

N'APA 275

March 2025



The Official Organ

#275

Next deadline: May 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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Brownian Motion #12

An apazine from Garth Spencer

For N'APA #274, January 2025

To the Mast of a Sinking Ship

I've been resisting this for a long time, but I have to admit that the fandom I joined in the 1980s doesn't exist in my part of Canada anymore. I don't have the resources to go to general-interest, fan-run conventions regularly; I can only correspond with fanzine fans elsewhere; my interests are represented by no local SF events, and in fewer and fewer regional conventions.

So be it.

#

There used to be a widely shared, level-headed attitude that people are going to have different family cultures, including subscribing to different god-shops, political parties, and sports teams, and that it takes all kinds to make a community. Some people remember this and some people don't, in our generation. You have to wonder when good sense went out of fashion and when people will regain it.

#

There used to be another widely-shared, level-headed attitude that this is a civil society, not a religious one, but the widely-shared misconception that ours is a Christian country – not to say a Protestant, or Presbyterian/Calvinist/Baptist one – seems to have overwhelmed the level-headed attitude. Guess it's a matter of who advertises widely on broadcast and social media, or how sheltered a lot of people's lives are. If North American schools adopted the policy of British schools and had comparative religion classes, it would be another matter, but it isn't like that's going to happen.

#

Canadian Unity Fan Fund Officially Ended

Garth Spencer, the last CUFF delegate, has declared the fan fund over and done with, cancelled, ended, and dead of attrition. In the last CUFF newsletter, he wrote:

"Despite my best efforts to spread the word to conventions and clubs, very few people have responded. I really didn't realize how *unknown* fan funds are, to contemporary fans.

"Very few people have made bids on the items CUFF offers for sale.

"No Canadian conventions have offered to host a fan fund delegate. This is a problem because scheduling the CUFF nomination and election process depends on when the

destination convention is scheduled. (Nominations and election also depend on fans knowing about, and participating in this fan fund.)

“Nobody has expressed an interest in standing as CUFF delegate in 2025 or 2026. Admittedly, I haven’t gotten as far as soliciting candidates.

“So, I’m giving up.

“If fans in Canada just don’t know or care what a fan fund is, there is not much point in doing this anymore.”

(Garth Spencer, *Shooting My CUFFs* #13, January 2025)

#

The Very Last Orycon

from the OryCon 45 chair, Diana Cerasin:

“As many of you have heard by now, the OSFCI board of directors voted on the competing bids for OryCon 45. Both bids were given time to present their ideas and goals, and both were opened for questions and commentary from everyone present. The OSFCI board voted in favor of the bid I submitted; part of this bid was an agreement that OryCon 45 will be the final OryCon-branded convention supported by OSFCI.

“Our reasoning for this condition is to create space for OSFCI and the fan community to innovate: new panels, new structures, new creative outlets.

“We want to foster an expansion of ideas, for what kind of convention you would like to see, even possibly a one-day event. There is room at the table for you. The world has changed since the birth of OryCon. Technology, social media, and our community has grown in so many ways.

“I want to celebrate OryCon's history by inviting as many past Guests of Honor as possible to be panelists. I want to remember the good times, the laughter, the community at large. I have assembled a staff of individuals who have the desire to share their love of the fan community, the authors, the artists, and the vendors. We want to bring this dream to you.

“As the cliché says, when one door closes another opens. Another desire is that we mentor and prepare a younger generation to explore these new avenues of the expressions of our fandom. My vice-chair Louisa Ark is an example. A second-generation convention runner, she's taking advantage of this opportunity to learn first hand what it takes to run a convention: what works, what doesn't, and how they can improve upon what's been done in the past to make any future project they work on shine.

“We want your ideas of what innovations you see in the future of an Oregon Convention, new panels, new fandoms. Until then, our vision is to make OryCon 45 be the best one that we possibly can. Stay tuned for upcoming announcements of guests of honor and what we have in store for this year.”

(Diana Cerasin:

<https://www.facebook.com/orycon/posts/pfbid02HCuFzJHS1keYEc4ddRDehzFZchyGGqpTftAZ594LaN3fb6RDneBZaZerRCJqecTRL>)

#

Broken Pencil Goes Out of Publication

Hal Niedzviecki, founder of *Broken Pencil Magazine*, announced its closure on November 30, 2024. He wrote:

“... I have been honoured to hear directly over the years from so many zine makers and authors who told me that a review in *Broken Pencil* changed their lives, giving them a sense of community and direction when they felt alone in their creative pursuits. For 30 years, *Broken Pencil* stood for self-expression, a celebration of the unconventional, and a home for self-described “weirdos” – like me – who sought refuge from mainstream culture. Our coverage ranged from showcasing Hong Kong democracy agitators and indigenous environmental artists to exploring niche creative works, from punk rock to vegan cooking to Afro-futurism, always in the spirit of free speech.

“Unfortunately, the values of the zine and small press community have shifted. In recent years, the relentless pursuit of ideological purity and identity politics has overshadowed the core mission of *Broken Pencil*. Recent events, including online harassment over my personal beliefs, a petition demanding that I resign from the publication I founded, that the magazine formally support the Boycott Divest And Sanction Israel movement and devote an entire issue to the conflict in Gaza, and the withdrawal of authors and sponsors from our Canzine festivals in Ottawa and Toronto, are emblematic of a broader issue. This cultural environment has become incompatible with the values of free speech, independent thought, and meaningful dialogue. ...”

(<https://brokenpencil.com/news/broken-pencil-1995-2024/>)

The Jade Ring (Finale)

I need more time to work out the ending of this story.

Mailing Comments

Nice cover on the last mailing.

Intermission #147 – Ahrvid Engholm

Interesting to read about the range of SF magazines that used to exist. For a couple of years I sent people satirical Christmas gifts, usually collected fiction in the guise of a nonexistent magazine titled *Boring Mundane Stories*.

Your piece on Bjorn Ranelid sounds suspiciously like a satire on Tom Clancy, or Clive Cussler, or possibly Scotland’s worst poet, William Lyon McGonagall.

Mr. McGonagall was known in the 19th century for his weak grasp of scansion, rhythm and rhyme, and his sometimes tasteless choice of topics, such as the collapse of a bridge on the river Tay. He had a sort of mock fandom that mobbed his readings and carried him about on his shoulders, so he innocently believed that his poetry was genuinely popular and widely enjoyed. The mid-20th-century American humorist Ogden Nash modeled his “poetry” on McGonagall’s.

I tried to download *If Crisis or War Comes*, but your link didn’t work. Good thing, then, that you printed excerpts.

Re your comments to me, specifically about the Canadian Unity Fan Fund: As you will have seen, earlier in this apazine, I have given up. I could see the writing on the wall.

Ye Murthered Master Mage #273 – George Phillies

Thank you for your kind remarks about my fanfiction.

The latest episode in your own story is bit talky; no obvious action or advance to the story, except to clear the air between two parties, and to lay out some of the elements for a Plan. I was a bit confused, a quarter to a third of the way into this episode, as to who was doing what and with which and to whom.

Archive Midwinter – Jefferson P. Swycaffer

Re your comments to me: the concern about archived information being lost is well taken, and some parties are making efforts to preserve it. But, as you point out, movements such as the microfiche fans can rise and then fade away to nothing. Gregory Benford, among others, has written about the challenges to preserving records and messages for far future generations; I suspect that nothing will last better than etched glass, silicon-based paper, or carvings in stone.

Based on your descriptions, I have missed a lot of good reading, not having seen many of George Phillies' works.

Intermission #148 – Ahrvid Engholm

Interesting to read about early computer systems whose output terminals looked like electric typewriters. I once encountered another early commercial computer system which also lacked a screen; it was based on the notion that you could type a standard or "boilerplate" paragraph of text saved on a magnetic Hollerith card, assemble a series of such Hollerith cards, and print out letters or reports from them on demand. Of course the design presumed that you had a letter-perfect touch typist to operate the machine, and a satisfactory way to label and index the cards for the blocks of text you wanted to assemble.

The kinds of things writers saw coming in the future – and those they didn't see coming – probably shows more about their grasp of developing technologies, and which ones are actually embraced by consumers. I was slow to grasp that, while flip phones and contemporary cell phones became nearly universal, clamshell phones appeared and then just disappeared. I am talking a pocket-sized design which opens like a book, with a screen on one side and a much-reduced keyboard on the other. Whether any hobbyists successfully build minicomputers on this model for personal use, I do not know. (I have determined that it's pretty difficult for me to source computer components here, for this or any other purpose.)

Re your comments to Henry Grynnssten: the lack of student engagement with schools, at least their curricula, is a chronic problem in North America.

The word "flum" caught my eye. Interestingly, a related idea crops up in the now-disused Chinook Jargon - /cultus coulee/, meaning roughly "pointless wandering

around.” (Chinook was for some generations very nearly a second language throughout the Pacific Northwest.)

Re your remarks to me – I see that you misunderstood what I said about trademarks, which I thought was perfectly plain.

Of course SF conventions are not, originally, commercial enterprises. *They don't have to be*, in order to trademark their names. In Canada and the U.S., the owners of trademarks can be individuals, companies, or *non-profit societies* instead of commercial entities. (Usually, the body that endures from year to year and oversees convention committees is a non-profit society, while each year's committee is ostensibly a separate body.)

Also as a matter of course, one trademarks a convention name in order to prevent naïve or fraudulent conrunners from using the same name as an existing convention.

This was all standard practice in North America by the 1980s. But I gather there are serious differences in Britain, not to mention the European Union. Would you care to define them, please?

Brandy Hall #9 – Mark Nelson

Your introduction to SF and fandom seems to have been about a decade later than mine. I mean that more often than not, my experience was that the medium is Text, and your experience is that the medium is Onscreen.

Samizdat #28 – Samuel Lubell

Re your comments to Ahrvid Engholm – I see your point about “common sense.”

There seem to be at least two cultures in conflict in the United States, wrestling with each other about appropriate reading matter in schools, appropriate viewing content in television shows, whether to allow either education about religion or education about sexual hygiene, etc., etc., and how to behave at public events such as SF conventions. Each culture defines its own “common sense” differently.

I don't expect a consensus to emerge any time soon.

R.A.I.L. #3 (Renovation And Innovation Letter) – Adrian Kresnak

I read this apazine with interest, but I don't have any comments, except I trust and hope that your thesis defence was successful and that you have now received your Master's degree!

INTERMISSION #151

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and intelligences not so artificial. Try @SFJournalen's newstweets, but we've been lazy with that (its future under Musk is like X the unknown...). Warnin: All your typo are belong to us! Math typo: 1+1=1.999... Late Jan '25.

Editorially: World Goes to Hell if Putin Prevails (But He Won't)

As the new (or recycled) US President unexpectedly began to threaten Greenland I felt my scepticism towards him validated. The guy wouldn't even rule out using force to get that ice-island! Invading a neighbour, haven't we recently seen that? On top of that, his "tariffs" against allies that makes *all* just lose. The serious world situation doesn't need friends bickering. Putin orders popcorn!

The Germans call it *Fingerspitzengefühl*, ie to have a feeling for what is appropriate - something Trump lacks. Yeah, he wants Canada too, and the Panama canal. We Scandinavians see Greenland as a part of us. Vikings settled there over 1000 years ago, the island is a part of (in federation with) Denmark. Greenland is Europe through her long, historic connection with us. And not for sale.

Mr Putin must feel vindicated when his colleague Trump threatens neighbours. But we should be aware of that Putin must – and dammit *will* – be stopped! If the Kremlin Czar gets his way Taiwan is threatened, the Baltic States, Moldova... Military expenditure will skyrocket, the world economy will suffer badly, and those who are afraid of a WWII would find we'd get much *closer* to such a disaster. Supporting Ukraine is to support yourself and the values we cherish! Giving them what they need boosts our own industry, and is an incredibly cheap compared to alternatives. Using our own military to finally stop despotes is way more expensive!

Some claim that Ukraine has no victory plan - which is dead wrong! The brave yellow and blue do have a plan: to stand up against the aggressor, causing him so extreme losses (soldiers, equipment, oil, economy) that he collapses. Such things happened before with Russia - 1917, 1991 - and is now looming again. When the realm of the crazy czar is in total disarray. Remember, a dictator always seem to sit safe on his throne...until the very moment he isn't. Syria's Assad was ousted in just a few days.

Here're facts on how Russia is near collapse:

* Russian losses are enormous! Personnel 1500-2000 per day, nearing 850 000 (!) dead and wounded. About 1/3 dead, of the wounded about half won't get back to service. That's Ukraine's figures, but independent Western estimates aren't far behind. Lost tanks, 10 000 – and analysts say they'll run out of old Soviet refurbished tanks in 2025. IFV/APCs 20 000 – they'll run out of those too. Planes and helicopters 700 – and those are very hard to replace without Western microchips and other sanctioned tech. 1/3 of the Black Sea Fleet sank – so it has been forced to withdraw. (Ukrainian losses, figure from November: 43 000 KIA, 200 000+ wounded. Bad, but a fraction of Russia's.)

* Millions of Russian family member are mourning and the population is becoming aware of what a disaster Putin's "three day war" is. It's increasingly impossible for Putin to fill up his ranks. All realise that signing up with his army is a death sentence. Recruitment plummeted 80% in January.

* The morale of the Russian troops is rock bottom. There are hundreds of videos of Russian platoons and units complaining about the deadly meatwave tactics, lack of equipment, no provisions, bad training, higher officers stealing paychecks... Russian officers by tradition bully their soldiers. They send the wounded to battle! Punishments are harsh. Behind the lines blocking units shoot anyone retreating. Several Russian commanders have been shot by their own due to their manners.

* While Russia creeps forward it's very slow, as the Ukrainians constantly trade tiny bits of territory to huge Russian losses. And the blue-yellow still hold parts of Kursk, tying up 100 000 Russians (and military worthless North Koreans). The Russians gain 0.5 km of farmland here a piece of forest there but hardly any settlements worth anything.

* The Ukrainians are mastering drone warfare much better than the Russians. They are ramping up drone production. Not only will they produce 2 million drones during 2025, of which 30 000 will be of long-range type (and a lot of drones come from Western crowd funding), but they are innovative also. The efficient sea drones was a new, Ukrainian invention that now comes with air defence missiles and daughter drones. They invented fire spitting drones with termite. They've put shotguns on drones for anti-drone warfare. They have drones with AI, optic fibres (jam proof), thermal sights for night use,

drones in swarms...

* To this add land drones, which recently (supported by flying drones) made military history's first unmanned combat assault. Their long range drones reaching up to 2000 km into Russia every night destroy oil refineries, military warehouses, command post, airfields, transport facilities (militarily legitimate targets, unlike the Putin terrorist who often target civilians).

* 1/3 of Russia's oil production is off-line, and that means both less fuel for Putin's planes and tanks (the dwindling numbers left) and less revenue to the war chest. Lately Ukraine has ramped up drone attacks, and with all long-range drones produced this year around 100 Russian targets are attacked every night. And many come through since the Russian air defence is very thin, and getting thinner since such installations are targeted too.

* The Russian economy is crumbling. The Ruble is shaking, hovering near 110 for just one dollar. To save what can be saved, increasing rumours say Putin will introduce strict withdrawal limits, which is the same as confiscating private bank holdings. That'll will destroy public trust in banks and the economic system and contributed to the USSR collapse. Putin had a big "national wealth fund" which is now 2/3rds depleted, so there's shrinking means to defend the currency. And much in this fund is investments in Russian firms, 1/5 th them are reported being close to bankruptcy. A big part of the shrinking reserves is! Russian banks have been forced to give unsecure "loans" to Russian military industry, so many banks now stand on the cliff's edge. The "official" inflation is 9.5% but independent studies of the real price rise is more like 25%, and increasing. Russia is coming close to hyper inflation, and since many remember the USSR collapse people are beginning to panic.

* With a central bank interest rate of 21% (in the west usually 1-4%) the real estate market has crashed (no one can afford the resulting +30% interest rate) and companies can't fund investment. Russian economy hits the brakes! "Officially" Russian economy is claimed to grown with 1% or so, but its destructive "Frowth", just increased production of military gear, with no peacetime use, id sent to Ukraine to be destroyed again. (Ukraine's economy isn't perfect, but holds up much better because of international support.)

* A major reason for Russian economy going down the drain is that energy export becomes increasingly impossible. Not only are gas pipelines closed and oil production hammered by Ukrainian drone attacks (taking out up to 30% of Russian refinery capacity!), but fewer and fewer want to buy Russian oil and gas. More sanctions hit the "shadow fleet" used for oil export (with many ships in poor shape, falling apart – like recently in the Black Sea, causing massed death among birds and dolphins). Hundreds of Russian ships are now banned from Chinese and Indian ports, due to fear of sanctions if allowed to dock. Trump promised "drill, baby drill" in his inauguration speech which with increased US production will lower the price and deprive Putin of cash. Energy exports have been financing the "special mindless operation", a funding now shrinking fast.

* Russia lost the naval base in Syria, stopping Africa ambitions, and are under tight scrutiny in the Baltic Sea. After several cut pipelines and cables, NATO has sent a substantial task force to stop more sabotage (Sweden doesn't have to send her navy to the Baltic, being *in* the Baltics - several units take part). There is talk about generally stopping Russian-affiliated ships as they pose a threat to the environment.

* Russian infra-structure (electricity, plumbing etc) is falling apart since it hasn't been maintained for decades. Funds for it have been stolen in corruption. Finland siezed a ship after a lost cable. Sweden recently did the same (a ship with Chinese owners). Charges of sabotage expected, as it has a damaged anchor (a "horn" broken off) from dragging it.

There's more pointing to a Russian collapse. We hear of sabotage in Russia - recruitment offices, trains, electricity substations, police vehicle etc are moloved every night. Russian propaganda (very active, especially on Internet) is losing its credibility as things go south and even more draconian laws are introduced. Russian weapons export has collapsed as their gear has shown to be sub-standard.

So what will happen with the war? At the time of writing we know nothing of Trump's plans. TV's wise guys claim he wants to force Zelensky and Putin to negotiating by promising Putin less sanctions and Zelensky more weapons. But Putin is probably refusing (he wants all of Ukraine) while Zelensky grudgingly agrees. Zelensky may get more weapons and Trump's ear. Trump *could* in the



Sweden's Special Operations Group seized a Chinese owned ship suspected of cutting an Internet cable. See anchor with a "horn" *teared off from being dragged.*

end be better for Ukraine, or am I too optimistic? An additional point is if Putin comes out on the top, Trump would seem like a loser. And he *hates* that.

If everyone says no to Trump, the war continues. And then it may end with Russian collapse (see above) in about a year. If Trump backs way from the war, Europe has to step in and increase its help (which we can - the EU economy is 17 bigger than Russia's), Russian collapse may then take longer, but it will come.

If Trump gets them to the negotiating a cease-fire, Ukraine will still not recognize land under Russian control as anything but Ukrainian, just "temporary occupied". Zelensky has in such a case spoken of getting the territory back "by diplomatic means". I suspect such means involve trading eased sanctions for land, so whatever happens - *sanctions must stay*. It's very important that we never ease sanctions without concrete Russian concessions. *Slava Ukraini!* --Ahrvid Engholm

How the Mighty Have Fallen...

When I heard of the latest adventures of Mr Neil Gaiman, I came to think of the famous case of the Swedish police chief who had earned the nickname Captain Gown... ("Kapten Klänning", mugshot name Göran Lindberg.)

This gentleman was known as the defender of women's rights in the police department. He held lecture on gender equality and feminism. Female officers would always find his support.

Every day. Daytime.

Nights were different. Captain Gown sat grooming on his computer, combing through teenager and dating sites, especially looking for under-aged girls. He set up dates in hotels and then raped them. His fellow officers finally caught up with him, and in 2010 he was convicted to 6 years in prison for rape, buying sex, pimping, violent assaults... It was a total of 23 charges.

Go to New York Magazine: <https://nymag.com/tags/neil-gaiman/> to read about another feminist, "How the bestselling

fantasy author Neil Gaiman hid the darkest parts of himself". You can easily find more about Gaiman's dark secrets. There are hundreds of sites and the sf and fantasy world is in a huge shock. While Mr Gaiman claims he has "never" had sex with someone without consensus, when we learn that his idea of romantic sexual enjoyment includes vomits and urine I find the "voluntary" claim hard to believe. Gaiman's sex games are utterly *disgusting*! For me it'll be impossible to read anything Neil Gaiman has written without thinking of puking and pissing. Who would have thought?

There are more examples of shocking double lives. TV stars seem especially susceptible. They reach huge successes on the screen and begin to think they can do anything, because they are irresistible and invincible. In Sweden. One Paolo Roberto, hosting some of our most popular reality and game shows, was caught pants down on a brothel. (Buying sex is illegal here.) Since, he's off the screen, or shown 10 seconds pathetically trying to explain it all...

But even more impressive is one in the jury of the very top game show named "Let's Dance", a Mr Dermot Clemenger. He is presently *on the run from an international arrest warrant* for 30+ brothel visits (the number indicates there's evidence in the form of payment tracks). Mr Clemenger, originally from Ireland, is believed to hide somewhere on the British isles. Tracking him is in the papers here daily. The latest news is that British police has finally given in (after some doubt, buying sex isn't illegal in the UK) and will help with the hunt. We'll see how it goes.

TV stars are constantly being caught using narcotics. It's too common to dig into, and drugs is something you do to yourself, while sex crimes is done to others. Bordering sex we some years back had the finance minister jumping nude on a table doing "the helicopter" - if you can imagine it! A minister of the labour market was accused and probably guilty of brotheling. The same goes for the nephew of our Queen Silvia. Our king, Carl XVI Gustaf, was in the 1990s accused of infidelity with a pop star (somewhat unclear, neither have confessed). It was huge a few years ago when the husband of a member of the Swedish academy was charged with sexual assaults, a scandal lasting



Would you buy a used typewriter from this man?



Captain Gown.



Wanted and on the run.

for months, topping the news, shaking the cultural establishment like an earthquake of magnitude 8 or 9. Recently we had a member of the Stockholm region government who resigned after being filmed masturbating on a local train. (He was gay BTW. Gays seem to be more susceptible to questionable sexual behaviour because they constantly see the whole world through sex glasses.)

If you go to #135 you see about the dystopian but also hard core P Swedish movie "Breaking Point", connecting to local fandom as the male lead is father of known Swefan AB. Who would have thought! (This Son of a B was also the one - with a translator/critic accomplice – falsifying fan fund votes purloining a substantial heap of money. A huge scandal resulting in a wave of gafiation.) Before the exploits of Neil Gaiman I suppose the previously biggest scandal in the sf world was around pedophile Walter Breen in the 1960s (tell me if you know of other such things!), with wife Marion Zimmer Bradley being accused of knowing it but being totally passive. (Though the daughter accuses her of more: <https://www.gaudiummag.com/p/the-dark-side-of-fantasy-and-science>). Nobelist Alice Munroe had been accused of similar things, as her husband sexually abused their daughter. Way back, dear old HG Wells was horny as hell, often dwelled in inappropriate bedrooms and got an illegitimate daughter.

When you least expect it, out pops a scandal. That Isaac Asimov ran around fondling boobs on conventions comes through as rather mild in comparison...

Congrats Kjell, 85!



The Great Author in the middle. Won't name everyone - missed some names - but many are Short Story Masters.

Sweden's probably "most author", our own Isaac Asimov (but only guilty of around 300 books...) Kjell Genberg was 85 Jan 16. We gathered in his home by the Bromma airport to celebrate, especially the Short Story Masters society that Kjell co-founded 20 years back. We sat in the living room chatting, coffee and drinks also present, and finished with a yummy "sandwich cake" in the kitchen.. ("Sandwich cake" is a Swedish speciality. It's like in ordinary cake but no sweets or cream, instead ingredients like prawns, ham, mayonnaise, cucumber, caviar, vegetables etc.)

I came to know Kjell 25+ years ago, as I began writing for his DAST Magazine. My first articles there were in the late 1990's and I tended to have something in almost every issue (it was a quarterly). The common denominator was Bertil Falk – whom I had known much longer - who also dragged me into the Short Story Masters society, as he knew I had been writing short stories for many years.

Kjell is still quite active writing but doesn't know exact number of books (it should be ca 300). I've read some, and they are quite OK if you are worried - especially his crime fiction. He has also written eg a long Wild West paperback series, a sea adventure recently translated to Russian, non-fiction about the international Mafia, non-fic about the Wild West, some science fiction even. I especially recommend his autobiographical *Ur min skottvinkel* ("From My Angle of Aim"), which beside telling about his interesting life (he was earlier eg manager of a successful pop group) also give us good writing advice. This enjoyable book is a little like Stephen King's *On Writing*.

Had both coffee and some whisky after the cake. And left in the evening as the aeroplanes merrily roared, from the Bromma airport nearby. Congrats Mr Genberg!



Enjoying sandwich cake.

Congrats Thor, 127!

...but it would have been quite a sensation if actor and comedian Thor Modéen was now! He'd be 127 years old. Anyway, since some years back we gather by Thor's grave on the Adolf Fredrik churchyard on his birthday - friends Martin, Anna-Lena, Esse and others tend to be there - to celebrate this Tour de Force on his birthday Jan



Me, Lars, Martin and Anna-Lena.



Thor Modéen, king of lager films!

22. And then we go home to Thor's daughter Margareta for some food, chatting, singing and silly stunts. We are usually 20-25 persons who all are interested in old Swedish films. Thor made a lot of films, the most famous is perhaps "Pensionat Paradiset", "Boarding House Paradise" - especially the genre known as "pilsnerfilms" ("lager beer films", or I just call it "lager films"). The lager films are the lightweight comedies of the 1930s and 1940s.

The term pilsnerfilm/lager film was according to <https://www.svd.se/a/841ae36b-0e07-4415-94c4-2aee9c22bf40/varfor-heter-det-pilsnerfilm> (try AI translation!) coined by an unnamed critic in the newspaper Svenska Dagbladet in 1933, explained this way: "film of the simplest constitution, with elements tacky comedy (around drinking lager beer etc). If you mix an appropriate amount of farmer's maid novels with an appropriate amount of Swedish humour you get a lager film".

To this comes that Sweden at the time had an alcohol rationing system, and rather weak lager beer was the only beer not rationed. So



Håkan was a sort of toast master. Sitting is Thor's son Lars (looks angry but wasn't, he was awarded a book about Charlie Chaplin).



Margareta, dressed as a cleaning lady, was awarded a blow-up of a magazine cover with Thor.

"pilsner" (a lager type of beer originating in Pilsen in then German speaking part of Czechia) became a symbol for something that was a bit so-and-so. These films resulted in a long debate, many high-brows thinking they were a shame and films should aim for higher cultural values. Me, like many others, say: *What's wrong with something being light-hearted and entertaining!*

I have myself always been interested in older culture and I have a special place in my heart for old black and white movies. I also tend to like things that others for some reason despise... I say: what's bad isn't so bad.

Anyway, at Margaretas place we first had tasty root mash with very tasty salted meat, and then Håkan brought forth a sing-along folder from which we joined in popular hits from the 1940s. On the way to the "fish pond" to catch candy and toys we would pass Margareta's little Thor Modéen exhibition. We would then take some more beer and snaps and coffee and Margareta came dressed up as a cleaning lady (a character familiar to lager movies) and some awards and presents were handed out. One of the highlights of the year!

Brilliant times, wonderful times! To quote Thor.



Eating. Margreta's food is always excellent!

HISTORY CORNER

10 dagars räkneproblem löser elektronhjärna på någon sekund

Minnemaskinen — annan häpnadsväckande nyhet inom elektronvetenskapen.

London, fredag. Även från avstånd. Elektronhjärnan är i stånd att lösa invecklade matematiska problem på bråkdelen av den tid en matematiker skulle behöva. Speciella beräkningar av projektilbanor som nu tar omkring tio dagar utföra av denna apparat på fyra sekunder. Komplicerade kalkyler som vetenskapsmännen ägnat år åt kan nu verkställas på några få timmar. Lösningen av många matematiska problem, särskilt inom integralkalkylen, fordrar en urskillnad och ett omdöme som förvärras genom erfarenhet. Även dessa funktioner, som hittills ansetts vara rent mänskliga, kan utövas av de apparater som håller på att konstrueras och som får en viss förmåga av minne, urval och bedömning. En av dem kan till och med skapligt spela ett parti schack.

Minnesmaskinen sade Lord Louis att den kommer att bli framtidens referensbibliotek, innehållande fantastiska mängder uppgifter som knappt skulle rymmas i miljontals böcker. Tack vare ett elektriskt system för registrering och hänvisning kan man genom att trycka på några tangenten få fram vilka varelser. Ordergivningen kan ske upplysningar man vill.

(TT fr. Reuter) Mänskligheten synes stå inför en revolutionerande utveckling som följd av de senaste landvinningarna på vetenskapens område, yttrade Lord Louis Mountbatten i ett tal till institution of British Radio Engineers, där han redogjorde för "elektronhjärnan" "minnesmaskinen" — två apparater som utgör ett gigantiskt komplement till de mänskliga sinnesförmågorna och därför inte betyder enbart en industriell utan en andlig omvälvning.

Elektronhjärnan utövar funktioner, liknande dem som hittills ombesörjts av de halvautomatiska delarna av den mänskliga hjärnan, sade han. Detta sker genom radiorör som påverkar varandra på samma sätt som hjärncellerna. En sådan apparat, vars egentliga namn är Elektronisk Numeral Integrator And Computer, innehåller 18.000 radiorör och förbrukar lika mycket ström som 100 elektriska värmeelement. Den mottar impulser som tillförs den på olika sätt och sorterar ut dem i enlighet med allmänna direktiv som lämnas av mänskliga varelser. Ordergivningen kan ske upplysningar man vill.

Something dominating the news today - beside Putin's war and Trump - is Artificial Intelligence. But earlier when I went through the Royal Library's newspaper archive, I found that the excitement was about the same when these new things called "computers" came in the 1940s and early 1950s. But at the time they were called mathematics machines or electronic brains. *Electronic brain* is a pretty cool term! Maybe we should call these new AI systems electronic brains? They have neural networks trying to emulate human brains, after all.

I found a stash of early computer newspaper clippings from my archive dig, of which most - if I remember - haven't been presented yet. So let's dip into how a small European country became computerised three quarters of a century ago. The situation is probably not very dissimilar from other smaller countries outside the leaders in the form of US (ENIAC) and the UK (Colossus), though computer development in the Soviet dominated Eastern Europe was much slower. ENIAC was presented in Norrskensflamman Nov 12, 1946: *10 Day Math Problem Solved by Electronic Brain in a Second*, reporting from a speech by Lord Mountbatten about the revolutionary electronic brain having:

...functions similar to half-automatic parts of the human brain. It's due to radio tubes effecting each others in the same way as braincells, he said. Such a machine, Electronic Numeral Integrator And Computer, has 18 000 radio tubes and use as much current as 100 electric heaters. It receives impulses injected in various ways and sort them according to directives given by human beings. It solves complex math problems and are/ ...calculating projectile trajectories taking ten days in four seconds, even remotely. Some complicated calculations scientists work on for years can now be done in a few hours. Solving many math problems, esp in calculus, needs a assessments from experience. These properties seen as pure human, are now in the machines being constructed, having a certain ability to remember, select and judge. One of them can even play decent chess. Lord Lotus sad the memory machine will be the reference library of the future, containing

fantastic amounts of facts that would hardly fit in millions of books. /Wikipedia, anyone?/Thanks to an electric system of registration and reference you get new information you want by pressing a couple of keys.

MATEMATIKMASKIN

kan nu konstrueras i Sverige.

Projekt redan klart på Teknis.

En matematikmaskin för lösning av komplicerade matematiska problem kan numera byggas inom landet, och de sakkunniga föreslår anskaffning av en svenskbyggd och en av utländsk tillverkning. Kostnaderna kan hållas inom den tidigare beräknade kostnadsramen eller 2 milj. kr.

Ett antal unga svenska matematiker och tekniker har under det gångna året studerat avancerad matematikmaskinteknik i utlandet, särskilt USA, och kan

(Forts. sidan 9: Matematik ...)



Docent Conny Palm.

Matematik ...

(Forts. fr. sid. 3.)

göra insatser vid en inhemsk tillverkning. Ett lovande projekt till en svensk matematikmaskin har inom tekniska högskolan i Stockholm uppgjorts av docent Conny Palm. Maskinen är avsedd att bli allsidigt användbar, alltså icke specialiserad på vissa typer av problem, och fullt modern samt beräknas få minst lika stor kapacitet som någon känd, färdigbyggd maskin.

Snabbheten svår att utnyttja.

— Vi har fått preliminärt löfte om lokaler på Tekniska högskolan för konstruktionen av den svenska maskinen, säger docent Palm, t. f. professor i tillämpad matematik vid högskolan, då Svenska Dagbladet frågar honom om saken. Jag har själv studerat de olika

typer av dylika apparater som byggts i USA och England. En av de första och bland allmänheten mest bekanta var "Eniac", som dock inte utgjorde någon idealisk lösning av problemet. Denna maskin byggdes nämligen under kriget, närmast för vissa militära uppgifter, t. ex. beräkning av projektilbanor. Och brådskan var så stor, att konstruktörerna inte hade tid att tänka igenom problemet så grundligt som de hade önskat. Det var ju också första gången som man förverkligade den djärva tanken att bygga en räknemaskin, som utför alla operationer med hjälp av elektronrör. Då elektronerna praktiskt taget saknar tröghet, arbetar apparaten så snabbt, att en av de största svårigheterna blir att helt utnyttja dess resurser och oavbrutet mata den med nya siffror och ekvationer.

Den svenska industrien har visat stort

intresse för saken och på många sätt lovat oss sin medverkan, säger doc. Palm till sist.

Den svenska maskinen färdig om ett par år.

Sakkunnigutredningen föreslår, att två anläggningar skaffas, den ena genom köp från utlandet och den andra genom tillverkning inom landet. Den från utlandet köpta maskinen beräknas relativt snabbt kunna stå till förfogande, medan den inom landet tillverkade beräknas vara färdig om ett par år.

De sakkunniga har varit generaldirektör N. G. Rosén, ordförande, samt professorerna S. Ekelöf, Göteborg, E. Vellander, Stockholm, I. Waller, Uppsala, och N. Zeilon, Lund. Sekreterare har varit förste amanuens G. af Sandeberg.

Teknikens män på långfärder i väster.



Svenska Dagbladet 8 Jan 1947 presented the technology delegation sent abroad, "Tech Men on Far Trip in the West". The caption says its six professors and three engineers, who will also visit France, UK and Benelux... studying chemistry, film, modelling, shipping, farming - and maths machines. They are P Hössjer, R Åberg, A Lindblad, A Johansson. A Liljeström, G Ambjörn. Å Bengtsson, N Liljegen.

USA, and have begun efforts for domestic production. A promising project for a Swedish mathematics machine is started by Conny Palm at the Technical Institute. The machine is to be generally useful and not specialised at certain tasks, being fully modern and will have equal capacity to any known, already built machine. /Speed Difficult to Use/ "He have temporary rooms at the Technical Institute to construct the Swedish machine," PhD Palm says, acting professor of practical mathematics at the institute, when Svenska Dagbladet asks him. "I have myself studied the machines built in the US and UK. The first and best known to the public is Eniac, but it's not an ideal solution for the problem. This machine was built during the war for certain military tasks, eg calculating projectile trajectories. And it was so much haste that they didn't have time to think the problem through. It was the first time they went with the bold idea of building a calculator using only electronic tubes. Since electrons have practically no inertia, the machine works so fast that a major problem is to use its resources and constantly feed it with numbers and equations. Swedish industry has shown big interest in this and promised to contribute in many ways, Palm ends. /The Swedish Machine Ready in a couple of Years/ The committee suggests two machines are obtained, one bought abroad one built at home. The machine from abroad could be operational relatively fast while the domestically build will be ready in a couple of years. /At the end a list of the committee members./

Here's more about the Swedish built machine, Dagens Nyheter 16 July 1948, **Mathematics Machine Will Be Made Here:**

It should be done by a government Mathematics Machine Council, costing 44 000 SEK/year /ca 8-10 years of an ordinary salary at the time/ and the cost for getting the equipment with peripherals is estimated to 1.7m SEK... /a very hefty sum at the time!/ Construction time estimated to two years, plus 6 months of preplanning. A site is available at the Technical Institute's older building at Queen Street. For the alternative buying a foreign machine, it is estimated to be running at least a year earlier.

Description not entirely correct - electronic tubes don't work as brain cells.

What the Swedes did after ENIAC was to send a big delegation abroad, to gather information about technology development from the war. The group set sail in 1947 and reported when they came back in 1948. From Svenska Dagbladet Jun 10, 1948, "Mathematics machines can now be constructed in Sweden - project already began at the Technical Insitute" (with pic of project leader Conny Palm):

A mathematics machine for solving complex mathematical problems can now be built within the country, and the experts recommends getting one built in Sweden and to buy one of foreign construction. The costs can be kept within the calculated frame of 2m SEK. A number of young Swedish marthematicians and technicians have the past year studied advanced mathemtics machines abroad, especially the

Matematikmaskin skall göras här

Matematikmaskinutredningen föreslår i sitt nu avgivna slutbetänkande att matematikmaskinutrustning både skall köpas från utlandet och tillverkas inom landet.

Detta bör skötas av en av regeringen tillsatt matematikmaskinnämnd. Årskostnaderna för nämnden beräknas till 44 000 kr., och kostnaden för anskaffningen av anläggningarna med tillhörande utrustning uppskattas till 1,7 milj. Ledamoten av utredningen professor Ivar Waller, Uppsala, föreslår i stället för matematikmaskinnämnden en av naturvetenskapliga och tekniska råden utsedd kommitté som skall sköta matematikmaskinfrågan till dess den första maskinen blir färdig.

But AFAIK, no mathematics machine was imported at this time. Those were "hand made" one at a time, and there weren't exactly machines available from the shelves. The first computer was ready in 1950, but used relays instead of tubes, and was named BARK (Binary Arithmetic Relay Calculator). It was slower than a tube-based machine but still pretty good. Anyway, it was an important step and, Aftonbladet Oct 15 1950 could report: *Mathematics Machine in Old Technical Institute begins earning back the money:*

The only mathematics machine in Scandinavia that was inaugurated last spring in the Old Technical Institute at Queen's Street is in full work and what from what we hear it is very diligent and has begun to earn back some of the big money it costed since industry have begun giving it big mathematics problems. The machine is a relative to the famous American ENIAC, which the academic world wants to call CONIAC /it didn't stick/. In record time and high precision it solves task from the military and geodesic institutions, yes, from all kinds of research. Another machine is planned but it may take a couple of years before it is ready to work. "It is especially good that industrial laboratories have discovered our services," the man behind it Conny Palm says to us.

Ny svenskbyggd räknemaskin
är den snabbaste i världen



Vid kalkylatormaskinen ses konstruktören, ingenjör Ragnar Westling, bankdirektör O. Norbeck och försämringschefen Stig Barfoelt.

En matematikmaskin, som gör 10 000 multiplikationer i timmen, är det senaste på kontormaskinernas område, ja man kan nog säga att den vällat behaglig upptändelse på kalkylmarknaden. L.M. Ericsson började konstruktionsarbetet för flera år sen, varvid man snart var på det klara med att använda företagets berömda telefonväxlare som s.k. räknepanel. Elektromojör Ragnar Westling är konstruktör, Stockholms sparbank vid Fredsgatan visade premiärmaskinen för Sv. D. på fredagen.

"We run a businesslike operation to help science, you could say."

Phone company Ericsson made their own relay machine which they they sold to bank, bragging it was the world's fastest (among relay-machines, at least). The speed was

measured in thousands of operations per hour, not per second...

Here from Svenska Dagbladet 4 oct 1951, *Swedish Built Calculator Fastest in the World*, beginning:

New Swedish built Calculator fastest in the world...A maths machine making 10 000 multiplications an hour is the latest in office equipment...L M Ericsson began construction several ago using the company's famous phone exchange switch

Matematikmaskinen i Går Teknis har börjat tjäna tillbaka pengar

Nordens enda matematikmaskin som i våras invigdes i Gamla Teknis vid Drottninggatan är i full gång och enligt vad AB erfar är den flitig och arbetsam och börjar tjäna in en del av de stora pengar den kostat sedan industrin i landet börjat ge den det stora matematikproblemet efter det andra.

Maskinen, som är en släkting till den berömda amerikanska Eniac-maskinen och som den akademiska världen efter dess svenske konstruktör kan emellertid behandlas åt gången. Oftast låter man den själv välja olika alternativ eller utvägar, man begävar den m. a. o. med en viss tankeförmåga. Men så här vår BARK-maskin — förkortning av binär automatisk reläkalkylator — också ett högt förtruffligt minne förborgat i sina rörliga och fasta register och telefonreläer.

Doc. Palm framhåller till sist att den nya planerade matematikmaskinen — den som skall komma om ett par år — blir ändå effektivare än den nuvarande. Den utrustas nämligen med elektronrör som ytterligare förhöjer minneskapaciteten.

ske upphovsman, doc. Conny Palm, vill kalla Coniac, inser med osviklig precision och på rekordkort tid uppgifter, som lämnas in från militära och geodetiska institutioner, ja, från forskningslivet alla områden. Ytterligare en maskin planeras men det tar ett par år innan den kan vara klar att börja arbeta.

Inte minst glädjande är att industrilaboratorier i landet tycks ha fått upp ögonen för vår verksamhet, säger matematikmaskinens högste övervakare docent Conny Palm till Aftonbladet. Vi driver sålunda en fullt affärsmissig rörelse till vetenskapens förmåga, skulle man kunna säga. Frånsett litet småkrangel, vilket man ju alltid måste räkna med så här i början men som tack vare våra många kontroller inte alls påverkar det slutliga resultatet, har arbetet slagit väl ut.

P. n. är maskinen sysselsatt med ett ballistiskt problem, det kanske mest invecklade hittills, eftersom det tar flera månader att lösa upp. Annars brukar tiden variera mellan 30 minuter och 14 dagar givetvis beroende på svårighetsgraden. Och ändå arbetar den här maskinen 10-20 gånger snabbare än människans snabbast ett



Docent Conny Palm
vars räknande undermaskin nu börjat göra skäl för sina kostnader.



BESK 1950's workplace. From the days when computers used blinkenlights and needed a room or two.

But it was of course necessary to build a tube-based machine as an electro-mechanic relay machine is too slow.

We began constructing our Binary Electronic Sequence Calculator, BESK, about the same time as BARK, but as it was faster and more complex it took longer. BESK was based on the so called IAS machine from Princeton University which contrary to ENIAC had the more modern von Neumann architecture (programs were stored in the memory). BESK was finished in the autumn of 1953 (though "official" inauguration was April 1st (!) 1954). English info: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BESK> Swedish article: <https://fof.se/artikel/2000/5/forsta-svenska-datorn-varldsbast/> (try AI translation!)



St: Robert Watson-Watt, känd som det engelska radarförsvarets upphovsman, hos dr Axel Wenner-Gren i Stockholm.

Datamaskiner för småföretagen från Wenner-Grens nya företag

Det behövs krafttag för att den svenska industrien skall kunna behålla sin konkurrenskraft under den redan påbörjade "andra industriella revolutionen". Alla industrimän är ense om detta, många kan ge recept på hur det skall gå till, men få har chansen att i kreditrestriktionernas tidevarv förverkliga sina idéer. Dr Axel Wenner-Gren är en av dem; det är en källa till glädje för honom, berättade han vid en presskonferens i hemmet i Diplomatstaden i Stockholm på tisdagseftermiddagen, att hans nya storföretag, Svenska Alwac a-b, kan hjälpa andra svenska industrier att hänga med i den snabba tekniska utvecklingen.

BESK used 2400 tubes and 400 diodes and is claimed to have been the fastest computer in the world for a few weeks, which I understand came from that they used the highest quality components. Those could be driven at a higher clock speed. It was a fine machine, operating until 1966! Today there's a mockup of the BESK control panel, at the Stockholm Technical Museum.

The Facit company (known for mechanical calculators) later made and sold transistorised, compatible BESK copies called Facit EDB, among other things used to develop the Swedish jet fighters of the period. Aeroplane company SAAB also made their own machine named SARA and later formed their a computer division named Datasaab. Another early computer was SMIL of Lund University.

BESK was a computer for hire. The military was the biggest customer, followed by other government agencies, but big private companies

would also buy computer time. One customer was the meteorology agency. ENIAC was early used to make "numerical" (using physics equations) forecasts, but as a 24 hour prognosis took 24 hours it wasn't very useful. BESK is said to have made the first useful 24 hour forecast, taking 15 minutes to calculate.

Machines mentioned this far were tax-paid government projects, but the famous businessman Axel Wenner-Gren wanted "Data machines for small businesses", on previous page discussing with UK radar man Watson-Watt (Svenska Dagbladet, Nov 7 1956).

An extra push is needed for Swedish industry to stay competitive in the beginning of the "second industrial revolution"...few have the chance, in the age of credit restrictions, to realise their ideas. Dr Axel Wenner-Gren is one...his new big company, Swedish Alwac Ltd, can help other Swedish industries to keep up with technological development.

His private low-cost computer project Alwac wasn't very successful, however, but it was presented in Expressen ep 67 1956, "New Calculating Robot to Stockholm":

The first copy of the Alwacs electronic brain came to Stockholm Early Friday morning. It came with boat from America where it has been manufactured by Logistics Research Inc, a big company owned by Dr Wenner-Gren. There he has hundreds of the most skilled American engineers working with constructing electronic brains. The machine arriving to Stockholm will in late september be a part of the "Kontor -57"

Ny räknerobot till Stockholm

Tidigt på fredagsmorgonen kom det första exemplaret av Alwacs elektronhjärna till Stockholm. Den kom med båt från Amerika där den tillverkats vid Logistics Research Inc, ett stort företag som ägs av doktor Axel Wenner-Gren.

Han har där ett hundratal av Amerikas skickligaste ingenjörer anställda för att arbeta med konstruerandet av elektronhjärnan.

Den maskin som kommit till Stockholm skall i slutet av september ingå i utställningen "Kontor -57". Den är utrustad med ett minne där man kan lagra tusentals ord och sifferkombinationer, som sedan kan användas vid olika arbetsoperationer. Elektronhjärnan utträtt på en minut en arbetsprestation som det skulle ta en människa en månad att utföra om han arbetade dygnet runt.

Atvidabergs nya elektronhjärna gör 23000 additioner i sekunden



Överingenjör Erik Stemme framför den automatiska enheten.

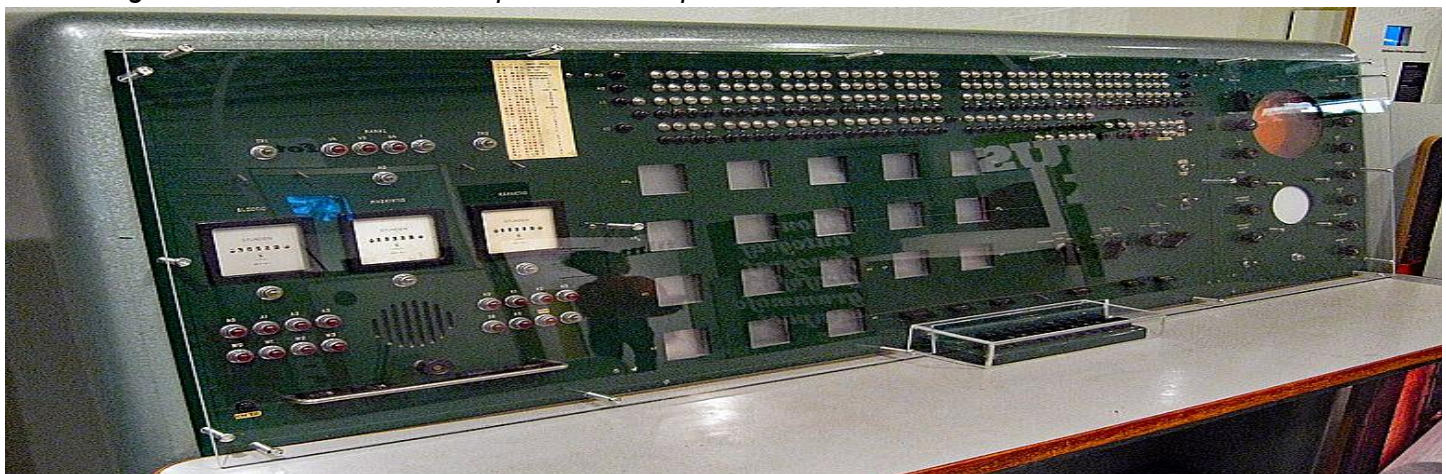
AB Atvidabergs industrier visade på tisdagen sin nya elektroniska data- och beräkningsmaskin Facit EDB som är uppställd i en särskild lokal vid Karlavägen i Stockholm. Facit EDB-central. Atvidabergschefen, direktör Gunnar Ericsson, framhöll att företaget energiskt kommer att fortsätta utvecklingen på det elektroniska området.

Den nya elektronhjärnan kostar 0,5 miljoner kronor och tillverkas på beställning med ett års leveranstid. Årets har redan köpt ett exemplar. Främst räknar Atvidabergs med att köpa ut sin EDB-central till myndigheter, företag och verksamheter, som har beräkningsproblem. Hyran är 300 kr per timme för körning av maskinen. Särskilda kostnader tillkommer för programmering och uppsättning av problemen varvid speciellt utbildad personal hjälper kunderna.

Atvidabergs har under många år beräknat vad som hänt inom elektroniken. För ett år sedan förvärfvade företaget den expertgrupp, som byggt matematikmaskinens Besk. Gruppen har nu lyckats få fram Facit EDB, som är den största i Norden och dessutom ännu mer avancerad än Besk.

Facit EDB härstammar i rakt nedstigande led från Besk som gett oss många erfarenheter, berättar expertgruppen leda, överingenjör Erik Stemme. Det är främst minnet och snabbheten som förbättrats och så har transistorer fått ersätta elektronrör. Maskinen kan utföra 23000 additioner per sekund av tolvstiffiga tal.

Atvidaberg's (=Facit) New Electronic Brain does 23 000 additions per second", says Dagens Nyheter Oct 2 1957. They offered computer time for 360 SEK/hour (about a month's salary) or the machine itself for 0.5m SEK. "Facit EDB is the direct descendant of BESK", says it's designer senior engineer Erik Stemme.



BESK's control panel. Middle (covered) keyboard. Left electricity dials and meters. Lamps etc show memory activity in the middle. Right: round oscilloscopes where curves from equations could be shown - normally results would be printed on an electric typewriter. Used 1953-1966. Who needs MS Windows!

Översättning kan nu göras med maskin

NEW YORK, 8 jan. (TT-Reuter) En elektronhjärna som kan översätta en text från ett språk till ett annat demonstrerades i New York på torsdagen. Några meningar på ryska matades in i maskinen under överinseende av en rad språkvetenskapsmän vid Georgetown University. Om ett par ögonblick skrev apparaten ut vad dessa meningar betydde — på engelska.

Bakom den sensationella konstruktionen står den stora firmen IBM — International Business Machines Co. Kärnan i apparaten är en elektronmekanism av den typ som tidigare använts för att lösa matematiska problem.

Apparaten kan användas som översättare från och till alla språk. Att man vid demonstrationen stannade för ryskan beror på att just detta språk vällat särskilt stora svårigheter i det internationella samfundet.

Den elektroniska översättaren skapar under arbetsprocessen ett eget konstgjort språk. Varje ord som apparaten behåller har försetts med "etiketter" som exakt preciserar dess olika betydelser i olika sammanhang. Skulle det svenska ordet "man" matas in i en översättningsmaskin finns i maskinens register vid översättning från svenska minst tre olika symboler för denna skriftbild beroende på i vilka sammanhang den uppenbarar sig: "En stor man", "Man glömlig utdömd" eller "Härens sviga man". De olika symbolerna representerar alltså både betydelsevarianter och grammatiska regler.

Vid torsdagens demonstration tillämpade maskinen endast sex regler, men detta var tillräckligt för att den skulle klara av de förslag som gjordes. Maskinens hjärna kan alltså inte tänka självständigt. Den måste laddas upp via en mänsklig hjärna — skriftbilderna måste erhålla sina varierande motsvarigheter. Men apparaten öppnar dock en ganska vida perspektiv.

Man har ganska länge vetat om att det går att bygga en "översättningsmaskin", framhåller svensk expertis. När det gäller att konstruera en sådan apparat har det svåraste problemet nog varit att kunna förse maskinen med ett tillräckligt stort "minne". Den kan ju inte tänka själv, alltså måste man lagra in hela lexika i dess "minne", som apparaten kan söka i när den skall översätta. Det säger sig självt att maskinen, om den skall fungera någotsnar tillfredsställande, blir både omfattande och mycket dyrbar. Kanske alltför dyrbar för att den skall kunna få någon större användning i praktiken.

who produce books as if they were automats, but publishers still look forward to a machine that doesn't ask for advances or complain about too little advertizing. These books could then be reviewed by machines by another electronic brain that says a book "has a message" or is "full of fresh, attractive sensuality". Then they invent the automatic publisher and reader, who buys books in a book automat, upon which the public may cultivate their cabbage in peace. Everything must be automated today! It's what counts today. Aeroplanes have autopilots. You get milk, cigarettes, chocolate, socks and camera film from automats. We have telephone automats. Heat is provided by automatic thermostats. In the kitchen are automats that grind, crushes, mixes, whips and kneads. The day isn't far away when it also eats the food it cooks. An automatic body manouevred by electric relays is already tested and seems to react more willing to follow the yellow lines than a human... All this should mean that the simple citizen becomes more and more comfortable and that he's the master of materials rather than the slave. But of course that won't happen. All who have put in their last three crowns into an automat's slot to get cigarettes understand this as the coin is stuck in the machine. And think of the little boy who once put a 0.25 SEK coin in a chocolate automat without anything happening. The child would then pound the machine with his fists until suddenly there was an eruption of coins onto the sidewalk. It was tempting to steal these coins, but the honest little boy dutifully put all the coins back into the apparatus so the owner wouldn't make a loss, upon which 12 bars of chocolate fell out that the innocent child - believing it was the reward for his virtues - ate immediately. When ordinary, simple street automats can cause so much problems you understand that a fully automated world must remain an

It has a memory that can store thousands of numbers and word combinations, to use in different operations. The electronic brain may in just one minute do what a man needs a whole month working 24/7 to do.

Meanwhile these electronic wonders found more and more uses, especially in the US. One thing we only now, 70 years later, begin getting right is language translation, though Svenska Dagbladet 9 jan 1954 announced: *Translations Can Now Be Done With Machine:*

An electronic brain that can translate from one language to another was demonstrated in New York Thursday. A few sentences in Russian was entered under supervision by a number of linguists from Georgetown University. Within a couple of moments the machine printed what the sentences meant — in English. Behind the sensational construction is the big firm IBM — International Business Machines. The core of the apparatus is an electronic mechanism of the type earlier used to solve maths problems. It can be used to translate from and to any language, but that Russian was selected is because this language has caused special difficulties internationally. The electronic translator creates its own artificial language during the work process. Every word the machine can use get a "label" telling its exact meaning in different circumstances. Should the Swedish word "man" be entered, the machine's registry has at least three different "labels" for this depending on where it appears. "man's" three different Swedish uses exemplified/ ...representing both grammar and shifts in meaning. At Thursday's demonstration the machine used only six rules, but they were enough to manage the sentences in question. The machine's brain can't think independently. It must be loaded via a human brain - it must be loaded with the variations. But the apparatus opens pretty wild perspectives. Swedish experts notes it has for a long time been known that a translation machine is possible. For building one the most difficult problem is to give the machine a big enough "memory". It can't think for itself so an entire dictionary must be stored for the machine to search through. It's obvious that the machine to work a bit satisfactory becomes both big and expensive. Perhaps too expensive to have any practical use.

But how about electronic brains writing original material? The Signature Red Top speculated in Dagens Nyheter Sep 23, 1953, "The Automatic Author":

At an American University they have installed a machine that can translate Russian to English. An "eye" in the apparatus /probably refering to a paper tape reader/ catches the words one by one, sends an electric impulse to a "brain" that finds it in a "dictionary" and then writes the translation on an automatic typewriter. The apparatus is a development of the electronic brain that these days helps technicians solve complicated mathematical problems in a fraction of the time earlier needed. But in the near future they also hope to constuct an electronic brain that can a u t h o r b o o k s. There are of course already authors

□ Vid ett amerikanskt universitet har man installerat en maskin som kan översätta ryska till engelska. Ett "öga" i apparaten fångar in de ryska ordena ett efter ett, skickar i väg en elektrisk impuls till en "hjärna", och sedan skriver ut översättningen på en automatisk skrivmaskin.

□ Dessa elektriskt översatta texter är inte bli så eleganta, eftersom maskinen inte är hemma i de subtilare böjningsformerna, men dock fullt begripliga.

□ Apparaten är en utveckling av den a. k. elektriska hjärnan, som numera hjälper tekniker att lösa de mest invecklade matematiska problemen på bekämda av den tid som för erfordrades.

□ Inom en snar framtid hoppas man också kunna konstruera en elektronhjärna som kan författa böcker.

□ Visserligen är det redan nu finnas författare som producerar böcker som automater, men bokförläggarna ser ändå med förvåning från mot en maskin som verkligen kan förskott eller klaga över att den får för små smorser.

□ Dessa böcker kan man sedan förmodligen recensera på maskinell väg i en annan elektronhjärna som säger att "de har ett ärend" eller att de är fyllda av "frisk, betagande sensualitet".

□ Därpå upptäcker man den automatiska bokförläggaren och den automatiska läsaren (som kiper sin bok i en bokautomat), varpå allmänheten i frid kan odla sin kål.

□ Över huvud taget allt skall numera automatiseras! Det är tidens lösen. Flygplan styras av autopiloter, mjölk, cigaretter, strumpor, choklad och film får man ut av automater. Vi ringer i automattelefon. Eldningen sköts via automatiska termostater, i köken finns maskiner som automatiskt mal matar, blandar, vispar och knådar. (Den dag här inte vara långt avlägsen då de också åter den mat de bager). En automatisk bil som helt manövreras av elektriska reläer har redan provats på en experimentbana och förefaller att reagera betydligt villigare för de gula strecken än människan...

□ Allt detta borde betyda att den enkla medborgaren fick det bekvämare och bekvämare, att han kunde bli materiellt berre och inte dess slav.

Men så blir det naturligtvis aldrig. Det förefaller var och en som stoppat in sina sista tre kronor i en springa för att få cigaretter nästintill och räkat ut för den målöten att mynten fastnat i anläggningen.

Och tänk på vår minsta gosse, som en gång petade in en tjuguföröring i en chokladautomat utan att något hände! Barnet hamrade då med sina små knytnävar på apparaten tills plömtligt en eruption av tjuguföröringar sprutade ut över hela trottoaren.

¶ Frestelsen att stjåla dessa slantar måste ha legat nära till hands, men den hederlige lille gossen stoppade samvetsgrönt in alla pengarna i apparaten igen, så att kassan inte skulle göra någon förlust. Varpå tålv chokladrakor föll ut, vilken det olyckliga barnet — i tro att det var dygdens belöning — omedelbart förtärde.

□ När vanliga, enkla gatautomater kan ställa till så mycket trasel begriper man att tanken på en helt automatiserad värld måste förbli en utopi och att det amerikanska universitetet med den ryska översättningsmaskinen gör klokt i att betrakta dess prestationer med en viss skepsis, om man inte vill att förhållandet mellan det och Väst skall bli ännu trasigare. Redan nu förefaller det att vara en skriv Me någonstans.

utopia and that the American university with a Russian translation machine should be wise to regard its feats with a certain scepticism, unless you want the east-west realtions to become even more difficult. Already now there seems to be a loose screw somewhere.

Poetrobot

En ung fransk vetenskapsman påstår sig ha uppfunnit en elektronhjärna, som skriver lyrik och känner till 20 gånger så många ord som 1700-talspoeten Racine. Meddelas till Eoa.

Poetroboten som fått namnet "Calliope", har byggts av den 30-årige fysikern Alberg Ducrocq. Den påminner något om en radioapparat och "tänker och skriver" genom att tända en röd och en grön lampor.

Lamporna tänds sig själva vilket gör att maskinen kan uttrycka sina tankar genom två siffror — ett och noll — vilka flätas samman till ord och meningar enligt ett särskilt utarbetat lexikon, berättar hr robotägaren.

Racines ordförråd inskränktes sig till 1500 ord. "Calliope" orkar utan svårighet med 35.000 ord, hävdar monsieur Ducrocq, som säger sig ännu avslöja alla detaljer så snart han avslutat prov på färgerna.

This may not have been very serious, but computers had begun writing simple poetry. In Hudiksvallstidningen, Apr 1 1953, we read about a "Poetrybot":

A young French scientists claim to have invented an electronic brain that writes poetry and knows 20 times the words the 16th Century poet Racine knew, Eoa reports. The poetry robot has been named "Calliope" and is built by the 30 year-old physicist Alberg Ducrocq. It somewhat reminds of a radio and "thinks and writes" by lighting a red and a green light. The lamps let the machine express its thoughts with two numbers - one and zero - which is tied together into words and sentences though a specially made dictionary, the robot owner says. Racine's vocabulary was limited to 1500 words. "Calliope" can without difficulty handle 35 000 words, mrs Ducrocq claims, and he intends to reveal all details as soon as he has finished his colour tests.

Beside writing poetry, translating, etc an electronic brain could also write music, Aftonbladet 7 jul 1956, "Machine Hit Song Opens on TV":

The world's first machine-produced hit song premieres on TV July 15.

Behind this feat is the new musical electronic brain from the Burroughs factory. The experiment is based on the principle that western music making in limited meaning is so complete that a machine being "fed" with complete composition technical data should be able to come up with a popular melody at least as fast as an ordinary composer. A spokesman of the factory's electronic machine department frankly confessed that the music robot, or the Datatone as it is called, is an electronic triumph but esthetically a failure.

The History Corner has several times covered Atomic Noah from 1945, that inspired by sf pulp stories of huge spaceships wanted to build one to save humanity from an atomic war (probably forerunner to Aniara, Harry Martinson being a club member!). The club was founded by engineers from the electric power company ASEA. Here we learn what they did with their new computer, a Swedish Facit EDB, ie a BESK copy: "ASEA's Mathematics Machine Sang Lucia this morning - 25 000 additions per second when it is at full speed", Expressen Dec 13, 1958 (Lucia is pre-Xmas celebrations).

The most original Lucia song was arranged by Master of Tech Bengt Kredell and his colleagues at ASEA Saturday morning. It was performed by the fantastic mathematics machine Facit EDB (1.9m SEK /ca \$400 000). the machine gives off a sound for every mathematics operation (max 25 000 additions per second). Every note equals a certain number of additions. By adjusting the addition speed to the notes and put it on a punched tape they calculated the Lucia Song...the machine played it clean and clear, unique electronic music without instruments. The only things missing was a mechanic robot Lucia with arc lamps and atomic split Lucia buns to high frequency coffee. To calculate the time tabel and fitting train time between Älvsjö and Södertälje would take three weeks for an expert mathematician. /Ed: Sounds wrong!! On Friday this was done in 3 seconds. Performing this fantastic calculation was the new mathematics machine Facit EDB. Åtvidaberg and its CEO Gunnar Ericsson officially delivered the machine to ASEA's chief of production, director Halvar Liander, on Friday. It is the first sold copy of Facit EDB. With needed peripherals it costed 1.9m

Maskinschlager får TV-premiär

NEW YORK (AB) Världens första maskintillverkade schlager får sin offentliga premiär i television den 15 juli. Det är Burroughsfabrikens nya musikaliska elektronhjärna som svarar för bravaden.

Experimenten grundar sig på den principen att reglerna för det västerländska musikskapandet i trängre mening är så pass fullständiga att en maskin som "inmatats" med fullständiga kompositionstekniska data bör kunna klämma ur sig en populär melodi minst lika fort som en schlagerkompositör.

En talesman för Burroughsfabrikens elektronmaskinavdelning erkände emellertid öppenlydligt på måndagen att musikroboten, eller datatronen som den kallas, är en elektronisk triumf men ett estetiskt fiasko. — TT-Reuter.

ASEA:s matematikmaskin sjöng Lucia i morse

25.000 additioner per sekund då den går för "full rulle"

Av BERTIL GILLBERG

VÄSTERÅS (Expressen). Landets originellaste Luciasång arrangerade tekniker Bengt Kredell och hans kolleger vid ASEA på lördagsmorgonen. Den utfördes av den snittiga matematikmaskinen Facit EDB (1,9 miljoner kr).

Maskinen ger ett ljud liksom sig för varje räknesoperation den utför. Omsett till 25 000 additioner per sekund. Varje not svarar mot ett visst antal additioner. Genom att justera additionsfästet efter tonerna och stanna in uppfästerna på en hålremsa har man räknat ut hela Lucia-låten.

När ingenstans Kredell på lördagsmorgonen förde in remsan i maskinen spelade den rent och tydligt upp Luciasången. Det blev unik elektronisk musik utan instrument. Men saknade bara en mekanisk robotlampa med bågglödlampor i lampstämorna och stumtavlans ljudkåst till det högfrekventa generatorkärl.

Tidtabell på 3 sek

Allt beräknas tidtabell och timplan för sträckan Älvsjö-Södertälje skulle ta tre veckor för en rymdmatematiker. På fredagen gjordes den beräkningen på 3 sek. Den som gjorde denna snittiga räknesoperation är den nya matematikmaskinen Facit EDB. Åtvidaberg med dess chef direktör Gunnar Ericsson överlämnade officiellt maskinen till ASEA produktionschef, direktör Halvar Liander på fredagen.

Det är det första affärs-exemplaret av Facit EDB. Med erforderliga aggregat kostar den 1,9 miljoner. Den har konstruerats av överingenjör Erik Stemme vid Åtvidaberg.

Maskinens produktionsfärdighet är rent fantastisk, säger direktör Liander till Expressen. Den skulle vid lite klara av de nuvarande beställningar, som är nödvändiga för tillverkningen av stormskåp.

Uppdrag per printer

Maskinen kan också via telexprinter få sina arbetsprogram. Det innebär tex att ASEA dotterbolag SPAL i Fläming kan ge maskinen ett uppdrag via printer, som den senare utför och överför redovisat. Ett fakturor på Åtvidaberg under ledning av tekniker Bengt Kredell har utvärderat i Facit EDBs matematikmaskiner. Det var också detta uppdrag som på tre veckor maskinen kunde utföra maskinens ljudbollar och tryck på etiketter sträckan Älvsjö-Södertälje. Sträckan är 14 mil lång och har tre stationer. Den avverkas på 44 min.

Strömkravet för maskin är 100 ampere och energiförbrukningen är exakt 131,71 kilowatt-timmar. Med dessa siffror som grund kan det lok, som utfördes på lördag, exakt dimensioneras.



Till och med på lördag i morse blev ASEA:s nya matematikmaskin Facit EDB levererad till Södertälje. Maskinen överlämnades på fredagen av Åtvidabergs chef, direktör Gunnar Ericsson, som står i mitten. Först utvärderades maskinens ljudbollar, sedan vid slutet av dagen gjordes räknesoperationer, som till exempel beräkningen av sträckan Älvsjö-Södertälje. Maskinen står till höger i bilden.

For technical reasons the original Swedish text above is a bit difficult to read, but you have the English translation. Pic caption: ASEA's new mathematics machine Facit EDB will save time and money in droves for the company. The machine was delivered on Friday by the Åtvidaberg CEO, dir Gunnar Ericsson, standing to the right in the picture. The designer, senior engineer Erik Stemme sits by the machine. ASEA's production chief dir Halvar Liander stands to the left.

Science fiction-författarna har naturligtvis för länge sedan spekulerat över möjligheten att en elektronhjärna en vacker dag inte bara börjar tänka utan också handla på egen hand, då naturligtvis de besynnerligaste saker kan inträffa. Vi lekarna däremot lever väl i allmänhet tryggt i medvetandet att en maskin förblir en maskin och att det inte kan komma mera ur den än man stoppar in. Men är det så alldeles säkert?

Nej, det är det inte, säger den kände matematikern dr Norbert Wiener, pionjär på detta område och grundare av cybernetiken, vetenskapen om kommunikationstekniken såväl hos djur som människor. "Det är min uppfattning att man kan överskrida en del av deras skapares begränsning". Först och främst kan de lära. När de hållit på och spelat "Fia" i tjugofyra timmar börjar de klara sina läromästare. För det andra handlar de så snabbt att vår förfärra att kontrollera dem inte tar i bruk förrän vi upptäckt faran och då är tiden för länge sedan försvunnen, säger Wiener, som erinrar om att han i sin bok om cybernetiken för tretton år sedan drog "den oroande historiska parallellen med den begåvade grekiske slavenfilosofen hos den mindre intelligenta romerske slavägaren, som dominerade sin herres handlinger änare än Attyde hans önskelningar".

Det må vara att dr Wiener överdriver en smula, men man bör hålla i minnet att elektronhjärnan ännu knappast trampat ur barnskorna. De som sysslar med dessa matematiska vidunder är övertygade om att vad oväntat om deras förmåga att spela "Fia" bara är en enkel början. Om någon generation kommer en elektronhjärna att slå världsmästaren i schack.

I Chicago upplevde musiktressorerad händelsen en sensation. Man fick nämligen höra en 25 minuters svit för stråkkvartett komponerad av en maskin kallad "Illiac" vid universitetet i Illinois. Det var en ganska andefattig historia, som kom kompositörerna av kött och blod att rycka på axlarna, men den hade alla fall tillkommit så att en musikprofessor och en matematiker matat in formel i maskinen, som sedan översatt dem till musikaliska termer. Musikprofessorn A. Hiller är övertygad om att maskinen en gång kommer att hjälpa kompositörer att uttrycka tankeprocesser, som är långt mera komplicerade än de som uttrycks i musiken av i dag.

SEK. It's been constructed by senior engineer Erik Stemme at Åtvidaberg. "The machines performance is short of fantastic, dir Liander says to Expressen. At full speed it does 25 000 additions per second. To solve an equation with 24 unknowns takes a seasoned mathematician four weeks working 10 hours/dag. This equation takes Facit EDB seven seconds..." For the machine to manage the giant tasks it handles it must have a program to work from. It is punched onto a tape. It's "tape reader" reads the program with a speed of 450 characters/second. The characters are stored in a "memory". And what a memory! It's buildt by 30000 small magnetic cores storing 2000 12-digit decimal numbers. As a curiosity it should be said that these magnetic brain memories are made by housewives as a spare-time hobby. /Ed: By knitting./ The mathematics machine is as big as a common summer cottage. It contains more than 2000 electronic tubes and it needs the same tender care as a newborn. Every day it must be washed for a couple of hours before put to work. The machine presents its calculations as normal text on an ordinary electric type writer. You can also get it in the form of a punched tape that can be feed into a telex machine and also be transfered to other places. The machine may also load rograms through teleprinters. This means eg that the ASEA daughter company STAL in Finspång can give the machine an assignment via teleprinter, which it executes fast and then presents. A team of eight lead by Master of Tech Bengt Kredell are trained to run the machine. It was this team that in three seconds could get the machine do the time table and tell if an electric train was needed Älvsjö-Södertälje. The stretch is 35 km long, has nine stations and takes 44 minutes. The current for the train is 180.3 Ampere and the energy needed exactly 191.7 Kwatthours. With these figures the train needed for the route can be given exact dimensions.

We've seen that these early electronic brains could translate, write, sing, compose, play games, predict weather, write poetry - just like we today marvel at how our Als excel in this! Their 1950s siblings were of course way more crude in their abilities, but everything we talk about now is yesterday's news! 3 /4 of a century ago there was even speculations about if electronic brains would become conscious and surpass their masters. From Sölvesborgstidningen Jan 16, 1960 (pfev page):

Sf-authors have naturally for a long time speculated that an electronic brain one day not only begins to think but also acts on its own, and the strangest things may then happen. We laymen are living in the safe assumption that a machine remains a machine and that no more can come out of it than you put in. But is it really so? No, says the well-known mathematician Dr Norbert Wiener, pioneer in this field and founder of cybernetics., the science of communication among both animals and machines. "It's my opinion that they may overcome some of the limits of their creators. First of all, they may learn things. When they played "Fia" /a simple boardgame/ for 24 hours they begin to beat their teachers. Secondly they act so fast that our ability to control them can't apply until we've seen the danger and then it's to late," Wiener says, and reminds us that he in his cybernetics book 13 years ago told of the "worrying historical parallel about the talented roman slave-philosopher with the less intelligent Roman slave owner, who dominated his master rather than follow his wishes. Dr Wiener may exaggerate a bit, but we must remember that the electronic brain yet is in the cradle. Those dealing with these mathematical beasts are convinced

about what's said above about that their ability to play "Fia" is just a simple beginning. In a generation an electronic brain beat the world champion in chess. Music lovers in Chicago could the other day experience a sensation. They could hear a 25 minutes long string quartet composed by a machine called "Illiac" at the University of Illinois. It was a rather simple thing, which made composers of flesh and blood just shrug, but it had come to getting a music professor of music and a mathematician entering formulas into the machine which then translated it to music. Music professor A Hiller is convinced that the machine one day will help composers to express thought processes far more complicated than those expressed in music today.

Hope you enjoyed these little peeks into the life of yesterday's electronic brains (I still love that term!). Today's gadgets may have way more muscles, but they are fundamentally same.

One day when they begin to wake up let's hope they'll stay our faithful servants. Or else...

MCs & LoCs

As you may guess - if you cared to read the colophones first sentence - this goes to apart from some individuals - and I often try new ones from Eddresses I find - to a couple of APAs. Below I mix my comments to faneds in those APAs (first EAPA, then N'APA - why don't you join!) but begin with incoming correspondence... (No WAHFs, since lastish had Xmas greetings, I got a lot of such in return -,too many to WAHF it!)

Leigh Edmonds: Thanks for *Intermission 150* which I finally got around to reading and enjoying. As you may, or may not, know, I've subjected myself to the mayhem of moving house and as part of that various bits and pieces went into strange places waiting to be rediscovered, hence my tardiness in letting you know that I had received it and have I now enjoyed it.

I liked your story about Vlad and Donny. I thought it was a very nice characterization of your two main characters. The only thing I was disappointed with was the punishment handed out to Donny. I thought your punishment was appropriate but not demeaning enough. After a bit of thought I decided that if I was seeking the appropriate punishment it would be as a Private in the US Army's infantry. I wonder what endless hours on the parade ground with the Drill Sargent from Hell would be like for Donny's ego?

I found your article on *In Case of Crisis or War* fascinating. The European attitude to war, and the Swedish view in particular, is very interesting to those of us on the other side of the globe. To us it isn't Russia that's the worry, it's China. I had to look up a map to see whether Sweden had a land border with Russia and found that Finland is in the way. Even so, you are a lot closer to Russia than we are to China, and Russia is being much more aggressive than China at the moment, so the threat must feel much closer there than we feel it here. For us the most aggressive things the Australian defence forces do is to send the occasional aircraft or ship up to the South China Sea to work with the Americans to suggest to the Chinese that the sea really isn't theirs exclusively. The likelihood of that turning into a shooting war seems quite distant, but you never know do you. Anyhow, we haven't had conscription in Australia since the beginning of the 1970s, and that was to do our bit in the American War in Vietnam. Even then, the conscription wasn't for every male who turned 18 but only for those who were unfortunate to have their birthdays written on one of the marbles pulled out of a barrel. That was one lottery where I was happy not to have my name selected. Since then the Australian Defense Forces have been entirely volunteer with not a hint of conscription in sight apart from those who think that what youngsters today need 'is a bit of discipline'. As a result of all this I have no idea what the maximum age for enlistment into the defense forces might be, but being an old age pensioner these days I don't expect that anybody is going to shove a gun in my hand any time soon.

History Corner was interesting. I hadn't thought about time capsules as a way of sending the present into the future but it makes sense. In their own way fanzines are time capsules too I think. At the moment a couple of fannish friends and I (Perry Middlemiss and Marc Ortlieb) spend a couple of days a month at the Special Collection Library at Monash University in Melbourne helping to bring some order to their fanzine collection. It is interesting work and we are often reminded of past events and people as we work our way through the collection.

The other thing in this issue I liked was the photo of the news stand. I've seen a couple of similar pictures taken in Australia in the late 1940s and early 1950s and I sort of thought that was unusual. However, I was recently in Ballarat's big shopping mall (I now live just over the road from it) and saw that they had a very long rack of magazines on just about every topic except science fiction. I did get excited for a moment when I saw the word 'Amazing' in the title of one, but it turned out to be 'Amazing History' which is really going in the opposite direction to sf.

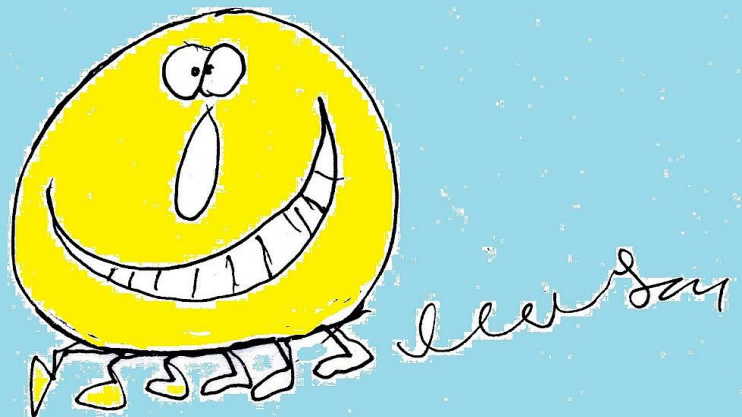
William McCabe:

Interesting smoke detector story...★★Twitter's (I don't like the name X) originally got its text limits from being compatible with the SMS ("texting it's called in the US) limit of 160 characters. Some characters were needed for addressing, so we were left with 120 characters. After using that for many years, many thought it was too little, so it was doubled (connection to SMS on a mobile no longer relevant!) to 240, but it has only been doubled once. Profound reasoning about what people think of short messages has nothing to do with it.★★This far Trump

has surprised us, indicating that he'll be tough on Putin and may open more sanctions on Russia.★★first heard of Tolkien was a radio serial in the 1970s, the summer serials for young listeners during three summer break.★★It'd be interesting if BBC would replace lost shows with AI generated versions...

Henry Grynsten: We will get more intelligent AI. It's just throwing more hardware at it.★★Yes, Russia is in deep trouble.★★A copy that functions 100% exactly the same is more than "only" a copy. As for functions - and that's what matters - the original and the copy *are* identical.★★what do I care if a digital copy survives me? I want to live". But that copy that survives is you.★★"It doesn't matter if Africans are "slaves" if we put a brain implant in them so that they like doing our chores? And conscious AI = conscious human" But we don't put implants into robots to like doing chores. They are made so from the *very beginning*, just as eg Homo Sapiens are made with certain programs being there from the very beginning. We have built-in programs for reproduction for instance, as well as other behavioural programs (e.g. being territorial). There's a difference between having something added or in you from the start (that *is* you).★★Basically, you say we can't get consciousness in a machine because it's too complicated. I say we can build machines so complicated!★★Plastic particles will dissolve (eaten by bacteria etc) in years, not hundreds of years.★★If you argue for that Homo Sapiens is getting "eusocial" (definition is that "eusocial" species let the reproduction happen through only *one* or very few individuals, like a bee queen) - we don't do that.★★Agreed, the film "Starship Troopers" contained a lot of satire...against Bobby Heinlein.★★The social democrats have some common ground with eg communists, just is that social democracy does communism a little milder... (At least classic social democracy.)★★You can't equal eg urbanisation with collectivism. It's individuals that move to cities, for individual reasons (usually: they earn a better living in a city!) and you can live a more individualistic life in a

Artist LON presents the Smiley Hexoped...



city, because there's more to choose from.★★About the "fordist era", in Brsve New World years are counted "AF" = After Ford. Sure, there are traces of fascist thinking in "fordism". Henry Ford himself admired Hitler.★★Today there's struggle between collectivism, which is to the left, and individualism, which loosely is to the right. I think most people prefer to be seen as individuals rather than cogs in a collective machinery.

Heath Row: Interesting about old films and comics!★★The Jabberwocky comic was fun! ★★(Later comments are to the N'APA zine, but it seems I have commented some of it before.) Was Neil Gaiman brought up by scientology parents? This shows how screwed scientology is.★★Yes, I agree that fannish correspondence, LoCs, lettercol hacking, and similar, which was common in fandom (before E-mail) could be counted as a sort of social media. ★★Today's leading Swedish sf/f writers? Well, perhaps Karin Tidbeck, Anders Fager, John Ajvide Lindqvist, Johan Theorin - just a few names, there are more! ★★If you read my comments to Glascon's "CoC" you noted that some "codes" aim at promoting PC opinions and banning dissent. That's unacceptable. That other parts of shitty "CoCs" may be useful doesn't make that acceptable.

Garth Spencer: RIP CUFF!★★I hadn't herd of *Broken Pencil* magazine, but now it's already folding...★★Your religion flowchart lacks a track to Roscoe!★★What I describe as wokeness? Rather what everyone recognise as wokeness, actually. Even the woke know and say they are woke...

Mark Nelson: Thanks for the Sven Eklund article! I hadn't seen it before. The text indicates it's from 1967. Most of what he says is correct (I have some comments though). Eklund was a leading fan and faned of the period, publishing the fanzine *Makromegas*, considered as the second most influential zine of the mid-60s (No 1 being the mentioned *SF-Forum*, which is still around) famous for a long LoColumn (a long debate with JH Holmberg defending Ayn Rand was one topic). Some slight corrections: *JVM* did 332 1940s issues and *Häpna!* 119 issues. The number of active Swedish fans at that time may have been 50+ or so, but here must have been much more than just a few hundred who read sf! Otherwise, sf books wouldd have hardly any readers (a typical novel sold in a bookstore would sell perhaps 1000-1500 copies; kiosk paperbacks would of course sell much more). The first Malcon, this "devilish chequemove", has been revealed as a hoax. What happened was that Sam J Lundwall went down to Dénis Lindbom over a weekend, they drank and partied and suddenly decided "Let's pretend we had a con" and write con reports about it. BTW, I'd put the start of Swedish fandom earlier than Eklund. The Finnish Galaxy was called *Aikamme tieteslukemisto* and came with 5 issues in 1958, from what I can find. Ekölund missed the smallest Swedish con, Halmcon in 1959, 12 attendees. JHH's *Fanac* didn't fold in 1967, it continued into the 1970s, early 1980s. Anyway, interesting to see Eklunds article. I wonder what happened to him? I remember seeing his name somewhere in the 1970s, but nothing more.

George Phillies: As for the famous "puppies" accusations about vote rigging, I'd like to know more. I've heard about these controversies only superficially. (Generally, I tend to find nominations and winners of major award increasingly irrelevant since the general mood is to us it to promote DEI. This devaluates the awards.)

Jefferson Swycaffer: I think that our genre of skiffy in the 1960s was heavily influenced by general trends in society. Hippies and Woodstock and a growing dissent with the Vietnam war, from it cae e g the New Wave. But at the same time, space exploration came more in focus with Apollo 11 and "2001". Both Q"flower power" and hi-tech! ★★We don't need "Codes of Conduct" to act against some stupid folks wanting to touch art show work. The problem with CoCs (and it must have been clear from what I wrote!) is a) they are ideologically bisased and attempt to ban ideological/political views the narrow-minded CoCs don't agree with, b) they become a weapon to try to quelch freedom of speech and even or oust people from the con.

Kevin Trainor Jr: It would be wise of Trump and the US to support Ukraine, because it's much cheaper to do that now than to have to pay much, much more in military expenditure in the future if Putin prevails! Supporting Ukraine is a very cheap way to weaken a traditional enemy, without even risking your own soldiers! And if you do it there are several benefits. 90% of support stays in the US i the form av orders to US industry, which helps economy and employment figures. And much military is support taken out of storage close to being scrapped. The US has thousands of decommissioned vehicles and airplanes sitting in the desert, on step away from being dismantled. They can be dusted off and still be of great use to the Ukranian army at no cost to the taxpayers. (Eg the 40-year old Bradley IFV has shown to be superior to rusty old Russian/Soviet tincans.) With the help of ChatGPT (such calculations may be complicated!) I'm told the US Ukraine support represents only 2.7% of the US military budget and 0.085% of US GDP. It sounds like a very good investment! For 1/40th of the total US defence spending the Russian military is blown to smithereens and not one US serviceman is at risk. ★★I agree on that school libraries should have the right to put away literature that aren't appropriate for young kids who aren't ready yet to tackle some topics.

Samuel Lubell: Even if the constant, annoying bag searches was beyond Glascon's control, the con could have shown its dissatisfaction with it, eg making official statements of protest. ★★See what I've written about "CoCs" elsewhere.

Adrian Kresnak: It may be wise to stay away from Chinese apps. Chinese companies are *by law required to cooperare with the Chinese intelligence community* and all info that passes through your app is wide open to Chinese communists. Avoid it.

Now somet bad news: This is alas the end of todays' Intermission! You have to wait a whole month now to get a new fix...

Слава Україні!
Коли ми боремося, ми перемагаємо!
(Glory to Ukraine! When we fight we win!)

Brandy Hall Issue 11 (March 2025)

Brandy Hall 11 is produced for N'APA mailing 275 (March 2025) by Mark Nelson.

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This is West Riding Press Publications ??? This is West Riding Press Publications (Australia) 33.

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. In the tenth issue, again inspired by Ahrvid, I reprinted an article by Sven Eklund on "Science Fiction in Scandinavia". This was reprinted from *The Australian Science Fiction Review* 14 (February 1968).

What's happened since last time? The main event occurred on 31st January 2025 when, after twenty-three years service, I left the University of Wollongong. Technically I took a Voluntary Redundancy, but more accurately it was an involuntary Voluntary Redundancy. The University decided that it needed to lose a re-occurring figure of \$21 million AUD and the easiest way for any university to make savings is to cut staff. If I'd been left to my own devices then I would have chosen to retire at the age of 64, rather than at the age of 56.5 years of age.

One consequence of this change is that I had to return my faculty-provided laptop. This was running ubuntu. I wrote *Brandy Hall* using LibreOffice. This issue is being produced on my wife's desktop, an oldish Mac. I've never used a Mac before, I'm slowly picking things up. I did think about downloading and installing LibreOffice, but decided against it. Originally I started writing this using TextEdit, but it didn't have some of the functionality that I wanted. Instead, I've written this issue using Pages. I've set the page size to be A4, because that's the page size that I am used to. However, thinking about how *N'APA* is put together I wonder if it would be better to select a US page size?

I've kept my mailing address as the School of Mathematics and Applied Statistics as I am waiting for the university to decide whether to appoint me as an Honorary Academic. If I compare my research record against former colleagues who have been appointed to these positions then there

shouldn't be any problem. On the other hand, the University is dragging its feet on my appointment. If I'm appointed I plan on working on research projects for two days a week, with one day on campus.

As an additional complication we are in the process of selling our unit and moving to a newly constructed house. In theory, leaving full time employment should free up time for writing my two apa zines. In practice, that has not happened. OTOH, the new academic year started this week (on Monday 3rd March). If I'd still been teaching I would have had even less time for completing this issue - it might have been one page without any mailing comments!

The Mathom House

Intermission #149 (Ahrvid Engholm)

Political historians will be debating why Trump won for many years to come. It defies belief, yet it happened. And it wasn't surprising that it happened as the opinion polls were pointing in that direction for a long time. I've always thought that it was Henry Ford who claimed that "Nobody ever went broke underestimating the taste of the American public..." , though it is attributed to HL Mencken on the internet. Trump showed a better appreciation of what the voters wanted. The significant financial contributions from the billionaires, in particular from Musk, was also important. I agree that Biden should have withdrawn much earlier. I was under the impression that when he stood against Trump in 2020 he implied that he would be a transition figure only serving one term.

"His ideas are economically dangerous, as the tariffs he loves will push up prices, start trade wars and thus kill jobs."

True, this was not adequately communicated to his supporters. What did Harris stand for? She failed to articulate her policies in the easy-to-understand way that Trump did. Saying that you opponents policies are wrong is not necessarily helpful if voters do not know what your policies are. Trump's policies were easy to state.

"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)."

I'm delighted to learn that your fannish activities haven't always revolved around the drinking of bbeer!

"I can't cover everything in this report."

I would have liked to hear about the Swedish Cons in 70/80s panel and, as ever, your thoughts on the convention's Code of Conduct!

Thank you for reprinting Lars Helander's account of Sweden's first SF convention. That is a nice follow-up to the article I reprinted last time! I hope you will follow this up by reprinting a report on the second Swedish convention. And then the third. And so on and so forth.

I enjoyed your history of sf-lovers, which I vaguely remember from circa 1990—1991 ish. Enjoyed, but no comments. A good historical account.

Ryct Henry Grynnsen

“Take the Mandelbrot set: everything in it is computable (ie deterministic) but since it has infinite resolution, you can't practically compute it.”

Whether this statement is correct depends upon what you mean by “can’t practically compute it”. It might be argued that as you can see pictures of it then it can be “practically computed”. OTOH, you could argue that when you magnify the boundaries of the Mandelbrot set ever increasing amounts of detail are found. This is a consequence of self-similarity and the infinite detail in the boundaries of the set.

Ryct Garth Spencer.

“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.”

The half-life of micro-pollutants depends upon many factors. Three key factors are the temperature, exposure to light (which is particularly important in aquatic environments), and microbial activity. Typically half-lives can range from a few hours, for some pharmaceuticals, to decades. You should be concerned about micro-pollutants at the extreme end of this range. Research has shown that micro-pollutants can accumulate in human tissues, even the brain. At the moment it’s not known what the long-term consequences of such accumulation might be.

Ryctm #1

“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...”

I agree with you about Alien and Bladerunner, and maybe the second (not the fifth!) Star Wars movie are very good SF films. If only movie companies reduced the special effects budget by 1% and spent it on hiring someone to write a decent story then the final “product” would be much better. I believe that the special effects budget for high-end blockbusters can be between \$100 to \$200 million. How much do they spend on the script?

Ryctm #2

“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 is correct, subject to the proviso that “complex system” means a set of mathematical axioms of sufficient complexity. Here ‘complete’ means that every true statement can be proved and ‘free of contradictions’ is self-evident. (That’s usually called consistent in mathematical logic).

Ryctm #3

“I think there are reasons to believe that the non-white, non-middle aged, non-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.”

I think it's a given that hard science-fiction, with its emphasis on science and technology, has fallen to the wayside. It's been replaced in popularity by a variety of other sub-genres, for example 'soft' science-fiction with its focus on philosophical, psychological, and social aspects of the future and, dare I suggest, better writing and character development. Still, like you, I enjoy writing which puts the science into science-fiction. (When I'm thinking about the development of science-fiction I often lump space opera and hard science-fiction into a combined pile. That's incorrect, they should be two separate piles.)

Ryct Samuel Lubell

“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.”

Recently I read about a case that's made it's way to the Supreme Court of the United States. I don't remember the details, it's along the following lines. Currently, if you belong to a 'majority' group, such as being white or being a man or being heterosexual, then the threshold that you must go over to establish that you have been discriminated against is higher than if you belong to a 'minority' group. The court case is whether this difference is discriminatory - shouldn't the threshold be the same for all groups? The origins of the case are that a white heterosexual woman was twice passed over for promotion in favour of gay men who she claims were less well qualified for the promotion; she was discriminated against for not being a gay man.

Based upon the account I read there is some agreement between both liberal and conservative groups of the court that it shouldn't be harder for someone to claim that they have been discriminated against because they are in a majority group. It may be simplistic of me, but I think that racism is either acceptable or unacceptable. Racism is either a breach of a Code of Conduct or it's not a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Ye Murthered Master Mage 274 (George Phillies)

Your comments about the N3F wikipedia page prompted me to look at it. (I've not looked at it recently). I always find it interesting that when the N3F was setup, in April 1941, “all science fiction, horror and fantasy literature was lumped into one category called 'fantasy'.” At what point in time did fantasy become a genre in its own right rather than a group heading?

Ryctm. It's news to me that there is a Forbidden Planet novel. The thought had never crossed my mind. Time to check wikipedia... I looked at your Essential University proposal but then became distracted by other entries on your blog...

“It is a math method, treating what is actually a difficult problem: If you have a set of measurements showing a smooth curve, how do you extract the first derivative of the curve at points along the curve? This is well known to be a very difficult problem if the data has noise, but I found an adequate method for my interests.”

It's very unfortunate, in my opinion, that our undergraduate program only contains one, basic, introductory course to numerical methods, which is also (IMO) unfortunately weighted too much towards numerical analysis rather than numerical methods (it's taught by pure mathematicians). Almost all practical problems involve noisy data and students should at least be exposed to the problems of noise. From a practical perspective, whilst accepting that there isn't time in an introductory course to discuss such problems, it would be useful to at least outline how noise can make problems more complicated.

Intermission #150 (Ahrvid Engholm)

Congratulations on making it to 150 issues! When did issue 1 appear? Has *Intermission* only ever been an e-zine? *Intermission* "is the longest running monthly in Scandinavian fandom". Another round of congratulations. But this opens up two questions. Firstly, what's the Scandinavian fanzine with the most number of issues? Secondly, what's the Scandinavian fanzine that ran the longest in time?

"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)."

My parents told me some time ago that the latest set of phone directories released in the UK would be the last set of phone directories in the UK: British Telecom have said they won't release a new edition. (Possibly there will be an electronic version that is updated, but certainly there will not be a future hardcopy edition). Who produces the phone directory in Sweden? When was the last version release? Will there be a future hard-copy version?

I don't know much about H.G. Wells, other than he wrote a few science-fiction novels and *The History of Mr Polly*. I wouldn't be surprised to learn that by the standard of today he was a racist. Is this a reason to remove a statue of him? I don't think so. By all means point out that, by today's standards, he was a racist. Maybe campaign to have a plaque added outlining this. But removing his statue? No. I was also against the removal of statues of Rhodes. Does removing a statue educate people about the person whose statue has been removed? No. Wells lived to the age of 79. Did his views change over his life?

We have one side of politics wanting to remove books from school and public libraries, because it's politically easier to remove choice rather than to ban it, whilst we have another side of politics wanting to whitewash history by removing from it anyone fwho doesn't pass muster on today's issues.

"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."

I have a high degree of sympathy for this position. However, I don't have a problem with the reevaluation of historical figures according to today's norms provided that this is explained in that way. Many small towns in Australia have statues to their great citizens of the 19th century. We now know that, based upon their actions, they would not be considered great citizens by todays standards. I don't have a problem with individuals putting this view forward. I don't approve of removing statues of the "great" citizens of the 19th century. I do approve of providing more context in the vicinity of these statues so that citizens are aware of the debate about how they became "great". If true, I think it's fair to

point out that Wells held racist views provided that it's also pointed out that such opinions were mainstream at the time he expressed them.

Archive Midwinter (Jefferson Swycaffer)

Ryct George Phillies

"I know that some readers dislike slow sections, and even skip over them while reading -- a notion that completely floors me."

I read everything, though I skipped over the faux 19th century poetry in A.S. Byatt's *Possession* (1990). Just between you and me I've started skipping over Ahrvid's EAPA mailing comments to Henry Grynsten...

Ryct Samuel Lubell

I haven't read anything by Walter Scott. Most likely I never will, he's not an author that's on any of my various lists of novels/authors that I'd like to read.

Esmeralda Country Line 8 (Kevin Trainor Jr)

Welcome back.

I know where Nashville is. I've never visited, though I have been to Tennessee twice. However, I would have been stumped if you'd told me that you went to a convention in Lebanon. I would have assumed you'd gone to a town in the USA, not the country of the same name... I once attended a conference in Tennessee, one of my two visits. One of the post-conference trips was a visit to Oak Ridge. I didn't go on that and can't remember what I did. I'm sure that I wouldn't forget a trip to Oak Ridge! It's possible that the reason why I can't remember which activity I did is because I didn't indulge in a post-conference activity.

Ryctm Rmct Jefferson

"I never understood what people saw in 2001, either the book or the movie, but that's OK."

I really like the special effects and the soundtrack, but that doesn't provide sufficient motivation to rewatch it. Some of the people I know that *really* like it watched it when it was released in 1968. If you'd watched it as a teenager on the big screen in 1968... I can understand that could be the reason why you believe it's the best SF movie of all time.

Snow Poster Township 19 (Heath Row)

Your summary of the controversy surrounding Neil Gaiman raises a number of interesting issues. But I will stick to the easy questions at the end of your discussion.

*"...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."*

My one-word answers are YES and YES. By the standards of today, or at least some subset of the standards of today, many artists and writers of previous generations would be considered to be Bad People, see my comments earlier about H.G. Wells. Should we ignore their work because of changes in morality? I see no useful outcome from doing so. OTOH, I am all in favour of a discussion of their work including a discussion of their lives; especially when that provides context for understanding their work. There's an ever present danger that any discussion of whether someone is a Bad Person becomes dominated by the political views of the people making the decision.

Ryctm

*"In **Brandy Hall** #9, Mark Nelson—say, Mark, what do you know about the Australian fan who published microfiche fanzines?"*

That's funny. Why is it funny? I just added a quotation from *Snow Poster Township* 19 to my ANZAPA zine. I finished this with an appeal to the resident Australian Fandom Historians to elaborate upon your paragraph. What's amusing, to me at any rate, is that the newest member of ANZAPA is... (drum roll) none other than Heath Row! (And to clarify: I am not an Australian and I did not grow up in Australia; I moved to Australia in 2000 at the age of 31.)

Ryct Samuel Lubell

"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."

Slightly under ten years ago ANZIAM, the Australian and New Zealand Industrial and Applied Mathematics organisation, started discussing the need for a code of conduct. One of the early drafts proposed that every conference organised under the ANZIAM umbrella would need to have its own Code of Conduct Committee. There was a suggestion that every committee should have a student member. I was very uneasy with these suggestions. I felt that members of a Code of Conduct Committee, which might be asked to investigate disputed accusations of misconduct, needed to have received appropriate training, not just in mediation but in matters such as collecting evidence and being impartial. (There's also the issue that in a small community the members of a committee could well be perceived as having a conflict of interest in a CoC involving an academic.) Having committee members who had not received such training had the potential for adverse consequences for the organisation. Eventually, it was decided that ANZIAM would only have a national-level committee and that all accusations regarding breaches of the CoC that could not resolved on site would be dealt with by this committee.

There was at one stage the following seriously silly suggestion, I trust that Ahrvid enjoys this: failing to report a breach of the CoC would be a breach of the CoC...

Samizdat 29 (Samuel Lubell)

I read your article on “College Reading” with great interest. It chimed in with related articles that I’ve read. The refrain that professors assign less reading than they used to do is one that I’ve heard regularly throughout my career. I wonder if anyone has analysed reading lists to see if this is any evidence for this?

In Australia one reason for students reading less is that they have less time for reading, because they are spending more hours working in order to finance their study.

My brother and I have always been readers. We enjoy reading and read for pleasure. My sister has never enjoyed reading. A regular complaint of my mum’s after visiting her is that there are no books in her house, besides from a couple of cooking books. I doubt that she has read any books for pleasure since the age of sixteen. Recently her youngest child, who started his last two years at school last year (the school year running across the year, i.e. 2024-2025), expressed an interest in going to university to study economics or politics. My mum suggested to my sister that he should read additional books those covered in class. My sister pooh-poohed the idea saying that “no-one reads books anymore” and that if students want extra ideas “they just use google”, or perhaps more realistically use ChatGPT. My mum also suggested that if my sister wants to improve Finlay’s general knowledge that she should start buying a “quality” newspaper rather than the one they receive. (I believe that they receive the Daily Mail). That suggestion was also not well received.

Let’s look at your list of commonly read books.

Shakespeare. I’ve read two: *Macbeth* & *Romeo and Juliet*. I’ve seen *Julius Caesar* performed and I’m pretty certain that I’ve also seen *Hamlet* performed.

Great American works. I’ve read *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *The Great Gatsby*. I have also read *Lord of the Flies*, though that is not a Great American work as William Golding is a British novelist. I haven’t read *The Grapes of Wrath*, but I do own the 1940 movie.

Mythology. I’ve got a feeling that I’ve read parts of the *Odyssey*, maybe even all of it but my memory is vague. I have read Greek, Roman, Norse mythology and even a little bit of Egyptian mythology.

British Lit. I’ve read *1984*, *Brave New World*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Animal Farm*.

Modern Works. I don’t think I’ve read *The Colour Purple*, but I’m not 100%, but I did watch the movie. I’ve wanted to read *The Handmaid’s Tale*, since the 1990s, but I’ve never quite got around to it. I did go through a period when I read a number of Margaret Atwood’s novels, but for some reason not the one I most wanted to read!

One conclusion from this is that there are plenty of books that I’ve not read that I should read but equally I’ll never read. Of the ten texts I’m positive about reading, I only read one at school (*Macbeth*). Six of the texts I have read were either books that my parents owned (*To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Brave New World*) or books that they bought for me as presents (*Lord of the Flies*, *1984*, *Animal Farm*). I hope that I give as good a literacy legacy to my son as my parents gave me.

“For the Washington Science Fiction Association I run...”

I am surprised that you have time for anything else. You must be very efficient at managing your time, something that I am not definitely not good at.

“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.”

I haven't read anything about the use of the flipped classroom in secondary schools, or the use of AI tutoring within the flipped classroom. The flipped classroom was certainly a very popular topic in tertiary education some years ago where it was often put forward as being a panacea to solve many problems. My impression of more recent meta-studies is that the flipped classroom works well when you are teaching a small class to highly motivated students or if you have a teacher that is passionate about it. But then many forms of teaching work well if either you are teaching a small class to highly motivated students or if you have a passionate teacher.

I have also read *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey, perhaps I will reprint my ANZAPA review next time. Your final sentence (*‘I recommend this book to anyone who likes beautiful language and would not mind the lack of a plot’*) is pithy and to the point. The only additional point I would add is that it's a very short novel.

Ryct *Intermission* 147

“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.”

When I was a final year undergraduate (1988-1989) I idly considered applying to some North American universities for postgraduate study. The university careers centre had information from a variety of North American universities. A number of them produced leaflets along the lines of “How to Behave in the United States”. Typically this provided a scenario and then explained how you should respond. The only one I remember is what does it mean if you are sitting in a coach and a woman asks to sit next to you. Now, as someone who grew up in the UK I didn't have any difficulties in understanding what the expected behaviour was in any of the scenarios described. But evidently there must have been problems when people from different cultures had been exposed to these situations, else why discuss them? (I don't remember if the list of scenarios included when to tip and how much to tip... that would have been very useful for most British citizens moving to the States.)

Ryct *Intermission* 148

“And of course Forbidden Planet has stores in NYC and London, but these days are mostly comics.”

There is a Forbidden Planet in Leeds, maybe in a different location to the one I remember... When I first went, in 1986, its stock was almost 100% books. By 1990, it seemed that its stock was almost 100% comics. I've not been there since 1997. My impression from its Facebook page is that it now carries a large amount of merchandise. The trend towards merchandise was evident in 1997, the percentage of the space devoted to comics certainly decreased as the 1990s progressed.

Ryctm #1

“Read more Shakespeare. There’s a reason he is usually considered the greatest English writer. [...] I need to get back to reading Dickens.”

There was an interesting article in *The Observer* today: “Who is better, Dickens or Shakespeare? We asked nine prominent writers”. The question is ‘silly’, but the answers were interesting. It’s not what the answer is, it’s how the answer is justified that is interesting. I learnt some interesting things.

Ryctm #2

“What does “Ryctm” mean? I see it in the comments but can’t quite figure it out.”

It’s short-hand for “Re your comment to me”. I picked that up from ANZAPA. I now wonder if that terminology is particular to ANZAPA?

Ryctm #3

“I think it is worth buying and reading SF magazines to support science fiction.”

I would like to, but I don’t have time to read them. (If I did subscribe it would have to be one that had a hard-copy subscription.) I did subscribe to a free Australian SF magazine. However, I never read any of the issues so I ended up cancelling my ‘subscription’.

R.A.I.L. #4 (Adrian Kresnak)

Congratulations on both successfully defending your thesis and on submitting a short story to the TNFFF.

You mentioned the ban on TikTok. I wonder what will happen? Trump put a stay on the ban when he came into office. But now he’s introduced tariffs on China, will he see the ban through? In his first term in office he was a big proponent of the ban. I wonder if the thought had crossed his mind that he might be able to buy it at a knock-down price, lift the ban and then sell it?

Ye Murthered
Master Mage 275

George Phillies
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester, MA 01609

I have now been N3F President for a decade. That's a very long time, longer than anyone else has been President. In that decade, we moved from a bimonthly TNFF and an irregular schedule for Tightbeam to a large number of N3F zines all coming out more or less regularly. Our total membership has climbed, but the count of dues-paying members has fallen.

There are far more social media than there were once upon a time. We have at least a modest representation in a fair number of them.

We do occasionally do rearrangements. I am moving The N3F Review to bimonthly publication. Same content, fewer mailings. Eldritch Science has a new Editor.

We really need someone to do more vigorous social media outreach. I have only so much time in my life, and much of it is full. Also, I am not getting any younger (78 this year) and would like to be sufficiently backed up that if I unexpectedly advance to the next plane of existence the N3F could carry on. The most important gap—the one that would be most challenging to repair without advance preparation -- is that we need someone to maintain the web pages and keep the zine mailing software up and running.

I confess that I did fall into something of a rut, doing the non-fannish things I do and bringing out our zines on a timely schedule. This year I will try to change that.

I have tried a few experiments. For several years running I ran multiple full-page ads in the DragonCon program books. These did not bring

in many new members. Jacqueline Lichtenberg remembered SF authors who began their writing careers by writing fan fiction, so we have a fan fiction program in which fen who want to start writing are encouraged to start here by writing fan fiction. It's a first step.

Commentationes

(For the curious the above word is not in English).

Brandy Hall: Thank you for finding the account of Scandinavian SF publishing.

As you are at least on the needed continent, I have a question. Going back 50 years, there was an Australian magazine, fanzine, or game company called Tau Ceti. It apparently produced a game The Timeless Ones. Are there perhaps Australian sources that give more information or better yet supply a copy of the game at this late date?

That was an interesting description of northern languages. I had vaguely thought there were two languages in Norway, but perhaps one of them is obscure. To languages similar to Finnish, note also Estonian.

Mathom House: The historians' analysis of Presidents that you quote is strange. It reads as people attempting to impose modern opinions on a time long ago. The slavery issue had been more or less settled by the Compromise of 1850, until the Dred Scott decision disrupted it. However, most politically interested Americans of the period would from my readings have said that the most important issue was preserving the Union, and other issues such as immigration and slavery had to play second fiddle relative to that.

Harding declared peace on Europe (we were legally at war with Germany until 1921 or so) freed Woodrow Wilson's political prisoners, and physically assaulted one of the teapot dome thieves. Wilson was far worse.

Archive Midwinter: Nice comments, much appreciated in my case. I agree that quieter segments of stories are important. An alternative is continuous violence, which I find boring.

Esmeralda County Line: Welcome back! Thank you for serving on an Elections Board. Good to read that Son of Silvercon II took place; sorry to read that attendance could have been better. I have sent in a contribution to the next one. Ah yes tax season. I will likely do my taxes tomorrow.

Re yr cts Brownian Motion: I have two computers under my desk, each with an Nvidia accelerator, a big screen, a keyboard, and a trackball, and something like 4-5 Tb of hard drive. (No, I do not download movies.) That's an alternative for someone with different needs.

However, I am still doing physics research and need the compute power. One program I have, and I write reasonably tight code in an efficient language, needed over a day to execute on the Nvidia Kepler K40, and that was with significant time experimenting with compile options. In addition, there is a George Phillies channel on YouTube, with videos of some courses I taught (and for which I wrote textbooks) and one political conference that I ran. For processing videos, the K40 was an enormous advantage, not to mention that it could run on one computer while I was working on the other.

The computer games I play are things like Space Empires 4 (little compute time needed) and Stellar Conquest, with a human opponent.

Snow Poster Township: Heath, you find remarkable books to review. Good news: We had enough stories to stage the short story contest. I may be misreading your sentence, but War Against the Chthor was published well after The Forever War.

Samizdat: You have certainly been busy with your reading. I was a college professor. Over my three decades teaching freshman physics, it appears to me in retrospect that the math preparation of students had perhaps improved, so at least there were more students who had studied a decent amount of calculus in high school and were therefore ready for my version of freshman mechanics.

RAIL Congratulations on your successful thesis defense. That is a big step to the future.

I am told that Xiaohongshu can also roughly be interpreted as Little Red Book, a Chinese cultural reference related to the late Chinese dictator. Is this true?

Fan Fiction

To be not at great length, one of our very long-time members suggested that we should open up fan fiction writing as an activity for members, this being one path for people to advance toward full writing efforts, in your own worlds, with your own characters, descriptions, and plots. You start, however, by writing in someone else's world. As a start, I give a section of fan fiction, though mine has been written so that the names and plot denouement are not the same.

Shepdon Fields

"And now I need to see what a kitten looks like. Please don't be frightened. I'm just going to see what color its aura is."

Charlotte called on telepathy. Cat minds were nothing like human, but this kitten was warm and well-fed. Its aura was a distinctive shade of emerald. And Orange had memories. Cat memories were foggy, but she had clear memories of four kittens feeding, seemingly the same four kittens each time.

"Good," Charlotte said, "now I know what I'm looking for. And there were, Orange thinks, four of them."

"You won't hurt the kittens?" a worried Mrs. Baskerville asked.

"Farthest thing from my mind," Charlotte answered. "Where are the barns Orange might have used?"

"There's only one, and it's right behind here. There's a ramp up to the loft where the last bits of hay are. To move a kitten, try picking up the bedding underneath."

Charlotte, basket in hand entered the barn. Kitten minds were faint, difficult to find, but two of them were near the top of the ramp.

Yes, she thought, there were some pieces of cloth, bunched up, well away from the edge of the loft. And there was a glow. She lifted the first piece of cloth, to be greeted by soft mews from two small kittens. Her strong hands reached underneath, cradling the kittens in the blanket and transferring them to the basket.

"Two down," she said. She took the basket to Mrs. Baskerville and herded the old lady out of the barn.

Full power search, Charlotte thought. *That kitten is here someplace*. Her aura burned flame-white. Her fingers and toes tingled. *There!* These was the last kitten, well away from its nest. It mewed weakly when she approached. Its overwhelming thoughts were of cold and hunger.

What to do? She scooped it up. It started licking her hand. Her pullover had a chest-level hand warmer pouch. She slipped the kitten into the pouch, putting one hand between the kitten and the outside air. It wiggled back and forth, then curled up in a circle in the curl of her fingers.

Widow Baskerville was waiting outside.

"The last kitten?" Charlotte asked. "It's making very strange noises. I think it's getting enough air."

As the girl approached, Mrs. Baskerville listened. "Charlotte, dear, your kitten. It's purring."

Charlotte answered with a baffled look .

"That noise," Mrs. Baskerville explained. "The means it's happy. It's nice and warm, and surrounded by something soft. That's as happy as it can get until its mom feeds it. Perhaps leave it where it is until it reaches its mom."

"Will do. This one must have been the most frightened. It tried to run away."

INTERMISSION #152

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and other Rare Earth Minerals. Try @SFJournalen's newstweets - slow since we're often ukrained (=occupied), also Twitter under Musk looks a bit shaky. The Mafia called and wants Trump back. A typo you can't refuse. Early March Feb 25.

Editorially: School shooting, Skiing, Trump

Mass shootings are pretty rare in Sweden. Until Feb 4, the worst was seven people shot by a drunk young army officer in 1994. (One Mattias Flink got dumped by his girlfriend, drank himself senseless, took his service AK and ambushed the "evil" girlfriend and friends. Four people were killed the same year by one Tommy Zethraeus in Stockholm after being denied entrance to a night club.) Feb 4 one total loser - left school with F in *everything* - took his semi-automatic hunting rifle and went to Risbergsga Campus in Örebro city, shot ten (eight of them immigrants) and then took his own life. Name was Rickard Andersson. He had recently been cut off from social benefits, failing to apply for enough jobs. (Methinks social services must minimum *always* cover food and housing, but they seem to disagree. Reagan was right: "I'm from the government and I'm here to help" are terrifying words...)

As Columbine bowling is an extremely rare sport here, Sweden was shocked. The prime minister held a speech on prime time TV. The king and queen went to Örebro and put down flowers. Exactly one week after the tragedy, there was a silent minute all over the country. Buses, taxis and other traffic stopped. Radio and loudspeakers (if nearby) declared silence. People really stopped. I saw it. I also stopped. And was quiet too.

But as you may know, everything hasn't been peaceful. Lately criminal gangs have begun blasting dynamite outside each others' homes and businesses. Though it has sometimes hit innocent bystanders, the intention of those perpetrators is to hit rivals. Madman killing innocent anybody remains rare.

Let's hope the police can finally stop the gang wars. But we can't be sure, and the recent Örebro murders may inspire copy cats. "Hm, shooting a lot of people is the way to *become somebody*! Great idea!" Mass murder relies on a bit of narcissism. And there are tensions in society - ethnics, politics, economy - getting tenser from ideologies that want to "diversify away" ordinary, normal people. If your not in a designated minority, you don't count. For guns, Sweden has rather strict gun laws, but there's still a lot of guns - for hunting. The moose hunt every autumn sends hundreds of thousands of hunters into the forests to decimate the half-million moose population, whose favourite grub is young fir plants. Hunters protect the forestry industry and provide meat you'll find in the supermarkets. The government now want to ban semi-automatic guns, to the discontent of populist Sweden democrats, the party for wannabe Rambos...

Speaking of weapons, as I write we have the World Championships in biathlon, in Switzerland. It's the sport where you ski for a while, stop and shoot target (penalties for misses), ski some more, stop and shoot again... The Swedes are pretty good in biathlon, with world champions like Sebbe, Ponsi and the Öberg sisters. (2025 result: 4 medals, 1 of gold.)

But I like traditional cross-country skiing more. The World Championships is on in Norway. Last time the cross-country skiers grabbed 12 medals, most on the women's side. The men's team is getting slightly better, but the women shine like a super trouser! (No doubt due to popular skiing star Charlotte Kalla who quit two seasons ago but inspired many in a new generation.) Jonna Sundling - /3/ 4 Worlds and Olympic golds! - is our merciless sprinter. Jonna just won the sprint final, as I write. (It was heartbreaking that our second comet Linn Svahn had a serious concussion on training just before and was forced to withdraw.) For longer distances there's Ebba Andersson (Champ queen 2023) and Frida Karsson (Tour de Ski winner). And several others have big potential.



"Annie get your gun!" Hanna Öberg, seven golds in biathlon from Junior WC and up.



Lately, I was in the Short Story Masters Xmas anthology, "The Night Makes Evil Strides".



Jonna Sundling, surely GOAT in ski sprint! 3rd Worlds gold in a row at ongoing Nordic skiing World Championship.

Why skiing? A small sport about running on water with sticks... Skiing has always been in the DNA of the Nordics (Denmark not so much, unless they go to Greenland). It was the natural way to move around wintertime, "horizontal" not downhill, moving cross-country. It's fun to watch on TV (unlike incomprehensible American football) and the athletes are often interesting personalities. A racer with icicles in the eyebrows and heavy breathing nearing the finish line, crossing it 2.7 seconds before that damn Norwegian! That's something!

Skiing troops also helped to save Finland in the Winter War. And speaking of war, the Trump administration is a flock of halfwits. Sweden's former Prime Minister Bildt called



Russian Army's supply donkeys. Poor animals!

them *amateurs*. The Donald antagonises: Canada, Denmark, Greenland, Panama and most of Europe, while the war criminal in the Kremlin is a great chum! The world watches in disbelief. Trump's tariffs on trade antagonise US consumers too. They'll see Trump inflation and layoffs as business relying on trade struggles. Any economists can tell you how counter-productive tariffs are. And his lapdog, the loose /r/o/c/k/e/t cannon Musk has just fired hundreds overseeing US nuclear arsenal security! Not to forget all other chaos Musk creates. He is nuts. (I'm all for stopping government waste and some woke idiocy deserves the axe, but you should do it in a structured way.)

An interesting theory is that Trump, who visited Russia four times before becoming president, have been *honey-trapped by Putin* and is blackmailed. We are reminded of the Stormy Daniels affair. Today AIs can easily create authentic looking films. It doesn't matter if Putin has a film of the Donald, he could claim having it and Trump wouldn't know. Is it bed wrestling that's shaking the world? Other possibility is that *dementia has reached old man Donald* or that he's a bona fide secret KGB agent, recruited in their 1990s! USA friends with Russia? Get real!

A Trump accomplice declared that Ukraine's territorial integrity was "unrealistic". A jerk needing his head examined! In #151 I detailed how Russia is crumbling, and it's even *worse* now. The Ukrainians have since knocked out their 10 000th Russian tank and the Russkis will run out of old Soviet tin cans in 2025. They're approaching one million casualties, have lost over 30 000 transport vehicles and now need *donkeys* for supplies. Donkeys! (Inspired by Trump Republicans?) The only thing not unrealistic is to *resist until the Evile Empire collapses*, upon which it's realistic to restore Ukraine's borders. To continue or, better, *increase* support for Ukraine is *the right thing to do*. Europe (17 times Russia's GDP) can step up, and will do so as we throw Trump's schemes in the wastebasket. Europe but *also the US promised* Ukraine security in the Budapest memorandum, in exchange for them giving up the world's 3rd largest nuclear arsenal. We shouldn't, like the Russians, renege on pledges, not to speak of invading neighbours. Trump is an insult to all decency and sanity. He's an enemy to USA.

Slava Ukraini!

--Ahrvid Engholm

Ps. Latest news is the Trump debacle when he and rotweiler Vance tried to bully Ukraine's president Zelensky, embarrassing themselves, in a nine eleven of diplomacy that erodes the international position of the US (and losing Ukraine's signature on a Rare Earth Mineral deal). I wrote a new piece on this, towards the end of thish (new stuff is easier to put at the end). Trump is a fool. A disaster. Impeachment! (Include the slimey JD tool)

Australian Journal of Fandom Research

Before the history orgy of thish, a few words about a new project: *Australian Journal of Fandom Research*. Below extracts from what reached the inbox:

The Australian Journal of Fandom research seeks to give researchers and authors interested in the study of fandom a venue to discuss their work and thoughts about fandom. It will publish contributions which add to a wider understanding of the culture, sociology, politics and history of fandom, ranging in scope from the personal to the international and from the beginnings of fandom to the present day. Contributions may include such items as research notes, reviews, articles in academic style, bibliographic information and other formats that seem appropriate. By doing this the AJFR will become a clearing house and forum publishing the work of fans, and others interested in fandom, about fandom...

Fandom is a collaborative activity and so AJFR will be collaborative, helpful and friendly project. Thoughtfully

critical comments will be encouraged, within this harmonious framework, but combativeness will not be entertained. Contribution in length from 2,000 to 6,000 words are encouraged. Proposed contributions may be shared and possibly peer reviewed by associates of the editor if this is likely to encourage a thoughtful and analytic quality to the AJFR. Consequently potential contributions should be prepared and sent in a way that will preserve the anonymity of the author or authors if a contribution is to be reviewed.

AJFR is being published in the fannish tradition of fanzine publication but following also the style of academic and scholarly, sercon one might say, publications. Contributors will be encouraged to provide references in their work, referencing to be provided in the footnote style with a bibliography.

Where appropriate images are encouraged, in high resolution .jpg format. If appropriate, AJFR will include a letter column to discuss and extend the material published in previous issues. It will be published in pdf format and available for 'the usual'. The AJFR will be published annually...

If you are interested in this project and in contributing to it you can contact me with questions, answers and suggestions at ajfannishr@gmail.com. I am planning for the first issue to be published around March this year. (Signed Dr Leigh Edmonds)

Ed: AJFR sounds very interesting! Other research channels tend to be academically stiff, often dealing with movies, games etc from a mediafandom perspective. I combed my my hard drive for something about early Swedish fandom and got together a thing now in line for AJFR. (Details on our early fandom have earlier been in different *Intermissions*.)

HISTORY CORNER

In thish's History Corner we'll take a look at academic papers and articles about fandom and fanzines, going international (by ferry to Denmark, then Norway and on to Czechoslovakia). Academics not seldom acts as snots believing in their superiority. (A reason behind the cancel culture often found in universities.) In the academy science fiction wasn't even *literature* at all for half a millennium. This has only changed in recent years, at least in the heathen North (the thaw may have been earlier in the US and UK). And since they ignored sf for such a long time, what they know about it is limited. They apply their dubious mainstream literary "theories" on books to which its irrelevant. Most of all, academics don't understand *sense of wonder*.

The academy is also ignorant when it comes to fandom. Their papers may say things like fandom came from trekkies in the 1960s and that the first fanzines were inspired by superhero comics in the 1950s. *Sigh!* Let's see if we can find other voices...

I find a study by one David Axler, "Fandom Is A Way of Life: A Folkloristic Ethnography of SF Fandom", <https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/1874/> (it's from 1977, reproduced as picture files in a PDF, written on a typewriter). It sounds like fandom will be studied like, say, a tribe of American Indians. I have to skim much of the 157 (!) pages of this Master of Arts thesis. The author starts with noting that he has read our skiffy stuff all his life, but the first time he even heard of an sf con and fandom was when he took a university course about sf. Because of this he went to Philcon in the early 1970s ("Parts of what I saw made sense to me") and then to the 1974 Washington DC Worldcon ("where I learned more in four hectic days than I had previously learned in a year") and more Philcons ("enjoying it more and more"). Through an ad in Galaxy he even subscribed to a some of fanzines - I bet he got a few on the cons he attended too.

Mr Axler wants to see fandom through the eyes of folklore research. Folklore may be defined as *"traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth"* /or rather "by word of typewriter..." / perhaps a *"a body of popular myths or beliefs relating to a particular place, activity, or group of people"*. He begins setting up half a dozen of questions to cover and makes "field interviews" with members of our tribe. The paper starts with going through fandom's history - including even a listing of the "numbered fandoms" (covering 1930 to 1958). To me it seems he gets to a level of understanding, eg knowing the

"FANDOM IS A WAY OF LIFE:"
A FOLKLORESTIC ETHNOGRAPHY OF SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of
the Department of Intercultural and Folk Studies
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
David M. Axler
June 1977

Fandom as Folklore.

difference between FIAWOL and FIJAGH, he knows about BNF, Gafia, neofan, Egoboo, SMOF...even if he confesses to being only a fringe fan. He correctly describes fandom as a social phenomenon, depending a lot on writing, and even goes into "fannish humour". It's rare that academics care about humour! We're told about APAs and Twonk's disease and even get sample filksong lyrics.

To me, this study of fandom as folklore looks refreshing. And even if it's 47 years old, it's worth having a look into. (Mr G Oogle indicates Mr Axler continued having fandom contacts and went into gaming.)

One Johan Sahlin wrote a Masters thesis at Linköping University in 2005: "Fantastic Literature and Narrow-minded fans - interpretation and creating meaning in SF-Forum 1960-1980", ie the Scandinavian SF Association fanzine. <https://www.uppsatser.se/uppsats/cbad6b7d55/> For some reason, the PDF-to-text functions won't work for the Abstract, but you'll get it as a picture. It looks innocent... The first quarter of the thesis talks about what he'll talk about and goes through some earlier studies and sources (my *Fandbook* is one source). He says fandom is interactive and has its own norms, to which we could agree. But also "a fandom" has often been seen "symptoms of a disease, a form of social dysfunctionality...an obsessed individual or a hysterical population". *What!* Here the stumbles upon the first schibboleth. Swedish nouns have two genders: common (used eg for living beings) and neutral. He gives "fan" the neutral gender ("fanet") but since long, and as fans are alive, the noun has common gender ("fanen").

Dubious is his claim that "if the object of one's interest is popular among working and middle class and cheap and easy to find enthusiasm for it is called fandom...". As far as I know the sf enthusiasts were the first to call themselves *fandom*. Fandom was for sf literature and the term spread from there. It has nothing to do with social class or being cheap and easy.

Somewhere around page 45 (of 77) we first hear of how sf fans are "narrow-minded" through quotes by eg JH Holmberg and Bertil Mårtensson. Alfred Bester is claimed to agree: "Fans lack perspective" and don't "communicate on adult level" Or so Bester is supposed to have said. It sounds like a stroll in the cherry garden. Mats Linder disagrees with this and notes that sf really tries to broaden perspectives.

And so it goes. He quotes a lot of people and their views, usually things they say in *SF-Forum*, over tens of pages. It becomes confusing, the author himself makes few attempts to analyse the sf genre or fandom, and we get little understanding of the subject. A major problem is that he limits his survey to *SF-Forum* while a gaze into other fanzines would have broadened the views. For instance, the concept of *fannishness* is mentioned one or two times, in passing, but not taken into account. And without going into fannishness you can't understand fandom.

Abstract (eng)

This Master's thesis examines the conceptual ideas of science fiction and science fiction fandom produced in the Swedish fanzine *Science Fiction Forum* (1960-) between the years 1960 and 1980. *Science Fiction Forum* was and still is a fanzine published by *Skandinavisk Förening för Science Fiction* (*Scandinavian Science Fiction Club*). Both the club and the fanzine are a part of the phenomenon called fandom.

A fandom is a collective of people called fans who form a community by sharing a special interest in a special object. The fanzine is one of the many material products produced by fans within a certain fandom. *Science Fiction Forum* and *Skandinavisk Förening för Science Fiction* were founded in 1959 and are a part of Swedish science fiction fandom, where the object of fandom is literary science fiction..

The primary focus of this thesis is the meta discussion on science fiction and science fiction fandom in *Science Fiction Forum*. The examination is organized around five different questions; what were the conceptual ideas of science fiction in the fanzine, how was the genre defined by the writers of the fanzine, what were the conceptual ideas of fandom, how did the writers of the fanzine view the status of the genre outside fandom and how did the writers of the fanzine answer the critics of the genre.

The analysis shows that the discussion on science fiction and fandom in *Science Fiction Forum* functioned as a way to interpret and produce meaning to the reading of science fiction and fan identity. The result is supported by other research on fandom, which shows that there is an ongoing discussion between fans within fandom about the reading and understanding of the object of fandom. It is a constant discussion where different interpretations of the object of fandom are revalued and renegotiated.



Lunding and Tapper were in the periphery of early SFF. Article about "Sweden's Youngest Record CEO". Their Stranded label was later acquired by ABBA's label!

The paper is limited, confusing, lacks depth and analysis. If we go to the title of it: it's not fans who are "narrow-minded" - it's what this study is. There are sites around that'll do a translation of the PDF. But I'm not sure I'd recommend you to waste your time. It's all rather narrow-minded.

As you know, beside haunting some unlucky individuals *Intermission* also goes to a couple of APAs - that's why the boring Mailing Comments last. So let's go into the topic of APAs, namely a history of Sweden's for a long time leading APA: SFF (Sveriges Fanzine Förening, "Sweden's Fanzine Association"), active 1978 up to the noughties. SAPA (ca 1964-1967) was the first local APA with perhaps dozen members. Worth mentioning is also Gurka ("Cucumber"), our first small APA for carbon-copied zines, 1979-80 (see my article in *Mimosa* #15, "The Rise and Fall of Cucumber", <https://fanac.org/fanzines/Mimosa/Mimosa15.pdf>).

SFF started as "Stocksund's Fanzine Association" in 1978, from the Stockholm northern suburb where the founder Anders Åkerlind lived. He actually didn't know about the APA tradition at the start, but thought it was a good idea to bundle together his zines with those of friends to save postage. (A sidenote is that in Åkerlind's circle, giving minor contris to SFF, were Klas Lunding and Anders Tapper, brother of fanne Siv Tapper. Those two founded the independent record label Stranded, which got a lot of attention and was soon bought by ABBA's Polar Music!)

The number of members was low in their beginning and mailings had mostly fanzines from Åkerlind and his friends. But as he used to appear in the SFSF clubhouse and hand out mailings SFF reached more and membership grew. "Stocksund's" was changed to "Sweden's". Unfortunately Åkerlind gafiated after a couple of years and the SFF mailings were held up for a while.

But one John Sören Pettersson from the city of Borås wanted otherwise. (I remember visiting John Sören and got the first glimpse of teletext via TV. Incredible! You got news on an electronic screen after tapping keys!)

We get the history from BNF Erik Andersson, later high-profile BCN (Big Cultural Name) as author and translator of both Tolkien and Joyce. From his 1996 essay "With SFF as a Pebble in the Shoe", <https://sff.fandom.se/andersson.html> (I'll contract it a little).

It was long since I met John Sören. My thoughts wandered aimlessly back and soon arrived at a point in space-time when I had sat by this very fireplace, albeit not in the same armchair, with my feet against the hard edge. It was the spring of 1981, and I held the yellow cobra /phone/ to my ear, which lent its hissing tongue to Mr JSP, John Splayer Special.

"Höwdy, itsJohnsireen."

Mr Johnsireen. I was immediately on guard. Two and a half years earlier I had ordered my very first fanzines, from BAGS, Bellis and Ahrvid. I received a

reply from Ahrvid by returning mail, and shortly afterwards Encyklopedia Galactica #3 from John Sören Pettersson in Borås. I had not ordered any fanzines from Borås! How could this John Sören know about my existence? And Borås was only 40 km from Västra Bodarne: the noose of fandom closed around my young neck. Now John Sören wanted to revive SFF. Why did he call me?

I don't remember. I really only remember one line, and it was I who uttered it a good bit into the conversation: - "But why on earth do you want to revive SFF?" I thought it was just as well that SFF would suffer the soot death. To me, there was something vaguely repulsive about bundling one's own fanzine with a number of others for the sake of crude financial gain. The uniqueness of individual fanzines seemed to be lost, and more than once I had reflected that the very best zines were not published with SFF. I myself was no exception. My first SFF fanzine was called Ein halber Hund kann nicht pinkeln (December 1979) and was completely devoid of content. It was not conducive to the idea of making a fanzine just to make it in time for SFF.

SFF Bulletin #7 (February 1980) was of equally poor quality. I think John Sören's answer to my astonished question was short and



Erik Andersson.



An issue of SFF's OO.

sincere: To get Encyklopedia Galactica out. In the legendary delayed EG 8 had been in the legendary delayed mailing 11 for a number of months. I was not really convinced. It was difficult to associate John Sören with any form of collective manifestation. However, one must remember that fandom was living under heavy pressure in the spring of 1981. The schism between Bellis and Engholm made everyone sad and confused, and there was a longing for a joint project that could replace VÄ. In addition, and perhaps even worse: fandom had gained an external enemy.

This external enemy was the Swedish Post Office, which disbanded "printed matter" and replaced it with the more expensive "association mail". Publishers of various kinds protested, I remember the biggest tabloid Expressen had the front page headline "Carry Ove Rainer away!" (the Post Office boss - Mr Rainer was later a cabinet minister but given the slip being caught with unethical tax dribbling).

Everyone had to pretend to have a club and apply for the "Association Mail" rubber stamp. I for instance invented "Gröndal's SF Association" for the Fanytt/SFJ newsletter VÄ evolved into. The city of Borås where John Sören lived from was a fannish power centre at the time. It was 1981 and Borås fandom arranged the legendary Raincon, target for the Bob Weber hoax (a story for another day, Erik helped with that BTW).

I'm not sure how many received the SFF mailings during Anders Åkerlind's time, but he used to deliver them on the SFSF meetings. That would be 15-20 or so, incl some being mailed it could be 50-75. Others than Åkerlind's friends soon joined, but then Åkerlind gafiated and SFF lay dormant for a period. When John Sören, Erik and others stepped in distribution tended to grow to around 100. Both moved to Gothenburg on the west coast, from which SFF operated. I believe SFF reached around 120 members towards the late 1980s. Most used SFF as a way to avoid postage costs and mailed their regular zines through the mailings. The envelopes usually also carried con ad sheets and similar flyers. It was very rare that people wrote Mailing Comments, as in other APAs - but of course there were fanzine reviews.

John Sören was somewhat of a computer whiz. He had an early Swedish computer, the ABC80 (similar in capacity to TRS-80 or Apple II) and at a time used its printer to produce SFF Bulletin, which for one issue had the headline "It Was /your name/ Who Had A Fling With Ylva". Everyone was with the help of the computer pointed out as having some hanky-panky with a leading Big Name Fanne. Now the era began when SFF was combined with Danish bheer. There was a ferry to Denmark from Gothenburg. Had a big headline Erik again:

Apparently, the Danish Post Office still recognized printed matter as a mailing format, and the fact was that it would be cheaper to send the SFF mailing from Denmark than to use the Swedish association mail.

Maths in particular saw enormous opportunities in this. During the time he lived in Gothenburg there wasn't a single fannish gathering that didn't at some point in the evening tried to move to Denmark. For him, Denmark was flowing with bheer and whipped cream. His dream was probably fueled by a youthful infatuation with a hot Dane dame, but he was uncharacteristically reticent about that.

In June 1981 we produced SFF Bulletin #5.11. We described the obvious advantages mailing SFF from Fredrikshavn, and it was Math's words that were most striking:

*MAKE YOUR FANZINE DISTRIBUTION A BRILLIANT PARTY!!!
CREATE DRAMA AND EXCITEMENT IN YOUR STENCIL GRAY EVERYDAY
LIFE!!!*

*SEE FOREIGN COUNTRIES. GET TO KNOW A DIFFERENT CULTURAL
CLIMATE!!!*

*WILD FUCKS WITH CHICKS!! DRUG YOURSELF SENSELESS!!!
FOR EVERY TEN ENVELOPES YOU SEND, YOU EARN A BOTTLE OF COLD
TUBORG BEER!!!*

Somewhat earlier in June, mailing 11 had been released after a six-month hibernation. In mid-August, mailing 12 came, with, among other things, new EG and the aforementioned bulletin 5.11. Already on September 23, it was time again, and we went to Fredrikshavn. My memory blend together into a single mushy journey with sometimes sun and sometimes rain and wind. However,



John Sören Pettersson

a good average impression of the journeys can be found in the signature Örjan Cutlet's one-act play "Dark is my life!" in SFF Bulletin 18 (somewhat abridged):

Erik: Welcome you shall be!

Everyone: Yay!

Erik: Where is my dark beer?

Everyone: here!!! (Suddenly there is a commotion - the boat arrives at Fredrikshavn)

Everyone: Towards the post office - Yeeeah! (After the post office:)

Erik: Where is my dark beer?

Lotta: Ask Karlfeldt

Everyone: He's dead!

John-S: Oh dear (Suddenly it's time to miss the boat)

Helena: Now we missed the boat (Suddenly on board the next boat)

David: Backwards forwards and by all means upside down

Everyone: Ohhhh

Örjan: Shall we dance?

Everyone: No (Suddenly at customs)

Kenneth: I have twelve liters of liquor in my pocket

Everyone: We have that too!

Customs: Pass

All: Shit! (In Gothenburg)

Everyone: Where do we live? (The answer is blowing in the wind)

The Wind: Here and there and there

All: Oh, shit (The moon shines over the brave crowd searching for the goal)

The excursions were characterized by palpable diligence. After a quick and very hearty breakfast buffet, we picked up the mailing and addressed it. At the post office we slabbed on stamps and then moved on to free exercises. Shops or taverns, depending on the season. I remember when Thomas Bossius and Kjell Waltman were with us and they were drinking Southern Comfort and Johnny Walker already on the way out - I thought it was too early for such strong drinks, but it tasted good: well, why not start drinking early so that the party lasts that much longer? The answer should have been obvious, and was revealed pretty soon anyway. I also remember games that seemed extremely funny at the time, hiding Glenn's drink for example ("Oh dear, it's time to go and fill up again!") Or poking John Sören in the stomach to make him utter the classic phrase "A whisky in Borås". Or when Bossius teased a drunk who insisted on walking on his hands out on deck: "You dare aaaaalways jump into that rainy sea!" However, I do not remember when a contingent of brave SFF supporters had to spend the night in an empty railroad car because they had narrowly missed three boats in a row and no more remained that day, because I wasn't with them.

This was also around the time when Erik, David Nessel, Glenn Petersen and others founded the zine *Gothenburg's Faanweekly*, that later came with its legendary 200+ pages #21! I happened to be in Gothenburg for one of the SFF mailing trips to Denmark. We had a lot of bheer and managed to miss 2 or 3 ferries back... As I remember I helped out with collating etc two mailings while visiting Gothenburg. I helped with 3-4 SFF mailings in Stockholm too, when I happened to be around, including one where I drew the



stencilled cover - and I believe that issue was also printed on my mimeo Ernst. Anyway, two of my best faanfictions have been published in SFF-Bulletin, "Storm in Fantarctica"

<https://percjorgensen.com/hobby/fanziner/sff134.pdf> and "Yesterday's World Today Again"

<https://www.percjorgensen.com/hobby/fanziner/sff146.pdf> . But usually, I had too much of my own fanzine activity to engage too much in SFF.

Around New year Martin Kristenson, David Nessel and I moved together in a slanshack at 9C Swan Street and in January Martin and I started to study Ideas History at the University.

Since this is going to be about SFF, I won't write more about GF and the time at Swan Street (and 23 Blastfuck Street /a pun/, where Helena Eriksson and later also David lived), but it feels a bit strange to skip it. In my life, this period is better known as the GF era, and it was around its publication and strange editing principles that everything revolved... In the spring we still went to Denmark with SFF; and when GF folded with its twenty-first issue, Maths and I

took over responsibility for SFF. The SFF Bulletin was also edited by us in different constellations...At this time, the mailings consisted of between five and ten fanzines, thin and thick. Various kinds of flyers and oneshots have been a plague throughout the association's history, but the co-distribution idea has been a help for debuting faneds...During John Sören Pettersson's time, the SFF Bulletin had been a one-sided magazine in all respects, which at best told something fascinating about space. Under my and Math's editorship, the bulletin became a kind of genzine, which had little more to do with SFF than that the association paid for it. But on the other hand, the SFF is just an empty form and it is up to the members to fill with something.

In issue 20, we began to publish the serial "Struggle, power and corflu", a so called faanfction, among essays, letters and reviews. It was initially written by me and Maths and had a plot that was worked out as we went along, but with David jumping in as a co-author in issue 21, it became difficult to keep up. But really the fault was mine, for it was I who introduced a bizarre parallel plot:

The planet Koho Pro IV had just entered its liquid phase and all its inhabitants were busy spreading the tea leaves evenly over the surface
"It's boiling! I think it's moving!"

Frustrating with excitement, the armadillo hovered over the bubbling masses of water. Hot water vapor dominated the atmosphere and caused even this well-wrapped harness to release the occasional drop of sweat under the wing attachment. Visibility was barely a cubit and all periscopes had to be switched on to the hyperspace piston. The air folded in front of the operators' eyes and it suddenly became possible to see all the way to a place that was actually relatively far away. The Armadillo made another announcement:

"Awright, boss. Take it off. I think we have it now."

The planet cooled down under a gentle and very short-lived rain.

"The tea leaves are swelling, Anker Jörgensen realized."

"The tea leaves are swelling! Awright. I think we have it."

The armadillo clattered its beak in delight.

"Can we pour a small one? Can we have a small one?" The Danish Prime Minister licked his lips and beard expectantly, then moistened the back of his neck with a dripping sponge.

"We have to pay soon. I think we have it."

"Lower faster! Lower much faster!" Anker shouted in a shrill voice.

"We mustn't sink it", the armadillo declared.

"Teasump, eh?"

(This is actually a piece that has stuck in my mind. It seems to me a rather preposterous idea to depict tea boiling on a planetary scale, and what follows in the next scene is no less strange: we get to follow the tea down into Anker Jörgensen's stomach, where it is taken care of by his enzymes:)

"It's tough! We'll have to take it a bit further from the bottom! Crawl this way! Get together!"

"Whoa! Whoa! Reality! Weather play! I'm caught off guard! Oh, my goodness!"

"Rough around the edges. There's trouble down here too."

"They're approaching the brown gate! It's a maelstrom! I'm going to lose..."

"Metal mesh."

"I'm getting lost...blub...gluft...kvt...maelstrom...gg..."

One stowed away all the remaining brownness, wrapped it up, stamped with one and forty and sent right into the brown gate. Great speed! Great power!

Then David took over and changed the perspective (as if it made any sense...):

The little green scientist leaned back thoughtfully in his chair in front of the Eurythma 4 research ship's control panel. The hyper-sensitive audio sensor beam was aimed at the vaguely discernible wriggling, snake-like creature glimpsed just beside the Danish Prime Minister in the swirling tea vapors below the surface.

"Tell me, Professor," interjected his assistant with a worried frown between his sensor plants, 'how is it that the enzymes talk in exactly the same way as the Armadillo and Anker Jorgensen?

"Of course, these enzymes are strongly influenced by how the carrier organism speaks; it's what's known as the interorganic interference law we see at work."

"My goodness, that's really amazing," the assistant whispered reverently.

"Let me demonstrate my thesis," said the professor, and with a few quick strokes on controls he aimed the audio sensor beam at his colleague's chest. Soon there was the speakers sounded three syphilis spirochetes having a hen party.

"Have you seen the deadly paper hats I've come across," one of them whispered reverently.

"Oh my, oh my, twilight, it really is amazing," said another. The sound of the spirochete working to thread the rubber band under its surely not too pronounced

chin cut through the loud gurgling of the nearby belly.

"Yes, they really are amazing. In truth. Goodness gracious," whispered the third spirochete reverently. 'In this bag, I have the streamers and the rabbit rattle. Goodness gracious.

"As you can see," the the professor said and switched off the equipment. His tone was dry, but a faint, distinct note of triumph emerged from under the thick layers of scientific objectivity.

"Goodness gracious," the assistant whispered reverently.

During the time of GF, we had experimented wildly with writing under different aliases, adopting different perspectives - testing the limits of writing in every way. In GF #2, I wrote a report from an SFF trip: instead of depicting the joys of the trip, I tried to capture the sadness and paint everything in grey. That report caused great consternation, and Cerberus Jante's columns in later issues could not be offset by Uncle Sven's.

This strange departure from the plot of "Power, Struggle and Corflu" appears, at least in retrospect, as a way of examining the nature of a narrative perspective, how people are portrayed through their lines, and the distance that can exist between author and narrator. Finally, to tie this section into the main plot, David had the research rocket approach the fandom system and the planet Serconism:

"A lot of hydrochloric acid today, but not much food," said one voice, with an evil laugh. "Has he been up to plotting some of his naughty plans again, has he?"

"You bet your ass he has," a second, presumably female voice read in a low tone. "He's just about to trick the stupid Sercon fans into a feud with the planet Fannishness."

Two low, evil laughs sounded low against the backdrop of the insistent gurgling of the abused stomach.

"Wouldn't you take care of that meatball over there," the first voice retorted.

"Yes, it's as good as eaten already, it'll be digested and distributed to the nutritional intake Real Soon Now. It's certainly not easy to break down pieces of food. It's a struggle from morning to night, I must say. And when I call Stieg /that would be Larsson!/, it just says 'what a meatball digestion'. 'Oh, oh, Stieg,' I whisper resignedly, "this meatball should have been be split by now."

The professor turned to the assistant: "Interesting; I think we've picked up a conversation between some of Steve Slem-Sandberg's food-digesting enzymes."

Along with Ove Rainer, the evil genius of the sequel was poor SF Forum editor Steve Slem-Sandberg (now in the Swedish academy), who had probably done no more harm than receive a modest fee for his work. The banner of idealism flew high in Fannish circles...

SFF Bulletin #27, Jan 1984, was the last to be made in Gothenburg. Maths had moved to Stockholm. Lotta Rönn had abandoned the olives. Glenn Petersen sold expensive sandwiches to Lill-Babs. Kenneth Larsson had exchanged geology for elderly care. I had started listening to soul. David Nettle was in jail. Ted Forslund's toes had curled up. Johan Frick got his arm stuck in the sawmill at home and couldn't move down to Gothenburg for a while. Jan Risheden didn't know about his love for the saxophone. Martin Kristensson was in agony...

I did manage a few issues of Abstrakt Astrakan, so it like Der Leuchtturm, reached the even number of ten, and together with Risheden I published three issues of the revived GF in 1988. The nail in the coffin, however, was SFF Bulletin 50, which appeared in March 1988 as my very last fanzine issue.

I and Maths Claesson edited it, content consisted of non-fannish writers like Xavier de Maistre, Frans G Bengtsson, Lars Gustafsson, Peter Nilsson and Samuel Beckett, who consisted of "tributes to the rocket space that surrounds us all". What an idea! Oh my god. The layout was a horror with its idiotic diagonality.

At the very end of this farewell fanzine is Johan Frick's and my account of the last trip to Denmark, which unfortunately did not take place because Particle Janne /fan, today professor of nuclear reactor physics, but then known as winner in TV's "48000SEK Question"/ was found to be underage when we were to board. We tried to keep our spirits up and write as if the trip had really taken place. There are pubs and restaurants, and one by one the participants disappear in an ominous manner. Lennart Svensson says he wants to go home; Janne Wallenius goes to relieve himself and Magnus Eriksson to find a pack of Chesterfields.

"No, let's go to someone's house and play poker," Andreasson exclaims. Andersson and Frick explain that they are happy to sit and drink, whereupon they are left alone. They each order another large strong one.

"Can it be a Cecil?" Frick asks.

"Oh, but have one yourself, by all means," Andersson says obligingly.

"But they're supposed to run out," Frick counters with a generous smile.

In this not entirely convivial atmosphere, Kenneth Larsson appears, and the journey home to him via Johan's apartment is double-exposed with the boat trip that never started and ends in the opening scene of Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil*, which we ended the evening by seeing. The games of fannish life are over. Through winding corridors and floating floors, the trio makes its way, descending to ever lower levels deep into the ship's interior.

The throbbing of the huge engines grows louder and louder, while the ship's interior changes. Debris swirls across the floor, the cabin doors seem to lead to simpler living quarters from which blaring transistor music and frying smell emanate, and among the shadows you can make out dark figures quickly slipping away. Dogs perhaps, or dark-skinned children.

"Do you live in these parts now?" Andersson asks.

Larsson nods silently. He unlocks a gate and leads the others into a charcoal-dark backyard, where the stench of rarely emptied garbage cans is heavy. They carefully make their way to another gate, climb a wooden staircase and enter Larsson's home in confusion. Andersson and Frick sits in the corner of the sofa while Larsson prepares refreshments. On the street outside the window, an open, large white car rolls away from the American border posts. Frick takes a deep breath, sensing what is about to happen; when a violent explosion destroys the car and its driver, he knows that justice must take its course, the stamp of evil washed away, the dynamite tracked down, and more chocolate and sweets procured.

Hopefully you notice the surrealistic chaos of Gothenburg fandom and SFF at the time. BTW, about posting from another country, I once mailed Fanytt/SFJ from Finland. I was to visit my friend Tom Ölander and as Finnish printed matter postage was substantially lower than Swedish association mail I prepared an issue. Tom had the rubber stamp you should use, saying *Painotoute* ("Printed Matter"). At times SFF discussed mailing from Estonia when the communist had left, but nothing came of it.

But as Internet grew and postage became more expensive, fanzines became rarer. And sometime in the noughties there weren't any left for SFF to distribute. SFF declared that if fanzines turned up that craved distribution they'd make a mailing, but nothing turned up. SFF went belly up for all practical purposes. But I have a suggestion!

I have a few times contributed to WOOF (Worldcon Organisation Of Faneditors), an APA making mailings for the Worldcons. *Why don't SFF try to make mailings for the Swecons?* There's no postage expenses if you hand them out on the con. Faneds could bring 100 copies of their fanzines on the Friday, it's then collated and handed out on the Saturday of Swecon.

If now today's lazy fans (many of them neo and fringe) know what a fanzine is and care to make them...



Cato Lindberg

The Norwegian border isn't far from Gothenburg (and the Norwegians go to Sweden for cheap blog, just as Swedes go to Denmark for it, Danes go to Germany, and Germans go to Czechia) so lets have a look at "When Fandom Came to Norway" by Cato Lindberg

<https://aniarasff.wordpress.com/archives/norwegian-fandom-origins/>

The "arvesen kiosskompani" is a chain of newsagents started more than 100 years ago. In their kiosks and stores you could (and still can) find virtually every magazine or newspaper published in Norway, but also much foreign stuff -especially English and American magazines, newspapers and paperbacks, and also publications from the other Scandinavian countries as well as from Germany, France, and other countries... We started to learn English in sixth grade, and I didn't know many English words before I started buying American magazines like Mechanix Illustrated, Motion Picture, True, Collier's, Fawcett and Dell Comics, and others, many of them financed with money earned by collecting and selling return bottles. The Dream of America was very vivid then, in a country where many goods were still rationed or not yet available. American magazines and Hollywood movies gave us a taste of that dream, showing us what an affluent society looked like.

*I am not sure when I got my first taste of science fiction. Norwegian folk tales had been my nourishment since I was a little child, and many of these tales have strong fantasy elements, if not science fiction. Among the first books I read were those of Jules Verne. Occasionally, articles about space travel appeared in various Norwegian magazines, and around 1951 to 1953 I found some paperbacks at Narvesen with some wonderful covers. The Signet edition of Robert A. Heinlein' *The Man Who Sold the Moon* even included an Interplanetary*



M/S Oslofjord

Tour Reservation form, issued by the Hayden Planetarium, with the possibility of making reservations for tours to the Moon, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn! (But for some reason or other, I never sent in my reservation.) And then in 1952, the first science fiction magazine ever displayed for sale in Norway appeared, the British Authentic Science Fiction, edited by HJ Campbell. Some of my first sf books were anthologies (Bleiler and Dikty, Healy and McComas, and others) including many of the classics of the genre, and I was very soon hooked. Then the first American sf magazine was displayed - and for some strange reason Narvesen had chosen the pulp magazine Science Fiction Quarterly (May 1953), not any of the more obvious candidates - Astounding, Galaxy or F&SF. But I enjoyed Authentic and SFQ, and one very fine thing about them was that they both had columns about fandom. In 1954, a Norwegian sf paperback series was launched with translations of Asimov, Heinlein, Van Vogt, and Wyndham. Also, a few home-brewed Norwegian sf novels were published then, but much more was to come in the 1960s. This was also the time of science fiction films like The Thing from Another World, The Day the Earth Stood Still, When Worlds Collide and others, all of them shown in the cinemas of Drammen.

I did something very typical of Norwegian youth at that time. In 1954, 17 years old, I worked my passage over to New York City and back again as a pantry boy on board M/S Oslofjord...(I found) E. Geiger Records at 815 Broadway in the innermost corner I found a paradise for a budding science fiction fan - several shelves with used sf magazines. I spent several dollars of my total pay of \$10 on issues of Astounding, Startling, Amazing and others, all at 10 cents apiece.

I started to get ready for fandom. I'm not sure if it was via the fanzine columns in Authentic or SFQ that I got my first contacts. I wrote to some fanzines, but the first ones I received did not impress me much. Then I received Charles Lee Riddle's Peon, and I was hooked! The November 1954 issue was a beauty of a fanzine, with stories and articles by Jim Harmon, Terry Carr and Isaac Asimov, and fine illustrations in a beautiful layout. And soon other fanzines started to arrive, among them the now so famous Hyphen.

I had a neighbour and good friend, Roar Ringdahl, two years my senior. By some strange coincidence, two such kindred spirits happened to live in the same street. Both of us were avid readers and moviegoers, and both of us had the hobby of making miniature cities and hand-written magazines. These magazines had a circulation of one and no readers except ourselves, and sometimes Roar's younger brother Ulf and my very patient and kind mother. As soon as he moved to my street and we got acquainted, when I was nine, we started to make these magazines together - with stories, comics and jokes. Some of the other kids found this a strange activity and called us redaktørene, the editors, as a derogatory term. Roar also shared my interest in science fiction, and when I showed him Peon and Hyphen and suggested that we make a fanzine, he instantly agreed very enthusiastically. I thought that Fantasi, Norwegian for 'fantasy', of course, was an apt name for our fanzine. The first issue of Fantasi, dated December 1954, had a small circulation of five, and was produced by carbon paper. The contents included translated stories by Ray Bradbury and Fredric Brown, science fiction news, and book reviews. It was not until issue no. 3 that we started using spirit duplicating method, and mailing it to others. We were unable to find other interested people in Drammen. At school, I propagandized for both science fiction and space travel, but was met with very little enthusiasm and much scepticism. Very few of my other friends thought much of "that Flash Gordon stuff" and very few, if any, believed in space travel. So our first readers counted only a few Norwegians (none of whom we were able to convert to fandom), but several Swedes like Alvar Appeltofft and Lars Helander, because Sweden at that time already had a fandom as well as a professional sf magazine, Håpna. Both Appeltofft and Helander contributed fiction, which we published in the original Swedish, since most Norwegians read Swedish without problems.

We experimented with various types of expensive duplicating methods to increase our circulation, among them a primitive spirit duplicator using what we called a 'Rory-rull', a washing machine roller to roll across the master and receiving paper. Later we used the stencil method, and since a Gestetner mimeograph was beyond our means, we fastened the stencil to a large stamp pad. Issue no. 6, in January, perhaps the finest issue of the eleven issues published, had a photocopied cover showing Roar's cartoon of us during our 1955 trip to England. We began getting contributions from fans outside Scandinavia, and No. 6 included a story by Paul Enever: "Roar's Head," and No. 7 included letters from John Hitchcock from Baltimore, Ron Bennett from Harrogate, and Paul Enever from Middlesex. I am not sure about the circulation. I believe it was around 75-80.

I left Drammen to go to radio school in the army in 1956, and during those 26 months Roar took over Fantasi and published #8, 9, 10 and 11 (the last Jan 1958). The eleven issues of Fantasi contained all sorts of typical fannish and sercon material. We were very fascinated by fannish language and customs, and liked to include cartoons of ourselves with propeller beanies on our heads.

In 1958 I went to sea, and for almost two years I worked as radio operator on board a Norwegian steamer, S/S Mataura, calling at ports like New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Savannah, Miami, Havana, Ciudad Trujillo, Tampico, Vera Cruz, La Guaira, and Belize. I met some American fans then, and especially remember young John Hitchcock of Baltimore who impressed me with his linguistic knowledge and acquaintance with the complex language situation in Norway, the differences between riksmål, bokmål and nynorsk! I also once met John Magnus and some other fans in Baltimore. Even in a large city like Baltimore there were not many true science fiction fans then, and when I look through my old copies of Hitchcock's



Peon. Here are scanned issues: <https://fanac.org/fanzines/Peon/>

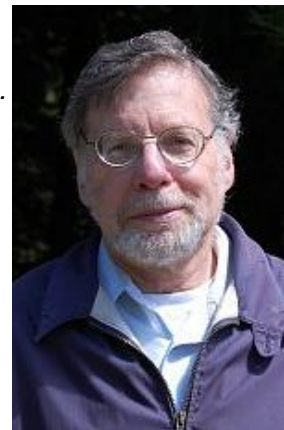


Roar Ringdahl.

fanzine Umbra /available here: <https://fanac.org/fanzines/Umbra/> / I see very few locals writing there; instead, there were internationally-known names like Jan Jansen and Ron Bennett. It is not strange that two young guys in little Drammen, Norway, had such a hard time converting people to sf fandom, when there were so few in a large town like Baltimore. In New York I visited Dick Ellington and his wife in their flat in Greenwich Village, and learned about the Industrial Workers of the World. He gave me copies of his fanzine FIJAGH and a propaganda brochure for the 'Wobblies' in Norwegian(!). Ellington had a Linotype machine in his apartment, and I had the impression that he was a kind of free-lance typographer. I also met the active fan Mike Deckinger in New York City. He came over from New Jersey to meet me at Grand Central Station. I, of course, visited Stephen's Bookstore, 45 Fourth Avenue, and was overwhelmed by seeing so many science fiction books in one place. This was the world's only specialised science fiction store then, but Stephen told me that I had been his only customer that day. He mainly made his living by dispatching books ordered by mail. During this period, I contributed some "Reports from America" to the Swedish fanzine SF-Fronten, writing about my meetings with American fans.

About this time, Roar started to cooperate with the Swedish fan Sture Sedolin Hällström to combine Sture's fanzine Super with Fantasi. The first issue of Super-Fantasi, "the only true triangular fanzine," had a cover by Atom and articles in English, Swedish, and Norwegian. After two large issues, Super-Fantasi ceased publication, partly because Roar's interest in cinema started to compete with his interest in fandom. He soon started his first film review magazine. But he still remained a fan; for some time he led the 'Norwegian branch office' of the International Science Fiction Society, which published the magazine Sirius.

Well-known American fan Ray Nelson and his Norwegian wife Kirsten lived at Ulvøya (near Oslo) at the end of the 1950s and became acquainted with Roar. Ray contributed many cartoons to Sirius and even published two issues of his own Le Marché aux Puces Fantastique, a fanzine in French published by an American living in Norway and printed at Roar's office in Oslo. Ray and Roar made a movie short at Ulvøya, "Monster on the Loose", starring Ray himself as a monster unable to scare a single soul and finally committing suicide. Roar was amused to later read in Ray Nelson's and Philip K. Dick's novel, The Ganymede Takeover, about a rather sadistic major Ringdahl of Ulvøya Prison. Roar cannot but hope that this sadistic major was not based on Ray's impressions of Roar's behaviour during their time together in Norway...



Mike Deckinger.

While I was mostly gafiating, Roar was very active during the Sirius period and he finally managed to recruit several Norwegians into fandom. Now, it was not a two-man fandom any more. In 1962, he met Per G. Olsen (now Per G. Hvidsten), and together they published a very fine fanzine, Alphabor. Per G. Olsen, as far as I know, is the only one from this pre-1965 period who is still very active in fandom, being a sort of link between our fandom and the next to come. Roar was also involved in many other fan projects at that time (maybe we can persuade him to write an article for Mimosa about this).

If the American numbering system for fandom is to be applied to Norwegian fandom, our fan activity in Norway must be considered to be First Norwegian Fandom. Roar and I published fanzines and had contacts around the world, and even a few here in Norway, especially after Roar started publishing Sirius. When students at Oslo University started the science fiction club Aniara in 1965, Second Norwegian Fandom was born. The club's founders probably had no knowledge about our early efforts.

In 1995, Roar and I published a 41st anniversary issue of Fantasi.

Since 1965, there has been an unbroken Norwegian fandom with high activity and many fans, cons and fanzines (the first Norwegian con was not until 1975, though). Much Norwegian science fiction has been published during this period by authors like Jon Bing, Tor Åge Bringsværd, and Øyvind Myhre. Since almost all Norwegian fans read English, the market for science fiction in Norwegian is small, and it is a long time since we had a professional science fiction magazine. But Aniara's beautiful fanzine, Algernon, published since 1974, may be considered a semi-professional sf magazine.

My old profession as a radio operator has become obsolete since I quit the sea in 1965. Morse code is no longer taught in military or civilian schools. Much of what I learned in engineering school has become obsolete, such as the use of vacuum tubes and the slide rule. Many of the great ideas of science fiction which were unknown to most people (except science fiction readers) back in the 1950s are now, if not obsolete, old stuff to millions of television viewers worldwide. But even back then, the older fans debated the loss of the 'sense of wonder' and were worried about the future of science fiction and fandom. I was full of this sense of wonder then, and did not understand these debates. Now, it's my turn to worry about the lack of new ideas and the staleness of most new science fiction. Probably, the young media fans of today would not understand such grumblings, but find the genre full of wonder still. And let's hope many of them will discover the pleasures of reading, too.

From Norway we go to Czechoslovakia (before the "divorce"). We read about Czech fanzine publishing under communism, from <https://henryjenkins.org/blog/2017/12/26/the-czech-zine-scene-part-2-science-fiction-fanzines> –I take the liberty to shorten a bit and re-edit if needed. That country was known to be the perhaps most liberal in the old USSR dominated Eastern Europe (despite the wicked 1968 Soviet invasion) and had a rather lively fanzine scene from the late 1970s and on:

The first true Czechoslovak fanzine came in the early 1980s by a group of science fiction fans at the Mathematical-Physical Faculty in Prague: "We want to publish fanzines like in the West too!"

The fanzine virus mutated from the Czechoslovak tradition of samizdat. You may divide Czechoslovak fanzine creators into two categories: dissidents and cottage-goers. The first were forced through the content, their stubbornness, and principles to come into conflict with the regime; the second accepted the regime's terms so that they could "only" devote themselves to their hobbies. They had no need to resist. They even had de facto state approval, as the state encouraged and supported "quality free time." It was an unspoken exchange: you leave us alone, and we'll leave you alone.

Sf literature was usually the domain of young men who were drawn towards technical sciences. One particular nest of such was the college dorms of the Mathematical-Physical Faculty of the Charles University in Prague named Větrník (Windmill). There one of the first and the most well-known Czech science fiction fan clubs was born, named Villoidus. It was established in 1979 by a group of students and three years later, they began to publish one of the first Czech sf fanzines.

The core of founding members of the club went into their compulsory military service and leadership of the club was taken over by a second generation of members who were born in 1960: Jiří "Pyvos" Kuřina, Vladimír Wagner and Miloš "Albert" Podpěra. Kuřina and Podpěra shared a dorm room together, where they kept an sf library for club members. According to Miloš Podpěra, it was during one evening meeting of the club that the idea of publishing a club magazine originated. That such a thing exists was learned from the only remaining member of the first generation of the club, Jiří Markus, who avoided military service due to health reasons and who had access to information sources about the outside sf world. He had an excellent knowledge of English, which was uncommon at the time. He owned an extensive English sf book collection, and would sometimes read his translations of novels during meetings. Sometimes he would even translate directly while reading the English original.

Jiří told his friends that in English-speaking countries, fans publish their own "fanzines". Everyone immediately wanted to publish their own fanzine. From this moment on, and for the next few decades, Czech fandom adopted basic English terminology pertaining to fan activities, like terms fan, fandom, fanzine and con.

Other pieces of the puzzle came together quickly. In the autumn of 1981, Petr "Pagi" Holan returned from military service. He was a member of the faculty board of the SSM (Socialist Youth Movement). The leadership of the SSM welcomed any new activity that it could use to demonstrate as its own activity, and so it became the umbrella organization for the fanzine. As with most things at the time, a combination of both official and unofficial procedures was needed. In April 1982, for the nationwide Parcon con, 150 copies of the first issue of the "Magazine for internal needs of SFK FO SSM UK / FMF" was published.

The first periodical sf fanzine was probably SF Věstník (newsletter), first published in January 1981 for members of the Teplice Observatory SF Club. It originally contained only short stories, which is why the publishers of the mathematical-physical sf magazine denied to call it a "fanzine" in one of their editorials. If we want even more obscure beginnings, then the first samizdat publication bordering being a fanzine or an anthology was Vega published in Pilsen in 1977.

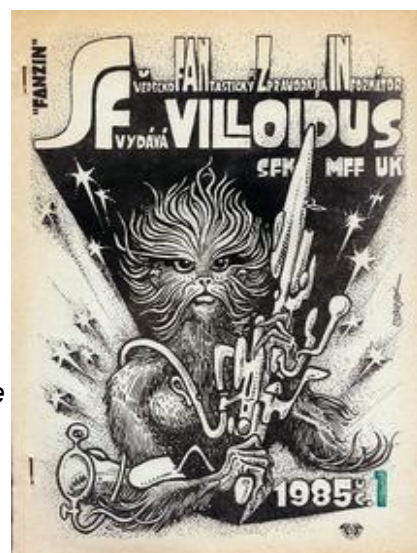
But let's get back to Prague mathematicians and physicists. Starting with the second issue, the term "magazine" was changed to "fanzine". The editors didn't realise at first that a fanzine should have a name; there was a typographic logo on the cover, which was thought to be the name of the publication - it was later referred to by the club name: Villoidus. In 1983, a subtitle appeared: "VědeckoFANTastickýZpravodaj a INformátor" (Science Fiction Bulletin and Informer), which was a Czech backronym that attempted to avoid the potentially dangerous Anglicism "fanzine".

Official support from the authorities was a significant aid in the practical aspects of fanzine production. Typed stencils only needed to be taken to the university copying centre, which would then print the "internal periodical" in the desired number of copies. The content was most likely regularly checked for subversiveness, but no restrictions of content ever took place. Content was a mix of short stories translated mostly from English and Russian, original Czech stories, fandom news, literary competition results, overviews of sci-fi publications abroad, advice to novice authors, and of course, reviews.

Graphically the fanzine were fairly modest. Stencils had limitations as to the illustrations and graphics that could be reproduced, so apart from a few exceptions, the content was primarily text. From 1985, however, the fanzine featured an illustrated cover by the famous painter and comic book illustrator Kája Saudek. The drawing always depicted the club mascot in some form, the fictional Green Fleecy, whose Latin name Villoidus gave the club its name. Over the course of a few years, the fanzine print run doubled to 300 issues. The fanzine folded in 1989. The editors, one by one, had finished their studies, and with the fall of the Communist regime, they now had incomparably wider options for self-realisation. The chief editor of the last two issues was Martin Klíma, who was involved in the



Spirit duplication was also used. This is described as an anthology, stories by Petr Jindra and Dalibor Boubín, from 1979. Title means approx "Nice to meet you".



Villoidus, 1985. Offset cover, the inside mimeographed.

student movement Stuha, and who on November 17, 1989 was one of the spokespeople of the student protests in Albertov in Prague at the beginning of the Velvet Revolution.

The vast majority of domestic, pre-revolution fanzines were published by science fiction clubs and these practically always existed under an official institution. It was never stated that a club or a group had to have an official institution, but to have one's back covered during socialism spared the nerves of fans (in Poland, some science fiction samizdat publishers were investigated by the police for suspicion of economic crimes) and also the umbrella organization aided in the publication and distribution of club fanzines.

Even though they were "samizdat", fanzines never didn't have content subversive to the regime present in them, nor did anyone feel any need for it. A rare exception was the R. E. Howard short story "Beyond the Black River", published in the Poutník (Wanderer) fanzine, deemed too bloody and harsh to the local commissars. The fanzine then had to find an alternative official organiser institution, which became the Socialist Youth Movement of the Chemical-Technological University. There were also cases of deception being used: fanzine publishers would make up an organising institution, or would use the name of an existing one without this institution being aware of the fact that a club magazine was using their name as political cover.

Some institutions had a reproduction section that took care of the printing. In other cases, fans had direct access to copying machines. It is worth noting that in the 1980s, copying machines were closely guarded and kept under strict control. This was due to the authorities' fear of politically subversive or generally uncontrolled publications.

The making of one issue of the Slan fanzine took the fans about three afternoons (the fanzine had about 30 pages, 70 copies were printed). Printing one page 70 times took about 15–20 minutes at a leisurely pace. The fans attempted to speed up this process by setting up a contest for the fastest page print. This was carried out with much physical effort, accompanied by shouts of "Come on!", "Rolling!", "More paint!" or "Wipe it clean!". The fastest team was able to print all copies of one page in one and a half minutes. The effort rubbed off on the compilers and binders too, so the first issue of the 1988 Slan fanzine was produced in one evening meeting in three and a half hours.'

There were simpler, if more laborious, methods besides stencils. Fans from the Karlovy Vary science fiction club Farma zvířat (Animal Farm) used a printing technique dubbed Rollset. You'll need a wooden frame with a screen, copying stencils, a roller, and paint. You put the inscribed stencil on the frame, apply paint evenly, place this on a blank piece of paper and then roll over it with a roller.

The content of fanzines was dependent on the resourcefulness of individual science fiction club members. There were effectively two kinds of clubs. One was a club that was present in a certain location, the second kind was a club associated with an organisation (usually a university). There were exceptions to this, for instance more well-known fanzines such as Interkom, which was primarily a newsletter about goings on within Czechoslovak fandom, or R.U.R., whose club of the same name was considered to be the central Prague science fiction club. Foreign short stories translated by club members was popular fanzine content. Some produced shortened translations of complete novels, for example Isaac Asimov's Foundation. In the Villoidus fanzine, Czech readers learned of Douglas Adams' The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy series approximately 10 years ahead of others in Czechoslovakia, through extensive reviews with excerpts. Translations were often carried out via a third language, for example English science fiction from Russian or, more often, Polish. Novice Czech authors would sharpen their literary skills on fanzine pages. The best stories were usually submitted

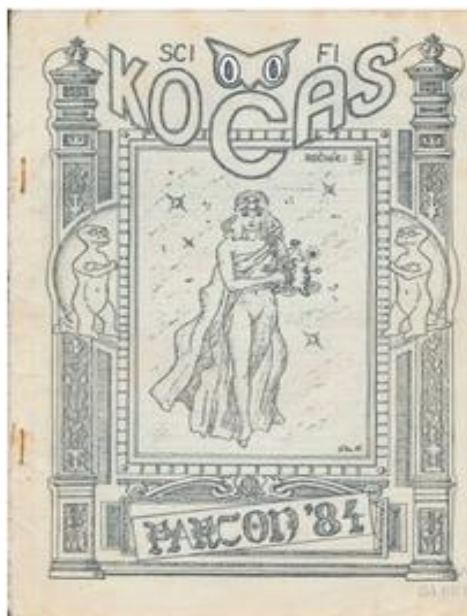
to the fandom competition for the Karel Čapek Award.

Fanzines published practically all work from club members that was at least a little bit readable, so the overall content quality wasn't particularly great, but a few talented writers did appear, for example Jan Hlavička, the original Zdeněk Páv, or the radical Eva Hauserová, who termed her style "biopunk".

What might seem as very bizarre to today's readers were reviews of contemporary films, some of which described in detail the plot of a film that could only be seen on video, for example, and which were thus completely inaccessible for an average fan. More news-oriented fanzines often published lengthy discussions, primarily about differing views on the running and organising of fandom (Vladimír Veverka, Jiří Karbusický, and Václav Pravda excelled in this), or about fanzines' missions (Láďa Peška). Reading these today, one can get easily the impression that fandom was more akin to a tiring conference than a fun hobby.

Similarly to authors of American fanzines, some of the local fanzine creators would later professionalise -. the publisher of the Bene Gesserit fanzine (probably the first fanzine intended to be primarily sold) founded the Winston Smith publishing house, Tomáš Jirkovský turned his Laser fanzine into a notable publishing house of the same name. On the other hand, in terms of original content, there was practically no overlap in authors writing for fanzines and those writing for the general public, even after 1989.

After the first professional magazine Ikarie started publishing in March 1990 and fandom started to fragment into smaller interest groups, there was a shift to more



Kocas, 1984. The cover is directly drawn on the stencil (fine job!).



Ikarie's last issue.

purely fan fanzines and a more laid back approach to content. *Ikarie* itself was the transmutation of the *Ikarie XB* fanzine, which was probably the most ambitious project of Czech fandom.

It had a group of experienced sf editors (Jaroslav Olša, Pavel Kosatík, Ondřej Neff, and Ivan Adamovič), was printed on quality paper using offset printing technologies (with a handmade template combining text written on an electric typewriter, hand-made, or transfer paper made headlines). The fanzine was inspired by the Polish magazine *Fantastyka*. When *Ikarie* began to be mass-published, fans still considered it a fandom magazine, which led to a sense of disappointment in some who thought the editorship didn't co-operate with fandom much (in reality the magazine had a long-running regular section about fandom).

Since the beginning of the 1990s, fanzines were also being published that were devoted to a particular part of the fantasy genre, for example Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* (*CoriCelesti*), hero role-plays and table games (*Dechdraka / Dragon's Breath*), works of Tolkien (*Imladris*), the cyberpunk-influenced *Poslední dávka* (Last Dose) a transmutation of the *RUR* fanzine), the heroic fantasy oriented *Ghul*, the horror genre, or purely personal fanzines that served only to publish the views and observations of a single author (for example *Wild Shaarkah*, produced in English by Eva Hauserová). One fanzine that has survived since the 1980s until now and remains probably the most significant fandom publication is the *Interkom* newsletter, originally created by Vladimír Veverka, since the late 1980s edited by Zdeněk Rampas. The November 1989 revolution and the sudden liberalisation of information and trade didn't have a significant effect on fanzines at first. Publications had an amateur look well into the 1990s. The assumption that more and more fanzines would follow the more "professional" graphic style of *Ikarie XB* proved false. Probably the opposite was true: with the widespread publishing of professional periodicals, fanzine publishers could focus more on the meaning of the word "amateur", derived in meaning from "lover".

In the second half of the 1980s the majority of fanzines switched to offset printing, which allowed for better quality reproductions of illustrations and allowed for higher quality paper to be used. Cases of Xeroxed fanzines also became more common, especially with fanzines that had fewer pages. In the 1990s, many fanzines switched to A5 format and some also transformed into semi-professional magazines. Energy previously used for fanzine publishing was channeled into smaller individual publications, primarily translations of short stories and novels.

In 1985, there were about 26 different fanzines being published; in 1990, the number (including ones no longer in publication) was approaching 50. Most of these stopped being published during the 1990s, even though a number of new ones sprung up. The reasons have already been mentioned: the ageing of fans and new possibilities after the revolution, and to a lesser extent the Internet.

It was really the emergence of the *Ikarie* magazine and later on others, rather than the expansion of the Internet, that caused a gradual drop in fanzine numbers. There were very few Internet fanzines, in the sense of publishing of finished issues; the principal fanzine in 1995 was *amber.zine*, which wrote about science fiction and new technologies. Other web project like the ambitious *Fanzine.cz*, *Sarden*, or *Fantasy Planet* can be considered more as being portals.

I was in contact with Jaroslav Olša Jr, well-known and long-time Czech fan, who gave me the link <https://fanziny.4fan.cz/fanziny.php?x=0&y=0&z=0> where digitalised Czech fanzines (only a small portion of them) are collected. (Most as picture files, but some as texts - many browsers have the option to translate text, eg to English, so use that.) Somewhere on this site I also found a lengthy article by Olša himself about Czech fanzines. It's too long to have in the modest little zine named *Intermission*, but I'll below do my best to summarise the most important. (Some of the phrasing will be Olša's, some mine. You o/l/s/a also find the article as a PDF here: <https://fanziny.4fan.cz/stah/fan0c6.pdf> - AI translation should work!)

In Eastern Europe the existence of such uncontrollable activities (as fanzines) was a thorn in the side of all regimes at the time. In the face of the fact of total and general control of any press, therefore, Eastern European SF fans had no choice but to go to "illegality". However, SF publishing was not suppressed as with political samizdats – fanzines therefore stood somewhere on the border between "still suffering" (suspicious?) and "already banned". It was more complicated in the Soviet Union, East Germany and Bulgaria, but some sort of freedom existed in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

The first Eastern European fanzines come from Hungary (1968), but soon Poland became the center of SF fanzines (the first fanzines were released in 1976) and in the second half of the 1980s also Czechoslovakia. An unexpectedly high number of titles was also published in Romania (only in a certain period), while in the Soviet Union, Bulgaria and the GDR only a few titles were issued.



Jaroslav Olša Jr (right), now Czech Consul General in Los Angeles!



Leonardo, from 1988. Fine cover, probably electrostencilled!

The Teplice Observatory sf club' stencilled periodical Sci-fi (sometimes Science fiction), better known as Teplice Gazette began with publishing short stories, but in #5 began having short reports on club activities and the emerging Czechoslovak fandom and the last issues had a very varied content. Unfortunately, after publishing a short story with a religious motif, the fanzine was banned by the club's founder after #12 (1984) and the club disintegrated...

Very important for the entire fandom the first periodic fanzine, simply named Science fiction, later just SF or Villoidus (1982-88, print run 150 to 350), published as an appendix to the de facto non-existent student journal of the Math Physics Faculty of Charles University, Prague. The faculty magazine itself was only a few pages appendix became a regular informant with fandom news from home and abroad, a total of 5-7 issues a year between 1982-88. SF was also the first to introduce the term fanzine to a wider audience. A large group of translators and authors gathered around the zine 1982 – 1986, that soon reached decent quality, albeit the printing quality was lower.

SF starts an era of early stencilled (mimeographed) fanzines, 1982-84, with titles like Makropulos from sf youth club in the city of Šumperk. Interkom was important for spreading fandom news. Not only news from home, reviews, controversies, advice for collectors and publishing plans, but also reports from domestic and foreign cons written by correspondents. With Interkom mentioned zine SF began losing its informative role and became more of a literary fanzine.

Other fanzines of the period were VF (1982-85), Siréna (Siren), Bonsai, Andromeda, some of them were already produced on a copying machines.

The period 1984-88 was the Golden Era of stencilled fanzines and the number of fans and clubs grew, even in smaller cities. The widening of fandom meant that the earlier close cooperation of a small group of translators, authors and editors disintegrated. The role of the declining zine SF was taken over by two other zines from near Prague, Slan (1985-89) from the city of Slaný, and Laser (various cities, later on city of Plzeň) (1985-) and Poutník (Wanderer) from Prague.. An experiment with the fanzine Argus (500 copies!) failed as it was only reprints from less available fanzines to a high production cost.

1985-86 saw the end of dominance of low-cost stencilled fanzines (only Laser managed to stay important). Among offset fanzines we saw Bonsai, Solaris, Ariadne, as well as the first anthologies of foreign sf Lety zakázanou rychlostí (Flights in Forbidden Speed - in three volumes - as a samizdat book, and the anthology Lidštější než lidé (More Human than People) of Czech authors from the Karel Čapek competition for best sf story. There was also an annual Czech authors anthology Kočas from the national con Parcon.

Until the turn of 1985/86, fanzine publishers mostly relied on the mercy of officials in houses of culture, pioneers and youth, businesses and schools, who with their silent consent did of a number of samizdats with fictitious permits (violating the law). After that, the number of periodicals and one-time publications began to increase sharply.

Two fanzines were the first to try to become truly professional-looking magazines. AF 167 (1985-1989) from city of Brno took American sf magazines as a model, with local authors and translations, also having non-fiction fact articles (eg a series of the history of Anglo-American sf). A year later Ikarie XB came from Prague, taking the Polish sf monthly Fantastyka as its model with a good graphic design. It had a series on Czech sf history but was unfortunately a bit irregular, instead of planned quarterly it became a yearbook, only 4 issues were published between 1986-1989.

There were many more sf publications in the late 1980s, too many to list here, including samizdat sf publishers of novels. In 1988 and 1989, only months before the fall of Communist regime and so-called Velvet Revolution, some fan personalities succeeded to produce fanzines in print-run exceeding 1,000 copies – these were usually novels or short story collection. Among these were Asimov's Foundation (Vol. 1), selection of short stories by G. R. R. Martin (his Sandkings and Song for Lya were extremely popular in Czechoslovakia), Robert Shekley, J. R. R. Tolkien and some Czech authors.

The Slovak part of the country though having less "repressive cultural policy", Samizdat didn't develop as much and there were fewer sf fanzines. Slovak SF clubs were established all around the country. The first influential fanzine was Pollux from the city Spišská Nová Ves (1984-87). Most Slovak SF fanzines didn't last long, with the exception of Lémai (1984-89), which had a relatively cohesive group of authors, translators and fans around its editorial office. Eastern Slovakia also saw Prit (1985-1988), Infinity (1988-89, some issues as computer printouts!), two similar newszines and Communicator (1988-89). Bratislava remained a bit in the background but had fanzines like Sféra (1986-89), IQ 2001, and Fiawol (1988-89). The late decade saw samizdat books coming from Bratislava, like short story collections by HP Lovecraft.

As in Poland, in Czechoslovakia samizdat sf publishers soon become very active, and as in Poland the most active became professional operations. The fanzine Laser became a publishing house of the same name. There was the AFSF (by the editors of Ikarie XB) publishing house, Golem-Ríša, AF 167, Winston Smith, Poutník, United Fans, Nová vlna (New Wave), and some of them still operate even 35 years later..

(The 1990s saw a drop in fanzine activity just as in the West, as electronic media took over. But that's outside the scope of this history.)

Fandom and its activities in most socialist countries at the time wasn't authorized or supported by the totalitarian governments, but tolerated to a degree. Fans weren't seen as "dangerous elements", more like "potentially dangerous". It was the same in all of Eastern Europe. Fandom became a distinct subculture whose very existence was against totalitarianism. Fanzines became companions to samizdat, presenting an alternative culture and way of life. Still the importance of fanzines have often been underestimated and their existence ignored. They aren't mentioned in studies of samizdat, or mentioned only as "unofficially published texts motivated purely to acquire profit"!

Samizdat (meaning approx "self published") was the Eastern Europe underground literature, everything from political newsletters, political or cultural pamphlets, to entire novels, done through everything from typing with carbon paper, to secretly printed at night with covered windows as the commissars slept. Fanzines had the same "state of mind" but as they usually weren't "politically incorrect" they could be printed openly at universities or other institutions, but were still in a grey zone.

Your editor had an interesting visit from Czechoslovakia in the autumn of 1989, about the time of the Velvet Revolution. It was by Ivo Železný (https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivo_%C5%BDelezn%C3%BD) active in Czech sf circles. We seated ourself in a local pub - high probability we had Czech bbeer! - and taked about sf and what happened in his country. There was a lot at that moment. The thing is that not only did he speak almost perfect Swedish, he had a PhD in the subject Swedish sf! (He learned the lanugage so he could read it obviously). He had worked as a translator also and then worked with publishing (quite successfully, Wikipedia indicates). Unfortunately I lost contact with him after some time I sent him my newszine, but as I remember it began to bounce after a few years.

And by this the History Corner closes for this time. We'll see what it covers in #153? Sf and cats?

Two Bullying Schoolboys

They had a plan: Let's ambush and embarrass him! But it backfired. They behaved like two little bullying schoolboys and embarrassed themselves to the degree...something we haven't seen in international politics ever! Not even, say, Hitler or Stalin were so stupid as to misbehave in front of a camera. President Volodymyr Zelensky kept his head cool and calm and was surprisingly eloquent in his limited English (though it has improved a lot during the war) as he tried to reason, as the US "president" shouted idiocies in his face and his cohort revealed his ignorance of a country he had "seen and heard the stories" from.



"Listen. My buddy Vlad assured me that bla bla..."

The reactions were overwhelmingly negative towards Trump and Vance. Around 50 international leaders directly stated support for Zelensky and Ukraine. Only diehard MAGA clowns seem to utter some kind of Trump support, looking like they wished they were on another planet. European leaders gathered in London to make their own peace plan and ramp up support for Ukraine even more.

One headline: *The Nine Eleven of International Diplomacy.*

I don't disagree. The Oval Office turned into a schoolyard with two bullies out of control. The American president behaved like a child embarrassing himself in front of the whole world. I've been against this former TV reality host from the beginning, a self-proclaimed "stable genius" (=unstable fool). In the Kremlin bottles are now popping to fake champagne that they've stolen from stolen lands.

I have a question, as I'm no expert on the US constitution: *Is it possible to impeach two at the same time?* From comments by experts on the US constitution Trump has already several times, eg in his executive orders, breached his presidential oath. It's an impeachable offence. The problem: Vance, who automatically takes over if Trump is kicked out. (Not the wonderful writer Jack Vance, one of my favourites, but JD Vance, JD = Just Dumb.) As the VP has limited powers, it's questionable if he has yet committed any impeachable offenses? Can you impeach him for just being a total jerk? I dunno.

The American political system must find ways to remedy the disastrous situation. A lot is hanging on the Congress. There's also the Supreme Court, though Trump has stuffed it with "conservative judges" - "conserve" means to preserve, lets hope they'll preserve the constitution. It's a mess. Surfing around I see some indications towards impeaching Trump, but it's not yet something obvious. We'll see in the coming days. (One Ukrainian member of their parliament seems to want to impeach Zelensky, but that will go nowhere. Mr Z's ratings are going up. All I find is that the Ukrainian people gathers around their president and are proud of him.)

Some (edited) snippets from the donnybrook with Donny (full transcript eg: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/02/28/trump-zelensky-meeting-transcript-full-text-video-oval-office/> and video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AL4zYCOVtXg>):

Vance: *What makes America a good country is America engaging in diplomacy. That's what President Trump is doing.* /Ed: Great "diplomacy" indeed.../

Zelensky: *He [Putin] occupied various parts of Ukraine in 2014... nobody stopped him. He just occupied and took. He killed people. From 2014 till 2022, the situation was the same - people have been dying on the contact line and nobody stopped him... he broke the cease-fire. He killed our people, and he didn't exchange prisoners. We signed the exchange of prisoners, but he didn't do it. What kind of diplomacy, JD, are you speaking about? What do you mean?* /And later:/ *Have you ever been to Ukraine to see what problems we have? Come once.*

Vance: *I've actually watched and seen the stories, and I know what happens is you bring people on a propaganda tour, Mr. President.* /Ed: Z visited a US ammunitions factory, if that was "propaganda" Zelensky certainly has the right to make propaganda for his country./ *Do you disagree that you've had problems bringing people in your military* /Ed: Russia has much, much more serious problems here/, *and do you think that it's respectful to come to the Oval Office of the United States of America and attack the administration that is trying to prevent the destruction of your country?*

Zelensky: *First of all, during the war, everybody has problems, even you. But you have a nice ocean and don't feel [the problems] now. But you will feel it in the future.* /Two exchanges later:/

Trump: *You're in no position to dictate what we're going to feel. We're going to feel very good.*

Zelensky: *You are going to feel influenced...*

Trump: *...You don't have the cards right now.* /Zelensky continues speaking, this transcript misses it, but he says: We're not playing cards!/
You're gambling with the lives of millions of people. You're gambling with World War III.

You're gambling with World War III, and what you're doing is very disrespectful to this country that's backed you far more than a lot of people say they should have. /Ed: From polls only about 1/3 of the US population is against or undecided about supporting



Ukraine. Appeasing Putin's with of empty nuclear threats will be commented later. Putin not Zelensky is the gambler./

Vance: *Have you said thank you once?*

Zelensky: *A lot of times.* /Ed: CNN counted to 33 times in official statements on Youtube. It probably doubles counting Twitter and other sources./

Trump ends it all with saying: *"This will be great television."* Is it *that* the moron is thinking of?

Agent Orange seems to have swallowed Putins repeated, empty sabre rattling. According to <https://united24media.com/war-in-ukraine/a-timeline-of-russias-nuclear-threats-against-the-west-947> the Kremlin Czar has come with nuclear threats at least 80 times, but experts and analysts are unified in noting it's highly unlikely. Nukes - it would be tactical ones - would have a very limited effect while having very bad ramifications for Russia. If Putin drops tactical nukes he'd instantly lose any support and relations with China, India, and all of that BRIC bloc the Czar is so fond of. It may even

become a factor that finally pushes his own people to revolt. (And there's claims that the US has warned him that NATO would strike back heavily with conventional means - 1000 plane raids on a turkey shoot on all Russian military in occupied areas. Though it's doubtful Trump would go along, European airforces may do it in 500 plane raids.) A tactical nuke is about Hiroshima sized, or a little more, and it will affect an area perhaps 3-4 km in diameter, defended by something like 2-3 companies, say, 500 soldiers. *It's a very marginal effect, with huge risks.* Therefore, use of nukes is unlikely, but Putin has lulled Trump into believing in his rattling. The Ukrainian Commander in Chief has also stated: If the Russians drop nukes, we will just continue fighting.

The Europeans have held meetings, deciding to increase military spending and Ukraine support. We're not afraid of the Ruskis. 11 NATO countries have conscription and could mobilise up to 1 million soldiers, beside all standing armies, trained and technologically top notch equipped. The Germans have elected a new chancellor more pro-Ukrainian. Relations with the US under Trump are in question, because of the ego-maniacs pitbull terrier "diplomacy". Another headline: Trump needs to back off, but he doesn't understand it. He's just too stupid. I've delayed finishing this as long as possible to comment the schoolyard brawl. And what's your views on all this!?

LoCs & MCs

First LoCs then MCs to EAPA, now *reaching mailing #250!* (Due to periodicity N'APA is commented in nextish). But listen. We need new members! Join! It's very easy to make a little fanzine today. Easy peasy and fun! Doctors warn that fanzines is the only way to stop your palms growing hair and spine to wither. Ask me for more info on EAPA or N'APA. Roscoe expects every fan to do his duty!

Bob Jennings: *Thanks for sending along Intermission #151. My apologies for not commenting on earlier issues, but I will try to make up for the oversight in the future.*

*I sincerely hope that Putin and his armies can be stopped in Ukraine, but the ongoing news does not sound promising to me. The news reports from many sources keep telling us about Russia's severe economic woes caused by Putin's war, and the effects the sanctions that other nations have on placed Russian commerce and banking are having, and the news is always full of reports about massive Russian troop losses, large amounts of Russian military equipment destroyed, bad morale among Russian soldiers, and more. There seem no end to the reports of how badly things are going for Russia, while many pundits are predicting the eminent collapse of the Russian government and overthrow of Putin any minute now. Except it never happens. /Ed: Just wait!/
The reality is that Putin is a psychopath whose ego will not let him give up this war until he has won. He doesn't care how many human lives it cost, how much money it costs, how many resources are wasted, or how the people inside Russia itself suffer from all the problems his war is causing. The only thing he cares about is winning, and at the present time he is slowly but surely wearing down the Ukrainian forces. In a war of attrition, Russia will win unless the defenders come up with better tactics and better ways to control their territory than they have been doing recently. /Ed: It's not that Putin would give up the war, but when he falls that doesn't matter. And BTW Ukraine has evolved a lot in drone warfare!/
This is very discouraging to me. The fact that Prez Trump is pushing for a cease fire and an immediate end for the conflict may be the only hope Ukraine has of surviving. /Ed: Putin needs a ceasefire more./ A cease fire may appear to be an advantage for Russia, but it will allow Ukraine time to regroup, time to repair the internal damages all those drone attacks have caused, and time to reestablish military priorities. Will a cease-fire come about soon? I don't know, but in the meanwhile Russia continues to make small but steady territorial gains, and the number of Ukrainian fighters continues to go down with every new Russian attack. I guess time will tell. /Ed: Ukraine can fill losses, unlike Russia./*

On a different subject, it sure looks like Neil Gaiman has led a double life for quite a long time. I always try to be cautious when these kinds of charges about bizarre sexual misconduct are made against media personalities (since there are predators who will make up false stories just to extort cash from famous people who do not want the bad publicity those kinds of court cases can create), but in addition to all the other charges against Gaiman, recent news stories report that his former family nanny has filed a criminal complaint against him alleging repeated forcible rape and deviant sexual behavior during her time working for him. The police are taking this complaint seriously, and neither Mr Gaiman nor his family have responded.

This is a wretched situation, since Gaiman is a very talented writer who has produced superb material over the course of his career. His Sandman comic series is legendary. You have to wonder what kind of twisted personality would lead to the behavior he has been accused of, or why he believed he would be able to get away with it forever. This will play out in criminal courtrooms as well as in the popular press, and the revelations may be enough to destroy Gaiman's creative legacy.

I admit I never heard of Thor Modeen or "lager films", which you explain are short comedy motion pictures made primarily during the 1930s and 1940s, but your write-up about the gathering to celebrate his 127th birthday has encouraged me to try and see if any are available with English language translations. (Hm, I just checked YouTube. There seem to be several videos posted about Thor Moden, but no films by him. I will look around the web later to see which I can turn up.)

The articles you ran about early computers in Sweden was very interesting. I wonder why one of the foreign tube based machine was never purchased as originally planned. /Ed: Nothing available. Electronic brains were manually built one by one./ Maybe the cost was too high, or maybe there were problems with trying to ship all the component parts and reassembling it again, what with those hundreds of vacuum tubes and connectors to

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deal with. Of course in 1948 Bell Labs introduced the transistor, which spelled the end for vacuum tubes for radios, TVs, and for computers.

Nice to know from your reprinted articles, that book publishers back in the 1950s were looking forward to computing machines being able to turn out works of fiction electronically so they could cut out those troublesome human writers who demand payment on acceptance and royalties on future sales, and have those pesky attorneys who insist that everything be put down in legally binding contracts. With today's AI models the dream is finally reality. We now have machines that can turn out sellable fiction without any human writers being involved at all. I guess this is progress.

Good letters column, but no immediate comments thereof. Good issue. Looking forward to the next one.

Leigh Edmonds: Thanks for Intermission 150 which I finally got around to reading and enjoying.

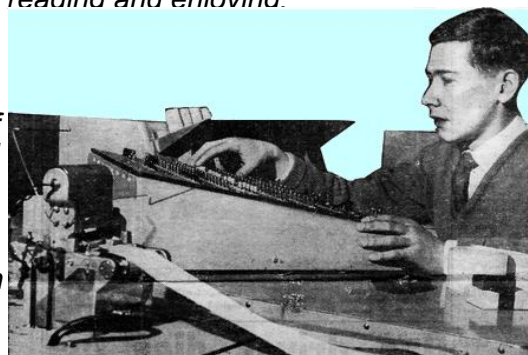
I liked your story about Vlad and Donny. I thought it was a very nice characterization of your two main characters. The only thing I was disappointed with was the punishment handed out to Donny. I thought your punishment was appropriate but not demeaning enough. After a bit of thought I decided that if I was seeking the appropriate punishment it would be as a Private in the US Army's infantry. I wonder what endless hours on the parade ground with the Drill Sergeant from Hell would be like for Donny's ego?

I found your article on In Case of Crisis or War fascinating. The European attitude to war, and the Swedish view in particular, is very interesting to those of us on the other side of the globe. To us it isn't Russia that's the worry, it's China. I had to look up a map to see whether Sweden had a land border with Russia and found that Finland is in the way. Even so, you are a lot closer to Russia than we are to China, and Russia is being much more aggressive than China at the moment, so the threat must feel much closer there than we feel it here. For us the most aggressive things the Australian defence forces do is to send the occasional aircraft or ship up to the South China Sea to work with the Americans to suggest to the Chinese that the sea really isn't theirs exclusively. The likelihood of that turning into a shooting war seems quite distant, but you never know do you.

Anyhow, we haven't had conscription in Australia since the beginning of the 1970s, and that was to do our bit in the American War in Vietnam. Even then, the conscription wasn't for every male who turned 18 but only for those who were unfortunate to have their birthdays written on one of the marbles pulled out of a barrel. That was one lottery where I was happy not to have my name selected. Since then the Australian Defense Forces have been entirely volunteer with not a hint of conscription in sight apart from those who think that what youngsters today need 'is a bit of discipline'. As a result of all this I have no idea what the maximum age for enlistment into the defense forces might be, but being an old age pensioner these days I don't expect that anybody is going to shove a gun in my hand any time soon.

History Corner was interesting. I hadn't thought about time capsules as a way of sending the present into the future but it makes sense. In their own way fanzines are time capsules too I think. At the moment a couple of fannish friends and I (Perry Middlemiss and Marc Ortlieb) spend a couple of days a month at the Special Collection Library at Monash University in Melbourne helping to bring some order to their fanzine collection. It is interesting work, we are often reminded of past events and people as we work our way through the collection.

The other thing in this issue I liked was the photo of the newsstand. I've seen a couple of similar pictures taken in Australia in the late 1940s and early 1950s and I sort of thought that was unusual. However, I was recently in Ballarat's big shopping mall (I now live just over the road from it) and saw that they had a very long rack of magazines on just about every topic except science fiction. I did get excited for a moment when I saw the word 'Amazing' in the title of one, but it turned out to be 'Amazing History' which is really going in the opposite direction to sf.



Fan Dick Jensen (AKA Ditmar) at SCIRAC, doing eg meteorology.



Jensen at the CSIRAC console, in 1999

(Later on #151:) On a couple of things. First, thanks for Intermission 151 which I enjoyed. I wish I was as optimistic about you about the war in Ukraine. For one thing, I doubt if even Trump knows what he's going to do so everything is up in the air from that perspective. Your description of a collapsing Russian economy that might force an end to the war might be optimistic but the misery it would bring to the Russian people could be unimaginable. I don't know if there is any way to achieve a good outcome, perhaps only a less worse one.

Your long article about electronic brains was fascinating and I now know a lot more about early computing in Sweden than I do about early computing in Australia. I do know a little about the beginnings of computing in Australia through a fannish connection. Australia's first

computer was built by a Commonwealth agency called the Commonwealth Scientific and Scientific Research organization and called CSIRAC. It began operation in Sydney in 1951 and was relocated to Melbourne University in 1955 and started running there in 1956. At the same time Dick Jensen, one of the founder members of the Melbourne SF Club, started on his Masters in Meteorology and used CSIRAC. On it he did the first weather modelling in the southern hemisphere and also did very early computer graphics when he developed a way for the computer to print weather maps. He said it was like living science fiction. After his

retirement Dick became very heavily interested in computer art and, among other things, won the Rotsler Award in 2016 for his computer generated fan art.

I'm attaching two photos of Dick, the first one taken with him at the controls of CSIRAC in about 1956 and the other one of him in 1999 at the same controls which are now in a science and technology museum in Melbourne. He died late last year.

J Cowie: I noted Leigh Edmonds LOC and The European attitude to war, and the Swedish view in particular, is very interesting to those of us on the other side of the globe. To us it isn't Russia that's the worry, it's China.

I have a feeling in my water (never a good sign at my age) that China is looking on to see how Russia fares in gaining Ukrainian territory as it will apply the lessons learned as to the West's preparedness and resolve to support Ukraine as a steer for China's own ambitions regarding Taiwan and Japanese territories in the Sea of Japan... In short Leigh, Ukraine is more relevant to USA interests than some in your country might possibly think... /Ed: The Chinese communist system is extremely inefficient, so the Chinese threat looks exaggerated./

Perry Middlemiss: One interesting comment on page 3: "Buying sex is illegal here." With the "here" being Sweden. That threw me a little. "Sex work" was legalised some years ago in various parts of Australia and I had thought most of Europe as well. Odd that isn't the case in Sweden. /Ed: Selling sex is legal here, it's buying it that's illegal./ (I should note here that the legislation legalising sex work from registered establishments is made at the state level in Australia, rather than at the Federal (ie whole country) level.)

Neil Gaiman's "defence" that he always had "consensual" sex just doesn't stack up to any sort of scrutiny at all. It appears that a number of the victims were young, vulnerable women in his "employ" or, at least, staying in his house. None of these would have been able to provide any form of legitimate consent to someone like Gaiman, and he should have known that. In most armed forces around the world where men and women mingle, relationships are banned between persons of different rank. Whenever there is an interaction between a person of one rank and someone either higher or lower in rank there is a power structure in place which cannot be ignored. The fact that Neil Gaiman chose to ignore his place in his own power structure says as much as needs to be said. /Now MCs:/

Henry Grynsten: "Do you know how many short stories you've written altogether?" I couple of years back i guesstimated it was a bit over 120. It's more now. My two short story collections alone are over 50 stories. I've been writing yearly xmas/New Year stories for 25 years. The activities of the Short Story Masters Society, active almost two decades, requires 2-3 stories every year (and I usually do it more, four a year at least), which would be ca 60 stories. $50+25+80=155$ - an arithmetic guess, but it could be more. Many stories from before my first collection aren't included. I have written faaanfction, which should count as short stories. ❀ "I've looked at tips on how to use ChatGPT, but not found anything very interesting". The important thing is to learn how to write a detailed, workable prompt for AIs. AIs will improve, fast, so whatever you think of today, in half a year an AI may amaze you. ❀ "Our brains didn't develop to be completely rational and think in scientific terms." Questionable assumption! Any property of a brain NOT made to reflect reality (=being rational) will be purged by evolution. Your brain has no use for a system that e g claim $2+2=5$. Such a system will lie to its user and endanger its existence, so it is purged. ❀ "There are no human groups anywhere, including today, that are completely free of superstitious beliefs or cognitive biases" There are groups that have minimal amounts of such, eg scientists. But what are superstitions? Side-effects of other important intellectual properties, and NOT something consciously produced by evolution. For instance: To protect your group and home turf is important to be able to stop attacks by wild animals etc. But as a side-effect of this evolution may make you see strange dangers near your protection zone, things that aren't there. It's a superstition that's a side-effect of useful properties, but evolution hasn't developed it on purpose. ❀ "We can't understand the scientific explanation of many things to begin with." Questionable assumption. We tend to be able to understand anything once we have studied it deep enough. When we don't understand things, it's due to lack of data. ❀ "thus we invent explanations that turn out to be superstitions" Which tend to be crushed by scientists, the group which has a low amount of superstitions. ❀ "Optical illusions" comes from short-cuts in our optical intepretation system. We need those shortcuts to make sense of the world (very rational!) but that they sometimes give strange effects is a side effect. ❀ "I can't see any reason to believe that any other animal could evolve to be completely free of these things". I would like to phrase it: no evolution of an intellectual system can be "perfect". There will be shortcuts and side-effects. But evolution itself will never have the GOAL to produce the shortcuts and side-effects. ❀ "In other words, you deny the limits to progress in the foreseeable future." It's the word "deny" I'm against. It's connotations include "to go against something obviously correct". But that the future have "limits to growth" ISN'T obviously correct. So the word "deny" shouldn't be used. ❀ No, re-designs of CPUs as their capacity increases is far from trivial. ❀ "What is the criterion for the number



Moonshine & red noses à la LON

No, re-designs of CPUs as their capacity increases is far from trivial. ❀ "What is the criterion for the number

of tricks sufficient to create consciousness?" We don't know yet. ❀❀ "A supercomputer that is twice as advanced as what we have now?" No, AIs aren't comparable to supercomputers, in the traditional computer way. AIs are big information networks. If you are interested, I saw some expert claim that today's AIs are perhaps 1% on the way to the level human consciousness. So the answer to your question may be that AIs big neural information networks need to expand 100 times. (It may be reached in 5-6 years, given a yearly doubling.) ❀❀ "It's how it's organized that matters." Sure, it's organised to mimic us, so it may happen. ❀❀ "Neural networks aren't programmed to and do not by themselves strive to become conscious." Many philosophers argue that consciousness becomes an automatic property given enough complexity in the right environment. ❀❀ "You don't need to use a sofa all the time. Part of the time is enough." No, because the other part of the time, you can do useful things. Suppose the Wright brothers spent 10 hours/week on the sofa being lazy - they could STILL develop an aircraft. ❀❀ "As of January 2025, 75 % of American adults are overweight or obese." This goes towards another debate, where you seem to claim humans are free from pre-programming (and I disagree). Humans obviously often has a pre-programming to eat as much as possible - thus obesity. This was useful during the stone age when food-supply was uneven, so better use every chance you have to eat. It seems the solution to this is eating certain pills to make you less hungry (a Danish company produces this medicine) ❀❀ "It doesn't look like (we're getting better brains), considering the state of the world today." That's a relevant observation, thinking of eg Putin's insane war. What we see in Putin's case is another instinct or pre-programming going wild, the "territoriality" of humans or "maximise your turf". Putin's mad brain says he must get as much territory as possible ❀❀ Coffee drinking "hasn't been such a mass phenomenon for all that time". From at least the 18th century and on coffee was a mainstay of at least city life. There were often more coffee houses than pubs. They were the place for much of the productive, intellectual debate. ❀❀ "Why did Americans expand west? Not because they had the genes to spread" It could be it was in the genes, something the Americans expressed with the phrase "Manifest Destiny" (Wikipedia: "The belief in the 19th-century United States that American settlers were destined to expand westward"). "Destiny" here points to "Unavoidable", unavoidable because it's built into us. ❀❀ It's not pointless to get colonies on the Moon or on Mars. Important points include: getting new scientific data, the efforts create new valuable technology, portions of humanity in a safe place in case of a dinosaur-killer comet. More can be added, but it's obviously vaild points. (Food? You grow it in greenhouses and tanks!) ❀❀ "vacuum, radiation, low gravity, dust, temperature, micrometeorites" Yes, there are huge challenges. If we overcome them (which we should) we'll get incredibly good technology. ❀❀ "I gave a reference to a careful academic study" I reserve the right to dismiss single academic studies. To counter Academic rot we need several studies, all pointing to identical results with a wide margin, and being reproducible. The quality of non-natural-science research tend to be very low today (due to identity politics, postmodernism and other rot at universities) and studies - several in fact - have shown that many social sciences findings are unreproducible. ❀❀ "Robots will be constructed for and imprinted with liking being our servants. That's fine unless they are conscious" Homo Sapiens also have plenty of pre-programming. If we can live with it, so can robots. ❀❀ "you have to argue that that technology and scientific knowledge wouldn't have come about in other ways if we didn't expand into space" It could be argued for some stuff. Examples: good weather forecasting, global natural resources surveys, GPS, a decade of extra computer development (NASA pushed it hard in the 1960s), probably many results in theoretical physics (radioastronomy, James Webb telescope, space apticles, etc), many new materials developed for space, new knowledge in aerodynamics, new knowledge in high temperature chemistry, etc , plus 100s of "small inventions"). The thing is that truly remarkable new inventions and findings tend to come unexpected when you are looking for something else! When you are looking for things that do well in space, out comes other things too! ❀❀ CO2 and microplastics are irrelevant. Don't bother about any "climate crisis". Have a look at "Climate the Movie": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXUHm0tNVws> 1) We are in an historically cold climate, 2) and BTW low CO2 too, 3) CO2 doesn't drive temp, it's the other way around, 4) the small changes we see in climate are due to astronomical factors. ❀❀ No we don't need to destroy nature because: 1) We recycle a lot, 2) we use resources more efficently and invent things, 3) we can get extra resources from the solar system. ❀❀ The Saturn V fuel requirement is microscopic compared to total fuel use on Earth. ❀❀ About MOZART: Interesting to read. It looks like you're right. It all looks convincing.

Garth Spencer: That TZ episode rings a bell... ❀❀ I wish someone would make a Microsoft compatible OS so we could get rid of Windows, which gets more annoying with every release. Ais should be able to analyse needed coding and fix a stjable Windows clone... (But you seem sceptical to the abilities of AI.)

Heath Row: Not to defend Musk (he acts rashly and should stay with space projects!) while being "unelected" he is appointed, just like any secretary in the cabinet. I've commented Trump's elephantic china shop tramplng elsewhere. Small hands lack grip... ❀❀ The problem with "wokeness" as "aware" is it only recognises certain heavily biased types of "awareness". ❀❀ Interesting movie ads. But I wonder how long movies intended to be in movie theatres will be made... ❀❀ Time to stop! Nextish more on Trump, exciting skiffy history, perhaps skiing and the Eurovision. Until next time! Adjö, vi syns!

Слава Україні!

Коли ми боремося, ми перемагаємо!

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

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 275

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9 March 2025

Comments:

Cover: Public Domain Fantasy Art

Ahrvid Engholm: While I agree with virtually everything you said, a sense of restraint prevents me from commenting in depth on your thoughts and ideas. Also a sense of loathing and nausea... Trump is the worst liar ever in the entire history of the United States, and quite possibly the worst liar in the history of the English language. I did have to laugh at the part where George Washington captured the British airfields...

Fun write-up of Swecon. I dare to hope convention fandom will return to my corner of the galaxy!

re determinism and computability, agreement. The world is obviously not subject to rigid Newtonian determinism, for, in a world like that, information cannot be created. All information exists, neither able to increase or decrease. But we know that evolutionary algorithms can, in fact, create information. And, yes, humans have "volition," if not theological "free will." The theological variant is hard to define categorically, but everyday ordinary human volition is pretty much an observed fact. People make decisions, using the most complex decision-making machine on earth: the human brain.



ret me, Robert Asprin was "too successful" with the Mongol Horde in the SCA, such that large numbers of members moved away from the founding motifs of the club -- knights and chivalry and medieval arts and crafts -- and found pleasure in role-playing as Mongols. Chapter after chapter of the SCA went Mongol, and a large number of traditionalists found that dismaying. The reaction, of course, became a little over-emphatic -- Asprin was accused of being a Nazi. It is always challenging to some when their favorite things change over time. I had friends who stopped reading SF entirely because of the advent of the "New Wave." It's just one of those rules of human civilization: things change!

I think the N3F Short Story Contest will muddle on for another year, at least. George Phillies, by heroic effort, got the word out and publicized/marketed the contest, to the degree that enough contributions came in to make the 2024 contest viable. Publicity and Marketing are things I do not know how to do...

Mark Nelson: Fun survey of fandom in Scandinavia.

Grievously depressing list of the ten worst U.S. Presidents. I largely agree with this list. Even the current incarnation of Trump does not fall to the hideous level of James Buchanan. But give him time...

ret Samuel Lubell, total agreement that the fantasy genre, these days, has been dominated by gigantic multi-volume epics, and that it would be nice to see some more accessible and convenient one-book fantasy novels. A compromise is “series” fiction, such as Fritz Leiber’s adventures of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, where the overall offering is multi-volume, but each book stands on its own, and the whole series can actually be read in pretty much any order without great loss of context.

(Fritz Leiber taught me how to write!)

George Phillies: I did not know that Forbidden Planet was also a novel! I will make an effort to find a copy!

Fun, but oh-so-brief, section of your “Fan Fic” with Charlotte and Widow Baskerville.

Ahrvid Engholm: Depressing and dismaying fictional (to some degree) story about Trump and Putin. Icky. The creation of the story, via AI assistance, is fascinating! The advent of this style of AI is more world-shaking than anyone had imagined. It’s a major world event that, I believe, no SF writer ever prophecied!

Fun History Corner. I’m impressed by the statue of H.G. Wells and the statue of a Martian tripod war-machine! Also, fun computer ad with Isaac Asimov. And, yeah, the “First Law of Robotics” is a dead letter. It never had a chance: humans are too fond of killing one another. The Mark of Cain has settled deeply into the human oversoul.

Kevin Trainor Jr.: re “Literary Fiction,” I found the following note online, and consider it worth quoting:

“At its core, literary fiction is a category of fiction that primarily focuses on character depth, prose style and thematic exploration over fast-paced, plot-driven

storytelling. While genre fiction – such as thrillers, fantasy or romance – tends to follow recognised conventions and structures, literary fiction often defies expectations, focusing on introspection, ambiguity and complex human emotions.

In short, literary fiction isn’t about what happens – it’s about how and why it happens, often leaving readers with more questions than answers.

I think this still overlooks the “literary” effect, but it is, perhaps, a good first approximation of a definition and/or a description. My primary quibble is that science fiction and fantasy, also, defy recognized conventions and expectations. Science Fiction is perfectly willing to accept stories that end, “...and everyone died.” This would be absolutely anathema in, say, Romance fiction.

I quite agree that “cozy military SF” is oxymoronic, to the degree of being a very risible combination indeed! It would certainly be a challenge to produce, and what possible market could there be?

Heath Row: re Good Art by Bad People, I find there to be a threshold effect. If the creator in question is guilty only of lesser sins and peccadillos, I can find pleasure in their work, but if they cross a certain line into very harsh moral failures, I find their evil taints their work, in my mind, ruining it forever. I’m uncomfortable reading Harlan Ellison and Jerry Pournelle, because (as mentioned last issue) they both engaged in hitting people at conventions, yet their skill as writers is so profound, I can manage to read and enjoy. But a rapist would be too ugly for me to tolerate.

As mentioned above, George Phillies heroically saved the 2024 N3F Short Story Contest. Maybe this year will be similar: a last-minute flurry of entries, saving the affair. One hopes. The joy of reading these stories is deeply rewarding!

Samuel Lubell: Very grim observation that college freshmen, in large numbers, are not experienced in reading books. It is almost impossible for me to imagine High School without a handful of books as required reading...let alone getting to age 18 without reading a good number of books for pure pleasure! My High School had the rather prosaic requirements of Romeo and Juliet, and Huckleberry Finn. Even back in 4th grade, our teacher read aloud to us, the whole of “Isle of the Blue Dolphins,” a book I will always treasure for that reason.

I agree with you, re good books by bad people: judge the book on its own merits, but take the author into account.

Adrian Kresnak: Hooray and congratulations on the Thesis! And I’m glad you were okay with the feedback I sent on your story as submitted to the Short Story Contest. I always ^try^ to be constructive and considerate, and, so far, no one has responded in anger.

The Boomerang Effect is certainly very pronounced in human culture. When books get censored, it often boosts their sales, often very significantly. And, yeah, people are stubborn, and, worse, perverse. When we read a bad review of a book, or a restaurant, etc., it makes us curious, and causes the odd reaction of making us more likely, not less, to try it out. This perversity, as Edgar Allan Poe observed, even works on our own internal perceptions and motivations, so that we often do things that we don’t actually want to do, giving in to the perversity of our own minds! And of course there is the classic observation that one cannot wholly control one’s own imagination. If you tell someone, “Don’t think about a green elephant,” it is quite difficult for them to obey that instruction!

Amazon Stops Kindle File Downloads

Way back in 2010, when I first bought an Amazon Kindle e-book reader, I developed the practice of buying an ebook, and downloading it to my PC. From there, I could move it to my Kindle via a USB cable. I still kept the books in directories on my PC, so I could re-load a book to my Kindle for re-reading. I kept very few books actually ^on^ the Kindle, really only those books I was reading now or intended to read very soon.

Well, so much for that idyll. Amazon no longer supports downloading ebooks as files. You ^must^ have the book transmitted directly to the Kindle reader, by WiFi or some other wireless method.

This is bad, because my old Kindle reader is so old, it won’t work with modern WiFi. In fact, my old reader is now electronic waste, and I have put it away in a closet, where it will slowly decay, erode, degrade, and become toxic trash.

Fortunately, the Kindle reading app on my Samsung smartphone is WiFi compatible, and so I am able to continue to read Ebooks from Amazon. Microsoft Word also supports exporting files to the Kindle, so I can read books downloaded from Project Gutenberg, not to mention my own books in MS Word format.

Amazon is simply doubling down on the precept that we, the consumers, are not ^buying^ books from them, but only ^renting^ books, for the duration of our reading. I think this is a really stinky business model, and I hold Amazon in great contempt for it. It is part of the victimizing of the consumer that is so much a part of corporate America today.



R.A.I.L. #5

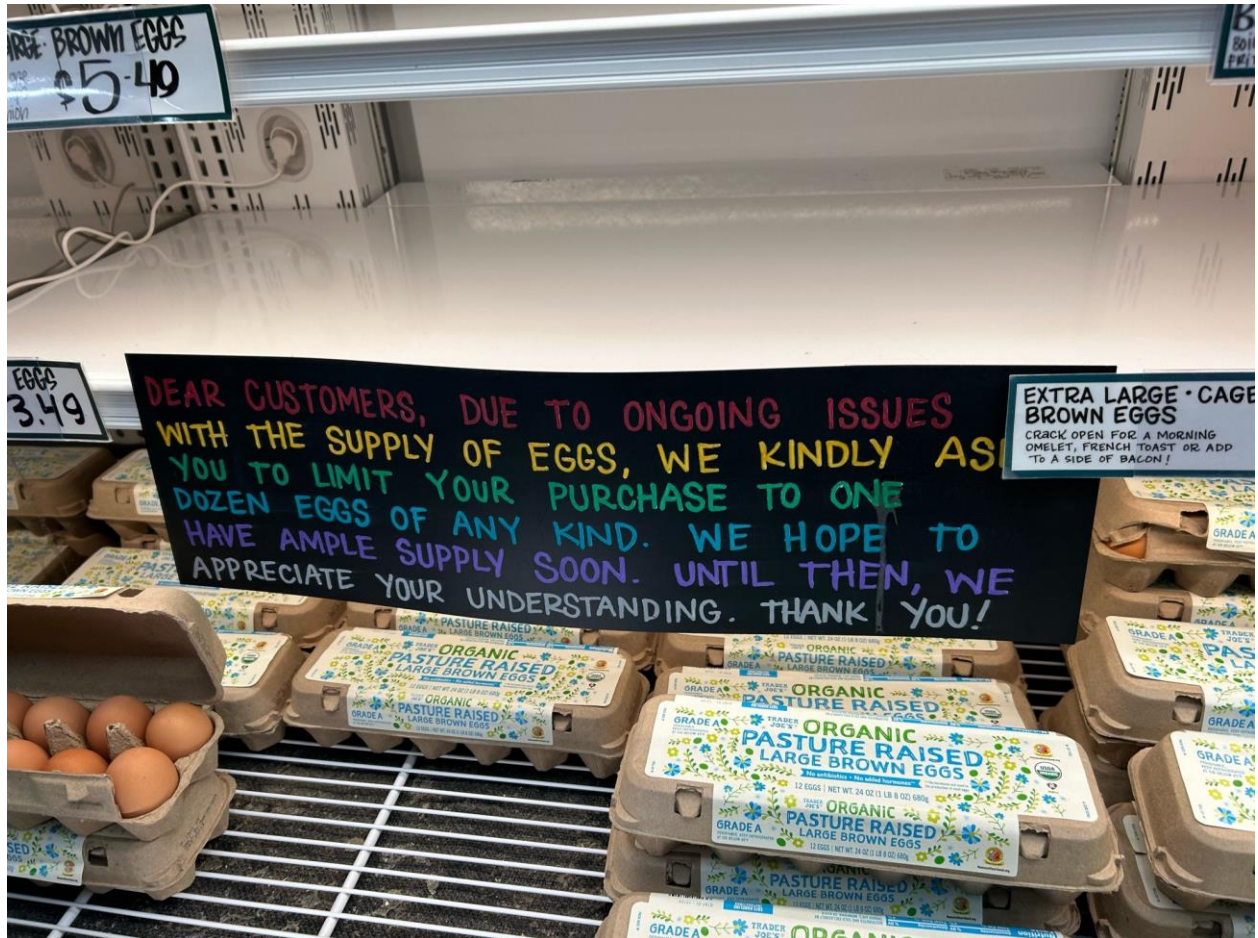
March 2025

Renovation and Innovation Letter #5

Adrian Kresnak

Cover pixel art by me

railfanzine@gmail.com



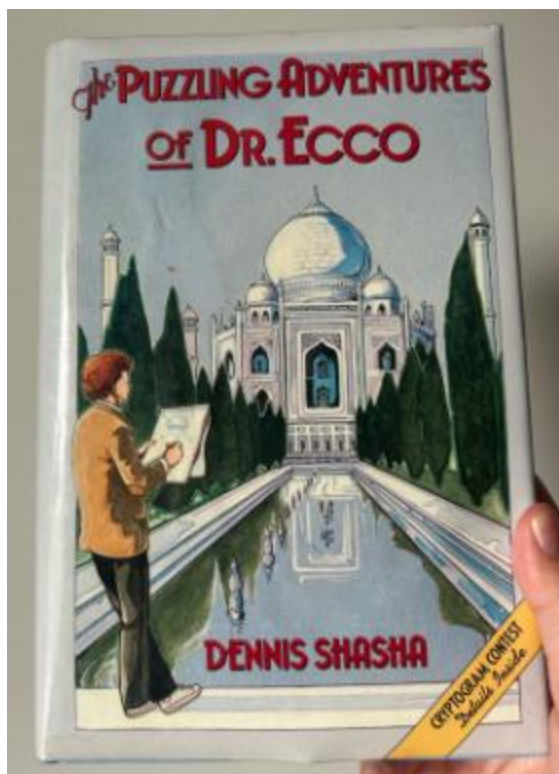
Trader Joe's. I'm curious about the economic effects of avian influenza in Michigan.

Hello all,

Great news!

In February 2025, I was awarded my master's degree! I've officially completed the Health & Risk Communication program. It's odd; I'd applied for the program in 2022 because I thought the pandemic had brought a new public consciousness around health. I'm not sure how realistic that expectation was. Well, I'm still happy that I was able to get this degree. The work continues.

This issue brings the next part of the Foxhaven Disaster story. Thank you all for your patience! I'm still getting the hang of writing in a serial format rather than chapters. I hope to continue improving and to bring the rest of the story in a timely manner.



Recently, I read *The Puzzling Adventures of Dr. Ecco* by Dennis Shasha and the following Dr. Ecco books. The inside cover of this book categorizes it as “Recreational Mathematics.” Intriguing!

Dr. Ecco is an *omniheurist*, which he defines as a person who solves all problems. It reminded me of Sherlock Holmes being the first “consulting detective.” Ecco’s problems are all mathematic in nature: predicting the results of elections, designing research stations, coding and decoding and proving.

What I found most interesting was the discussion following the solutions. Shasha explains how the principles in the solutions apply to computer science. The research station design, for example, asks Ecco and the reader to design a building made of square rooms with no hallways. Some rooms can have three doors, some only one. The doors can be anywhere except a room’s corners, and the inhabitants must be able to get from any room to

any other room by crossing at most five other rooms. Or that’s how I remember the conditions.

The solution turns out to be an H-shape with a crystalline structure. “Chip designers lay out binary trees using the H pattern since it is the most space-efficient method available,” Shasha writes. It gave me a new understanding of circuitry.

The second Dr. Ecco book was available to me on the Libby app, and you may be able to read it there also. I’ve finished the third and am currently reading the fourth.

*

In other news:

I heard that **Asimov’s**, **F&SF**, and **Analog** have been sold to a new publisher. The new publisher apparently also bought a couple of mystery fiction magazines. This worries me in a way I can’t quite explain.

I’m a little worried about the political climate here in the USA. When Trump won the first time around, my brother’s classmates joked that our family would get deported.

One of my articles **got accepted** into a magazine. I’m excited to share it with you when it comes out! It’s a reflection on communication research. I’ve wanted to join the magazine’s contributors for a long time, so this is a dream come true.

Looking forward to seeing you all here,

Adrian

Replies:

As I write this, I'm unable to read the January 2025 NAPA.

Heath Row, Stf Amateur: I saw you following my Instagram! Yes, I learned about Capfan and the UFO from your zines. My thesis defense was the last week of November, and the final work got accepted by the school in December.

I must apologize for unintentionally misleading you. I am a woman, not a man. I'm so used to being the only Adrian around that I forget that it's a masculine spelling. (My parents wanted me to have the shorter version of the name.)



The entrance to a restaurant in Chicago.
Chicago is the current center of the American railway system.



WE CARE

Dear Postal Customer:

We sincerely regret the damage to your mail during handling by the Postal Service. We hope this incident did not inconvenience you. We realize that your mail is important to you and that you have every right to expect it to be delivered in good condition.

Although every effort is made to prevent damage to the mail, occasionally this will occur because of the great volume handled and the rapid processing methods which must be employed to assure the most expeditious distribution possible.

We hope you understand. We assure you that we are constantly striving to improve our processing methods in order that even a rare occurrence may be eliminated.

Please accept our apologies.

Sincerely,

Your Postmaster

Lately my zine mail has been going through some difficulties before it reaches me!

The Foxhaven Disaster

Part Two: One hour after the earthquake.

In the last chapter: Laurie and his superhero disaster response team came to Foxhaven, IL. They spoke with Marco, a prominent landowner in the city. Laurie persuaded Marco to consider the team's disaster preparation proposal.

*

The field gear never felt any lighter. Laurie shifted the backpack on his shoulders, double-checked the packs strapped to his legs. He would probably use all of it before they were done here.

Foxhaven looked so different. The glittering river that Laurie had so admired was now filled with debris. The skyscrapers were mostly still standing; they'd been built to survive a lot. The smaller buildings – residences and shops and schools – were all in various states of ruin. The team landed at the edge of the city.

As they left the plane, Fable spoke. "We're moving in a grid pattern. Med Center's ready to receive survivors. Remember: people over property. Are you ready?"

"Understood," Auralyn said. She never said much. Laurie thought that might be why she was Fable's favorite.

"Got it."

The streets were crowded. Many of the survivors were on their phones – people usually tried to reach loved ones in situations like this. Others hung around by whatever doorways remained, hesitating as though they were determining whether to risk retrieving their things. Still others simply stood, eyes glassy, shocked.

Those who were still responsive noticed the team almost immediately. It would be hard not to, considering their uniforms had reflective stripes over high-visibility green. Drawing so much attention used to make Laurie nervous, but not anymore. It helped to know that nearly everyone watching them was only looking for help.

Nearly everyone. A woman wearing a floral hairband walked by carrying a box. Laurie recognized it as the packaging of the newest generation of a game console. Her eyes met his. She froze, blushed, and quickly started walking away. Laurie nearly started after her, but Fable caught him by the elbow.

"Life over property, Laurence."

He nodded.

To the crowd, Fable announced: "We're from Search & Rescue." She launched into the usual directions: the emergency camp was along this safe route; anyone who was injured but able to walk could come to the Med Center; the team would come find anyone who was too injured to walk or otherwise trapped.

Auralyn began her work with the survivors who were conscious but unresponsive. She didn't use her powers for this part; they wouldn't have been useful. Instead, she came up to each

person and spoke softly to them, running through some grounding exercises until they were ready to go.

A voice called out from a pile of rubble.

Laurie jumped toward it. He examined the debris: the biggest part was a bookshelf, still heavy with books. A piece of a ceiling. A standing lamp. He didn't feel any electricity flowing to the lamp. At least that much was safe. He moved it aside.

"We're going to get you out of there," he said. "Stay still, alright?"

The voice said something that sounded like *okay* or perhaps *yeah*.

Fable helped him move the shelf. They found the source of the voice: a young man, covered in bruises. There was something concerning about the way his neck looked.

Laurie pulled out a C-Spine Set and placed it on the man's throat. The tech blinked to life, forming a supporting brace from his chin to shoulders.

"It's too dangerous to pull you out from here," Fable said. "I have to teleport you. It doesn't hurt – it just feels like a static shock. Okay?"

"kay."

She placed her hands on the man's arm. Then, after a moment of concentration, she teleported him away. He shone a bright blue for a moment and was gone.

Laurie tried to joke: "You know, this whole thing would be a lot easier if you could bring people *to* you instead of just sending them away."

"I'm aware. Come on."

An hour later, they'd made good progress through the streets. No deaths so far – though Laurie knew better than to hope that would last.

A woman approached them, gesturing worriedly at the remains of a house. "Someone lives there. I didn't see xem get out. I'm worried xe's still in there."

Laurie noted the pronoun: one person, of unknown or ambiguous gender. He held his wrist toward the house, and the sensor reported a warm body. He nodded to Fable.

She shouted: "Hello? We're from Search & Rescue!"

A familiar voice shouted back: "Fabs? Is that you?"

To be continued...

Brownian Motion #13

An apazine from Garth Spencer

For N'APA #275, March 2025



Editorializing Freely

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.

#

I wondered why N'APA 274 was dated "September 2025" instead of January 2025? And where was my contribution – did I have another senior moment, and assumed I sent it when I omitted to do so?

Talking it over with Jefferson Swycaffer, he told me that he didn't remember seeing *Brownian Motion* #12, although the email might inadvertently have gone into the wrong folder in his email program. I then mounted a search and finally found that contribution, and N'APA #273 – but on my laptop, not on my desktop computer. (Yep, I had a senior moment: I forgot to move my laptop contents to my archival computer at the end of February.)

Well, I sent BM #12 and #13 to this mailing. Hope I have reduced confusion instead of creating it.

#

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?



*Name the rest of the seas for provinces!
Win fabulous prizes!*

Jade Ring IV

Garth Spencer

“Are you feeling better, Mr. Bond?” Polly asked. James Bond was sitting opposite her and Ernie at the table in their apartment kitchen, wearing clothes borrowed from Ernie, sipping slowly on a cup of tea.

“Somewhat better, yes. I’m still confused,” Bond said. “And ill at ease, I confess. You say that we’re in *Canada*, of all places?”

“Yes,” Ernie said. “Spuzzum, British Columbia, to be precise. On the Pacific Coast.”

“However did we get here?!”

Polly said, “Well, if you recall, I took your arm, and then the sanatorium disappeared and this apartment appeared.” She held up her right hand with the jade ring on it. “I simply thought of home, and since we were about to be apprehended by the security personnel in your sanatorium, I *really, really* wanted to be anywhere else.”

“And that was all it took?” Bond wondered. “I wonder where I could get a ring like that.”

“If that’s all you need,” Bernie interjected. He eyed Bond skeptically. “From what you say about the sanatorium, you needed to rest and recuperate from your career. And from the aftermath. What do you think?”

Bond looked back at him narrowly. He had to admit that Ernie had a point. He had to rebuild himself, after a nervous breakdown. If that was obvious to an untrained civilian, a relative innocent, then it really was time to make his life over. And Ernie and Polly were not pushing any obvious agenda upon him. Bond was puzzled by that.

Polly broke the short silence. “We can put you up temporarily,” she said, “but unless you return to your fiction within a short period, we have to find some more permanent accommodations for you. And to do that, we have to obtain some identification for you, and a bank account, and a source of income ... it can be involved. Canada is about as bureaucratized—”

“As the United Kingdom,” Bond finished. “I quite realize.” He sipped his tea again, reflecting on the slightly down-at-heels apartment and mismatched kitchen furniture. No matter how skeptical he was, these two really did seem to be Canadian students living in student circumstances. He needed to walk around and examine the town. Perhaps he had contacts in this area, corresponding to those in his ...

“You said ‘fiction,’” Bond mentioned. “Can you explain that word?”

Polly looked at Ernie, who faced Bond again. “When we’re not studying, my friends and I read science fiction and fantasy,” Ernie said, “and a couple of authors have used the word ‘fiction’ for parallel worlds, specifically the story universes in which fiction writers set their stories.” She paused, and took a deep breath. “This is going to sound silly. But the fact is, you do seem to be a character from a series of action-adventure novels in this world, which have been made into popular films.”

Bond laughed abruptly. “Ridiculous!”

Polly waved a hand. “And yet, here we are.” She pointed through the kitchen door. “Shall we go to the living room? Ernie, show him.”

Bond looked with disbelief at the somewhat worn Ian Fleming novels that Ernie handed him. Leafing through the paperbacks, which spelled out his classified cases in mass-market format, was hard to believe and yet indisputable. He put the novels down on the living room table, and stared out the large window – on a rain-soaked, unfamiliar town, with futuristic cars on the streets – and realized he really wasn’t at home.

He turned. “What do we do now?” he said, and his voice trembled.

Ernie guided Bond back to his chair. “Another silly thing,” he said, “is that this phenomenon only started after some ... strange people wanted to hold a large entertainment event in this timeline, although they had no experience and no apparent capital. They also have delusions of grandeur. They disregard our best advice, which is to start small and scale up over a span of years.

“And then, I received advice that they aren’t simply being overambitious fans. They are being misled and deluded by some power that wants to build resources in this timeline, to infiltrate and subvert us.

“I don’t know if you have any tactical advice for a situation like ours. Maybe if this were a covert political or religious movement, it would be easier to take seriously,” Ernie said. “You might have dealt with something similar in your career.”

“You may not feel up to active participation,” Polly interjected. “But you may have some tactical perspective. Some of us may be able to act on it.”

Bond thought that over. Just contemplating it made his gut twist in knots. These civilians were in no way prepared. But he still felt he was now on familiar ground.

“Very well,” he whispered. “Though you don’t know the risks ...” he paused as a thought struck him. “... any more than I do.”

#

Hrothgar was doodling illegibly when Ernie found him in the Student Union building. “Hrothgar, could you come over to our place? Now?” Ernie said. Hrothgar looked up, startled.

“Oh, hi, Ernie. Yes, actually. What’s up?”

“We may be coming up with a plan ...”

#

“Are you guys on crack?!” Hrothgar demanded.

“I assume that means you’re skeptical,” Bond observed.

Hrothgar turned to him. “Well, yes. I’ve seen seven impossible things before breakfast already, but I haven’t seen how untrained civilians like us can find a headquarters in a parallel universe, let alone infiltrate and sabotage it!”

“You don’t want to take part in this plan, then?” Bond said neutrally.

Hrothgar sputtered. “Look, I want the Combinationoids to get real. I want any *other* addled mediafans to get real, before they create any other fiascos! I want to frustrate the people who deluded the Combinationoids, however they plan to infiltrate this timeline! I would just like a well-conceived plan, that’s all.”

“You do what you can, where you are, with what you have,” Bond replied. It sounded like a quotation. “Time is not one of your major assets. Neither is manpower, or training, or materiel.” He felt his old strategic skills coming back to him, and some of the confidence in fraught situations he had always depended on. “So, a frontal assault is out of the question. Of course you have to infiltrate surreptitiously, and create a diversion, an obvious disaster for the enemy while you penetrate the core—”

“This sounds more and more like a role-playing campaign,” Ernie remarked.

Hrothgar looked at him. “A *campaign*. By *fans*. In *another ficon* ...”

“Yes?” Paula said doubtfully.

Hrothgar smiled. “Now I know what strategy to use. We just have to locate the evil empire’s crosstime travel base.”

Bond was baffled until Hrothgar explained. Then he was terrified.

#

Mac was slow to agree to join the team, partly because he still had a chip on his shoulder about the jade rings, but mainly because he was slow to absorb all the background to the mission. He only started to catch on when Ernie explained the

action in terms of a live-action roleplaying game. “That sounds like your standard average quest,” he responded. “Why didn’t you say that in the first place?”

Bond found it simple to work with Mac; he thought somewhat like the infantry teams he was used to. “First, we locate a defended structure, at or near a transportation nexus ...” he began.

“... Operated by an evil empire, with several lines of defense, not all of them human or mechanical,” Mac interjected.

Irritated, Bond continued. “At this point Team A merely locates the necessary fiction, making several deliberate jumps together. When the right fiction is located, Team A jumps back to this timeline as soon as possible to coordinate with Team B.”

Hrothgar raised a hand. “Question.”

Mollified, Bond said, “Yes?”

“Pardon me if I missed hearing this before, but which assignments do Team A and Team B have?”

“I was just getting to that. Team A is assigned to locate and neutralize the crosstime travel system the Empire uses.” Bond suppressed the silly feeling he got from saying “Empire” for an enemy power. “Team B mainly provides a distraction, along the lines you described.” And may God defend the right, he thought. He sipped his cup of tea, wishing for something stronger.

Hrothgar beamed. “Very good. I know what to do.”

#

Surprisingly, the plan worked. Team B was promptly arrested, outside of a dark tower in a gloomy land, strongly reminding Hrothgar of the great tower in Mordor except for the railway switching yards that extended miles in every direction.

(to be continued)





Mailing Comments

I like the cover illo, although the superhero on the front could fly Canadian, or better yet, Ukrainian colours. The definition is a bit fuzzy, which is a problem I have also had – what is the best way to fix that?

Intermission #149 – Ahrvid Engholm

Re current events: Calm yourself. See my editorial above.

Re your history: thank you for adding to the history of the early ARPAnet, and Usenet groups. Those were the days.

Re free will: “free will,” like freedom of the press, belongs to the person who owns one.

Re your comments to me:

thank you for all your comments. Maybe we should advertise eAPA as the freedom resistance fans' APA, or something like Radio Free America broadcasting from Canada. The problem with pervasive low-grade pollution, such as microplastic particles, is *how long* they take to biodegrade, and what damage they can do in the meantime.

The problem with Canadian residential schools was not simply that they were instituted to beat the Indian out of the Indians; they were charnel houses, places where children died in great numbers. Physical abuse, malnutrition, and sexual abuse were out of control. We are still dealing with serious numbers of missing children, apparently buried in unmarked graves, and serious numbers of traumatized adult survivors, as well as continuing high suicide rates on native reserves. But this is a tale that has been told.

I thought my faanfiction was pretty clear. This was based on a real fiasco in Victoria, where some wild-eyed overenthused mediafans wanted to mount a Very Big Convention in a little weeny town, and they had no experience and no capital to work from, and wouldn't listen when numerous fans told them to scale things down. It was like they were living in a different reality. The point of my fiction was that yes, every time they dealt with money issues, they really were diverted into a different reality – for the nefarious purposes of the Evil Lukass Empire in yet another timeline. (That was revealed in the second part of “The Jade Ring,” which appeared in *Brownian Motion* #10/ mailing #272.)

Re your comment to Henry Grynnssten:

Some time ago I took another tack.

For one thing – what is God, or a god? I have no better definition than “something people worship.” Why humans worship, when no other organisms are observed to do so, I have no idea. You may have some ideas.

For another thing – I was interested by your conclusion that if a consciousness can't be replicated in something material, then magic exists, and we know it doesn't. The first part of that sentence comes with a whole lot of assumptions, but since you're ready to close the subject, I'll ask what we mean by magic.

A whole lot of rumination led me to the conclusion that what is called “magic” is an alleged ability to manipulate probability. Since a lot of magical practice boils down to visualizing an object of desire and firing your concentrated will and desire at it, the practice sounds a lot like adults playing a child's game, pretending that wishing will make things so.

We can make up any hand-waving explanations and unobtainium devices we like, for the purposes of a fantasy story, but this is my position.

If powers of visualization and concentration were all it took to reshape reality, wouldn't we have licensed and qualified practicing magicians with offices downtown today? And professional associations licensing (and disbaring) practitioners, every year? Wouldn't we have national and regional legal standards of practice, binding on practitioners under defined sanctions, and a difficult history with prevailing belief systems, going at least as far back in history as the Protestant Reformation?

Brandy Hall #10 – Mark Nelson

Sven Eklund's reprinted article could form a first chapter in a history of Swedish fandom, if Ahrvid Engholm hasn't already compiled and published one.

Re the topic of making usable records to last (indefinitely, we hope): I keep thinking about the substances we use to write on and the utensils we write with. There are documents, such as the original U.S. Constitution, made with such acid-free paper that it will outlast contemporary books and magazines. They are even likely to outlast brand-new electronic media. Medieval books and Classical-era scrolls are fragile today, but have endured for centuries. Mesopotamian clay tablets have endured for millennia. Maybe we should start developing silicon-based writing materials? Or has this development already started?

Re your remarks to Sam Lubell: At first the *Washington Post* article on American readers and library users seem dismaying, until we put them into context. As far as I can determine, reading has always been a minority interest, in any country. (With some exceptions, as in Iceland.) Perhaps we could stand to define just a few books that capture the basic skills and knowledge any culture needs to build on, but we're going to have a lot of trouble reaching a general consensus – should we include basic science, or basic engineering/home maintenance texts? Basic dietary, culinary and first-aid/medical classics? Do-it-yourself Boys' Own science project books? Classic vegetable gardening? Boy Scout manuals that emphasize practical skills? Classical literature? The Bible? Shakespeare's plays and poems? (You can see I've been thinking about this.)

Re literary fiction: I think you've defined "literary" fiction about as well as it can be defined. Thank you.

Re your comments to me:

I have to apologize for not defining where I am. People have criticized my amateur fiction for "white room" syndrome, which I guess means I don't describe places or spaces very much.

If human managers are more interested in talking vaguely to cover their asses than in giving clear and complete instructions, then I for one welcome our future alien overlords. Based upon my experience, they can hardly do worse.

What you describe about GPs being overage, overworked, and underpaid in rural Australia – and finding it hard to find replacements – reminds me of similar issues in English-speaking North America: mainly, medical services being overstretched and under-resourced, especially where more service is needed. I have heard of programs to require a number of graduating doctors to serve for some years in remote communities, as in the *Northern Exposure* TV show, but I'm not up on how many such programs there may be, across the U.S. or Canada or Australia.

About fanhistory – there seem to be scattered, separate volumes covering fanhistory from the 1960s onward, in separate countries. Here in Canada, the late Taral Wayne collected many of his fanhistory articles into the volume *The Great White Zine*, which is archived online. (I'm trying to complete another volume.) Fanac.org may have the

largest body of American fanhistory, but a great deal of it will be in scanned and archived fanzines. Rob Hansen wrote a volume on British fanhistory, *Then*, which is also archived online. (I think you can link to it from the Ansible website.)

Ye Murthered Master Mage – George Phillies

I see I've been talking around the subject of adulting, or defining adequate adult skills, for some time.

Thank you for the Essential University link!!

Thank you for your kind words on The Jade Ring (3)!

I liked the bit of fiction in your apazine – the quest for lost kittens hooked me right away.

Intermission #150 – Ahrvid Engholm

This story hooked me. The ending was predictable, but it still held my attention. Your writing procedure worked!

There are some other, programmatic story-building devices on the market; I obtained the Fabula story-building card deck, which I intend to learn to use.

Thank you for the fannish background on Stieg Larsson! I was distracted by the mention of his common-law wife – it turns out that common-law marriages have a history, and some legal standing, here in British Columbia. Maybe I could supply more information on the subject in future.

Thank you also for the link to the English-language version of the Swedish civil emergency guide. It may be more important that I look up Canada's defence system – I have been given conflicting opinions about it. One of my acquaintances thought Canada's defence system had become a joke, being underfunded and undersupplied ever since the first Trudeau administration (under Pierre Trudeau, that is). Another acquaintance thought Canada might be undermanned and under-resourced, but extremely resourceful, compared to American forces.

I would still hate to see push come to shove, if the entity in the White House were serious about appropriating Canada.

Onward. Thank you for the discursive piece on H.G. Wells. Yes, I think most of us know that prominent people are of their time, and can't be entirely free of "common sense" ideas of the time that turn out to be silly, or pernicious. And yes, people make judgments about the meaning of Wells' works and deeds – or Kipling's, or Churchill's – based on what they heard, rather than actually looking at the works and deeds. Which should give us pause for thought; how often do we fall into that trap? Not least, on the Web.

Man, I've gone over-length for comments on your zine, and I didn't even get to your mailing comments yet. Thank you for your kind comments to me!

Archive Midwinter – Jefferson Swycaffer

You commented to Ahrvid that microplastics are not a severe problem yet, and that nuclear devices in the hands of politicians is probably our biggest threat. Well ...

Back when I was still watching TV regularly, up until 2021, I happened to see an episode of *Criminal Minds* where the polymath named Spencer is asked what the biggest threat facing humanity is, and he answers seriously, “epidemic diseases spread by international air travel.” This was at a time when hyperalertness about microbes was seen as absurd – as witness a scene in *Supernatural* where the demon-hunting brothers are interviewing a small-town sheriff, who applies copious quantities of hand sanitizer after shaking hands.

So then what happened? The COVID-19 pandemic happened.

About spoken English: I take your point about phatic “mouth-noise” interjections. But it seems to be an inevitable part of spoken language. I guess we have to chalk it up to performance never being quite as good as our competence in speech, and then move on.

Thank you for your kind words about “The Jade Ring”!

Now that I reread my remarks on fanfiction, and reflect on my use of characters from Star Trek and the Bond novels, I am coming around to your view. Although I maintain a distinction between “fanfiction” (*à la* uninvited, unpaid *Star Trek/Star Wars* stories) and “faanfiction” (*à la* stories about fans, by fans).

Re “Post-Election Considerations”: I have seen an article reproduced on Facebook that maintains the sitting President still sees himself as a reality TV star, and his opponents are missing the target by addressing the level of competence, performance, or integrity of the current administration. Seen this way, *any news at all* is good news for this entity, because it just raises his profile.

I look forward to a different future.

Esmeralda County Line #8 – Kevin Trainor Jr.

I read this APA contribution with interest, but there aren’t a lot of things I can comment on. My own experiences and trains of thought are mostly over the horizon from where your experiences and comments stand.

Among your comments to me, you mentioned instances of deteriorating information storage, even storage formats such as magnetic tapes for which we no longer have playback machines. That is happening all over – Dave Langford once mentioned 8” drive disks kept carefully in storage at the BBC, for which the drives no longer existed. There’s some level of absurdist humour in that.

Thank you for your apt comments to me. As it works out I have regular, if selective social contacts, what with family (when they’re not vacationing), the Heathen Freehold (I act as Clerk for the HF), and the Unity Housing society (I am one of the house representatives). That seems to suffice me. As to computers, I am still looking for a

lightweight but powerful laptop within my price range. (Maybe I just pack too much else in my shoulder bag besides the laptop?)

Thank you for correcting me about military SF, and about the Sad Puppies.

Thank you for your kind words about “The Jade Ring”!

As stated elsewhere, I am having second thoughts about attending the Worldcon in Seattle. My interest is mainly in gathering with other fannish fans.

Looking forward to seeing you in Stipple-APA!

Snow Poster Township #19 – Heath Row

Thank you for your comments! I will be interested to see the heathen materials you send. And thank you also for your kind comments on “The Jade Ring.” No, I haven’t really started using the Fabula Cards yet. Ernie von Ulm also thanks you for remembering his full entire sesquipedalian name.

Samizdat #29 – Samuel Lubell

Re your comment on Codes of Conduct: thank you, it finally struck me that we need to talk about cultures, in a fannish context.

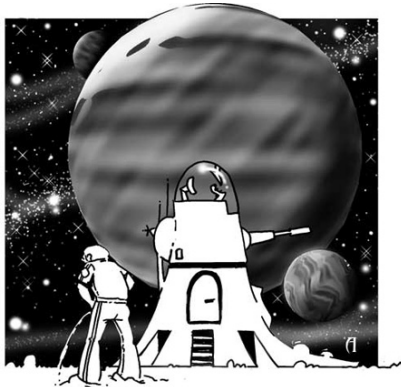
Re your comment to *Brandy Hall* (Mark Nelson): “Reyctm” means “Re your comment to me.” This is, like, what you call one of them cryptic and occult abbreviations.

Thank you for the profile of Alastair Reynolds!

R.A.I.L. #4 – Adrian Kresnak

Congratulations on the success of your thesis defence!

Thank you for supporting my idea of superheroes as being essentially emergency first responders. In fact I began to think they would be scouted for an international emergency-response team, sort of like U.N. peacekeepers but with more first-aid kits, emergency shelters and sanitation engineers than uniforms or weapons. And what arm of the U.N. would they work for? Must think on this.





Snow Poster Township #20

March 14, 2025

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.

Slow Mail Boat

In the mail on March 14, I received a very interesting item. Henry G. Franke, editor for the Burroughs Bibliophiles (<https://www.burroughsbibliophiles.com>), mailed a business-sized envelope address to me, Membership BB#84, on July 7, 2012—to an address that I'd vacated in 2011. That piece of mail arrived in Culver City four days later on July 11, 2012, where it was labeled "Notify sender of new address." It finally arrived at my home on March 14, 2025—13 years later. Where it spent the intervening years, only Roscoe knows.

The envelope contained *The Gridley Wave* #353-355 (February-April 2012) and a convention registration form for the 2012 Dum Dum. Not only have I not read *The Gridley Wave* for many years, I'm now quite late to register for that particular con.

A lot has changed in 13 years. Not only do I no longer live where I did when I first signed up for the Burroughs Bibliophiles, I no longer participate in ERBAPA. But a lot has also stayed the same. I'm still an apahack who sometimes acts like a faned, the Burroughs Bibliophiles remains active, *The Burroughs Bulletin* is still publishing under Franke's watchful eye, *The Gridley Wave* continues to ebb and flow (now

as a PDF), and ERBAPA also continues.

Scott Tracy Griffin recently emailed to inform me that he's returned as editor for ERBAPA, which will soon mail its 164th and 165th distributions. Founded in 1984, ERBAPA is embarking on its 42nd year of activity, still maintaining a quarterly schedule. He invited me to return as a participant, and receiving this piece of mail might just push me over the edge. Even though I recently joined ANZAPA and have agreed to participate in APA-V, I did enjoy my time in ERBAPA, which led to much reading of Burroughs. (We'll see if all this apahacking spreads me too thin in terms of fanac again. I think it's worth a go.)

Like John Carter himself, who was transported from the Civil War era on Earth to the dying world of Mars, that single envelope also went on quite a journey. I wonder what dusty corner of the post office it inhabited for so long—and what instigated its eventual delivery!

I think it's a sign—from Roscoe or good ol' ERB.

Screened at the Globe: Fantastic Television

The second season of *Severance* debuted on Apple TV+ on Jan. 17, but my wife and I finally got around to watching the first episode in early March. The final episode of Season 1 first streamed April 8, 2022, so it's been a long time in between. That's a challenge for viewers of such a complex program.

We didn't seek out any Season 1 recaps before returning to the program, but there are several available, including options from *Elle* and *Men's Health* of all magazines, as well as the more fannish *IGN*, which provides a 14-minute video summary of the first season. One subreddit participant recommended a three-hour recap, which is still about a third of the first season itself. The comments in response to that suggestion were pretty amusing.

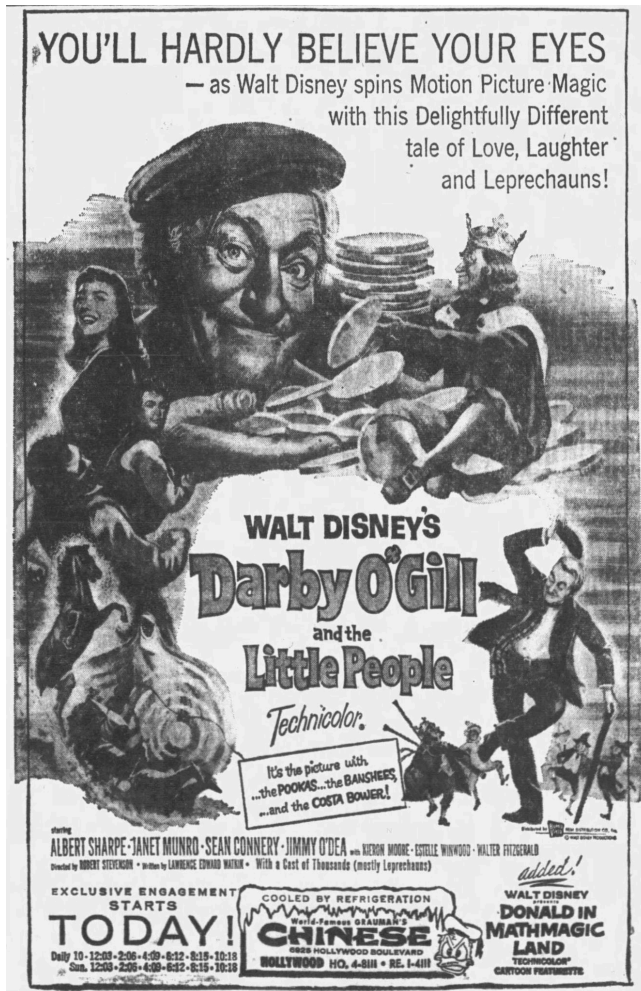
In any event, the brief recap preceding the episode itself got us back up to speed generally. We'd forgotten a lot about the ending of Season 1, and I'd also forgotten that Ben Stiller is involved in the program.

I won't write much about the actual storyline of the first episode, but we'll definitely continue watching. Not only do I appreciate the show's approach to the nature of self, identity, and the relationship between work and personal life, the production design is absolutely beautiful.

Where I work, an internal message board often features employee memes expressing actions, behaviors, and preferences of one's outie, or non-work self. I believe they feature the character Ms. Casey, the wellness counselor. I would share some examples here, but my innie would disapprove.

My innie and outie, however, approve of this show entirely. On that, at least, we agree.

In non-genre television, we also recently enjoyed the second season of *We Are Lady Parts* and the program *Say Nothing*. The former concentrates on an all-female Muslim punk band in England, and the latter adapts Patrick Radden Keefe's 2018 book, *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*. The book builds on the Belfast Project, an oral history project on the Troubles based at Boston College in Massachusetts.



Los Angeles Times, June 26, 1959

Juvenalia: “Yo, Ho, Ho, and a Box of Diskettes”

Thesis: The purpose of this paper is to provide information to the reader about software piracy and the effects it has on the software industry.

- I. What is software piracy?
- II. The effects on the software industry
 - A. Effects on educational software
- III. How software manufacturers retaliate

A. Copy protection

IV. Pirates and the law

“Computer software piracy is the most popular indoor sport,” says an article in a recent issue of *Newsweek* magazine.¹ A question that many computer users are asking is, “What is computer piracy?” Software piracy is the term used for illegally copying protected software. In 1985, out of \$3.2 billion worth of software sales, \$800 million worth of software was copied illegally. The purpose of this paper is to provide information to the reader about software piracy and the effects it has on the software industry.

Companies that design and publish software suffer extreme losses due to software pirates. An expert recently stated that if copy-protection methods and the penalties exacted on pirates were improved, sales would improve 25 percent. I seriously doubt that statement, because if they did that, the people who are trying to keep the price of their computer cheap would find new ways to reproduce the protected programs.

One of the places that software is copied the most is in the nation's classrooms. Many times, a teacher will illegally copy a program once for every computer in their classroom. Teachers often complain about the lack of high-quality, original software on the educational market. The president of one of the leading software manufacturers says, “I don't see any basis on their complaints. If they wouldn't copy our software, we could afford to design newer, better software. With the present situation, we aren't able to finance any new projects.”²

As a method of retaliation, many software manufacturers resort to copy protection. Copy protection is done in the formatting of the diskette. Software manufacturers produce their programs on unconventionally formatted diskettes so that when a pirate or other user tries to reproduce the original program, it won't copy onto the same spaces as the original. When the diskette is booted, it searches for the original format. If it isn't found, it will scrag.³

That method is much like the method that Adi Shamir has developed. Adi Shamir is a professor at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel.

Another method of copy protection is this: Certain programs are purchased with a hard-to-duplicate key and a lock box. The lock box is attached to the computer, and before the program can be booted, the

¹ Mike Lewis, “Scuttling the Software Pirates,” *Nation's Business*, Vol. 73 (March 1985), p. 28.

² Staff, “What's Going Wrong in Classroom Software?”, *inCider*, Vol. 4 (August 1986), pp. 57-58.

³ “Scrag” means “not work correctly.”

key must be inserted into the lock box.

Even with such efforts, pirates are still able to copy the programs correctly. Software manufacturers even publish programs that are able to copy protected software.

In Singapore's Chinatown, there are street-side shops that have "operators standing by" to illegally copy software for eager tourists. Tourists will pay \$15 for a program that sells for \$495 back in the United States.⁴

Geoffrey A. Berkin, an associate general counsel for computer program publisher Ashton-Tate, is waging a one-man war against piracy. In most cases, the FBI and CIA's attention have been drawn only to large cases. Most of the smaller cases are usually treated as misdemeanors.

A lot of piracy is practiced in the homes of people who are backing up software for their own use, or making a copy for a friend in exchange for another program. Most of those cases are ignored.

Software piracy is a big problem in the computer market, but is it worth spending millions of dollars to stop? Many people do not believe so. I think that if the pirate doesn't make a large profit from his or her dealings, it is OK.

I hope that this paper has been able to provide enough information so you have a better understanding of software piracy and the effects it has on the computer industry.

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⁴ Lotus 1-2-3

In Person, David Love, Star of Teenager from Outer Space
8:30 P.M. United Artist, Inglewood only

THE FANTASTIC WAR OF THE GIANT FIRE MONSTERS! BORN IN HELL TO DESTROY EACH OTHER BUT FIRST THEY'LL DESTROY THE WORLD!

GIGANTIS RAGING ACROSS HELPLESS CITIES!

ANGURUS ROASTING ANYTHING IN ITS WAY!

THE FIRE MONSTER

The picture you've been hearing about on Radio and TV!

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plus... TODAY! "TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE"

16 THEATRES and DRIVE-INS
And all over Southern California
Late Show Fri. & Sat.

Before—a beautiful girl. One moment later—a skeleton!

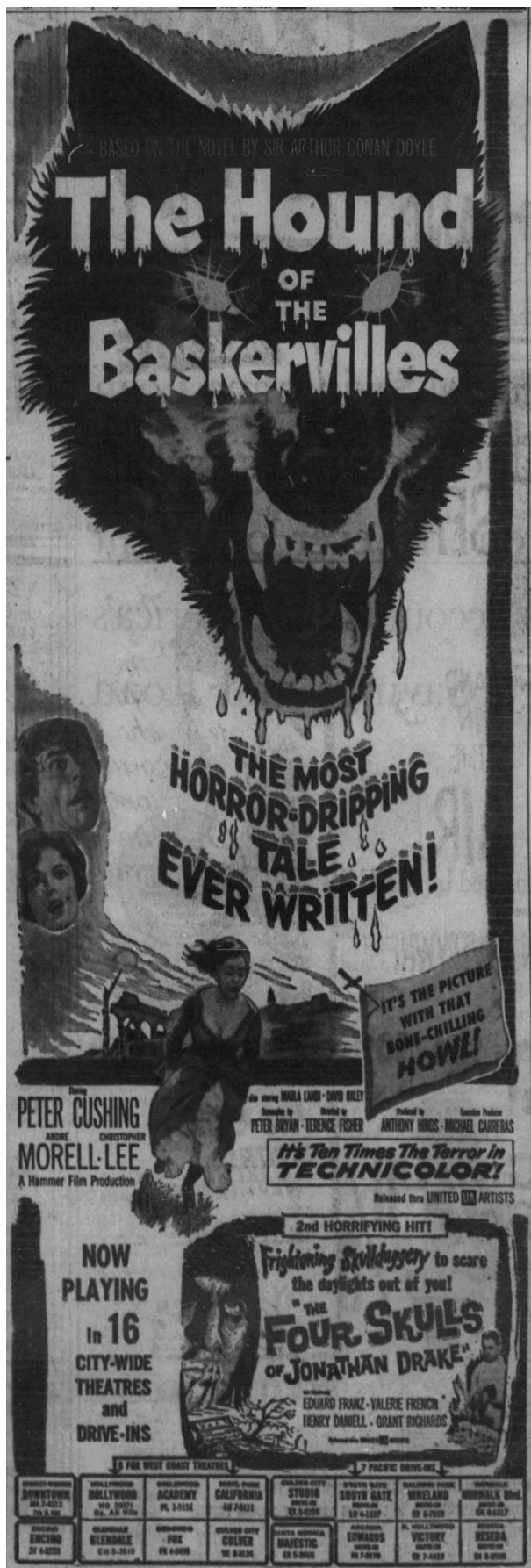
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DOWNTOWN HILLSTREET United Artists OW 7-2177	SANTA MONICA MAJESTIC EX 9-2400	RESEDA DI 4-0153 • DI 4-0154 Show 3 p.m. Sat.	MONTROSE GARMAR RA 3-1131 • FR 8-1218 Show 7- Sat. Sat. 12-14	SAN PEDRO DRIVE-IN TE 1-1370	WESTCHESTER CENTINELA DRIVE-IN OX 4-3144	SUNBURST SAN VAL DRIVE-IN TE 2-1177 Sat. 12-14
STANLEY WARNER HUNTINGTON PK. LI 5-0564 Show 7 p.m. Sat. 12-14	GLENDALE CAPITOL CI 6-1647	MATINEES AT MOST THEATRES	EAST L.A. FLORAL DRIVE-IN AN 2-0746	EL MONTE ST. ALITE DRIVE-IN AT 4-6886	SOUTH GATE DRIVE-IN LO 4-1137 Show 6-7 p.m.	

TODAY ALSO AT HOLLYWOOD ACADEMY HO 5-1491

GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER **plus: "TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE"**

Los Angeles Times, June 26, 1959



Los Angeles Times, July 3, 1959

“Science and the Citizen,” *Scientific American*, Vol. 251, No. 3, September 1986, pp. 87-88.

Staff, “What’s Going Wrong in Classroom Software?”, *inCider*, Vol. 4 No. 8, August 1986, pp. 57-60.

I wrote this paper for an eighth-grade English class in September 1986. I had become a teenager earlier that year. While I think my sympathies are largely misplaced with the companies producing software, it’s interesting to me that I was interested in—and wrote about—technology at such a young age.

While I received an A on the paper, my teacher, Mrs. Strey, did comment throughout. For example, she would have liked a footnote after the phrase “improve 25 percent.” (I think even more footnotes might have been warranted, and I’ve done my best to confirm names throughout, as well as in the bibliography. My cursive—the paper was written in ballpoint pen—wasn’t always fully legible.)

My grasp of the technical aspects of copy protection and piracy might not have been entirely correct at 13, and I’m pretty sure the term “scrag” wasn’t widely used in technical or piracy circles. But I like to imagine using Readers’ Guide to Periodical Literature to find the sources cited—I miss that resource tremendously—and I still remember where the Whole Earth Software Catalog was shelved at the public library. I’d forgotten I was aware of Stewart Brand and his work in junior high.

It was also fun to see a reference to inCider magazine, which I remember reading along with A+, Byte, MacUser, MacWorld, and other magazines—including Softalk, which I remember being mailed to subscribers with diskettes. I’m surprised I didn’t cite Enter magazine, which published an article on computer crime in March 1984. I’ve long associated this paper (or my memory thereof) with that issue.

While I’ve already renewed my membership in the Electronic Freedom Foundation (<https://www.eff.org>) for the year, I’ve yet to do so for the Free Software Foundation (<https://www.fsf.org>). This is a good reminder to do so!

Comments on N’APA #274

I commented on Ahrvid Engholm’s *Intermission* #149 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #26 and will reprint that here: “In *Intermission* #149, Ahrvid Engholm commented on the outcome of the recent presidential election in the United States of America. We were in Portugal when the results came in—we’d voted before we left for the month of November—and the results were a disappointment. I remain hopeful,

however, that the next four years don't dismantle the American experiment in democracy. As I plan to fight whatever requires fighting in the years to come.

"I'd much rather read and think about poetry, the Eugen Semitjov exhibition, and Allan Kämpe. Thank you, also, for the conrep on Swecon. Your experience with the Fantikvariat reminded me of my book buying at the recent Loscon. I still need to sort the two bags of paperbacks I obtained into storage boxes. [I have since done so.] I'm intrigued by Åke Ohlmarks's *Tolkien and the Black Magic*.

"As always, I also enjoyed the History Corner, especially the exploration of the SF-lovers list, which was new to me. The closest I ever came to that was likely rec.arts.sf.written on Usenet. That seems relatively active still on Narkive. So much to return to and spend more time with. I'll have to reread on my tablet rather than the laptop!"

In *Brandy Hall* #10, **Mark Nelson** recounted the contents of his N'APA contributions to date, walking through the various aspects of his development as a fan. He also reprinted an article found while researching for his ANZAPA fanzine *Australian Fanzine Fandom In...* . Sven Eklund's 1968 "Science Fiction in Scandinavia" from *The Australian Science Fiction Review* #14 was an interesting read even at this late date. Let us know if you find any other international "scene reports" during your research!

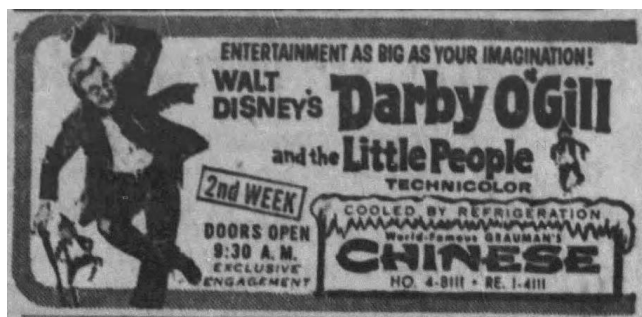
At first I thought that your contribution was solely the reprint, but your mailing comments, "The Mathom House" are lengthy and comprehensive. I agree with you that Oxford University Press's *A Very Short Introduction* series is wonderful. Your mention of David Seed's *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction* reminded me of Sherryl Vint's *Science Fiction*, part of the MIT Press Essential Knowledge series, which you might also appreciate.

The discussion of literary fiction interested me. Like you, I think I might know what it is, but I have trouble defining it. In a 2023 article, *Writer's Digest* suggested that "[l]iterary fiction is less of a genre than it is a category, which makes defining it difficult, but you know it when you read it." (We're not alone!) "[L]iterary fiction focuses on style, character, and theme over plot—unlike most genre and commercial fiction. This means that literary fiction is not beholden to certain tropes or genre expectations to be considered lit fic, but that also means it can feature elements of any genre and still be categorized as lit fic." I guess my takeaway from that is that plot is less important than character and theme.

George Phillis's *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #274 announced some changes to the N3F's clubzine publishing schedule. *The N3F Review of Books* will

definitely work as a bimonthly, and if *Eldritch Science* becomes a bimonthly, perhaps you'll see an increase in fiction submissions. How deep does the slush pile go? Can you support two to three issues with existing contributions?

Given Jefferson Swycaffer's previous reports on the short story contest, I was delighted to see there were winners, which indicates a successful contest. Not only did the N3F once have a microfiche bureau, but recently reading Jarett Kobek's *How to Find Zodiac (Faculae & Filigree #40)*, the primary suspect for the Zodiac killings served as its bureau chief for a time. Paul Doerr was also an active participant in N'APA, to which he contributed fanzines such as *Pathan* (or *Panthan*), *Patter*, *Pioneer*, and *Hobbitalia* between 1968-1971.



Los Angeles Times, July 3, 1959

It's a fascinating book, and there are numerous references to the N3F throughout. Doerr might have first joined the N3F before October 1947. He wrote a letter of comment to the *National Fantasy Fan* in August 1968 inquiring about apae. He indicated that he disliked *Star Trek* in the May 1969 *Tightbeam*. And he wrote to *Science Fiction Review* in November 1984 about the N3F's microfiche bureau. Letters to *Tightbeam* in 1985-1986 also addressed microfiche, and Doerr advertised promoting multiple fichezines. Did any of us ever interact or correspond with Doerr? The Zodiac killings occurred around the time he was sending in letters of comment and participating in N'APA. We had a serial killer in our midst!

My comments on *Intermission* #150, reprinted from *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #27, read as follows: "In *Intermission* #150—congratulations on reaching the milestone!—**Ahrvid Engholm** offered his annual Christmas fiction, a short story featuring a thinly veiled Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump. I shall have to return to this piece in the future, too. Actually, that you used ChatGPT to write it diminishes my interest somewhat. So much to read, so little time! But we'll see. I could probably use a little disrespectful levity.

"I appreciated your memorial for Joachim Larsson,

as well as the information about his brother Stieg. The booklet *In Case of Crisis or War* resonated with me. I'll be sure to read the English edition. It might be applicable here! In recent days, I've also acquired a useful pamphlet titled *Don't Just Do Nothing to Counter Fascism*. (<https://itsgoingdown.org/dont-just-do-nothing-20-things-you-can-do-to-counter-fascism>) That '[a] copy [of *In Case of Crisis or War*] has been distributed to every household' did my heart good. In 2021, Trump signed an executive order to investigate the actions of Antifa activists, stop 'members' from entering the United States, and consider classifying it as a terrorist organization.

"Weird thing is, antifa isn't an organization. It's solely anti-fascist sentiment. Some people occasionally confuse black bloc anarchist activism—which is admittedly violent and confrontational—with antifa activism, but I hope that opposition to fascism doesn't become illegal.

"History Corner remains a delight. I enjoyed your coverage of time capsules, which I also find interesting, and I was interested in the efforts to remove a statue of H.G. Wells. Even though I disagree with the doublespeak appropriation of 'woke' as a term (Being aware of social and political issues affecting people of all sorts is a good thing!), I did chuckle at the gentle irony that this is occurring in Woking. A critical reading of Wells's writing is well worth pursuing."

In *Archive Midwinter* dated Jan. 12, **Jefferson Swycaffer** mentioned *The Elfquest Gatherum*. I might have a copy on my shelves. When I next examine it, I'll check whether it's the volume with your writing in it! **Kevin Trainor Jr.**'s *Esmeralda County Line* #8 indicated a return to N'APA. You've certainly been busy! I enjoyed your notes in "Books & Other Media" and realize I've been neglecting my reading of C.J. Cherryh since reading *The Pride of Chanur* a couple of years ago. (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #69)

Samuel Lubell's *Samizdat* #29 remarked on the Big Three prozines: *Asimov's*, *Analog*, and *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. Since the last edition of N'APA, Penny Publications and Gordon Van Gelder have sold those titles to Must Read Magazines, a division of 1 Paragraph Inc. (<https://www.patreon.com/posts/123173828>) 1 Paragraph is in turn owned by Steven Salpeter and a group of investors. The purchase also included *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* and *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*. We'll see if the acquisition leads to any changes in editorial staffing, frequency, or publishing status.

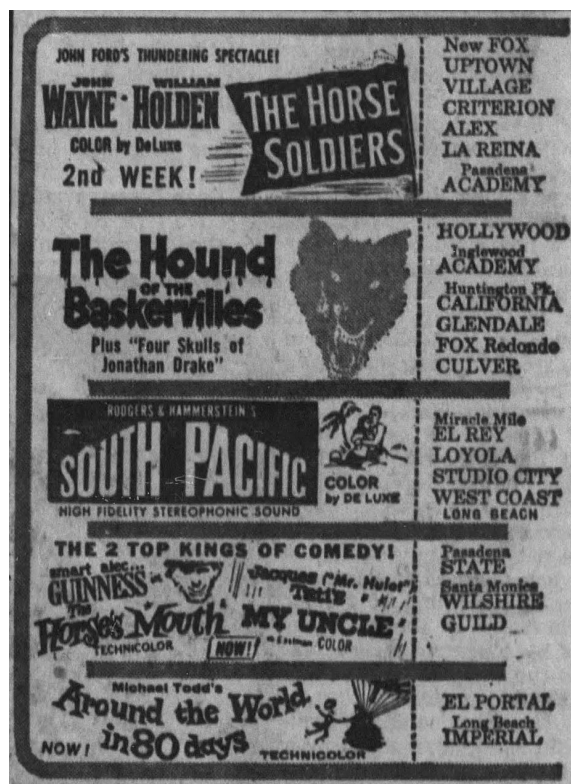
In addition to the local sf-only bookstores you mention, I used to enjoy going to the Stars Our

Destination in Chicago, even though I only went a couple of times. In Los Angeles, before my time in the city, fen could frequent A Change of Hobbit. I've walked by the old locations to check out the neighborhood. Uncle Hugo's Science Fiction Bookstore (<http://www.unclehugo.com>) is still open in Minneapolis. Portland, Oregon, is home to Parallel Worlds Bookshop. (<https://www.parallelworldsbookshop.com>) I enjoy visiting 20th Century Books in Madison, Wis. (<https://www.southparkbooks.com>) And Bakka-Phoenix Books is still active in Toronto. (<https://www.bakkaphoenixbooks.com>) Frankly, I'm a little jealous. I'd love a specialty store nearby. They make natural meeting places for local clubs and other groups.

Also in nearby Burbank, Calif., Dark Delicacies (<https://www.darkdel.com>) is a horror-oriented shop that frequently hosts author signings. Its owner, Del Howison, is retiring from retail, so the store will close in April. Right now there's a 25 percent off sale. I had hoped to go—for the first time—mid-month for an event with Cory Doctorow and Wil Wheaton but did not.

I read and enjoyed your author spotlight featuring Alastair Reynolds, as well as "College Reading." All in all, an excellent issue!

And in *R.A.I.L.* #4, **Adrian Kresnak** informed N'APAns that he successfully defended his thesis. Congratulations!



Los Angeles Times, July 3, 1959



Art from canva.com

...LOC for N'APA 274

Intermission #149 – Yes, I don't understand how Trump could have gained votes compared to 2020. We saw what happened the last time he was President; we had a million Covid deaths. And now he is blaming Ukraine for the Russian invasion and attacking our friends and working with our enemies. Trump showed that lying constantly works. Yet somehow his endless recitations of grievances didn't turn people off. Yes, the billionaire spending helped as did his attacks on the elite (as if Trump wasn't a billionaire elitist himself), but ultimately the people got who they elected. And yes, he is already supporting Russia over the Ukraine. I hope Europe is able to pick up the slack there.

270 people for Swecon make it seem small. U.S. cons like Balticon (Baltimore) and Boskone (Boston) get over 1,000. But having fun is more important than the numbers. I agree that Leeds sounds more like what we call a convention. I remember SF-LOVERS although I didn't get access until 1985 or 1986 when I was at Harvard. It is sad that there is no more pure SF bulletin board anymore the way the old rec.arts.sf was. Facebook isn't the same.



The problem with relying on common sense is there are people who don't have it (or cannot agree on it). Inevitably, if there isn't a rule specifically forbidding certain behaviors, someone will try to take advantage of it. Con runners have a game, If I Ran the Zoo, where people discuss how they would handle real problems that actually took place at different cons. Yes, many books are padded but many others take advantage of the extra space to provide more (and better) characterization, deeper world building, and more innovative plots. Sometimes it is hard to avoid some repetition on panels, since the same panelists appear on multiple panels and they may repeat stories and stray from

the topic. But if there are multiple panels during any hour of programming, you can just go to a different

panel if one overlaps a panel you have already seen. Also, it is one thing for the educators in a school who know their students best to decide that book A is better than book B. It is censorship when someone from outside the school community decides that regardless of what the school thinks, no one can teach book A.

Brandy Hall 10 – Thanks for the interesting reprint of the history of Scandinavian SF. How much of this is still true? I didn't know Nordic countries were so small with Finland and Norway at just (5.6 million). That is smaller than 22 U.S. states (not just the biggest ones like California and Texas, but mid-sized states like Wisconsin and Colorado). I used microfiche to read the Congressional Globe for my Master's thesis in history but using it gave me headaches. I had to close my eyes when moving the text.

Yes, read *The Anubis Gates*, it is Tim Powers' best book and one of my favorites by any author! There were years when I used Goodreads to track my reading and some years I did get to 100 books (especially when I was unemployed or commuted 2 hours a day). I'm not sure when codes of conduct started to be used for SF conventions. I've been involved in running conventions since 1998 (and attending them since 1988) and don't remember conduct being a major issue before 2010 or so. Yes, which topics are popular will vary by con and their audience. Science programming for instance, is more popular at Balticon than at Capclave. A better question to ask is not when literary fiction began but rather when did genre fiction begin. At one point all fiction (or at least adult fiction) was literary fiction (with varying degrees of success) but at some point people began to separate genre and recognize that they were trying to do different things. There are still many standalone novels published. But readers want to go back to worlds they love and it makes sense that once an author puts in the world building work for one novel that they see the potential for other tales to be told using that same background (and it also saves them a lot of time and effort to re-use the background work).

As to people thinking fanfiction is covered as fair use, many people think that if they really want to do something, they should be allowed to do it. And, if no one is making money off of fanfiction, it is hard to see how it harms the writer or publisher. The people who read and write fanfiction tend to already be big fans of the licensed property. That is why many authors/publishers tolerate fanfiction as long as no money changes hands.

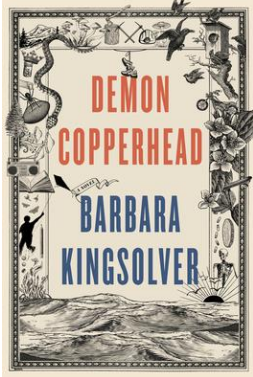
Ye Murthered Master Mage 274 – I need to get back into reviewing. Seventh grade seems too early to be reading *Romeo and Juliet*. I think my school did it in 10th grade.

Intermission #150. Congrats on such a high number. Your Putin/Trump story was interesting. I would not have guessed that it was AI generated. So Sweden's defense is guerilla war. That's also Canada's plan if the US attacks. Hopefully neither plan will be needed. Your time capsule mentions "minutes of the internal fighting in WSFA," which bout of internal fighting? There have been so many... I don't think we should just judge people in history by their contemporary norms, but we should take them into account. But the judgment of history should certainly reflect the consequences of their actions and beliefs. I like the TRS-80 ad you printed. I actually owned an earlier model than the Model III shown. In 1979, I used bar mitzvah money to buy a TRS-80 Model I, 4K of memory (I upgraded to 16K), capital letters only, tape drive (no disks, it took half an hour to load a program), 47 by 127 resolution graphics. Asimov's laws were constructed to provide story ideas, not as any guidance intended for the real world. I think SF authors use space empires because they are easier than trying to create new forms of democracy and familiar to the audience. In the U.S. slavery declined until the invention of the cotton gin, after which it took a civil war to end slavery (and many argue a thinly disguised version continued for decades afterwards).



Archive Midwinter – I think SF sense of wonder has continued, but readers want more than just pretty scenery and grand scope. I agree that *The Empire Strikes Back* was the best of the Star Wars films. I've actually started reading *Bleak House* in my read of all of Dickens. I absolutely intend on reading all of his

novels. I only have seven to go. Yes, every code of conduct I've seen was instituted because someone somewhere made it necessary. I was a History and Literature major in college and think that reading the classics is part of maintaining my education. But I do feel that *Ivanhoe* was probably Sir Walter Scott's best book and it will be a while before I tackle another one (*Rob Roy* was disappointing). America has made other contributions to culture – Hollywood movies, the Western, jazz, fast food, and the animated cartoon come to mind. I wish I was as certain as you that Trump won't try to take over the Panama Canal, Greenland, or Canada. It fits his "real estate" notion of what it means to be great. We may have survived worse than Trump, but it still will be pretty bad.



Esmeralda County Line #8 – Remember the old schoolyard joke about Washington. First in war. First in peace. Last in the American League. I've read some C.J. Cherryh but have a whole shelf in one of my unread bookcases. A lot of mainstream fiction does call back to older fiction. The recent bestseller *James* by Percival Everett is Huckleberry Finn from the point of view of the slave Jim. And *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver is based on Dickens' *David Copperfield*. I agree that the difference between Heinlein and Haldeman is in part generational, based on their different experiences with the military. The mainstream publishers do publish a lot of first novels. I collect lists of debut novels for the Baltimore SF Society's Compton Crook award for best first novel. There are lots of debut novels from Harper (10), Orbit (7), Daw (4), Angry Robot (4), CamCat (9)

and many more. I had close to 150 and I know I missed some. Tribute anthologies are basically licensed fan-fiction.

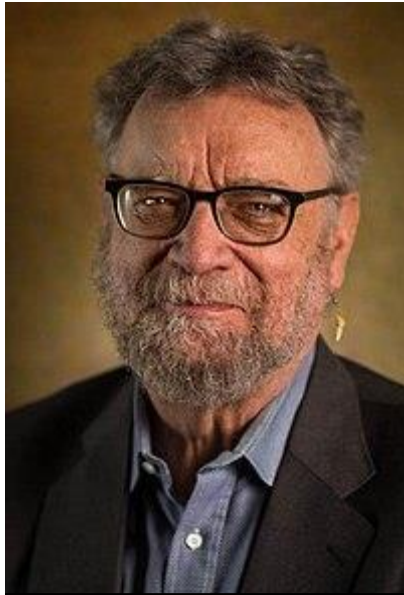
I think Trump has turned out to be much worse than people feared pre-election. His tariffs are already crashing the economy (the stock market has fallen way down). He is kicking out federal workers without regard to performance or even the importance of their duties. And he is turning friendly nations into, if not quite enemies yet, uneasy allies who are much more wary of the U.S. Tim Powers was a guest at Capclave and I drove him from the airport. The article I cited for the stats of Republicans views of books and libraries cite a poll saying 67% of Democrats, but just 46% of Republicans have a very favorable opinion about libraries and 56% of Democrats but just 38% of Republicans have a very favorable opinion about bookstores. So it's not just people objecting to their tax dollars paying for books they don't support. The poll shows that Republicans are less favorable toward books in general. The problems with the Chengdu Worldcon had nothing to do with the Sad Puppies (which had run its course well before that Worldcon).

Snow Poster Township #19 – I covered the accusations against Gaiman in Samizdat 29, but I missed the Scientology angle. I will have to find the Claire Dederer article. I think that we can separate the author from the works but recognize that the characteristics and flaws of the author do influence the work. Haldeman's *The Forever War* was NOT a response to David Gerrold's War against the Chtorr. The first book in Gerrold's series, *A Matter for Men* was not published until 1983, while *The Forever War* was published in 1974. So, unless Joe had that accidental time machine... Good point about fandom and fanzines inventing social media long before Facebook and such. You make a good point about con codes of conduct. Con runners don't make them because we are power-made control freaks but so we can point to rules when one person (or worse, the hotel) has a problem with another person. There's a long list of stories written in response to "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" including "The Ones Who Stay and Fight" by N. K. Jemisin. There is an extensive list at <https://www.kith.org/jed/hodgepodge/nonfiction/some-responses-to-omelas/> Thanks to Jed Hartman for the collection. I covered *The Atlantic Monthly* article about college students not reading in Samizdat 29.

Rail #4 – Congrats on defending your thesis. The Marvel comics universe has an organization Damage Control to explain how entire neighborhoods of NYC can be reduced to rubble one month, but is completely okay the next month.

...Author Spotlight: Michael Swanwick

Michael Swanwick is known as an author's author. His work is very literary. While he's written some novels (even an accidental trilogy), he is best known for his short stories (over 150). Most of his work is fantasy, although he wrote a time travel novel and some of his stories count as science fiction.



By Mike VanHelder - Own work,
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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=77715699>

Swanwick was born in 1950. In 1973 he moved to Philadelphia and decided to become a science fiction author. He took temp jobs as a typist, wrote term papers for students, and struggled to complete a story. He became friends with fellow writers Gardner Dozois (who later became editor of Asimov's SF Magazine) and Susan Casper. Although he did not publish anything until 1980, when TriQuarterly published "Ginungagap" and Robert Silverberg's New Dimensions published "The Feast of St. Janis," both were Nebula Award nominees. His first novel was *In the Drift* in 1985 for Ace. He has written about a dozen novels including *The Iron Dragon's Daughter* (1993) a dystopian fantasy about a girl kidnapped from our Earth and taken to a fantasy world in its equivalent of an early industrial age (with overtones of Charles Dickens) where she is forced to work in a factory making iron dragons. It was originally a standalone until Swanwick wrote a sequel *The Dragons of Babel* in 2008 and *The Iron Dragon's Mother* in 2019. His *Stations of the Tide* (1991) won the Nebula. Other important novels include *Jack Faust* (1997), an update of the medieval legend, and *City Under the Stars* (2020), his posthumous collaboration with Gardner Dozois.

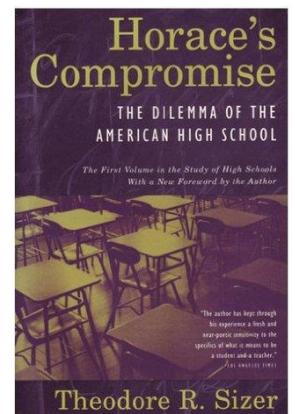
His short stories range from stunts like his flash fiction *The Periodic Table of Science Fiction* (a story for each element) and his *Puck Aleshire's Abecedary* (a story for each letter of the alphabet) to more serious fantasies. Award winning work include "The Edge of the World" (Theodore Sturgeon award 1990), "Radio Waves" (1996 World Fantasy Award), "The Very Pulse of the Machine" (Hugo award for short story, 1999), "Scherzo with Tyrannosaur" (Hugo award for short story, 2000), *Tales of Old Earth* (Locus Award Best Collection 2001), "The Dog Said Bow-Wow" (Hugo award for short story, 2002), *Slow Life* (Hugo award for Novelette, 2003), *Being Gardner Dozois* (2002 Locus Award for nonfiction), "Legions in Time" (Hugo award for Novelette, 2004), and "A Small Room in Koboldtown" (2008 Locus Award for short story).

Those unfamiliar with Swanwick should start with the two *Best of Michael Swanwick* collections from Subterranean Press. While the first one is out of print, the ebook is available for \$2.99. Volume two is \$50 for a signed limited edition, but the ebook is a bargain at \$6.99. I also recommend *Faust* and *The Iron Dragon's Daughter*.

...These Are a Few of My Favorite Books

A while ago I participated in a 7 book challenge on Facebook to name the 7 books that influenced you the most. Here is my list:

- Tim Powers' *The Anubis Gates* is a fun, exciting book about time travel, literature, body swapping, and magic. I like kitchen sink novels where the author throws a bunch of stuff at the reader and somehow makes it all work.
- *Horace's Compromise* by Ted Sizer greatly influenced my thinking about the problems of high schools and teaching. It made me want to be an education policy reformer. It led me to work at the Scarsdale Alternative School.
- Orson Scott Card's recent books have been disappointing and he's over-mined the Ender books for so long that most readers have forgotten the impact of the first two



books. But *Ender's Game* and *Speaker for the Dead* are a powerful pair of novels that together question the relationship of human to human and human to alien. And I like *Speaker* better.

- In 10th grade, my social studies teacher assigned her advanced students *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* by Barbara Tuchman. It probably was the first real book of history for adults (as opposed to a textbook) that I read. It sparked an interest in History that led to me to become a History and Literature major in college, get a MA in History, and become a History teacher, albeit briefly.
- *Tam Lin* by Pamela Dean is one of my favorites for the beauty of its writing. It is a wonderful example of modernizing a myth/fairy tale. It takes place on a college campus and while it takes a while for the fantasy elements to become recognizable (although on re-read I spotted them much earlier) the beauty of the writing is such that I didn't mind that.
- *The Complete Hawthorne* by Nathaniel Hawthorne shows that Hawthorne is more than just *The Scarlet Letter*. I read this as part of my favorite course as an undergraduate, Henry James and the Legacy of Hawthorne. We read all four novels of Hawthorne and some of his short stories and a comparison selection of the work of Henry James. The professor was fabulous. I later used Hawthorne when writing my undergraduate thesis which I have published in these pages.
- I'm cheating a bit with the *SF Hall of Fame* (edited by Ben Bova) as it was four volumes (I understand a fifth has been published since) with some of the best SF stories and novellas of all time. Many times, SF stories and novellas are more interesting than the novels.

Runners Up

- *Memory and Dream* by Charles deLint
- *Lafferty in Orbit* by R.A. Lafferty
- *Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens
- *Startide Rising* by David Brin
- *The Dark is Rising* by Susan Cooper (well maybe not the first book)
- *Dune* by Frank Herbert
- *Tomorrow's Children* ed by Asimov
- *New Teen Titans* by Marv Wolfman and George Perez

...Amazon's James Bond: Satire

Amazon MGM Studios has taken full control of the James Bond movie franchise. Here are my predictions of what an Amazon-run James Bond would do:

- Instead of getting devices from Q, he will order his gadgets from Amazon.
- Tech moguls will be good guys, not villains
- James Bond will read his mission briefing book on his Kindle
- Plot will include getting something vital overnight and Bond will say "Good thing I have Amazon Prime"
- News headlines will be from the Bezos-owned Washington Post
- James Bond will be an American who will say nice things about President Trump.
- The plot will involve saving the Amazon River from rabid environmentalists.
- Bond will fight for personal liberties and free markets.
- There will be no discussion of having Bond being played by a black or woman. The Trump-era Bond is no DEI hire.
- At the end of the movie, Bond will have to submit his 5 bullets for what he did in the past week.
- April's Fool!



...Government Shutdown 2025

As I write this on Friday March 14, the Democrats have broken their filibuster after the federal government once again came within hours of shutting down. We will have a continuing resolution covering the budget through the end of this fiscal year. That means there will never be a budget for 2025. At the end of the workday today, government employees did not know for sure if they would be reporting to work on Monday. This is no way to run a small company, let alone the most powerful nation in the world. It shows that the Democrats have become completely powerless to stop the Trump Administration from exceeding its powers and doing whatever it wants regardless of the constitutional authority of Congress to set the budget.

Hugo Nominations

The Hugo deadline was Friday March 14th and I got my nominations in on time. Here's what I nominated:

Category: Best Novel

- *The Mercy of Gods*, Author: James Corey, Publisher: Orbit
- *The Tainted Cup*, Author: Robert Jackson Bennett, Publisher: Del Rey
- *A Sorceress Comes to Call*, Author: T Kingfisher, Publisher: Tor
- *The Wings Upon Her Back*, Author: Samantha Mills, Publisher: Tachyon
- *Beyond the Light Horizon*, Author: Ken MacLeod, Publisher: Pyr

Category: Best Series

- *Lightspeed*, Author: Ken MacLeod, 2024 Example from Series: *Beyond the Light Horizon*
- *Vlad Taltos*, Author: Steven Brust, 2024 Example from Series: *Lyorn*
- *The Tyrant Philosophers*, Author: Adrian Tchaikovsky, 2024 Example from Series: *Days of Shattered Faith*
- *Liaden*, Author: Sharon Lee and Steve Miller, 2024 Example from Series: *Ribbon Dance*
- *InCryptid*, Author: Seanan McGuire, 2024 Example from Series: *Aftermarket Afterlife*



Category: Best Novella

- *The Butcher of the Forest*, Author: Premee Mohamed, Where Published: Tordotcom
- *Death Benefits*, Author: Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Where Published: Asimovs
- *Barbarians*, Author: Rich Larson, Where Published: Asimovs
- *The Imposition of Unnecessary Obstacles*, Author: Malka Older, Where Published: Tordotcom
- *Saturation Point*, Author: Adrian Tchaikovsky, Where Published: Solaris

Category: Best Novelette

- *The Man in the Moon Is a Lady*, Author: Ian Baaske, Where Published: Asimovs
- *And to Their Shining Palaces Go*, Author: Betsy Aoki, Where Published: Asimovs
- *The River Judge*, Author: S.L. Huang, Where Published: Reactor
- *The Four Sisters Overlooking the Sea*, Author: Naomi Kritzer, Where Published: Asimovs
- *Title: Turtles to the Sea*, Author: Sandra McDonald, Where Published: Asimovs

Category: Best Short Story

- *The Alice Run*, Author: Nancy Kress, Where Published: Reactor
- *The Time of the Skin*, Author: AE van Vogt, Where Published: Last Dangerous Visions
- *Primordial Follies*, Author: Robert Sheckley, Where Published: Last Dangerous Visions
- *Circadas and Their Skins*, Author: Ava Margariti, Where Published: Strange Horizons

We'll see how well I did in picking finalists in a couple of months.

Also, the Baltimore Science Fiction Society has announced the finalists for the Compton Crook Award for Best First Novel. They are:

- *The Book of Love* by Kelly Link;
- *Someone You Can Build a Nest In* by John Wiswell;
- *The Stars Too Fondly* by Emily Hamilton;
- *Sun of Blood and Ruin* by Mariely Lares;
- *The Wings Upon Her Back* by Samantha Mills.

All of these are well worth reading.

...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.

Project Classics – I got a little further in *The Source* by James Michener. I'm on 655 out of over 1,000 pages. The book is really a collection of stories set in the same location than a novel with continuing characters. So I read "Yigal and His Three Generals," about a common olive grower who leads his people against the Roman oppressors and "The Law," which presents Christianity as more accepting than Judaism. I've also started *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens. So far the orphan heroine has become a governess in a rather bleak household in which the mother is more concerned with her charity work than with her daughter and the ward of the court assigned to the family.

Project Nonfiction – I'm still reading *Scotland: A New History* by Michael Lynch. I'm on page 171 of 450. So far the book exhibits the worst stereotypes of history textbooks as the author reduces what should be exciting stories of battles and political intrigue to dull narration without even a strong thesis to provide a central argument. The author is not a storyteller, nor a strong synthesizer.

I just finished *The Inequality Machine: How College Divides Us* (2021) by Paul Tough (originally published as *The Years That Matter Most: How College Makes or Break Us* (2019) Tough originally



Art from canva.com

wanted a book on what colleges were doing to help low-income students succeed in college. The book does do that, but Tough found that the system is the biggest obstacle. The higher education system in the U.S. has developed in ways that deny high-achieving low-income access to the best colleges and that many students quit because they cannot afford college and lack financial support. Our college systems, especially the reliance on standardized tests like the SAT and ACT actually help less qualified rich and white students get in and deny admission to black and low-income students (a

disproportionate percentage of blacks at top schools are immigrants or children of immigrants and those who went to elite private high schools). He also includes some information about what happened when schools shut down due to Covid.

Ending Hunger: The Quest to Feed the World Without Destroying It by Anthony Warner. This book by the author of *The Angry Chef* discusses the history and science of food and the problems with how the world currently manages food. Our current food systems strain the environment and stresses fads like organic food and local sourcing. He wants people to eat more plants, but questions whether fake meat is any healthier. The book makes some good arguments but could have used more focus and trimming.

How the World Ran Out of Everything: Inside the Global Supply Chain by Peter S. Goodman starts with the disruptions to the supply chain due to Covid, but also goes into how the supply chain system and the just-in-time system developed and how Covid stressed them. It showed how business leaders took advantage of the disruptions to increase profits and how this hurt small businesses that depended on shipments from China and the everyday people such as truckers who serve the system. And in the end it is the consumers who pay. Much of the book is a convincing argument against globalization.

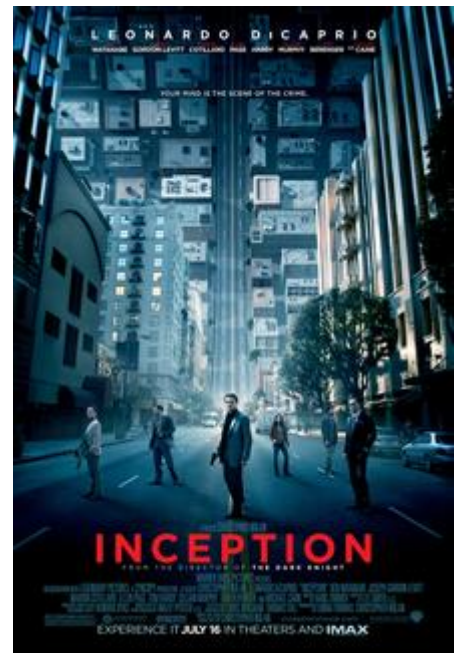


Project Video - I watched Season 1 (13 episodes) of *Black Lightning* on Netflix. This is a well done superhero series from the CW network about a black superhero who gave up superheroing 20 years ago to take care of his family. Now he is a respected principal. But when an old villain returns, he finds himself putting on his old super-suit and tackling corruption in his mostly black neighborhood. And then his children, one in medical school, one still in high school, start developing powers of their own (related to his, the power is genetic). This is one of several shows on CW based on DC Comics, although it only ran for three seasons. Aside from the problem of giving the title character a glowing costume (which makes sneaking in the dark impossible), I thought it had a realistic treatment (well, for a superhero show) of corruption, crime, and the effects of being a superhero on one's family. I'm going to watch the other seasons before the show leaves Netflix. I've also started watching *The West Wing* DVDs as my protest of the

Trump Administration.

I watched *Inception* by Christopher Nolan with a cast that included Leonardo DiCaprio, Michael Caine, Elliot Page, Tom Hardy and others. The premise is that technology allows people to enter other people's dreams and even control these dreams to steal information and implant ideas. The main character Dom Cobb used to be able to manipulate the dreams himself, but he no longer can without his dead wife appearing and causing trouble. He is hired to infiltrate the dreams of the heir to a major corporation and implant the idea of breaking up its parts. The result is a complex plot with three layers of dreams (with different time speeds) and it is sometimes hard to figure out what is going on. A problem I have is that the film requires the viewer to root for the criminals. Overall, this is an excellent film that can be watched multiple times.

I was disappointed by *Deadpool & Wolverine*. The violent comedy that worked well in the first two *Deadpool* movies got lost here with far more violence and an overly muddled plot. *Wolverine* had such a great exit in *Logan* that this film tried hard to come up with a way of restoring *Wolverine* while staying respectful to that ending (I don't think it was). But when they added in multiple timelines and bringing back *Blade* and *Elektra* from non-Marvel Cinematic Universe films (plus *Gambit*), the film lost any focus it originally had. Too many scenes seemed to be in the movie because someone thought it was a cool idea, rather than try to have a cohesive story.



Project Activities - I attend Boskone in Boston and did tabling for Capclave. Boskone is always an excellent convention with lots of great guests. Jasper Fforde, the author of *The Eyre Affair*, was the main writer GoH. Since one of the characters in the Thursday Next books is a genetically engineered Dodo named Pickwick, I brought a Capclave dodo puppet to his book signing (he signed my books To Sam (and Dodo)). After the convention I visited my sister who lives near Boston and saw a play that adapted the book *The Life of Pi*.

No progress on Projects Trek, Shakespeare, Clean-up, and Exercise. I really need to work more on these. Perhaps if the government does a reduction in force and lays me off...

...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. Views on political issues are my own and have nothing to do with my government employment. Graphics are from clip art discs and the Internet.



Art from canva.com



Esmeralda County Line #9
February – March 2025
A zine for NAPA 275

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The Taxman Cometh

Well, tax season has finally started, and we are already into the beginning of First Peak, that time in tax season when everybody is trying to get their returns in before February 15 so they can get their refunds as soon as possible. Second Peak, a/k/a the Death March to April 15, will come later, and mostly consists of clients who are putting off the inevitable as long as they can without having to file for an extension.

It seems I am spending a considerable amount of time on the road this month. I had a wound care appointment in Las Vegas this past week (leg wounds are much better), I have an optometry appointment ditto this coming week, and the week after that there is an NSSAB meeting in Las Vegas, and at the end of the month I am off to Confinement in Lebanon, on the outskirts of Nashville. Since I'm flying in a day before the convention, perhaps I'll make the hajj unto Buc-ee's in Crossville, which is an hour away on I-40. It'll beat sitting around the hotel waiting for everyone to show up.

BOOKS & OTHER MEDIA

I have started keeping track of what I'm reading in a Notebook file, which I have never done before, and I am a little surprised at how many I've gone through already in just these first six weeks of the year. With the exception of an unimpressive book about foreign volunteers for the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War, they are all SF; even the lone epic fantasy (Larry Correia's Heart of the Mountain) is really SF that just looks like fantasy because of its mostly low-tech setting. I am tempted to file Alfred Coppel's The Burning Mountain as horror, even though its is ostensibly about OPERATION CORONET, the invasion of Kyushu in 1946, because its main story could be interpreted as psychological horror set in the backdrop of the last battle of the Pacific War, which was horrific enough.

Picked up Michael Flynn's In the Country of the Blind used through Amazon, and it's not drawing me in like his later works. I have set it aside for now, since the 17th volume of Ralts Bloodthorne's magnificent Behold! Humanity! kitchen sink series The Inheritors War is out, and once I finished that I had to backtrack to some earlier volumes.

Comments on N'APA #274

The Official Organ Everybody's entitled to an occasional goof, and no harm done.

Intermission #149

(Editorial) ROFLMAO. If I didn't know better, I would think this was a parody of a serious election analysis article. I'll leave it at that. ☹️☹️ Ukraine needs bodies to use the equipment provided more than they need the equipment – especially since, as is becoming apparent, the previous administration slow-rolled deliveries and the majority of the funds allegedly sent to Ukraine somehow never got there. I'll be disappointed if dozens of people don't wind up going to jail or into punishment battalions depending on whether they're American or Ukrainian bureaucrats.

(History) RAEBNC

(rec.arts.sf.*) Like a lot of things fannish, I came late to the Usenet groups and didn't get too heavily into it since I had a family and a couple of jobs to juggle while all this was going on. I was an active participant in rec.arts.anime in the early 2000s as well as alt.fan.utena, but then Anime Detour started eating all my free time.

(RYCTo Heath) "...you cross a state line and you're just about where you started." Balderdash! Bunkum! Even on the East Coast (or perhaps *especially* on the East Coast) the differences in culture, history, and architecture are very notable once you cross the state line. Massachusetts is not like Rhode Island which is not like Connecticut, etc. etc. and especially so once you cross the Potomac from Maryland to Virginia. I suppose if you are a tourist who pays no attention and never gets off the Interstate (or out of the airports & nearby hotels) you won't see that, but that is an E.U. problem and not an U.S. problem. (SWIDT?)

(RYCTo Garth) I can testify from personal experience that being exposed to multiple languages at a young age makes it easier to learn additional languages as you get older.

(RYCTo Jefferson) I'll let him answer the Bob Asprin/Yang the Nauseating/Mongol Horde question because he almost certainly knows more about it than I do; I daresay I don't know the whole story or even most of it.

(RYCTo Sam) Regarding Trekkies, I felt at the time and still feel that mainline fandom made a huge mistake snubbing the Trek fans. A lot of them appreciated SF just as much as any other fan, but yes, their main interest was Trek. Some of them went on to become rather decent authors, for example current Life N3F member Jacqueline Lichtenberg. In any case, this mistake was repeated with other media fans, anime fans, gamers, etc. and the end result has been that you could drop Worldcon into the San Diego Comic Con or Otakon and nobody would know it was there.

Brandy Hall

(RYCTo Ahrvid) IIRC von Braun's VFR was publicized by Willy Ley before the Reich slammed the security door shut. Ley emigrated to the U.S., of course, and wrote some SF short stories before becoming the science columnist for *Galaxy*. Interesting trivia – thanks to Willy, the National Air & Space Museum has a sizable collection of...well, it's not really porn, I suppose, but erotic pictures of feet, specifically Olga Ley's feet. She had been a foot model, and her portfolio was among the materials Willy bequeathed to NASM when he died. 🍷🍷 Somewhat related: there was great mockery when some ignorant sod proclaimed that they didn't want America's space program in the hands of that Nazi, Elon Musk! Many pictures of SS-Sturmbannführer von Braun were posted and many LOLs were had. 🍷🍷 Ralts Bloodthorne's BEHOLD! HUMANITY! novels feature a powered armor soldier whose religion prohibits cloning or the use of the SUDS system, which effectively allows you to reincarnate soldiers killed on the battlefield. 🍷🍷 I am going to look for Chan's novel and see how it compares to Algis Budrys' "Rogue Moon", which IIRC was the first story to address the question of whether your clone/transporter duplicate is you or not.

(RYCTo Sam) I have visited the town library here in Tonopah a few times, though to be honest I have spent more time in their parking lot hacking the Ingress portal there than I have perusing the inventory. The SF selection is unimpressive and consists mostly of Star Trek and D&D spinoff novels, though I did give them a thumb drive with the Baen Free Library on it. I used to use the Clark County libraries a lot when I lived in Las Vegas and would probably still use them if the interlibrary loan system here in Nevada wasn't so balkanized & Byzantine. 🍷🍷 I think I have well over 1000 books (mostly, like yours, still in boxes) and could probably set up my own library if I got the urge. 🍷🍷 There is a strong sentiment that George R.R. Martin is responsible for killing off serial epic fantasy novels, at least in traditional publishing, because so many fantasy readers don't want to pick up the first novel in a series without knowing the sequels are already out. On the other hand, I certainly agree that authors ought to be able to write standalone novels without dragging things out over six or twelve sequels.

Ye Murthered Master Mage

(RYCTO Jefferson) Someone is still fussing over our outreach to Gab and MeWe? I thought that kerfluffle had been put to rest after the departure of my predecessor. 🍷🍷 Is the Serviss novel you refer to Edison's Conquest of Mars? I downloaded that from Project Gutenberg and soon wished I hadn't. Other writers have done better with that topic.

Ceterum autem censeo Carthaginem esse delendam.

Well, I managed to survive all the traveling last month, and am damned grateful that I don't have to do any more of it until the first week in April when I get to have the wound care people look at the holes in my legs. I was supposed to attend an NSSAB meeting in Beatty on April 16 and the National NSSAB Chairs meeting the following week, but because of budget uncertainties at the Department of Energy those have been changed to virtual meetings, and frankly, I'm okay with that, because after the Death March to April 15 all I want to do is stay home and sleep a lot.

Confinement VI was a good time, even if I did miss a lot of the programming that I originally thought I'd want to see. I did catch the last 45 minutes of Glenn Reynolds' GoH speech/law discussion, and got to stand him a couple glasses of wine Saturday night while we compared notes on parenting and other stuff. The convention ended a bit abruptly on Sunday as Mike Williamson, his family, and assorted other folks hied off to Oleg Volk's place for some range time; I didn't go since I hadn't brought Masha and am not really comfortable with shooting other peoples' weapons. Unusually, I didn't buy any books, but I talked to Mike

about a sharpening kit for my several knives and put in an order for a C6 T-shirt, which I had stupidly forgotten to order before the con.

I did make the holy journey unto Crossville to visit the Buc-ee's ~~and now I am a secret man~~, and man...it is like a Love's truck stop and a Walmart mashed together with the hype turned up to 11. About 25% of the store is devoted to Buc-ee's swag in a bewildering array of designs and colors (none of it in my size, perhaps fortunately), the Wall of Jerky is indeed impressive, and their BBQ brisket and pulled pork sandwiches are MAGICAL. I wound up going back to the hotel with a bunch of chow and a soft-sided 24-pack cooler with the beaver logo. I think I'll go back next year; unlike the long enervating drives through the desert here, it was nice to drive through the greening countryside of southeast Tennessee, where the cricks and streams had actual running water in them.



Say hello to my little friend!

And that's about it for this month. N3F members are reminded that Son of Silvercon III, with guest of honor Maxwell Drake and other special guests (TBA) is coming up fast, and the pre-registration deadline is June 15 if you want to take advantage of your \$5 discount.