasi—and their contributions to the N3F. I wasn't involved in the situation, but when someone reacts to actions so strongly, it might be helpful to consider the actions. Both remain active in fandom, but in different quarters, so it's the N3F's loss and broader fandom's gain."

R-Laurraine Tutihasi has been a member of ANZAPA since mailing 316 (August 2020). Is that before she left *N'APA*?



Snow Poster Township #18

Sept. 13, 2024

Snow Poster Township is an apazine published by Blasted Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. Banner artwork by Henry Chamberlain. *Snow Poster Township* is prepared for contributors to N'APA, members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and select others. A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.

Administrivia: A Correction

The restaurant we ate dinner at while in the Chicago area in July (*SPT* #18) was in fact Al Bawadi Grill in Niles, Ill. (<https://www.albawadigrill.com>)

Fantastic Magazines

In my reading of back issues of various fanzines and amateur press associations, references to pornography—and such magazines—occurred more frequently than they seem to now. Fen were younger, perhaps. More randy. The connections between sf, fandom, and pornographic magazines were also stronger, in part because aspiring genre writers were making money on the side writing erotica—and because notable fen such as William Rotsler and Forrest J Ackerman were involved in the publishing of pornography.

The October issue of *Hustler* deserves mention, even if the reading of such magazines might be less common among current fen. As the October issue, it's lightly Halloween themed—consistent in recent years—offering two feature stories that might be of interest. One I'll merely mention in passing. John Blaylock's "Goth Goddesses" interviews a handful of sex workers involved in goth culture, related activities, and BDSM. While the article addresses "zombie porn"

and vampires, it concentrates more on gothic trappings and social media sex work than the fantastic.

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Los Angeles Times, Aug. 8, 1958

Kelly Webb's "The Final Girls," however, might be more intriguing. Since the demise of magazines such as *Scream Queens Illustrated* and *Femme Fatales*, I haven't kept up much on scream queens, though the phrase "final girl" has entered common parlance. The article interviews several "horror heroine[s]," "Hollywood's hottest scream queens" to explore low-budget horror. The subjects include Danielle Harris, Erin Marie Hogan, Victoria De Mare, and Pandie Suicide.



Los Angeles Times, Aug. 8, 1958

After early work in a couple of the later original Halloween movies, Harris appeared in films such as *Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead*, *Blood Night: The Legend of Mary Hatchet*, *Cyrus: Mind of a Serial Killer*, *ChromeSkull: Laid to Rest 2*, and *Redwood Massacre: Annihilation*, as well as a couple of Hatchet flicks and the Halloween reboot. She was also cast in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* and multiple television shows, including a recurring role on *Roseanne*.

Hogan, according to *Wikipedia*, is "mostly seen in direct-to-video horror films," which makes her a true scream queen. She's appeared in *Paranormal Entity*, *Zombies and Assholes*, the anthology *The Theatre*

Bizarre, and *House of Manson*, among other straight-to-streaming (the modern form of direct-to-video) movies. She's also appeared on multiple TV shows and recorded music as a vocalist.

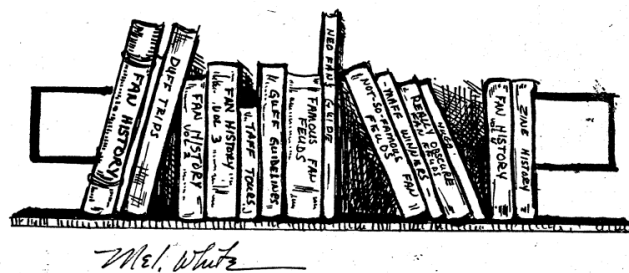
Since her debut on *As the World Turns* in 2009, De Mare has acted in about 125 movies and TV shows. Highlights include *Werewolf in a Womens Prison*, *Diary of a Serial Killer*, *Bio Slime*, several Killjoy movies, *Dracula in a Women's Prison*, and *The Rideshare Killer*. She's appeared in multiple productions by Charles Band's Full Moon Features.

And Suicide, aka Pandie James, appeared in several music videos before embarking on an acting career that includes *Burying the Ex*, *Blood Bath*, *Ditch Day Massacre*, *Night Terrorizer*, and others.

The interview explores how the actors first got involved in horror cinema, child acting, the Halloween reboot, social commentary in horror, sex scenes, and inspirational scream queens of the past. Several of the women indicate Harris as a role model because of her work in Halloween over the years. Others include Marilyn Burns, Mary Elizabeth Winstead, and Fay Wray—suggesting they're grounded in more modern, if not mainstream horror cinema.

For *Hustler*, the photography accompanying the interview is relatively chaste, portraying the interview subjects in slinky black dresses, sleepwear, and under garments, sometimes spattered or smeared in fake blood. It's an interesting read and a good introduction to the current cohort of scream queens. While I find such actors interesting, I haven't seen most of the movies mentioned—and usually find it challenging to prioritize such fare over other genre options.

But as the Blaylock piece asserts, "spooky season is upon us," and regardless of whether you find scream queens sexy, they—like this issue of *Hustler*—are certainly spooktacular.



From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

Dear Cyborgs by Eugene Lim (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017)

This is a mainstream literary novel rather than genre fiction per se, but Lim's writing includes elements of the fantastic and might be considered slipstream

fiction similar to that of Haruki Murakami, Jonathan Lethem, and Ben Marcus. I wouldn't necessarily compare *Dear Cyborgs* to works by those authors, but it's worth reading—and suggests promising future writing.

Two Asian-American boys bond over a shared love of comic books—even collaborating on them—and the later search for the long-lost friend as an adult introduces aspects of “an alternative or perhaps future universe” that involves a team of superheroes, black-op missions, political activism, and a “mysterious cybernetic book of clairvoyance.” For the most part, Lim experiments with the form of the novel, blending straightforward narration, surreal action sequences, and flashback as exposition, drawing on pulp writing as well as progressive politics.

Before the book begins, the author quotes lyrics from hip-hop act Das Racist that cite “Wikipedia Brown,” which amused me. Lim describes reading comic books as “a sort of hedonistic, perhaps onanistic, act of defiance.” There's an adult comic titled *MunQu*, discussion of protest as religious ritual, “old-fashioned moral tales disguised as science fiction,” a secret vigilante superhero group called Team Chaos, a friend who's a “foundling extraterrestrial sent from a far superior civilization,” mind-control schemes, a space disease, references to mystery novels featuring Inspector Mush Tate, karaoke, fine art, “soft-porn fan fiction,” a raygun, Brownian motion, anime characters, energy bursts, True Random Number Generators, surveillance drones, comic book shops, and other elements of interest throughout.

In addition to the at-times surreal aspects of the fantastic, Lim's novel espouses anti-capitalist political views and posits that we're already in an early phase of cyborg culture. Automobiles, the Internet, and mobile phones suggest that human beings are already a form of cyborg. I was also intrigued by the author's concept of city ghosts, or remaining hidden and anonymous in dense urban areas, and comic book stores being one shared space with multiple entry points.

I am curious how non-genre readers consider this book. Is it a gateway text, or are the fantastic elements components of kitsch? It doesn't really matter. I enjoyed reading *Dear Cyborgs*, can easily recommend that you do the same, and I'll seek out other Lim work.

Hardwired by Walter Jon Williams (Tor, 1987)

At first, I thought that this relatively early cyberpunk novel was a fast followup intended to capitalize on the

subgenre's growing popularity. I'd never heard of Williams before. There are so many awesome cyberpunk elements present that while reading the opening pages, it almost felt like too much, all at once. Like a pastiche or near-parody. But that feeling quickly faded as I got pulled into the story.

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"HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER"
and **"TEENAGE CAVEMAN"**

Los Angeles Times, Sept. 5, 1958

In part, that's because Williams is a very good writer. A Very Good Writer. When *Hardwired* was published, he'd already been writing science fiction since the early 1980s, later earned multiple Hugo and Nebula award nominations for his novels and short fiction, and even received a Philip K. Dick Award nomination. Despite his many award noms, he might have won only two Nebula awards for short fiction: the 2000 story "Daddy's World" (from the Constance Ash-edited anthology *Not of Woman Born*) and 2004's "The Green Leopard Plague." (*Asimov's Science Fiction*, October-November 2003)

The book is also excellent, despite my initial misgivings. The first in a multi-work series—including the novel *Voice of the Whirlwind* and two novelettes—*Hardwired* also inspired a 1989 sourcebook for the *Cyberpunk* roleplaying game. The world portrayed by Williams is that rich and deep.



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 5, 1958

The novel features cybernetically augmented couriers who drive high-octane vehicles on elicit cross-country delivery runs. There are enhanced bodyguards and assassins equipped with internal prosthetic weapons. A computer programmer finds himself lost among the network's code after death, able to communicate with friends and compatriots over phone lines. An isolated corporate leader loses his sense of morality and decency as he strives to create his twisted vision of the future. And Orbital platforms and other celestial bodies have been

colonized, some by corporate entities that have attacked the Earth by redirecting meteorites.

The characters are very well portrayed, their interpersonal relationships and shifting loyalties intriguing, the technology fascinating, corporate shenanigans malevolent, and heroic attempts to organize the couriers in opposition to the forces they eventually realize they're serving are laudable. Even the portrayal of the protagonists—who lead hardscrabble and hard-won existences—as they determine who they can trust, open up to, and even love proved interesting. The tensions and stakes in the book are very real.

Regardless, there is a lot going on in the book. Some of it is detail, and some is in the foreground. The result is an intricately dense narrative that is surprisingly solid for an author I should have already had on my radar. As recently as 2022, Williams seems to have turned his attention to military sf and space opera—the Dread Empire's Fall series—so he's keeping his hand in. I'm sure that any book by Williams is worth picking up.

Comments on N'APA #271

I commented on Ahrvid Engholm's *Intermission* #143.5 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #21 as follows: "Ahrvid Engholm's *Intermission* #143.5 reported that he's been in touch with Åke Schwartz, publisher of Sweden's first fanzine. What a wonderful experience that must have been! I'm sorry to hear about your computer woes—how has the solution progressed?—but I'm glad you were able to publish this half-issue. Because what an issue it is: All History Corner.

"I enjoyed Schwartz's first-person account of his early fanac, especially because he and his friends didn't have other fannish friends but subscribed to *Häpna!* and *Galaxy Science Fiction* and otherwise pursued books and movies of the time. The content of the issues as detailed suggest a solid balance of fannish science content, short fiction, and UFO-related material, which makes sense given Schwartz's later involvement with UFO Sweden. Have you seen back issues, or scans thereof? Fanac.org might be interested."

Similarly, I commented on George Phillis's *The Murdered Master Mage* in *Emulators & Engines* #16: "Welcome back, George Phillis, with *The Murdered Master Mage*! (Hmm... that fanzine title seems familiar!) It was fun to read about your early fiction in roleplaying game apae, where your writing has gone since then, and your activities in the professional world and fandom. I look forward to future issues." I could've sworn you'd been somewhat recently active

in N'APA, but it was fun—and a surprise—to see you in Alarums & Excursions.

In addition, I commented on **Ahrvid Engholm's** *Intermission* #144 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #22: "In *Intermission* #144, Ahrvid Engholm seems to have overcome his computer difficulties, which must be a relief indeed. I enjoyed seeing you in the 2023 WOOF, which I recently commented on for the 2024 edition. And your name popped up in back issues of Wolf von Witting's *CounterClock*, which I just stumbled across while looking for information on English translations of non-Perry Rhodan German sf series. *CounterClock* #4 was particularly of interest to me. I love the idea of pre-loaded e-readers—or even MP3 players.

"It's slightly amusing that the Eurovision Song Contest can also fall prey to—or employ—'unusual voting patterns' similar to those we've recently experienced in the Hugo Awards associated with the Glasgow Worldcon, and its precursor in China. The controversy does seem like a tempest in a teacup, far from Ben Foster of Screeching Weasel jumping off stage to punch a woman in the audience a dozen-plus years ago. (<https://tinyurl.com/Foster-punch>)

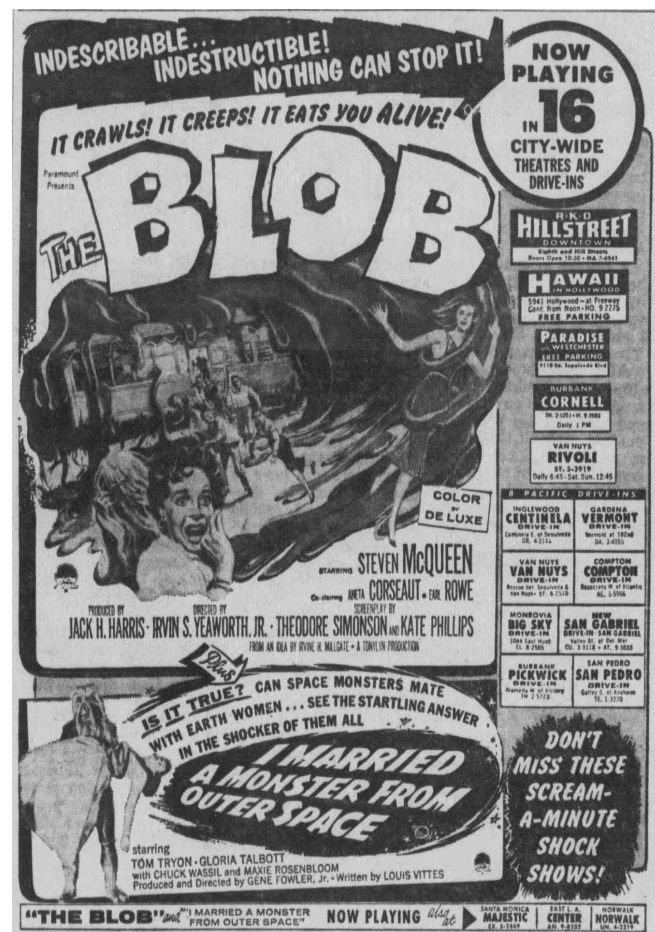
"That Joe R. Struly is a fine speaker, I've heard! I was saddened to read about Alvar Appeltofft and the subsequent scandals with the foundation. At least the fanzine collection ended up in the Royal Library. Thank you for sharing your *Locus* obituary for Bertil Falk. Ooh! Henry Grynnsen wrote fiction? Alas, there's nothing listed in the Internet Speculative Fiction Database.

"The Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Films grew out of the Count Dracula Society, founded by Dr. Donald A. Reed. Since 1972—a decade after the society's founding—the organization has organized the Saturn Awards (<https://www.saturnawards.org>) to recognize notable genre films. Last year, I was a paying member, which meant I could vote in the awards—and attend free weekend screenings not far from my home—but I'm debating renewing for this year. I didn't go to many movies and failed to vote last year."

That brings me up to **Jefferson P. Swycaffer's** *Archive Midwinter* dated July 8, 2024, on p. 37. The first 36 pages of 88 in this edition were also reprinted elsewhere—in either Alarums & Excursions or eAPA. That means that almost half of this N'APA distribution isn't original work. I can understand and appreciate the benefits of placing fanzines in multiple apae, but that seems like a large amount to reprint. And here I was impressed by our page count this distribution!

Swycaffer remarked that "new writers are pretty much ruled off the turf, and have no path to

publication. Also, today, genre classifications are iron-bound and clichés are the rule. Take a look, if you will, at 'Cozy Mysteries.'" I don't know if it's true that new writers have no paths to publication, but I do think that the economics of publishing—and the ability to make a living earlier in your career—might be more problematic. If anything, we have more paths to publication; they just pay diddly squat. Your comment on cozy mysteries made me think of the new hybrid form of cozy fantasies such as Travis Baldree's *Legends & Lattes* series. Are those gateway books to more fully fledged fantasy? Are they legitimate fantasy? Are they a way to sell books to readers who might not otherwise buy your books? Or is the Venn diagram overlap between fantasy and cozy readers big enough to matter? I wonder.

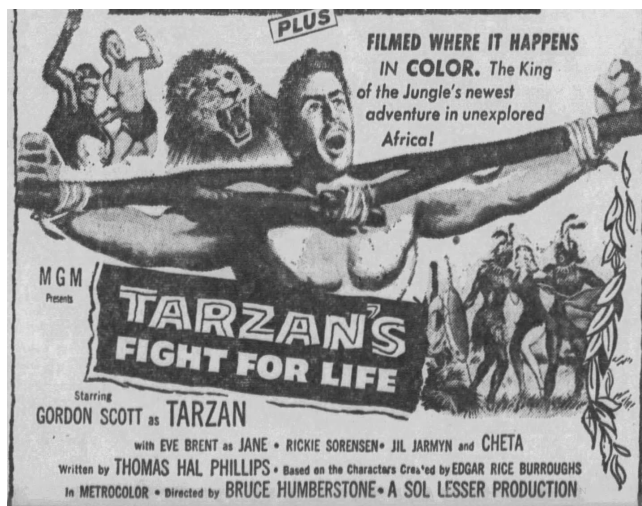


Los Angeles Times, Sept. 12, 1958

Is writing for a shared-world tribute anthology the same as writing fan fiction? I wouldn't think so. It's a shame that *The Further Adventures of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser* fell by the wayside. What did you end up doing with your submission? I recently learned—or realized—that Harry Turtledove lives in Los Angeles. It surprised me that I wasn't previously aware.

I enjoyed and appreciated your commentary on the comic book character Spiral. Her first appearance was in *Longshot* #1 (September 1985), so she's relatively new. Arthur Adams's work along those lines—*Mojo*, *Excalibur*—is pretty excellent. You can access a list of Spiral appearances at https://cmro.travis-starnes.com/character_details.php?character=1885. Most recently, she appeared in *Marvel's Voices Infinity Comic* #88-89 earlier this year. Those with the collecting bug, beware!

George Phillies also contributed *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #271, his usual N'APA fanzine. (Thank you for not just switching entirely to reprinting the same thing in both apae—your inclusion of *The Murdered Master Mage* makes more sense now.) Your commentary on fan fiction continues to intrigue me, my skepticism aside. I appreciate your outreach to current and former Neffers.



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 12, 1958

You moderate a *Facebook* group focusing on “modelers building 12:1 scale models of Martian war machines”? That sounds awesome. Wait... did I miss the fan fiction you intended to include?

In *Brandy Hall* #7, **Mark Nelson** discussed a *YouTube* video titled “Top 10 Best Sci-fi Movies.” I tend to not watch videos like that because I can read a listicle so much faster—and because the lists are usually crud. The list you shared—*2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Dune* (2024), *Nope*, *Alien*, *The Terminator*, *Avatar*, *Blade Runner 2049*, *The Matrix*, *Inception*, and *Interstellar*—isn't that bad, but does raise some questions, as you indicated yourself.

First of all, nothing before 1968? Kudos, at least, for leaving off *Star Wars* or *The Empire Strikes Back*. I feel like the video suffers from recency bias, with some effort—but not much—to dig deeper. And some of the choices mystify me like they did you: The 2024

Dune? *Blade Runner 2049*? The less said about *Avatar*'s place in the storied history of sf cinema, the better. It's certainly not in the top 10.

Nope (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #73), however, is definitely worth seeing, even if it might not make the top 10. Thank you for turning me on to *Alone in Space*. I'll have to seek that out! I, too, am curious about Mr. Engholm's perspective. In your mailing comments, the phrase “Answers on a postcard please...” gave me much pleasure. I'll have to remember to use that myself.

When I went to college in 1991, every student—I presume—received a university email address. I don't remember having to do anything special to secure one, and I didn't study computer science. I continued to use it well after graduating, even using it to sign up for the *Facebook* before they opened it up to non-students. Other than bulletin board systems, my first experiences online were during college, editing email using emacs, and utilizing Gopher, Archie, Veronica, Fetch, and Usenet. I think I miss Gopher and Usenet the most.

Your mention of *Swamp Thing* and *John Constantine, Hellblazer*—I've also always called it *Hellblazer*—reminded me of DC's wonderful Vertigo comics imprint. I also quite enjoyed Peter Milligan's *Shade, the Changing Man* and *The Sandman*, which I've been rereading after watching a couple of episodes of the TV adaptation and listening to much of the Audible audio drama. In fact, I just finished the second Sandman collection, *The Doll's House*, so I've reread up to #16. It's still quite good, Neil Gaiman's recent controversies aside.

George Phillies's *Fan Fic* #2 yields the fan fiction I was looking for in *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #271 above. What program is that based on? Your remarks in *Ye Murthered Master Mage* suggested it's still on TV. If that is fan fiction, it's fan fiction I'd read more of. The show it's based on isn't self-evident, and it could very well be original fiction. I quite like the idea of telepaths in MI5.

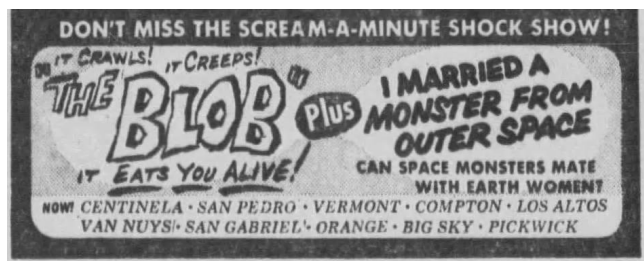
In *Renovation and Innovation Letter*—R.A.I.L., natch—N'APA is joined by **Adrian Kresnak**. Why, hello, good sir! We first emailed in April, you sent a letter of comment to *The Stf Amateur* and submitted a short piece on electromagnetic fields—and now here you are in N'APA! Well done. You found your way to an amateur press association. What a pleasant surprise to see you in our pages.

That you cite Stephen Duncombe in your first ish earns you bonus points in my book. Welcome, also, to the N3F. You're participating in a straight line to history. If you're also a railfan, you might enjoy the fanzine *MarkTime*. It's available from Mark Strickert,

P.O. Box 1171, Rialto CA 92377; busnrail@yahoo.com. When I last wrote to him in May 2022, I was struck by similar interests in sf, punk rock, and transit. I haven't seen an issue in some time, so I need to catch up with him. Cy Chauvin is also a transit buff. We recently exchanged notes on *Trains* and *Railfan & Railroad* magazines.

Samuel Lubell's *Samizdat* #26 commented on the heat. It's been warm here, too, but this week cooled down a little, which was welcome. Similar to our discussion of cozy fantasies above, you mentioned romantasy fiction, of which I've also recently become aware. Another example of genre bleed and semipermeable membranes!

I appreciated your Author Spotlight on Joe Haldeman, an author I've never read, despite knowing about his series the Forever War, which also inspired a comic book and board game. I figure it's only a matter of time; I shall eventually read Haldeman.



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 12, 1958

I'm a big fan of Robert D. Putnam and *Bowling Alone*, as well as his subsequent *Better Together: Restoring the American Community*. When I worked as a media and online community organizer, his work inspired and informed mine daily. As did Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals*. Your table of Worldcon participation rates is informative. Local con counts might also give us interesting metrics. Not to put you on the spot, but how does Balticon look over the last two decades? Being able to satisfy one's fannish yen online—at any time—hasn't helped matters, I'm sure. It used to be that you had to go somewhere to scratch that itch.

In *Brownian Motion* #9, **Garth Spencer** announced the death of Frances Skene. I never corresponded with Skene, but I've seen her name in fannish birthday calendars and cc lists for N3F mailings. Thank you for sharing your memorial and information about her activities and involvement.

"The Jade Ring" smacks of proper faan fiction, which I can get behind without hesitation. It's good to see the name Hrothgar Weems again. Not to mention my first exposure to the name Ernest Wolfgang Friedrich Siegfried Gunther Klaus Inger Stroheim

Hentzau Schleswig-Holstein Trishtrash-am-Wiesen von Ulm, which is worth the price of admission alone. Is this an example of couching what you've learned about con running in fiction? If so, write more!

Your comment to Jefferson P. Swycaffer that you "somehow gained an impression that fan feuds were forms of entertainment staged for fans, like hoaxes or student pranks, and not meant in earnest" made me wonder. I'm sure that some might have been meant in jest, but some throughout history seem downright vicious. Even today, the dislike exhibited and expressed by two particular older fen in various email lists—both of whom I respect—occasionally proves disruptive. I can't imagine that the grudges they must carry are playacting.



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 12, 1958



I attended Worldcon in Scotland and then toured the country for a couple of weeks. I'm sharing my experiences in this issue. Note: Some of the usual *Samizdat* features are omitted this issue to make room for this extra-long Scotland trip report (and photos)

...LOC Responses to N'APA 271

Snow Poster Township #16 - *F&SF* is a great magazine, or should I say was? They've only published one issue in 2024 so far (although I've heard rumors of a Summer 2024 issue that I have not seen yet). I fear it is dead but still have hope. I lead a magazine discussion for the Washington SF Association that alternates between *F&SF* and *Asimov's SF* on First Friday and *Clarkesworld* and *Lightspeed* for Third Friday. We've decided to switch from *F&SF* to *Analog* due to its nonappearance. The editor, Sheree Renee Thomas will be guest of honor at Capclave in Rockville, MD this month. Let's see what she has to say. I haven't read Walter Isaacson's book about Elon Musk, but I have read other biographies by this author and do not think he goes overboard on hero worship of his subjects. Discussion of the history of fandom is always interesting. I'm glad you agree about "affirmative action" even though it made things harder for your son. I ask "Should people read good books by bad authors" because no one should have to read bad books. Yes, I deliberately never used the term "science fiction" in my undergraduate thesis because I knew that Harvard looked down on science fiction. I don't know if that's still the case. We cannot agree on who was the first SF author because to do that we would have to agree on what is SF and how it differs from fantasy and imaginative stories.

Intermission 143 - I'm sorry for your computer problems. Your history of Sweden's first fanzine was quite interesting.

The Murdered Master Mage (George Phillips) - The covers of your books look like real comics. Congrats on a productive 50 years!



Intermission #144 - I agree that it is shameful the pro-Hamas protestors never acknowledge that Hamas started the violence by attacking Israel on October 7th, killing and kidnapping civilians (including a few people from other countries). Interesting about the Abbatars; perhaps, AI really will replace (or duplicate) celebrities. I hear they are remaking Barbarella. I'm curious to see what our more conservative time will make of this '60s icon. I've used AI art in this fanzine with good results. I disagree with censorship at any level. Books should not be removed for political reasons. I know Youtube has a lot of very recent fully copyrighted works. I wouldn't use the existence of content on Youtube as evidence that their copyrights were not renewed. I didn't cover Verne and Wells in my undergraduate paper because I was studying the History and Literature of America. Also Verne and Wells came later. Since Biden already has a vice-president, when Biden stepped down from re-election, his vice-president was the natural replacement especially as his delegates to the Democratic convention were already pledged to the Biden-Harris team. No one really challenged her as a candidate.

Archive Midwinter - Yes, Trump has a serious chance. The most recent polls show a 50-50 shot (I'm writing this before the debate, which could alter things significantly). I disagree about new writers having no path to publication. I run the Compton Crook Award for best new novel and every year there are over 100 debut novels (including some from major publishing houses). I disagree about Hemmingway. He is much more readable today than many of his SF pulp contemporaries. I think my first convention was Boskone (a Boston convention), in either 1986 or 1987. Thanks for the Congrats. I think my Balticon went well, all things considered but I have a few ideas of what I could do better. I've met Harry Turtledove a few times and agree that he is a very nice guy. I read the first two Teddy Roosevelt books, but never did the third. You mistakenly label Spiral's team as "Justice Force." I believe you meant "Freedom Force," an early Marvel version of Suicide Squad that was done better with the Thunderbolts. I have dabbled in fanfic, include a series of stories about Jewish holidays set in the Buffy the Vampire universe (using a pen name). But I think there are plenty of places to publish fanfic already, I don't think N'APA needs it. As to the Hugo, I think the censoring was done by Americans out of fear of offending Worldcon's Chinese hosts. Thanks for the kind words about my undergraduate thesis. If you think the Review of Books would be interested, I'll send them the full version. I didn't know *Edison's War on Mars* had a thing on phrenology. I'll have to look that up.

Brandy Hall #7 - That's an interesting list of top movies. I'm curious why they included *Blade Runner 2049* and not the original. I've seen eight of those on the list. I've never heard of *Nope* and never saw *Alien*. I remember going to my university's computer center in the late 1980s to read rec.arts.sf.written on USENET. I don't think I had an email address then. A good chunk of superheroes were scientists - the Flash, the Atom, Iron Man, Mr. Fantastic, the original Ant-Man, the original Starman, the Hulk.

Renovation & Innovation – There's an old dispute between those who say Fandom is a Way of Life and those who say Fandom is Just Another Hobby. Sorry, nothing comes to mind in the way of trains and SF.

...My Worldcon Scotland Trip

I left Dulles airport on Tuesday, August 6th, 2024. I had a jacket tied around my waist but it somehow came off while I waited at the gate and I didn't notice until I was almost on the plane. Fortunately, the airplane attendants let me go back for it. The plane sat on the runway for over an hour and I almost missed my connecting flight to Glasgow. This was an overnight flight so arrived Wednesday morning August 7th. I got my bag without a problem (which didn't happen on my last flight to the Chicago Worldcon). I found a shuttle to Glasgow central & left my bags at the hotel as it was too soon to check in.



I tried walking to the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) where Worldcon would take place, but the walk took over an hour. I had been told it was only a mile. I must have gotten lost. Fortunately, after I registered the information desk told me about a train pass which made getting to the SEC much easier. I walked to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and saw some nice art (including Egyptian) & heard a band & organ concert. It felt a bit weird to hear American big band music in Scotland. I went to a computer store and picked up a SIM card for my cellphone to make it work in the UK (which was only the start of a long telecom nightmare). I went to bed early.

Thursday, I took the train to the Exhibition Center and walked to the University of Glasgow and saw the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery. The museum had an exhibit about how it was really bad how these collectors stole from native peoples, and it was wrong and we know better now and won't do it again. I thought they were trying to have their cake and eat it too, but there was a mention of some exhibits that they did return. These were small museums. I saw everything in 2 hours without rushing. I walked back to the SEC (stopping at a truck for a rather decent Greek gyro) and heard panels on The Scottish play and SF (lots on MacBeth, very little on SF). I saw a friend who was on the Policing the High Frontier panel (outer space law is mostly insurance law.) I went to the Joe Haldeman table talk. He is excited at being a Guest of Honor at Capclave 2025, which I am chairing. I went to a panel on Epic Appeal (the differences between plotters and pantsers was very evident.). I went out to dinner with friends. I had a salad - I hadn't seen any healthy food since arriving in Scotland.



Friday morning I overslept. Somehow my watch alarm wasn't enough to get me up. I guess I hadn't fully adjusted to Scottish time. I went to the Guest of Honor Interview with Terri Winding who has a fascinating story of editing a major publisher's fantasy line at age 22 because no one cared about fantasy and it wasn't expected to much money. I heard a concert by the organist who performed (really collaborated) the soundtrack for the movie Interstellar. I went to panels on Mashups and the Ken Macleod GOH interview (I need to read more of his books. I am way behind. When I got back I ordered

an omnibus of his *Corporation Wars* trilogy) The panel on Sentient Starships described these as the SF equivalent of talking horse fantasies, which explains a lot. The panel also raised questions about ownership and control. I heard the Worldcon Philharmonic Orchestra perform themes from movies, games, and tv, plus Holst *The Planets* and some Scottish melodies.

Saturday, I set additional alarms. I tried some more to get my cell phone working. The panel on "Of Its Time" was full (unfortunately since this was not one of those they recorded) so I went to a panel on the multiverse. There was some interesting speculation that comic books' frequent use of multiverses paved the way for its use in movies, tv, and other forms. It also could lead to instantaneous travel since, in an infinity of worlds, there must be one where you already are wherever it is you were going. I went on a walk of local "steampunk" sites near the SEC, which turned out to be boat locks and cargo lifts.



pipers from LA who were playing an outside concert sponsored by the LA Worldcon bid. I went to dinner at a nice Indian place. The UK has lots of Indian food. After dinner I went to some parties (British style is to put all the parties together in the common space). Right when I was about to leave I bumped into a friend from home who told me that the singing group Sassafrass was playing right then (it was Masquerade judging time), so I watched their performance of songs from their Norse gods cycle.

Sunday I attended a panel on Urban Fantasy Settings which didn't stick to the settings part of the topic. It did discuss how NYC writers when trying to create an American fantasy came up with urban fantasy. Setting can drive a book in that setting influences character. They also discussed how writers integrate magic into the world and whether magic is known or secret. I went to a table talk by Micaiah Johnson, who won the Compton Crook award in 2021 for *The Space Between Worlds*. She's finished her PhD and is unsure what happens next. I went to a panel on Reviews which debated between reviews as recommendations and reviews as exploration of what book is doing. (Or what the reviewer thinks the author was trying to do.) I heard part of the concert by the Irish videogame orchestra. Friday's orchestra was better.

I heard Terri Windling's husband, an actor, read short stories that Terri then explained and interpret. I went to a panel on Weirding the Future about stories that are unsettling & strange. They said weird is a mode of writing and are most weird when almost real. The panel on Locked in Space had two British big name writers, Peter Hamilton & Alastair Reynolds, yet was not in a big room (so I made sure to get there early) They stressed the contrast between the vastness of space and the pressure cooker of a small spaceship.

I went back to the phone shop to see if they could get my phone working in the UK (I had tried two different chips. The store told me the chip holder was broken and charged me quite a bit to fix it). But, when I stepped outside I heard a team of





I went to a panel on Dark Academia which I found most interesting for what the speakers about the European higher education system and how it is growing more expensive. Only the rich can afford to study the traditional liberal arts while everyone else has to study content that can help them earn a living. We are having similar problem here except U.S. higher education is much more expensive. I went to an acapella concert by a Norwegian singing group, Another Castle. Then after another fruitless trip to the phone store, I went to the Hugo awards. I was surprised at some of the results. *Among Us* beat out *Dr. Who* and *Star Trek* for best short form dramatic presentation. Charlie Stross did not win best series despite home field advantage and Naomi Kritzer won twice. *Some Desperate Glory* won Best Novel despite being a debut by an unknown author. The Sunday trains quit early so I had to walk back to my hotel, but this time I had better directions so it was only about 20 minutes away.

Monday, August 12, was the final day of Worldcon. I heard a panel on Alternate History which raised

the idea of alternate histories where racism and colonialism are different. Too much of AH is worse than our history. They also gave a list of titles. I went to a panel on fantasy and setting which wasn't as good as the Urban Fantasy panel. Then I walked to the Riverside museum and saw their exhibits on transportation including cars, trains, and buses built in or used in Glasgow. I also paid to go aboard their late 19th/early 20th sailing vessel which had masts and sails but also an engine. I went back to the phone place and gave up on having them fix my phone, even though I paid them to do so and got them to apply that money plus 30 more pounds for a new cheap UK phone (mainly so I could use Google maps). I went back to the conversation for a Ceiligh dance to hear the music and then chatted with a couple of friends at the dead dog party.

Although the Worldcon was over my adventures in Scotland continued. On Tuesday, I stored my bags in my expensive not-really-close-to-the-convention hotel. I went on a nice 3-hour waking tour of Glasgow starting from the Museum of Modern art to the Cathedral. This was from.



Gander Walking Tours and the guide did a great job once I got used to his accent. I only had to correct him once (he identified the 'Wither you go, I go' line as being from the Book of Job when I knew it was the Book of Ruth.). I went through the Cathedral, although they were doing construction on the spire so my pictures weren't so good. I went up to the Necropolis, which even had a Jewish section, and the St. Mungo Museum of religious life. Then I went to Provand's Lordship. This is thought to be the oldest house in Glasgow dating to the 19th century. Then I got my bags and transferred to the much cheaper student housing with a tiny, hot room that's really all I need (I didn't go to Scotland to watch TV). Then I went to the nearby





Scotland, listen to Scottish music.



Royal Concert hall for the International Pipers Quartet competition. I found it too loud but interesting. When in

Wednesday was Castle Day. I took the train to Stirling and bought a 14-day historic pass and used it to see Stirling Castle with lots of connections to Mary Queen of Scots. This was my favorite castle. They had people in costume portraying characters from the 16th century. Then I took a bus to Doune Castle which was used in Monty Python and the Holy Grail and Outlander. That castle was more in ruins and not really furnished.



Thursday, August 15th I left Glasgow for Edinburgh. I saw the Palace at Holyroodhouse and the ruins of the Abbey there. There was lots of nice history. I went to the Edinburgh museum which had interesting but disjointed exhibits that didn't tell a consistent story. Then I went to the Scotland National Gallery of Art, which had tons of gorgeous art.

I took a three-day Highland Experience trip. The weather the first day was wet and cloudy so I don't

know how well my pictures will turn out. I saw Loch Lomond, parts of Loch Ness, the village of Lies and Glen Coe with its Turf and Creek House. I stayed overnight in Inverness. Saturday, the tour went to the outside of the Eileen Doran castle but didn't have time to go inside. It visited the village of Portree and the volcanic rocks of Elgin. And there was lots more picture taking.

Sunday was the best day of the trip. I went on a boat cruise of Loch Ness and went looking for Nessie who didn't show. Then I explored the spectacular ruins of Urquhart Castle. In the afternoon, the tour went to the Highland Folk Museum, an outdoor museum with recreated buildings from different periods in Scottish History. Then back to Edinburgh. The guide was great with lots of stories from history and myth.





I spent Monday in Edinburgh. I visited Gladstone's Land, one of the oldest buildings on the Royal Mile. Each floor is displayed as it might have appeared at a different period of



history. Then I went to Edinburgh Castle. This is a fantastic castle, with full buildings not just ruins. It is interesting how long it stayed in use. I tend to think of castles as things that existed a long time ago, no later than the 16th or 17th century, and then to be historical artifacts. But some of these castles were still used as late as WWII (mainly for training and housing of soldiers). Then I visited St Giles Cathedral. In the evening I explored the city some. It was raining and I think I caught a cold.





Tuesday I took a train into Linlithgow and saw the ruins of the palace there. In some ways this is more honest than the buildings that have been rebuilt/reconstructed. Then I took a bus to Blackness Castle also in ruins. This is much more of a fortress with a tower for prisoners. Then I wandered through the town looking at old buildings and sculptures.



Wednesday was museum day. I went to the Royal Academy, the National Portrait Gallery (where I focused on the historical paintings) and the National Museum of Scotland. I saw lots of paintings and historic artifacts.



Thursday I took a train to Glasgow and then bus to the airport and flew home (with another airline delay). I was so exhausted that I went straight to bed and slept for over eight hours.

...From Wizard to Scientist: Changing Views towards the Scientist from Hawthorne to Twain (Part VIII: Conclusion)

This changing conception of science in the latter half of the century naturally affected Twain. Samuel Clemens, as a pilot on a Mississippi steamboat, found that his growing technical knowledge of the river ruined his natural enjoyment of the river's beauty.¹ Yet, Twain clearly valued his river pilot days, appropriating his pen name from a steamboat term. He always wrote enthusiastically about the power and force of machines.² While he accused some men of science of quackery, he praised others for their diligence and, despite occasional doubts, never rejected science. On the contrary, he described himself as a scientist. In his essay "Was the World made for Man" in 1903, Twain asserted, "I seem to be the only scientist and theologian still remaining to be heard from on this important matter..."³ Twain gave Darwin special tribute, and gleefully told of Darwin reading his novels to fall asleep.⁴ He

¹ Leo Marx. *The Machine and the Garden* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1964) p. 323

² "For just as he never developed any distinctions between invention and creation, or between the mechanical and the beautiful, so too he only rarely took the machine age to task because it had destroyed the beauty in human life." Kreuter p.254

³ Mark Twain, "Was the World made for Man", in *What is Man? and Other Philosophical Writings, The Works of Mark Twain, Volume 19*. Paul Baender ed. (Berkeley, California:University of California Press, 1973) p.33

praised inventors, specifically Marconi, Morse, Bell, and Edison, as "men who have added the top story to the majestic edifice of the world's modern material civilization."⁵ In *A Connecticut Yankee*, he puts similar sentiments into the mouth of Hank Morgan.

Twain's fiction reflects the importance of science to society and the public's growing knowledge of the field. Twain himself, in his late period, was a scientific determinist. Sherwood Cummings writes that Twain's philosophy was based on scientific ideas, especially Darwinism:

Although he did not understand precisely the methods of scientists, he could not really, in his role as an enlightened citizen of his century, deny the authority of their conclusions. Nor could he as a philosopher speak to his age if he ignored these discoveries of science which were challenging or transforming the concepts of virtually all its citizens.⁶

Just as science emphasized exact facts and accuracy, so did Twain's fiction; he took special care to transcribe dialogue for each character in the appropriate vernacular. There is even an element of Darwinism in his fiction in which his characters are greatly influenced by their environment.⁷ The Widow Douglas's failure in her efforts to reform Huckleberry Finn reflects Twain's Darwinian sense of how environment shapes one's character. Similarly, in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, a white boy who mistakenly grew up as a black slave cannot adjust to being suddenly recognized as white and is only at home in the kitchen with the slaves.⁸



Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* directly exhibits the new role of science and technology in late nineteenth century America. When Hank Morgan builds a modern industrial and mechanical civilization in the sixth century, many of his innovations- the telegraph, electric lights, and the telephone- were very recent even in Twain's time. The Yankee always assumes that this new civilization is a good thing, and while Twain sometimes satirizes a few of the Yankee's excesses, the bulk of the novel supports the idea of technology as progress. Twain's novel capitalizes on the conception of science in his era, and on its progress since Hawthorne's time. The Yankee is the quintessential utilitarian scientist, directing his knowledge to the goal of practical use. He

is not a theoretician or philosopher but a maker of concrete things, like the late nineteenth century scientists who similarly produced technology. The Yankee sets up schools and "man-factories" just as scientists in the late nineteenth century worked to improve schools for scientific study and formed associations of scientists. While Hawthorne's scientists worked alone, Twain's Yankee surrounds himself with assistants: Clarence, the former page who became his chief assistant; the "experts" he has trained; the graduates of his "West Point" and his "Man-factories"; and the people who ran his telegraph lines. Twain also brings in evolution, with an ironic note wondering if man was worth the trouble, procession of ancestors that stretches back a billion years to the Adam-

⁴ In a speech given to the Nineteenth Century Club in November, 1900, Twain said "I thoroughly appreciate that compliment, and consider it the highest one that was ever paid to me. To be the means of soothing to sleep a brain teeming with bugs and squirming thing like Darwin's was something that I had never hoped for. Mark Twain. "The Disappearance of Literature" speech in *Mark Twain Speaking*. Paul Fatout ed. (Iowa: University of Iowa Press 1976) p.356

⁵ Mark Twain, "Theodore Roosevelt" (July 16, 1908) in *Mark Twain in Eruption: Hitherto Unpublished Pages* Bernard DeVoto, ed. (New York:Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1940) p. 9.

⁶ Sherwood Cummings, "Mark Twain's Acceptance of Science", *The Centennial Review* Vol VI, Number 2, Spring 1962 p. 261

⁷ See Sherwood Cummings "Science and Mark Twain's Theory of Fiction" *Philological Quarterly* Vol 37, Jan 1958

⁸ Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (New York: P.F. Collier and Son Company 1893, 1922) p. 202

clam or grasshopper or monkey from whom our race has been so tediously and ostentatiously and unprofitably developed."⁹



By Twain's day, the new professionalism of science had changed the culture's view of science and the supernatural. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when even religion sought rational "scientific" explanations for its doctrines, superstition was looked upon with disfavor. The "pseudo-science" that was accepted as science at the beginning of the century despite its strong similarities to magic, was by the century's end considered fraud. As science discredited the supernatural, religion lost some of its influence. Religion struggled for a position alongside science; and had to alter itself to fit the new scientific world by minimizing its supernatural elements: "The age of miracles was past; and indeed whereas in past time claims to miracles would help a religion, by the mid-nineteenth century they

were a hindrance to it, connecting it with superstition."¹⁰ Science determined the extent of this change, and religion merely reacted to its initiatives. John Tyndall, trying to assuage fears in 1872 that religion would not survive science, only demonstrated how much religion had already yielded:

"Thus religion survives after the removal of what had been long considered essential to it. In our day the Antipodes are accepted, the fixity of the earth is given up, the period of Creation and the reputed age of the world are alike dissipated. Evolution is looked upon without terror and other steps have occurred in the same direction... fact, from the earliest times to the present, religion has been undergoing a process of purification." ¹¹

The growing strain between science and religion in his own day may have been behind Twain's choice of the church as the Yankee's true enemy. Twain believed that both religion and magic were superstitions dependent on man's belief for their power. Although the Church could defeat science in the sixth century due to the more prevalent superstition of that date, it could not maintain its power in the late nineteenth century.

Twain depicts science differently than Hawthorne, because of these changes in science during the nineteenth century. Originally, science was seen as "natural philosophy", no distinction was made between a scientist and a philosopher. Scientists claimed to be utilitarian, but almost the only sciences producing results were the "pseudo-sciences". Hawthorne's scientists show his doubts about man's ability to control this knowledge. But in Twain's day science was cheered as progress. With "pseudo-science" discredited, the public no longer identified science with mysterious forces, but instead with electrical power, and new technology. Science had become more utilitarian, producing actual benefits for man. While Hawthorne veiled his scientists in ambiguous, magical language, Twain's Yankee is straightforwardly direct, introducing machines and ideas to transform Arthurian England into nineteenth century America. Both writers portrayed science as it existed at their time, so the change in the science of nineteenth-century America resulted in a change in the portrayal of scientists in the fiction of Hawthorne and Twain.

Conclusion: From Wizard to Scientist: Changing Conceptions of the Scientist from Hawthorne to Twain

Mark Twain once said, "Fashion in literature changes, and the literary tailors have to change their cuts or go out of business."¹² Both he and Nathaniel Hawthorne were "literary tailors", writing in popular genres, Which exposed

⁹ Samuel Clemens. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: A Facsimile of the First Edition* (Toronto: Chandler Publishing Company 1963) p. 217

¹⁰ Knight p. 163

¹¹ Tyndall, "Science and Religion" *Popular Science Monthly* Nov 1872 p.80

¹² Mark Twain, "The Disappearance of Literature". Speech given at the Nineteenth Century Club Dinner, Sherry's, New York. Nov 20, 1900. *Mark Twain Speaking*, Paul Fatout ed. (Iowa: University of Iowa Press 1976) p.358

their fiction to the influence of the public. As science became more popular, useful, and progressive in American society between the time of Hawthorne and that of Twain, its image in fiction changed becoming more practical, positive, and benevolent. The scientist moved from being a powerful wizard to being an utilitarian engineer.

Clearly, Hawthorne and Twain differ in their portrait of the scientist. Hawthorne considered him indistinguishable from a wizard. Though the source of the scientist's power could be science or magic, his ambition and desires remained the same. Hawthorne associated science with the "doubtful sciences" that were then popularly accepted as legitimate: his characters, like mesmerists, seek to rule over others. By Twain's day the "pseudo-sciences" had been delegitimized, and Twain associated them with the wizard Merlin and not with the scientist Yankee. To the Yankee science is progress; he attempts to transform England into an improved, democratic nation through the introduction of science.

But, though our world remains Twain's technological world of machines, we are increasingly moving towards Hawthorne's interpretation of science. Although Mark Twain hints at the destructive capabilities of science, our late twentieth-century view of science is closer to Hawthorne's more persistent conception of it as a dangerous, uncontrollable force. Once again, the public has started to worry about the results of science manipulating powers it cannot adequately restrain. In a world where nuclear accidents at Three Mile Island, and Chernobyl leak deadly radiation into the air, where genetic research attempts to create new forms of life, where science has given man the power to destroy the entire planet — science once again threatens go out of control. The recent discovery of the greenhouse effect, directly attributable to the results of science and progress, shows that our unknowing interference with natural forces can have fatal unpredicted and unpredictable consequences. In the late twentieth century, the scientist has again become a wizard, meddling in dangerous forces beyond his ability to control. In this centennial year of Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee*, we have come full circle. Turning aside from Twain's world of science automatically leading towards greater progress, we are approaching Hawthorne's world of ominous unrestrained science, on the verge of destroying everything.

...Author's Note

Samizdat is a production of Samuel Lubell who is solely responsible for its contents. Nothing here should be taken as the views of any employer, client, or organization to which I belong. This zine was produced during Samuel Lubell's non-work time. Photos are from my Scotland trip.



Brownian Motion #10

A Garth Spencer apazine

For N'APA #272, September 2024

In this political season, you are going to want to keep these sites handy. Visit them regularly. And rather than relying on one, you'll want to use multiple fact check sites.

<https://apnews.com/hub/ap-fact-check>

<https://www.factcheck.org/>

<https://www.politifact.com/>

<https://www.opensecrets.org/>

<https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/>

<https://www.verifythis.com>

<https://leadstories.com/>



Should I Reinvent CUFF, or Throw in the Towel?

My efforts to promote the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, and to find a convention interested in a CUFF delegate attending next year, have not met with a lot of response. It is as if my broadcast emails merely disappeared, except for two or three discouraging responses.

There are few upcoming fannish conventions in Canada, anyway; not “fannish” in the sense that they address the fanzine-oriented, internationally-corresponding fandom in which fan funds were invented, and which I entered a few decades ago. (I gather contemporary fans now call this “literary” fandom, or “literary” conventions, which always makes me snort.)

At this point I have two or three main choices.

One choice is to reinvent CUFF to address contemporary fandoms – that is, to represent not so much regional fan groups to each other, but different fandoms to each other. CUFF was conceived as a way to put Canadian fans from one half of the country to the other half, to improve their communication and travel across the country. Would it make more sense, now, for gaming and comics fans to nominate and

elect delegates to represent them to anime and media-franchise conventions? Or does this just imitate what fans do anyway, within any given city or province?

Another choice is, as the late Fran Skene suggested,

Why not announce in the CUFF Facebook group that CUFF is on hiatus this year [2024], and that next year [2025] we will revisit it, and decide then whether it can be revived or, if not, be donated to a worthy fannish cause?

That gives you time to [build up] the CUFF bank account, and then [it can be] used for either the next CUFF destination or [a] designated cause.

(Fran Skene, email, May 26, 2024)

So that's what I announced and that's what I'm doing.

R. Graeme Cameron (editor of *Polar Borealis*) offered a third choice, which I haven't acted on:

"Recent discussion with CUFF winners Garth and Fran has produced two ideas to revise CUFF.

"1) Make it a typical fan fund, i.e. from country to country. Send Canadian fans to US cons.

"2) Instead of the old idea, now impossible, of sending CUFF winners to Conventions (now held online), send them to wherever Corflu is being held. This has the advantage of a destination con utterly devoted to fannish fandom. Select from candidates who are going anyway, and offer to ease their financial burden. They in turn get to embody a solid fannish tradition at a venue where this will definitely be appreciated.

"And now an alternative third radical revision proposal.

"3) Give up the idea of finding a con – willing to host – that will offer a free membership , a free hotel room, and program space for CUFF events. Given the budget constraints of most cons these days, that's like asking for the Moon. Face it, there is no public demand for a CUFF presence. It won't increase attendance numbers. After all, most fans today are fans of SF, not fans of fandom. Even if you 'educate' fen, it still won't mean anything. A CUFF presence does not enhance con profitability.

"But, but, but... if CUFF frees itself from 'forcing' obligations on unwilling cons, and simply sets about raising funds to aid the CUFF winner with the financial burden of attending a given con, paying in whole or in part air fare, a membership, and a hotel room, that leaves the CUFF winner free to ignore programming and simply meet and mingle, in the hospitality suite, in hallways, at parties, all the while glad handing and promoting fannish fandom and Canadian unity.

"In practical terms CUFF funds wouldn't pay for everything, but would function as a grant, making it easier for the winner to attend. In return, the CUFF winner would do their best to have a good time helping others have a good time, which is the whole point of fannish fandom anyway.

"What about the traditional Turkey readings and CUFF auctions? If a con is willing, fine. But the Turkey reading at NASFiC had almost zero audience participation except for a young guy dressed as a Barbie Doll Stewardess. Not a lot of laughs. Not a lot of money raised. And the CUFF auction had, what, four bidders? Again, not a lot of money raised. My point being: something of a wasted effort.

“Help a CUFF winner attend a Con and simply unleash them to promote CUFF and fandom individually and very personally. That, I think, is the key to keeping CUFF alive. And to making CUFF an attractive proposition for potential candidates.

“Whereas CUFF as tradition for tradition's sake, loading up the winner with hardscrabble conditions like an auction or a Turkey reading which conoms are liable to stick in obscure rooms at obscure times, and loading the host con with financial obligations, is doomed from the start. Such is my opinion.

“In essence, converting CUFF into a grant enabling the winner to party hearty meeting other fen and proselytizing on behalf of fannish fandom while having fun seems the best direction for CUFF to aim for.

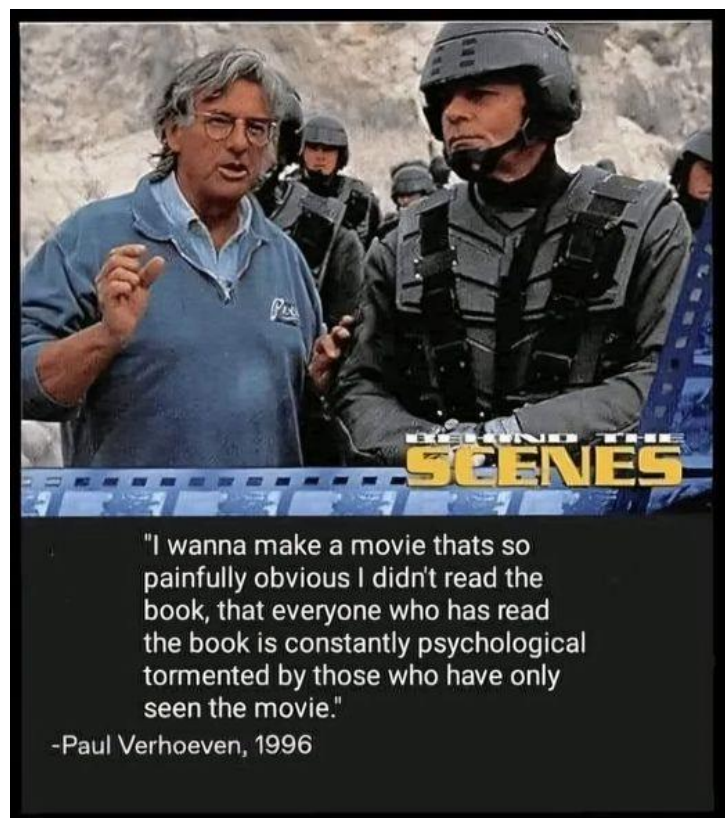
“At any rate, that's my suggestion.”

(R. Graeme Cameron, CUFF Facebook page, May 7, 2024)

At this point I am persuaded that Graeme is right.

So, **I am inviting your opinions:** What function do you think a fan fund carries out, by assisting a fan to travel to a convention? That is, what representation does one fan community need to give, or receive, from another? Should CUFF be organized to represent Vancouver fandom to Toronto, or Toronto to Halifax, or Ottawa fandom to Calgary? Or should it represent anime fandom to gaming, Star Wars fandom to gamers, costumers to fanzine fans or conrunners? Or do we have other functions to perform, if some fan groups are out of contact with each other?

The floor is open.



THE JADE RING part II

In the winter of 1981/82, at one of the unofficial gatherings at the Lettuce Patch café that happened after the monthly SF club meetings, Polly said, “I think I found out where the Combination committee get their ideas. The Star Wars Republican Federation has been advertising in some of the prozines, and offering reprints of the Star Trek Welcommittee’s one-shot about organizing a convention. Now, check out the page I flagged with a Post-It note.” She twisted some of her long black hair nervously, nearly dipping it in the ketchup beside someone else’s fries.

Hrothgar took the mimeographed fan publication obediently and leafed through it. Like other amateur publications, it had some drawbacks in font size and margin size, but it was more or less readable. On page eight Polly had flagged:

1. The professional convention. This is usually a very large convention run by people who may have a passing interest in Star Trek, but whose real love is money. ...

3. The fan-run big con. This tends to be smaller than the pro con. Although registration fees, events, and other hoopla are the same, since the con is run by fans, they keep more of an eye on fan-oriented panels ... Size ranges from 500 to 17,000 attendees, with the majority running around 5,000 to 8,000 ...

3a) The fan-run fan con. This is a smaller con, by, of, and for fans. There are no stars, no writers, just fans discussing fannish topics and enjoying themselves ... attendance [runs] between 100 and 500.

3b) The fan-run neo con. While the fan con appeals to active fans and its purpose is to stimulate interest in Trek and fandom, the neocon is for acquainting new fans with fandom ...¹

“Well, that’s a ... creative way to describe conventions,” Hrothgar said. He handed the one-shot to Charlie Johnson, Polly’s brother.

“Yes. Somebody had a first impression or two based on mediacons,” Ernie said. “And then the Star Wars gang took their description for a *pre*-scription.”

Charlie slapped his head. “*This* is where they got their idea of a convention! And the Federation must be the reason why they didn’t listen, when I told them 90% of congoers come from within 100 miles of a convention.”

“I have a question,” Hrothgar said slowly.

Polly looked at him. “Like what?”

“Where did this Star Wars Republican Federation come from?” Hrothgar asked. “I can see how the Trekkers could get a few screwy ideas, but ... where did this Federation get theirs? Completely unworkable ideas, I mean?”

Everyone looked at everyone else, baffled, and changed the subject.

¹ The Fan’s Little Golden Guide to Throwing Your Own Con” (a Star Trek Welcommittee handbook)

In June 1982, Norman French in Saskatoon released another issue of his newszine *Nouvelles du Fantastique*. He reported that several problems with Combination Con were obvious even to out-of-towners eight months in advance:

“Intending to host ‘the largest convention ever in Canada’ when only two of the committee had ever attended a con before;

“Persistently grandiose planning – the breakeven point will require about 1,000 people ... This is more than twice the attendance of any Spuzzum con, and large than even the largest Samsara con;

“Alienating almost all members of the local SF clubs by requesting their manpower while refusing their advice to scale down;

“Picking the same name as the long-running Combination Con in New York (and claiming they had ‘researched’ the name, yet found no clue to the New York con);

“Picking a date only a week away from the Samsara relaxicon, which broke an agreement Spuzzum fans made with Samsara fans;

“Offering to pay travel and accommodation expenses for TEN pro guests, when no con in North American paid for more than four (and Combination had neither the cash nor the reputation);

“Renting not one, but two hotels – the biggest in Spuzzum;

“Threatening all fandom in western BC, since a failure of this scale will turn both fans and hotels off future cons in the area.”

After Norman French recommended the Combination concoms scale down, they arranged a conference call with him. In the meeting, Norman strongly repeated his printed advice to scale down Combination Con – to drop one of the hotels, drop the paid guests apart from official Guests of Honour, scale down the con to break even at 400 attendees, and reconcile with the local clubs.

The treasurer, Rob Cuttendash, later reported to the concom that “We’ve gotten Norman French straightened out and everything’s okay now.”

§

While Hrothgar was editing the Spuzzum SF club’s newsletter, he received some newsletters in trade from as far away as Utah, where Thor LaViola had quietly made Muscon one of the most celebrated small conventions, especially for artshows. In July 1982 Hrothgar received a letter from Thor commenting that he had offered his own advice, based on his years of conrunning experience, only to be rejected.

Thor also commented on the Star Wars Republican Federation. He wrote:

“Convention committees usually incorporate a non-profit society to protect themselves from several and individual financial liability, if and when a convention’s expenses exceed its revenues, and petition for permission to use a convention’s name, which is trademarked by the non-profit society. I don’t know how you organize this in Canada. In the United States, at the federal level, organizations such as the World Science Fiction Society and the Westercon Society register for 501(c)3 charitable status.

“My point, and I do have one, is that the Star Wars Republican Federation must be registered at a federal or a state level. But I have not been able to find their

name registered at the federal level. I suggest you investigate whether they're properly registered in Canada, or at least in British Columbia."

Hrothgar made a mental note to follow this up, but in the tumult of events that followed, he never did. Well after the Combination Con affair, though, he found out how society registration worked in British Columbia.

§

One night Hrothgar called Ernie on the phone, unexpectedly. "I need to talk to somebody about something ... really weird, that happened to me," he began. "I hope you're not busy ..."

They met up at the Student Union basement café, and Hrothgar found one of the more secluded corners in the non-Euclidean geometry of the place. "Before I tell you what happened," Hrothgar said, "Can you promise me something?"

"I guess so," Ernie said cautiously.

"Please promise me you won't tell me I'm crazy."

Ernie blinked, but nodded.

Hrothgar began to describe his experience on the *Enterprise*. He surprised himself by telling it as if he were drafting a story for the student newspaper – a lead sentence, a summary paragraph, then a short narrative. "After I put on some music," he finished, "I guess I went to sleep. At any rate, the next thing I remember is waking up at home, lying on my bed." He had been staring resolutely at the far wall, which was a sort of pale cream colour and needed repainting. He shifted his gaze to Ernie's face.

Ernie stared back. "Last week I had a similar experience," he said finally.

"Jesus," Hrothgar said.

"I didn't meet Jesus," Ernie went on. "I was thinking about some faanfiction turning on a character named Jophan, and then ..."

Ernie didn't know at what point his walk through the English department's corridor turned into a trek through softly glowing halls, leading to a large circular chamber cluttered with hektographs, mimeographs, typewriters, and stacks of paper. In the centre was a throne occupied by a pile of fanzines. A robed figure was bent over a mimeograph and muttering to himself.

Ernie cleared his throat. "Hello?" he said.

The robed figure turned, showing a beaming balding countenance, and said "Hello! Are you visiting?"

"I suppose I am," Ernie said. "What are you working on?"

"Aach, this hunk of junk is having a hissy fit." The balding man hit the mimeo gently with his fist. "Probably needs to be stripped down and cleaned thoroughly, I think it has dried-up ink in the works. Now, what can I do for you? My name is Jophan." He came forward, holding out his hand.

Ernie shook hands automatically. "I'm Ernie von Ulm. Well, that's the short version. I'm not at all sure how I got here. Where is here, anyway?"

Jophan looked astonished. “You don’t know? This is the Great Fanzine Room in the Sky, where all true faneditors go when they shuffle off this mortal coil to that undiscovered country where the Eternal Convention is held. I host panels and fanpubbing workshops here. Surely you must be attending the next panel?”

“Not to my knowledge.” Ernie found himself twisting his ring nervously.

Jophan noticed. “Oh. Oh, I know what that is.” He looked searchingly at Ernie. “You’re one of the Jade Ring, aren’t you?”

Ernie was astonished. “What, you’ve heard of us?”

“All sorts of news finds its way here, eventually.” Jophan gestured Ernie towards a pair of chairs, he shifted more piles of fanzines off of them, and they sat down. “Do you know what activated your jade rings?” he asked.

“Activated? No, I don’t know what that means,” Ernie said.

Jophan put his hand to his mouth in a pensive motion. “Tell me,” he said after a pause, “Have any curious things happened to you, or to your fan community, in the past year or so?”

Ernie found himself pouring out the story of the Combination Con’s plans for an overblown convention with insufficient resources, and its interference with their own plans for a modest minicon.

Jophan scooted his chair closer until they sat nearly knee to knee, and leaned forward.

“Jade,” he began to explain, “is actually a mineral named jadeite, in the Old World and in New Zealand. Chinese, Maori, and Meso-American cultures, in particular, prized jade for its colours and toughness, surrounded it with a wealth of folklore, and excelled at creating amazing pieces from it. Meso-American jade folklore developed around jadeite, though. When the Spaniards arrived in Mexico, they found the Aztecs valued jade many times more than its weight in gold.”

“Oh,” said Ernie.

“Don’t interrupt. Jade had a status-value in ancient China exceeding gold or silver. Jade became a favourite material for the crafting of Chinese scholars’ objects, such as rests for calligraphy brushes, as well as the mouthpieces of some opium pipes, because they believed that breathing through jade would bestow longevity. Jade is also said to grant unique access to the spiritual world, opening ‘a bridge between earth and heaven,’ as in encouraging and understanding dreams. Jade bangles are commonly worn for protection, to shield the wearer from negative energies. Jade is said to crack as it absorbs any harm aimed toward its wearer.”

“Now why would they believe—”

“It doesn’t matter,” Jophan went on. “Jade is a gemstone believed to have several benefits, including increasing fortune, grounding, and enhancing maturity in relationships. Different crystals and stones are believed to harness their own energies and provide unique benefits. Jade is mentioned in the Bible as a precious stone representing one of Israel’s 12 tribes on the breastplate of judgment worn by the highest priest in ancient Israel; read Exodus 28:20, Exodus 39:13. In the second place, it is mentioned a decoration on the covering of the King of Tyre; read Ezekiel 28:13.”

Ernie gave up and settled back to wait a long time. He had long experience of elderly people, from living in Spuzzum.

“The Combination Con committee really are living in their own world,” Jophan said abruptly, “a parallel universe to yours, where vast promises really do attract vast sums of money. But I happen to know that the Star Wars Republican Federation is a front for an evil empire, based in still another timeline. One of their modes of conquest is to set up a front organization in an unsuspecting timeline, dupe some local residents into serving some get-rich-quick schemes, and when they have enough currency, start building a beachhead. This kind of operation is, apparently, what you are witnessing – but you have a secret weapon.” He pointed at Ernie’s ring. “Jade is critical to the cross-timeline travel you are experiencing. You and your friends have to master the use of jade, in order to defeat the Evil Lukass Empire!”

“But how?!” Ernie wailed.

The walls, the room, and the face of Jophan began to fade. “... master jade ...” was all Ernie could make out, as the rising sound of a whirlwind bore him away home.

§

Ernie and Hrothgar stared at each other.

“Oh crap,” Hrothgar said, “we’re in the middle of a fricking adventure fantasy.”

“More like up shit creek without a paddle,” Ernie muttered.

“Like I said,” Hrothgar returned.

§

As she came toward him through the fog, “How annoying it is,” she was saying plaintively, “that these moors are never properly lighted.”

“Ah, but you must not blame Ole-Luk-Oie,” he protested. “It is all the fault of Beatrice Cenci....”

Then Hrothgar knew he had unwittingly spoken magic words, for at once, just as he had seen it done in theatres, the girl’s face was shown him clearly in a patch of roseate light. It was the face of Saavik.

“Things happen so in dreams,” he observed. “I know perfectly well I am dreaming, as I have very often known before this that I was dreaming. But it was always against some law to tell the people in my nightmares I quite understood they were not real people. Today in my daydream, and here again tonight, there is no such restriction; and lovely as you are, I know that you are just a daughter of subconsciousness or of memory or of jumpy nerves or, perhaps, of an improperly digested entrée.”

“No, I am real, Horvendile—but it is I who am dreaming you.”

“I had not thought to be a part of any woman’s dream nowadays.... Why do you call me Horvendile?”

She who bore the face of Saavik pondered momentarily; and his heart moved with glad adoration.

“I haven’t the faintest,” she admitted. “Except that you and I seem to be replaying parts of something you read. These meetings in dreams sometimes occur after a mind-meld; I must have been careless in my technique.” As she spoke the fog gradually

dissipated, the surroundings brightened and began to form a meeting room in the *Enterprise*, and Saavik's flowing medieval dress reformed into a standard uniform.

"There may be more to it," Hrothgar said, not admitting to himself he wanted to prolong their company. "Recently one of my friends was informed that strange events in our town, and strange experiences happening to him and to me, were a side effect of an incursion from a parallel timeline ... and that such incursions had strange effects on jade artifacts." He held up his hand. "Such as this ring."

At which point he woke up. Cursing.

To be continued



Mailing Comments

The Official Organ #271

- I enjoy the Alan White cover!

Mini-Editorial – Jefferson P. Swycaffer

- Humans are prone to mistakes, accidents, and whimsical providence. Don't sweat it.

Snow Poster Township #16 – Heath Row

- I have debated buying or subscribing to the pro SF magazines, but usually shied away due to cost.
- I ask myself why the catchphrases in *Child's Play 3* fell flat. If they were a bit aged and out of period, that might be a factor. You have to wonder whether the producer, director or scriptwriter were a little less than au courant with contemporary language, or whether the production process meant the references would be dated.

- Re your comments about John Thiel's *Synergy* #48 – You seem to be talking about a number of psychological or philosophical fads. When you mentioned symbolic logic, I think you were trying to recall General Semantics. Symbolic logic, on the other hand, is not a fad but a reasoning tool, sometimes also called formal or mathematical logic. I am glad that I gained a rudimentary acquaintance with it at university, but the fact that I learned about it *accidentally* leaves me uneasy.

- Re your comments on *Brownian Motion* #7 – I have another uneasy feeling about the Auroras, the Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards, for that matter about the FAAn Awards. I suspect that these awards mainly involve people who are already participating members of Classic Fandom, the world of clubs and fanzines and conventions and APAs and fan funds and awards – and little or no news about them reaches Modern Fandom, which lives in its own world of experiences and speaks other languages.

- Moving to “An Organized Collection of Irrational Nonsense,” as a Venn diagram, I got that image from Facebook, where all sorts of fun graphics appear.

- You pose the question whether we should read good books if they are authored by bad people. For my part I read the good stuff and set aside the writers' moral issues as Their Business.

I still see your question – in the case of Marion Z. Bradley and Neil Gaiman and anyone else charged with moral turpitude – and raise another one:

Who is without sin and can cast the first stone?

I can't claim to be much better than Neil Gaiman, at least within my own heart. Not to say too much, but I know what excesses I might be tempted to if I gained enough prominence and wealth. Perhaps this is *why* I live like a student in my retirement years.

- Hmm ... specific awards I've heard of ...

Aurora Awards (Canada)

BSFA Awards (U.K.)

Ditmar Awards (Australia)

Elron Awards (prank/satire awards that were held at VCON, in Canada)

FAAn Awards (multinational)

Hugo Awards (multinational)

Prix Boreal (Canada)

Prix Solaris (Canada)

Seiun Awards (Japan)

Sunburst Award (Canada)

I'm probably forgetting awards that David Langford and Ahrvid Engholm have mentioned in their zines, including prominent ones. I'm having a senior moment, trying to recall the name of a juried award, as well-known as the Hugos. Is anyone still holding the Hogu joke awards? Or the Fugghead Award? And do we have any excuse for being so anglosphere-centric?

Intermission 143.5 – Ahrvid Engholm

- Computers.

It dawned on me at one point that humanity has gone through several media for writing, as for recording sound and music – and we’ve gone through more and more of them, just in my lifetime – and one interesting detail is that a new medium is often used as a temporary workbook, before putting text in a final, and more venerable medium. But, by stages, the newer medium – as in word processing, or digital storage – becomes the standard and replaces typewriting, or printed books, or hardcopy files and libraries.

Since my lifetime spans the decades when (at one extreme) teachers smacked your hands with a ruler if you wrote left-handed, to (at the other extreme) high-school graduates who can’t read handwriting, my viewpoint is a bit detached.

After such a baseline of experience, I am not wedded to the idea that print is dead. Or that computers can be relied upon entirely; I expect disks and hard drives to become unreadable. Regularly I am plagued by not finding old files, or at least not recognizing and interpreting old filenames. So, I believe in making monthly backups of my computer contents, and even in making printouts of files, no matter how many boxes I have to lug about with me whenever I have to move.

- For a while, my Ideal Computer would have been a re-creation of the pocket computer, a model that briefly appeared on the market but never really caught on: something the size and shape of a pocketbook, opening to reveal a 7-inch screen opposite a 7-inch keyboard. By now, though, I realize a) I would have to build my own, b) the keyboard is too small to use, c) I can’t *get* the parts in Vancouver, even if I had the skills to assemble them.
- Your plan for coping with your Amazing Disappearing Files is probably a good one. But don’t give up your paper files yet.

The Murdered Master Mage – George Phillies

I’m not sure what to say about your books. They must be great reads.

At the moment, I identify with older and less enabled protagonists – partly because I am older, I admit, and partly because I now deal almost exclusively with people who have some severe limitations, ranging from inarticulacy or dyslexia to attention deficit, autism range, or personality shortcomings.

Intermission 144 – Ahrvid Engholm

- Ah! You succeeded! (Eventually we will have to talk about planned obsolescence in commercial computers.)
- About the media ignoring much of the news from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict: it sounds, from your thumbnail description, as though there are simply too many ramifications and complications for the average newscritters’ tiny little minds to grasp. (Notice I did not say “journalists,” who seem to be an extinct species.) There is also the matter that neither newspapers, nor broadcast news programming, are well adapted

for in-depth reporting. English-language news has largely been tailored to people reading at a 12-year-old level at best, more often an 8-year-old level, and attention-deficient 8-year-olds at that. Everything, from short attention spans to the influence of advertisers to the dominance of business accountants, militates against serious, in-depth investigation.

- Onward. I read your history and newsclips and all with interest. Hadn't realized there were three-wheeled vehicles in any numbers, either in Europe or in Britain, but there you go: a lot gets past me.
- Re your comments to Henry Grynnssten: of course, I was arrested by your discussion of religious issues, and especially your version of the Ask and Embla story. On the one hand, of course I know that organized religions have a mixed history. These days I wonder why anyone feels the need to flog that dead horse. Maybe it's time for a movement promoting **un**organized, personal and private worship? Or has it been going on since at least the 1960s?

If in fact there is such a movement, I seem to be part of it. For the last few years I have been the Clerk of the Heathen Freehold, an organization in British Columbia with "kindreds" in several municipalities. (Well, fewer now than there were. The COVID-19 restrictions had a hard impact on our gatherings.) I know enough about the myths to realize a) these stories are symbolic, not literal, so the point is what they mean, not to take them as factual; b) there seem to be significant differences between the Germanic pagan myths in the famous *Eddas*, as recounted by Snorri Sturluson, and the Germanic pagan myths in the *Res Dana Gestorum*, as recounted by Saxo Grammaticus. I know people who tell new stories about the old characters, suggesting that reinterpretation and invention are not outlawed. So unorganized faith can be sort of creative.

- There is a side to the issue of fanaticism that you may not have considered – and it coincides with the (apparently unrelated) issue of institutional corruption. That is, these serious drawbacks have less to do with religion, and a lot to do with institutions of all sorts.

So help me, as far as I can tell, every religious institution, *and every governmental, political, military, financial, and business-related institution* has had to contend sometimes with levels of corruption that threatened to get out of hand; and, likewise, with occasional fanatics who try to overwhelm their institution.

You could explain a lot of the financial and political decisions of the last forty or fifty years as the result of right-wing fanaticism, in a broad variety of institutions.

I don't expect to convince anyone, but I put forward the idea for consideration.

This talk about intelligence and superintelligence misses a critical detail: there are different faculties grouped together under "intelligence," and they aren't the same. Whether there can be "superintelligent" beings, biological or artificial, is a question of how capable they can be in ... oh, receiving all kinds of sensory information, visual, spatial, or manual/kinesthetic, chemical or sonic; remembering, or comprehending it, recording or expressing it ... social intelligence, empathizing with other beings, learning skills manual or digital or interpersonal, and growing in character.

At this point I start thinking about Robert Heinlein's protagonist in *Citizen of the Galaxy*, who has the good fortune to be taught the skills to maximize his attention and memory – attributed to a Dr. Renshaw. I don't know if Heinlein invented him.

- You asked me how many APAs I know about are electronic. The best answer to that is to get Heath Row's latest Blue Moon Directory (2024), combining and updating his and my information about APAs. Just ask!

Archive Midwinter – Jefferson P. Swycaffer

Thank you for your comments to me.

- As to computers ... see my initial comments to Ahrvid Engholm way above, about the different media used for information. Computers seem to be one more medium of recording and processing information, succeeding a great number of previous media. Which begs the question, what will succeed computers?

- I see you took my point about how very much of the world we have to take on faith, lacking the “Renshawed”/maximized skills to absorb, remember, or process very much information.

Ye Murthered Master Mage #271 – George Phillies

An interesting read in general, as usual.

- One quibble – you describe a 5.25” external drive with a USB connector as “impossible,” but I actually used to have one. I wish I had had it available when I had a lot of 5.25” disks. For that matter I wish I had still had a 3.5” disk reader, when I had more of disks in that size.

- If I were to take out an ad, for the Canadian Unity Fan Fund or anything else, I suppose it would be at least 1.5” tall by a column wide (seeing that a number of N3F zines use a two-column format). But I'm going through a phase now in which I wonder whether there is still a place for CUFF in contemporary Canadian fandoms.

If, on the other hand, you wanted to place an ad in the Obdurate Eye, I would quote you something for a roughly equivalent space, or for one of the nifty 7.5” banner ads you run in the *FanActivity Gazette*.

Brandy Hall Issue 7 July 2024 – Mark Nelson

Thank you for your kind comments on my zine. It appears we're pretty much in agreement.

Fan Fic 2 – George Phillies

I see how this is slowly developing. Maybe my own faanfiction is slowly developing – not too slowly, I hope, for contemporary readers.

Renovation and Innovation Letter, by Adrian Kresnak

Welcome to the fold!

Like some other fans here, my entry into fandom was earlier than 1985, and what I was exposed to revolved around fanzines, clubs, fan-run general-interest conventions – and only incidentally fandoms such as Japanese animation, comics, costuming, filking, gaming of all sorts, *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, or any other TV or movie series.

Unfortunately, I am in a region where fans aren't sharing their worlds with each other. Some days I feel like the Last of the Elder Fans in my town. Almost the last in my country. There are probably solutions, but I haven't found them yet.

Samizdat... Ish #26, July/August 2024, by Samuel Lubell

- We seem to be pretty much in agreement on most things. I only wish I *saw* more overlap between reading fandom and screening fandoms, though.
- Thank you for the table of pre- and post-COVID Worldcon attendances; I wasn't sure what the attendance levels have been since the turn of the century.
- Your project list gives me some something to consider, because of the way it contrasts with my ever-changing life handbook. Maybe I should bring it up in my next apazine.

Snow Poster Township #17, by Heath Row

- Interesting to read about *ABCs of Physics*, and other Baby University books. What a concept!
- Interesting also to read your review of Peter Watts' *The Freeze-Frame Revolution*. I wonder if I can track it down? (If I recall correctly, Peter Watts is a Canadian writer.)
- Glad that you, too, enjoyed my short fanhistorical piece. I have some manuscript materials towards a Canadian fanhistory, but much of the material is in the 70s through the 90s, overlapping the majority of the material covered in Taral Wayne's *The Great White Zine*. (This and other publications by Taral should be on the eFanzines.com website.)
- I'm also glad you appreciated the "News-Like Substances." Good to hear how Kalin received your contact when you approached CSFFA.
- When Elizabeth Vonarburg performed a hoax, she used the name "Sabine Verrault" (that's how I recall it), which was supposed to be an anagram of her name. The issue about her work being rejected under her own name had to do with some kind of attitudes between different cliques in Quebec prodom at the time – nothing to do with Elizabeth's gender.
- Thank you for reminding me; I had about forgotten that we talked about drawing covers for each other. Time to take up my pencil again! (and relearn how to draw ...)
- I haven't received any advertisements yet.