

# THE OBDURATE EYE #49

March 2025

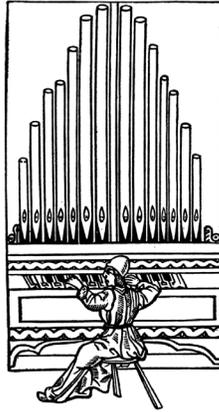


*How would you rename everything but the Sea of Ontario?*

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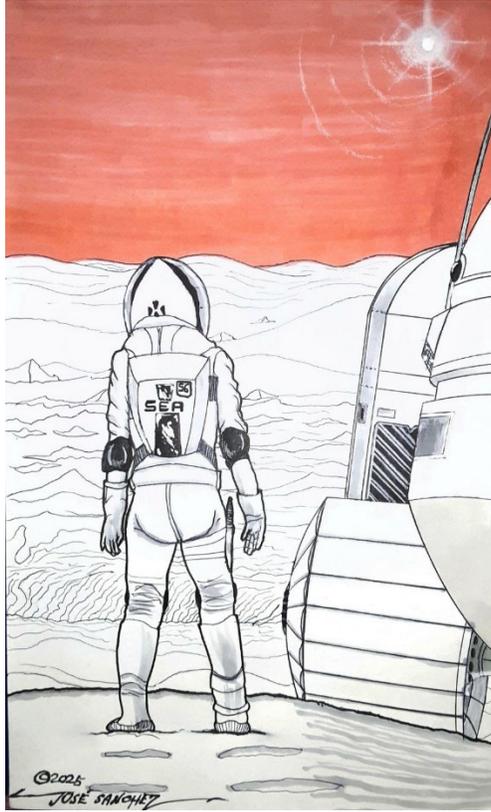
THE OBDURATE EYE #49, March 2025, a personalzine from Garth Spencer, 6960 Doman Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5S 3H7, Email [garth.van.spencer@gmail.com](mailto:garth.van.spencer@gmail.com) or [hrothgarweems@gmail.com](mailto:hrothgarweems@gmail.com) . Garth acknowledges that he does this on the unceded territory of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm, səlilwətəł, and skwxwú7mesh peoples.



*The organ of no clique or party*

## Art Credits

Garth Spencer .....	cover, pp. 3, 5
José Sanchez .....	p. 1
<i>“At the ‘Bagnold Dunes’ on the northwestern flank of Mars’ Mount Sharp, a SEA (Space Exploration Agency) astronaut, overlooks the strange black sand dune terrain on Mars. contrary to Mars’ abundant red soil, these dunes are very rare and beautiful. But they are also quite strange.” (Jose Sanchez, February 5, 2025)</i>	
Clipart .....	pp. 6, 10
Roy Pounds .....	p. 11



*“Miles and miles of ... miles and miles ... just like Saskatchewan ...”*

## Editorializing Freely on Subjects I Know Little About

Since reality ended (about the Reagan administration, I think), and we were all stuffed quickly into a virtual reality so the Powers that Be had time to finish up their paperwork, our virtuality has been getting steadily more absurd, by a series of logical developments. It is like living in a satire of reality as we knew it. This is what happens in bad films, without a continuity editor. In a virtual reality, it happens when the continuity module isn't functioning. (And I now realize there is no more point in practicing satire and parody as political commentary – reality is way ahead of me.)

The sensible response is to demand the virtuality scriptwriters – game developers, in these times – start doing their job better. Either that, or they start recruiting from professional SF and fantasy writers within this virtuality.

Not having an address to write to, we simply have to resist the silliness and absurdity of the current brutalist world order. We have information that the bizarre entity now acting as the U.S. President is a Russian mole, whatever the quality of that information may be. We know that Russia is a major source of disinformation and fake news on the Internet. We also know that Fox News is another major source.

The most unlikely thing about this virtuality is that popular culture hasn't already swung from an absurdly unlikely far-right, plutocratic, libertarian-capitalist position to a more liberal, humanitarian, social-support position. We already knew in the

1980s that a conservative backlash was in the works; but we had no idea that it would last this long.

#

One of the many burrs under my saddle is the fact that I was expected to soak up my culture's social norms as if I were psychic, and they were broadcast in the woven air as if from a state-run mind control centre. Well, I am not psychic. And the social norms available to me were usually unspoken and usually inconsistent, as they came from at least three or four competing cultures. It is annoying enough to be expected to live up to unknown standards of behaviour: even more annoying when the behaviours you see depend on who you see performing them, in what setting, or depending on the time of day and phase of the moon.

Maybe I shouldn't complain. This was, after all, normal life for normal people in normal North America. Except that "normal" kept changing and things never really settled down to a social consensus.

One of the outcomes of this babel is the growing realization that conventions need to publish explicit Codes of Conduct. There was a time when you didn't have to *tell* people to put on their best behaviour, not your worst, when you go out of town and attend someone else's event; when you didn't have to arrange a security force, even an amateur one, if the consuite or the room parties served alcohol; when you didn't have to coerce grown men (and women) not to grope costumers' body parts; whether it's become illegal to take pictures of the scene, including costumers; or, in some cases, that congoers should shower daily, or go to restrooms to relieve themselves. Apparently, these days, some people really don't know these things.

May I suggest that Codes of Conduct can equally be applied to major institutions and their officers, such as banks, school boards, religious officials, corporate boards of directors, corporate investors, actors, and heads of state? Or, come to think of it ... don't they have Codes of Conduct already?

#

I had ambitions to start a garden, overestimating my physical energy as usual, and collected three different farmer's almanacs<sup>1</sup> from which to collate information. As you might expect, they all focused on regional weather forecasts throughout this year, and not explicitly stating the best planting times per region for different vegetables. \*Sigh\* Well, I can research this online, and one of the housing society's meetings this month may take up my friend Jean's suggestion of a distributed gardening project.

A prepper-minded acquaintance of mine surprised me with the list of crops that can be cultivated here in BC. Allegedly this list includes not only the temperate vegetables, grains, fruits and nuts you might expect, at 50° to 60° latitude, but somewhat exotic plants such as peanuts. This, in John's opinion, not only provides a balanced diet but some potential cash crops, particularly the bamboo.

Mind you, we have about as wide a range of climates – bioregions, you might say – in BC as in Washington and Oregon. Hence the early spring conditions here on the Coast.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Old Farmer's Almanac 2025, Harrowsmith's Almanac 2025, and American Farmers Almanac 2025.*



## Locs Received

**Mark Nelson** [nelsonmark07@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonmark07@gmail.com), Feb. 16, 2025

A reminder that I am trying to transition my non-work emails to [nelsonmark07@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonmark07@gmail.com). The university is threatening to prevent UOW staff from using their UOW email address for non-work related activities from June 30th. They haven't specified how they will determine that an email is for a non-work related activity ...

*((Message received.))*

My experience with middle managers and senior management at Australian universities ... If you make decisions that result in the loss of significant sums of money you are gently pushed out of the door and the matter is hushed up. The last thing that managers want is for staff and/or students to know that significant funds have been misspent.

*((Sounds like Standard Operating Procedure.))*

Let me be a Johnny-come-Lately in lamenting the departure of CUFF. If there's no interest, then there's no interest. Reading through the locs on this topic sent me off on a tangent. How many SF fanzines are being produced in Canada? Discounting club zines. Is it now only two: the *Obdurate Eye* and *Opuntia*? How has the number varied over time? Has it seen a gradual decline since some Golden Age? Have the numbers wildly oscillated? Have the numbers dropped off the cliff only comparatively recently? Have Canadians historically been more focused on state-based clubs and shown little interest in Canadian fanzines produced outside their state?

*((Since Canada has provinces instead of states, I don't know what you mean by 'state-based' clubs – in fact clubs are usually limited to one subfandom in one city. [The B.C. Science Fiction Association was so named only because they didn't name it the Vancouver Science Fiction Association.] The only historical factor is that after some point in the early 1970s, clubs and new fans generally had little concept of, and no exposure to fanzines. Thus, there may indeed be just two personal fanzines produced now in Canada.))*

I was interested to read R. Graeme Cameron's thoughts on CUFF (the CUFF winner in 1997, I learned from elsewhere!) I wonder how many fans engaged with CUFF in earlier years? Is it that the level of interest in fans in CUFF has decreased at the same time that interest in conventions has decreased?

*((It's a fair question. There is information online about the number of fans who were delegates, and who voted for them, in previous years. As to your question, I suspect the answer is 'yes': that clubs and conventions and new fans since at least the COVID-19 pandemic have had little concept of, and no exposure to fan funds.))*

Several of your correspondents mentioned that convention fees, hotels, travel, etc., have become expensive. Have they? I don't know. As fans have aged and retired, perhaps their disposable incomes have decreased?

*((Up to the last VCON held in Vancouver, R. Graeme Cameron noticed a serious change in the receptivity of hotels to SF conventions – both because they raised their function space costs, and because they were really unwilling to negotiate features of their hotel contracts. Maybe conventions in other regions in North America have different experiences. Certainly SF convention rates have risen every year, as far as I can see. The cost of travel is one thing; my experience is that apart from the last NASFiC in Winnipeg, convention committees have not been interested in hosting a delegate for a little-known fan fund, if it means paying for their convention membership and hotel room nights. Your conjecture that senior fans have less disposable income is probably valid.))*

I note that Heath Row's Karma Lapel is not available through [fanac.org](http://fanac.org).

**Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON CANADA M9C 2B2,  
[penneys@bell.net](mailto:penneys@bell.net), March 3, 2025**

Another *Obdurate Eye* is here, issue #48. I am a little swamped right now, lots to respond to as well as lots to edit, so I will get straight to it.

We all deal with our personal life experiences, and some of us actually learn something from them. Statesmen are truly rare: politicians often serve in their positions to angle for richer positions later on, like being on the board of directors of major corporations. Saying they are public servants is one thing, but later, they truly serve themselves.

*((I learned a long time ago from the sayings of "Lazarus Long" that public servants come to think of themselves as public masters.))*

Graeme reminds me of long ago, when a bunch of us would refer to the 'Balkanization of fandom,' the division of fandom by interest – these days, something very specific. Once, we were all just SF fans, but now, we divide by individual book or TV show or movie, by SF or fantasy or horror, by author or title or actor or animator or director...

We've added to "This is my favourite," the rejoinder "And everything else *sucks!*" This is where instead of a fandom, we only have (very) individual fans, and no community.

*((Uh, yeah, I noticed.))*

Hello to Heath Row! Loscon 50 was a great time. I got to meet Jean-Paul Garnier, and you two seem to be just about ruling LA fandom these days. I may not be able to go to a convention like that for some time, and I hope I'm wrong.

*((I'm beginning to wonder whether I should go to Worldcon in Seattle this summer.))*

I have seen the problems with Costume-Con ... interest in the convention is on the wane, and I am not sure if any bids from either Canada or the US would really help. There is quite a gap between the values of the two currencies, and I am not sure if that is an advantage to anyone.

*(('Twas ever thus.))*

I have a manuscript that needs some attention, so I will fold it here now. Many thanks, see you with the next.

*((Looking forward to it.))*

### ***We Also Heard From: Perry Middlemiss, Kent Pollard, Heath Row***



## Some Propagandist Out There Wasn't Briefed Properly

*(Thea Jay, Facebook, March 6, 2025)*

I have a bit of a pet peeve around some of the messaging that's going on in regards to our federal election.

When people say that whoever we get as the prime minister replacing Trudeau won't be who "we elected" – it's not actually true. It's using American rhetoric, and not understanding how our own governmental system works. Though an individual may

choose to vote for the person they're voting for because they want a specific leader to be the prime minister, we are actually voting for the representative of our riding. Like, if I vote for Hedy Fry because she's the liberal candidate in my riding, I may be voting for her for a variety of reasons – including the possibility that I'm wanting Trudeau to be the leader, or I'm wanting the Liberal party to be the one in power. But technically, I'm voting for Hedy.

Unless you are a registered voter in Papineau, Quebec, you didn't actually vote for Trudeau.

That said, of the four candidates remaining ... only 2 are current elected officials. If either of those two people get in, then our system is doing exactly what it's always done, and we have an elected prime minister. If one of the other two gets in, then the statement has veracity. But for fuck's sake people ... We are not America ... Learn about our Constitution and our government systems. Stop with the American rhetoric.



*As Putin ordered*

# How the Powers that Be Mismange the World

## ***I: IMBECILES ABROAD***

*(Den Valdron, Facebook, February 6, 2025)*

I have heard a rumour tonight that after meeting with Netanyahu, Trump has agreed or decided to take over Gaza.

This raises the question: between Trump and Netanyahu, which one is more deeply stupid?

Initially, you would think Trump. Infamously, Trump's opinion tends to depend on whoever talks to him last. Unless it touches on his narcissism, or his occasional fixed ideas – racism, greed, graft – Trump is deeply gullible and easily influenced.

This isn't an insult, it's just the way things are. Trump isn't very engaged or interested in the world, he's deeply incurious, and he relates on personal levels, so he's often apparently very pliable and agreeable. I'm not the first person who's reported this trait – he just agrees with whoever talks to him last.

So what happened is Netanyahu got him into a room, pitched hard and persuasively, upsold like crazy and got him to agree to a stupid idea. Probably made it sound manly and heroic and “brilliant place in history” and the “man who can.” Fed his ego like mad.

It's a great deal for Netanyahu and Israel. Israel is prepared to spend billions to kill Palestinians, but isn't willing to spend pennies to keep them alive. (If this remark offends anyone, please let me know and then fuck off. Or just fuck off.)

The reality of Gaza is it's a major financial burden. There are 2.8 million people there (less now, but you know what I mean).

Gaza is expensive. It's blockaded, so there's no economic activity, no trade, no significant industries. Even in normal times it would require massive subsidies to keep afloat.

Right now, it's particularly expensive. Every school, hospital, clinic, bakery, government building, water and sewer plant, and food processing center has been relentlessly bombed to hell and back. The scale of damage is incalculable, infrastructure and residence is massively damaged and you have a traumatized population which will require large-scale medical attention, food and shelter.

Managing Gaza, even the basics, is exponentially expensive. Policing Gaza will be incredibly expensive and dangerous.

Israel's whole strategy the last twenty years – lock it behind 30 foot walls, blockade it, let the gulag run itself and bomb regularly to keep them in their place – has failed. But the strategy was driven by cost-effectiveness. It was the cheapest method to manage Gaza. It wasn't about being humane or inhumane, it was about being cost-effective.

Well, that's out the window. Even if they go back to that standard, the costs are going way up. If they try to control or administer or divide the territory, it'll cost exponentially more, and the IDF will be exposed to more danger.

And frankly, the money isn't there. Israel's running significant deficits each year. Its accumulated debt is getting massive. This series of wars has cost it between 50 and a

100 billion dollars, and even with the US footing a lot of the bill, it's still costly. The Israeli economy contracted 15% during the Gaza war.

Oppression, it turns out, is expensive.

And there's no end in sight. Israelis don't have the stomach to follow through on genocide, or at least, they're concerned the world won't let them. The Gazans aren't going anywhere, no prospect for ethnic cleansing. So it's a headache that won't go away.

So, why shouldn't the wily Netanyahu foist it off on the gullible Trump, and then head for the hills, like some live-action re-enactment of a Loony Toons cartoon? Isn't that his best option?

Well here's the thing: If you have a friend and ally that you are desperately dependent upon, it's not a good thing to make a gift to them of a giant box of flaming shit.

Not appreciated. As a general rule, gifting boxes of flaming shit is a good way to end a friendship.

Now, Netanyahu may have figured he scored a coup and solved a problem, handing the flaming box of shit off to the Donald. But he's overlooked something.

The Donald changes his mind constantly. His best friend today is his "who's that stranger" the next. The deal of a lifetime today? "Never heard of it." The great deal-maker" has 3600 lawsuits, mainly from welshing on every deal, and suing everyone he's ever worked with or encountered. Loyalty, principle, commitment, don't exist in his world. He changes wives the way other men change pants. His Presidency involved him declaring war on half his cabinet members – and he handpicked them.

And that whole trait of just agreeing with whoever talked to him last? Whoever talks to him last is an ever changing game of musical chairs. At some point, people will explain to him just how much taking over Gaza will cost, the degree and kinds of expense, the commitments required, the lives put at risk.

And he'll change his mind. He has no compunctions against rejecting, returning or denouncing the flaming box of shit.

This takeover of Gaza ... it'll slide off the table so fast it'll be like it was rocket powered. Look how he backed away on tariffs on Mexico and Canada.

But here's the thing, as changeable as the Donald is, he does have some fixed points that don't change: Narcissism, greed, etc.

And hatred. The Donald knows how to hate. And there's things the Donald hates and won't ever forgive. Humiliating him. Making him look like an idiot. Handing him a box of shit and selling him that it's actually candy and gold pieces... he's not going to forgive that.

He'll walk away from the deal in a heartbeat. But he's going to hate the fucker that made him look like a crowning idiot. And he's got the entire US government, the Republican Party and his idiot cult under his thumb. This overgrown man-child has been handed the power of a God.

And Netanyahu's moronic shenanigan has just made a mortal enemy of him. Has begun the alchemic process of turning American from Israel's backer and ally, to a country led by a man consumed by hatred and the desire for payback.

You ask me, of the two of them, Netanyahu has proven himself the bigger idiot.

## **II: RANDOM THOUGHTS**

*(John Herbert, Facebook, February 14, 2025)*

- We are used to American administrations which are indifferent to Canada. But having an administration that is openly hostile to us is something none of us ever thought we'd see.
- The biggest threat to us may not be that the US will take us over, but that it will fall apart before our eyes. It already has an administration that seems intent on taking itself apart piece by piece. We all knew that this was the century that the American empire would crumble; who knew that we would watch it live in real time as its leaders did it to themselves intentionally.
- And this is precisely the wrong thing to do if you're planning to expand your imperial footprint. (Canada, Greenland, Panama Canal, Gaza....did I miss any? I'm sure more will be added to the list as time goes on.) Annexation on that scale would be a huge project – you would need a government operating at peak efficiency to accomplish the task, not in total chaos as it is right now. For instance, President Felon wants to put an American presence into Gaza. One would think that a strong intelligence-gathering service would be a must before launching such an endeavour, yet Felon has offered severance to every member of the CIA, and has mused that he will dismantle the agency.
- Where are our G7 and NATO partners in all this? How are these organizations going to operate when one member is openly boasting that it will annex another? I suspect that there are a lot of quiet back-channel conversations going on, but it would be nice if some of our friends spoke up publicly.
- Speaking of speaking out, where is Canada's King in all this? Someone is threatening to take over his realm and nary a peep. Why do we have a monarch anyway?
- More drugs, illegal migrants and guns come from the US into Canada than go the other way. Much more. Why are our politicians not pointing this out and demanding action from the US on this issue?
- For all his tariff bluster, few of Felon's tariffs have actually kicked in. He has cancelled or delayed them at the last minute. At some point, he has to actually activate them or they become useless as a bargaining chip. Maybe it's time to call his bluff. Looks like we have nothing to lose at this point.
- Felon has torn apart decades of goodwill between our countries, and has damaged, perhaps fatally, the largest trading partnership in history. The relationship between us has been forever altered, and even if the tariffs never come in, the economic and social upheaval done to both countries over the next decades will be incalculable. It seems that the US is intent on not only simply attacking all its friends, but on having no friends at all.
- Canada has two settings: 1) I'm sorry; and 2) you'll be sorry.



*Is this a Canadian-built economy-size sub?*

## All the News that Fits

### **Aurora Awards Nominations Now Open**

CSFFA members\* can nominate works done in 2024. Members may nominate up to five different works in each of our 10 categories.

We ask that you only nominate in categories if you are familiar with the eligible works. Our nomination form closes at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 5th.

Review eligible works via our eligibility lists. A basic list is open to the public from our main website page,

Even after you've saved your choices you can return another day and add to, or alter, your prior choices. When nominations close your choices are locked.

Note: Members who nominate the same work multiple times in a category will have all of those submissions voided.

The 2025 Aurora Awards ballot will be the five highest nominated works in each category. Only works that make it to the final ballot can be deemed Aurora Nominees.

(\* Membership to CSFFA (Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association) is open to Canadian citizens and Permanent Residents.

(Murray Moore, Facebook, March 3, 2025)

See:

<https://www.csffa.ca/2025/03/nomination-form-for-the-2025-aurora-awards-is-now-open/>

(Cliff Samuels, email, March 3, 2025)

## **CSFFA Professional Development Grants 2025**

“It is the vision of the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (CSFFA) to promote and showcase Canadian writers of science fiction, fantasy and all their subgenres and to also support writers in a process of education and growth. To further that vision, we are proud to open the 2025 Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association Professional Developmental Grant period.

“This grant is to enable CSFFA members to pursue education and professional development that helps them expand their skill set. Starting in 2023 we will be awarding a total of \$2,500.00 over the year to new writers, writers new to the genre or writers changing focus, for example short story to novel.

“This Grant will be awarded to a successful applicant or applicants to cover up to 75% of the cost of developmental avenues such as:

- Courses
- Retreats
- Writing software
- A book coach or editorial fees for their first book

“There will be two submission windows in 2025. The first is January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>, with funds awarded by May 15<sup>th</sup>, and June 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>, with funds awarded by Oct 15<sup>th</sup>.

“Funds will be distributed at the discretion of the Board and based upon applications submitted per submission windows until the full amount of the grant is paid out. Any unawarded funds will be distributed at the discretion of the Board or rolled over into the next grant year.

“Successful applicants will be contacted by CSFFA and an announcement will be made on our website, newsletter, and/or during the Aurora Awards.

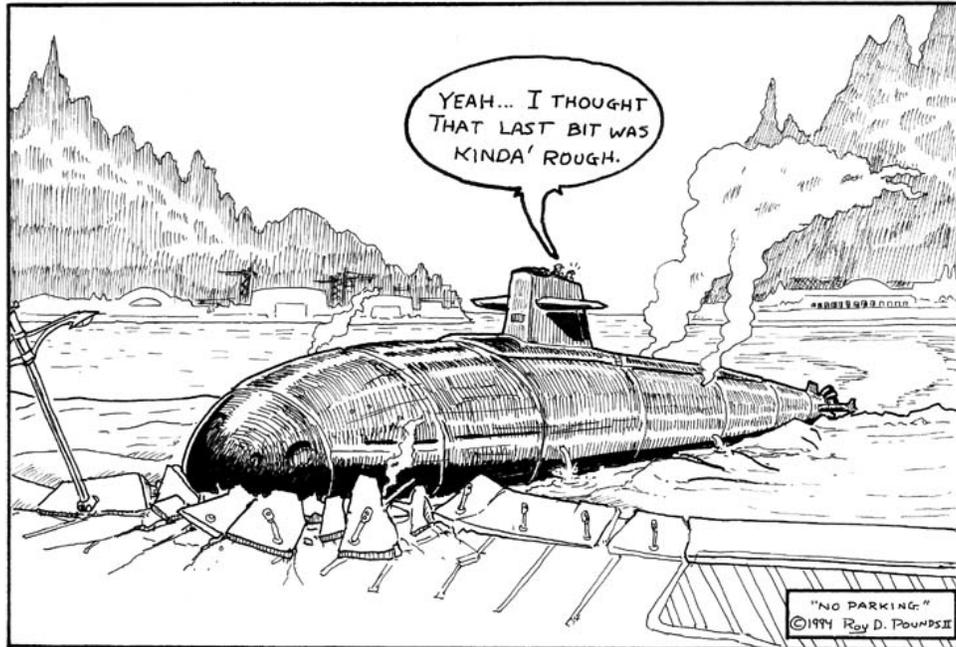
“For detailed application guidelines, please visit our Professional Development Grants page [here](#).”

*(CSFFA Newsletter, February 2025)*

## **New Rules for Old: U.S. Copyright Changes**

Presented without comment.

<https://venturebeat.com/ai/u-s-copyright-office-says-ai-generated-content-can-be-copyrighted-if-a-human-contributes-to-or-edits-it/>



*Driving Lesson*

## Fanzines Received

This month I have gone way over my usual deadline for producing *The Obdurate Eye*, and will simply acknowledge receiving:

*Stf Amateur* #17; *SMOF News* #4:23 and 4:24; *Tightbeam* # 365 (Feb 2025); *SF Commentary* #118 & #119; *Fan Activity Gazette* (Feb 2025); *La C'hronica* (newsletter of the Kingdom of Talossa, Jan 2025); *CSFFA Newsletter* (Feb 2025); *Captain Flashback* #75; *Universal Life Church* newsletter (Feb 2025); *This Here ...* #84; *The National Fantasy Fan* (Feb 2025); *The N3F Review*; *Perryscope* #51; and a special feature, *The Old Farey's 2025 All-Fanac Almanac*, patterned on *The Old Farmer's 2025 Almanac*!!