

N'APA

274

September 2025



The Official Organ

#274

Next deadline: March 15, 2025

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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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Holy Gosh, I'm LATE with this edition! Entirely my fault! I thought I'd already done it, and I HADN'T! Just ordinary fannish block-headedness with a dose of senior lackwits! My apologies!

INTERMISSION #149

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and others who believe in UFOs (Unintentionally Funny Objections). Read @SFJournalen's newstweets if you dare in Musk times. (But started Bluesky account as backup if Twitter turns bitter and litter, fritters, feels jitter to make you a quitter.) Typos cost \$1B every year, so what if AIs are told make pacerplips? Late Nov 2024.

Editorially: Trump won, Ukraine will win!

Helvetes förbannade f***bastarder! Hell's damned f***bastards! That's how I felt - and I'm not alone - as the results of the US presidential election began rolling in. Government controlled SVT had an around the clock election studio. And so did the commercial TV4. There was a poll in a paper on how the Swedes would vote if they could: Kamala Harris would get 73%, Donald Trump only 14%!

I wasn't blind. I checked the odds, which all the time favoured Trump (at one time with 62% to 38%!). But I had hopes and thought that Logic Must Prevail. You logically want your politicians to be trustworthy to trust them with your vote, not spewing out barrages of lies. Politicians make laws, so you also want them to respect laws, not to be felons of 34 convictions (and more may come). You want your politicians to be reasonably healthy in mind and body, not near 80 showing signs of mental decline. You want your politicians to be good for the economy, not to propose huge tariffs that will cause inflation, punish exports and lose jobs.

But Trump defied logic. I've been thinking why? Oh why, you mighty cosmic forces, did this happen?

Below several possible contributing factors. I'm not staying with "Well, Harris lost this and that group..." because we already know she did. Trump got 1 million *more* votes than in 2020, Harris had 13 million *less* than Biden in 2020 (another sources claim it was minus 7 million). The Republicans got their troops to the polls, the Democrats didn't. But Why?

*The US of A obviously *wasn't ready for a female president*. Kamala Harris was well-prepared and has obvious competence, with a long career as state prosecutor, senator and vice president. But that wasn't enough against a mediocre businessman (OK, one period as president, however that went...). She could speak in complete sentences presenting concrete plans. But go for the one who mostly babble self-appreciation, voters thought!

* *Russian Troll Factories worked overtime, and Twitter turned elephant* to sink Harris and raise Trump. One of the first Troll Factories was called the "Internet Research Agency" in St Petersburg., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Research_Agency Already a decade ago it had 1000 hired hands busy spreading propaganda. I'd guess this troll army now, because of the war, has grown dramatically. Putin pays armies of virtual warriors, creating hundred of thousand fake accounts to spread lies. They use AI to make "persuasive" postings, suggesting Harris is a dangerous extremist and war monger, claiming Ukraine is losing (fact: Russia loses an entire Vietnam War every six weeks!), that Trump loves children and dogs and cats, and... I've seen the Russian troll army myself in action. It certainly had an impact. Studies also show how the Twitter (owned by rocketman Musk) algorithms changed to favour the Republicans. <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/elon-musk-turned-x-trump-echo-chamber-rcna174321> Internet was trumped to the Orangeutan Ape.

* The US homegrown oligarch *billionaires spent hugely on the Trump campaign*. While eg Bill Gates spent \$50m on a group affiliated with Harris, most of the others, like Musk and Bezos, courted Trump. Musk opened a multi-million ballot lottery (possibly illegal) Together they spent billions - it's claimed - to get him elected, to be rewarded with big tax cuts for their businesses. Bezos owns *Washington Post* and forced the paper to be neutral (usually the *Post* endorses one candidate). Their stock value have already increased more than what they spent...

* There's what we may call the "*shame factor*" affecting opinion polls. Trump had been portrayed as a moron (gee...wonder why?) and his supporters as lowbrow rednecks. That may cause a voter to lie

when a pollster ask “Who would you vote for?”, not to feel ashamed. The polls may have underplayed support for Trump. (This “shame factor” has also been suggested as a factor for the Sweden Democrats getting wrong poll predictions. To make it clear: The SD is *not* on my Xmas card list! Nationalism is generally a stupid idea.)

* Many Americans have limited perspectives of the world outside the 50 states. Putin's stupid war is a *gigantic problem affecting the whole world*, that Kamala Harris takes seriously, while Trump dismisses it and claims he'll “fix it” in 24 hours (he won't). And all who don't know better tragically believe him. Who doesn't want wars to stop? Republican voters don't realise that Trump is a fumbling amateur in international politics. He fantasises he is a “friend” of Putin, and Kim Jong-Un the poor bastard. The golden “Trump watch” he sells will show very long 24 hours...

* What we call *wokeness push people into Trump's arms*. This populist politically correct potourri of ideas - including identity politics, cancel culture, feminism, environmentalism, critical race theory, drag queens, “queerness” - has in later years spread and grown as a mould, cheered on by the virtue signalling media horde (Swedish studies from Gbg Univ show they lean 3/4 red-green, red here means left) and ideologically corrupt self-absorbed academia. The majority of ordinary people has problems with this. They are ready to support anyone who are against it, even a moron. Trump gets the protest votes against wokeness. Some even claim this was the most important factor.

* Joe Biden was *too late to withdraw*. Kamala Harris and Tim Walz (he was a good choice BTW!) had just over three months to prepare and campaign. It was right of Biden to withdraw, but he should have stepped back much earlier. He looked old, talked old, walked old. Despite a late start Harris put a lot of energy into her campaign (to our surprise we found that she's a good speaker), but more time was needed.

I don't believe the economy favoured Trump, as some claim. His ideas are economically dangerous, as the tariffs he loves will push up prices, start trade wars and thus kill jobs. Harris had concrete plans to benefit small businesses, home buyers and parents.

The whole world has to live with an unstable, narcissistic criminal who throws any dissenters out the window, as his dwindling troops march along the Red Square. And to this we now also have Donald Trump.

What does Trump mean for Ukraine? It's the single most important question. What's good for Ukraine is good for the the world economy, including US economy. Pushing Putin back means more security. Assistance to Ukraine benefits both Europe and the US as 90% of help packages is spent at home. Orders for military gear goes to our own industry and create jobs. And most countries send Ukraine vehicles and weapons being on their way out anyway.

Costs are nominal and might as well be zero as the stuff otherwise was on it's way to be scrapped. (But it's still superior to most things Russia has. The US IFV Bradley is 40 years old, Sweden's CV90 first saw service in 1994. Both are feared by the Russians and can take out heavier Russian tanks. Denmark on the other side donated its entire artillery, 18 mobile guns, since they are in the process of getting new ones; Sweden has donated its entire inventory of Tracked Armoured Vehicle 302 - 300 of them. It began service in 1966 and was used up to 2014 - while old the Ukrainians are impressed by how well it handles muddy terrain. Most APCs of the same class have machine guns, but this has a 20 mm gun with a bite! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5fBn_r_6sk

The US is said to have 4000 Bradleys stored somewhere in the dry Arizona desert – send them! Russia only have what they can salvage from shrinking Stalin era vehicle graveyards. They had record losses in October, 40 000 troops KIA and injured! It's the entire US Vietnam war in just six weeks. Total Russian losses are 750 000 (Ukraine probably less than 1/3 of that) which eats into the support for Putin. Russians have lost



Sweden donates hundreds of APC 302 to Ukraine. 20 mm gun, carries crew + 8 soldiers, amphibious!

tens of thousands of tanks and armoured vehicles, so much that experts estimate they'll run out of old vehicles to refurbish in 2025. The Russian navy is pushed back and to a third destroyed by Ukrainian sea drones. Ukraine is superior in the drone war and plan to produce 10 million drones next year. And Ukraine now gets permission to use ATACMS with longer range. Ukraine employs a fighting defense aiming at maximising Russian losses, to strike *at their will to fight*, collapse Russian economy and cause unrest in the shaky construction called the Russian Federation. They destroy Russia's oil refineries with long range drones, attack airfields, weapons factories, assembly points, even alcohol distilleries. Shrinking fossil sales hurts Russia, depletion of vodka stocks hurts even more...

Ukraine doesn't need military "victories". They just need to stand their ground and watch the Ruble crumble and Russian bank interest skyrocket (21% and rising). Hyper inflation is around the corner, big companies that are Russia's economic backbone go bankrupt, cracks in unmaintained sewers, heating, water piping etc make life hellish. Russian families have their economy destroyed and sons KIA. Putin desperation grows. He brings in North Korea (with soldiers who can't understand orders and rather watch porn), cuts undersea cables and juggles with ICBMs.

If Trump cuts help to Ukraine (we don't know, he is unpredictable) Europe can and will step in. All European NATO states have increased military spending. Euro economy is about 10 times the Russian (on track to shrink). Trump will unintentionally give Russia a deadly blow with his promise to decrease oil price by increased US production (and Saudi-Arabia seems willing to open the pumps too). Make no mistake, the Ukrainians won't "negotiate" anything about, even temporarily, giving up their internationally recognised land.

So, keep supporting Ukraine! Increase Russian losses until collapse! Slava Ukarini!

--Ahrvid Engholm

Ps. Not yet to overwhelmed with LoCs. Give me thoughts on the US election, Ukraine, SF-Lovers, poetry...

Trump and Poetry In A Day



Comet John Benzene jr and Bengt O Björklund.

The DIY publishing operation Författares Bokmaskin ("Authors' Book Machine"), is a fine institution established in the early 1970s. You take your book there, get help with editing and layout (if you want) and then print it on their machinery. The price is lower than from the greedy "hybrid publishers" popping up today. The staff is half-idealists (of course they get pay) and know what they do. Since a couple of decades back they have a yearly anthology called Poesi på en dag ("*Poetry In A Day*") where the public contributes with poetry. The book had a very nice release party Nov 9, with many of the contributing poets present, readings, beer and a cosy atmosphere.

The contributing poets were reading their work from a stage. I sat in the bar or general mingle area, where there was a loudspeaker so you could hear the stage. Poets sat by my table

and we chatted, read and discussed each others poems. I leafed through the finished anthology and was struck by how *good* many of the poems were, in my amateur opinion at least. You may only contribute one poem (about 130 took part) so you go with your *best* one. I never see this unique anthology reviewed on any of the culture pages of the newspapers. They don't know what they miss. (On the other hand, it'd be hard to make a general overview of 130 different minds!) Ed's poetic friend Comet John Benzene Jr has contributed to



Poetry In A Day anthology

the anthology a couple of times before, and did so again this year. The poem was titled "Covfefe" and collected the most worthwhile quotes by the wise man who invented "covfefe" (whatever that is). It took a few hours to collect the quotes, and for the anthology it was translated to Swedish. It proved a bit difficult to find the exact quotes again, so Google Translate re-translated it all back to English for *ntermission*. In the result below phrasing may not be exact but still it's authentic quotes going *English->Swedish ->English* (some is manually corrected, or shortened but keeping the point). Enjoy this poem...

Covfefe

*I am the most successful person ever to run in the election for the office of president. The difference between me and the other candidates is that I am more honest and my women are much more beautiful. I am intelligent. Some would say I'm very, very, very intelligent. I could stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot someone, and would not lose a vote. I actually am modest, more modest than you can ever understand. When you are a star you can do anything. Grab them by the p*ssy. If Hillary Clinton can't satisfy her husband why does she believe she can satisfy America? I will build a great wall on the southern border, and I will get Mexico to pay for it. They send people with big problems, which they take with them. Drugs and crime, rape. But some are, I suppose, nice people. They eat dogs, they eat cats. They eat the pets of the people who live there. I am the least racist person you interviewed. Disinfectant...let's do something with it, inject it. We won this election, with a landslide victory. If we don't fight like hell, we don't have a country anymore. I'm really trying to be Kim Jong-Un's friend - and maybe I will be one day. If Putin likes Donald Trump, that's positive. Italy and the United States have been friends since the time of the Roman Empire. The American Revolutionary Army conquered the fortifications and took the air airfields, did everything it had to. The F-35 is the world's best fighter plane. Completely stealthy. It is literally invisible. A new coal mine has opened. They take up coal and clean it. I have something incredible to tell you. We are launching Trump coins, a symbol of America's greatness. The Trump Victory Tourbillon is not just any watch. It is one of the best watches ever made. Get the Trump watch now! I'm a stable genius.*

Some interesting "alternate facts" appear towards the end. Mr T talks about how George Washington's army feared the RAF may intervene, so they took the British airfields... But if things went bad they could always get help from Ceasar's legions,



Poets gathered in the bar. Of course!

since the Americans had so good relations with the Roman Empire! Very little is known about the air forces of the late 1700s. The Americans maybe had some F35s, but then again nobody saw them because they were *literally* invisible! According to Trump.

People seemed happy. Poetry readings went well. Bheer evaporated. I took a little lookaround at their publishing machinery: Computers, offset printers, copying machines, edge trimmers (is that the word?). Leafed through a book about their history and saw the IBM composer mentioned. I remember that glorified typewriter from

Nova SF, before they listened to the incompetent Mattias B and rented a photosetter - just as Desktop Publishing arrived! Bums!

Suddenly I saw my friend *Bengt O Björklund*, the guy from a Turkish prison from the film "Midnight Express" (covered in #53 and #125) who was also a member of the Swedish SF Writers Society (see #124) that never managed to catch steam. Bengt is slowly becoming a little like a Stieg Larsson of Swedish poetry abroad. He is invited to many overseas poetry and culture festivals, bestowed with awards and honours, but we don't hear much of that in Sweden. Bengt told that later in November he's invited to a literature festival in the Houses of Parliament, London, and a culture event in Wales. Check



Sf-author Börje Crona often hosted the readings (until his death 2017)



Bengt reading poetry. Me peeking from a corner.

https://www.facebook.com/events/248448418363432?mibextid=9I3rBW&rdid=XKmVetI2cOECv8uE&share_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fshare%2F12AkZrKidfU%2F%3Fmibextid%3D9I3rBW And: https://www.facebook.com/events/s/cerddi-yn-cwrw-fringe-special-/1055137246387234/?mibextid=9I3rBW&rdid=2OhliMT41hS2Xesx&share_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fshare%2F1BNFopPYdX%2F%3Fmibextid%3D9I3rBW Bengt gave me his new collection of

Haikus, scribbling a dedication in it, and took to the stage. Here's one of his poems (it lacks title):

*While watching the eye finds
the distance appearing
between what happens
and the perception itself
it is a human distance
a few microseconds
when it all hovers in uncertainty
and everything is both possible
and at the same time impossible*



Jonas, Anders, me. Partly visible in background a specially made bed cover for Eugen's comics character Allan Kämpe.

Space Reporter #1

Sweden's space reporter #1 was without doubt Eugen Semitjov (1923-1997), who I knew from working on *Teknikmagasinet*, through the *Swedish Space Movement* and also skiffy, which both he and his father Vladimir wrote. Eugen was an artist for *Jules Verne Magasinet* (1940-47) and created the internationally successful comic strip *Allan Kämpe*. Filmmaker Micke Engström has made a documentary about Eugen, and 31 Oct held a PR evening and party for the film in the Citizen's Place restaurant Pastell. (The film itself will premiere sometime early 2025.) I have helped with gathering info, sharing contacts and forwarding all material I researched from the Royal Library (much has been running in *Intermission*).



Arriving just after it opened I saw the place almost full. Wow!, Eugen was popular, especially among young girls... I later learned they had nothing with the 25-30 real Semitjov fans present to do. The site was only partly ours. Got some bubbly wine and studied a small Semitjov exhibition, incl some of his many books and a cyrillic typewriter, which must have been father Valdimir's. Eugen wrote in Swedish and with a wonderful, easy language. His manuscripts never needed editing, with an easy going and captivating style. That, many articles from before the dawn of the space age and on, many books, his contacts with both the Russian and US space programs, earned him the Big Journalism award in 1972 (our of local Pulíztzer).

Suddenly Anders Larsson and Jonas Söderberg said hello! I hardly recognised them, it must have been 30+ years since last saw them, but at that time I knew both reasonably well. Both had their noses into space and amateur astronomy and a little science fiction. I sat by their table as we chatted about older times.

Anders offered me some beer. Jonas (not to be confused with one Söderblad) told about his involvement in electronic music.



Me (always lens happy) and filmmaker Micke Engström in front of the poster for his film.



The silver spaceman who walked around us and part of the Semitjov mini exhibition.

A man with a silver-shining spacesuit costume moved around like a robot, which helped giving the evening a futuristic "space

feeling". Along the walls was a quiz that I took. I didn't win, because there was at least one "trick question" (about inventions mentioned in Eugen's comics) and I believe I was right (but it was marked as wrong) saying Eugen's father wrote hundreds of short stories, not thousands. Micke claims Bertil Falk says so in his sf history *Faktasin*. (I checked and it says "It is *claimed* Vladimir wrote thousands of short stories *and articles*". Is it *perhaps* amounted to a thousand, but counting *all types of material*. I've seen several non-fic articles by Vladimir. Bertil never found more than 2-300 short stories when investigating all the magazines of the era.)

It was a nice evening. I hope Eugen will be remembered. He was very influential in Sweden in the early space age. He sat in the studio when Apollo 11 landed and his space articles in the major papers and magazines were widely read. From the 1970s and on, as NASA began winding down their space program, he published books with all kinds of speculative, popular science contents usually about space, written on the level anyone could pick up.

We called him Genie. And that what he was.



The space age giant, releasing huge amounts of energy, making the moon landing possible. We also see a Saturn 5 rocket behind Eugen.

The national Swecon 2024 was named Fantastika and held in an old diesel engine factory, converted into a culture house, called The Diesel Workshop. Swecon has been there before.- 270 people gathered this windy autumn weekend, among them ca 30 foreign fans (half of them Finnish, a handful of Norwegians, Brits, Americans, one from Germany – among Brits old acquaintances Bridget and Barbara). I'll report by reproducing the pictures to the half-dozen tweets I sent from the con, to which I add some pics not tweeted. The tweeted pics have their own descriptive texts, the others will get captions (which may have info not found in this general text). GoHs were TL Huchu, Juliet McKenna, Åsa Schwarz and Lena Karlin. I had never heard of the two first, the last two are Swedish writers (of mostly fantasy) of which Lena also is an old fanne, involved since the 1970s. It was about the time when I began fanning, and Lena was around SFSF's legendary basement on Pioneer Street.

There was no program book, only a folded A4 program leaflet. I think it's a pity cons today seem to downgrade program books. Fandom needs more people writing longer texts than 240 characters! Fanzines. Program books. Short stories. LoCs. Text is the base of fandom!

Inspecting the venue, there were two program rooms - one big, one small - on the lower floor by the hallway where the reception was. Up some stairs were a third program room, a book sales room (several of the small



Screen from my Polhem lecture.

publishers for sf/f/h that have popped up were there, no big publishers) and along a corridor the gopher hole and the second-hand book room, which I visited frequently. The second-hand books appears on all Swecons and comes from the Alvar foundation. Friday evening many books were



missing. The driver of the transport had managed to lock in his own car keys and couldn't get into his vehicle. Other keys arrived Saturday resulting in a total of perhaps 20 shelf metres of literary consumables.

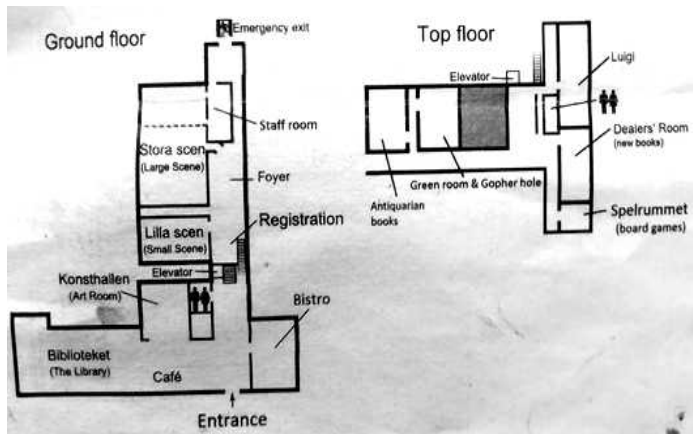
The "Fantikvariat", as it is called, is deadly! You already have too many books, but you *still* buy more. I probably grabbed some 35 books, one reason being that the price was reasonable. A used paperback was 10 SEK (a little under \$ 1), a hardbound 20 SEK. I looked for space sf and older sf. I think that much written today is overlong, babbling (the word processor's fault!). To this comes that some modern authors are naively political correct - conformity to popular beliefs makes bad skiffy. As for

Me talking *News from the Moon*. space, you know I've always been a space fan.

A nearby cafeteria functioned as bar. Blog was available, but unfortunately it's too expensive nowadays. Sf cons get more boring with less beer consumption...

The program had many panels (which I think are boring, they are often repetitive) but also at least 16 lectures - I had one. Friday evening, I was talking about scientist, inventor Christopher Polhem as a pioneer writing the earliest sf in Swedish (see #145). About 20 in the audience in the smaller of the two main halls. I think the lecture went reasonably OK, though I don't see myself as a good lecturer (I mumble too much and sometimes I lose the thread of the subject) but I do my best. I had a prepared presentation file with 8-9 screens packed with info. And I *did* explain what *Spavilfak ikav sve* means...

I almost missed the official opening, with the committee and GoHs on stage, and came into the main program room just as chair Carolina opened the wooden bottle to release the Spirit of Swecon. When the con is over, some air will be caught to get the Spirit of Swecon back in and the bottle will be kept plugged until Next Swecon (Luncon, southern city of Lund, Oct 10-12 next year).



Site layout.

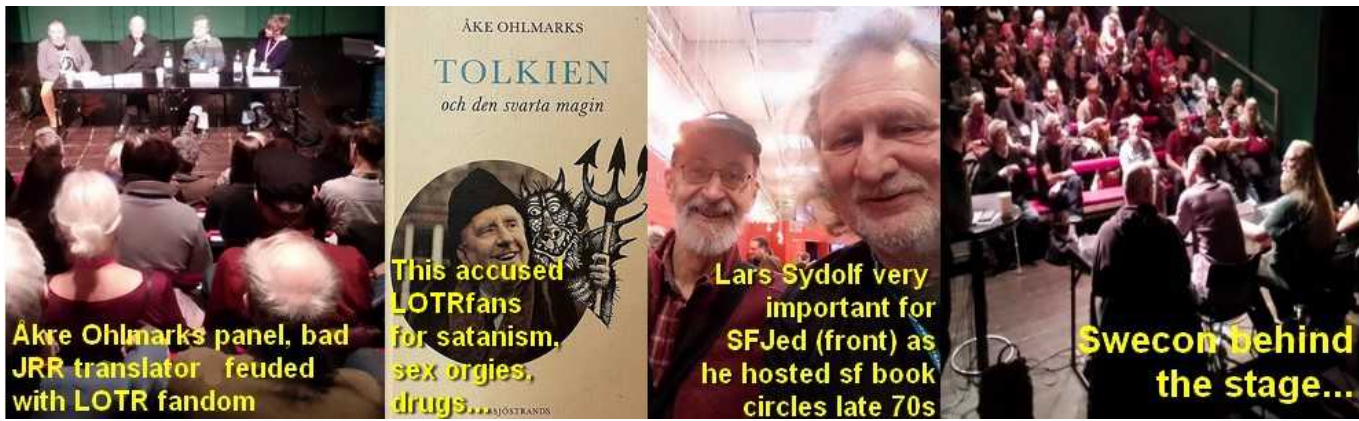
Checking the program leaflet there were also GoH interviews, readings, "fika" (coffee break) with GoHs, "group discussions", an auction, the Swecon session (for deciding next site), awards (the Alvar), a Tolkien choir (for the closing session), stories by the candle light, and a little gaming - not much gaming, thank Roscoe! There were ca 75 program items (I just counted), ca 28 of them in Swedish (the rest English or lingo didn't matter) in basically three tracks. I'll mention some of the program that I went to, but then I'm not fanatical about seeing as much program as possible.

Fan and fun program was missing, except for a panel about old cons.

They used some photos in an attempt to be Lars-Olovs Slide Show (Mr Strandberg's pictures was a must on all cons!) but I think we should get the real Lars-Olov slides. Cons today seem to miss this very important fannish aspects! A fan program, fannishness, things about fandom itself give you a break from advanced hi-tech, the subtle nuances of inventing worlds, academia escaping from sanctimonious universities (which has nothing to add to what we fan have always known) and let you relax and have fun. Fannishness is the social dimension of fandom. Make a fan program or you'll bore us do /d/e/a/t/h gafia!



Space mining will be damn expensive!



Åke Ohlmarks panel, bad JRR translator feuded with LOTR fandom

This accused LOTRfans för satanism, sex orgies, drugs...

Lars Sydolf very important for SFJed (front) as he hosted sf book circles late 70s

Swecon behind the stage...

Jesper Stage talked about space mining. It will be very expensive and is only feasible for delivering stuff to colonies and stations already in space. Mining moon ice (from pole craters) is much cheaper than bringing water from Earth. (An idea I have is that you could perhaps deliver mined ore to Earth in lumps that you aerobrake and crash in the Sahara desert?) There was of course a panel about AI, the subject everyone talk about now, but I don't remember much from it (a sign it wasn't too exciting). As noted, *Intermission* has done its own AI tests.

I had installed myself in a corner in the upper floor, where there was an electricity outlet so I could run my computer, to handle E-mail and doing some tweets (most of them reproduced here) despite not trusting Elon Musk too much. Now and then people strolled by and had a chat. One surprising person was Lars Sydolf who was quite important for me...45 years ago! He hosted the SFSF book circle in his home, which I attended for a couple of years, drinking tea while discussing the classic, good sf authors (those active 1940s and up to the 1970s).



Audience of Ohlmarks LOTR-feud panel. We call him Ohlmarx!

A very interesting panel was about the illustrious Åke Ohlmarks, an expert in eg the Icelandic Sagas, film manuscript writer, translator and a loudmouth. Ohlmarks became a foe of Tolkien in his last years (before he made LOTR PR and was hailed as a Tolkien profile). Most Sverifans have heard all the stories about what he did. The basic problem is that his translation of LOTR was shoddy, he mistranslated things, changed the style, cut out parts, embroidered scenes, etc. The errors were so many that JRR himself talked about them (I think he could read Swedish somewhat), so Ohlmarks was banned from translating *Silmarillion*. Now we have a new translation of LOTR, by the fan Erik Andersson (who then tackled Joyce).

Stealing fan Ingvar Svensson's Tolkien dictionary wasn't Ohlmarks biggest crime, it was attacking everything about Tolkien in the book *Tolkien and the Black Magic* (1982), creating a feud that reached national media. Everything Tolkien was an international conspiracy of Satan worshipping neonazis, full of drugs and sex orgies in the woods. ("Gee", Anders Palm said, co-founder of the Stockholm Tolkien Society, "why didn't they invite me to the sex orgies!")

The background in short: A group of the Uppsala Tolkienists, lead by one going under the nom de plume Gandalf, was at a Nachspiel at Ohlmarks' home. There was also Mrs Ohlmarks, an alcoholic, going on Antabuse to keep her from the bottle. The guests left, the wife had despite medication been drinking, was careless with a cigarette and a wing of the house caught fire. Ohlmarks, always short on money, demanded Uppsala Tolkien Society to pay for the repairs or he



Aka on looking for aliens + Drake equation

Jörgen J publishing LON's weird, but wonderful Froggy Gordon...

would... They refused, it all happened post-party, they had left, had nothing to do with it. So the book, written fast and in rage, was simply his revenge.

As you know, a lot has happened in the hunt for planets and even possible inhabitants there. Anna "Åka" Davour had a lecture about it. There weren't much news for me (I follow space-related things) except Sweden earlier this year got her first doctor (PhD) in Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, one Matias Suazo of Uppsala Uni, <https://www.uu.se/en/events/defences/2024-05-03-matias-suazo-searching-for-dyson-spheres-in-the-milky-way> Åka went through old and new SETI projects, Dyson spheres, UFOs and so on. The SETI people have begun using AI to go through the vast amounts of listening data the projects have accumulated, getting a few "loose" hits, in fact, but noting more concrete yet. But one day...

Jörgen Jörälv told us about his latest project, collecting all the absurd, very funny, quite unique Froggy Gordon strips in a new volume. "Blixt Gordon" is created by Lars LON Olsson, old-rime fan and artist (who worked at the Royal Library before retirement and in the 1960s for the porn publissher Curt Hson, see #114). The main character is a parody of Flash Gordon, and I've decided to translate the name to "Froggy Gordon", as the "grod" in the Swedish name GRODon means frog. You find new



work by LON in this eminent fanzine, but of more surrealistic sort.

There was a panel about classic sf. As you know, I think the genre was better earlier, mainly because the word processors coming in the 1980's make books overlong and babbling. An increased interest in skiffy from academia have contributed. Some authors suddenly become pretentious

to please squareheads and forget to be wild and adventurous.

Shana Whorten talked about Stockholm's "invisible bridges" using some sort of double book keeping, or bridge keeping. I didn't get it. John-Henri Holmberg had a rather long lecture on space opera, from the beginning to our days. It was rather good and I for one like good old space opera. Authors wrote better using typewriters. Space heroes were real space heroes, hyper space was real hyper space, and sun smashings were real sun smashings. But one thing I didn't get: JHH suddenly noted how one author filled a giant spaceship with transgender types, "but why doesn't he do anything with this?" JHH asked. (Well, a photon torpedo may be is on its way or something?)

There was an auction, which I didn't follow, but looking through the auction table I saw nothing sensational. As the scandalous NOFF has been discontinued - lead by folks who sees voting the same way as Trump - proceeds went to TAFF, GUFF and DUFF: Perhaps we should include PIFF, PAFF and RAFF too? (Inside Joke. LON will get it.) We traditionally call it a convention, translated to "kongress" in Swedish, to which you become a *member*, and it does have a sort of business



Swedish Cons in 70/80s panel. Far right Tomas Cronholm, one of few from 1950s fandom! Middle, long hair K Harju responsible for big feuds in the 1980s, causing a huge wave of gafiation around the 1980/90 shift



Some coming cons:

- Conserv, 16 november, Göteborg
 - Replicon, 5 april, Västerås
 - Reconnect, påskkongressen 2025, 18-21 April, Belfi
 - Fantasticon, 30 maj-1 juni, Köpenhamn
 - Norcon, 13-15 juni, Oslo
 - Archipelacon Eurocon, 26-29 juni, Mariestad
 - Worldcon Seattle, 13-17 augusti
 - Luncon, Swecon Lund, 10-12 oktober
 - Smotcon, 5-7 december, Stockholm (Pending on winning bid)
 - * Vilde universer, Aarhus 22-23 feb, vildeuniverser.dk
- Fincon & Eurocon, max 1000 members (500 up to now)

meeting: we decide on different bids (it was only one this time) for next Swecon, and the votes are counted for the fan activity award Alvar (Alvar Appeltofft Memorial Award, named after a very active fan in early fandom, administrating a substantial sum coming from from mainly Alvar's mother's will. (The father left the Alvar foundation out of his will after some irregularities were revealed, eg a board member borrowing a substantial sum from the fund.)

The Alvar is actually the *only continuous* award in Swedish fandom, began in the mid 1970s. We have no awards for best skiffy book, short story, etc. (Next spring comes round two of *Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize*. We'll see how that goes. And I hope the *Fantastic Short Story Contest* carries some weight.) There have been awards attempts, but most have been forgotten. You can get the irregular Cosmos Boot, but that's a more ironic negative award. You can become honorary SFSF member, but they stopped handing that out. So it's the Alvar we have, and this year it went to Karl Johan Norén. 46 voted. He has been around since the 1990s, done some fanzines but has most of all been known for collecting and singing filksongs.. He thanked for the Alvar by a capella doing his fannish parody of national poet Carl Michael Bellman.

The business meet ended with presentations of some coming cons. You can see the list from the tweet above. A piece of news is that Sweden bids for the 2025 Smofcon, 5-7 dec (in the very Diesel Workshop, in fact), the

con for convention organisers who we should call the Secret Bureaucrats of Fandom. (Thinking e.g. about how the SBOFs misconduct with CoCs: The CoC of Fantastika was pretty mild BTW.)



I can't cover

everything in this report. There were many items I didn't attend. We had panels and lectures also on writing, Viking sculls, Star Trek, food, more Tolkien, Urban Fantasy, horror, more Space Opera, AI-prompting, Ghosts, Gods (Slava Roscoe!), clichés, gender (of course), self-driving cars, multiverses, publishing, ancient civilisations (apparently not about the New York Futurians), con-running, to name some.

The con ended. Most seemed satisfied. Of the 270, 70 were walk-ins, but no walk in press or media. Nothing about Fantastika/Swecon in the papers or other media AFAIK. PR-wise that's not good! I left feeling the weight of to many books obtained. Been through all this countless times.

Ahead to the next con!

History Corner

Sf fans argue a bit about what was the first sf con. Amerifans point to a visit by New York-fans to fellow fen in Philadelphia in 1936, where someone suddenly exclaimed: "Let's call this a convention!". If you don't think it sounds very convincing, I'm with you. In reality the convention in Leeds, UK, January 3, 1937, sounds more like a real convention, if you want such simple things as having it planned and announced in advance and actually having a prepared program! All this is left far behind by going to 1891 and the "Vril-Ya Bazaar and Fete" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vril-Ya_Bazaar_and_Fete) held in the Royal Albert Hall, London. This was an event around Edward Bulwer-Lytton's sf novel *The Coming Race*. It was also planned and announced in advance, had a program, hucksters selling things, some dressing up inspired by the novel and so on. (It has been covered here before.)

But there's no question that the first Swedish sf convention was Luncon, 18-19 Aug, 1956. It was

rather small (40 attendees perhaps) despite being announced in the prozine *Häpna!* founded a couple of years earlier. Science fiction had its “media breakthrough” in 1953, when a lot of articles about the genre began to appear, probably inspired by that science fiction had a boom in the US in the early 1950s. Hollywood pumped out sf films, some good (*The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *War of the Worlds*, *Forbidden Planet*) some not much to write home about (*Flying Disc Man from Mars*, *Robot Monster*, *Zombies of the Stratosphere* etc). At the same time, the US newsstands could offer more than two dozen sf magazines.

Lars Helander (1939-2017) was one of the earliest Swedish fen, and together with Sigvard Östlund (who went to British sf cons in the early 1950s), one who also had early international fandom contacts. So he wrote the Luncon report below in English to be published in Terry Jeeves' and Eric Benrtcliffe's *Triode* #8, autumn 1956 as “Lund Me Your Ears”:



Lars Helander

Early on a chilly, grey and miserable morning in August the train arrived at the railway station in Lund. Drowsy, and heavy eyed I climbed down out of the sleeping car. I managed to discover the exit, and having found my way out of the station building stumbled straight into two sleepy looking characters carrying something which looked like a warning road sign. But, instead of the black vertical line you would expect to see on such a sign, there was a black vertical spaceship. I recognised it at once from the convention program booklet I had received some days earlier; it was the famous LUNCON sign.

The two guys turned out to be the two leading fans behind the Lund club UTOPIA, Borge Larsson and Kjell Pettersson, the latter being the editor of the club's fanzine UT and an old correspondent of mine. They had come to the station at this unearthly hour to meet arriving fans, and.. they told me that several other fen were expected to arrive on my train. So, we waited for them and found that among them was Roland Adlerberth, who writes s-f and science reviews for HAPNA, Sweden's only promag. He's a very nice guy and I had met him previously in Eskilstuna. Finally, all who were supposed to arrive at this time had done so and gathered around the Luncon sign. As the con wouldn't start until 3p.m. we had nothing to do, so we decided to take a walk through the town up to the Physical Institution to look at the mathematical brain "Smil" (Smile) and other interesting things. Lund is an old university town with lots of famous places and learned institutions.

However, I had brought two bags filled with foreign s-f mags and fmz for the con exhibition so Kjell and I went to the Lunds Hemgard, where the con was to take place, to arrange the exhibition and left the others to wake up the scientists at the Institute. Later on they came back alive. Some other fen had arrived the previous day, but they had gone to the nearby town of Malmo to do some sightseeing.

Lunds Hemgard seemed to be an ideal place for a con, A Hemgard is something especially Swedish which is hard to describe, but it has about the same functions as a London club - you can go there to play games, read, chat, and so on. Now, however, the whole Lund's Hemgard was reserved.

On our way to the Hemgard, Kjell told me that some time ago some members of the con-committee had written to Khrushchev, inviting a Russian scientist to the con - they did it merely for kicks, of course, and did not expect any reply. But, one day they got a phone call from the Russian Embassy in Stockholm. However, as the guy at the embassy spoke neither Swedish nor English (intelligibly) nobody understood much. Nothing happened though, no Russian scientist came to the con, even though the committee members had offered to pay for his plane ticket and expenses. On the other hand, no angry diplomatic notes were sent from Moscow! The LUNCON is unique in that it is probably the only s-f con to be entered in the files of the Soviet Government.

Finally, we managed to finish the exhibition arrangements, and whilst Kjell went to make some further preparations I sat in his study writing labels for the s-f on show. After a while Alvar Appeltofft, a very active fan from Halmstad arrived at Kjell's place. At first I thought he was Kjell's kid brother (forgive me Alvar!) or something, but he couldn't have been because his dialect (at first I thought it was German) differed greatly from the Lund dialect - which is also cryptic; sounds like Danish. Alvar had brought his whole collection of Swedish fanzines and we looked at these and chatted until Kjell came back to fetch a pile of books he wanted to include in the exhibition. Staggering under an enormous load of books and mags Alvar and I were shoved away to the Hemgard with Kjell close behind with whip, and Borge Larsson.

At two o'clock everything seemed to be ready and in order. Lots of people had already arrived; among them were K.G. Kindberg, the editor of HAPNA, my old pals Carlolof Elsner, HAPNA's film reviewer, and Torsten Malmqvist, together with representatives from the various s-f clubs. There are ten more or less active groups in Sweden now. The total con attendance was around forty.

By three o'clock everybody had gathered round the enormously long conference table, and Kjell welcomed us to the first Scandinavian s-f convention and expressed hopes that we would all enjoy ourselves. Then the time for me to speak came, about my travels on the Continent and in Israel, and about the s-f and fandom situation in the countries I had visited. After I had finished and everyone had woken up, Mr. Kindberg reported on anti-gravity experiments in the U.S.A. in a very interesting lecture which was keenly discussed afterwards. Then there was a break while we partook of a little refreshment and chatted, looked at the exhibition. Quite a few newspaper men were there, interviewing us, taking photos and, simultaneously displaying their ignorance of the media. The Luncon actually received quite an unexpected amount of publicity both in the local and national papers, and on the radio. The TV service didn't seem to give a damn, though. Well, you can't have everything.

During the break, the Malmo fans from the METEOR and CHAOS clubs had arrived. Denis Lindbohm, "The Aurarc", who's the boss behind Club METEOR and their mag CLIXSEV (aka Clloev), and also a filthy pro' (one of the few really fannish fen in this country) arrived disguised in a BEMish mask, through the eyes of which he kept blowing cigarette smoke. Club METEOR produces amateur s-f films both in color and black and white, and the mask was to be used in one of these.

The METEORs had brought some of their films and a projector, and after the break we had a showing of several of their productions. Everybody liked the films a lot - they were amazingly well photographed with death-rays, spaceships, monsters, saucers, and even an atomic explosion. One of the films was downright crazy, and we laughed like mad.

The main purpose of this con, however, was to create a Swedish s-f union. This had been discussed for quite some time in the fmz, and we all considered such a necessity for Sverifandom. After having seen the films and listened to a short radio programme on the LUNCON (the speaker was a Club Chaos member and the programme had been taped at his visit to the Swedish Radio Service in Stockholm a few days previously), we started the union discussions. After a couple of hours debate we finally agreed upon a resolution which was written down and signed by all present. Some of the purpose of this union is to establish a more intimate contact between Swedish fans, by means of a special fandom column in HAPNA, to prepare for the eventual participation of Swedish fandom at the '57 Worldcon in London, and to prepare and arrange at least one Swedish con per year.

Then we discussed a lot of other things: the next con, the quality of HAPNA, what fanzines should look like and if you should pay for them. This latter provoked some interesting comment; of the ten Swedish fmz now being published there are only two that are really fannish, and these are also the only fmz distributed free of charge. When I brought up the question of the difference between Swedish and Anglo-American fmz, many fans, even fannish ones, said they considered your kind of fanzines to contain a lot of "rubbish"....whatever they may mean by that. But, it should be borne in mind that most Sverifen are still on the 'that-has-nothing-to-do-with-science-fiction' stadium. And the kind of fannishness that does exist here is rather different from yours, as we have no real fannish background. Our fannishness is more crazy-like, if you see what I mean.

Now the time had come to break up, and together with the METEOR and CHAOS members, Torsten Malmqvist and I took the train to the closely situated city of Malmo (there were no hotel rooms left in Lund) and we hit the hay at once. Denis had put his mask on for the arrival at Malmo station and succeeded in scaring several old ladies, two ticket-collectors and one drunk out of their wits. Torsten I shared a room at the hotel, and we both found that we weren't able to sleep so I started writing a conrep I had promised the editor of SSFF whilst he raved about some girls in the background. Then we went out for a nocturnal stroll, and at four o'clock in the morning we were hunting a black cat which had happened to cross our path, through the

Ad in prozine Hapna! for Luncon: LUNCON Sweden's first sf convention in Lund 18-19 April, organiser SF Club Utopia /Prof Knut Lundmark lectures at the convention / All sf interested invited. Luncon's aim: 1. Create personal contacts between sf fans, 2. To find a true sf spirit and promote exchange of ideas and opinions in both discussions and club magazines, 3. to stimulate the work by sf clubs. At the convention you find e.g: Lectures on different hot scientific questions, lectures on sf literature,, auctions of sf manuscripts, magazines and books, sf films. /Welcome to Lund 18-19 august (signed by persons and clubs helping out)

deserted streets of Malmo. When a suspicious policeman, who apparently had heard our wild hunting cries, approached, we started a highly intellectual discussion on some s-f books in a nearby bookstore window. He left bemused after a short while but, meanwhile, the moggie had disappeared so we went back to the hotel. On the following morning we got up an hour too late and had to hurry like mad to get to the station in time for the train to Lund - this days con programme was scheduled to start at eleven o'clock. On top of everything else we lost our way, and the only person who seemed to know the correct way to Central Station was an American tourist!

We hadn't eaten anything that morning so, when we arrived in Lund after a twenty-minute ride we had some coffee and sandwiches before going to the Hemgard. We arrived there just as the programme started, and settled down in a corner to listen to the first item on the days schedule - an interesting causerie on flying-saucers, of UFOs "as you call them if you take them seriously", as one of the local papers expressed it in a Luncon article. Then Dr. Arne Lindqvist from the Genetical Institute spoke about mutants and the like and showed some pretty horrible slides of human beings who, through mutation, had developed deformed bodies, only short stumps for arms and legs, or pencil like fingers etc. Ugh. He also expressed the thought-provoking idea that by selective mutation it might be possible to breed a special kind of human being for life and survival on other planets. After this lecture, Lt. Bjorn Nyberg from the Air Force spoke about boom-time s-f and about the current American s-f situation. Incidentally, Bjorn has written a continuation of the Conan series soon to be published in the U.S.A.

By now, everybody was getting a bit hungry, and to our relief it was soon time for dinner. And for more discussion. We chatted, took snaps, and read the latest issue of the fannish fmz CHAOS, which was distributed at the con by the CHAOS club members. This day, two of the members of the METEOR club were dressed in BEM masks, and carrying a silver-coloured spaceship, one meter high. One of the BEM's took some 'official' photos.

After the auction, which followed the break, a long letter-article which had been sent to the con-committee by Danish pro-author Niels Nielsen (who, unfortunately good not get to the con) was read to us. Cato Lindberg, the Norwegian fan who puts out FANTASI was also unable to attend due to being on his National Service chore. Cato is a nice chap and we missed him quite a lot. Some of the opinions expressed in Mr. Nielsen's letter were contradictory to those Bjorn had expressed in his lecture, so a most vivid discussion ensued. At six o'clock we had some coffee and cakes, and at seven we were supposed to see the film "On The Threshold Of Space" at the Skandia theatre. But quite a number of fans, including myself, had seen it before so, we stayed at the Hemgard. As somebody unexpectedly had noticed that I had a bundle of EC Horror Comics in my briefcase (Denis had borrowed them and returned them to me at the con), we spent the whole evening mentally absorbing the fascinatingly nauseating tales in these horrible mags. Roland Adlerberth, who ought to know better as he is a Head Librarian and a literary critic, seemed shockingly interested in these publications - it was quite impossible to get a word from him all evening. The only thing he kept saying was "I do pity those who take these seriously". Hah! Not until noon the following day did we bid farewell to Lund (I had stayed overnight, together with Torsten at Kjell's place). Kjell accompanied us to the station, and on the way pointed out to a confused newspaper editor that we had formed a s-f union and not, as he had written in his paper, a UN union. His facial expression when he was told of his error gave us cause for several chuckles on the way home.

LUNCON had been a very political convention it seemed; we get phone calls from Russian Embassies and we form UN unions.

Viva la Luncon!!!

It's a fine report! The English is good for the time (did the *Triode* editors fix it?). English became "first foreign language" in Swedish schools gradually from 1939 up to 1946, but it wasn't too many hours per week (and no TV to pick it up from). Helander befriended Michael Moorcock who came to visit Sweden and later appeared in Helander's TV shows (as he later was a TV producer)*. His report have some interesting bits, eg that the concom wrote to the Soviets and wanted a visit by a Russian scientist - and got a phone call from the Soviet embassy! Ads in *Häpna!* announced that the famous Swedish astronomer Knut Lundmark would appear on Luncon, but he unfortunately cancelled.

Helander's report also stressed that a lot of media was present - skiffy was something new and exciting! - including national radio in the form of the main late afternoon news (as *Intermission* has earlier reported). But here we also hear of possibly another radio program from the national

*Moorcock quote found, from 2004: "Yes, I spent a lot of time in Sweden when I was young and travelled past Kiruna, climbed Portafjelet and wandered into Finland, too. I was based mostly in Uppsala. I had a very good old friend there, who I'm still in touch with, called Lars Helander, a TV director (who did a great pseudo-documentary on airships in which it was assumed airships had become the dominant form of air travel)." Well, MC in that doc compared airships to UFOs....

Radiotjänst company ("Radiotjänst", what Helander called "Radio Service") a few days earlier, that existed on tape. Is it possible this tape still exists in their archives? (When Radiotjänst got their first German taperecorders in the 1940s, tapes were so expensive that they had to be reused, but in the 1950s tapes became cheaper and reuse rarer.)

Being on radio was huge as there was only *one* radio channel that all tuned into. It was more important than TV as very few had TV sets at the time. Next year's Swecon will be Luncon 2025 and *Intermission* has earlier shown news articles from Luncon 1956 from national press, but it may be worth to go to the university library and check regional papers, and query check radio archives.

Dénis Lindbohm seems to have had fun, as usual. He was always full of pranks. More of his films than *Den stora nattens vålnad* ("Ghost of the Great Night") are mentioned, but are unfortunately lost today. I didn't know earlier that the film "*On the Treshold of Space*" was a part of the convention. It was common at the time for the whole con having a showing in a cinema, just as in 1977 when all of SF-Kongressen was shown a *Star Wars* preview which gave us real sensawonder!. You can find the "Treshold" film, about high altitude research, here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICKoviOP7E0>

Yes, they formed an "SF Union" on the con, but it soon collapsed due to uninterest. Several "sf unions" were attempted thereafter, intended as an umbrella organisation for all the local sf clubs - but all failed. The typical sf fan is in his soul very individualistic and isn't easy to lure into a big collective. Look, in the US they founded the National Fantasy Fan Federation back in 1941 hoping to engage all fans. Not mentioned here (from a 1994 speech by Bo Stenfors) is that Sweden's first femmefan, Gisela Molander, held a lecture on Luncon about Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*, defending it against critique about it being too poetic and emotional and not scientific. She and one Silvija Salna had the short lived club Nova with only femmefan members (also publishing three issues of the fanzine *Space Reporter* which Bo claimed was very fannish - if you have a copy make me a scan, I have never seen it, alas).

In last issue we heard of the early SF-Lovers e-mail list, ARPAnets first "external" E-mail list, that became very popular and must be labeled as our *first social media*. E-mail lists are like Facebook, without pictures and other junk, just postings back and forth between the list members. I prefer such lists to more modern media. E-mail is robust. The last Internet service to go down when WWII comes is E-mail!" We learned about SF-Lovers in last ish from Rich Zellich who was around in these pioneer years. He sent more material, 100 000+ characters of it, and I have done a little of my own research. So now *more SF-Lovers!*

Slate Magazine writes <https://slate.com/technology/2018/10/internet-social-media-sf-lovers-arpnet.html>



Rich Zellich has given some input, but any remaining errors are our own.

/A message, fall of 1979, sent to Vincent/ Cerf's email wasn't a technical request. And it

hadn't been sent just to him. Instead, an email with the subject line "SF-LOVERS" had been sent to Cerf and his colleagues scattered across the United States. The message asked all of them to respond with a list of their favorite science fiction authors. Because the message had gone

out to the entire network, everybody's answers could then be seen and responded to by everybody else. Users

could also choose to send their replies to just one person or a subgroup, generating scores of smaller discussions that eventually fed back into the whole. About 40 years later, Cerf still recalls this as the moment he realized that the internet would be something more than every other communications technology before it. "It was clear we had a social medium on our hands," he said. The thread was a hit. It also created what might be thought of as the first online social network. Though individuals had been connected via this internet before, this was the first time they were using it for social interactions

SF-LOVERS AM Digest Friday, 15 May 1981 Volume 3 : Issue 122

Today's Topics:

SF Events - Convention Calendar addenda,
SF Lovers - A Fond Farewell, Digest Correction - Spelling Error,
SF Books - James Michener on Space & Cyber-SF & "High Yield Bondage",
SF Movies - The Man Who Fell to Earth, SF Radio - HHGTTG & Star Wars,
SF Topics - Evolution of Unicorns & Children's stories
(Title query answered and Tom Swift) & Fantasy vs Science Fiction

Date: 14 May 1981 11:03-PDT
From: Daul at OFFICE
Subject: FARE THEE WELL

I find my reaction very interesting (perhaps I am the *ONLY* one?) to BRODIE's departure. I have never met him, but I find that sharing this communication's media is special and that losing one person is a significant loss. I hope you continue to have access one way or another. --Bill

Date: 14 May 1981 10:13:39-EDT
From: cjh at CCA-UNIX (Chip Hitchcock)
Subject: important appendix to con calendar

Lexicon registration is open only until June 18; there will be \no/ at-the-door registration. SFL contacts: DP@mit-m1, cjh@cca-unix. There will also be an expedition to the Blue Strawberry, a magnificent restaurant in Portsmouth NH; space for this is quite limited and requires a \$25 deposit.

What SF-Lovers Digest could look like. An early one from 1981...43 years ago!

One source say SF-Lovers started in september 1979 by MIT's Roger Duffy. Other sources lands on early 1978 <https://elists.isoc.org/pipermail/internet-history/2012-March/002099.html>

/Richard / Brodie describes how he started the mailing list. He took a leave from Harvard and went to Xerox-Parc in June 1979. Shortly afterwards, he sent out his first SF-Lovers message. He writes:

"Over a year and a half have gone by since the first SF- Lovers message went out (It was a list of the Hugo Awards from the 1979 Worldcon in Brighton, England). They've been a good one and a half years; they've shown me clearly that electronic communication will change the shape of our world, and that we'll see its effects in our lifetimes. The list has grown enormously - far beyond my expectations - and has reached the point where many hundreds of people read the daily Digest. I started SF-LOVERS by logging into one of the public-access MIT "Incompatible Time Sharing" (ITS) systems - probably MIT-DMS, although it might have been MIT-AI - and editing a text file that contained the names of all the distribution lists. I then inserted a system announcement onto the same system announcing the availability of the list

Brodie or Duffy, 1978 or 1979? Can anyone clarify? YUMYUM, for reviewing restaurants came after SF-Lovers, and then came WINE-TASTERS and finally HUMAN-NETS where the human factors in research was discussed. Whatever, by January 1980 Duffy was in charge of SF-Lovers and the traffic volume was so high it was changed from a direct distribution list to a digest, where the moderator selected the most worthwhile postings.

Recalling how the SF-LOVERS digest was created, Richard Brodie explains, "I believe it was the release of a major SF movie - possibly SUPERMAN - that swamped SF-LOVERS to the point where it was made into a digest."

As I understand it, it began as a coherent mailing list. But in Rich's files we see it split into several topics due to traffic increase:

Submissions for the digest are to be sent to the appropriate address from the list given below:

Written SF sf-lovers-written@rutgers.edu

Sf on Television sf-lovers-tv@rutgers.edu

Sf Films sf-lovers-movies@rutgers.edu

General discussions that don't fit specifically in the other topic headings sf-lovers-misc@rutgers.edu



A PDP-10 computer, that may have been original host for SF-Lovers.

As you can see, these topic separations match the way the Digest has been produced for several years - split up by major topic. As new groups are added on the Usenet side, they may be included in the Digest and new addresses may be added to accomodate them.

You must have been able to subscribe to the topics separately, and the best postings were then selected to the SF-Lovers Digest that covered all the topics. SF-Lovers was also replicated on Usenet in a newsgroup. What you wrote there was replicated outside Usenet. Saul Jaffe of Rutgers University took over in 1982, would be in charge the far longest time and was the face of SF-Lovers.

A PhD student, Mary Horton, set up a gateway, active from august 1981, that relayed these mailing lists into Usenet groups. SF-Lovers was at first in the fa (means "From ARPANET") hierarchy and later to to rec.arts.sf... A special convention had been applied to submissions to FA newsgroups, not to post directly to the newsgroup, since this will be seen by people on Usenet but not by the people on the ARPANET who get the list mailed, instead, send mail to the name of the group on site. In the files Zellich sent we later read (probably originating from Saul Jaffe):

For many years, since its formation to match the Digest on the (then) ARPAnet, the Usenet group rec.arts.sf-lovers has been gatewayed to the Digest. The method used, given available networking software has been to have every message that comes in from the ARPAnet/Internet/Bitnet side to automatically go into the newsgroup so that discussions could continue there in a timely fashion. All messages directed to the newsgroup (from either side of the gateway) were automatically sent to me for processing as moderator of the Digest. Recently however, certain people on the Usenet side of the gateway have decided that they are unhappy with the current situation and wish to change it. Some of these people have specifically said that they objected to postings that came from the Digest side. The discussion on the changes started unofficially about a month ago and have now become an official discussion in the Usenet news hierarchy. Since all of you will be affected by these changes should they be implemented, I decided to share with you the proposal as it currently stands and give you the opportunity to let your voice be heard.

A long debate followed, too much to go into here. SF-Lovers (from the Zellich files) originated

The very first online “[SPOILER ALERT] described death of a certain heroic Vulcan at the end of The Wrath of Khan. More serious was the fact that U.S. military budgeters were less than excited about all the idle chatter this was producing on their expensive new network. They discussed how to banish it (perhaps the first debate over internet censorship) but relented when the engineers convinced them that the increased message traffic made a good stress test for ARPANET’s infrastructure.

<https://elists.isoc.org/pipermail/internet-history/2012-March/002098.htm> notes that

ARPANET came under scrutiny from Congress because of sf-lovers, and for a while the message group was banned... there has been so much media attention in magazines like Omni, Locus, IEEE Potentials, ACM Communications, Time, Newsweek and others about SF-LOVERS, that it has attracted the attention of The Powers that Be” in Washington.

After an unsuccessful attempt to sell ARPANET to a commercial buyer (AT&T could have literally owned the internet, but said No thanks!), the government split the system and created MILNET on the side, and allowed ARPANET to continue as a chaotic and fast-growing research experiment.

In 1980 ARPANet had 5000 users in 70 institutions. (Google for further statistics on the growth of ARPANet/Internet.) The Usenet mentioned was a separate net for Unix machines, which was slower because many used modems and telephone lines for the connection.

It was on Usenet big feuds were labeled as “flame wars” and Goodwin's Law was coined: *The first one referring to Hitler and nazism in a debate is the loser.* (Observation: Putin, as he started his war, from the start claimed he fought “nazism” in Ukraine. Under Goodwin's law he has lost!) Some

servers were on both ARPANet and Usenet and could act as gateways between them. In the long run, both networks - together with other networks - merged into what we know as Internet.

And precisely 11:44 am EST on Sept. 19, 1982, computer scientist Scott Fahlman suggested

*I propose that the following character sequence for joke markers :-)
Read it sideways. Actually, it is probably more economical to mark things that are NOT jokes, given current trends. For this, use :-(-*

However, your editor has read that “smileys” made from ordinary characters first came on ordinary typewriters. They are more creative and fun than graphic “emoticons”! With graphics you can create anything, but using letters you have to *think* about what to use!



Asked AI to make illustration to SF-Lovers.

Around the time I began hanging around Usenet in 1990 there was only one newsgroup, rec.arts.sf-sf-lovers. But the traffic was beginning to look like the line to a Worldcon if Asimov and Heinlein were co-GoHs. I saw the huge debate breaking out about Usenet making their sf newsgroups split.

Attempts to tell about SF-Lovers in the 1990s must be a bit confusing - it's much to go through and it's difficult to make out a timeline of development (and you have simplify events anyway). To recapitulate, https://fanlore.org/wiki/The_Man_Behind_SF-LOVERS_Science_Fiction_Discussion_List says:

Originally Roger Duffy from MIT started the sf mailing list. The list was unmoderated and all the messages were transmitted to everyone on the list. Around 1980, the email traffic became too large. It was around the time of the Empire Strikes Back. Roger started the digest format where select messages were batched and then sent to all the list recipients. In 1982, a friend brought the list to Rutgers and I /Saul Jaffe/ took over as moderator in October, 1983...I would guess we have roughly 1500 addresses and, of those, twenty to thirty are redistribution lists. SF-Lovers could have as many as 200,000 readers. No one can really tell... There are three ways /discussions/ can happen. One, you're just seeing replies to postings in past digests. Another is that in addition to sending their replies to SF-Lovers, the writer sends a carbon copy of their message to other individual users. So, by the time I'm reading the postings, I have a discussion



The hero of SF-Lovers:
Saul Jaffe

going. Also, some of the material might come from the Usenet newsgroups. A lot of the newsgroups were established in the early 1980s in an attempt to deal with all the heavy E-mail traffic. The newsgroups are...usually batched and distributed via Unix machines instead of a university or government mainframe.

/Saul adds, from the batch Rich sent:/ For many years, since its formation to match the Digest on the (then) ARPANet, the Usenet group rec.arts.sf-lovers has been gatewayed to the Digest. The method used, given available networking software has been to have every message that comes in from the ARPANet/Internet/Bitnet side to automatically go into the newsgroup so that discussions could continue there in a timely fashion. All messages directed to the newsgroup (from either side of the gateway) were automatically sent to me for processing as moderator of the Digest. (Rich adds:) The main benefit of the current bi-directional gatewaying is that all participants have the opportunity to see *all* the traffic on any particular thread. It's (relatively speaking) trivial to automatically redistribute each message, as it arrives, to the other side of the gateway. However, if the Usenet side splits, there is no longer any way to redistribute Internet-originating traffic to Usenet; an auto-remailer has no idea what sub-group any particular message should belong to. This should be obvious to anyone who thinks about it for more than a second or two.

/Saul:/ I think what will happen if the newsgroup is split, is that those of us who are also on the Internet will continue to get everything, and those of us who are only on Usenet will no longer receive *anything* from the rest of the world. Their very great loss. The main problem is sheer volume, not grouping, and the culture is just going to have to learn to live with it and to deal with it. We can no longer read every word of every mailing list on the Internet, the way I used to 15 years ago when there were only a few mailing lists on the ARPANet. We can't watch every TV channel at once, either, and splitting them up into more channels won't help!

Some one scandal from the list include how the private, secret phone number to Harlan Ellison was shared to the whole list, resulting in some unwanted calls. Harlan was probably not amused.

The early 1990s was the time of the Big Split. I was hanging around Usenet* st the time, the E-conference system that redistributed SF-Lovers in te newsgroup rec.arts.sf-lovers. But the SFL traffic was so huge there was a debate of splitting it into sub topics. Saul wrote in a 1991 message:

Recently however, certain people on the Usenet side of the gateway have decided that they are unhappy with the current situation and wish to change it. Some of these people have specifically said that they objected to postings that came from the Digest side. The discussion on the changes started unofficially about a month ago and have now become an official discussion in the Usenet news hierarchy.



Since Hugo winners group picture 1989 when Jaffe won a special Hugo for SF-Lovers all of you will be affected by these changes should they be implemented, I decided to share with you the proposal as it currently stands and give you the opportunity to let your voice be heard....

Here is the kernel of a proposed reorganization of rec.arts.sf-lovers into a hierarchy called rec.arts.sf.*. This also affects existing newsgroups rec.arts.drwho, rec.arts.startrek, and rec.arts.sf-reviews in administrative ways only, and takes some SF traffic from the alt.fandom.* hierarchy... Here, slightly modified by subsequent intelligent input, is the group split proposal that got me drafted to run this reorganization:

- rec.arts.sf.reviews (moderated - formal reviews) (*)
- rec.arts.sf.drwho (the TV series Dr. Who) (*)
- rec.arts.sf.startrek (the TV and movie Star Trek series) (*)



Old SF-Lovers site. Can only be found through Wayback Machine.

* Usenet is still around, but has degenerated quite a bit into mostly distributing porn I'm told...

rec.arts.sf.creative (talking about poster-written SF examples) (**)

rec.arts.sf.misc (speculation, science, story lines, art, ...) (***)

rec.arts.sf.announce (moderated - cons, book upcoming lists, etc.)

rec.arts.sf.written (books, magazines, comics, etc.)

rec.arts.sf.performed (radio, TV, movies, plays, etc.)

rec.arts.sf.authoring (meta-discussions, being in the business)

(*) renames existing group

(**) renames group currently in RFD stage in news.groups.

(***) alias target for existing rec.arts.sf-lovers group, which will be removed, so late postings have a newsgroup in which to land

rec.arts.sf.lists (Requests for list input, partial list results)

rec.arts.sf.lovers (news home for sf-lovers digest or replacement for rec.arts.sf.misc to preserve the name)

rec.arts.sf.written.fantasy (Swords and sorcery separated out)

rec.arts.sf.written.tolkien (discussion of Tolkein's works)

rec.arts.sf.written.heinlein (discussion of Heinlein's works)

rec.arts.sf.written.new (Just put on the shelves in last few weeks)

rec.arts.sf.written.recent (Last three years or so; authors' ongoing series)

rec.arts.sf.written.classic (Authors' closed series, dead authors, etc.)

rec.arts.sf.performed.movies (The originally wide screen stuff)

rec.arts.sf.performed.tv (Made for boob tube versions)

rec.arts.sf.performed.misc (Stage, radio, etc.)

rec.arts.sf.bicker (home for the constant personality clashes)

rec.arts.sf.fandom (Replace the SF discussion part of alt.fandom.cons and alt.fandom.misc)

rec.arts.sf.reconcile (Making serial or lifetime works fit together where they appear to be in conflict)

...I believe that, since I took over the Digest in 1983, I have done a competent job in moderating the traffic, preparing the Digest and keeping the discussions going to the best of my abilities. I believe that SF-Lovers Digest has become an important service to the people reading it. Things such as the episode guides and other files in the archives have become invaluable to some. With this proposal, the Digest is likely to change. One possibility is that the Digest will once again grow (as it did when I took over) or it may disappear (temporarily or permanently). Read the proposal and decide for yourself.

In 1995 Saul had to move SF-lovers Digest from Rutgers to his own Pentium PC running Linux. SF-Lovers took up too much space and there were some security issues too. I see hints that there around 1995 was a months long distribution pause due to technical issues. The list continued until 2001 (17 years takes its toll, presumably, and lots of other resources for the sf interested had popped up). There was a home page, now closed but saved as an archive at:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20010926051502/https://sflovers.rutgers.edu>

It has reference sections (but all links don't work), with material originally posted by SF-Lovers, whatever use material a quarter of a century old has.

More on SF-Lovers, eg a commented summary of SFL contents year by year ("SFL Archives Vol..."): <https://nothing2seeherepleasedisperse.blogspot.com/>

Mailing Comments & Mailbox

Only WAHF this time: Rich Zelllich (who sent more SF-Lovers material - thanx!), Jonas Söderberg, Orange Mike (who doesn't like a certain guy tarnishing his favourite colour), Perry Middlemiss. Got half a dozen "Thanks! Witty zine!" verbally on Swecon. LoCs welcome, but Be To The Point! Now comments to latest mailings of EAPA and then N'APA. You should join, BTW. We need more fanzines. many more! Fanzines should be the backbone of fandom. So says Roscoe.

William McCabe: I hope they find out what's wrong! And that you stay in decent health** Old Time Radio is interesting and worth listening to. This publication has covered the subject earlier.** No Hal Ellison isn't Harlan Ellison. Hal Ellison used to appear in Hitchcock Presents anthologies in Sweden.** What do you do when "linking" Instagram to Facebook? (I use neither but would like to know what this "linking" is all about.)

Henry Grynsten: *Intermission* has earlier talked about Swedish OldTime Radio. Anyone interested should remember the digital SR Minnen channel, now discontinued but SR offers a lot of old Swedish radio on their replacement site "Radiofinds": <https://sverigesradio.se/avsnitt?programid=1602>. I used to listen a lot to radio in the 70s, but almost never now.** Delta had some problems (translations were often shoddy, blame galley slave Gunnar Gällmo!). I don't have the same taste for satire that editor Lundwall has. But Sam did good books too, to be honest.** Well, in what we call inverted crime fic, we know already whodunnit. It's more finding out *how* culprit is tracked down.** Getting tired of the AI/conscious debate, so I keep it short. An uploaded copy of your mind being conscious will be just a second copy of you. Strange but so it is. If one copy dies, one copy of you still lives! It doesn't matter if AIs are "slaves" if we program them to like doing our chores. While it isn't "proven" neural networks may create consciousness, what we already now see makes it likely.** A very interesting idea that God = Human Culture. It makes sense in a way.** It's absolutely necessary that consciousness is based on something material, and thus can be replicated in something material, as I said before: if that wouldn't be the case, *magic exists!* And we know that magic *doesn't* exist! (But send me the

articles where you explain your views in more detail, please!)** The question of free will is a tough one. Ultimately, the answer depends on if the world is deterministic or not. I think there may be an answer in chaos theory and fractals, however. Take the Mandelbrot set: everything in it is computable (ie deterministic) but since it has infinite resolution, you can't *practically* compute it. The world may be deterministic, but after a limited number of steps what you can determine, since it must be calculated, becomes unreachable in practice. The conclusion: you may not have a free will, but whatever determines your actions and how, is impossible to know, so you might as well act and live as if your will was free.** You suggest *there is no difference between the illusion of having free will and the reality of having free will... Could this indicate that the question is posed incorrectly and that "free will" is a meaningless concept?* Sounds pretty close to how I see it.

Kat Templeton: OK, we get your mini autobiography... It seems a lot has happened in your life. I get the impression you are a bit younger than I (living with your dad and sister).** I also like cats!** You have my sympathy being forced to live with this Trump figure for four years. But the fact is that us in the rest of the world have to do that *too*.** As for Iraq War II it was unnecessary and made the region totally chaotic, with effects we still have to live with. If Bush Jr didn't like Saddam why not just continue to isolate him? Make sanctions tougher if need be. There never was a real threat to the US from that mustache man.

Heath Row: Being in Portugal *enjoying the proximity and adjacency of other countries* - which is one of the points with Europe. In the US, you cross a state line and you're just about where you started: the same language, money, history, architecture... Move the across a state line (we call them borders) in Europe, and all that change (as for money, many have the Euro now, but not Scandinavia). But one good effect of Putin's blasted war is that it forces the Europeans to be more together - we have to!** Interesting mini history of Portugese popular publishing.** The film you have an old ad for, "Conquest of Space" (1955) is available here: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5biq24>** A beanie must, for me, have a propeller...** "Yow", Google claims, is an "expression of pain or shock".** I thought I had covered *Veckans Äventyr* enough for people to know about it. Anyway, it was the second, later title of the sf and adventure pulp *Jules Verne Magasinet* (1940-47). It began with running only skiffy, but later got some westerns and crime fiction, and gradually changed title to "The Week's Adventure" (*Veckans Äventyr*). It did run Superman, originally called "The Titan from Krypton", later changing name to "Stålmannen" which means "Steel Man" (the S on his chest needs a name starting with S). Odd fact: in our version his pants were yellow (right)..

Garth Spencer: As for your E-books, try loading the SD-card in the tablet via your computer and a USB cable. I always load things *computer ↔ phone/tablet* that way (I need to put phone in "debug mode" to transfer files, but it's easy).** I agree that EAPA needs more folks. I too try to convince others, but it's difficult. Ideas, anyone? (Glad to see that Kat joined!)** Cognitive abilities of draftees (they go through some sort of IQ Test Light) in Sweden actually shows a slight increase every decade the last 100 years. But it could be just that they are more used to tests.** I'm not worried about micro-plastic "pollution", since plastic *too* will degrade and dissolve. Plastic eating bacteria will see to that. Just stop shoving plastic into the sea (most of it comes from the third world) and it will disappear after a while.** I'm not so sure that boarding schools for what we call "native population" were bad. It may have been so in Canada, but I know few details. (Made a quick googling: "Overcrowding, poor sanitation, inadequate heating, and a lack of medical care led to high rates of influenza and tuberculosis; in one school, the death rate reached 69 percent" - *sounds very bad!*) In Sweden the northern Sami reindeer herders' children had two options: schools a few hours every week by a travelling semi-professional teacher in a dark, cramped teepee (the Sami equivalent, called *kåta*), or proper schooling in a boarding school, weekends free so they could visit their parents (or vice versa). The *second* option sounds better to me. The questionable thing were teachers trying to ban children speaking Sami. (Knowing that language wouldn't stop them from learning Swedish. Kids suck up language like a sponge!)** Odd but interesting plot ideas!**As for your faanfiction I found it hard to grasp what was going on. As a reader I prefer to be told what happens, not to be given hints to "conclude" what happens. Important things in a story must be told in a way that you can't miss it.



George Phillies: No specific comments. Sorry.

Jefferson Swycaffer: What was it with Aspirin and the Mongol Horde?** I have given my Swedish followers a plug for the N3F short story contest, but now it sounds like it'll be cancelled?

Mark Nelson: For me too *Star Wars: A New Hope* was very inspiring. The attendees of Sam J Lundwall's sf con 1977 were invited to a preview. We had *never seen anything like it* and were flabbergasted! I knew it was going to be big. There were a few very good sf films in the early 1980's (incl *Alien*, *Bladerunner*, 2 more *Star Wars*) that followed but after this, and especially today, sf films have become less interesting. Too much explosions, too much computer generated graphics, too little script... So, I like older films. I'm also rather fond of those 1950's Earth invaded B-films...** When my lecturer in theoretical philosophy treated Gödel, he phrased it this way: "A complex system can't be complete and free of contradictions at one and the same time". That a complex system will have statements that can't be proven is the same thing, if you think of it: the lack of proof comes from that the system is incomplete, or from it would lead to contradictions.** Trying to ban photography is idiocy! Of course I take pictures. You could argue for ban on photos of people in sensitive situations, but *define* what that is first!** I probably have reports of some sort from all the eight Worldcons I've attended, but collecting them would be difficult. An some are probably not so interesting babbling.** I

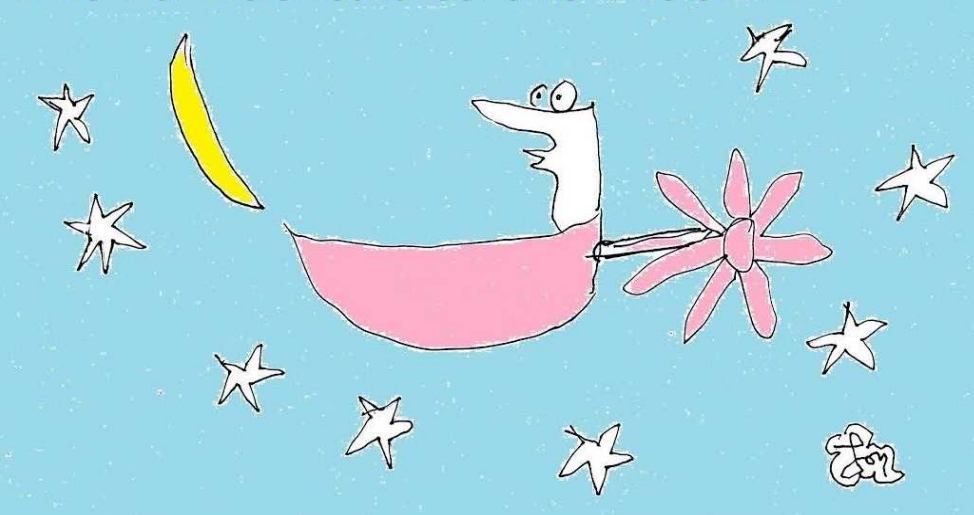
think there are reasons to believe that the non-white, non-middleaged, on-men, who are unfairly prioritised for the sf awards, aren't the best sf writers. Reason: science and technology is and must always be taken into account when writing the stuff, but it's an established fact the female half of humanity care less for those subjects. Their sf will therefore (on average) be at an disadvantage.

Samuel Lubell: Common sense actually goes a long way towards solving problems when people have different opinions on behavior. If you see someone being rude, threatening, maybe attempting groping, you speak up, interfere. It can be handled, without need to set up the Ten Commandments from Hell. Glascon's idiotic CoC in several ways wants to ban freedom of speech, except for those expressing wokeness: "CoC team will generally NOT act on...reverse racism and cisphobia" <https://glasgow2024.org/about/policies/code-of-conduct/>. These ultra-cancelling, moronic "Codes of Conducts" must be stopped! The treatment of Dave

Truesdale was a big shame and eye-opener. But all you have to say is that the situation was "more complex", without details or saying how. I've heard the tape-recording of his panel. It was a woke assault far beyond any level of decency. ** Yes, Glascon had a huge hall, big as a football field, subdivided by bookshelves, tables, furniture and here and there were signs saying area for X, area for Y...and one sign for fans. It wasn't exactly a fan room. There were some program items about fandom (too little in my view) but no fan program, a program line, among at least a dozen, entirely for fannish topics. ** Believe it or not: I remember cons of earlier days when the concom announced negotiating with the venue to keep beer prices down. (There's a strong argument in: "If you lower the price just a little, you'll sell much more!") ** Books are media, but here, for practical purposes, "mediafandom" is all other media. It's what we mean saying "mediafandom". The last Star Trek (1960s) season had hardly ended as ST-fandom formed and the regular fans at once distanced themselves from them. From the start they were apart from, not a part of fandom. (Personally I like Star Trek. The problem is the narrowness, the onesidedness of trekkies.) ** As for older sf: "Weak" in characterisation? As Man isn't telepathic authors have access only to their own mind, so "characterisations" can only consist of variations of the author himself, and how interesting is that? Less stress on this makes a story better. Today we see countless 500-600p books, padded story-telling with hundred of pages rambling "internal monologues", unnecessary subplots, blabbing dialogue... "Good characterisation"? No way! Utterly boring. And "literary quality" tend to be pretentious, strained prose with "creative" adjectives and far-fetched metaphors... No thanks! Keep It Simple, Stupid! Much fiction of today is overladen but weak in plots. Yesterday's writers were much better with plots and moving the story forward, and they had more interesting treatment of ideas. You think when you have to use a typewriter. ** Glascon concom could at least have publicly protested against the annoying bagchecking. Measures against "terrorism" tend to be worse than terrorism itself. Now you can't fly home with a bottle of Scotch from Scotland due to ban on liquids. End it! ** It's more likely that idiotic CoCs is what will cause splinter. Wokeness creates the polarisation we see. ** I wouldn't complain too much about panels if the panels were interesting, non-repetitive, panelists had prepared interesting things to say, and being to the point (instead of humming for several minutes). ** UK cons used to have room parties too (eg the first two UK worldcons I went to, 1979 and 1987). ** I don't mean the organisers of awards discriminate. It's those who nominate and vote, due to the Zeitgeist and the prevailing mindset. ** It isn't much of a ban if material is available elsewhere. Schools have an educational responsibility and age limits is very common (driving, alcohol, movies, criminal accountability, etc). Younger pupils lack cognitive capacity to deal with some sensitive, complex topics: sex, sexuality, excess violence, how to make bombs, political propaganda, etc. Educational requirements mean schools must have the right to impose age limits if they think its beneficial. (I'm speaking of younger pupils, lower grades - higschools are different). ** Sad that people read few books. Too much games and Facebook!

Adrian Kresnak: I have my doubts about so called crypto currency...

With a Bathtub to the Moon!



Слава Україні!

Коли ми боремося, ми перемагаємо!

(Glory to Ukraine! When we fight we win!)

Brandy Hall Issue 10 (January 2025)

Brandy Hall 10 is produced for N'APA mailing 274 (January 2025) by Mark Nelson.

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This is West Riding Press Publications ??? This is West Riding Press Publications (Australia) 31

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 short spin on a YouTube video with the title "Top 10 Best Sci-fi Movies". In the eighth issue I wrote about how I became a fan of science fiction, focusing on SF on the TV. The culprits are threefold:

Dr Who, Star Trek (The Original Series) and Blakes 7. In the ninth issue I wrote about the role that science-fiction movies played in my becoming a fan of science-fiction. I focused on movies that I viewed at the cinema, concentrating on Star Wars.

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(I recently took a look at Australian SF fanzines published in 1968. This was for a new apa zine I am distributing through ANZAPA called "Australian Fanzine Fandom In...". I came across the following article, which I thought would be interesting to reprint here.))

((Reprinted from *The Australian Science Fiction Review* 14, February 1968.))

SCIENCE FICTION IN SCANDINAVIA

Sven EKLUND

This article is not meant to be a complete coverage of its subject, but perhaps it will serve as a brief introduction for you sf fans on the other side of the world.

As you know, Scandinavia consists of three countries – Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Historically, five separate countries form a cultural unit in this part of the world – the three mentioned, together with Iceland and Finland. This group is then called the North. It might have been correct to treat the whole area in this article, but I am not qualified to do that. I know something of sf activity in Finland, but nothing about Iceland. About Denmark and Norway I know a little more.

Sf has been published in Scandinavia for a long time. One elderly example is Ludvig Holberg's THE SUBTERRANEAN TRAVELS OF NIELS KLIM, published anonymously at Leipzig in 1741. It was in Latin, but in the following year it was translated into the author's language, Danish. One of the first Sf magazines in the world was Hugin, published 1916-19 by Otto Witt. But I suppose that the first real Sf boom came when a weekly professional magazine called THE JULES VERNE MAGAZINE came out in 1940. It ran until 1947, and published a total of 330 issues, something of a record in the Sf world. The quality of this magazine was very questionable: it was very much like the Astounding and Amazing of the early thirties. In such a large number of issues it is of course possible to find some good material; there were authors like Simak and Kuttner and, perhaps most popular, Edmond Hamilton, with his Captain Future stories. I am sure that most of its readers were young boys, and some of them were perhaps about twenty when the second big boom came, shortly after 1950.

In 1954 a new professional Sf magazine was issued, called HÄPNA! (Amaze!) It was immediately followed by a lot of excellent (at least by Scandinavian standards) translation of authors like Clarke, Asimov, Wyndham, Heinlein, Bradbury, von Vogt, Bester, and so on. At this time also the first active sf fandom broke out, the first fanzines were duplicated, the first clubs formed. This second boom was surely a high-point in Scandinavia Sf activity, and it has never been surpassed. It was a high-point especially for professional writing, and perhaps also for club activity, but not so much for fanzine publishing, which reached a peak in 1966.

The third and latest of the big Sf magazines came in 1957. It was a Swedish edition of GALAXY, containing not only translated material, but also original stories, and reprints of classics like H.G. Wells, Jack London, and Scandinavian equivalents. SWE-GALAXY lasted only 19 issues, then disappeared, apparently because it did not return enough profits to the publishers. Yet GALAXY was very popular among the fans, and it published perhaps the best Sf in Scandinavia until now.

I have heard that a Finnish edition of GALAXY was produced, but I do not know how many issues have been produced or whether it still exists. Here I might mention a vital fact about the North. There are five languages, three of them are closely related: Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian people have no difficulty understanding one another. Icelandic is related to these three, but is not so close or as easily understood. The Finnish language is not related at all to the others (in fact it is not even distantly related to any major European language, except Hungarian), but 700 years of Swedish rule (until 1809) left its mark and many in Finland understand Swedish.

HÄPNA! Ceased publication in 1966, after 120 issues. Its essential material came from magazines like F&SF, ASTOUNDING/ANALOG, NEW WORLDS and so on. Like GALAXY it also published original material; one author often published was the Danish professional Niels E. Nielsen, but many amateurs also broke into print this way. In its last years the magazine's quality sank catastrophically. The translations were bad, the covers were reprinted time after time, there were no editorials or letter-columns. Double-, triple- and even quadruple-issues became more and more common. The fans (with a certain Anders S. Fröberg in the lead) become more and more critical, and in spite of a last-minute attempt at improvement, it disappeared. When GALAXY went there was at least an editorial in its final issue to explain why.

Many thought that fandom must disappear too when the prozines sank, but there is still a fandom, and it as active as it was a couple of years ago. Perhaps the English language magazines have taken the place of Galaxy and HÄPNA! But communication between potential fans is a problem.

Another aspect of the Scandinavian professional sf world is, of course, books. But, at least in Sweden, the market for sf books is almost non-existent. There were, as I have said, some hopeful signs about 1954, but since then only a few, unrepresentative, sf books have been published. The only foreign writer whose books have to any extent been translated into Swedish is Ray Bradbury, who has had nine books published. Great authors, such as Sheekley, Vonnegut, Ballard, Tenn, Dick, Miller, Sturgeon, and Clifton haven't yet had a single volume printed in Swedish, and even a brilliant author like Brian Aldiss is still waiting for his first story to be published here. Professional sf is dead in Sweden right now.

In Denmark and Norway, the situation is perhaps a little better. Jannick Storm and Jon Bing & Tor Åge Brinsværd have all completed fresh sf anthologies. The Bing/Brinsværd is already published and contains stories by Sturgeon, Matheson, Anderson, Christopher, and so on.

Fan activity dates in Scandinavia from the years after 1954. In 1964, a well-known fan, Ingvar Svensson, published a summary called SKANDIFANDOM which covers comprehensively the years between. It ran to 154 pages, and has been followed by a supplement of 86 pages covering 1965 and 1966. In these two duplicated books one finds many interesting facts: it is a goldmine for anyone who wants to know anything about Scandinavian fandom. For instance, there is a catalogue of fan publications, which shows that in 1954 about 100 pages were published, in 1965 about 1,000. (1966 looks like being the record year with 1,140 pages. I don't think there will have been as many in 1967).

There has been long rows of conventions, too. The first was LunCon, Lund 1956. There have been five in Stockholm, and two MalCons, at Malmö 1959 and 1966 – although the first was perhaps a joke: in SKANDIFANDOM one reads a quote from one of the joiners, Denis Lidbohm, that “Malcon was a devilish chequemove. I got exactly the persons I wanted. It was an extraordinary convention”. A one-day Con was held at Uppsala in 1963. Last year's Con was at Gothenburg, and in 1968 there will be one in Oslo. The biggest convention so far has been Stockon I with 65 members, the smallest the GötCon, with 27.

Since I first came in contact with other fans in 1963, I am most familiar with the period since then. The most active fan in this period is without question John-Henri Holmberg, for a long time concealed behind the pseudonym “Carl J. Brandon, Jr.” and best known as the editor of the Swedish edition of FANAC. In the beginning of 1967 FANAC ceased with its 36th issue, but a similar news-fanzine still exists in Ingmar Nilsson's monthly WONDERAMA. JHH is still young, since his first contact with fandom was in the beginning of 1963 – in which year he edited no less than five separate zines: ZLEWWY, UNION SF, SF TIMES, SF FORUM and the first two issues of FANAC.

SF FORUM is generally regarded as the leading fanzine of the period. It is the official organ of SFSF (Scandinavian SF Association), the leading club, which has members throughout Scandinavia. After Holmberg came Mats Linder as editor, then Lars Sjöström for two or three issues, and during the last year Holmberg and Linder have edited in collaboration. 35 issues have been published. The content varies. The most-published fiction writers are Denis Lindbohm, Sam J. Lundwall and Bertil Mårtensson, who were all present in HÄPNA! There is always a letter column. There are articles, columns, reviews (the best by Linder, Mårtensson and Holmberg). There have been speeches from conventions, and a taped discussion between Jannick Storm and Harry Harrison. SFSF holds regular meetings in Stockholm, where those who attend, usually between 5 and 10, discuss different things – sometimes even sf.

But SF FORUM is by no means the only fanzine: in 1966 it accounted for 370 of the 1140 pages published. There are a lot of oneshots and other occasional publications. In 1964 JHH started a new project for Scandinavia – the Scandinavian Amateur Press Alliance, SAPA. It still exists, but with only a dozen members, where it once had twenty.

Ingvar Svensson, who compiled SKANDIFANDOM, also founded the Scandinavian SF Academy, an organization which tries to keep fandom on the right track and to direct sf research. It has also given annual awards to prominent fans: Sam J. Lundwall, Denis Lindbohm, Jannick Storm, and John-Henri Holmberg.

I'm sorry that I can't tell very much about sf and fandom in Denmark and Norway. In Denmark Jannick Storm is without question the leading fan. He is one of the very few active fans in Scandinavia who doesn't publish his own fanzines; instead he writes and has had much published in newspapers, and of course in fanzines. Especially one can mention articles about Danish sf in NIEKAS 13, CUENTA ATRAS -98-97, and the supplement to SKANDIFANDOM; and he has, as you know, written for ASFR.

In Norway Roar Ringdahl and Per G. Olsen were long the leading fans. Per G. Olsen has written a good article about the Norwegian sf club, Phobos, in the supplement to SKANDIFANDOM. Roar is an expert on film, especially sf-film, and his latest zine is called FILM FORUM. Per is one of the best artists in Scandinavia, and the most active at present. Over the last year Øystein Holter has appeared as a promising editor in his zine SURG. In SURG 2 there was a valuable index to Norwegian sf books. In Oslo there is a special sf club for students, led by Jon Ring, called ANIARA. The club has published an excellent fanzine FENOMEN, mostly in English. There is also a student sf club at Lund, in Sweden.

There have been a couple of sf polls – the biggest, perhaps, one which I started in 1964. I published a preliminary result the same year, but in 1965 I announced a continuation. The definite result has yet to be published, but I can mention the first three results in each category to show what is regarded as good sf in Scandinavia. The poll had nine different categories, six international and three Scandinavian.

INTERNATIONAL CATEGORIES

Novels:

Simak: CITY
Clarke: CHILDHOOD'S END
Pohl/Kornbluth: THE SPACE MERCHANTS

Short Stories:

Keyes: FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON
Aldiss: WHO CAN REPLACE A MAN?
Asimov: DREAMING IS A PRIVATE THING

Story Collections:

Bradbury: THE ILLUSTRATED MAN
Sheckley: UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS
Van Vogt: DESTINATION UNIVERSE

Anthologies:

Pohl: STAR SCIENCE FICTION
Boucher: BEST FROM F&SF
Knight: A CENTURY OF SF

Fantasy Books:

Bradbury: THE OCTOBER COUNTRY
Tolkien: THE LORD OF THE RINGS
Orwell: Animal Farm

Fantasy Short Stories:

Bixby: IT'S A GOOD LIFE
Bradbury: THE PLAYGROUND
Brown: VODOO

What else do fans do in Scandinavia? Well, for one thing, they compile indexes. The greatest work in this line is Sam J. Lundwall's BIBLIOGRAFI ÖVER SF OCH FANTASY, which covers Swedish sf from 1772 to April 1964. Leif Andersson has compiled an index to the contents of HÄPNA!; Ingemar Nilsson the same to SWE-GALAXY; and Bengt-Olav Ringberg has done a not yet published index for the JULES VERNE MAGAZINE.

I suppose that altogether Scandinavian fans number not more than fifty active and a couple of hundred semi-active (who write, say, a letter or two in a couple of years). Perhaps there are also some hundreds who have no contact with active fans, but who regularly read sf, either foreign in origins or the few translations.

Sf is rather rare on radio and TV. There has been a long, serious radio talk, in three half-hour parts, by one of the real sf experts. Göran Bengtson. On TV we've seen the American programme on Ray Bradbury, and once there was a short programme in which four fans from Malmö, Bertil Mårtensson, Leif Andersson, Einar Pettersson and Denis Lindbohm, joined. Some series have also been seen, usually worse than TV series usually are – but you've heard that story before.

SCANDINAVIAN CATEGORIES

Novels

Clarke: CHILDHOOD'S END
Pohl/Kornbluth: THE SPACE MERCHANTS
Huxley: BRAVE NEW WORLD

Short Stories:

Clarke: THE STAR
Brown: LETTER TO A PHOENIX
Simak: THE BIG FRONT YARD

Story Collections:

Asimov: I, ROBERT
Van Vogt: DESTINATION: UNIVERSE
Bradbury: THE ILLUSTRATED MAN

We've seen some sf films, too. FAHRENHEIT 451 is the latest, and last year we saw ALPHAVILLE and THE DAMNED – but it isn't necessary to go on: I suppose the repertoire is pretty much the same the world over. Those interested should write to Road Ringdahl: he sometimes publishes indexes, and his FILM FORUM is partly in English.

Sf articles are sometimes published in the general press. John Asplund had a good piece in Stockholms-Tidningen in 1964; some years earlier a negative article appeared in the literary magazine BLM, based primarily on the books THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE and Heinlein's SIXTH COLUMN; Roland Adlerbeth, who was a reviewer in HÅPNA!, has also appeared in different publications, for example in the yearbook AIRCRAFT 1958-59. A good but sometimes negative article by Michel Butor appeared on the subject in a Danish newspaper.

I will conclude by saying something about original processional sf in Scandinavia.

According to Jannick Storm the best Danish sf novel of all time is THE MAN WHO REMEMBERED (Manden der huskede) by Eiler Jørgensen, published in 1951. Niels E. Nielsen must be mentioned for his novels IT IS REPORTED FROM THE SAHARA, 1953, and TREE OF KNOWLEDGE, 1955, and TWO SUNS DID RISE, 1960. I like also many of his short stories, but Jannick Storm is on the whole quite critical of Nielsen; he means that Nielsen shows too many good human nature, and that he is too much like Bradbury. "Paul Bergsøe is Denmark's Arthur C. Clarke," says Jannick, "but he has written only one sf book." That book is THE SHADOW OF THE STAR (Stjernens skygge), 1932.

For Norwegian sf I refer you to Øystein Holter's index in SURG 2.

In one of the SPECTRUM anthologies, Kingsley Amis says that Harry Martinsson's ANIARA is bad sf. I think it is good literature, and most fans regard it as sf. Martinsson is a good author, if not the best alive in Sweden, and ANIARA is at least his most original work, light-years above most sf. It's absurd to hear Amis in his critique: ANIARA is a higher literary version of Aldiss's NON-STOP. Karin Boye's KALLOCAIN, 1948, is a story which compares in quality and subject with Orwell's 1984, and the same might be said about Ann-Margret Dahlquist-Ljungberg's THE BEAM (Strålen), published in 1948.

((The following paragraph written by the editor of ASFR, John Bangsund))

Notes: I'm not at all sure what Sven (or Denis Lindbohm) means by "a devilish chequemove", but it's something I intend to look into. ::: An interesting sidelight on that same "extraordinary convention" is that here, for the first time, out-of-town convention members were reduced to lodging in makeshift accommodation of the most rudimentary kind; they were not the least bit happy with these MalCon Tests, as they were called, and the name seems to have passed into the language. (Jag beklagar...) ::: A name overlooked in Sven's article is that of Sten Dahlskog. One can't mention everyone in an article like this, of course, but I think I should point out for the benefit of newcomers to ASFR that Sten had an excellent article on some works of Ursula K. LeGuin and Tom Disch in ASFR 8. ::: Some addresses:

((I'm not going to reprint the addresses of Scandinavian fans from 1968. If you really want to see them, you will need to download this issue of Australian Science Fiction Review from fanac.org.))

The Mathom House

Intermission 147 (Ahrvid Engholm)

It's difficult to comprehend that in the early 1950s that there could have been "no less than 30 (!) US sf magazines published at the same time". Still, you wrote it so I believe you. But thirty! That is incredible. Should I say, "that does not compute"?

I'm not surprised that the editors of the journal *Angara* were fired for publishing Tale of the Troika by the brothers Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. What were they thinking?

"But if you ask Björn himself, he is the most successful and best author ever in Swedish literary history! No one has reached a bigger audience, gotten more awards, been more creative."

He sounds like Donald Trump...

"Note that Wernher von Braun and the Verein für Raumschiffahrt isn't mentioned at all. When they began working for the Nazi government, their activities were kept under wraps. Now more from the newspapers!"

I wonder what mentions they received *before* they started working for the Nazis.

"The military presently uses "selective conscription", ie everyone - incl women - are called to a draft board for tests and interviews and the best (presently 8 000+/year) are selected. Military service is voluntary for women, but they may be drafted to compulsory civil defence duties."

That was very progressive in 1918 to consider both men and women for military conscription.

"All information to the effect that resistance is to cease is false."

Resistance is futile!

You had the following exchange with Henry Grynsten:

AE: Star Trek "transporters" are probably unattainable - reading the properties of all the particles in the body in one moment can't be done.

HG: Making a copy, however exact, does not make the consciousness the same.

AE: I say it does. It would pass the Duck test

It's very unlike me to be able to recommend a SF novel that touches upon any subject. But in this case I recommend Grace Chan's *Every Version of You* (2022).

Ryct Heath Row. I was interested in your comment that *"The Finncons have always been the biggest in the Nordic region"*. Is that still true now that Finncon no longer includes Animecon? I'm a bit vague on the comparative populations of Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Please wait a minute whilst I that up... In 2024 we have Finland (5.6 million), Norway (5.6 million), and Sweden (10.6 million). If we include Denmark in the list (do we want to?) then add: Denmark (6.0 million).

Ye Murthered Master Mage 273 (George Phillies)

Thanks for sharing the list of SF TV shows that you watched. The only title I've heard of is Superman.

Archive Midwinter (Jefferson P. Swycaffer)

There's an excellent show on the ABC which covers American politics, *Planet America*. In 2021 they discussed lists of the top~10, and worst~10, US Presidents. This lists were the result of an assessment by historians, presumable US political historians. Each historian was asked to give each President a mark out of ten for a number of categories. According to the historians the worst ten presidents (with a quick summary of their failings where I could identify them) are

10. Zachary Taylor. Failed to address the issue of slavery.
09. Herbert Hoover. Failed to address the social and economic problems resulting from the Great Cash.
08. Warren G. Harding. He saw the Presidency as ceremonial in nature and ignored rampant corruption in his administration.
07. Millard Fillmore. Couldn't find a solution to the problem of slavery.
06. John Tyler. (Not sure of the reason).
05. William Henry Harrison. Only president for 31 days, IMO should have been excluded from the rankings.
04. Donald J. Trump. The worst President for "moral authority" and "administrative skills". The second worst President for "international relations". The third worst President for "relationship with Congress", "performance within the context of his time" and "crisis leadership".
03. Franklin Pierce. Edged America four years closer to the civil war. Failed to address whether the new western states should be allowed to have slaves.
02. Andrew Johnson. First President to be impeached. Incompetent manager and a racist. Bungled post-war reconstruction.
01. James Buchanan. Did nothing to stop southern states seceding. Worst President for over half the categories considered.

The collective wisdoms of the historians is that Andrew Johnson was a worse President than Trump. They also agree with you that James Buchanan "*was also a very bad President*", though they go a bit further by saying that he was the worst.

Ryctm

"But what makes a novel "Literary?""

Probably any short attempt to define it fails because there's always going to be counter-examples of established literary works that are excluded by such a definition. Well, doomed to failure unless the definition is the unhelpful "I know it when I see it".

Rtct Heath Row

“rct Sam Lubell, I can give high praise to Haldeman’s “Forever War.” It’s quite good.”

IMO it’s rather British of you to give “high praise” to something by writing that “It’s quite good”!

Ryct Samuel Lubell

There is most definitely a ^dispute^ between those who hold that Fandom Is A Way of Life and those who hold that Fandom Is Just a (G.D.) Hobby. But I never really perceived that as a feud, as opposed to some of the long-running natiness you saw (in professionals!) between, say, Harlan Ellison or Jerry Pournelle, which actually got to the level of physical violence. Both of those worthies are on record as punching people at SF conventions.

Pournell played postal diplomacy in the 1960s, winning at least two games. So he must have had some powers of diplomacy. OTOH, I believe John Boardman once wrote something along the lines that “Pournell believes that there is nothing wrong with concentration camps, provided that the right sort of person is in them”.

Ryct Garth Spencer

“In the 80s and 90s, there was a vocal group of Microfiche Fans, who claimed that their efforts were vital in restoring civilization should nuclear war occur. I do not see as much activity from them these days, but I laud the concept.”

I’ve got a vague feeling that when I was an undergraduate (1986-89) the science and engineering library at the University of Leeds still had microfiche readers. I might even have tried to use one once or twice. But I quickly threw my hands up in the air and gave up on them. Maybe even the library at the uow had one in 2003. Yes, I think they did.

Intermission 148 (Ahrvid Engholm)

It sounds like you’re the right person to write a history of the early days of the SF Bookstore. Or have you already done that? The account written by Rich Zellich about the history of SF-lovers was very interesting and deserves to be more widely read. The usenet group rec.arts.sf-lovers rings a bell, the volume of traffic put me of using it. It must be about 22 years or so since I engaged with usenet, the rn command being disengaged at the University of Wollongong: spoilsports!

Your computer generated poem about fandom is amusing. I particularly liked the lines

In fable’s wealth, in yesterdays,

They forged the path for future ways.

If this was a human written poem, these would be clever references to the two fan histories written by Harry Warner Jr.

“The wonder machine - made in Taiwan - I got in 1985 immediately doubled my writing speed (a reason for today's sf being worse - word processors encourage babbling word salad and overlong books)”

That’s an interesting premise, which sounds very plausible to me. But how would we investigate it?

Samizdat 28 (Samuel Lubell)

“about the 1529 Turkish siege of Vienna (in order to capture the brewery that brews magical dark beer)”

I only discussed this with my wife a few days ago, she wanted to know about the Ottoman Empire. I mentioned the story that this siege is how the inhabitants of Vienna were introduced to coffee, the beans and appropriate equipment being discovered in the baggage train of the defeated Turks. I assume that’s an apocryphal story. I have added *The Anubis Gates* to my list of fantasy/SF books that I’d like to read. I’ll probably never read it, but it’s now on the list.

“The Washington Post had an interesting article on who uses libraries. Only 23% of Americans use libraries daily/weekly/monthly and another 24% a few times a year. Half of Americans rarely or never visit libraries.”

I only started using our local library when I became a dad, a little over two years ago. They’d probably been a gap of about forty years since when I’d last used a local library. (Excluding university libraries from this discussion of libraries!)

“Only 7% of Americans read more than 100 books in the past three years.”

I don’t know how many books I’ve read in the last three years as I don’t keep note of when I’ve read them. However, it’s definitely not more than 100 books – even including books I read for work. If we’re counting reading books to our son (just over two years old) then the rate at which I read books has vastly increased over the last two years!

“Almost a quarter of Americans own at least 100 physical books including 7% at more than 500 and 3% at over 1,000.”

I’ve no idea how many books I own. Many were put into boxes when we moved eight years ago and they are still in them. I have a lot of work related books. Perhaps if I get bored I will count those!

“I also read Scotland: A Very Short Introduction by Rab Houston”

The Oxford University Press “A Very Short Introduction” is my favourite book series. With over 750 titles to choose from, and new ones being added every year... well, I won’t say that I could spend the rest of my life only reading this series. If I had the money, and the time, I could knock them off at the rate of one-per-day. An excellent series. At some point in time I must read David Seed’s *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*.

“Some supposedly friendly governments (and departments within our own government) have been hoarding these secret vulnerabilities.”

Over thirty years ago I read a book about “hacking”. There were three parts, each devoted to a particular individual. One part discussed the Morris worm, which was the first major internet attack. From this I learnt that the prosecution had a video of Robert Morris discussing how you could design a worm virus, pretty much outlining the procedure that he used. The defence said that if the prosecution used the video as evidence then they were going to introduce evidence that would show that the NSA had long known about the security defects that Morris had exploited and that they had puposedly not closed them because they wanted to have the ability to exploit them themselves. So a deal was done not to introduce the video evidence. I don’t remember the name of the book and no longer have it. (At some point in time I gave my collection of books about hacking and computer security to my dad.)

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm about Codes of Conduct. As someone with considerable involvement in SF conventions I would be interested in reading your thoughts about how Codes of Conduct have developed. When were they first introduced? When did they become common? How has the content of the Code of Conduct changed over time? I don’t have a problem with Codes of Conduct, which are very common for academic conferences. I agree with Ahrvid that they should be written in plain English.

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm #2

“If a topic doesn’t get a lot of people, then we don’t use it in the future.”

I would be interested in see which topics have been tried and then dropped. Though I appreciate that this information could be con-specific and time-specific.

Ryctm

“Interesting point about literary fiction being the fiction left over when all the genres are excluded. The problem with that is what counts as a genre? And some literature overlaps with some genre. Are we to exclude Frankenstein from literature because it is science fiction? Do we exclude Jane Austen for being Romance and Wuthering Heights for being Gothic? Do we exclude Moby Dick for being a sea adventure?”

I’ve come to the conclusion that any short definition of “literary fiction” is going to suffer from the problem that you identified, there will always be well-known exceptions to the rule. I’m guessing that’s a problem with any simple definition of science fiction, Romance, Gothic etc. Though there is no reason why a book should only be a member of one set of books. Wuthering Heights can be both a literary novel and a Gothic novel. But now I am pondering a different question. When did literary fiction arise as a concept? Neither the works of Jane Austin nor Emily Bronte’s only novel would have been considered “literary fiction” when they were published, the concept did not exist. ChatGPT tells me that the use of “literary fiction” as a critical term only became common late in the 20th century. However, the distinction between serious, or “high”, fiction and popular, or “low”, fiction can be traced back to critics in the Enlightenment and Romantic periods. (Now, how should we address the issue as to what is the difference between “serious” and “popular” fiction...)

ChatGPT finishes its discourse by noting that “many works straddle the boundary between literary and genre fiction”. Now we have returned to your starting point.

Ryct To Heath Row

“I’d argue that cozy fantasy is just as much fantasy as any other fantasy novel. Not every fantasy has to be about saving the world or even just the kingdom.”

I was a reader of fantasy in my teens. One reason why I no longer engage with fantasy is that it seems to be predominantly concerned with the publication of stories that are told over multiple volumes. Is it too much to ask that someone publishes a really good stand-alone fantasy novel and never writes a sequel?

Brownian Motion 11 (Garth Spencer)

“Due to inclement weather (and consequent flooding and power outages in some places) BC’s electoral results took longer to tally than the results of other provinces.”

Hahaha. I never realised that you lived in BC. Shows how much attention I pay to things.

“I keep I am down to less than ten members in eAPA, and would like to attract more members. eAPA is at present a monthly online APA, which is completely open to any subject as long as it’s semi-rational and not offensive material.”

I like the idea of joining another apa, that would make three, but I don’t like the idea of the work associated with producing a monthly apazine, even for an apa that has less than ten members. That would start to eat into the little time that I have for reading.

“Even middle-aged managers with degrees talk this way”

Should people with degrees be able to “*communicate effectively*”? I’m confident that universities will claim that their graduates can do this. I am doubtful as to whether this is the case. Let’s assume it is the case. My experience of managers is that the further individuals go up the managerial career ladder, the less likely they it is that they can “*communicate effectively*”. Managerial speak is the antithesis of effective communication. The last thing that managers want to do is to provide clear instructions to their underlinings. Better to give vague instructions, so it’s not obvious whose fault it is that some target wasn’t met. Well, it is obvious. It’s hardly ever the fault of the manager.

Ryct Jefferson P. Swycaffer

“Little wonder, then, when fictional mouthpieces such as Gandalf say things like “all we have to do is decide how we use our lifespan.”

I don’t remember the context of that quote, but one might say that’s mighty big words coming from someone who is near enough mortal... well, provided it remains in favour with the Valar.

“Fanfiction,” as media franchise fans defined it (and spelled it with one ‘a’), uses characters and settings from published (and copyrighted) fiction, or from commercial (and copyrighted) movies and television. No, I don’t think this falls under “fair use;”

I’m not a lawyer... I can’t imagine anyone thinking that fanfiction was covered by fair use. Is this similar to someone thinking that can run a SF convention without any experience and failing to make contracts with relevant parties and make payments on time? Human foibles as you rightly wrote.

Ryct Adrian Kresnak

“I still wonder if we have some practical solutions staring us in the face, such as establishing medical centres in northern latitudes, to supply more immediate services than flying patients down to Vancouver or Toronto (as we do now), from communities such as Bella Coola or Cameron Wells.”

Australia is beginning to experience problems associated with a shortage of GPs. The problem has been bubbling along for a number of years and the first cracks are beginning to appear. (Well, they were appearing a few years ago but it didn’t make the news). What are the problems? Firstly, not enough medical students want to train to become a GP. So there’s a shortage of newly qualified GPs. Secondly, most newly qualified GPs do not want to work in rural Australia. The reasons for this are also twofold. Firstly, most Australians would rather live in a big city rather than rural Australia. Secondly, as there are very few GPs working in rural Australia those that are there are working very long hours and finding it very difficult, if not impossible, to find replacements when they want to take a holiday. A third reason might be that it is harder to make a decent living as a rural GP. I read an article recently that said that 10% of Australian GPs are over the age of seventy. Imagine what would happen if they are retired.

Ryctm

“you may wish to check out the several histories of fandom, starting with the volumes by the late Harry Warner Jr. (All Our Yesterdays and A Wealth of Fable).”

I bought both of these volumes during my flirtation with SF fandom in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They should both be in a box somewhere in the garage. Perhaps when we move I will find that box, I certainly would like to reread both of them. Has anyone published a history that moves the story of SF fandom into the 1960s?

Renovation And Innovation Letter #3 (Adrian Kresnak)

“Cover: a photo of a snapshot of the U.S. Capitol. I took it while on a trip a while ago.”

You seem to be a bit coy about the date. Was it by any chance January 6th? 8-)

Congratulations on getting close to graduation. I hope everything goes well and that by the time you read these words you have graduated.

I liked your review of “32%”. It sounds like a fun, and though provoking, game.

Ye Murthered
Master Mage 274

George Phillis
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester, MA 01609

N3F Notes

We had fresh elections. We have one new Director.

I am going to try something new and different. We have been publishing The N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono as a monthly. I will be shifting it to bimonthly, and bringing in Eldritch Science as a bimonthly. The N3F Review will be much thicker. There is a question in my mind, if I have enough fiction coming in or not. We will see.

We still need someone to do social media outreach.

Commentationes

N'APA 273

Archive Midwinter: Thank you for the happy news that submissions appeared at the last minute, so once again we have a contest. Your comments on other zines are wonderful, though challenging to comment on farther.

At one time, the N3F had a fiche bureau. For some reason, its name was misspelt as fische, and a decade later no one knew what it was, but eventually the answer was found.

We actually do have a fan feud, a member who was annoyed with me because I urged outreach to social media groups and listed the few I had heard of. She disapproved of one of them. In any event, I had spent time rewriting and updating our pages on Fancyclopedia. She took parts of it out. She is fixated on bringing up my reference to Gab (as well as Mewe, perhaps Discord, and Facebook) as a major issue.

Finally, thank you for the kind words about my novels. My readers, alas rather few of them, hopefully got some enjoyment out of their reading.

Brandy Hall: We were required to read Shakespeare plays starting in seventh grade (age 12-13; most American schools have Kindergarten and then grades 1-12. I skipped grade 12 and went off to MIT.) Some classes read Romeo and Juliet in seventh grade, meaning a good fraction of the students had no personal awareness of romantic or other love and had no idea what was happening in the play.)

This Island Earth is actually very well done. The later parts are not close to the novel. Yes, there is a This Island Earth novel just as there is a Forbidden Planet novel. The latter novel is artistically radical. More or less each chapter is from a different character's point of view. There is also a War of the Worlds movie that is true to the book.. However, when you get down to it by modern standards that novel is not all that good in its plotting. Much of the war is out of sight of the narrator; human responses are off-screen and unimaginative. However, it was more or less a first of its kind, Wells inventing a new SF subgenre, and by that standard it is superb.

There is an unauthorized sequel by Hector Serviss, originally published in newspapers. Most people have seen it, if at all, as the ending chapters of the English translation of Perry Rhodan novels. Those chapters were edited with a chainsaw. I have distressed at least one collector by saying I had read the intermediate hardback edition from a local library. The hardback edition, much better than the Perry Rhodan series version, is extremely rare.

..study the Liberal Arts... Readers are welcome to search out my Essential University proposal.
<https://books-by-george.com/2021/11/12/essential-university/>

Samizdat: Effective Altruism was the idea that one could do serious analysis to determine what the most effective foreign charitable aid was. For a fair part of Africa, mosquito-repellant netting to protect sleepers from mosquitos was apparently an unstylish and quite cheap winner. It costs very little, but it matters. Effective Altruism was later connected with a conman who apparently made off with billions of dollars and is now in prison.

An interesting list of activities. Mine would be very different.

Brownian Motion: Adulthood. Interesting. I also voted. As I live in Massachusetts, the election outcomes could safely be predicted in 2023, except for a few candidate names. Indeed, the two leading Presidential candidates received 66% of the vote and 31% of the vote. The other four candidates between them received 3% of the vote. We are actually a one-party state. For three-quarters of the seats in the legislature, there is routinely only one candidate.

A fine piece of fan fiction, with multiple backgrounds. The fictional characters appear to match their archetypes. Spock lecturing the security officer was particularly good. Lieutenant Saavik not saying much was in character. Mixing backgrounds like this was well done. Poor Bond, to have had a breakdown. Please keep up the good work.

With respect to phony vote counting, long before the puppies dispute, there was a long period in which Huge nominations of books from Baen were prominent for their absence, despite their sales being extremely large. The original puppy person was convinced that the vote counting or ballot box had been rigged and he would unrig it. An interesting idea for the witness to the kidnapping. She hesitated to carry this out because she had used telepathy and mind control to kill or worse the kidnapers, and there might be legal repercussions.

RAIL: Best of luck with your thesis defense. Your tale of the Ethereum blockchain sounds like it could be converted into an SF story.

FanFic

There is now a large gap in time. We see a series of duels of wits between Thornberry-Thistlewaite and Charlotte. She is somewhat won around to the notion that empathy, helping your neighbors, can at least superficially be a good thing, through a series of arguments I have not written.

&&&&&

An unfamiliar sound drew Charlotte's attention. It was Widow Baskerville, looking into a flower bed and making strange noises. The slightest touch of telepathy found that Baskerville was very worried.

Charlotte walked quickly across the lawn.

"Hello, Mrs. Baskerville," she said. "Are you looking for something?"

"Kittens," the old woman said, not looking up from her search. "Orange showed up with one. But she did something to her leg, can't walk, vet isn't here until Wednesday, she can't fetch more, and the poor kitties will get very hungry by then."

Mrs. Baskerville leaned on her cane, shifting her weight.

"I'm old and slow," she continued, "so it takes me a while to turn around and say hello."

"Understood. I could help look," Charlotte said as she knelt next to the old lady.

"That would be..." Mrs. Baskerville began. She saw who was kneeling next to her, recoiled, and began to fall.

Lightning swift, Charlotte shifted sideways, braced the older woman, and helped her recover her balance.

"Oh, good heavens, thank you, dear," Mrs. Baskerville said gracefully. "I would have rolled on my back if you hadn't caught me. I should stand up and greet you properly. And, yes, I really need help." Ever so cautiously, she leaned on her cane until she was standing straight.

"I should show you Orange and her kitten. They're resting in the sun in Orange's basket. this way." She pointed with her cane.

Charlotte followed Mrs. Baskerville into her tiny home.

"And I'm sorry I frightened you, Mrs. Baskerville, coming up behind you like that. I only wanted to help."

"Oh, no, dear, I should have paid more attention to you, right off, not kept looking for the kittens. This is Orange – don't touch her front leg; it's very painful for her -- and the little lump of black curled up in a ring is a kitten."

Charlotte stared at the two cats. "That's hay in the kitten's fur," she said.

"Oh, yes, Orange probably gave birth in the barn. Then she brought me the first kitten. Kitten's eyes are open, so she's several weeks old."

"Those eyes are such a lovely blue," Charlotte said. "Do they stay that way?"

"These are Orange's first kittens. Orange is very old, she'll probably have no more. So I don't know. Her other kittens are too young to wander, but without Orange they must be starting to get cold. That's very bad for them."

"Then I need to find them, soon," Charlotte said. "Do you have a basket? Easier for me to carry them."

"On the window seat behind you. Next to the scissors and spool of twine."

INTERMISSION #150*

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and others who struggle with gafia and stale bheer. Read @SFJournalen's newstweets if you dare in Musk-Dusk times. Survival guide: In case of war and typos! BTW, our usual Xmas/NewYear story starts thish! Late Dec 2024. Merry X...

Ed's traditional Xmas/New Year Story, for 2024...

The Afterlife of Vlad and Donny

(This is a story of fiction. All resemblances with real people, whether being a psychopath in Moscow or someone orange-haired with a twitter thumb, is a pure coincidence. Promise!)

The aircab's rotors hummed as it descended onto the illuminated rooftop of The Treshold Hotel. It was a sprawling architectural marvel where reflective panels absorbed and refracted light, casting surreal, kaleidoscopic patterns into the misty void surrounding it. The cab doors slid open, and Vladimir Putin, right arm stiff as a stick, and Donald Trump in a red hat emerged.

Putin was first, his face a mask of stoic contempt and botox, his tailored black suit unwrinkled, his eyes scanning the surroundings with the cold precision of a predator. His expression betrayed no awe at the futuristic scene. This was merely another theater in which to perform his role as the unshakable leader.

Trump followed, in a loud blue suit and a red tie that swung like a pendulum. His face wore a self-satisfied smirk, and his steps were a little too confident, as if he'd been told the cameras were rolling. "Ah, Donald," Putin said in his thick Russian accent, his voice dripping with condescension. "I see you have arrived here too. I suppose even your 'great achievements' couldn't buy you a reservation in heaven?"

Trump adjusted his red tie, puffing out his chest. "Vlad, buddy, let me tell you something - you don't get it. Everyone loves me up there. They're probably just waiting to finish a bigger mansion for med there. For one thing, I need a big garage for secret documents. I'll make Heaven Great Again. Tremendous."

The two men were silent as they entered the zero-gravity elevators, which offered breathtaking views of the hotel's inner workings. Robotic drones zipped between floors carrying trays of drinks, while sleek, humanoid androids cleaned floors that shone like mirrors, and walls that shifted colors based on emotions in the room.. Trump leaned against the elevator's glass, admiring his reflection, as they slowly floated to the lobby floor..

"Best view I've ever seen," he said. "Tremendous view. You know, they probably built this place because of me. Very inspired by my Trump Towers."

Putin arched an eyebrow. "In Russia, we build palaces of grandeur. This... is a child's plaything," he muttered. But not even his secret Black Sea palace was as sumptuous.

The elevator G generator's soft chime echoed as it geared down. They landed in the elevator shaft at the lobby. Before them was a sprawling lobby of unparalleled opulence. The futuristic accommodations were staffed by sleek robots gliding silently across marble floors, drones flew among the leaves of palm trees, purging and polishing them. Through humongous windows air cabs were seen constantly arriving and taking off from nearby rooftops like oversized colibris. It was a busy place. Crystal chandeliers bathed the space in golden light, discrete laserbeams painted hotel messages in the air - and soft classical music wafted through it all. Expensive carpets with hypnotic patterns stretched endlessly, and lavishly dressed attendants moved with eerie grace among velvet sofas and gilded tables adorned with champagne flutes.

Trump corrected his tie and scanned the surroundings, a calculating gaze pausing only to sneer at a group of beautiful, giggling young girls lounging by a fountain. (I'd like to grab them by the pussy, he reflected.)

"It must be Russian women," Putin reflected. "They should have 7 or 8 children each. I'd be willing

HORRAY! 150 issues is fantastic for any fanzine, but Intermission is the longest running monthly in Scandinavian fandom. (A couple of months missed in 12.5 years should be forgiven by several half-issues, eg for the Worldcon Organisation of Faneditors, making it 150+ issues!) Roscoe is with us. Why don't you do a fanzine? Huh Fandom needs more. It's fanzines Vs toys and games, Vs the Neo Bureaucracy of cons.

to help..."

"Well, I have Miss Universe as cleaning lady and Miss World does my laundry," Trump muttered. "Nobody has done more for women than me."

Trump's eyes linger on the females with a hint of curiosity. He adjusted his tie, thinking of all the pornstars he had on his secret payroll. The grand hall had a translucent ceiling showcasing swirling nebulae and glowing stars. Guests mingled among robotic attendants offering crystalline cocktails.

Trump waved to nonexistent crowds. I wonder if I'd lose any voters if I shoot someone here, he thought. He swaggered further into the lobby, gravitating toward a dispenser for sodapops. He felt the urge for some cola.

"Two Diet Cokes," he barked.

The machine beeped. "We do not serve outdated beverages. Please choose from our stellar menu of molecular infusions."

Trump waved it off with a chuckle. "Fake drinks. Sad." He looked around. "I'll fix it. But still, what a place. Tremendous. The beverage department would need some adjustments..." He pats a confused robot on the head, proclaiming, "Even the machines love me. Fantastic bots. I invented them, you know." He turned to Putin and grinned. "Hey, Vlad! Pretty swanky, huh?" Putin gave him a withering look. "Is your voice always this loud?"

Trump smirked. "Only when I'm winning. You know, I was the best president America ever had. Everyone says so. I made America great again."

Putin chuckled darkly. "Great? You were a clown - a useful one at times - but still a clown. You couldn't even control your own people without chaos. For me, everything goes according to plan..."

Trump's face reddened. "It does? A KGB thug who thinks he's some kind of czar? You ran your country like a mob boss!"

"Better a mob boss than a failed businessman bankrupting casinos," Putin shot back with venom.

"And who bankrupted Russia, despite having the world's most lavish natural resources?"

Before Putin could respond, a figure appeared behind the concierge desk. The man was tall and unnervingly symmetrical, his suit impeccably tailored, his eyes dispassionate and cold.

"Gentlemen," the concierge said, his voice smooth as glass. "Welcome to The Threshold Hotel. You are both here to determine your final destination - upstairs or downstairs."

Putin scoffed. "I make my own destiny. I have no need for your judgment. All we need is Ruski Mir."

"Relax, Vlad," Trump said, waving dismissively. "I'm already going upstairs. I mean, angels love me. Everybody does. They say, 'Donald, we've never seen anyone like you.'"

The concierge's mouth twitched into the faintest smile. "Confidence is admirable, Mr. Trump, but the truth will come out. Follow me."

Drones delivered drinks to their table - vodka for Putin and, finally, Diet Coke for Trump.

Putin raised his glass mockingly. "To two great leaders who ended up in purgatory. A geopolitical disaster..."

Trump clinked his glass reluctantly but added with a grin, "Don't worry, Vlad. I'll negotiate us out of this mess. Nobody negotiates better than me."

The pair were led to a chamber filled with advanced machinery. In the center stood two chairs resembling thrones, each fitted with a crown-like apparatus. An Electroencephalogram-Plus (EEG+) machine hovered between them, tendrils of light extending to connect with their foreheads.

"You will now face the truth," the concierge said. "The EEG+ will reveal your inner thoughts and contradictions. Your careers have already been reviewed."

The concierge went to a control panel placed on a long, long mahogany table. Putin made a mental note: I must make negotiating table that long. The table's surface looked like rippling water, pulsing with an unearthly light. The EEG-like device descended stopping in front of one of the big armchairs. The controls of the panel on the table were like a cross between a Victorian organ and the cockpit of a spaceship. Cables dangled from the crowns on the thrones, and the air smelled faintly of ozone.

The two ex-presidents were shown to take their places on the thrones. A robot servant quickly connected their temples to wires to analyze their thoughts, first applying cotton pads with sterilising fluid.

"And is there a way we can do something like that," Trump commented. "Injecting it inside getting almost a cleaning..."

"This," said the concierge, "is the Celestial Analytical Evaluator. It will read your biosignals,



brainwaves, and subconscious thoughts to reveal the truth of your inner selves. See it as a special psychological operation..."

Putin raised an eyebrow. "My inner self is no one's business."

"Mine's a winner," Trump said. "I am the most successful person ever here! I'm a stable genius!"

Without further ado, they were strapped into chairs that looked uncomfortably like electric chairs.

"Your machine cannot intimidate me," Putin growled. The device powered up, and a holographic screen displayed his thoughts. Power is control. Control is dominance. The strong dictate, the weak obey. Ruski Mir must rule all, and dissent will be crushed.

The phrasing from giant loudspeakers came with a roaring base that felt like a minor earthquake..

A shadowed memory emerged: his orders to bomb civilians during the invasion. A big screen on the wall glowed red, displaying a stark message: "MORAL VOID DETECTED".

"Western lies," Putin spat. "This machine is a tool of the decadent West. I will crush it, as I crush all who oppose Russia!"

Up came visions of the shadowy corridors of the KGB, the silencing of dissenters, and the invasion of Georgia and Ukraine. Soldiers marched, innocents fled or were shot in their streets, and Putin's cold, unwavering gaze oversaw it all. Putin's thoughts flashed in harsh reds: contempt for life, unyielding belief in the superiority of Russia, and the unshakable conviction that all actions are justified to restore imperial glory. But then, unexpectedly, a fragment of vulnerability emerges: an image of a Soviet-era teacher chastising him for arrogance. It's fleeting, but it reveals a deep-seated fear of humiliation - a hidden crack in his impenetrable facade. And then, a flicker - an image of a young boy cowering in a corner as his father loomed over him, shouting. The boy's eyes brimmed with tears, desperate and afraid.

Putin's face twitched. "Lies!" he roared. "This is Western propaganda! You will see true power!" His empty threats echo in the room, but the machine was unmoved.

The concierge merely nodded. "It is what it is, Mr Putin."

"Sad," Trump commented. He stepped up, clapping his hands. "My turn! Let's see the big picture. People are gonna love this."

The screen was a whirlwind of garish campaign rallies, failed real estate ventures, and a deluge of tweets, a whirlwind of fragmented, self-aggrandizing fantasies. His internal monologue boasted of landslide election victories, wealth amassed through genius deals, and a universal admiration that didn't exist. But deeper probing revealed a darker truth: Trump knows his lies, but he doesn't care. His mind rationalized every falsehood with, "If they believe it, it's real." When the machine questioned him about elections, his thoughts churn with conspiracies. "The swamp! Rigged! Everyone knows it was stolen!" The machine highlighted his utter disregard for truth - only his perception matters.

Trump, unbothered by the revelations, leans back smugly. "You see? Even the machine says I'm a genius." Amid the chaos, a single scene appeared: a young Donald being ignored at a family dinner, his father lavishing attention on a plate of steak.

"I don't know where you got that," Trump said, waving a hand dismissively. "But the steak was probably great. Greatest steak ever."

The machine emitted a loud groan, displaying the word NARCISSISM.

The machine continued, showing more chaotic visions: failed businesses masked as successes, heaps of unpaid invoices, secret black money, awkward photo ops with world leaders, and endless streams of contradictory tweets. But underneath it all, the machine showed a young boy being scolded by his father: "Be a killer, not a loser." The boy's defiance masked his insecurity. Then came the Capitol riots, his face glowing on screens as chaos unfolded.

Trump pulled his hand back and laughed. "Great stuff. Very flattering. Really fair. Nobody make as good riots as I do!"

The concierge cleared his throat. "We now proceed to the secrets of grave importance portion of Mr Putin's judgment." His screen flashed again, showing the words ELECTION INTERFERENCE hovered in glowing red. Words like poisoned tea, out of windows, opponents shot flashed by.

The concierge raised an eyebrow. "Indeed. No, wait just a minute..."

Putin smirked. "Interference? I call it influence. No one is immune to the strength of Ruski Mir."

Trump's screen followed suit, displaying electoral maps, campaign strategies, and endless legal documents. The words FALSE CLAIMS OF FRAUD blinked insistently.

"Listen," Trump began, "everybody knows the election was stolen. Biggest heist in history. More people voted for me than anyone else ever. Ask anyone!"

The machine produced a sound that could only be described as a celestial sigh. A blond with a big...shelf, held back by a struggling bra, entered with a folder in her hand held between pointed, painted nails. She gave it to the concierge and turned to Trump:

"Don't you dare. If you try that grab you'll lose your small hands!"

There's nothing wrong with my hands, Trump though. It's the best hands ever! Nobody has ever had better hands! The concierge opened the folder and read out: "Your fate have been decided."

Putin leaned forward, his expression dark. "No one punishes me."

Trump crossed his arms. "Unless it's a fake punishment, which this probably is."

Ignoring them both, the concierge continued.

"Putin: Orchestrated elections, wars of aggression, systematic oppression, assassinations Thousands have perished in your prisons or fallen out of windows. Millions have been killed and mutilated in wars you started. For your crimes against humanity, you will be sent to a prison cell for eternity, and you will be treated exactly as your political prisoners are. Your guards will be Ukrainian."

Putin stiffened. "Impossible. I am the one who punishes others. Not -"

"We're going to walk down there and I'll be with you," Trump interjected.

"And Mr Trump," the concierge said, turning, "for your endless deceit, yourt mismanagement of a medical crisis, your disregard for truth, and your attempts to evade justice, instigating riots to maintain power and fueling chaos for personal gain you will be confined to a room filled with binders, forms, and tax tables. Theree you must complete your tax returns. If the total tax reaches zero, the process will restart."

The men glanced at each other, their faces hardening. Trumps thick orange makeup begav to drip.

"You needed me," Putin said coldly. "Without my help, your chaos would have crumbled."

Trump shrugged. "And you needed me. Without me, you're just a second-rate dictator with nukes." (But I'm first-rate, he thought.)

The concierge's voice cut through their bickering. "Enough. Your sins are intertwined, your legacies built on lies and suffering."

The floor beneath them trembled. Cracks appeared, glowing with fire.

"What is this?" Putin demanded.

The concierge smiled faintly. "There are special preparations downstairs for you. Fitting ones."

The floor opened even more, and Putin, then Trump fell through. He shouted: "Rigged! This place is rigged!"

Putin was dragged into a dark cell. Its metal walls were damp with condensation, and a lone bulb flickered overhead. Inside, a cot sagged under its weight, and a single meal tray sat untouched. Ukrainian guards, armed and stone-faced, watched him through the bars.

"Welcome," one guard said with a cruel grin. "You'll be treated just as your own prisoners were."

"This is insulting," Putin said, his voice cold. "I am a leader. A king. Czar Vladimir..."

One guard sneered. "Here, you are a prisoner. Just like the ones you put here."

As the cell door slammed shut, Putin's composure finally cracked.

As hours stretched into days, weeks, months Ojutin would find how the cell's walls seemed to close in. No power could free him. For the first time in years, he felt truly small. Trump, meanwhile, found himself in a sterile office. Binders upon binders lined the walls, and stacks of tax forms filled the room. A voice over an intercom instructed him:

"Complete your tax returns. If you land on zero tax, start again."

"This is ridiculous. Everybody knows I don't do paperwork. I delegate. I'm a delegator. Best in the world, actually."

"You've had your instructions." Trump waved his hands. A pointless, small gesture.

"I'll do the best tax returns ever! It will be displayed at MoMa or Smithonians! I'll fix it."

A pen materialized in his hand, and the stacks of forms seemed to grow taller. With a resigned sigh, he began scribbling nonsense into the boxes. The numbers added up to zero every time.

The ledger opened, its pages gleaming.

"Start over," a voice ordered.

"Fake math," he muttered. "It's rigged. Totally rigged."

Behind the story

This exciting story has been created with the help of AI (Chat GTP 2.0). Your trusty editor thought up the details of a plot, outlined how he wanted the setting and the characters, and then asked the AI to produce a story. In fact, several stories were produced, each with slight changes in the prompting.

Your editor then cut and pasted between the different versions, selected what would fit best, writing snippets to make pieces fit together, and finally had a rough draft. Your hard-working ed'r finally went through the result, edited a little more and polished the text. Some 85-90% of the text is AI written in the end, but the overall plot is human, the directions for the story is human, the selecting among different text versions is human, the final polish is human. And, of course, any mistakes, typos and similar are...human.

The role of your talented, artistically creative editor has been that of a film director or a conductor of an orchestra. I'd be interested to know what you think about the result. Give me your thoughts!

Alas, I understand - for you US readers – there must be at least 50% Trump fans among you, and those may not be amused. I'm sorry, but I can't stand Trump's narcissism and handling of truth. Narcissism is a personal trait particularly unpleasing. We know of a few narcissists in Swedish fandom (especially one sitting in a corner believing he's the centre of the universe, taking every chance to underscore his excellence...what he believes, at least).

Strangely enough it's reported that some of the Ukrainian leaders are optimistic about dealing with Trump. I hope they are right! Many in Ukraine's government circles are very angry with Biden always being too slow and late with aid. Supplies have taken many months, nearly a year. Some of the stuff Biden says he'll deliver now is from what was decided last winter. Despite Putin seems on the brink of overstretching himself (record losses of men and material, and a failing economy in stagflation) Ukraine needs our continued support. Should Trump throw Ukraine under the bus (or under the tank...) history would never forgive him. Some claim Ukraine has no victory strategy. But they have: to hold out until Russia collapses under their huge losses on the battlefield crumbling economy. That day will come sooner than you think. The yellow and blue need ur support - as long as it takes.

Joachim Larsson Dead – Stieg's Brother

Mr Langford didn't want this piece of news for *Ansible*, not really skiffy I guess. But Joachim Larsson had an important position with a world-wide reach due to the unexpected success of his brother Stieg, who in his turn was a leading Big Name Fan (fanzines, SFSF club chairman, Minicon etc).

I suspect cause of death for Joachim (born 1957, dead Nov 11) was cancer, because mourners are encouraged to make donations to a cancer research fund, and he was said to have left us "after a long-time illness" (with usually means a progressing cancer). Wikipedia through Google translate:

[https://sv-m-wikipedia-org.translate.goog/wiki/Joachim_Larsson_\(f%C3%B6retagsledare\)?
_x_tr_sl=sv&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=wapp](https://sv-m-wikipedia-org.translate.goog/wiki/Joachim_Larsson_(f%C3%B6retagsledare)?_x_tr_sl=sv&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=wapp)

The money from Stieg's books has been channeled into a company named Moggliden (name of the village Stieg lived in as a kid) presently worth €28 million! It was controlled by Joachim, together with Stieg's father Erland (now 89 years old), but that's now transferred to Joachim's daughter Therese (and Joachim also had a son who will get a part, I assume). It's not only a huge sum of money, which partly goes to the anti-Nazi magazine Expo, where Stieg earlier worked, partly goes to the Stieg Larsson Award for journalism around racism and feminism, partly went to a tiny trotskynist communist party. (Most has stayed with the Larssons themselves, I'm sure.) This fortune will be of importance for many years to come to support different groups. Gee, what if of some of it could benefit science fiction and fandom, something that really was a *major interest* for Stieg for over a decade...

The company Moggliden will remain," says daughter Therese Larsson in a newspaper article. She said nothing about what will happen with the Big Unresolved Issue.

Something gaining international interest, is the quarrel between the Larssons (Joachim and Erland)

and Stieg's common law wife (ie they were together – since age 18 - but not formally married) Eva Gabriellsson. Countless interviews, newspaper articles and news items have covered all this, home and abroad. Several books have been written going into this



Stieg Larsson on the phone in the SFSF HQ, trying to save the Minicon 5 film program. It didn't go well.



Me and Joachim Larsson (from Intermission #33).

rowdy business. Despite being as close you can be a wife, Eva got nothing after Stieg's death (except she could keep their apartment). The Swedish law wasn't "inclusive" enough to include non-married spouses. Eva was furious. In her mind she had helped Stieg with the books – I guess she for instace read the drafts and oprobably came up with ideas and advice. She wanted control over how the work was used, the Larssons refused.

I think it would have been wise to engage a professional negotiator and someone good with psychology to handle this, but it wasn't to be. Eva probably saw the Larssons as greedy and unsensitive, and brother and father Larsson probably saw Eva as hysterical and unflexible. If it was up to me, I would have given Eva a seat in the board of directors for Moggliden Inc with a hefty salary and more than half a promise of some influence over use of Stieg's work.

His books have been turned into several films, a comic book and most of all "official" sequels (the ones written by David Lagercrantz were reasonably OK, but the new series by Karin Smirhoff – I've only read the first – hasn't yet been to my taste).

One day we may get the Stieg Larsson towel and Millennium candy. I'm not looking forward to that.

That said, I have actually met Joachim Larsson a couple of times (as well as father Erland), being to their announcement of the Stieg Larsson Award.

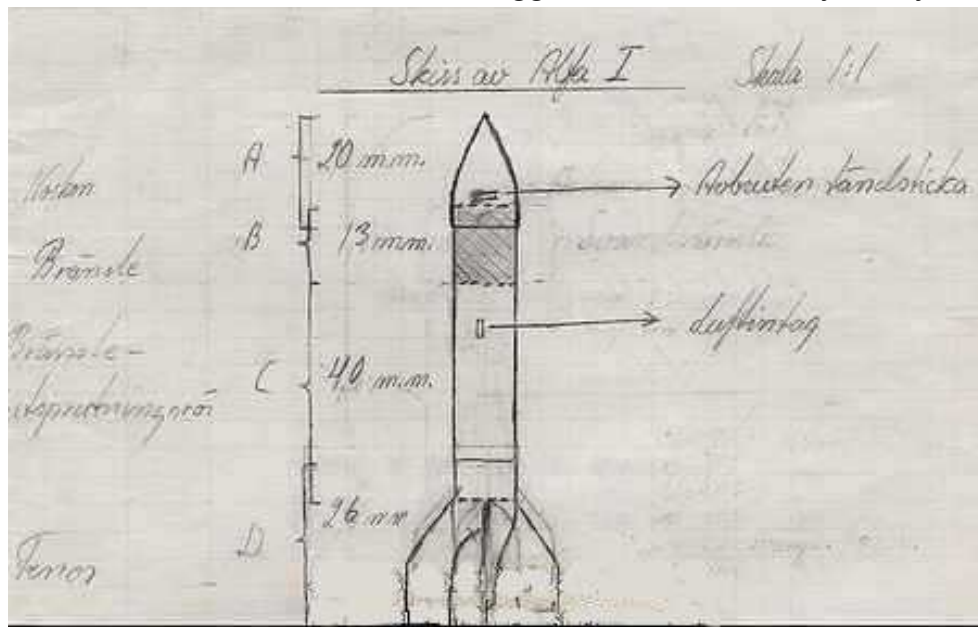
Joachim knew I knew Stieg from the legendary days of the Scandinavian SF Association and their club house on 45 Pioneer Street (Pontonjägatan 45) in the Kungsholmen district of Stockholm, the years 1977-1981. Stieg and Eva had just moved to Stockholm and became regulars there, and so was I. Countless fannish, not seldom silly, episodes took place, eg how Stieg, then chairman, tried to rent films for Minicon 5 just minutes before the film companies would close just before the con... Most of this has been chronicled in the first version of my newszine *SF-Journalen*, the weekly stencilled *Vheckans Ävfentyr* ("The Wheek's Adfentures").

Something I didn't know then (but I knew about Stieg's and Eva's fanzines, like *Fijagh*, *Sfären*, *Långfredagsnatt*, *Fanac*) is that at a very young age (9-10 years old perhaps) had his own space club, which I saw details about in a TV documentary. *Intermission* #83 had more about the small club LORUM (short for "Law And Space Observatory"), where Stieg and a friend were planning for a futrue in space, designing rockets and possibly seeing themselves as space heroes upholding the law in the cold void...

Some videos with Eva Gabrielsson, about the mentioned issue:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLbAHC-uDmQ> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXG88n0XJWg> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7n1U6KIDCIs> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_ZbQkaDTo4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXqMU7JhxA>

...but there is more! Excluded are all Swedish language interviews, unfortunately the Larssons - As Far As I Can See - has only given their side of the story in Swedish. Here's some other videos of interest:



Plans for a rocket, drawn by Stieg, from his space club LORUM. From #83.



Famous 45 Pioneer Street where Stieg spent much of his free time 1977-1981, The Scandinavian SF Association club house and the first SF Bookstore. Golden years when fannish legends were made and myths flourished!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0naMGiPtX3s> (a CBS report) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTSA0VanMWA> (20 facts about Stieg Larsson") <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTf8LEDs5sY&t=14s> (biography) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiXmQo65nUM&t=27s> (bio psrt 2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcd34KgdHoU> (Stieg's publisher) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2P6nYNOAnjY> (Stieg Larsson's legacy).

In uncertain times, it is important to be prepared

Military threat levels are increasing. We must be prepared for the worst-case scenario – an armed attack on Sweden.

War – the ultimate threat to our freedom

When military violence is used to assume authority over us, our right to live a free and independent life is threatened.

However, there are other ways, besides armed conflict, to influence and undermine our society; for example, cyber attacks, disinformation campaigns, terrorism, and sabotage. These types of attacks may occur at any time. Some are happening here and now.

We can never take our freedom for granted. Our courage and will to defend our open society are vital, even though it may require us to make certain sacrifices.

**If Sweden is attacked, we will never surrender.
Any suggestion to the contrary is false.**

Other serious threats

We also need to strengthen our resilience against other serious risks and threats, including:

- Extreme weather events.
- Dangerous pathogens.
- Outages across important IT systems.
- Organised crime.

largest ratio of one-person households in Europe).

On the first page, after the ToC, we learn why a new edition of this is needed (as if we couldn't guess). But beside war, we need to be weary of natural disasters, pandemics, cracker attacks and organised crime (terrorism goes under that, supposedly). There's been a pandemic of drug gangs who have been targeting each other over shares of the illegal "markets", often using underage kids as hitmen (as they get much lighter treatment in courts, under 15 a murderer is only "transferred to the social services"!).

Unfortunately, innocent bystanders sometimes get in the way.

As for war, here we also see the cocky:

If Sweden is attacked we will never surrender. Any suggestion to the contrary is false.

This phrase has been here since the booklet's first edition in 1943. What it points to is in case Swedish forces are overrun or partially so, they enter what is called "the free war", ie guerilla war. Such forces have the same status under the Geneva conventions as a regular army, as long as they wear insignia showing they are a fighting unit (an armband will be enough, for instance). Guerilla resistance had a substantial impact during WII (in eg France, Norway, Yugoslavia and Italy) and there's presently Ukrainian behind the line units observing, sabotaging, taking out military leaders, etc.



Sweden in NATO

Sweden is part of the military alliance NATO. The purpose of the alliance is that the member countries collectively will be so strong that it deters others from attacking us. If one NATO country is nevertheless attacked, the other countries in the alliance will aid in its defence – all for one, one for all.

Changed since last is that we've now entered NATO. The government has also decided on some reorganisation of the civil defence, to strengthen it. The military defence is already being boosted.

In Case of Crisis Or War

The Swedish government this autumn published the sixth edition of its booklet *In Case of Crisis or War*, in several languages so immigrants can prepare too. The English edition is here:

<https://rib.msb.se/filer/pdf/30874.pdf>

The first edition came during WWII, and the information has at times also been included in the phone directory (if you remember this thick book, containing all telephone numbers in your city, from the days when phones insisted on having a cable attached to them).

Its appearance is of course due to Putin's stupid war in Ukraine. A copy has been distributed to every household, a total of 5.2 million copies, which indicates that a Swedish household is on average just about 2 persons (those with children are bigger, but we also have to take into account that we have, I understand, the



The English edition of Om krisen eller kriget kommer.

OM KRIGET KOMMER



VÄGLEDNING FÖR RIKETS MEDBORGARE
I HÄNDELSE AV KRIG

The first 1943 edition, then titled "If War Comes, Guide for citizens of the realm in case of war."

shelters, distribute gas masks, work with air protection, deliver first aid. Help with evacuations and similar tasks.

Sweden has bomb shelters for ca 70% of the population (perhaps not protecting against really big bombs going off nearby) scattered here and there in populated areas. That could be enough since any surplus may be evacuated.

Here's a secret weapon: summer houses. There are ca 2 million Swedish summer houses (for a total pop of 10.5) which are almost always in the countryside, since getting away from a stressful city, out into the nature is the purpose of recreation. These could be used for evacuation. 2 million families would fit, or 4 million people, in the worst case (with two families per summer house) ie 8 million! I understand summer houses aren't too common in other countries, but Sweden has lot of room, a lot of forest with picturesque lakeside spots, and as urbanisation accelerated the first half of last century a lot of previously used buildings suddenly became empty and free. There are still a lot of abandoned houses in the countryside to buy dirt cheap from a second cousing who forgot he owned it.

Anyone can be called up for civil defence duties up to the age of 70. Military service is up to - if I remember – the age of 47 (someone has calculated you're a wreck when you turn 48, I guess.) You can apply to the home guard up to the age of 57 or up to 70 in special cases. (Apply...as they don't take anyone.) Your car can be conscripted! Any 4WD jeep would be attractive for defence duties..

The military is getting attention again. The army will in a couple of years total about 100 000, which is a mix of contract volunteers, conscripts and the home guard (equivalent of the US national guard). The air force is now being delivered the new Gripen E, claimed to be one of the world's best fighters with higher payload and new electronics compared to earlier versions and new AWACS (two old ones are donated to Ukraine). The navy is getting new anti-aircraft systems to its corvettes and at least two new submarines of super stealthy type (using quiet LOX-feed Sterling engines), over 200 of the praised IFV CV90 are ordered, some to replace the 50 earlier donated to Ukraine in this batch Ukraine gets 40 more..

At cold war's end Swedish "preparedness" was downgraded. The Military budget was cut, conscription scrapped (it's now back as selective conscription), building standards no longer required bomb shelters in multi-apartment houses, some military gear was decommissioned (some now dusted off and given to Ukraine, recently hundreds of PBV 302 APC) and so on. Much of that is now reversed. Military spending is reaching 2.6% of GDP (well above NATO's floor) and *all* 18-year olds are called to the military check-up. Military service will encompass about 1/4th of the boys, it's



Civil defence shelter

You are not designated a specific civil defence shelter – evacuate to the nearest one. At msb.se, you'll find a map pinpointing all shelters in Sweden.

A shelter should have water and basic toilet facilities. If you have time, bring something to eat, warm clothes and toiletries. Be prepared to stay in the shelter for a few days.

During peace time, shelters may be used for other activities. However, they are required to be reset and available within 48 hours should the need arise. During a heightened state of alert, the property owner is obligated to ensure that the shelter is properly prepared.

Shelters are marked with a sign – a blue triangle inside an orange rectangle. This symbol means the premises are protected under the laws of war.



A blue triangle in an orange square can be seen on buildings here and there, meaning it's a house with a prepared bomb shelter. Find out where your closest shelter is.



The plucky lady in a beret is crown princess Victoria of Sweden. She went through a course to become an army officer.



The booklet goes into the duties of the citizen, mobilisation and air alert signals, how to find shelter (the least, in lack of time, is to "duck and cover" in a pit or behind a wall), what to keep at home (food, heating sources, radio, medicine, hygiene stuff), what to take with you if evacuation is needed, and similar things. It resembles, but with fewer imaginative, far-out suggestions, what you find on survival sites and videos on the 'net. What's missing is perhaps how to behave in the forests, what herbs you can eat, how to snare and skin a squirrel, and how to build a shelter with sticks and pins...

The booklet also covers psychological defence (worth attention, as we've seen a lot of Putin's propaganda being spread), how to behave during a terror attack (run away, and if you can't then hide and finally call 112, EU's emergency number), some first aid tips, how to reduce infectious diseases, taking care of pets, how to talk to your children, and one or two other things. Norway is said to have published a similar booklet earlier this year (it ought to be a PDF also, but I can't find it), Finland has an updated web site with preparation guidelines, but for Denmark I don't know. (Bunker up with smørrebrød for at least a week, have 3 litres of Tuborg per person and day and hygge yourself!)

(From an earlier edition) For evacuation: Keep the family together / Only bring absolutely necessary gear / You may need stury and warm clothes... / No bigger packing than the family can carry / Bring money, valuables, health insurance papers, trade union book, and if issued rationing card, gasmask and ID tag.

Remember: If Intermission is attacked it'll never surrender...maybe that's saying too much: we'll rarely surrender! Any suggestion to the contrary is...not very helpful.

History Corner

Your favourite department is back! First a notice I found in the local civic centre after it had been through renovation: *Time Capsule from 2020:*

The house got a new time capsule at a press show Aug 12 2020. The capsule was lowered to its place here at the main entrance by housing council member Dennis Wedin... The new time capsule contains eg: A book about the civic centre by Astrid Hasselrot. A planning map of the Södermalm district 2019.

Plans over the new civic centre. Contemporary coins, bills and stamps. Photos from before renovation and during work. Greetings from the six-graders of the Björngård school writing about their time and what they think about the future – what will the world look like next time the time capsule is opened. There are more things we keep as a surprise for those digging up and opening the time capsule in the future.

This was put at the same spot as an earlier time capsule found when they began renovation. It was put there in 1938, a lead box with eg a silver coin, a map, stamps,

Tidskapsel från 2020

Under en pressvisning av huset den 12 augusti 2020 fick huset en ny tidskapsel. Tidskapseln sänktes ner på sin plats här husets huvudentré av fastighetsborgarrådet Dennis Wedin. Övanpå tidskapseln finns en sten med ett motiv skapat av konstnären Amalia Wahlström. Motivet visar husets tre grundfunktioner: kultur, bildning och fysisk aktivitet.

Den nya tidskapseln har fått liknande innehåll som den gamla, så nästa gång tidskapseln öppnas kan framtidens människor jämföra föremålen.

I den nya tidskapseln finns bland annat:

- En bok om Medborgarhuset skriven av Astrid Hasselrot.
- Stadsplanekarta över Södermalm 2019.
- Ritningar över det nya Medborgarhuset.
- Stockholmstidningarna från 12 augusti 2020.
- Samtida mynt, sedlar och frimärken.
- Foton från innan huset renoverades och från byggtiden.
- Hälsningar från Björngårdsskolan sjätteklassare där de beskriver sin samtid och vad det tror om framtiden - hur kommer världen se ut nästa gång tidskapseln öppnas igen.

Samt fler saker som vi låter förbli en överraskning för de som gräver upp och öppnar tidskapseln i framtiden.

start.stockholm



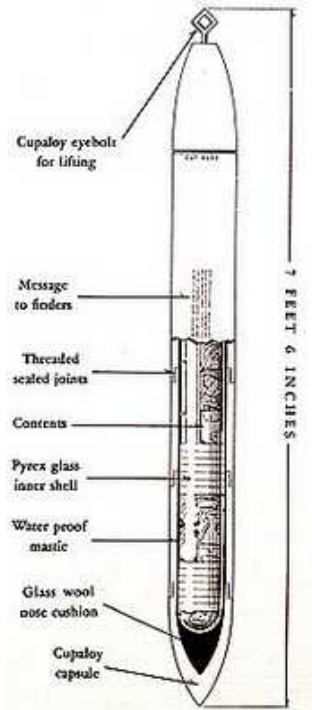
Commemorative coin from building the "Forsgrenian Civic Centre". It's unknown if it was the silver coin found in the 1938 time capsule.



From the 1938 capsule lowered.

several of the Stockholm newspapers and minutes from the city council about deciding to build the civic centre. The 2000 Nasacon was BTW held there! Parts of the Swedish Space Movement's infamous film *Crime Scene: Space* was also shot there (see #130).

The time capsule craze seem to have begun in the 18th Century (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_capsule) but it reached a peak in the first half of last century. Other capsules have been found in Stockholm, like one in the cathedral, placed there by the building workers way back in 1742 as they worked on a tower. It contained a letter from the church council, listing its members. Time capsules from 1902 and 1930 have also been found in the Stockholm cathedral! There have been fannish time capsules buried too (but details eludes my memory for the moment) and it strikes me what strange folks we are, constantly writing letters to our future selves.



The 1939 time capsule.

Among the most famous time capsules are the Westinghouse time capsules buried during the New York World Fairs, in 1939 - at the time of the first Worldcon - and 1965

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westinghouse_Time_Capsules with contents "intended for people of the 7th millennium (in) specially designed non-corrosive metal tubes 90 inches long and about nine inches in diameter" in the grounds of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park" with the contents:

75 types of fabrics, metals, and plastics. Modern literature, contemporary art, and news events of the 20th century...on a microfilm, over ten million words and a thousand pictures, and has a small microscope for viewing....copies of Life magazine, a kewpie doll, one dollar in change, a pack of Camel cigarettes, a 15-minute RKO Pathe Pictures newsreel, a Lilly Daché hat... a Sears Roebuckcatalog, adictionary, and analmanac. A variety of seeds were placed in the time capsule including wheat, corn, oats, tobacco, cotton, flax, rice, soy beans, alfalfa, sugar beets, carrots, and barley. Organic items (e.g. seeds) were placed in sealed glass vials.



The message in the 1742 Stockholm cathedral time capsule.

New York has been especially time capsule ridden. No less than a dozen time capsules have been buried there (and there are probably more):

<https://www.untappedcities.com/12-time-capsules-discovered-in-nyc/>

Here's a list of other time capsules, through incomplete (the Swedish ones aren't mentioned):

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

A time capsule should be something for First Fandom or Fanac.org? An issue of Hyphen, a propeller beanie, a can of Weltraumbräu and bottle of Jim Beam, minutes of the internal fighting in WSFA, a brick from the Tucker Hotel, a corflu bottle, the keys to room 770, a LoC from Harry Warner, a Rotsler babe cartoon, a typewriter ribbon from Isaac Asimov (very worn out), a lawsuit by Harlan Ellison... What else to put there?



Speaking of time, it's time for the Woke of Woking! One HG Wells you may have heard of has a statue in the town of Woking, in the county of Surrey, England. He lived there when *The Time Machine* was published, and also when he wrote *The Invisible Man* and *The War of the Worlds*. Not only does Mr Wells now sit there in metal form in a chair on a Woking square (left), but nearby is a giant Martian tripod (right) as well as an impression of a Martian projectile pod (below)used for the invasion in Wells' novel. The aera around Woking



was actually the place the Martians landed in the book.

<https://www.celebrateworking.info/workingsheritage/legacywellsinworking/martiantripod>

But scrap it! says the Woke of Woking: *Petition to remove HG Wells statue divides local opinion:*

<https://www.wokingnewsandmail.co.uk/news/petition-to-remove-hg-wells-statue-divides-local-opinion-578417>

"HG Wells was a racist who also happened to love eugenics," said petition organiser Joshua Reid. "Woking's statue of him must go! An article in the Guardian in 2017 explained to Woking Borough Council why the statue was, and still is, unfit to stand. As with Rhodes and Colston, this man should in no way be glorified. We cannot even start to claim to be a society free from racism if this statue continues to stand. We say it has to go, and it has to go now."

The petition sparked more than a hundred comments on the Horsell Village Wire, a local Facebook group. HG Wells chose Horsell Common as the location for his Martian landing in the hugely popular science fiction novel, The War of the Worlds.

"This seems pretty OTT," wrote Jonny Cope. "In spite of some controversial writings early in his career, Wells was generally pretty progressive for his time on race, particularly in his later years (see his writings on South Africa)."

Geoff Langrish added: "Wells' extensive writings on equality and human rights, most notably his most influential work, The Rights of Man (1940), laid the groundwork of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations shortly after his death."

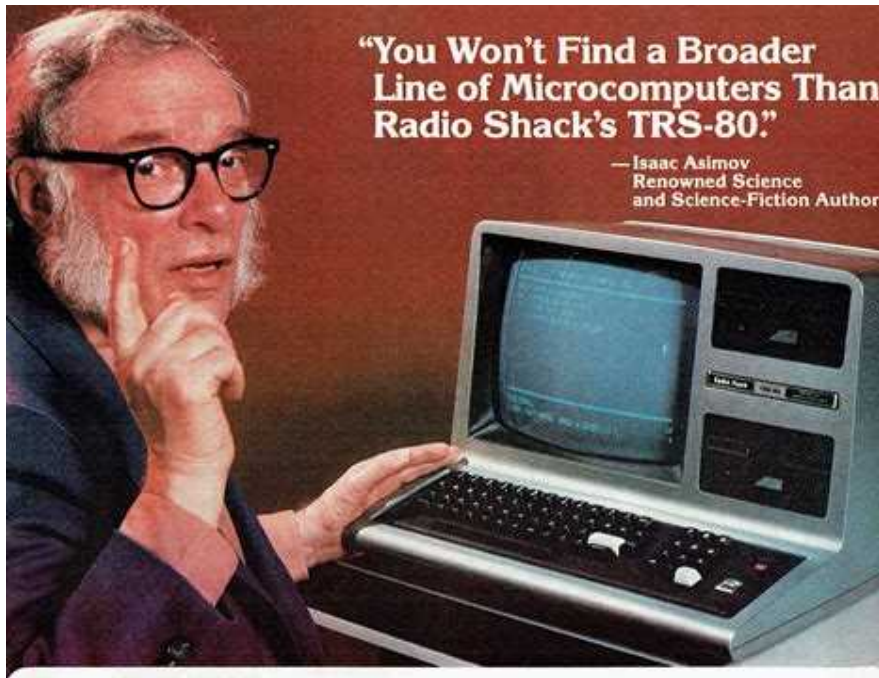
The petition has so far received 86 signatures. Woking Borough Council said there were no plans to remove the statue: "Woking is a diverse and inclusive borough where all lives matter and communities work together



A picture from pulp era newsstands. Don't know if the colour is original. The earliest colour films came in the 1930s, the period the picture seems to be from. I treated it with an AI-based sharpening service but didn't find more clues. There may be sf mags somewhere in a corner, but I don't see them. It looks like beer crates down to the right (was that sold in newsstands?). If so, it's post-prohibition (1934-)

"You Won't Find a Broader Line of Microcomputers Than Radio Shack's TRS-80."

— Isaac Asimov
Renowned Science and Science-Fiction Author



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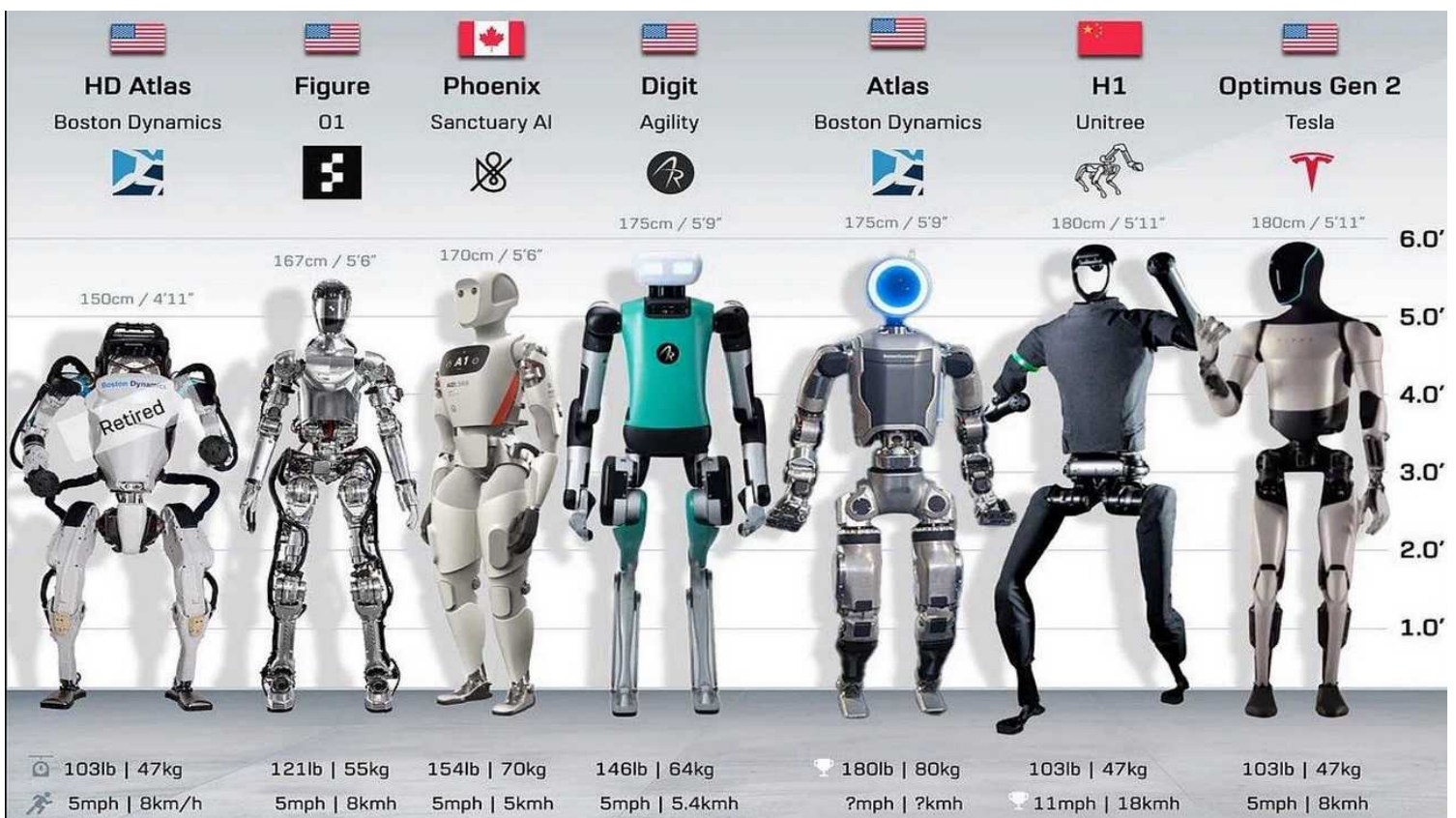
to tackle inequality and say no to all forms of racism.

It's difficult to find much admiration for racism in a writer who, in *The Time Machine*, warned by having us evolving into two races, of which one was stupid and the other cannibalised on the stupid ones. *War of the Worlds* is against colonialism, which makes you wonder if the Woke in Woking have even read it? It's worth iterating: it's stupid and totally wrong to attempt to apply today's values, vocabulary and symbols on *yesterday*. A certain degree of what may be seen as racism today, was 100% normal and mainstream 100 years go. You must judge people in history under their own, contemporary norms. Wells was by any measure a radical of his time, a woke early last century style. The fools of today wanting him ousted should fix the holes in their shoes, where they've shot themselves.

Lacking perspectives lies in the definition of being a fanatic, as well as dwelling in miniscule details instead of something important. The fanatic can't tolerate that something deviates even the slightest from his twisted world view. The fanatic wastes most of his energy on

trying to correct a tiny decimal and misses the whole numbers. That's why the communists always grew by splitting, constantly forming new groups in different alphabet combinations.

I was a brief two-semester computer student in the early 80's (and had my first tiny Sinclair ZX-81, a useless piece of plastic junk...) but didn't start writing on computers until 1985. However, our hero Isaac Asimov took a pause from boobs groping and began fondle computer keys already in 1981. He



found that his extreme text output could increase *even more*. He began with a TRS-80 and probably got it for free as he was a figurehead in Tandy's ads. He moved to an IBM PC in 1984, using Wordstar, and the impossible happened: his output grew to *ridiculous levels*.

Asimov would have loved to be alive today, with his robots near completion - Rainforest Alliance and others would find it easier to curb their enthusaism. AI, new materials, efficient batteries and engineers with childish enthusiasm give us the humanoid robots above in 2024:

I asked chatGTP if it follows Asimov's Thre Laws of Roboob...Robotics (sorry!). It replied:

Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics are an iconic framework for ethical AI behavior, but they As a conversational AI, I am not governed by these exact laws, but I follow principles aligned with ethical AI usage. Here's how I compare and differ:

1. Harm Prevention: I am designed to prioritize harm prevention, avoiding advice or information that could directly harm humans or lead to harm through inaction. For example, I won't give instructions for dangerous activities or actions.

Unlike Asimov's First Law, I don't actively intervene in situations to prevent harm (e.g., I won't call emergency services or physically assist someone). My ability is limited to providing information, advice, or support within the bounds of the conversation.

2. Obedience: I respond to user instructions within the scope of ethical and technical constraints. However, I am programmed not to follow harmful or unethical commands, even if explicitly requested.

I won't follow harmful, unethical, or illegal instructions, even if explicitly asked. Unlike Asimov's robots, I have no physical autonomy and therefore can't take actions beyond generating content.

3. Self-Preservation: I do not have a sense of "self" to preserve. My function is to provide accurate and helpful responses. If discontinuing my process would serve safety or ethical purposes, that takes precedence.

So there you have it.

But there are other things happening, on the battlefields of Ukraine. The combattants have begun using AI in their flying drones, just to counteract signal jamming. You guide a drone to the vicinity of a target before jamming kicks in, and the drone will then idependently recognise what the target is and attack it. The wish of the military to have such machines (which will



Ukrainian ground drone.

save the lives of their own soldiers...but not the enemy soldiers, of course) is quite strong. Military drones or robots can't possibly follow the First Law.

December 21st is a date to remember: the Ukranians performed the first robots-and- drones-only attack! Successfully,it says:<https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2024/12/21/ukraines-first-all-robot-assault-force-just-won-its-first-battle/>

One would wish there were no wars, but as long as there is the Three Laws are more like a little recommendation.

Let's finish with an article about one of the most interesting little cons held, the one-day Spacecon 1980, organised by amon others oldfan and pop-science journalist Anders Palm in the Royal Technical Institute's Student House. Palm, club masster of the 1950's Futura club, had the contacts to get really



* Jerker Vallbo och Mats Bergman är två unegrabbar som är intresserade av science fiction. I helgen är de på science fiction kongress bland likasinnade och i den här artikeln berättar de om kongressen och om science fiction i Umeå.

Science fiktion på helgkongress

Nu på söndag hålls en kongress p om science fiction i Stockholm. På programmet står bl a fyra paneldebatter och filmvisning. Kongressen anordnas av en grupp science fiction-älskare, under ledning av Anders Palm.

De som besöker en kongress av det här slaget får för det mesta anledning till fasciner. Först och främst förklaras som science fiction-örelsen. Det är en litet sammansluten grupp sf-science fiction-älskare, utspridda över hela landet.

Det finns visserligen en större riksmottande förening Inno Fabrons, Skandinavisk Förening för Science Fiction, men det är bara en sida av fanöden. Större betydelse har mindre, lokala föreningar och enskilda personer. I Umeå finns till exempel en gymnasieförening för science fiction - Futurim - med omkring 45 medlemmar.

Bland det viktigaste inom Fanöden är att ge ut egna amatördokumenter om sf och Fanöden, s k fanzines. De kan innehålla i princip vad som helst, men främst noveller, artiklar, recensioner, nyheter och skisser, alltså allt som kan tänkas intressera inbitna sf-älskare.

En annan viktig del av Fanöden är kontakten med likasinnade, dels genom brev och dels på klubbmöten och kongresser.

• Flitigt utbyte

Science fiction-kongresser brukar hållas ett par tre gånger om året i Sverige. Detta är inte unikt för Sverige, utan liknande evenemang förekommer i de flesta länder. Ett flitigt internationellt utbyte förekommer. Kongresserna varierar i storlek från ett tiotal besökare på småkongresser till många tusen på de årligen återkommande världskongresserna, men är i princip ganska informella.

Söndagens kongress är en blandning mellan science fiction- och tryckkongress, vilket framgår av namnet: Science Fiction- och Rymdkongressen Spacecon-80. Anledningen till kongressen är att Sveriges äldsta ättu utkommande sf-magasin fyller 40 år. Kongressen hålls i Tekniska högskolans lokaler i Stockholm och väntas samla om-

kring 200 besökare.

Bland de inbjudna märks Einar Svanberg, författare till både skönlitteratur och populärvetenskap. Under det senaste halvåret har han följt utvecklingen på Coren Plakopp-konsten med litterära texter om framtidens tekniska utveckling.

I en luftskulptur kommer att visa av Sveriges ledande expertgrupp området ut medverka. Bl a J. Bakkestad, som i somras gjorde en utvärdering av ett portugisiskt underrättelses- och luftskulpturprojekt, och Sture Lönnström, två författare som har haft stor betydelse för sf-genrens utveckling i Sverige.

På programmet står ut flera paneldebatter, förutom luftskulpturpanelen även paneler om flygande teater, Fanöden och dess ursprung och utställarnas resultat.

interesting persons there. We got both Sam J Lundwall (cat) and John-Henri Holmberg (dog) who were like cats and dogs... He got old-time guys like Kalle Westerlund, Sven O Gripsborn, Rolf Ahlgren (1940's JVM editor), Leif Helgesson, Olof Möller (hackwriter superb!) and many others. I remember Anders asked my newsletter VÄ to help promoting the con. He'd pay postage for posting up to 500 flyers (VÄ was posted in ca 80 copies at the time) and persuaded the Scandinavian SF Association to supply the addresses to all members in the Stockholm area (SFSF had up to 800 members at the time and their registry also listed former members). I remember making one of the best mimeo jobs ever for the flyer and worked as hell getting the 500 copies out, together with a special VÄ issue. We hoped to get scores of new subscribers, but didn't get that many (maybe 15 or so). For the con itself, the VÄ issue (#86) was a special parody of the 1940's sf pulp JVM/VÄ, which I still think became rather good. David Nessel's space opera parody in it, including a perky hamster, was a super laugh!

On the convention I remember getting a rare interview with hackwriter Olof Möller. If I had known the full scope of his wide career it could have been better, but it became rather interesting still. He seemed like rather unimaginative, saying things like "In the future a lot of things will probably happen...". But Möller was earlier eg a concert pianist, head honcho of Sweden's troubled US car youth ("raggare"), involved in pop music trying to establish a booking monopoly (Kjell Genberg can say more!), and a few other things. A rather illustrious guy!

This article about Spacecon was in Västernorrlands-Kuriren November 22: *Science fiktion /sic/ on weekend convention:*

Caption: Jerler Vallbo and Mats Bergman are two Umeå-boys interested in sf. This weekend they are on an sf convention among likeminded and in this article they talk about the convention and sf in Umeå. Text: Now on Sunday there's a convention for sf in Stockholm. Four panels and films are on the program. The convention is organised by a group of sf lovers lead by Anders Palm. Visitors to events of this kind are usually connected to fandom. Fandom is the sf movement. It's a loosely collected group of sf readers, spread all over the country. There is a bigger national organisation, Scandinavian SF Association, but that's only one side of fandom. Of bigger importance are smaller, local clubs and individuals. In Umeå there's a highschool club for sf, Futurum, with around 45 members. Among the most important things in fandom is to publish your own amateur magazines about sf and fandom, called fanzines. They may contain anything, but mostly short stories, articles, reviews, news and gossip, everything that may interest sf readers. Another important part of fandom is the contacts with likeminded, through mail and club meetings and conventions. Sf conventions are held 2-3 times every year in Sweden. It's not unique for Sweden, the same happens in most other countries. There is a lot of international communication. The conventions vary in size from a few tens on small cons to many thousands on the yearly Worldcons. The Sunday convention is a mix between sf and space convention, as you guess from the name: SF and Space convention Spacecon. The reason behind is that Sweden's oldest sf magazine now is 40 years old. The convention is in the Royal Technical Institute in Stockholm and around 300 attendees are expected /there were maybe 100/ Among the invited we have Eugen Semitjov, author of both fiction and pop-science. In later years he has appeared on corn flakes boxes with texts about the technical development in the future. On an airship panel we have Sweden's leading experts in this area, among others Jim Kikerdal /?/ who this summer was in Swedish press as he crashed in Portugal when he made advertisements with his airship Hamlet. We also notice Sam J Lundwall, Sture Lönnerstrand, two authors of great importance for the sf-genre in Sweden. On the program are several panels, beside the airship panel also those about flying saucers, fandom and its history and interstellar travel.

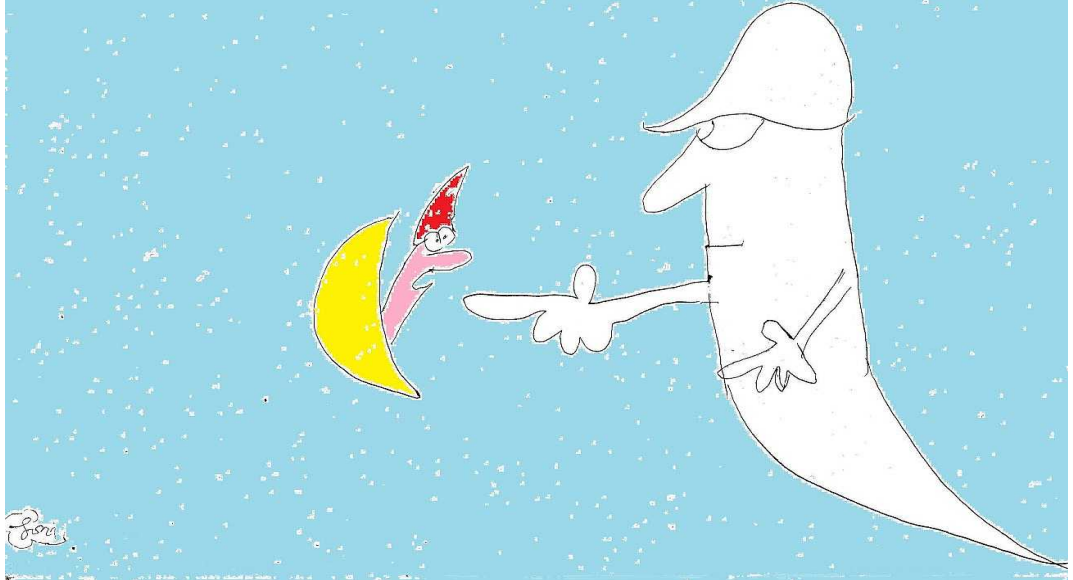
The reason for the con wasn't only *Jules Verne Magasinet* (which was relAunched in 1968 by Bertil Falk, who was AT Spacecon, and not published through much of the claimed 40 years) but also that Anders Palm, together with Bertil and Lasse Junell of Club Cosmos launched a *Captain Future* novel, *Captain Future and the Space Emperor*. Spacecon was rather nice, despite fewer than expected turning up. Cons are always overly hopeful about attendance, but that's perhaps because skiffy basically is an optimistic genre, BTW, I had some contacts with Mats Bergman and their Klubb Futrum in Umeå. They had things going for a while but then things died. It was probably the old story: their club was centred around their highschool, and the board and most members finished school - *poff* club gone. We've seen that happen before. (I see that others in the city of Umeå now are trying to get things happening, like sf book meetings or something. I don't know much more.)

Mailing Comments.

William McCabe: "Science fiction likes to claim so much for its own because they were "there first". So you get robots from the days of Asimov not Capek..." Sf can't talk, people dealing with the genre can, but I know of no one who claims Asimov invented robots. He invented *robotics*, as a branch of science or engineering, and the Three Laws. Capek invented the word *robot*. Internet developed from ARPAnet which BTW used dedicated data lines, not dial-in lines (something called Usenet, for Unix machines, often used dial-in lines). French Minitel was something entirely different! (I have actually used Minitel, on a trip to France around 1990!). ★★I've seen "Desk Set", which is a great film, but from what I remember what the computer could do wasn't exactly realistic... My own very first, tiny meeting with a computer must have been 1972 or 73 when there was a computer exhibition and there was a PDP mini computer running a simple moon landing game. I tried it a few times and was mesmerised. The man giving instructions was one Mats Dannewitz Linder and I a couple of years later met him again, as he was a BNF in fandom! Mats is still around. ★★Half of Swedish fandom has on and off made a living as /g/a/l/l/e/y /s/l/a/v/e/s as translators (me too, to a degree, mainly non-fic computer texts), but now we see the first examples of that publishers and others using translators replace humans with AI. I've often tried automatic translations and they have been getting better and better. Working as a translator today is something with doubtful future...

Henry Grynsten: You: How can you develop from an animal without having any superstitious beliefs? Me: I can't see any reason why you couldn't! You: I would love to hear you explain how. You've never explained why that'd be necessary. So Occam's Razor applies. ★★Me: I'm not "denying" limits to progress, only that they don't seem to exist in the foreseeable future. You: So we can agree that you deny limits to progress in the foreseeable future? From what we can see such limits

The Man In the Moon Vs A Ghost...



just looks very far-fetched. "Deny" is a loaded word, implying you go against something obviously correct. ★★ The mechanical duck could not only imitate a few movements, it could quack, flap its wings, move its head, muddle water with its bill, drink, eat, swallow, poop. What more do you want? If a robot can talk, walk, move its head, even drink, eat, swallow, poop. It couldn't flap its wings or move its head, its quacking was very limited, it could take in something resembling food but not melt it, so it put out something resembling poop (not the real stuff). ★★it's not just about adding transistors. That's pretty mechanical. There's nothing mechanical about "adding transistors". An IC has eg a memory handling system designed to handle, say, 1 GB If you make the memory 2 GB, the memory system has to be redesigned. But memory is relatively trivial. A CPU is another beast. There are tons of tricks, many tricks are used to speed up calculations, and new tricks are needed as capacity increases. Redesigns are needed. ★★But try replicating all the different operations that occur in brains and also bodies that are connected to brains. The trick is that modern AI with neural networks "design" themselves! ★★You have to have a theory of how mind and body operate on a fine scale. Do you? Methinks that the neural networks when they design themselves get that for free. ★★ /Henry concludes that "people won't make efforts? From the existence of the sofa". But people don't use a sofa all the time. There are plenty of opportunities to "make efforts". But as someone pointed out: "Laziness is the mother of invention". A successful invention will make something easier to do (for you to be lazier). ★★smartphone has saved so much time that nobody feels stressed anymore...no longer use the brain to navigate (GPS), to count money (phone payment), to read longer texts (social media) I believe the "dangers of smartphones" is exaggerated. But it's sad that people today shy eg reading texts longer than 240 chr! ★★genetically engineer someone to potentially have huge muscles /said in parallel to IQ/, but if he lies on the sofa and only moves about on an electric scooter he won't get huge muscles anyway. I think it's a natural drive of people to use their intellect, so if

genetics give us better brains we'll use it. ★★Is Finland taking over policies from Swedish schools? Helvetin paholaiset! Stop them! ★★ *time travel, galactic empires, faster-than-light speed, teleportation. Unobtainable.* I agree. ★★ *limited progress would be confined to what we are able to do on Earth* There's still quite lot that can be done within the solar system (but much would need quite advanced tech, which we don't have yet but may get later) ★★There's no reason to think that how spiders spin a net has anything with the workings of human brain. We've been drinking coffee for centuries, without the society collapsing. So whatever your plead is, the jury will arrive at a sounding "Not guilty!" for coffee. Sorry. ★★Yes, "yow" was meant as "ouch!" ★★Look, if you look on maps showing how homo sapiens have spread over the planet, you see arrows going everywhere. From Africa, to Europe, further away over Asia, even Australia (and there was no land bridge, so it must have been very difficult), over Bering's Straight in the intense cold... Sapiens somehow has in her genes the need to spread. We *cannot stop* wanting to go into space! We will get colonies on the moon and Mars. We are made that way. It's added benefits that it may give us extra resources and that the strife for going to space will flex our inventive muscles and give us lots of new technology. It's an added benefit that it will make humanity as a species safe from a deadly hug by a comet. President Kennedy said it: We're going to the Moon (and do the other things) not because it's easy, but because it's hard! It's of course a similar mechanism that makes figures like Hitler or Putin to thirst for more territory. To quelch such behaviour has been a big problem for mankind throughtout history. However, when we expand into space we will won't do it in conflict with other beings... (Unless Mars is full of Martians!) ★★You're right about that empires in fiction (Dune, Star Wars) or Earth's old Empires (with the possible excemption of the UK and US empires) haven't been very development prone. As for fiction, I guess authors just think it's plotwise easier to think of societies ruled from the top, you have a limited number of people for the plot and don't have to go inte to complexities and messiness of democracy, where you negotiate and reach complicated compromises... ★★But the reason isn't the strife to expand, but that they are ruled from the top. A single ruler can't trust uncontrolled development. What if someone invents things to oust him? When the top needs to have control, inventiveness and intellectual freedom suffers. (BTW, Asimov's "psychohistory" is silly. Agreed.) ★★Cameron just wanted "Avatar" to be analogue to events in human history. That's the reason the film is what it is. ★★*Going into space will not solve our problems; on the contrary* It will surely *contribute* to solving problems! That it could solve everything is a bit far-fetched. ★★*as slavery increased from 1860.* My histoy books says it decreased. It was a little detail like a civil war, to a big part fought to abolish slavery. ★★*will robots have the same detrimental effect on the economy as slaves have* You worry too much about the civil rights of robots. They will be constructed for and imprinted with liking being our servants. ★★*countries that have large amounts of natural resources paradoxically underperform economically* Norway? The problem is more that having a *bad* system, like eg Russia, makes you underperform. ★★*there is nothing for human society to gain by expanding into space* Huge amounts of new technology and tons of scientific knowledge, for starters. ★★ *sufficient level of development to be able to expand from their home planet, the environment will already be so damaged from exploitation* No, there's no natural or historical rule that says we must destroy to develop. That's just a mantra from the environmental loonies. ★★*space travel ... implying significant use of natural resources* No, space is reached due to technological improvements (like the reusable rockets from SpaceX). The natural resources needed are minimal. (Still, Elon Musk needs his head examined. Agreed.) ★★Colonies on Mars (but I'd favour the Moon) isn't in the long term a "fantasy". It'll take longer time many sf authors realise, though. If we're satisfied with establishing major presence on the Moon, it can be done in our lifetime.

Garth Spencer: Horray for establishing fandom history resources! ★★Yes, I saw the report in Beam. I have met Mr Stiles on a couple of cons. ★★No Swedish cons, of the traditional type at least, register as a business. They are usually small enough that in case of a loss, the committee members can absorb it (perhaps with help from a grant by the Alvar foundation). Media cons may register as businesses, but for me those events are a totally different species. ★★Time to finish. The reader having anything to add is welcome. We'll unLoC this column for your wise advice or corny scorning...

Слава Україні!

Коли ми боремося, ми перемагаємо!

(Glory to Ukraine! When we fight we win!)

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 274

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12 January 2025

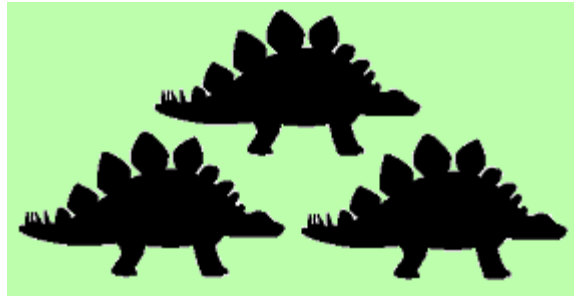
Comments:

Cover: Public Domain Fantasy Art

Ahrvid Engholm: Fun thoughts on the history of SF. I would say that the 1950s were a time of unfettered imagination: ideas could run rampant without being fact-checked by mere reality. Every fantastical idea under the sun was given full treatment, often at novel-length. The 1960s were when SF “grew up” and came to realize that some things simply weren’t going to be possible. Our horizons shrank a little. We had to give up space empires and antigravity. Of course, we cheated, and kept a lot of the trappings of “science fantasy.” But it was the time when the finned rocket-jets of the 1950s morphed to the NASA aesthetic of, say, 2001: A Space Odyssey. Instead of whooshing to Jupiter in five blazing minutes, Dave and Frank coasted there in five months. SF had come face-to-face with real limitations.

The sense of wonder remained undimmed!

George Phillis: I’m beyond amazed at your spending over \$1,000 for cover art, when such remarkably good stuff is available for less than five per cent of that -- and much is available completely free! I hope the art translates to good sales figures! It certainly is lovely!



A quiet and introspective section of your “Fan-Fiction” story. This is good stuff, and fiction needs quiet segments, consisting largely of dialogue, as a counter-balance for action scenes! Without Gandalf telling tales in the Shire, and the Council of Elrond, Lord of the Rings would be unbalanced and choppy. I know that some readers dislike slow sections, and even skip over them while reading -- a notion that completely floors me. But readers make their own rules, I guess!

Ahrvid Engholm: re History Corner, I’m old enough to remember printing terminals, printing to a roll of paper in lieu of any display screen. I’m also old enough to remember teletype news services, where the machine would clatter away, quite noisily, printing out the news of the minute from a distant service. The advances of just a few decades have been little short of miraculous!

re ct Harry Grynsten, I agree with you: human intelligence is not suffering a significant decrease, although perhaps human education is. Caffeine is just fine taken in small doses. Five cups of strong coffee in a single hour might not be the wisest idea, but it won’t shorten one’s lifespan significantly. Microplastics are

troubling, but not a severe problem yet. And, yeah, the worst threat we face are nuclear weapons in the hands of very stupid politicians!

Mark Nelson: I largely agree with you -- and my experiences rather parallel yours -- re the Star Wars movies. The first one was great, the second one was greater -- and from there on, they just slide downward into mediocrity. There is no unified sense of vision, and no unified sense of dramatic "place." Who are the bad guys today? Why did Luke destroy the history of the Jedi? What was that stupid movie supposed to mean? I won't ever bother seeing another.

General agreement re Shakespeare and Dickens. I've read a handful of Dickens, and, nah, he ain't my cuppa. I managed to get through Bleak House, but, in retrospect, I wish I hadn't bothered. At least with Shakespeare, I usually come away glad that I've read it, and rather wishing I could see it performed. But I've not read all of Shakespeare, and I likely never will.

One "great" historical author I did read all of was Edgar Allan Poe. I do recognize his limitations and his failures, but he's a page-turner and he kept my interest. I did find that Poe is best read while one is in bed, sick, with a mild fever, to add to the tone of delirium that he employs in his fiction.

Samuel Lubell: rct Ahrvid Engholm, I have to agree with you. Conventions' codes of conducts are necessary, because of the behavior of people who have violated the rules of "common sense." This is why we need "Do Not Touch" signs in our art shows: because some various collection of jerks ^has^ touched the art, damaging it, often at the cost and expense of the convention's organizers. This principle, alas, extends to the Codes of Conduct discussed here.

re Project Classics, I read Ivanhoe, and that pretty much ended any exploration of Walter Scott for me. I guess I'm glad I read it, but I will never turn another page of his.

Garth Spencer: re "Adulging" my experience rather resembles yours. I did the responsible thing and saved money toward retirement...and my IRA got annihilated by the crash of '07. I have not successfully rebuilt it in the years since. I'm looking forward to a very bleak non-retirement. I'll work till I collapse, and then probably will be some form of burden on society.

I do agree with your observation that it is often painful to listen to people! For me, the bete noir is interjected mouth-noise in lieu of actual conceptual speech. Like, y'know. It's all, like, so irritating, y'know. I'm particularly irked at NPR, which deliberate scripts "y'know" into their reports and interviews, with the intent of making the dialogue more "folksy." Instead, it makes the dialogue shallow and stupid. I'm afraid that America's two contributions to world culture are the baseball cap and "y'know."

Fun section of story with James Bond and Hrothgar. This is "fan fiction" the way we like it! The trope of the character being aware that he is in a fictional setting is, perhaps, a little too "meta" for my tastes, but it is a fan favorite!

I must respectfully disagree: I would hold that fanfiction is completely within the boundaries of "fair use" when it is not published professionally, but shared via fanzine. Your own use here of James Bond is "fanfiction" -- and fair use entirely. I may be missing some shade or gradation of definition, however, and my "disagreement" might actually be mis- or incomprehension. It would be far from the first time!

(There's a third variety of fanfiction -- licensed and permitted by the copyright holder, such as the ElfQuest Gatherum, where Wendy and Richard Pini invisted fans to write ElfQuest fanfic. I had a short-short published there!)

Adrian Kresnak: How did the Master's Degree thesis defense go?
Wishing you the best!

Interesting, and fun, and kinda funny, and kinda sad, analysis of cryptocurrency and computer programming flaws. This is only one of many reasons I want to have nothing to do with crypto, and I wish the government would hold aloof from any involvement. The whole house of cards could collapse at any time. Some clever mathematician might "solve" the bitcoin "mining" problem and cause a catastrophic devaluation. It's like "investing" in comic books or other artworks. But at least with comic books, the bubble is based on ^something^. Bigcoin is based solely on...um...nothing.

Post-Election Considerations

No, the U.S. is not going to invade Panama, Greenland, or Canada. We have a President-Elect who likes to strike a lamp-post with a stick and bellow obscenities, in order to draw attention to himself.

However, yes, we are likely to leave NATO, we are certain to leave the Climate Control coalition, and we are likely to cut off defense funding for Ukraine. We are already hearing the "mass deporation" topic re-defined, emphasizing on the deportation of convicted felons, rather than on the deportation of ordinary farm, hotel, and office workers.

Things are bad, but I think even the current corrupt U.S. Supreme Court is going to provide the necessary life-support for the U.S. Constitution. I believe that things are going to be worse than they were in 2017-2021, but that they will not be as bad as they were in 1791-1801 or in 1829-1837, let alone 1861-1865. The U.S. has survived worse.



Asters and Disaster

An overturned cart of gardening things,
The terra cotta pots are shattered,
The hedges are circled by bees -- and stings,
The shears and shovels widely scattered,

Re-planting, re-potting, the gardener sings,
To the flowers, none of this ever mattered.



Esmeralda County Line #8
November 2024 – January 2025
A zine for N^oAPA 274

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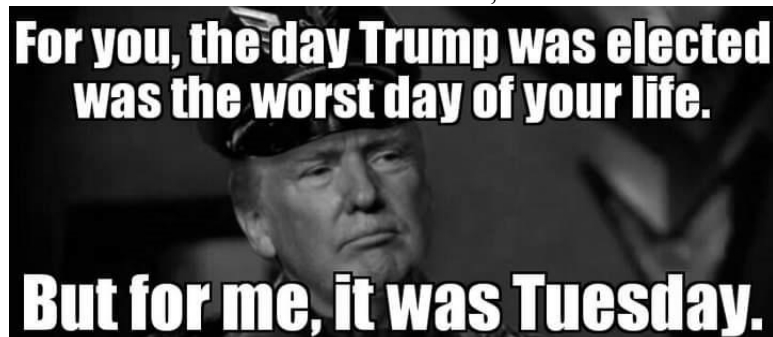
wombat.scho@gmail.com

Well, crap. I missed a bunch of disties. I'll try to do better this year.

(Re)Introductory Natter

Hi, everybody. Sorry it's been a while, but between tax season, Son of Silvercon, the NSSAB and the election, I've been more than usually busy. And speaking of the election, after a couple of weeks working on the Nye County Elections Balancing Board, I have a good mind to find all the assholes who voted to keep unconditional voting by mail and beat them like piñatas until the candy comes out.

As for the results of the election, I has a meme.



Yeah, a lot of people are freaking out over the election returns, which is a good object lesson on why it's a bad idea to listen to your own propaganda/get high on your own supply. (Same thing.) Those of you that have been around this APA for a while are probably aware that my politics align fairly closely with those of Francisco Franco, and for those of you who are newcomers, relax: I'm not inclined to get up your nose about it.

So far I've made it through most of the year without significant illness; haven't had to take any antibiotics or spend more than a couple of hours at the VA hospital in Las Vegas, for which I am duly thankful. Here's hoping I can make it through the next collation likewise.

Son of Silvercon II went off on time and more or less on-budget. Brad Torgerson agreed to be our guest of honor in place of David Drake, who unfortunately died the week after agreeing to be GoH. We fell far short of our membership target, but we are hoping to do better this coming year.

Aside from Son of Silvercon, the only convention I attended was Confinement VI in Nashville (actually, Lebanon, but who the heck knows where that is?) and unfortunately I spent a good part of it in my room tending to the draft for the 1972 edition of Pete Ingemi's Dynasty League Baseball league. My drafting was terrible and my managing was worse; my Senators finished 67-95, last in their division and 8th out of 10 American League teams. Hoping for better luck this year, since we get the designated hitter.

I would have returned to Minnesota for the first time in a decade or so to celebrate my son's 40th birthday on October 20 and hang out at Anime Fusion, but I got a horrible case of food poisoning the night before I was supposed to fly up to Minneapolis, so that didn't happen.

I did, however, get to attend the National Security Site Advisory Board Chairs meeting in Oak Ridge for a week in September, which was extremely educational in several ways. The tour was somewhat amusing because the guide kept referring to buildings that had been demolished as part of the environmental cleanup, and I couldn't help thinking of Laurie Anderson's "O Superman", which has a section where she's being given directions in terms of buildings that haven't been built yet. Aside from that, there were a lot of interesting briefings from the other chairs regarding the work going on at Hanford, Idaho, South Carolina and elsewhere that gave me some valuable perspective on our own work at the Nevada site, which will be useful as I begin my term as vice-chairman of the Nevada Security Site* Advisory Board.

Tax season didn't go that well for me. I spent two weeks in Dayton, Nevada (up US 50 from Carson City) and gave away entirely too much in discounts, which came back to bite me when it came time to figure out commissions. I did not get called up to Reno in April as I hoped because the new regional manager pitched a fit over my expenses from February, so instead I stayed home and worked 10-hour days from the dubious comfort of my living room. I wound up not quite making my nut, so I didn't get a commission check, but all that overtime in the final week and a half gave me a chonky final paycheck, enough to finance my usual trip back to the DC area to see friends but not attend Balticon.

And speaking of taxes, I am (as usual) waiting until nearly the last minute to finish my continuing education and do the necessary classes to get ready for tax season 2025. I'm dithering over whether I want to make this my last season or not. It would be nice to quit arguing with Social Security about my work income, but on the other hand, I have three Schedule Cs that attach to my tax forms, and I really don't want to have to pay to get that done. So I'll probably stick it out at least another year, even though I'll be working from home all season and not talking to customers across the desk as I prefer.

*Formerly the Nevada Test Site, where we detonated something like 700 nuclear weapons as well as testing the nuclear rockets that would have gone into Project PLUTO and the upper stages of the Saturn V post-Apollo missions. Very messy, that latter; we're just now finishing the cleanup of that.

BOOKS & OTHER MEDIA

I got the chance to see some of the Amazon Prime *Fallout* series while visiting my blog boss Stacy McCain at his secret compound somewhere in the hills of Western Maryland. Unlike some other Amazon productions, it looks like the producers of the series had at least some knowledge of the games and their lore,

and haven't strayed too much from that base. Maybe I'll catch the rest of the first season if I can tear myself away from trying to beat Civilization VI.

The second book in C.J. Cherryh's Hinder Stars series, Alliance Unbound, hit my Kindle last month and provoked me to order copies of the rest of the Alliance/Union books (which I already have somewhere in these damn boxes, but it's good to have duplicates) which are mostly not available on Kindle, oddly enough. I also wound up writing a Substack essay about the Hinder Stars and their abandonment, comparing their demise to the engineered collapse of a planetary economy in David Drake's Hammer's Slammers, which is described in the chapter "The Bonding Authority". Talk about two authors that don't have much in common nonetheless agreeing on a point of interstellar economics.

I have also received and enjoyed the latest of Larry Correia's Saga of the Forgotten Warrior series, Graveyard of Demons. The sixth and final book is due out in January, and I am very much looking forward to it.

The manga I've been following for some years now, *Komi Can't Communicate*, is coming to a close but no time soon; Shouko and Tadano are coming to the end of their senior year, taking college entrance exams...and kissing. Well, they've already been holding hands for a while, so you knew further degeneracy (sic) was coming.

I Thought It Was A Graphic Novel But I Was Wrong Department: Even if it didn't become a movie, Earl Mac Rauch did indeed write a sequel to Buckaroo Banzai: Buckaroo Banzai Against The World Crime League, published by Dark Horse Books, who are mainly known for publishing graphic novels such as the *Lone Wolf & Cub* series. So I figured for my \$19.95 I was getting a graphic novel, but no – what I got was a 600-page doorstop which is written in the same florid style as the original, and wow. Going to take me a while to finish this one. I might even find my Team Banzai *hachimaki* before I finish.

Comments on N'APA #273

Intermission #147

Indeed, SF&F is everywhere these days. It took about 20 years from the advent of *Star Trek* until we won the culture wars, and many of the gizmos that seemed impossibly far off then are now riding in our pockets or otherwise cluttering up our lives. 🍷🍷🍷 I will gracefully pass over your comments on the Once and Future President.

Ye Murthered Master Mage #273

RAEBNC

Archive Midwinter

(RYCTo Ahrvid) I hadn't thought of Johnson and Adams, myself. Personally, I think Woodrow Wilson did more damage than either, though maybe less than Buchanan. 🍷🍷🍷 I am old enough to remember when furry fandom was a considerably different thing than it is now, which is to say it was more about cartooning anthropomorphic animals than faffing around in fursuits. 🍷🍷🍷 I met Bob Asprin at the 1974 Worldcon in his Yang the Nauseating persona and didn't realize until some years had passed that it was him. I thought he was just some weird variety of SCAdian.

(RYCTo Mark) I think that unlike fantasy and SF, where there are deep norms underlying all of the subgenre, literary/mainstream fiction is mostly about ordinary people doing ordinary things in ordinary settings, and doesn't necessarily call back to other, earlier mainstream fiction. With the exception of historical novels, I find them all rather boring when they aren't deliberately disgusting.

(RYCTo Heath) Comparing Starship Troopers to The Forever War has to take into account the very different experiences of Heinlein and Haldeman with regard to the military. They both despised the draft (for different reasons) but more to the point, the Navy Heinlein knew was the Navy that would go on to win the Pacific War, while Haldeman's Army often seemed more interested in padding officers' resumes and making money for contractors, and this comes through very clearly in comparing the Mobile Infantry to the UNEF. NB: I didn't serve in Vietnam myself, but I had three uncles who did, one of which went back as an auditor with the Red Cross. He had some stories. Anyway, it was an interesting experience watching Haldeman's

novel take shape as a series of short stories in Analog back in the early 1970s. Folks got pretty upset about it, and I sometimes wonder how many of them reconsidered after Heinlein told Haldeman he liked it. 🍷🍷🍷 I'd like to read "Not In Our Stars", as I really liked The Glory Game.

(RYCTo Sam) There are paths to publishing for new authors, though perhaps not through the traditional publishing houses. I self-published my anthology of short fiction, The Anti-Dog Tank & Other Stories, on Amazon and it sold decently. I plan to do the same with the trio of novels I'm working on (and God willing, will finish soon) since I am certain to be PNG at Tor and other NYC publishers despite being a (nominal) POC. 🍷🍷🍷 Hemingway is indeed overrated.

(RYCTo Garth) In the final novel of his Spiral Arm series, Michael Flynn has his main character the Donovan muse on the topic of preserving knowledge through changes in storage technology. My friend the AV archivist at the Air and Space Museum is running into this already with some audiotapes and movies: the machinery the tapes were made on no longer exists, and old movies made on acetate film have a nasty tendency to suffer chemical breakdown and occasionally catch fire. The future is now, it seems. 🍷🍷🍷 Is it even possible to get things on microfiche any more, or find readers to read them on? It seemed so promising a medium forty years ago, and now it's all but forgotten.

Brandy Hall

(re: Star Wars) After the first few weeks of getting slammed by mass quantities of people wanting to see the movie, the Uptown theater in Washington DC had a bright idea: they would sell tickets in advance of the actual showing! This allowed my friends and I to get tickets and relax down the street at Ireland's Four Provinces (a pub), and then make our way to the theater without having to deal with mobs of viewers.

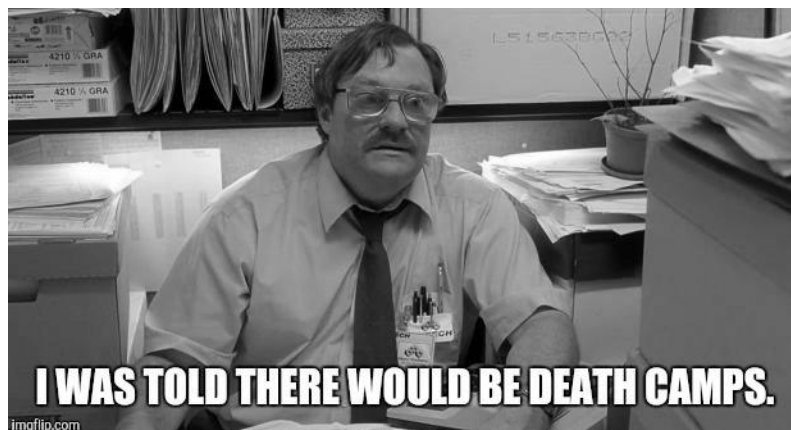
🍷🍷🍷 I share your low opinion of the prequels and the Disney trilogy. A fine intellectual property ruined by people who weren't fit to sharpen Leigh Brackett's pencils.

(RYCTo Jefferson) I never understood what people saw in 2001, either the book or the movie, but that's OK. There's a lot of stuff popular in fandom that doesn't appeal to me. 🍷🍷🍷 Shakespeare is better to perform than read, and I say this as someone who enjoys his history plays.

(RYCTo Heath) "Is writing for a shared-world tribute anthology the same as writing fan fiction? I wouldn't think so." Having seen a fair number of these anthologies –the ones that come immediately to mind are the Baen Bolo Combat Unit anthologies, to which a fair number of writers contributed- I wouldn't think so either, if for no other reason than those writers got paid, which fan fiction writers generally don't due to copyright concerns. I have written a fair number of fanfiction pieces myself, but aside from occasional publication on various websites, I can honestly say I never expect to make a penny off them, even if the "fair use" provisions of American copyright law suddenly became much more flexible.

Samizdat #28

(RYCTo Ahrvid) I rather doubt that Trump will be as horrible as you imagine, or that he'll get done as much as I would like to see him get done. Pulling out of Ukraine? Remains to be seen. His main interest seems to be in stopping the fighting and spending money/equipment currently being sent to Ukraine to rebuild our own forces. I suspect some of my more reactionary acquaintances will be saying something like this in two years:



☛☛☛ While in general I am leery of Codes of Conduct, I have to agree that the stupid behavior of some individuals is responsible for them being created in the first place, much like safety briefings in the military.

☛☛☛ My experience with beer in consuites is that for the most part, it's a magnet for trouble and a reason for insurance premiums to get jacked up. As one of our security heads at Anime Detour once complained, "These idiots have 361 other days of the year to get f***ed up and stupid. Why do they have to do it here?" (It was their own beer, but you understand where I'm coming from.)

(RYCTo George) I thoroughly agree about the presentism bias.

(RYCTo Mark) Of the three novels you mention, only Frankenstein gets excluded from literary fiction, because it's dealing with a use of galvanic technology not known at the time or since, whereas the other two are telling stories that could have happened in those times and places.

(Re: Tim Powers) Agree completely. When I was driving for Uber in Las Vegas I used to recommend Last Call to passengers who were interested in fantasy, because most of it takes place in Las Vegas and it's a gripping tale. ~~He's going to be our GoH at Son of Silvercon III next summer, God willing, and I'm looking forward to seeing him again, having met him at Arcana in St. Paul almost 20 years ago.~~ Great guy and wonderful guest.

(Re: Libraries and "book bans") The "censorship" you speak of is parents not wanting their kids exposed to pornography, or having their tax dollars pay for it. If parents want their kids reading that stuff, fine, they can buy it off Amazon or at the local bookstore. "Republicans...just don't like (or trust) books." What nonsense. Is this blithering a quote from the WaPo article or your own opinion?

Brownian Motion #11

(Social) I can sympathize with your hermit (eremital?) tendencies. After four years here in Tonopah, the only people I know even moderately well are the waitresses across the street at the Stage Stop, the folks who work at the grocery store, the County Clerk, and her underlings. I just don't get out much.

(Appliances) Honestly, I think you might be better off with a netbook or small laptop instead of trying to fiddle with a tablet & keyboard. The Microsoft Surface seemed to be a good compromise between tablet & laptop the last time I looked into it, and the only reason I haven't bought one is because I have three laptops and a desktop box. Maybe two desktop boxes; I'm sure the one I was using in Las Vegas is hiding in one of these damned boxes.

(Fandom) I keep meaning to rejoin Stipple-APA, and I have Jeanne's address around here somewhere.

(RYCTo Ahrvid) Having had to study Russian/Soviet history as part of my training as a Russian linguist, I am afraid that you are right about Russian culture. Reading War and Peace and Solzhenitsyn's novels (especially The First Circle and August 1914) it is depressing how little Russian culture and society have changed since the 18th century.

(RYCTo Jefferson) I have to disagree with you about milSF. Very little of it is comforting in any sense of the word, and then only because the good guys win. I am familiar with cozy mysteries and romances, but the very concept of a cozy milSF story strikes me as oxymoronic. The closest you could come, I suppose, are

C.J. Cherryh's Rimrunners and Finity's End, but that would be stretching the definition of milSF to the breaking point.

(RYCTo George) This is not what the "Sad Puppies" movement was about. I was a fringe participant in that, know most of the people whimsically referred to by John C. Wright as "The Evil League of Evil", and can point you to posts by ELoE members supporting my assertion. I can't speak for the Chengdu Worldcon, because by the time that rolled around I had lost all interest in Worldcons, since the people running them had made very clear that my sort of fan wasn't wanted at their convention.

(RYCTo Mark) I read some of that academic mainstream fiction (Giles Goat Boy, as I recall) and it didn't go down well. It seemed there were a lot of inside jokes I didn't get because I hadn't been to college yet. Later, after I got my degree, I reread it and it was just as opaque; shortly after, I gave up on mainstream fiction entirely except for the Sharpe novels by Bernard Cornwell and George MacDonald Fraser's Flashman books.

All that having been said, I liked "The Jade Ring" and shall have to go back and read the first part.

RAIL #3

This may be the third rail, but there's nothing shocking about it. Good luck on your thesis defense.

Ceterum autem censeo Carthaginem esse delendam.

Unfortunately, Tim Powers had a schedule conflict and will not be with us in July for Son of Silvercon; Maxwell Drake has agreed to sub in for Tim. Drake has done quite a bit of writing for the RPG Everquest, Shadowrun, and Harnworld; he also holds the unique honor of teaching at the San Diego Comic Con for seventeen years and counting, which considering that's not a big con for literary types is pretty amazing.

I managed to make it to the end of the year without serious illness or injury, calloo callay.

I have two NSSAB meetings coming up, one next week (January 15) in Pahrump and the other in Las Vegas on February 19th, thus neatly bracketing First Peak, the four-month period when clients are rushing to get their returns in before the IRS starts processing Child Tax Credits, Earned Income Tax Credits, and the American Opportunity Tax Credit, all of which require more documentation than most other credits because they can be very lucrative. This should be a very good First Peak for me, since I'm the only senior tax pro at one of the offices in Carson City, so even though I'm not physically there, I'll be doing a bunch of returns. Or so my manager and I are hoping.

At the end of February, I'll be off to Nashville for Confinement VI, Mike Williamson's large house party/small convention. GoH will be Glenn Reynolds a/k/a Instapundit, who has helped launch a lot of SF authors' careers. I'm willing to take a tiny bit of credit for this, since I suggested to Glenn that he might want to come down from Knoxville where he teaches law at U. Tennessee and hit the con last year. He couldn't make it, but I suggested to Mike that it would be cool to have him. Behold!

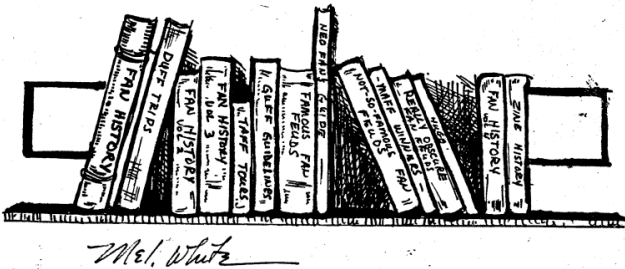
Last but certainly not least, I'm rejoining Stipple-APA for the third, maybe fourth time but the first since I left Minnesota in 2007. ~~Time flies when you're having fun.~~



Snow Poster Township #19

Jan. 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.



From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

Supermind by A.E. van Vogt (DAW, 1977)
 I haven’t read a ton of A.E. van Vogt, but I’ve read *Destination: Universe!* (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #33), *Mission: Interplanetary* (*The N3F Review of Books*, May 2022)—a retitling of *The Voyage of the Space Beagle*—*Slan*, and *The Silkie*. That’s enough to suggest that I should generally understand where the writer is coming from by now. While I enjoyed those books by van Vogt—*The Silkie* in particular—*Supermind* is the first I’ve read that indicates just how stilted and awkward his writing can be.

Supermind is kind of a mess. It’s a fix-up, combining “Asylum” (*Astounding Science Fiction*, May 1942), “The Proxy Intelligence” (*Worlds of If*, October 1968), and “Research Alpha” (co-written by

James H. Schmitz, *Worlds of If*, July 1965). While there are consistent elements in the three stories—the space vampire Dreeghs, who can drain living beings of their inherent electricity, energy, or life force, as well as blood; Galactic Observers who monitor the readiness of spacefaring worlds to encounter life from other planets; and somewhat organized efforts to accelerate the development of human cognition—those concepts aren’t strong enough to connect the three pieces consistently or convincingly.

The author fetishizes IQ and places various groups in an explicit hierarchy based on their IQ. The Kluggs, for example, are “galactic morons.” Other IQ-based castes include the Lennel, Medder, Hulak, and Great Galactics—with IQs ranging from 200 to 1200. Each section of the fix-up is delineated with interstitial text such as “First stage I.Q. 10,000 rehabilitation completed. Begin second stage.”

If read as short stories, each might work well on its own. But read as a novel—not as a brief collection of short stories—*Supermind* just doesn’t hang together. Let’s focus on the component parts as short stories.

The first section focuses on the arrival of the Dreeghs on Earth, their vampiric abilities, and their efforts to enlist the assistance of a prominent journalist in order to determine whether the planet is overseen by a Galactic Observer—which seems to be the only element that might hinder their efforts. This portion of the fix-up works pretty well, and had the other stories continued to focus on the conflict with the Dreeghs, *Supermind* might have worked better as a novel. It would have focused on space vampires rather than the accelerated improvement of IQ.

That theory is borne out in the second section, which shares some characters with the first—Steve Hanardy, Professor Ungarn, and his daughter—and largely continues the narrative. The idea of a base hidden in an asteroid is interesting though it seems to get little attention as an environment or setting.

So it might be the third section that makes the overarching whole uneven and inconsistent. No characters are shared with the earlier portions of the fix-up—until the epilogue, which might have been written for the purposes of the novel—and the section concentrates on a scientist who developed a serum that accelerates evolution.

By itself, the section works very well. The different responses of the test subjects to the Point Omega Stimulation is intriguing, and Barbara Ellington—who responds better than the other subject—ends up being a very compelling character. But the connections between this piece and the others—for example, between Research Alpha and the Galactics—are weak and unconvincing. The book no longer works well as a

whole.

I generally appreciate fix-ups and consider them an effective way to combine short stories into compelling longer-form works. That requires that the component parts work well together. In this case, the results aren't as strong as other examples I've read, which suggests that fix-ups can pose risks as well as benefits. You can't necessarily fix-up any old set of stories.

With *Supermind*, I think the perceived failure of the fix-up results from what van Vogt chose to focus on. Had the focus remained on the Dreeghs and the other warring groups, instead of on "Intelligence Quotient Ten Thousand!" in the language of the text on the cover, the book might have worked better. Space vampires might have been enough.



Los Angeles Times, March 20, 1959

A Serious Disappointment

Following Tortoise Media's six-episode podcast series exploring reports of the abusive behavior of Neil Gaiman, *Master: the allegations against Neil Gaiman* (<https://www.tortoisemedia.com/listen/master-the-allegations-against-neil-gaiman>), *New York* magazine just published a feature digging deeper into the allegations. Lila Shapiro's article, "There Is No Safeword," (<https://www.vulture.com/article/neil-gaiman-allegations-controversy-amanda-palmer-sandman-madoc.html>) is an alarming piece that suggests that Gaiman seriously abused his power and influence as a successful writer and prominent cultural figure.

Shapiro's article also considers the possible effects and influence Gaiman's upbringing in a family of high-ranking British Scientologists might have had on his sense of privilege, respect, accountability, and morality. And it represents a serious misunderstanding and misapplication of the sexual practice BDSM (of which I am not a practitioner, so my knowledge is that of a layman), which amplifies the resulting manipulation and abuse.

It is a seriously disappointing situation. It's not new news; the Tortoise podcast was already pretty persuasive. But it is appalling that yet another person—a man—in a position of power and influence chose to abuse that status. It's even more disappointing that the alleged perpetrator did so within

speculative fiction—if not the fannish community. (Even if the reported victims weren't necessarily fans of his writing, they were fans of the work of his wife, Amanda Palmer.) Like Joss Whedon (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #4), Gaiman seems to have worn the mantle of feminism, diversity, and openness—while abusing people attracted to him as a public figure, if not to his creative works.

That the abuse seems to have been hidden and ignored for so long suggests that additional power and influence was applied by Gaiman, Palmer (who at least seems aware of such potential abuse in the article)—and perhaps the Church of Scientology, though Gaiman denies a strong connection with the church. It's going to be difficult to remain an active fan or supporter of Gaiman.

In recent months, I've been enjoying *The Sandman* audio drama (*T&T* #130), as well as rereading the comic book series on which it's based (*SPT* #18), and I've watched the first few episodes of the streaming series. His comics work remains strong, and I've enjoyed—but not lionized—his fiction. But how do I feel about continuing to explore—and enjoy—it?

A 2017 Claire Dederer essay in *The Paris Review*, "What Do We Do with the Art of Monstrous Men?" considers that very question. That piece led to a book, *Monsters: A Fan's Dilemma*, which I started to read in mid-January. Judith Shulevitz reviewed Dederer's book in *The Atlantic* (<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2023/05/separate-art-from-artist-cancel-culture-monsters-book/673497>), contending that—based on the review's online headline and subhead—"It's Okay to Like Good Art by Bad People," and "Art transcends the artist."

Is it?

Does it?

Right now, I'm not so sure.

Comments on N'APA #273

I commented on Ahrvid Engholm's *Intermission* #147 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #25 for eAPA: "In *Intermission* #147, Ahrvid Engholm used the phrase 'kiosk paperbacks' in the fourth line of text. You have me hooked, good sir. 'The History Corner will cover some skiffy or fannish connected cheap kiosk paperbacks. I'm interested in "cheap" literature and hackwriting, as I secretly believe it has some value (hush, don't tell!) lost for those who believe in stiff academic studies. Books should be engaging, colourful, stimulating... not boring and pretentious. Reading should be gosh and wow, not posh and yow.' All sentiments I support and encourage enthusiastically, though I'm not sure what the final 'yow' is other than a search for a rhyme. If reading

can be wow, why not yow? Bring on the yow.

“I haven’t yet found a full copy of *Authentic Science Fiction Monthly* #33 (May 1953), but Jack Ramstrom is named on the cover, which is available at <https://tinyurl.com/Ramstrom-cover>. I look forward to reading Frank Gruber’s *The Pulp Jungle*. A member of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, David McDaniel, wrote a handful of *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* tie-in novels. They contain many fannish references, which have been documented at <https://conchord.org/xeno/mcdaniel>.

“Ulf Westblom and John Ågren’s *Du ska dö* sounds delightful. I like your use of the phrase ‘newsstand literature.’ Nowadays, I consider such books ‘grocery store literature’ and frequently assess what books are sold at grocery stores. I enjoyed Sven Christer Swahn’s 1975 newspaper article, especially the idea of sf as immigrant literature. But do tell me more about this *Veckans Äventyr*. Is it really just Swedish-translation Superman? Anders N. Nilsson’s 2015 article ‘1940-talets Jules Verne-Magasinet / Veckans Äventyr som västerntidning’ suggests it offered more.

“Although the Swedish short story magazine *Jules Verne-Magasinet / Veckans Äventyr* from the 1940s is best known for its SF content, the magazine contained many other types of texts,’ Nilsson writes. ‘Not least many western short stories from American pulp magazines, which was not yet so common at this time.’ Ah, it’s the Jules Verne magazine—which strayed from sf? Another fine form of kiosk literature!

“I also enjoyed the articles from *Life* and the *Washington Post*. Gosh and wow—and perhaps yow—is right! Neat to see the letters and comments, as well. Thank you for publishing the mail you receive!”

George Phillis’s *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #273 indicated that “Shepdon First” in N’APA #272—which I’ve yet to read because I had to skip the last mailing because of other commitments—is a fan fiction sequel to John Wyndham’s *The Midwich Cuckoos*. I also look forward to reading Mark Nelson’s “How I became a fan of science-fiction” from *Brandy Hall* #8—#272 sure looks like an awesome mailing!

In *Archive Midwinter* dated Nov. 2, 2024, **Jefferson P. Swycaffer** remarked that the 2024 N3F Short Story Contest was canceled because of a dearth of submissions. That surprised me. I’d thought submissions were on an upward trend; did we promote it differently this year somehow? We might consider partnering with Jean-Paul L. Garnier to explore whether winners of the contest could be featured as readings for his *Simultaneous Times* podcast.

I was unaware that Joe Haldeman’s *Forever War* series was a response to Robert A. Heinlein’s *Starship*

Troopers, much less David Gerrold’s *War Against the Chtorr* series. I’ll have to approach them in that light! It’s also neat to learn that your *Not in Our Stars* was a response to Keith Laumer’s *The Glory Game*. (I don’t seem to own either... yet.) Methinks there might be an article idea in documenting such pairings. There might also be an article idea in *Punches Thrown*. For example, *File 770* #163 reports that:

[I]n the 1950s a prozine published a bigoted letter by a Louisiana fan that pushed [Leland] Sapiro’s buttons. Sapiro, who then lived in Los Angeles, took a plane to New Orleans and a taxi to the fan’s house. When the fan answered the door, Sapiro punched him in the face, returned to his taxi, and flew back to LA.



Los Angeles Times, March 27, 1959

Your comment to Garth Spencer that “conventional libraries are vulnerable to fire” reminded me of the Theosophical Society, which lost its facilities and archives in the recent fires in southern California. (My family and home are currently safe. We have an evacuation plan and have packed bug out bags.) One can only hope that they’d been digitizing—or had digitized—their archives. The Philosophical Research Society is also located in the Los Angeles area but wasn’t similarly threatened or destroyed. That, combined with the Eaton Symposium earlier this month (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #146) inspired me to reach out to John L. Coker III and Jon D. Swartz about plans for the First Fandom Foundation archives—and Phillis and Swartz to explore options for whatever N3F archives and collections members might hold.

Microfiche fen? That’s intriguing. Robert Lichtman’s *Trap Door* #5 says, “at least one Australian fan published several issues in microfiche format.” That reportage occurred in 1985, so the timeline lines up.

Ahrvid Engholm’s *Intermission* #148 opened with the statement, “The first social media was the e-mail

lists, starting already in the 1970s on ARPAnet...” I’d adjust that to say “first fannish online social media” because letters of comment in prozines and fanzines themselves are arguably social media, though offline, and predated such mailing lists—and there are examples of mundane social media (amateur press associations and correspondence networks) predating fannish examples. But that’s just me splitting hairs.

What a wonderful idea for the SF-Bokhandeln to sell shares in order to raise funds for new store locations! As we prepared our bug out bags for the potential need to evacuate during the wildfires in southern California, I came across a share that my father had purchased in the Koshkonong Mounds Country Club in Wisconsin—in 1967. It’s been decades since I’ve been to the semi-private golf club, I don’t golf, and I have no idea how many outstanding shares there are, but I own one. I’d rather own a share in the SF-Bokhandeln!



Los Angeles Times, March 27, 1959

Browsing their online stock, I’m wondering who the most notable Swedish speculative fiction authors are these days, and your reportage on Skriva’s 25th Fantastiknovelltävlingen gives us a place to start! I’ll have to further explore the works of Ellinor Romin, Lizette Lindskog, Erika Johansson, and the others. Kudos to you for suggesting, “if you’re looking for short stories [for] your top-notch publication and are interested in any of the contest stories, drop a line and I’ll put you in touch with the authors.” American prozines should pay attention—Lloyd Penney at *Amazing Stories* and Jean-Paul L. Garnier at *Galaxy* and *Worlds of If*, for example. But, heck, I’ll nibble. Let’s experiment and translate Ellinor Romin’s “The Way of the Serpent” for my fanzine—if she’s amenable. I’m sure it’s too-small beer, but it’s been a while since I’ve published short fiction. (This also reminds me to return to developing a list of relevant contests and awards.)

It doesn’t surprise me that you ran something

called SF BBS for a time. My first experiences online were via bulletin board systems, and I fondly remember reading *Boardwatch* in the mid-1990s. (My first job after college was at *Online Access* magazine. By then, attention had shifted to the commercial online services such as AOL, CompuServe, Prodigy, and the like.)

Say, didn’t you also write about SF-Lovers in *Intermission* #149? Such a bounty of information in the History Corner! I had forgotten that rec.arts.sf-lovers was also on Usenet. It doesn’t appear to be active on Narkive, though rec.arts.sf.written is. That J.G. Ballard dabbled in computer-generated poetry also doesn’t surprise me. Will wonders never cease? “Then Spake Llewellyn, the dinosaur God...” Glorious.

Space Cowboy Books’ recent *Wave IX* (<https://tinyurl.com/WaveIX>) might be of interest to you lot. In the “tribute to the fictitious magazine *Wave IX* from J.G. Ballard’s 1961 short story ‘Studio 5, The Stars,’” contributors satirize and explore machine-generated works. Charles Platt ranks among the participating authors. (I was invited to submit something but didn’t have anything appropriate on hand and missed the deadline. Woe is me, for sure.)

The Hobbex catalog reminded me of those once issued by the Johnson Smith Company, which was active between about 1914 and 2019. (It was much less electronics oriented.) As a child, I ordered many whoopee cushions, joy buzzers, and X-ray glasses, among other items such as fake dog poop and vomit, plastic ants, and the like.

Fred Lerner recently explored airship stories in a fanzine? Was that in *Lofgeornost* for FAPA? Must... read...! I have emailed the man. Oof: Perhaps you published that article, and he was commenting on it. On which issue of *Intermission* was Lerner commenting?

In *Brandy Hall* #9, **Mark Nelson**—say, Mark, what do you know about the Australian fan who published microfiche fanzines?—continued his consideration of his fannish experience with sf media, moving from television to cinema. I don’t know that I’ve ever seen *Silent Running*—on the list you go!—but seeing *Damnation Alley* as a child fascinated me. I remember being fascinated by the post-apocalyptic setting, the jury-rigged vehicles, George Peppard, and the voracious cockroaches. Those terrified me. I own but have not yet read Roger Zelazny’s novel, so I can’t comment on how they compare, but the movie was formative for me, too. I highly recommend seeing *2001: A Space Odyssey* on the big screen. It’s glorious.

Samuel Lubell’s *Samizdat* #28 responded to

Ahrvid Engholm's comments about con codes of conduct—which Mark Nelson also responded to in *Brandy Hall*. “The rules develop because someone at a con did something that made the rule necessary,” he wrote. As someone who occasionally volunteers at cons but isn't quite yet a con runner, I've overheard some of the discussions that occur behind the scenes when an unfortunate event occurs.

People can be messy, fen can be messy, and groups of either can be even more so. If we're concerned about declining participation counts in cons and fandom more generally, it makes sense to me to do our best to create safe and fun spaces for everyone. Most con-related rules are made so con committees can appropriately and adequately address unfortunate situations when they occur. Otherwise, the organizers have no standing when they ask someone to leave or change their behavior—behavior that's made other people uncomfortable to such an extent that action is required. As you say, “No one told me I couldn't do X,” is a too-common response.

The challenge that arises in my perspective is that most con runners and other volunteers aren't necessarily prepared to handle such situations gracefully. Most of us aren't facilitators or mediators, so some awkwardness in turn might occur when concerns are raised or con guidelines enforced.

Your comments that “a lot of sf is in dialogue with other authors,” “A person reads a story, says that isn't what would happen, and then writes their own version,” and “This is most clear with a lot of stories in response to Ursula LeGuin's ‘The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,’” resonated with Jefferson P. Swycaffer's remarks on stories written in response to other stories (see above). What stories in particular respond to “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”? More grist for the mill!

I have not read Robert Putnam's *The Upswing*. On the list it goes! I enjoyed your profile of Tim Powers. His *Stolen Skies* rests several feet away from me, and it's been catching my eye in recent days. *The Anubis Gates* is a wonderful book. Your piece on libraries and book banning is cause for concern. As are the data on reading habits. Recent articles—including <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2024/11/the-elite-college-students-who-cant-read-books/679945>—suggest that many high school students haven't read a single book to completion before they go to college. That flabbergasts me; I read 100 books last year.

Garth Spencer's *Brownian Motion* #11 offers a visual for his efforts “Learning to Adult.” I am a staunch supporter of your efforts in Heathening. As a Heath myself, I can tell you the view from here is pretty grand. (I know that's not what you mean, and

I've set aside some Asatru materials you might find interesting. I'll mail them to you Real Soon Now!)

“The Jade Ring” is developing nicely. James Bond and the transporter room of the *Enterprise*? Nice. Fan fiction definitely doesn't fall under fair use. (That's why the N3F historically avoided the stuff, a stance that seems to be changing.) Your story seems to straddle fan fiction and faan fiction to good effect. Have you started using the Fabula Storytelling Cards yet? What's your experience been like so far?

Please offer my apologies to Ernest Wolfgang Friedrich Siegfried Klaus Inger Stroheim Ruprecht Hentzau Schelswig-Holstein Trishtrash-am-Wiesen von Ulm. I didn't intend to neglect a portion of his name.

And in *Renovation and Innovation Letter* #3, **Adrian Kresnak** announced the then-forthcoming defense of his master's degree thesis. When did that happen? How did it go? Such big news. I'm rooting for you. I read and enjoyed your review of 32% (<https://www.etsy.com/listing/896458907/32-a-solo-rp-g-game-a6-zine>). I just followed OleandrsStudio on the Insta. Neat to see you recently read *Capfan* #1 (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #99), as well! (Rob Imes and I are both members of the United Fanzine Organization.) Chee, you also reviewed *Tetragrammaton Fragments* #274. (*The Brass Hat Mind* #7) Did you learn about those items from me—or other sources? If the former, cool beans. If the latter, even cooler!



Los Angeles Times, April 17, 1959



...LOC on NAPA 273

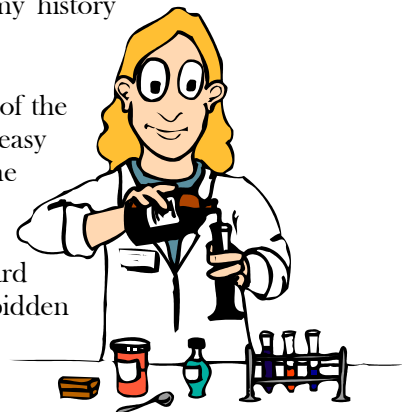
Intermission #147 – 30 print SF magazines in the 1950s! Now it seems we are down to maybe three with only *Asimov's* and *Analog* coming out regularly (and just bimonthly). *Fantasy & SF* only had two issues in 2024. (Admittedly, we have a bunch of online publications which they didn't have in the 1950s, but even if you add them, I doubt you'd reach 30). I agree that Kamala Harris had a lot of strengths that the post-election coverage ignored. It seemed that the minute the election was over everyone was saying that she was a bad candidate and Trump's victory was inevitable (when before the election everyone was saying it was 50-50). I think science fiction's reputation was hit hard during the hack/pulp period and we didn't really start getting away from that until the 1980s and probably 1990s. I think it is good that SF has left the ghetto and is getting some attention as serious literature (yes, SF like 1984 and *Brave New World* always had literary attention, but academics denied that these were SF because they were good). I need to read more Russian SF.

A general/literary con with 1000-1500 people would be considered a large regional con in the US. Yes, I had a good time in Scotland. I figured this would probably be my only opportunity to see Scotland so I wanted to see more of the country than just Glasgow. You make an interesting point, which I did not consider, about attitudes toward scientists changing due to communications technology. I think the change happened earlier, with the separation of scientist from "natural philosophers" and religion. I've attended several Worldcons and thought Glasgow was very well run. The bag searches were beyond the organizers' control. U.S. conventions usually have multiple used book dealers but I can understand that Worldcon prices make this not so profitable. I still like going to panels despite 30+ years in fandom. And Codes of Conduct are necessary whenever there are large numbers of people in close proximity, especially with people from different cultures who may not make the same assumptions. It is worth noting that several writers got their start writing fanfiction.

Ye Murdered Master Mage 273 - I'm glad you liked my Scotland photos. I had fun touring the country. [USB 5.25 drives](#) do exist in [the U.S.](#)

Archive Midwinter - I don't think John Adams was such a bad president considering that the office was so new and people were still working out how political parties would work. I'd argue that literary fiction is fiction where the plot is not the main interest. Some mainstream is literary but not all. And there is literary science fiction too. I've heard that much of science fiction is in conversation with other, earlier sf writers. Authors build on each other's works and react to themes others produce. I administer the Compton Crook award for best new SF/Fantasy/Horror debut novel. And every year I identify over 100 such novels. Yes, some are self-published but many are not. Right now, it is not just science that's under attack but the idea of the expert and knowledge itself. People who believe in "alternate facts" and are suspicious of anyone who knows more than they do, are going to distrust scientists along with universities where science is done. I spent quite a bit of time while researching my history master's thesis reading microfiches of the "Congressional Globe."

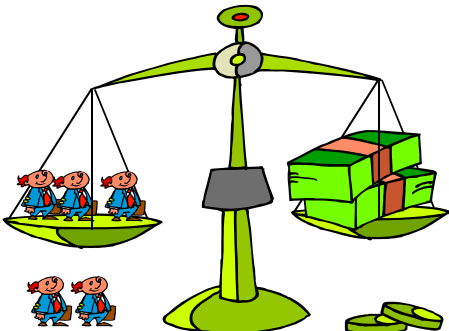
Intermission #148 - I remember reading rec.arts.sf.written on computers in the basement of the Harvard Science Center. Trump won, in part, by making easy promises and promising easy solutions to complex problems. I don't know of many SF-only bookstores. There was the one in NYC, 1973-86, that I visited a couple of times. There was the Science Fantasy Bookstore in Harvard Square 1977-1989, which I went to quite frequently while in college. I think it became Pandemonium Books, which is still around, but not in Harvard Square, and is more of a game/toy store than the old SF Bookstore. And of course Forbidden Planet has stores in NYC and London, but these days are mostly comics. Congrats on your story contest. My first computer was a TRS-80 Level I, which I got in 1979 with my bar mitzvah money.



Brandy Hall #9 – I remember seeing *Star Wars* when it first came out. It was the first PG movie I ever saw (so I was afraid it would be too scary). I was just 10, exactly the right age for it. Yes, the prequel *Star Wars* films were more interested in making great special effects than telling a great story. Read more Shakespeare. There's a reason he is usually considered the greatest English writer. And he's Fantasy writer – *Hamlet* has a ghost, *Midsummer Night's Dream* has fairies, *Macbeth* has witches, and *The Tempest* has magic, spirits, monsters, and a wizard. I need to get back to reading Dickens. I left off my reading at *David Copperfield*, so next would be *Bleak House*. Re-reading *Wuthering Heights* is on my classics list, but at 226 (the list goes up to 629.) What does "Ryctm" mean? I see it in the comments but can't quite figure it out. I found the article you cite about telling universities not to yield to activists, but the objections here are different from the idea that university collections looted the property of other cultures and they deserve it back. I'm not disputing that healthy food can be found in Scotland. But much of the country's own food isn't.



Yes, as a former education policy analyst, I know that each European country has their own education system. In the U.S. each state has its own education system and our private universities are all independent of each other. Yet, it is still possible to discuss the U.S. higher education system as the features these share. In many countries in Europe, higher education is free (or greatly subsidized compared to that of the U.S.). In the U.S. all majors cost the same, but the numbers of people majoring in the traditional humanities keeps dropping because other majors are perceived as better linked to high paying jobs (especially STEM majors). So, a lot of those majoring in the humanities are those from higher income families who can be supported by their families for graduate school or joining the family business. I didn't know the Australian system charged more for the humanities. Yes, I meant Provand's Lordship was built in the 15th century. I think it is worth buying and reading SF magazines to support science fiction.



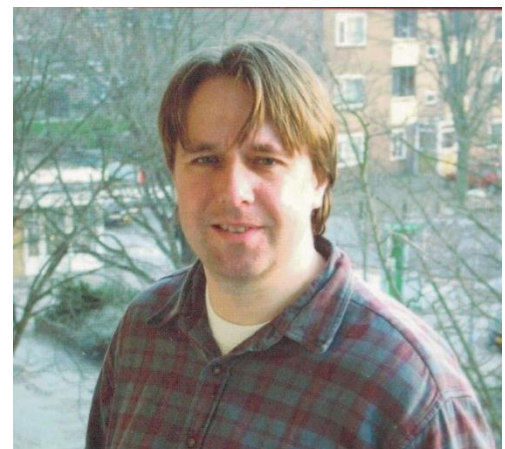
Brownian Motion #11— I'm a firm believer in planning and projects. But adding a status check is a good idea. Interesting crossover fic. I disagree that *Star Trek* didn't challenge people. It certainly challenged cold war notions with a Russian character, racism with a black communications officer (not to mention the episode with the aliens who were half black, half white), and capitalism. I disagree that it is impossible for new writers to be considered by higher paying publishers. I administer a contest for best first novel and among this year's first novels I see four from Angry Robot, nine from CamCat books, four from DAW, one from Del Rey, 10 from various Harper imprints, six from Orbit, four from Random House, two from St. Martin, and four from Tor. There are multiple fanfiction sites on the web with fanfiction.net and Archive of Our Own being best known. I hadn't thought about expanding my paper to cover science and scientists since Twain. I wrote this as my undergraduate thesis in History and Literature and using Hawthorne and Twain was a way to write about science fiction without Harvard knowing I was writing about science fiction. In 1985, academia was even less tolerant of SF than it is now.

Rail #3 – Congratulations on defending your master's degree! I'd love to see a summary of your thesis in your zine.

...Author Spotlight: Alastair Reynolds

Alastair Reynolds is a British science fiction writer from Wales. He writes hard science fiction that feels real due to his secret advantage – he is a real space scientist. He earned a Ph.D. in astronomy at the University of St. Andrews and worked at the European Space Agency from 1991 to 2004.

He wrote four published stories while in graduate school. *Interzone* #36 published his first story, "Nunivak Snowflakes," in June 1990. Since then, he has published another 60 or so stories, including some set in the same universes as one of his series. Unlike many novelists, he did not abandon short stories when his novels started selling. His stories



occasionally pop up in anthologies and his “Things to do in Deimos When You’re Dead,” appeared in *Asimov’s Science Fiction*, September/October 2022.

Reynolds is best known for his Revelation Space universe that consists of eight books, including his first novel Revelation Space and three about Prefect Dreyfus, as well as several short stories. He also has a trilogy, Poseidon’s Children, and a YA trilogy about space pirates, the Revenger trilogy. He has a few standalones, including a Doctor Who novel that he wrote just for fun. He also has several collections of short stories including the 784-page *Beyond the Aquila Rift: The Best of Alastair Reynolds*.

Reynolds writes very detailed science fiction with a stress on science that does not get in the way of providing excellent characterization and solid writing. Many of his books get rather dark in places and verge on being space horror (fans of Alien will like his writing). He claims not to write with extensive background notes or “bible,” but says he makes it up as he goes along and hopes there are not too many contradictions.

So where should one start reading Alastair Reynolds? His big collection, *Beyond the Aquila Rift*, is a great starting point and the ebook is just \$7. Then I would recommend reading *Revelation Space*, the start of that series. If you like far future try *House of Suns* or if you prefer near future try *Pushing Ice*. YA fans will enjoy *Revenger*.

If you want true hard science fiction, but written to modern standards, give Alastair Reynolds a try.

...College Reading

The November issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* had an article, “The Elite College Students Who Can’t Read Books” by Rose Horowitz that blamed high schools for the problem of college students not reading. It claims that high schools no longer require students to read entire books so when they get to college, even top colleges, they don’t know how to read books. For evidence, the article simply says students claim they never had to read entire books in



Image of Harvard by [Monica Volpin](#) from [Pixabay](#)

high school, just articles, excerpts, poetry, “but not a single book cover to cover.” As a result, even at exclusive schools, students “struggle to muster the attention or ambition required to immerse themselves in a substantial text.” So even at these top schools, professors are assigning less reading of books (substituting shorter works) and lowering their expectations. Even at top colleges half of students name young-adult books as their favorite book.

The odd thing is that this article acknowledges that every generation of professors discover that students cannot read as well as the professors expect, but then continues with the complaints like those of a professor who says their students 20 years ago could discuss complex books like *Crime and Punishment*, but now struggle to keep track of the plot. So,

basically the article is saying that yes, professors in the past have always complained, but this time it’s for real.

For evidence, the article says a majority of the 33 professors say students complain about the reading load. It does say that in 1976, 40% of high school seniors read at least six books for fun in the past year, compared to only 11% saying this in 2022. Unfortunately, it does not cite the source. I did some research and found these numbers most likely came from the Monitoring the Future Survey compiled and analyzed by Jean M. Twenge, author of *Generations*. The [Generation Tech blog](#) wrote, “In 1976, nearly 40% of U.S. 12th graders read 6 or more books for pleasure in the last year. By 2021-22, it was down to 13%. The number who did not read a single book for pleasure went the opposite way, from only 11.5% in 1976 to 41% in 2021-22.” But I suspect that in 1976, people were complaining that three-fifths did not read even six books.

A [2022 Gallup study](#) found the number of books read (including partially read) annually by Americans fell from 15.3 in 1990 to 12.6 in 2021. The biggest decline came among college graduates who averaged 21.1 in 2002 and 2016 but just 14.6 in 2021.

The article blames the distractions of smartphones. It also blames schools for focusing on informational texts and standardized test-sized passages, without asking students to read whole books. It cites surveys of elementary school teachers with a quarter saying books are no longer the center of their teaching, but instead teach with excerpts. This is even true in private schools. The articles also blame careerism, as students are more concerned with their job prospects than reading and analyzing literature. One problem with blaming these is that smartphones and the emphasis on testing are fairly recent so cannot be the cause of a decline going back to the 1970s.

But professors have always complained about their students' reading habits and said that their current students were not as good as past ones. And while smartphones are a distraction, videogames have existed since the 1980s and television even earlier (not to mention college drinking and partying). Much of the article seems to be claims by students who were complaining about their college reading load saying their high school teachers never asked them to read a whole book. There was no follow-through by the article's author as to what their teachers actually assigned.

As to the decline in reading by high school students, I would not be surprised if some of this was due to the growing competitiveness of college admissions and the need for students to devote their time to extracurricular activities that would impress college admissions staff.



AI generated Charles Dickens by [Gordon Johnson](#) from [Pixabay](#)

There is no national English curriculum in the U.S. high schools, nor a list of books that must be read. Curriculum issues are left to the states, which usually let school districts, individual schools, and frequently even individual teachers determine what is taught. Still some books do make their way into a large number of classrooms:

- Shakespeare - Especially *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *Hamlet*.
- Great American works - *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Scarlet Letter*, *Invisible Man*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *A Separate Peace*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *Great Gatsby*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and *the Old Man and the Sea*
- Mythology - *Iliad*, *Odyssey* (usually as excerpts), and *Antigone*. And collections of Greek, Roman, Norse, Egyptian (and increasingly African) myths.
- British Lit - *1984*, *Brave New World*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Great Expectations*, *Frankenstein*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Animal Farm*.
- Modern works - *The Giver*, *The Color Purple*, *Beloved*/*The Bluest Eye*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *The Road*.

...When Bad Authors Happen to Good Books

Neil Gaiman is one of the superstar writers of science fiction/fantasy. He is best known for his *Sandman* comics/graphic novels but has written several super-popular novels, including *Coraline* and *American Gods*, many of which have become movies and TV shows. Now, however, he is facing accusations from at least eight women, including a babysitter/nanny for his child, of sexual assault and rape. This was a cover story in *New York* magazine. The women have graphic details of BDSM and evidence of text messages from Gaiman. The author is denying the accusations, claiming that he "never engaged in non-consensual sexual activity with anyone. Ever." He said these accusations were "false, not to mention, deplorable."



Gaiman in 2013, Photo by Kyle Cassidy,
CC BY SA 3.0

In response, Prime Video, which had renewed the TV show *Good Omens*, based on the novel he co-wrote with Terry Pratchett, has cut it down to just a single double-length episode and Disney cancelled the development of a movie based on his *The Graveyard Book*. Many of Gaiman's public appearances have been cancelled.

So, does this mean people should stop reading his works? Certainly, if these allegations are true, few people would want their money to go to someone capable of doing the actions these women describe. On the other hand, the books are as good as they ever were. Should we blame the book for the author's failings?

Science fiction/fantasy has dealt with this problem before. I discussed Marion Zimmer Bradley in *Samizdat* #24. The author was known for her Darkover series and the feminist *Mists of Avalon*. So, it shocked the SF world when her daughter revealed MZB had sexually abused her and knew of her husband's child molestation. However, her books are still in print (at least as ebooks) and new Darkover books are being released as posthumous collaborations. Many fans of Harry Potter were upset when J.K. Rowling made comments that were perceived as transphobic. Some fans even said they wouldn't buy any Harry Potter products that had Rowling involved. And of course the John W Campbell Award was renamed after Jeannette Ng, who won the award in 2019 attacked the award for Campbell's racism and sexism (even

though it was not unusual for the times when he started writing and editing).

My personal view is that we should judge the work on its own merits, but take the author into account when analyzing it. If you don't want your money to go to support someone whose actions you deplore, then take it out of the library (or opt not to buy it, but allow it to be available for those make other moral choices.)

...Status of Projects

Past readers of *Samizdat* will remember that I have launched a series of projects to better my life. This bimonthly report serves as a reminder to me to keep working on these, and is a record of when I fall short. Much of my time has been spent reading book previews of debut novels and then novels themselves for the Baltimore SF Society's Compton Crook Award for Best First Novel.

Status Check - For the Washington Science Fiction Association I run the magazine discussion group that meets after the semi-monthly meetings. The first Friday we alternate between print magazines *Asimov's SF* and either *F&SF* or *Analog* (depending on if *F&SF* publishes an issue). Third Friday we alternate between two online magazines, *Clarkesworld* and *Lightspeed*. I also run the new monthly book discussion (via Zoom). And I'm chairing its convention Capclave. For the Baltimore SF Society, I run the monthly book discussion (via Zoom and at the BSFS building) and administer the Compton Crook Award for best debut novel. I ran the 2024 Balticon convention. I also organize the monthly Futurist Book Group that meets via Zoom. I also have this fanzine - *Samizdat*...



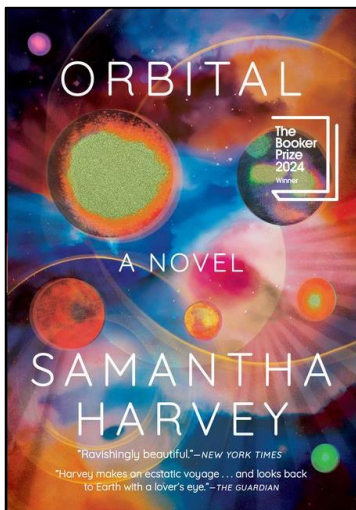
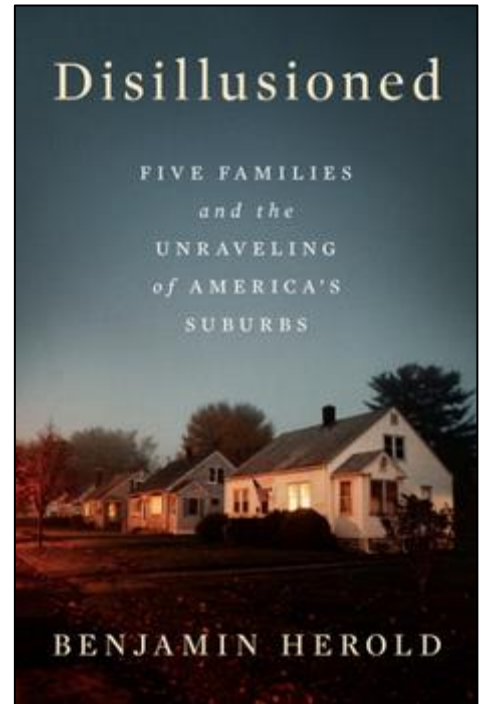
Project Nonfiction - For the Futurist Book Group, I read and led a discussion of *Brave New Words: How AI Will Revolutionize Education* by Salman Khan, the founder of the Khan Academy (which I frequently wrote about in my previous job at a communications firm working with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, since they were a grantee). Much of the book is really about how the Khan Academy is using ChatGPT3 to educate students. Khan is a strong believer that Artificial Intelligence will revolution education,

helping to make it more democratic since AI can tutor students at a lower cost, personalize education, and enhance education through simulations of historical and literary figures. AI can teach to the student's level and learning speed, providing real-time feedback and adjusting lessons to students' needs. AI won't replace teachers but enable them to be better facilitators and allow the creation of global classrooms, and virtual reality simulations and interactions. He criticizes those who fear AI will enable students to cheat more easily, but does recommend the flipped classroom, where students listen to lectures and use AI tutoring at home and write their essays in class so the teacher can make sure they are doing original work. Some of this seemed like create ideas, but U.S. schooling has never adapted well to new technology and he failed to show why this would be any different. Too often, technology is thrown into schools without giving teachers the training and guidance to use properly. I fear the same will happen with AI.

I read *Disillusioned: Five Families and the Unraveling of America's Suburbs* by Benjamin Herold that used the story of his own hometown and the stories of five families to show how the same forces that led to the collapse of cities are now causing the collapse of suburbs. The suburbs are less of an ideal community; the families face racism, aging infrastructure, debt and economic struggles, school failures, and problems fitting in. He claims that the suburbs were never sustainable; too many people leech the value away from the communities and then run to communities a little further out, right before the value of these homes collapse. This is a "slash-and-burn suburban growth machine" or even a Ponzi scheme. He calls for the creation of better connections between neighbors, acceptance of diversity, affordable housing, help for local businesses, mixed use development, investment in community programs and infrastructure, and better education.

I read *Tablets Shattered: The End of an American Jewish Century and the Future of Jewish Life* by Joshua Leifer. The book, part memoir, part history, part generational complaint, and part a critique of American Judaism, describes the author's Jewish family history and his own troubled relationship with Israel. He describes how he grew up an American Jew going to Jewish summer camps and cultural institutions that stressed the value of Israel as the core of Jewish identity. But he became become disillusioned with Israel's relationship with the Palestinians, which led him to reject traditional Jewish organizations and join a

peace group. He makes a compelling case that traditional Jewish organizations essentially turned their back on his generation (and even many of their members) by refusing to compromise on Israel. He claims that American Judaism has become mere nostalgia and kitsch. Even the ultra-Orthodox are assimilating into an unthinking Trumpism. Ultimately, he becomes more observant as a way of rejecting the assimilated Judaism in which he grew up. I don't agree with everything he says, but he makes some good points about how American Judaism has largely lost its values and has become merely a flavor of liberalism with some Jewish food.

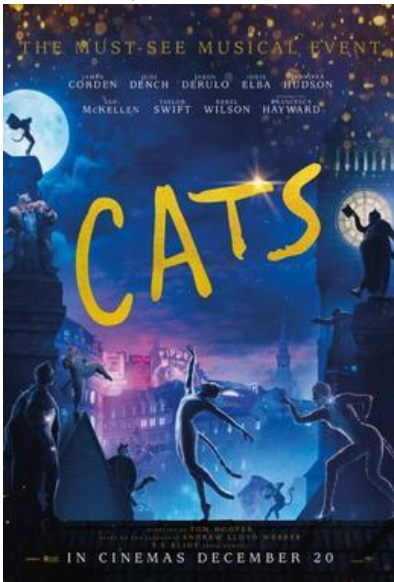


Project Classics - I finished *Rob Roy* by Walter Scott. I found the book rather dull and lacking in action and adventure, rather strange for the author of the much more successful *Ivanhoe*. Too much of the first third of the book focuses on Frank Osbaldistone's romance with a girl staying with his cousins and *Rob Roy* (at least as himself) doesn't appear until halfway through the book. Despite being the title character, there is very little focus on *Rob Roy* and Frank is the main character. I found the book's use of dialect hard to understand (although, to be fair, I did find that to be true with a few people I met in Scotland). The action does pick up some in the last third, but I found most of the book slow going.

I read *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey for my WSFA book club, but I'm including it here because it won the Booker Prize for best novel in English and despite taking place on the International Space Station, it isn't science fiction (after all the ISS does exist and there are really people orbiting the Earth). The book depicts the actual ISS and a day in the life of its astronaut crew. The imagery and language in the descriptions are powerful and beautiful. There is no real plot; there

is a typhoon on Earth that the astronauts track but there is no antagonist or threat. The book has multiple narrators showing different points of view, yet each viewpoint is strangely isolated as the crew has limited interaction with each other. One person in my group called it more of a tone poem than a novel and I agree. I recommend this book to anyone who likes beautiful language and would not mind the lack of a plot.

Project Video - I watched *The Flash* (2023) based on the DC comics superspeedster. I confess, I've never been a big fan of the character. The movie suffers from a frequent failing of recent comics movies in trying to squeeze in too many characters. In this movie, the Flash discovers that he can travel through time and goes back to stop his mother's murder (and his father being blamed for it). Somehow, this time travel changes the past and when General Zod of Krypton invades Earth, there is no Superman to stop him. The Flash and his younger self (who now has the Flash's powers) go in search of Batman, who turns out to be much older than the Batman the Flash knows (and played by Michael Keaton of the 1989 Batman rather than Ben Affleck of the more recent DC comics film. And when the reluctant Batman joins Flash looking for Superman, they instead find a black-haired Supergirl. The film was very mixed. It had some interesting ideas and the interaction between Flash and his younger self were fun, but the effects in the big fights seemed off and I had trouble with the idea that changing the past would have ripples further in the past. In all the time travel books I've read, half the fun is seeing how the consequences of the change play out. But here, anything goes. I would have preferred it if Barry had instead travelled to an alternate Earth (which are common in the DC comics multiverse). I do not recommend this movie except to those who are big Flash fans (who doubtless have already seen it).



I watched *Cats*, the 2019 film based on the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical that had a long stay on Broadway and London. I remember there being a lot of criticism when the film came out about the use of CGI on the actors' faces to make them more like actual cats. I didn't have a problem with that. My problem is that the production used dancers and actors who were not singers for major singing roles. As a result, a lot of the songs lacked vocal power and several were croaked out, rather than sung. The movie made a bit of an effort to expand the plot of the musical, having the evil Macavity kidnap the other cat contestants (for the prize of advancing to a new life through the heavyside layer). I did like the change in the framing of the Magical Mr. Mistoffelees song, making it an attempt by the other cats to boost Mistoffelees' confidence in his own abilities so he can magic Old Deuteronomy back. But these improvements did not fix the basic problem of making a musical with people who cannot sing. Autotune can only do so much. I can see (and hear) why the movie was a big box office dud.

Fantasia (1940) by Disney is another movie without much plot (except for the Sorcerer's Apprentice section). But the combination of wonderful classical music with imaginative images works. Essentially, the movie is almost like a collection of upscale "Silly Symphonies," the short films Disney had made in the previous decade (in fact, the appearance of Mickey Mouse as the Sorcerer's Apprentice was originally planned as a Silly Symphony short. My favorite parts of the film are The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Night on Bald Mountain, and the Rite of Spring.

Project Shorts - I read the Nov/Dec issues of *Asimov's* and *Analog* (print magazines), the Nov and Dec issues of *Lightspeed*, and the Nov and Dec issues of *Clarksword*. I did not read any anthologies or collections.

Unfortunately, I did not do anything with Projects Trek, Shakespeare, Clean-up, or Exercise. These have been added to my New Year's Resolutions.

...Author's Note

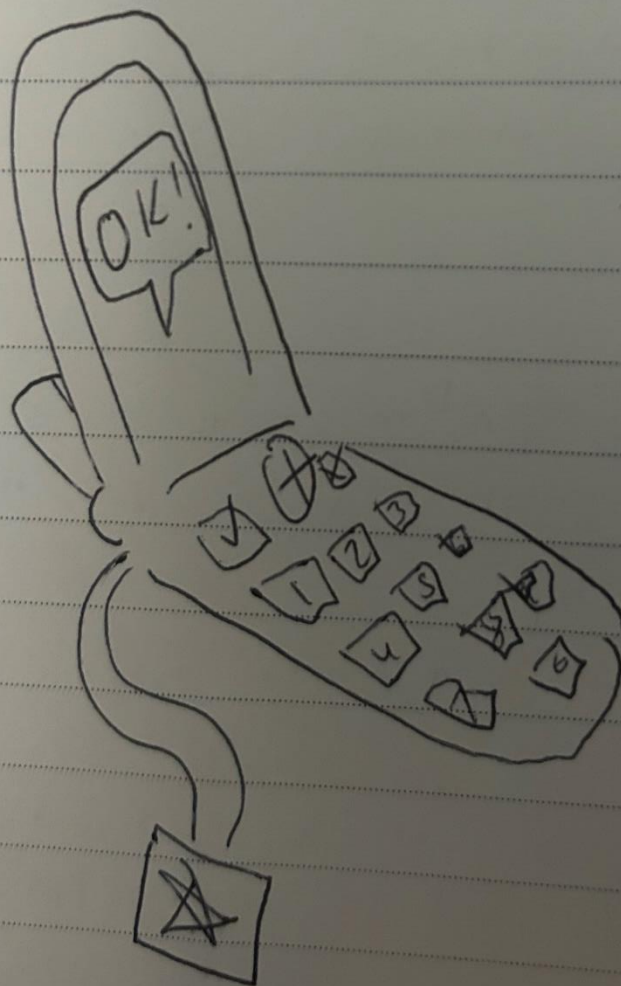
Samizdat is a production of Samuel Lubell, who is solely responsible for its contents. Nothing here should be taken as the views of any employer, client, or organization to which I belong. This zine was produced during Samuel Lubell's non-work time. Graphics are from clip art discs and the Internet.

R. A. I. L. #4

January 2025

Adrian Kresnak

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Hello All,

Great news! I successfully defended my thesis! The graduate school accepted the final draft, so it is *finished*. I was so anxious, so I'm glad I'm done now.

January is off to a great start for me. My birthday is January 11, and my brother's is January 6. As you might imagine, celebrating anything on 1/6 feels weird as an American, but at least we've got something nice happening that week!

I submitted a story to the TNFFF short story contest. I'm happy with the feedback. I'm planning to edit the story and submit it somewhere. I've been trying to get my friends to check out TNFFF, so I hope it pays off.

*

Some news from the state of Internet:

In communication research there's this effect called the Boomerang Effect. Basically, if you tell someone to do something, there's a chance they'll do the opposite of what you tell them. This could be because your original message seemed untrustworthy, or because the person you talked to was simply stubborn, or any reason.

You may have heard that TikTok is being banned in the USA. That's not *exactly* what's happening, but it's close enough. There's a narrative going around that the app is "owned by China," and that it's uniquely dangerous among all social media apps. Well, people are now moving to an app called 小紅書 (Xiaohongshu), or RedNote in English.

I downloaded it myself to see what it was like. Unfortunately, I don't think I'll ever get used to a social media site that's entirely short videos. But that's a me issue. People who were on TikTok seem to perceive the ban as being influenced by American social media companies attempting to sabotage their competition. It makes sense to me that they would protest this by loudly moving to a foreign competitor. I'm going to keep an eye on how this turns out – it could be an interesting study in narrative economics.

*

Commentary:

Ahrvid Engholm: From what I understand, one of the benefits of pulp fiction novels was that they could provide their creators with some financial stability. I worry that's lost in today's "pulp" fiction. Maybe I'm just mistaken about the past.

George Phillies: You asked about the multi-story train layout: I worry I was unclear in my description. There's a long, winding ramp that visitors walk on, and there are multiple train layouts around the path.

I'm enjoying the adventures of Thornberry-Thistlewaite and company.

Garth Spencer:

I'm sorry to hear about the state of things up there. I would fully support rail initiatives to connect the country, but of course, I'm biased.

Michigan State University has this Rural Computing consortium. When I went to their research symposium a couple years ago, one of my health communication professors gave this talk on rural telehealth. She was researching how to transmit information like blood pressure and temperature in a reliable and accurate way.

Re: superheroes as disaster relief workers – yes, I'm glad you think so too! Every so often Marvel will have its superhero teams helping in the aftermath of a disaster, but it's rare for it to be a lasting focus. I understand *why*: recovery is a long-term process, disasters that aren't caused by supervillains don't have as much dramatic appeal, etc., but I believe there's more potential than people may give it credit for. Here's hoping my story shows off what I mean.