

The Obdurate Eye #52

A Garth Spencer fanzine

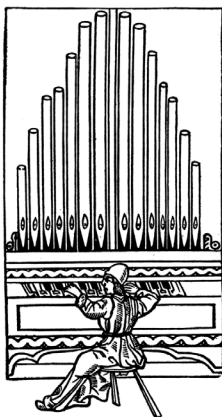
June 2025



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THE OBDURATE EYE #52, June 2025, a personalzine from Garth Spencer, 6960 Doman Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5S 3H7, Email garth.van.spencer@gmail.com or hrothgarweems@gmail.com. Garth acknowledges that he does this on the unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm, səlilwətał, and skwxwú7mesh peoples.



The organ of no clique or party

Art Credits

Dogman (José Sanchez) cover

“Out on a lonely rural road somewhere in the United States, a Dogman feasts on a small white fox unseen and uninterrupted in the darkness of the night.”

(Jose Sanchez, May 5, 2025)

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Garth Spencer's Diary

On April 30 and May 14, the BCSFA writers' workshop held its usual online critiquing session (via Discord, rather than Zoom). My conscience bothers me somewhat about writing as I have not generated any new fiction, not to submit to the writers' workshop anyway. (I have been working on a faanfiction serial for N'APA, but since this is a satire on a convention fiasco that happened some decades ago, I don't think the professional writers or aspiring professionals will be interested. I need to start finishing some abortive stories.)

In contrast, May was a busy month for *fan*writing, as several APA deadlines all fell within May: not only my regular first-of-the-month deadlines for *The Obdurate Eye* and for eAPA, but the deadlines to contribute to N'APA (the N3F's bimonthly APA), APA-V (the Vegas APA that Nic Farey has revived, with deadlines three times per year), for Stipple-Apa and for Apaplexy (the Minneapolis and Ottawa APAs, respectively, both of which schedule their deadlines approximately every six weeks). Both Stipple-Apa and Apaplexy members have "collation" meetings online, despite that Apaplexy has been entirely online since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Stipple-Apa produces both hardcopy and online (scanned) editions.

Ahrvid Engholm rightly questioned why I tend to wait so long to notify eAPA members as to when a zipped mailing is posted at eFanzines.com, and what the unzip password of the month is? He proposed that I could simply distribute eAPA mailings to the members. The group will have to discuss this and come to a decision.

This was also a strenuous month for late garden installation. The housing society I belong to adopted my friend Jean's proposal for raised garden plots at three or four houses. He and I (yes, that's a male Jean) have since been going to housing and garden supply stores, sawing wood, building frames, filling them with garden soil, planting vegetable seedlings and laying out weeping hoses to water them. I was pleasantly surprised to find myself capable of several hours of physical exertion each day. I even started taking care of outdoor, mechanical labours I had been putting off for months, over the winter.

I spent a little more than I expected, preparing for a mid-June camping trip. The Heathen Freehold, which I serve as Clerk, is holding its annual general meeting (Althing) in June, on Vancouver Island. So I went to Canadian Tire, and bought myself

a tent, groundsheet, tarpaulin, sleeping bag, mat, and mess kit – the basic camping equipment I didn't already have. Now I have to experience how much my whole burden will weigh, when I hie myself to the ferry ~~and have to wait for two or three sailings to pass me by.~~



Not a Tourism Bureau picture of Vancouver

LoCs and Quays

My nonsense text for the last OE email was,

> I still don't know what 'diddy wah diddy' means.

Dara Korra'ti (May 4, 2025) kahvipub@murkworks.net replied,

well, we have learned that diddy dum, because of what diddy do, so maybe there's another part of the prophecy yet to be discovered

Kevin Trainor wombat.scho@gmail.com replied the same day,

Me either! Thank you for this pleasant surprise on a Sunday afternoon. Although I am traveling to Virginia and Maryland this coming week (though probably not DC) I will attempt a LOC from my Surface Pro. Wish me luck.

Nic Farey fareynic@gmail.com replied with *This Here ... #86 and the gnostic reply*,

"Your own mind is a sacred enclosure into which nothing harmful can enter except by your permission."

((I wish.))

John Bartley of Tualatin john.bartley@gmail.com responded,

Regarding Ish #51 and the Fun with Physics discussion thread:

Félicette was a stray [Parisian](#) cat that became the first feline launched into space on 1963-10-18 as part of the [French space program](#). She was one of 14 female cats trained for spaceflight. According to an article in [Space.com](#) on 8 November 2017, the participation of Félicette in the space race "... was certainly not voluntary, but it was a huge milestone for France, which had just established the world's third civilian space agency (after the Soviet Union and the U.S.). Félicette's mission helped bring France into the space race." <https://www.space.com/felicette-first-cat-in-space-statue-unveiled-in-france.html>



By <https://felicette.com/blogs/news/39142657-the-first-cat-in-space> direct link, Fair use, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=55139595>

((That is, indeed, a French stray cat.))

Hugh Spencer, spencer.hugh@gmail.com wrote:

I think you could invent your own meaning. Stick with it and others will take it on.
Thanks for the latest issue!

Mark Nelson, nelsonmark07@gmail.com, March 19, 2025

One of the few shocks of moving to Australia from the UK was the requirement to complete a tax return. In the UK I was not required to do this. The first time I completed an Australian tax return was 2000. This was very easy as I only started work in May and the tax year finishes on June 30th. In that year, and for perhaps ten years afterwards, a hardcopy of your tax return had to be posted to the tax office. A feature of these years was picking up the two large books that the tax office produced to help you fill out your return. At some point in time the tax return moved to electronic submission. By the time I bit the bullet, most people had already transitioned to electronic submission. Electronic submission means logging onto the ATO (Australian Tax Office) website and filling in a web-based form. It's straightforward and there are links to information provided by the ATO on how to handle your tax affairs. After submitting my tax form for the first time electronically I wondered why I hadn't switched years before.

When completing the form by hand I used to get frustrated by the process. Each year I'd wonder if I wouldn't be better paying an accountant to fill in my return, the expense of so doing being a tax deduction on the following year's form. But each year I persevered on my own. And having completed the form I vowed not to pay someone to do it the following year.

((I am consistently confused by some of the reasoning and calculation in the Canadian tax return form, somewhere on the second page. It seems I tend to put my taxable income into the wrong slot, time after time. Finally I gave in and used the good offices of a firm that regularly offers tax calculation services.))

The Australian federal election was only a few weeks after the Canadian one. It's difficult to determine what effect Trump had on the outcome. He certainly influenced how the opposition campaigned. Earlier in the year they were running MAGA-lite slogans, tailored for an Australian context, and came across as being influenced by Trump. For example, one Shadow Minister had her portfolio extended to include "Government Efficiency". Although it was claimed that this was intended to ensure that Federal funds are spent effectively and not wasted, it was widely interpreted to be a DOGE-like front. A photograph emerged during the campaign of the Senator's husband and herself wearing MAGA hats at a Christmas event. This photograph came to light shortly after she had used the phrase "make Australia great again" during a campaign rally. The Senator claimed that wearing the hats was a "joke" and that Trump did not have a monopoly on the phrase "Make somewhere Great Again". If I am being charitable I would say that these are, at best, politically naïve statements.

Since January the opposition slowly dialed back their pro-Trump rhetoric and MAGA-like slogans. However, it's not clear, when push came to shove, whether Trump was an important issue for the voters. The Government did put forward a message that with Trump in office Australia had entered troubled waters and that it was better for

Australia to have a known, safe pair of hands on the tiller than the unknown quantity of the opposition. But Trump is an irrelevancy in that sentence. I've never known a Government to tell the public "Yes, it's time for a new Government. Vote for the opposition." The Government always claims that it's better to stick with what you know.

((There isn't much left to say about the latest American federal administration, except that the sitting president seems to represent some kind of turning point in international, not simply national political culture. People have expressed opinions before about the level of education, intelligence, or integrity of heads of state, but have we ever had this much to criticize? ... Well, maybe I'm being naïve.))

I suppose that political historians will be arguing about this in the years to come. There were certainly many other reasons not to support the opposition party. (In Australia the Liberals are a right-of-centre party. They formed the opposition in conjunction with the Nationals. Historically, the Nationals were a rural-based party which represented the interest of farmers. That's not been true for some time and it's difficult to identify what, if anything, the Nationals stand for as a party. Based upon previous Liberal-National coalition governments, what the Nationals most stand for is putting their heads into the trough of public funding and hoovering up as much of it as possible.)

I'd heard about the second Trump assassination attempt. I haven't heard a suggestion that it was a fake assassination attempt. Funnily enough, that was my initial assumption when I heard about the first assassination attempt. I only just noticed that when I drafted this loc I'd written about the "fake Trump assignation attempt." I wonder if that happened, what it would involve?

There was an item in the travel section of the *Sydney Morning Herald* a few weeks back. An Australian had booked a cruise departing from Miami. He flew from Sydney to New York via Hong Kong as this was the cheapest path when he booked his ticket. He was denied entry into the US by US Customs, who claimed that his route was unusual. (I have no reason to doubt that it was the cheapest when he booked it.) US Customs also claimed that they knew he had two phones and used them to buy drugs. He said that he only has one phone. I wasn't planning on visiting the US, so my decision not to visit the US for the next four years is not a hardship.

((Not having a passport yet, much less an expired visa, I should logically be safe from the antics of US Customs, but I decided not to trust to logic when I decided not to go to the Seattle Worldcon.))

I don't suppose it's exceptional to reach 50 issues, but it's not so common that it shouldn't be celebrated. I don't know of any analysis for SF fanzines. In *The Numbers Game* issue 2 (July 1986), Richard Walkerdine presented various analyses of British postal diplomacy fanzines. From this, he concluded that 86% of such fanzines folded before issue 50. He also found that 98% of British postal diplomacy fanzines folded before issue 100.

Returning to the training of AI tools on the contents of efanzines.com and fanac.org. Has this happened? I suspect it has because it's easier to train your AI on almost everything that's publicly available than to try and predetermine a quality threshold.

Perhaps this will allow deceased SF Fans to communicate with us from the Great Beyond?

((Oh, this begs for a new round of posthumous memes ...))

How long until the question "How to address an envelope" needs to be replaced by "Do you know what an envelope is?"

((Fair question!))

I was going to tell which of your life skills I definitely do not have, but the list is too long. Instead, let's look at pages 7 and 8 with a vague threat to return to this topic in a future loc!

* *How to apply some science to your home, to renovations, to health, to gardening or your workspace:* I have zero gardening and renovation skills.

* *How to arrange flowers:* Not something I have ever needed to do.

* *How to bake chocolate chip cookies:* I am sure that I have the skills to make chocolate chip cookies from a recipe should I ever need to do so. Perhaps I will try and accomplish this before my next loc.

((Mark, I'm surprised at you! Chocolate chip cookies are like coffee or alcohol, one of the pillars of so-called civilization!))

* *How to balance your chequebook:* My bank, along with many other Australian banks, no longer provides its customers with a chequebook. If I really needed to write a cheque I would have to visit my bank and request that they write one.

I'm not sure what "balancing your chequebook" means. I always used to check that all cheque transactions on my bank account matched those on the stubs in my chequebook. Is there more to it than that?

((This sounds like the trend I am seeing here. I have to ask for newly-printed cheques if and when I move my residence, and since we are prone to postal strikes in Canada, and have plenty of opportunity to conduct our transactions electronically, cheques and even cash are not always necessary.))

* *How to barbecue:* Based upon a conversation I had with a guy who lived in Tennessee, I believe that the word "barbecue" means something different to Australians than it does to Americans (in addition to my very selectivity sample set, this comment is also based upon a few TV shows I've seen), and by extension, perhaps to Canadians. In the UK, barbecuing again means something different. It means a middle-aged man creating a large amount of smoke by burning meat on one of the few days of the year where it looks like there will be a nice summer's day.

((This pretty much sums up the Canadian definition.))

* *How to breathe properly:* I've been successfully doing it for nearly 57 years so I assume that I must be doing something right.

((You're fooling yourself. Numerous doctors will attest that city dwellers generally use half or less of their lung capacity, with many lamentable consequences. So will yoga instructors.))

* How to brew coffee: I probably don't know how to do this, but what does "brew" mean?

((Letting coffee permeate the hot water for a while before you pour it.))

* *How to build a fire:* I'm not an outdoors person. If I survive into a future where this is a required skill, then I am going to quickly perish. Who are we kidding?

If there's a future in which people need to know how to build a fire to survive, then I will have [most likely] perished before the stage at which building a fire becomes important.

((Interesting. If I can generalize from my own example, Canadians are very likely to have some camping skills, and at least a foggy notion of wilderness survival skills. Let's see how well I do the camping thing next month.))

* How to build and drive a go-cart: I don't know how to do it. But Mr. Grug knows how to do it. Mr. Grug is a beloved character in a long running series of Australian children's picture books.

((Why for name blong himfela i-callim Grug??))

* *How to build and maintain a website:* I know how to write HTML code, but perhaps that is different from building a site. (I never needed to learn cascading style sheets.)

((I learned how to write HTML code in the 1990s, and also learned how to link several HTML pages to a "welcome" page, thus constructing a site. But I have yet to master any of the icon-driven programs for webmastering which are now available. For that matter, I have yet to master metatags. That is next on my self-education list.))

* *How to buy a diamond:* My wife didn't want a diamond ring, so I didn't need to do this. My understanding is that, even for professionals, it's very difficult to distinguish between a lab-grown and natural diamond without the use of expensive tools. Since the former are much cheaper, I know that in the unlikely event that I needed to buy one, that I would purchase a lab-grown diamond.

* *How to care for a houseplant:* We have a demonstrated affinity for killing houseplants.

((Earlier in this fanzine I should be describing my recent adventures in gardening. We shall see if I tend to kill plants myself.))

* *How to care for your skin:* I would say that this question, like some of the others, is a bit vague. What exactly does 'care' mean? In Australia caring for your skin involves knowing that you should always wear a hat in the sun, always apply sun-screen in the sun, and always wear a shirt, in the sun.

((This is pretty much the same recommended procedure as in Canada. I am old enough that I tend to neglect the sun-screen. But beyond taking precautions against sunburn ... I have seen evidence that people who don't finish high school tend not to know that your skin may need any care beyond soap and water ... if they are, in fact, taught to wash every day.))

Personally, I think that the last point applies when you are not at a beach. I am always shocked when a man thinks it's OK to go to the local supermarket without putting a shirt on. Am I showing my age?

((No more than I do!))

* *How to catch fish:* I've only ever been fishing once in my life.

* *How to change a diaper:* I do know, but until I was 54 I would not have known. Thank goodness for disposable nappies!

((For a bachelor, I have a bit more experience with changing diapers than you might expect. I guess I was an honorary uncle!))

* *How to change a tire / How to change your oil:* As I don't drive I do not consider it to be essential to know how to do these.

((Neither do I, but then I live in a city with relatively satisfactory public transit and bicycle lanes.))

* *How to clean a house / How to clean and deodorize shoes:* Knowing how to do something does not necessarily mean that you do it as often as you should, or perhaps even at all.

((I have been teaching myself how to cook and wash up later and take care of housekeeping for myself, because frankly nobody else is going to do it!))

* *How to conduct a background investigation:* Not something I have ever needed to do. The last time I was on a university appointments committee, we were told that it's against university policy for committee members to look at the applicant's social media profiles. One reason for that is that we are not supposed to know the gender of the applicants. That does make it difficult to increase the number of women working in the STEM disciplines.

((Sometimes you have to wonder how the Perfectly Equitable Future is supposed to be achieved.))

* *How to decide what you have to do next (executive skills):* I have decided that I am not discussing any more of your questions once I reach the end of page eight.

* *How to decorate a Christmas tree:* We don't have a Christmas tree. Perhaps we will buy one when our son is a little older. As he still doesn't know anything about Christmas, there seems no point. What? There's a right way to decorate a Christmas tree? Seems a bit prescriptive.

((As you must have deduced by now, this is the first draft of a list of all known skills – ultimately, our whole cultural knowledge base! We can either make it complete and exhaustive and encyclopedic, or else trim it down to the essential skills of a Totally Competent Citizen, for this day and age.

((And why? Before I was disillusioned, I thought my father was the kind of omnipotent man who could survive and thrive if he were dropped into any environment in the world, and in fact could start naked in the wilderness and re-create civilization. This is one of the goals to which I aspire. Someday. Eventually. ~~When I've finally learned everything my mother called "common sense" but refused to tell me.~~ [I am 68 years old as I write this.]))

**Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2,
penneys@bell.net, May 26, 2025**

Many thanks for *The Obdurate Eye* 51, off on the second half of the first hundred issues. Hey, I'm optimistic here... More comments will follow, I promise.

Mention of the CSFFA reminds me... I recently saw the actual CSFFA Hall of Fame trophy at the home of David Clink, who manages the Hall of Fame. I think you will be on that trophy someday. I wish more fans were on that trophy.

My loc...we did our civic duty, and we worked the federal election, both the advance polls and the actual election day. (In fact, we checked today, and we have been paid for our services.) Both were very busy, and it reminded me of what the inside of a high school looks like. We have worked federal, provincial and municipal elections before. We do not expect to work in another election for the next couple of years.

Still no signs that it is safe to travel to the US. This past weekend was the big annual anime convention here, Anime North. Friends came up from the US, and returned safely. I guess this is what we get for not being American nationals.

((I can't help thinking sometimes I might have been overreacting by not attending Worldcon in Seattle. Then again, sometimes I read about American citizens in America going about their lawful occasions and suddenly being harassed by ICE 'agents'. I thought our nations fought a war about ending this kind of bullshit, at least in northern Europe.))

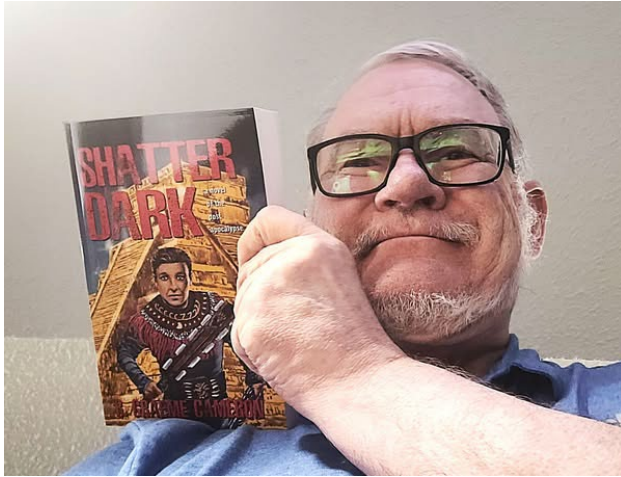
We did open up *Amazing Stories* to new short stories, and we have been flooded. New stories should be on the website in a couple of weeks. Also, thank you for running the cover of *Best of 2024*! That's good works from Bob Eggleton. The book is now available not only through Amazon, but also through independent bookstores.

Time to get moving on other things, so many thanks for this issue, and I know you've got the next on the go. We will see you when it arrives.

We Also Heard From: Bill Burns, Perry Middlemiss, Steve Green



In the News



R. Graeme Cameron Achieves His Dream

Shatter Dark, R. Graeme Cameron's novel, has attained the stage of proof publication. He writes:

"Late this night [May 8, 2025], discovered a package left outside my door.

"Turned out to be a hard copy of my book sent for proofing purposes.

"My reaction surprised me. Overwhelmed with emotion, I burst into tears. 58 years I've been waiting to hold a book of my own in my hands. A lifelong dream come true.

"Good thing I didn't film myself opening the package. Would have been embarrassing.

"Fact is, I am supremely happy. Still not the final version though. But soon, very soon."

R. Graeme Cameron, Facebook, May 8, 2025

There's a Right Way, and a Wrong Way, and Then ...

"Seattle Worldcon 2025 (August 13-17) has, like any modern Worldcon, hundreds of program participants and well over a thousand applicants. ...

"An unnamed person or people on the team charged with vetting the participants decided to bring ChatGPT in to help, and when word leaked out somehow, the Worldcon community was up in arms. ..."

SMOF News (volume 4, issue 36)

CSFFA/Aurora News

May 2025 was a somewhat busy month for the Canadian SF and Fantasy Association, in respect of preparing for the Aurora Awards, new entrants to the Hall of Fame, and new professional development grant applications. A Voters' Package of information is now available at **the CSFFA page (csffa.ca)**, for people who have paid memberships to

CSFFA. (Remember, **CSFFA memberships are still available until June 12th!**) Voting also took place in May on the agenda items of the CSFFA Annual General Meeting. The second window for writers' applications for the CSFFA Professional Development Grant opened on May 31.

Voting for the Aurora Awards opens June 7th and continues to July 19th; the voters' package includes downloadable editions of all the nominated works, from SF novels through graphic novels to fan publications.

Garth Spencer

TAFF 2025 News

The 2025 TransAtlantic Fan Fund delegate is **Mikołaj Kowalewski**, whose itinerary includes the Seattle Worldcon.

This Here ... #86, May 2025

Corflu 2025 News

The 2026 Corflu (#43) will be held in Santa Rosa, California. For more information see <https://corflu.org/>

This Here ... #86, May 2025

FAAn Awards 2025

The 2025 FAAn (fanzine) award winners are:

BEST GENZINE: *Banana Wings* (Brialey & Plummer)

BEST PERZINE: *This Here...* (Nic Farey)

BEST SPECIAL PUBLICATION: *SF Fandom - Its Part in Our Downfall* (Brialey & Plummer)

BEST LETTERHACK: Leigh Edmonds

BEST FANARTIST: Teddy Harvia

BEST FANWRITER: Nic Farey

BEST FANZINE COVER: *SF Commentary 118* (Elaine Cochrane)

Other awards: LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT: Mark Olson

PAST PRESIDENT, fwa: Leigh Edmonds

The full breakdown of this year's voting is here:

<https://efanzines.com/TIR/Incompleat2025results.pdf>

This Here ... #86, May 2025



Stream of Consciousness

Thoughts occasioned by *The Stf Amateur* #20, by Heath Row:

In *Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #158, in a response to *The Ignorable Theme*, and the question “What’s the most powerful weather you’ve ever experienced?”, you responded – at least, I believe this is your response – about gathering downstairs with your family when there was a tornado in Wisconsin. You also wrote one of the most evocative passages I have read about enduring a storm:

I also experienced some powerful weather while at the 1985 National Scout Jamboree. Held at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia in late July that year, the jamboree was hit by the remnants of Hurricane Bob. Heavy rain and high winds disrupted the jamboree, knocking over hundreds of tents and 50 portable toilets. I saw at least one troop’s campsite lifted into the air, and afterward, we’d find remains of encampments and gear deposited far from their original location.

My parents had come to visit me at that time. I had gone to a trading post with fellow Scouts from my troop and remember standing in line as water gathered at our ankles and shins, the rain hard, the water rising. When my parents arrived at our troop’s camp, I wasn’t there. They waited for me, and seeing me approach camp after the storm had passed has become a formative family story. Though I was just 12, my mother and father have said that they knew then that I was no longer a child, but a young man. I had weathered the storm.

That has impact. That has meaning.

Thoughts occasioned by *This Here ...* #86:

I feel rather guilty, because I was also asked to contribute something to the Corflu 42 Memory Book and completely forgot to submit anything by May 31. Maybe I've put too many projects on my plate.

Condolences on your ill health after your latest convention, and on the various chronic ailments. On behalf of all of us who aren't getting any younger, I really, really wish someone would invent modular pop-out/pop-in organs and tissues ...

It's always interesting to read what you observed about popular music and television; for some reason I am unconnected. (Well, not having a television might have something to do with it.)

Thoughts occasioned by *Tightbeam* 368:

The most interesting article in this issue – to me – was the biography-cum-bibliography of Jack Vance, one of the most unique American stylists in science fiction or fantasy.

Thoughts occasioned by *The Visionary* (May 2025:

The Visionary is the weekly email newsletter of The Universal Life Church, in which I obtained an ordination on a whim back in 2014 or so. Since then they have established an online-order house in Seattle (themonastery.org) and a serious newsletter addressing contemporary issues.

On May 7, 2025, the newsletter posed the problems: "A pastor was arrested for praying for the poor, the Supreme Court is poised to rewrite the separation of church and state, and psychedelic drugs are being taken as a sacrament. Plus, the president is cosplaying as the pope. Are norms meant to be challenged, or do they exist for a reason?"

Thoughts occasioned by *SMOF News* (volume 4, issue 36):

You know what? Acknowledging all the fanzines I receive at the beginning of the month is taking too long. I should write these capsule responses daily or weekly and then wrap up my fanzine in less than a week, for a change.

Addresses:

***FanActivity Gazette* (#4:12)**, Mindy Hunt, mindyhunt@scifi4me.com

***Ionisphere* #46, May 2025**, Jean-Paul Garnier, 61871 Twentynine Palms Hwy.
Joshua Tree, CA 92252, USA, email for the editor and magazine
spacecowboybooks@gmail.com

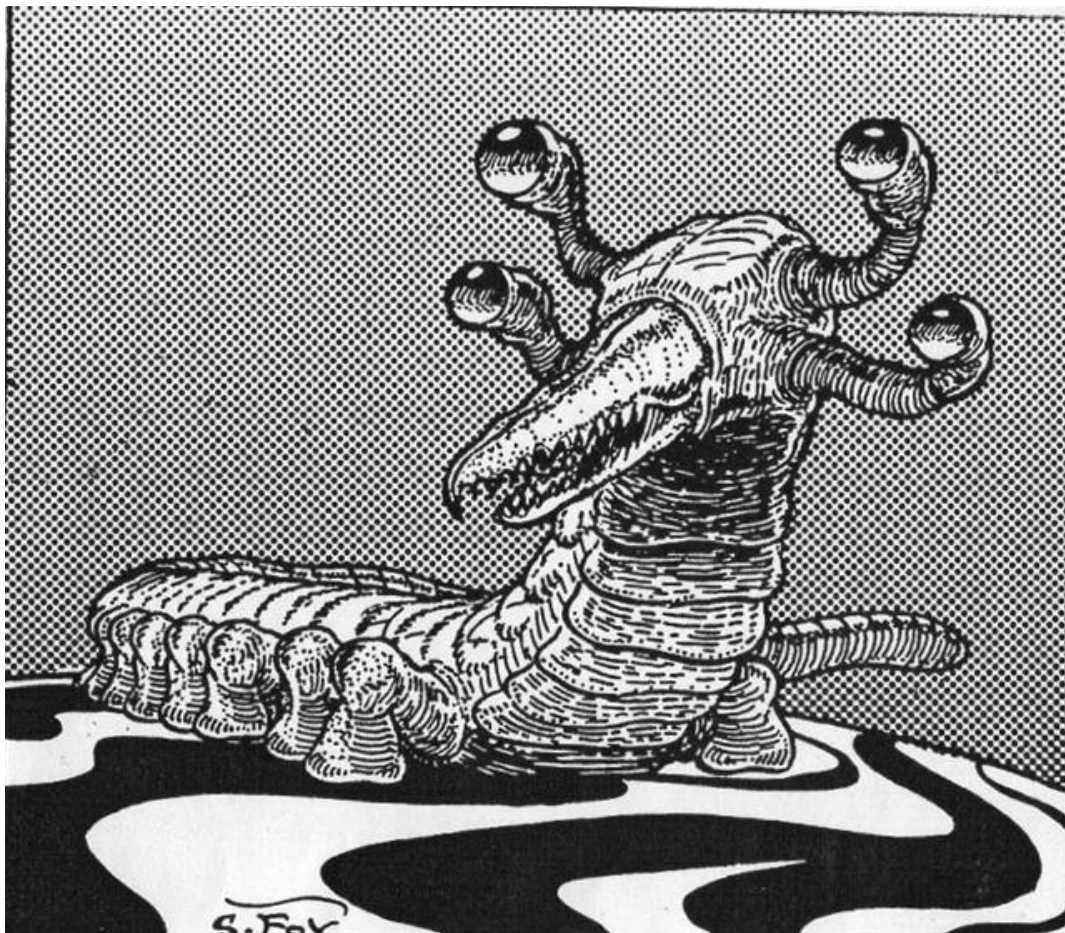
***SMOF News* (#4:36)**, Petréa Mitchell, 548 Market Street PMB 72296, San Francisco, CA 94104, USA, Send tips, corrections, press releases, and letters of comment to:
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The Visionary, Universal Life Church. mailing address: Universal Life Church Ministries, 2720 1st Ave S, Seattle, WA 98134, USA, newsletter@themonastery.org.

Tightbeam 368, May 2025, the N3F fanzine that tries to cover all tastes in fandom, such as anime, comics, cosplay, films, novels, biographies, poetry, music, short stories, food, ... The editors are: George Phillies phillies@4liberty.net, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester, MA 01609, USA and Jon Swartz judgetswartz@gmail.com



Our Prairies correspondent

Keycon 25 – The Book Table

Den Valdrón

(Facebook, May 18, 2025)

Well, Keycon 25 has come and gone. The last couple of years they've been out at the Hilton Airport Hotel on Wellington.

This is my second year participating in the Dealers' Room with the Authors of Manitoba at their book table. I didn't bother with the convention much this year. I took a day pass on Saturday to wander around.

Saw a couple of panels, didn't get much out of them. At this point in my non-career, I'm experienced to the point that I do panels, I don't watch them.

I did thirty panels and presentations last year, including five for Keycon. This year, I didn't bother doing panels. I just wanted to be low key. Casia Shreyer and R.J. Hore did six panels apiece though. They're keen.

I did kind of okay. I sold nine books. Gave away five – three to fellow writers – networking, one to a guy I knew who deserved a break, and one to someone who bought three books.

Other members of the Authors of Manitoba – I think there were about seven us – sold books. It depended. Some sold nothing, or three or four, or six or seven. R.J. Hore at the adjacent table sold some.

Overall, none of us did big numbers. The table fee was \$80. Authors of Manitoba split that seven ways. R.J. split three ways. If we hadn't shared tables, it would have been hard to cover our tables – particularly if you factored in, not the cover or gross price, but the net price – what it cost us to print and get it shipped. As it was, most of us made a small profit.

Unless you factor in the travel time and cost to get to and from the convention, meals while working the dealers room, the commitment of time – a total of 18 hours over three days. Then the economics get tough. Factor everything in, you're not making an hourly minimum wage. Potentially, you're losing.

I really have to question the utility of direct sales for most of us. There were only three real book tables at Keycon representing writers/publishers. Plus maybe three artists-comics guys. Plus John Speelman, doing time as a used book vendor.

The rest of it seemed to be crafts, handmade stuff, jewelry, etc. With the advent of 3D printers, there's a lot of 'printer' vendors. I'm not going to kick about that though.

Nothing commercial

Admittedly, Keycon is a tough one. The convention is small, out of the way, poorly advertised and poorly attended. The dealer's room is decent and open to the public, but it's not advertised or promoted and poorly attended. I've known a lot of vendors that have abandoned Keycon. There are none of the commercial vendors, they don't go there.

But I don't think it's unique. The big Winnipeg Comic Con, C4 – the tables go for \$450. You'd have to sell a large number of books to net, even break even. An even larger

number if you're from out of town. A lot of writers/small publishers have abandoned C4 as non-viable. A.P. Fuchs, GMB Chomichuk, Ian Russell and maybe Matt Joudrey's At Bay Press are the exceptions.

But for the most part, I think Creators – Artists and Writers, Crafts people – are on the way out at C4.

This just leaves craft shows, collectors conventions, little comic collections, catch as catch can venues, where you can buy a table and try and sell your books. I haven't done a lot of them. I'm very new to doing this direct sales thing. But R.J. Hore, an incredibly prolific author whose books have been with three different publishing houses, does. He tells me he's lucky to make his table costs back.

Casia Shreyer, the force of personality behind Authors of Manitoba, also pushes and does tables for all she's worth. She's an organizational dynamo, and a driven writer.

I get the impression, though, we're all smashing our heads against the wall. For most of us, this is not a sound business proposition. Maybe not for anyone.

These comments are confined to southern Manitoba, obviously. And there are exceptions – Fuchs and Chomichuk, notably. Ginther maybe. Russell.

Maybe. I was talking to Ira Nayman who had a table at the dealers room for the North American Science Fiction convention, and he'd had his best ever – sold eighteen books over a weekend. I've chatted with Indie Writers at tables at CanCon and WWC. General impression? Tough. Really tough. You don't make real money. A lot of the times you're doing good to make your table back, and maybe net a bit. Bookstores and publishers do better, a lot more product on offer. But tough. The economics range from tough to deadly, particularly when you factor in the person-hours involved in doing a table(s) for

Honestly, it looked pretty dire from the outside looking on, which is why I've been so slow to try it. Being on the inside doesn't really change the equations.

It may not be that way everywhere. You hear tales of marketplaces in the United States where a writer with the right book clears hundreds of copies over a weekend. Or maybe that just falls into the tiny minority of situations or individuals that make it work ... maybe.

Sad fact is that, these days, no one gets rich being a writer. It's hard not to avoid a general sense of doom. The big players, the majors, are clueless and desperate; agents seem to verge on delusional; the money is bad, and getting worse; and historical costs of publishers are being offloaded. And that's the top of the heap.

For us basic struggling writers? Jesus H. Christ, it's frustrating. We're supposed to master a literally insane panel of skills in addition to writing, to have any chance. Let's work thirty hours a day to extreme levels of skill... for what will amount to crap money.

I think if we put the same amount of work and intensity into playing the stock market, or pretty much anything else, we'd be better off. But this is what calls to us.

So, direct sales, tables seem to be a losing proposition. But maybe everything is. Maybe there's no winning? Just ... the quest.

I dunno. I may be toiling pointlessly in a doomed art form, facing a tidal wave of competition. But its what I want to do. And I'm not alone, there's a lot of us, busily writing away, with something that we need to say, whether or not there's anyone out there to listen.

There are some upsides. One is the chance to actually hang out with and network with other writers. At different points we talked kickstarters, publishing companies, platforms, advertising, special editions. I shared information, they shared information. It's nice to talk shop. Pass ideas around. See what people are doing.

I enjoyed sitting with writers, saying "Tell me about your book?" "What's the favourite book you've written?" "Tell me what you're working on right now?" They just come alive. It was great.

And it was fun to interact with readers. I thought that would give me the heebie jeebies. Honestly, something like C4 gives me nightmares. 50,000 people filing past refusing to make eye contact? Or worse, making eye contact with 50,000 people.

Mostly, I low keyed it; if someone was looking at the books, I let them. But once in a while, you'd chat. There'd be interactions. Human contact. It was nice to make a sale now and then, not just for putting a book in someone's hands, but the actual social component.

Direct sales, doing tables is definitely brutal. It's a lot easier to share the load – and maybe it's the key, not just to networking, but to building a community of writers to share information and help build each other's skills.

Doing it alone is hell. Doing anything alone is hell. But maybe this is worthwhile. Maybe it's not so much about coming together to sell, maybe it's really about coming together.



Den Valdron at Keycon

Call for Submissions



—William Rotsler

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Abbreviations: hc = hardcover, tp = trade (oversized) paperback, [UK ed] = British publication, [CDN ed] = Canadian publication. Default is US publication.

June 2025 New Mystery and Crime Fiction Releases

Anderson, Lin. WHISPERS OF THE DEAD. [RHONA MACLEOD #18]. Macmillan, 21.99 tp.

Archer, Jeffrey. AN EYE FOR AN EYE. [WILLIAM WARWICK #7]. HarperCollins, 23.99 tp.

Barrington, C. F. WHEN WE WERE KILLERS. Aries, 24.99 tp.

Barton, Fiona. TALKING TO STRANGERS. [ELISE KING #2]. Penguin Canada, 13.99 pb.

Belle, Kimberly. THE EXPAT AFFAIR. Park Row, 23.99 tp.

Berry, Flynn. TRUST HER. Penguin, 24.95 tp.

Berry, Steve. THE ATLAS MANEUVER. [COTTON MALONE #18]. Grand Central, 13.99 pb.

Blake, Matthew. A MURDER IN PARIS. HarperCollinsCanada, 25.99 tp.

Blake, Matthew. ANNA O. HarperCollinsCanada, 13.99 pb.

Brennan, Allison. BEACH READS AND DEADLY DEEDS. MIRA, 24.99 tp.

Burke, James Lee. DON'T FORGET ME, LITTLE BESSIE. Atlantic Monthly, 43.50 hc.

Burke, James Lee. CLETE. [DAVE ROBICHEAUX #24]. Grove, 27.95 tp.

Carr, Jack. CRY HAVOC. [TOM REECE]. Emily Bestler, 26.99 tp.

Cartmel, Andrew. LIKE A BULLET. [THE PAPERBACK SLEUTH #3]. Titan, 24.99 tp.

Castillo, Linda. THE BURNING. [KATE BURKHOLDER #16]. Minotaur, 13.99 pb.

Chao, Gloria. THE EX-GIRLFRIEND MURDER CLUB. [HU DONE IT #1]. MIRA, 23.99 tp.

Chapman, Julia. DATE WITH DESTINY. [THE DALES DETECTIVE SERIES #10]. Pan, 21.99 tp.

Chowdhury, Ajay. THE SPY. [KAMIL RAHMAN #4]. Harvill Secker, 21.99 tp.

Chowdhury, Ajay. THE SHADOW. [KAMIL RAHMAN #5]. Harvill Secker, 31.99 tp.

Clinton, Bill & Patterson, James. THE FIRST GENTLEMAN. Little, Brown, 42.00 hc.

Cooper, Catherine. THE PENTHOUSE. HarperCollins, 23.99 tp.

Cosby, S. A. KING OF ASHES. Flatiron, 25.99 tp.

Cranor, Eli. BROILER. Soho Crime, 24.95 tp.

Day, Jamie. BLOCK PARTY. St. Martins, 14.99 pb.

Dukess, Karen. WELCOME TO MURDER WEEK. Scout, 24.99 tp.

Evanovich, Janet. THE KING'S RANSOM. [THE RECOVERY AGENT #2]. Atria, 26.99 tp.

Firestone, Jo. MURDER ON SEX ISLAND. [LUELLA VAN HORN]. Penguin Random, 24.95 tp.

Giarratano, Kimberly G. MAKE A KILLING. [BILLIE LEVINE]. Datura, 24.99 tp.

Gilbert, Sian. I DID WARN HER. Morrow, 24.99 tp.

Gray, Alex. ACTS OF MALICE. [DSI WILLIAM LORIMER]. Sphere, 38.00 hc.

Gray, Claudia. THE LATE MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Penguin Canada, 13.50 pb.

Gray, Claudia. THE RUSHWORTH FAMILY PLOT. [MR. DARCY & MISS TILNEY #4]. Viking, 24.95 tp.

Greaney, Mark. SENTINEL. [ARMORED #2]. Berkley, 14.99 pb.

Grisham, John. CAMINO GHOSTS. [CAMINO #3]. Vintage, 14.99 pb.

Hallett, Janice. THE EXAMINER. Atria, 26.99 tp.

Hannah, Mari. HER SISTER'S KILLER. [STONE AND OLIVER]. Orion, 19.99 tp.

Hart, Rob. ASSASSINS ANONYMOUS. Putnam, 25.99 tp.

Hendricks, T. R. THE INFILTRATOR. [DEREK HARRINGTON #2]. Forge, 13.99 pb.

Henry, James. BLACKWATER. [NICK LOWRY #1]. Quercus, 23.99 tp.

Huber, Anna Lee. A TARNISHED CANVAS. [LADY DARBY #13]. Berkley, 25.99 tp.

Iglesias, Gabino. ZERO SAINTS. Mulholland, 23.99 tp.

Iles, Greg. SOUTHERN MAN. [PENN CAGE #7]. Morrow, 26.99 tp.

Jakubowski, Maxim (ed). BLACK IS THE NIGHT: STORIES INSPIRED BY CORNELL WOOLRICH. Titan, 24.99 tp.

James, Peter. ONE OF US IS DEAD. [ROY GRACE #20]. Pan, 21.99 tp.

Jance, J. A. DEN OF INIQUITY. [J. P. BEAUMONT #23]. Morrow, 12.99 pb.

Johnson, Craig. FIRST FROST. [LONGMIRE #20]. Penguin, 24.95 tp.

Johnson, Craig. RETURN TO SENDER. [LONGMIRE #21]. Viking, 39.99 hc.

King, Laurie R. KNAVE OF DIAMONDS. [MARY RUSSELL AND SHERLOCK HOLMES]. Bantam, 39.99 hc.

Lancaster, Neil. WHEN SHADOWS FALL. [DS MAX CRAIGIE #6]. HQ Digital, 25.99 tp.

Lippman, Laura. MURDER TAKES A VACATION. Morrow, 25.99 tp.

Lloyd, Ellery. THE FINAL ACT OF JULIETTE WILLOUGHBY. Harper, 23.99 tp.

MacNeal, Elizabeth. THE BURIAL PLOT. HarperCollinsCanada, 25.99 tp.

Marais, Bianca. A MOST PUZZLING MURDER. MIRA, 25.99 tp.

Martin, Faith. FATAL NIGHT. [RYDER AND LOVEDAY #7]. HQDigital, 23.99 tp.

Martin, Faith. THE FATAL END. [RYDER AND LOVEDAY #8]. HQDigital, 23.99 tp.

Mellor, Sarah. THE DEPARTED. HarperNorth, 36.99 .

Mosley, Walter. FAREWELL, AMETHYSTINE. [EASY RAWLINS]. Mulholland, 24.99 tp.

Nevin, E. C. A NOVEL MURDER. HarperCollinsCanada, 24.99 tp.

Nodarse, Alejandro. BLOOD IN THE CUT. Flatiron, 23.99 tp.

Otani, Akira. THE NIGHT OF BABA YAGA. Soho Crime, 23.95 tp.

Parker, T. Jefferson. DESPERATION REEF. Forge, 27.99 tp.

Patterson, James. ALEX CROSS MUST DIE. [ALEX CROSS #29]. Little, Brown, 13.99 pb.

Penney, Elizabeth. BODIES AND BATTLEMENTS. [RAVENSEA CASTLE #1]. Minotaur, 13.99 pb.

Petievich, Gerald. 13 HILLCREST DRIVE. Rare Bird, 42.95 hc.

Pomare, J. P. 17 YEARS LATER. Hachette Australia, 25.99 tp.

Potzsch, Oliver. THE GRAVEDIGGER'S ALMANAC. [LEOPOLD VON HERZFELDT #1]. HarperVia, 24.99 tp.

Preston, Douglas. BADLANDS. [NORA KELLY]. Grand Central, 40.00 hc.

Rao, Nilima. A SHIPWRECK IN FIJI. [AKAL SINGH #2]. Soho, 39.95 hc.

Robb, J. D. PASSIONS IN DEATH. [EVE DALLAS #59]. St. Martin, 13.99 pb.

Rosenblum, Emma. VERY BAD COMPANY. Flatiron, 23.99 tp.

Ryan, Hank Phillippi. ONE WRONG WORD. Forge, 13.99 pb.

Sampson, Freya. THE BUSYBODY BOOK CLUB. Berkley, 25.99 tp.

Sayo, Ji Hong. ANGELHUNTING. [SEAMUS CARON #1]. ECW, 24.95 tp.

Scarrow, Simon. DEATH IN BERLIN. [HORST SCHENKE #3]. Headline, 26.99 tp.

Schellman, Katharine. THE LAST NOTE OF WARNING. [NIGHTINGALE #3]. Minotaur, 25.00 tp.

Smith, Michael Farris. LAY YOUR ARMOR DOWN. Little, Brown, 38.00 hc.

Smith, Sally. A CASE OF MICE AND MURDER. [THE TRIALS OF GABRIEL WARD #1]. Bloomsbury, 38.99 hc.

Steel, Stephanie. TRAIN FROM PLATFORM 2. Avon, 23.99 tp.

Swanson, Peter. KILL YOUR DARLINGS. Morrow, 25.99 tp.

Townson, Harriet F. D IS FOR DEATH. Hodder, 23.99 tp.

Toyne, Simon. THE BLACK HIGHWAY. [LAUGHTON REES #3]. Morrow, 39.50 hc.

Uketsu. STRANGE HOUSES. HarperVia, 21.99 tp.

Weaver, Ashley. LOCKED IN PURSUIT. [ELECTRA MCDONNELL #4]. Minotaur, 24.00 tp.

Whitelaw, Jonathan. THE GARDEN CLUB MURDERS. HarperNorth, 24.99 tp.

Wood, Trevor. THE SILENT KILLER. Quercus, 23.99 tp.

June 2025 New Fantasy and Science Fiction Releases

Alderson, Ben. A GAME OF MONSTERS. [REALM OF FEY #4]. Angry Robot, 24.99 tp.

Arena, Brittney. A DANCE OF LIES. Random House Canada, 38.00 hc.

Asher, Neal. DARK DIAMOND. [TIME'S SHADOW TRILOGY #1]. Tor UK, 33.99 tp.

Ayinde, M. H. A SONG OF LEGENDS LOST. [INVOKER TRILOGY #1]. Saga, 26.99 tp.

Bacigalupi, Paolo. NAVOLA. Vintage, 27.99 tp.

Barker, R.J. HEART OF THE WYRDWOOD. [FORSAKEN #3]. Orbit, 25.99 tp.

Barron, Natania. QUEEN OF MERCY. [THE QUEENS OF FATE TRILOGY #3]. Solaris, 22.99 tp.

Bates, Jeremy. THE NO-END HOUSE. Kensington, 24.95 tp.

Bear, Elizabeth. THE FOLDED SKY. [WHITE SPACE #3]. Saga, 26.99 tp.

Bedi, Aman J. CITY OF JACKALS. [KAVI #2]. Gollancz, 28.99 tp.

Boop, David (ed). PERMUTATIONS: A WELL WORLD ANTHOLOGY. CAEZIK, 25.99 tp.

Brody, A. L. BABIES & BANSHEES. [MATING AND MONSTERS #3]. Amara, 23.99 tp.
 Finale to the series begun in DATING AND DISMEMBERMENT and WEDDINGS AND WITCHCRAFT.

Cole, Penn. SPARK OF THE EVERFLAME. [THE KINDRED'S CURSE #1]. Atria, 26.99 tp.

Cole, Penn. GLOW OF THE EVERFLAME. [THE KINDRED'S CURSE SAGA #2]. Atria, 39.99 hc.

Coles, Donyae. MIDNIGHT ROOMS. Amistad, 23.99 tp.

Davis, Hank & David Afsharirad (eds). ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME. Baen, 25.00 tp.

Dawson, Delilah S. HEIR OF STRAHD. [DUNGEONS & DRAGONS RAVENLOFT]. Worlds, 39.99 hc.

Durst, Sarah Beth. THE SPELLSHOP. Bramble, 26.99 tp.

Dyachenko, Marina & Sergey. SCHOOL OF SHARDS. [VITA NOSTRA #3]. Voyager, 24.99 tp.

Elliott, Kate. WITCH ROADS. [WITCH ROADS #1]. Tor, 41.99 hc.

Feist, Raymond E. A DARKNESS RETURNS. [DRAGONWAR SAGA #1]. Voyager, 24.99 tp.

Flint, Eric & Ryk E. Spoor. FENRIR. Baen, 37.00 hc.

Ford, R. S. ENGINES OF WAR. [THE AGE OF UPRISING #3]. Orbit, 25.99 tp.

Fox, Hester. A MAGIC DEEP AND DROWNING. Graydon House, 23.99 tp.

Gratton, Tessa. THE MERCY MAKER. [THE MOON HERESIES]. Orbit, 25.99 tp.

Green, Simon R. HYDE & SEEK. [JEKYLL & HYDE INC. #2]. Baen, 12.99 pb.

Halle, Karina. REALM OF THIEVES. [THIEVES OF DRAGEMOR #1]. Ace, 25.99 tp.

Hamilton, Peter F.. THE ARCHIMEDES ENGINE. [EXODUS #1]. Worlds, 29.99 tp.

Hanrahan, Gareth. THE SWORD TRIUMPHANT. [LANDS OF THE FIRSTBORN #3]. Orbit, 25.99 tp.

Haynes, Clarence A. THE GHOSTS OF GWENDOLYN MONTGOMERY. Legacy Lit, 39.00 hc.

Hocking, John C. CONAN IN THE CITY OF THE DEAD. Titan, 23.99 tp.

Huang, Justinian. THE EMPEROR AND THE ENDLESS PALACE. MIRA, 23.99 tp.

Isaac-Henry, Olivia. SORROW SPRING. Harpercollins, 23.99 tp.

Islington, James. THE WILL OF THE MANY. [HIERARCHY #1]. Saga, 32.00 tp.

Kay, Guy Gavriel. WRITTEN ON THE DARK. Viking Canada, 40.00 hc.

Kim, Sophie. THE GOD AND THE GWISIN. [FATE'S THREAD #2]. Del Rey, 25.99 tp.

King, Stephen. NEVER FLINCH. Scribner, 43.00 hc.

Kingsley, Hannah. SOUL HATE. One More Chapter, 22.99 tp.

Kitasei, Yume. THE STARDUST GRAIL. Flatiron, 24.99 tp.

Kristian, Giles. ARTHUR. [ARTHUR #3]. Transworld, 21.99 tp.

Lackey, Mercedes & James Mallory. DELIVERANCE OF DRAGONS. [THE DRAGON PROPHECY #3]. Tor, 34.99 tp.

Lackey, Mercedes. GRYPHON'S VALOR. [KELVREN'S SAGA #2]. DAW, 37.99 hc.

Laird, Tonia. SEVENTHBLADE. ECW, 24.95 tp.

Latham, Mark A. THE LAST VIGILANT. [KINGDOM OF OAK AND STEEL #1]. Orbit, 25.99 tp.

Lee, Hana. FLIGHT OF THE FALLEN. [MAGEBIKE COURIER #2]. Saga, 26.99 tp.

Lima, Ananda. CRAFT: STORIES I WROTE FOR THE DEVIL. Tor.com, 24.99 tp.

Linde, K. A. THE ROBIN ON THE OAK THRONE. [OAK AND HOLLY CYCLE #2]. Red Tower, 43.99 hc. (Sequel to THE WREN IN THE HOLLY LIBRARY.)

Lyons, Jenn. THE SKY ON FIRE. Tor, 27.99 tp.

Malfi, Ronald. SMALL TOWN HORROR. Titan, 24.99 tp.

Mandelo, Lee (ed). AMPLITUDES: STORIES OF QUEER AND TRANS FUTURITY. Erewhon, 24.95 tp.

Marshall, Helen. THE LADY, THE TIGER AND THE GIRL WHO LOVED DEATH. Titan, 24.99 tp.

McGuire, Seanan. TIDAL CREATURES. [ALCHEMICAL JOURNEYS #3]. Tor.com, 27.99 tp.

Miller, Rowena. THE PALACE OF ILLUSIONS. Redhook, 25.99 tp.

Neville, Stuart. BLOOD LIKE MINE. [THE BLOOD TRILOGY #1]. Hell's Hundred, 25.95 tp.

Novik, Naomi. BURIED DEEP AND OTHER STORIES. Del Rey, 25.99 tp.

Older, Malka. THE POTENCY OF UNGOVERNABLE IMPULSES. [INVESTIGATIONS OF MOSSA AND PLEITI #3]. Tor, 40.99 hc.

Olthoff, Melissa. RISE FROM RUIN. Baen, 25.00 tp.

Onyebuchi, Tochi. HARMATTAN SEASON. Tor, 38.99 hc.

Parry, H. G. A FAR BETTER THING. Tor, 25.99 tp.

Paxman, Emily. DEATH ON THE CALDERA. Titan, 24.99 tp.

Penner, J. A FELLOWSHIP OF LIBRARIANS & DRAGONS. [ADENASHIRE #2]. Poisoned Pen, 26.99 tp.

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Ringo, John. NOT THAT KIND OF GOOD GUY. Baen, 37.00 hc.

Ringo, John. BEYOND THE RANGES. Baen, 12.99 pb.

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Taylor, Jodi. KILLING TIME. [TIME POLICE #5]. Headline, 19.99 tp.

Tchaikovsky, Adrian. BEE SPEAKER. [DOGS OF WAR #3]. AdAstra, 39.99 hc.

Tingle, Chuck. BURY YOUR GAYS. Nightfire, 25.99 tp.

Topping, Zac. ROGUE SEQUENCE. [ANDER RADE #1]. Tor, 27.99 tp.

Vee, Julia & Ken Bebel. BLOOD JADE. [PHOENIX HOARD #2]. Tor, 27.99 tp.

Walter, Heather. THE CRIMSON CROWN. [THE CRIMSON CROWN #1]. Del Rey, 27.99 tp.

Warwick, Alexandria. THE SOUTH WIND. [THE FOUR WINDS #3]. Saga, 25.99 tp.

Wexler, Django. EVERYBODY WANTS TO RULE THE WORLD EXCEPT ME. [DARK LORD DAVI #2]. Orbit, 25.99 tp.

White, Frances. VOYAGE OF THE DAMNED. Mira, 24.99 tp.

White, Kiersten. LUCY UNDYING: A DRACULA NOVEL. Del Rey, 24.95 tp.

Wiesebron, Lauren. HOUSE OF FROST AND FEATHERS. Voyager, 24.99 tp.

Wiles, W. P. THE DEAD MAN'S EMPIRE. [LAST BLADE PRIEST #2]. Angry Robot, 24.99 tp.

Wiswell, John. WEARING THE LION. [HERCULES]. DAW, 39.00 hc.

Wurts, Janny. SONG OF THE MYSTERIES. [THE WARS OF LIGHT AND SHADOW #11]. Voyager, 13.50 pb.

Zahn, Timothy. THE ICARUS CHANGELING. [ICARUS SAGA #4]. Baen, 12.99 pb.