

N'APA 276

May 2025



The Official Organ

#276

Next deadline: July 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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INTERMISSION #153

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and all who want to put Putin in the Hague. Try @SFJournalen's newstweets - a bit of ceasefire now, in lack of enthusiasm for Musk's "X". If Trump isn't a Russian agent, he still acts like one! Deaht to typos! Early April 25..

Editorially: Russian agent as Prez?

Trump promised that "the golden age of America begins now". Did he mean alienating all friends and causing a recession with braindead tariffs? (The ugliest word in the English language!) He woos a lose their supply chains, there will be layoffs... *Trump's stupid tariffs* of course invites counter tariffs, hits trade, slows the economy, raises prices. Economics 101.

If Trump is a Russian "asset", a useful idiot, trashing the US economy is precisely what he'd do. Add to this how the US under Trump vote with Russia in the UN, his bad attitude towards the "dictator" Zelensky who "attacked Russia", his many contradictory statements...if he isn't a Russian agent he surely acts like one.

There are speculations that Trump was recruited by the KGB in the 1980s and given the code name "Krasnov". <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/03/13/fact-checking-online-claims-that-donald-trump-was-recruited-by-the-kgb-as-krasnov> Trump has always - whatever he claims - been a lousy businessman. Many of his companies have gone bust. He cheats and doesn't pay bills. Because of this he was in dire straits financially in the 1980s, went to Moscow and somehow go dough and saved whatever businesses he had mismanged.

It may be a feint that he 'restarted' weapons delivery - Biden's stuff - to Ukraine and intelligence sharing. He'll soon retract it. His "ceasefires" are broken by Putin, but agent Krasnov doesn't care. He'll never put any meaningful pressure on Putin. (Threats of tariffs on Russia trade is a joke. The US has microscopic trade with Russia). Ukraine will get weapons and intel from Europe. And we have decided to boost defences with €800Bn (maybe that could buy saome Gripen jets now when F35s are cancelled?). Trump has united Europe - and we have some oomph! The SWIFT system blocking Russian banks is European. The majority of the frozen Ruski \$300Bn is in European banks.

If Trumps fumbling isn't active sabotage, it could just be that he is slipping into dementia. He is after all soon 80 and it may explain his constant lies, his stupid remarks (like that the US has "lent" \$350Bn to Ukraine, the real figure is 1/3, mainly grants) and that he often lacks even the most basic understanding of facts. People slipping into dementia often won't admit to their situation and become dismissive of things around him (or her). Thus they go against even the oldest friends. But Trump can't by himself withdraw from NATO. I understand it would need an act of Congress and I can't imagine that even the most befuddled republicans would be so foolish as to terminate America's most imporant security alliance the last 80 years. But Trump may attempt it. He is totally unpredictable and surrounds himself with idiots. Trump's main negotiator Witkoff doesn't even know Ukraine's geography. His point man Musk banned Smithsonian from advertising the historic bomber *Enola Gay* and stole \$120 000 000 from Swedish taxpayers. (We co-organised a third world farming project with USAid, now stopped and our money in it disappeared). For military planning Trump's halfwits rely on a public domain chat program.

Maybe we should let Trump stumble and fumble and fail and slowly gather strength for an impeachment. I understand the Democrats have a good chance of taking over Congress in the next election in 1.5 years. And then...

We also have Vance and Musk, accomplices in destroying US economy and reputation. Several countries - incl Canada and Portugal - are cancelling the expensive F35 jets and other US military export also faces difficulties (to the worth of hundreds of billions a year). Musk sees his Tesla stocks drop and sooner or later he must withdraw. Vance must be impeached too. Greenlanders shout "Yankee go home!" The mild and reserved Vermonters formed a long line along the road when Vance came there to ski."Traitor! Go to Russia to ski!" a sign read. How could the world's oldest democracy (though women and slaves couldn't vote) get into this mess?

As I write there's continued talk about a possible 30-day ceasefire. Ukraine



They've been reported from other cities, but recently I saw this food delivery robot in Stockholm. Gee!

gruntingly says Yes, Putin claims to adhere but only if Ukraine disarms and turns over certain oblasts. So in reality Putin says Njet. I don't think a ceasefire is possible whatever Trump does or claims. The war goes on, Europe takes up any slack and the Ukrainians continue to cause Putin huge losses, targeting his oil and gas, and so on. Russia's military is grinded down, their workforce shrinks, the reserve funds, the banks, the Rouble sinks. If we think of it as a war of attrition, it's Ukraine winning! The Ukrainians have allies that will replace losses, the Russians have only old Soviet soon empty stores and are limited to their own resources, subject to corruption and inefficiency and sanctions. Ukraine grows stronger and Russia weaker every day.

An important point is that Ukraine will *never* give up their legitimate 1991 borders. How does that work with a ceasefire? I guess that Ukraine counts on either trading sanctions against territory. The Russians will be sunk to third world level if they don't withdraw. Or when Russia is destitute and even weaker than now, the Russian Federation may collapse, and the stolen land will bounce back.

Ukraine's best policy is to resist and fight back. Russia is fragile and will crack! --Ahrvid Engholm

❄ ❄ **Clean Sweep by Golden Lady Skiers** ❄ ❄

In last issue the Nordic skiing World Championships (WC) had just begun, with the world's fastest skier on the women's side, Jonna Sundling, winning her fourth championship gold medal in a row (incl the Olympics). I suspected there was more to come - and it came.

XC (cross country) skiing maybe a small sport but the WC in Trondheim Norway still attracted over 100 000 (!) spectators daily. The Norwegians love it (me too) and could see their own Johannes Høstflot Kläbo grab all 6 (!) of the individual golds on the men's side.

On the women's side, the Swedish ladies made their *clean sweep of the gold medals*. It was their best WC eve, but it began by one of the great stars Linn Svahn sadly crashing while training and unfortunately having a bad concussion. The doctors banned her from further competition. Linn have had so much bad luck with championships, with eg an earlier shoulder injury stopping her. She's probably the only one that could match our cannonball Jonna, but haven't had the chance yet.



A toe! That was Ebba's (right) winning margin after 20 km.

Last WC saw Ebba Andersson grabbing two gold medals (plus two of other metals), but this time she'd be fighting Norway's great

Therese Johaug, making a comeback. And wonder of all wonders, Ebba managed to defend her previous titles. One race won through photo finish by the length of a toe, one won by 1.3 sec. As Ebba also was in the winning relay team she ended with three gold medals (plus one of another metal).

But it's doubtful if she can be called the WC queen, because Jonna Sundling enjoyed the same dividend (had earlier together with Maja Dahlqvist cashed in the team relay gold), *plus* being heroine of an instant relay classic. Emma Ribom on the first leg had a bad day or bad skis or bad stomach or something and lost half a minute. Frida and Ebba followed but held their ground more or less, and Jonna was 37 seconds behind on the last leg. Race lost? Not if you have the world's fastest skier!

Jonna killed 15 seconds of the time on the first 700 metres! After 4 km (out of 7.5 km) she had devoured all the 37 seconds - and the rest was a formality. "A monster feat by Jonna!" the commentators yelled! "She did a Kalla! She's our best skier ever!"

It was decided that the ladies would run the same distances as the men from now on. For instance, the relay race legs were set at 7.5 km (earlier 5 km for the ladies) and the women would for the first time run 50 km (earlier longest was 30 km). This has been called the Blue Riband of skiing or maybe the *White Riband* is more appropriate. Norway's Therese Johaug desperately wanted to grab the historic first 50K gold. Another who



The teammates watch in awe as Jonna Sundling cashes in the gold with a monster relay leg.

*In the 2014 Olympics Charlotte Kalla nullified a 25 sec deficit in 5 km (about equal to 37 sec in 7.5 km), but worth noting is that she met tougher resistance. I still hold her high as our Best Skier. While Sundling now has 8 golds (WC & Olympics) to Kalla's 6, Charlotte had tougher opponents in her days, like Johaug and Björger. This is reflected in her huge collection of silvers and bronze - a total of 22 championship metal pieces, to Jonna's total of 11.

wanted the White Riband was Sweden's Frida Karlsson. Since her breakthrough at age 19 Frida has often been our best women skier (eg winning Tour de Ski, a tough week-long campaign that only Charlotte Kalla earlier had won) but she's been without individual gold medals.

The conditions for the 50K were lousy. There were rain showers. The snow was mushy and slow. After ca 10 km Frida Karlsson was 10 seconds behind. Then she got her act together, caught up with the leaders and took the lead herself - more or less leading the entire last 30K. Johaug was right behind her the final 1 km, but Frida wouldn't let go. She crossed the line with a margin of tens of metres and looked happy as a cat at the fishmonger stand. The first historic White Riband was won by the skier that longed for it the longest, under the most terrible snow conditions - that's a really grand feat.

On top of the ladies successes, the Swedish men's side managed to grab three medals (2 bronze, 1 silver) which is 200% better than last WC. Our men are on their way up and our women are the world's best. In skiing at least.*



Frida Karlsson conquered the White Riband of skiing - the 50K.

🎵 🎵 Eurovision 🎵 🎵

Or more precisely the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC), that music extravaganza uniting Europe almost as much as Putin and Trump. It's that season now. All members of the European Broadcasting Union have selected their entries. (Except some who abstain because of finances, and Russia and Belarus who likes blood, war and death too much. Instead we let Australia join us!) The special Eurovision fandom follow the entries, have pre-parties, watch odds lists, chatter about who will win.

I don't think Sweden will win this year, because we've won recently and many think it would be boring and unfair. But we've come up with an interesting entry, creating a bit of a stir - a song about taking sauna baths, by the Finnish group KAJ. They are from a Swedish speaking community in Ostrobothnia so they sing in Swedish or their local dialect of it, and many actually think it's positive to use something else than English. The title of their song is "Bara Bada Bastu", meaning "Just take a sauna bath".

It's fun, has a catchy melody and the boys in the band are well choreographed. Most of all it's different from what we usually hear in ESC. Sweden usually sends sleek pop, so it's interesting that we broke with that tradition. KAJ actually beat former ESC winner Måns Zelmerlöw in our local selection (Melodifestivalen, known as "Mello"). Måns' entry reminded a bit of "Heroes" he won with in 2015, but it was just a little bit lame - he deserved to lose.

I've seen a lot of reactions to "Bara Bada Bastu" on Youtube and it goes well on top lists and the radio. In fact it leads in the odds (as said, while I think while it'll do well, it won't win). Judge for yourself:

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

The song is in (Ostrobothian dialect of) Swedish, with a few Finnish phrases thrown in. They have no plans for an English version, but in translation it starts:

*The clock strikes, it's time now, all worries will soon disappear
The best cure for body and soul, four wood-panelled walls*



The group KAJ with their Eurovision entry on stage, decorated with a wooden sauna wall, logs, a fire and trees in the background. They are good singers and have a detailed choreography supported by a dance squad. They make an impression!

**I made it sound like Sweden dominated. No way! Norway won the medal race easily, with 13 gold medals, thanks to their men's team - hats off for Kläbo! - and disciplines like nordic combination and ski jumping where Swedes didn't enter.. Our last major ski jumper was Jan Boklöv 35 years ago (but he was important, as inventor of the revolutionary V style). A huge scandal has since emerged around the Norwegian ski jumpers. A whole squad of them have been suspended for manipulating the ski jumping suits, manipulating the aerodynamics to jump longer. Not good.*

*We're gonna have a sauna, sauna, steam up and let go of all stress today
Sauna brothers, we're the ones who glow, hundred degrees, well then
Just having a sauna, sauna, throw water so that the sweat just whirls around
Having a sauna, yeah We're gonna have a sauna, sauna, steam up and let go of all stress today*

"Bastu" is Swedish for sauna, short for "badstuga" ("bathing cabin"). Saunas is a bit of a Nordic tradition, but especially connected to Finland. It is said there are more saunas in Finland than cars. Swedes also like saunas. All public baths and aqua centres have saunas, all decent hotels as well as many private homes. Actually, the market leading sauna heater brand Tylö is Swedish. In my old home my father fixed a little sauna (where my mother later stored demijohns for homemade wine, once of good help during a fannish party!). My dear father sadly passed away when I was young, but one memory I have of him is actually sharing a sauna with him. He was a forester and saunas have always been something for people connected to the woods.



Throwing some water(loo) on the sauna heater...



Finnish ESC fans celebrating KAJ's Mello victory.

I've been checking some of the other entries. Austria is #2 on the odds lists and is a very strong contender: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ieSTNpxvio> It has a good chance of winning and is the type of song that fits ESC. Sweden's "Bara Bada Bastu" should be satisfied with spreading a smile over Europe and should make top 5. Other strong entries are from Estonia, Finland, Ukraine, Australia and Cyprus. But you can check entries yourself on Youtube, by entering Eurovision 2025 + country name. It'll be in Basel, Switzerland, with three shows 13-17 of May. Sweden is anyway guaranteed 12 points from Finland... Yksi, kaksi, kolme, sauna!

When KAJ returned to Finland from Mello, they were met by enthusiastic Eurovision fans who saw their entry as a win for Finland too. Melodifestivalen is like a mini Eurovision Song Contest and is followed a lot abroad. After all Sweden has done well in ESC through the years.

A final observation. The Name KAJ is the initials of the group members: Kevin, Axel and Jacob. It has happened before that a band won that took it's name from the initials of the members: Agnetha, Björn, Benny, Anni-Frid... And Björn incidentally sent KAJ a message on Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DHF5DIPMO7/?hl=sv>

The Vasa Museum

There are two places you shouldn't miss in the Swedish capital: the Old Town - with many spots worth your visit, including the Science Fiction Bookstore - and the Vasa Museum. There you'll find the world's only preserved 17th Century warship, named the Vasa.

Vasa raised anchor from the quays of the Old Town one beautiful August afternoon in 1628. After less than a mile her only partially raised sails picked up a gust of wind - and she rolled over and sank. It was one of the biggest, proudest and most beautiful ships of her era, but the Vasa was of faulty construction. And it was the king's fault.



The Vasa seen from the decorated stern. The museum entrance is towards the bow.

The name "Vasa" means "sheaf" and comes from the king's dynasty name. There's still a corn sheaf

in Sweden's national coat of arms, even if the royal dynasty has changed. In the years following Vasa's disaster the valuable bronze cannons were salvaged with the help of primitive diving bells, and then the ship sank into myth and oblivion. Her resting place was only approximately known.

But in 1956 the freelance marine archeologist Anders Franzen rediscovered her near the edge of the Stockholm harbour. Divers then spent years digging - or rather using a form of water jet - six tunnels under the hull for hoisting cables. Finally, in the morning of April 24 1961 press and TV cameras from all over the world saw the ship slowly break the surface for the first time in 333 years.

The hull was in surprisingly good condition and the masts, the huge collection of ship sculptures, and other pieces that had fallen off, as the iron nails had rusted, were taken care of. It formed what has been described as the world's largest jigsaw puzzle. But everything was in reasonable shape as the woodworms don't like the brackish waters of the Baltic Sea.

The ship spent the next 27 years in the temporary Vasa Wharf, all the time receiving sprays of polyethylene glycol to replace the water in the cells of the blackened oakwood. If the water wasn't replaced the wood would crack and crumble as it dried. Meanwhile piece after piece of the puzzle was completed. The Vasa was heavily decorated with painted wooden sculptures, the Facebook or Youtube of its time boasting: *Look how mighty I am, beware!* Most paint had through the centuries dissolved from the oakwood, but scientists could reconstruct the luminous splendor of Vasa from remaining paint traces, and that is shown on ship models in the museum.

The ship was moved to the new Vasa Museum in 1988 and is restored up to the bottom half of the masts. The roof of the museum has masts showing how high up in the air the original masts would reach. To build a museum that allowed the complete rig indoors would have been prohibitively expensive. Today the caretakers are busy strengthening the hull which is sagging - not much, but enough to worry - from its own weight as the treated oak is heavier than originally.

After you have paid your ca €20 (varies with the season) and taken a few steps forward, you're met with a mindblowing sight! An entire ship, several hundred years old fills your field of view! It's like being brought there by a time machine.

On several floors around the ship are related displays: models of the Vasa, a reconstruction of the gun deck and the captain's cabin, tools found onboard, mannequins of what some of the people onboard looked like, cannon balls, coins, things around the history Vasa and the society and politics of that time, a museum shop, and other things related to the ship. There's a little movie theatre showing a film about Vasa, alternating between being shown in Swedish and English. Here's one of many films about the Vasa from Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A62y7jeX-dM> (I don't think it's the museum's film). More films can easily be found.

Fully manned the ship would have a crew of about 450 sailors and soldiers, but she had much less onboard on the fateful maiden voyage. The rest would be picked up further out in the archipelago.

"Only" around 30 people went under with the ship, including some women as families of sailors were allowed on board on the first leg of the intended voyage. But most

survived. Some could swim the 120 metres to the nearest shore, others clinged to the mast tops that stood up over the surface (the depth she sank at was 32 metres and the ship was more than 50 metres tall) and small boats rushed to the rescue.

For the thousands of Stockholmers watching the king's latest "marvel" capsize it must have felt like - for a later audience - seeing the space shuttle Challenger explode!

In the early 16th Century the conflict between protestants and catholics reached its peak with the devastating Thirty Years War (1618-48) in Germany - at the time a mosaic of smaller states. The Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus decided to intervene in 1630 to help the protestants (Sweden had



What the ship would look like with the original paint (from a model).

broken with Rome in 1523 and gone protestant). The king Gustavus Adolphus spent the years before this ordering new ships to be built and reforming the army.

The Swedish 17th century army, also consisting of troops from allied German states and Finland (the Finnish *hakkapeliitta* - word means approximately "Slash them!" - cavalry was famous), was rather successful. Gustavus Adolphus has been called "the father of modern warfare" - "modern" up to the Napoleonic wars one must presume - using smaller units that could outmanoeuvre opponents and more mobile field artillery that could follow with the infantry. Anyway, it was the king who had specified that the *Vasa* must have two gun decks.

The evil Danes had just built a two gun-deck ship, you see, and he didn't want to be left behind.

Master shipbuilder was Dutchman Henrik Hybertsson and he had already laid the keel when Gustavus Adolphus demanded the second gun deck. Doubling the gun decks made the ship very top heavy. This could have been fixed with extra ballast, but *Vasa* became too narrow to have room for it.

The fleet admiral Fleming ordered a test while *Vasa* was being outfitted and lay at the quay, having 30 men running back and forth on the deck. It made the *Vasa* heel dangerously and the test had to be stopped. Still, the king wanted his ship being made ready. He was abroad, enjoying a little war in Poland, and sent his commands by dispatches. That he wasn't at home to personally become aware of the problems certainly contributed to the catastrophe and no one dared to step forth to counter royal commandments.

After the disaster the board of investigation interrogated all involved (Hybertsson had died in 1627 before the ship was finished, and his widow took over the project) but no one was found guilty, no one was punished. Everyone knew the king was behind *Vasa* being unseaworthy. (Gustavus Adolphus by the way fell in the battle of Lützen in 1632 so later questions about his responsibility evaporated. But his armies continued fighting under loyal and often successful commanders, reaching as far south as to Prague which the Swedes merrily looted.) *Vasa* was the first of a series of five similar ships ordered and her undoing had at least the good consequence that the stability of the other four ships was fixed.

Being a sailor in those days was a tough job, remaining roughly the same up to the days of Lord Nelson. The *Vasa* has given us a glimpse into that world: you were sleeping in cramped quarters between the guns making it easy for disease to spread, in battle you'd face wooden splinter from flying cannonballs cutting down men, you could expect harsh punishments by the ship's officers for any offence and expect eating lousy food giving you scurvy if you were on a longer trip. Staple food was bread and beer, many litres of it. Voyages on the Baltic Sea were too short for scurvy, but Sweden also sent Atlantic-crossing supply ships to her short-lived Delaware colony New Sweden and later traders to East Asia.

Vasa was doomed from the beginning. Had you been able to squeeze more stabilising ballast into her, the gunports would have been too close to the water, but maritime experts believe she would have had poor sailing characteristics. This expensive and embarrassing failure did however result in something good! Thanks to the ship being sunk and then raised again Stockholm enjoys the most popular and magnificent museum in Scandinavia, and historians got a treasure of knowledge about 17th Century shipbuilding and maritime life.

Facts - Museum and Ship:

Address 14 Galärvarvsvägen, on Djurgården Island east of central Stockholm, you can take tram route 7 there.

Open Monday to Sunday 10-17, Wednesdays 10-20.

Admission Oct-Apr SEK 195 (ca €18), May-Sep (ca €21), up to and including 18 years it's free.

Vasa was named after the king's dynasty.

Launched to be fitted 1627, sank on maiden voyage 1628

Displacement 1210 tonnes.

Sparred length 69 metres.

Beam 11.7 metres.



The Vasa Museum from the outside, with masts showing how high up the original masts would reach.

Height (from keel) 52.5 metres.
Draft 4.8 metres.
Sail area 1 275 m²
Crew 145 sailors, 300 soldiers.
Armament 64 bronze cannons
 48 24-pounders
 8 3-pounders
 2 1-pounders

(The numbers above makes it 58 guns, but the figure be uncertain since most guns were salvaged the years after sinking and we don't know how many. It is documented that Vasa was *intended* for 64 guns, some were perhaps held back in a vain attempt to deal with the stability issue.)



In 2014 a replica of one of Vasa's guns was tested, shooting at a replica of her hull. The iron ball reached 350 m/s - just over the speed of sound, easily penetrating the hull (lower left) resulting in a deadly spray of wooden splinters inside. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpNS0JpnUNY>

The Short Story Masters Strike Again

The illustrious Short Story Masters Society has been covered in this illustrious publication earlier. March 14 it had it's yearly business meeting, in Kjell Genberg's place in Bromma. But I don't really know nowadays what to make of the group. Only two of the original members are left (Kjell and Ulf D, the latter is near retiring) and some of the new members are people I don't know. Anyway, the meeting eg re-elected Ulf Broberg as chairman, reported on economics (those are very modest) and activities 2024 (eg some publications and taking part in several meetings, the biggest last spring in Uppsala as reported here) and decided about a summer meeting and a possible excursion to the crime fiction library in Eskilstuna. Eight participated and we finished with eating hot dogs and strawberry icecream. In the chat afterwards I learned that Kjell actually knew sf author and oldfan Dénis Lindbohm - who was one of my best friends in the sf world. He also gave me an academic study of his wild west paperback series about Ben Hogan, a book that looked very impressive! (a report in nextish, this is already too long.) Just as I came back from the meeting early evening I found I had sold yet another story to *Kvällsstunden*, the nostalgic weekly, one of few taking short stories today. It may be my 151st published short story - estimated, I haven't kept count.

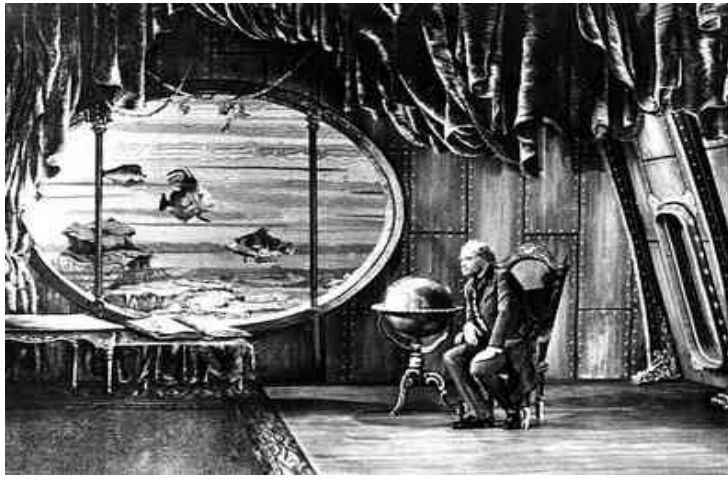


The Short Story Masters in front of Kjell's (in armchair) bursting bookshelves. I took it as a selfie so I could be in it too.

History Corner

In last issue we covered the history of Czechoslovakian fanzines. Here's another article with more details about their fandom generally: <https://www.forumhistoriae.sk/sites/default/files/03-antonin-k-k-kudlac-czech-sci-fi-fanzines-in-the-era-of-late-socialism-and-early-post-socialism.pdf>

We learn there was a Jules Verne Club formed there in 1969, which however suffered from a "rapid demise". Otherwise fandom as such began - and so did fanzines - in the late 1970s. Not much skiffy was published but the genre was "tolerated". The government sponsored Union of Czechoslovak Writers even had a "Commission for Science Fiction Literature" (1980-1987). After the Velvet Revolution in 1989 a "Syndicate of Fantastic Literature Authors" was formed but much didn't come out of it (alas, I remember - as covered here earlier - my feeble attempt at a Swedish SF Writers society...not much happened). An "Association of Fans of Science Fiction" formed in 1990 but "it rapidly changed into a publication and distribution company and precursor of the 'professionalisation'



From a Jules Verne film by Czech director Karl Zeman.

of fantastic literature." We also read:

Jaroslav Olša Jr /who we met in last issue/ at the end of the 1980s compiled an extensive bibliography of Czech and Slovak SF fanzines, wrote in an overview study originally published in the magazine *Nemesis* (11-12/1996, 1/1997) that by 1990 approximately 60 fanzines with a total of around 400 individual issues had been published. (Zdeněk Rampas adds the claim that "in my inventory, there are over 550 published issues of periodical fanzines and one-off 'book publications' by 1989"). There is extensive material available for researchers at the website of the collector Karel Dvořák (<http://fanziny.4fan.cz>), containing digitised content from some of the SF fanzines as well as a list of them. When summing up the characteristics of Czech SF fanzines in a contemporary encyclopaedia on national samizdat

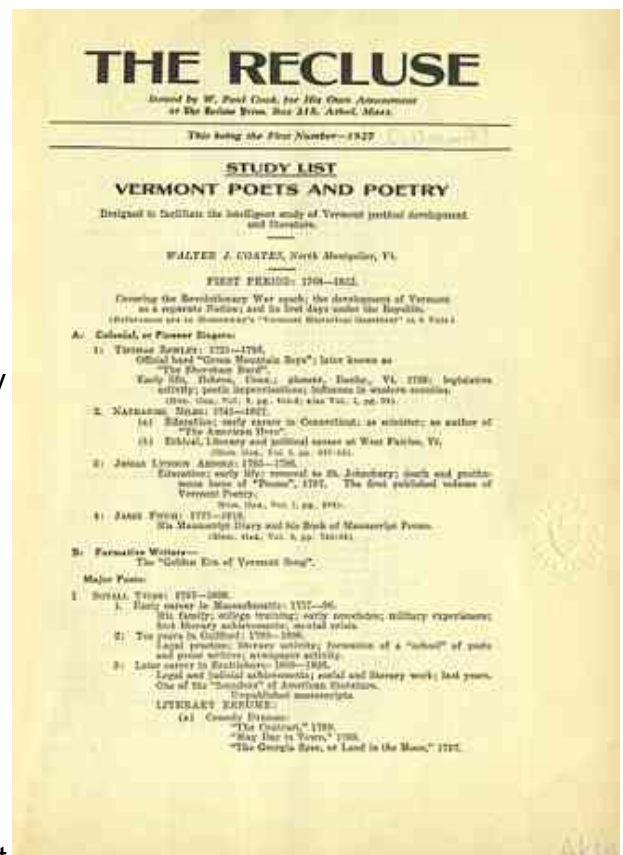
writings, Zdeněk Rampas wrote that Czechoslovak fans, at least in some cases, published "authentic samizdats" whose content may have been "against the regime". According to him, the perceived lack of popular literature and the absence of officially published specialist magazines led to the creation of fanzines, which in itself became a "political act". At the same time, he acknowledges that the regime might deliberately have refrained from applying greater pressure here in order to "allow young people to ventilate their creative energy". Nevertheless, it was never completely free from the risk of punishment. In the introduction to the same publication, Michal Přibáň states that SF fandom in the 1980s had acquired the status of an "unreliable, though on the whole tolerated part of literary life." Although fantastic literature was also published officially, much of it was still outside the direct control of state power organs. I believe that these fandom publishing activities fall into a kind of "grey zone" or "tolerated culture" (Přibáň also writes about a "samizdat with a stamp"), whose creators appeared from the outside to be loyal, but internally they certainly were not. Therefore, members of this subculture cannot be considered to be warriors against the regime. Other subcultures at the time operated in a similar manner; for example, in the 1980s, computer fans expanded their activities to include the publication of fanzines solely as part of Svazarm; thus, "they were not in direct opposition to the regime, though neither were they supporting it."

We've been writing a lot about fanzines lately. I think two questions need to be answered: Can sf fandom lay claims on having *invented* the concept of fanzines? And: How did it start? Fancyclopedia https://fancyclopedia.org/What_Was_the_First_Fanzine%3F isn't sure what the first fanzine was. Here're the candidates for how it started:

The Recluse - a oneshot dealing with Vermont poetry, but also HP Lovecraft, by W Paul Cook within the "ajay tradition", ie the mundane APAs (I guess it would be the National APA founded in 1876, <https://amateurpress.org/>). It's available here <https://archive.org/details/the-recluse-1-1927> Having had a look, it doesn't feel like a fanzine to me. In every detail the editor tries to mimic a professional magazine and while HPL takes up a big chunk of it, it's slanted towards poetry, not fantastic literature.

Cosmic Stories, a supposedly hectographed publication by Jerry Siegel (of Superman fame) from 1929 and "it was advertised in the classified section of Science Wonder Stories". The problem is nobody have seen it (or the Wonder Stories ad!). We're not even sure if it was made by carbon copying instead? Sam Moskowitz mentions it in *The Immortal Storm*, 1945, placing it among the "rarest" publications - so rare SaM never saw it. It's also mentioned in Pavlat/Evans fanzine index (1955). Nobody has seen it, info is shaky. On these grounds I'll write it off.

The Comet from May 1930, ed Ray Palmer, does exist and has traditionally been seen as the first fanzine <https://fanac.org/fanzines/Comet/index.html> What can be said against it, is that it almost exclusively prints news about what was called the Science Correspondence Club. However, "amateur science" was at the time seen as equal to sf (thanks to Gernsback who saw sf as a tool to teach



Start of the ToC of *The Recluse*, 1927 (the Table of Contents continues for several pages). It doesn't seem like a fanzine for Yours Truly.

The National Amateur.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE NATIONAL AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION

Vol. XLVII

WEST PARK (CLEVELAND), OHIO, JANUARY, 1922

No. 2

MIRRORS OF AMATEURDOM

No. 1

Warren J. Brodie

THE attorney for the plaintiff in the personal injury case between "Mr. Brodie" and the defendant, "The National Amateur Press Association," was asked by the jury where you were when your automobile struck my client.

"I was leaving my home, the University Club," answered the witness.

"And where were you going?"

"To the Mayfield Country Club to play golf."

The attorney turned to the juror.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we have here a clubhouse."

And the jury later brought in a verdict unfavorable to Mr. Brodie, who, is, of course, our own Warren J. Brodie.

This story is told here to picture the Brodie of today—Brodie, the clubhouse. The writer does not vouch for the truthfulness of the story. It was told by a Cleveland judge, a fellow resident of Brodie's at the University Club.

The tale serves well to illustrate why the man once called the "Prince of Amateurs," is no longer active in the National Amateur Press Association.

For Brodie, the clubhouse, is in society. The game of golf has largely replaced Amateur Journalism as his favorite hobby.

Buy and Business

Before a paper-littered desk in an Arcade office, high above Euclid Avenue, Cleveland's busiest street, Brodie holds forth from 10 A. M. to 4 P. M. in winter—golf takes him away from his desk much earlier in summer.

Most active appearing, blue suits, with white stripes, tan low shoes, high white collar, and mild colored tie. That's Brodie. His once jet black hair has turned to iron gray. In summer months he carries a crop of tan—golf again.

"You know," he once said, while the golf season was on, "I've been on the links every day this week, and I may even play tomorrow, but my favorite club has been turned out to the window for the day. But there are other places."

A conversation with Brodie in his office is interrupted many times by the soft-shod woman secretary and many assistants who bring official-looking papers to the man at the desk. Buy all the time, he says.



WARREN J. BRODIE

Brodie, however, is never too busy to talk Amateurism.

"What Amateur Journalism needs," he says, "is for someone to manufacture a cheap selling printing press. Then things will boom."

"Why lack in the '40's—and here the 'Hundred Amateurs' hailed to reach into a drawer of his desk and brought forth a green-bound book—'we received many papers every day. This book, Harrison's Career,' tells all about it. Did you ever read Tommy Harrison's history? It's the best ever published."

"No, Amateur Journalism isn't the same anymore."

"Did you know about The Shilalah?"

This question ended with a chuckle and a peculiar glint in the eye of Brodie.

"Fanny, isn't it. They never found out who published The Shilalah. Ha! Ha!"

For years the identity of The Shilalah publisher was the mystery of the hour in Amateur Journalism. Not a few of the older members to this day hold that the little green-

(Continued on page 32)

Bureau of Critics Comment on Late Amateur Papers

During a brief participation on the Bureau of Critics last year, the "Late" story in the above-mentioned appreciation of Mr. Howard P. Lovecraft's work, designed to question as to their value not only to amateur, but through whatever channel they fare in professional literature.

Stories of terror have been, since the days of the dawn to Ambrose Bierce and Thomas Burke, purely the medium of an exploitation of the little whip, or so to speak, the touch of salt on the open wound at the close of the tale. Mr. Lovecraft applies no such an irritant.

In the "Facts Concerning the Late Arthur Jermyn," published in the March and June numbers of Mr. Lovecraft's "The Wolfen," we have what may well be called a masterpiece in handling the subtle but hair-raising material. "Late" begins the writer, "the a hideous behind what we know of it peer delirious hints of truth which make it sometimes a thousand-fold more hideous." And here, in the very first sentence at the very beginning of his masterpiece but malign ingenuity, Mr. Lovecraft conjures up an unwholly atmosphere; the wind of "unguarded horror" slowly revolves until with something akin to the Shakespearean activity of Macbeth, his characters, pure fiction or not, but created actually endowed to obey the misanthropic impulse of the gods of hashish, opium and maniacs, sustain and complete their doom to the darkness and inevitable end. One feels no theatrically. Mr. Lovecraft's "Shilalah" well deserves the name of that. Nightmares turbulent and all-embracing there is, and not unlike those dreams that betake themselves to mortals when the "good things of day begin to droop and drowse," their simplicity is their genius, and the utter absence

(Continued on page 32)

science) and this club was seen as a part of fandom. In my opinion *The Comet* has a strong claim.

The Planet, July 1930, was the organ of what is widely recognised as the first not-just-correspondence sf club. If you want to send *The Comet* on a hyperbolic trajectory away from the First Fanzine system, *The Planet* goes into orbit and ticks all the boxes.

With two 1930-publications we don't have to bother about *The Time Traveller* from 1932 or *The Meteor* from 1931. But read the Fancyclopedia article and decide for yourself!

As an avid fanzine editor myself, I've always tried to promote this fannish artform. In the 1990s I wrote a "FAQ on fanzine publishing" (in Swedish "FAQ om fanzineutgivning") that you find here. http://old.fib.se/fib_1/fan_faq.html. It was quite ambitious covering: history, production, contents, terminology, why publish fanzines, listing 10+ Swedish fanzines, literature. I had seen how the art of fanzines rapidly lost ground throughout the 1990s (e g many faneds had gafiated in dismay over the Hariu feuding) and wanted to spread inspiration. It didn't help much. Only one Swedish fanzine is now left on paper, and only about two exists electronically (of which this publication is one). The postal service has raised postage to make it virtually impossible to mail fanzines. In my Frequently Asked Questions (=FAQ) I go into three factors unique for fanzines from sf fandom, that also points towards fandom having the right to claim being the innovator of fanzines:

1. **Economy.** Fanzines are published under very modest economic conditions. Editors don't make money, usually they lose money as fanzines are often given away for free. This is often not the case with eg punk or comics fanzines. Some of them costs a lot! And an interest group with hefty membership fees can't make a claim for a modest economy should they have a publication. There's a term for better off fanzine-like publications: semi-prozines.

2. **Style.** Fanzines develop their own unique style. Starting with the prose in fanzines we find a personal style, puns, odd perspectives, experiments, etc. The layout and illustrations often has a life of it's own - some of it comes from the origins in mimeographing. You rarely find cartoons like those by Bill Rotsler outside the sf fanzines. He was often brilliant though it took him a full 10 seconds to draw it. Basically, fanzines don't look at professional magazines and try to copy them. One observation is that visual differences between fanzines and professional magazines became smaller when computers took over layout work. The programs

you use have some built in assumptions that lead the work.

3. **Interactivity.** Fanzines engage the readers. It's quite common that the readers are personal friends of the editor. They write LoCs, a debate ensues, the editor contact readers for material, fanzines also interact with each other. Some level of interactivity exists among other publications too, but here it runs deeper.

OO of NationalAPA, 1922. Note eg Bureau of Critics. NAPA set up contacts and you could advertise your projects, but it didn't collate member publications into mailings.

AMATEUR PRESS ELECTS OFFICERS

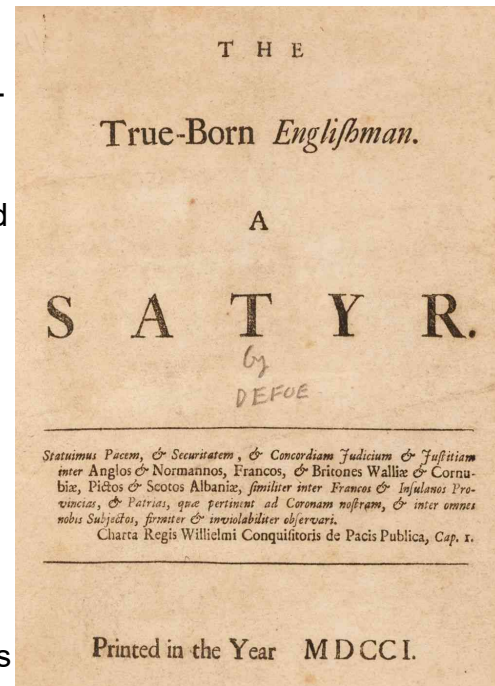
J. Fuller Spoerri was elected chairman of the board of directors of the United Amateur Press Association at the final meeting of the convention yesterday.

Other officers elected are Mrs. Ida C. Haughton, Columbus, Ohio, president; Frank B. Long, Jr., New York City, first vice president; Eleanor R. North, State College, Pa., second vice president; Howard Phillips Lovecraft, Providence, R. I., official editor; Grace M. Bromley, Washington, D. C., manuscript manager; H. R. Conover, Conardale, Ohio, laureate editor; Myrta A. Little, Westville, N. H., historian.

State College, Pa., was chosen as the seat of the next annual convention.

Mrs. Anne Tillery Renshaw, of Washington, and Paul J. Campbell, of Ridgefarm, Ill., were elected to the board of directors. Henry Louis Mencken, literary critic and editor of the *Smart Set*, was voted an honorary membership in the association.

Washington Herald reports from United APA, the other active mundane APA, 1921. Lovecraft was official editor! UAPA was more livey and wilder than NAPA (HPL was around there too). The internal UAPA feuds reminds of of fandom...



Pamphlet by Daniel Defoe from 1701

These are key points for sf fandom's fanzine tradition. I'm not mentioning that fandom's fanzines often deal with science fiction, because there are fanzines that hardly even mention science fiction at all. And all that in the fanzine tradition - separated from amateur publishing in general - comes directly from sf fandom.

We had amateur publications before. When censorship in practice was disbanded in England in the early 18th Century a wild undergrowth of publications emerged, everything from inflammatory, naughty or political pamphlets to regular newspapers. It usually came from those well off who could afford paper and printing. Daniel Defoe of Robinson Crusoe fame was a very active self-publisher, for instance. (Sweden got a similar scene after her Freedom of the Press act in 1766.) This English wild and free press of course also spread to the North American colonies. Ben Franklin was one taking advantage of this.

In the 19th Century as public schooling spread and communications improved we had amateur press in the form of publications for different organisations or interests, school magazines (HG Wells edited one, running an early version of or inspiration for his *The Time Machine*), there were sports publications and pure hobbyists. The

National APA site (see above) writes that publishing "was no new hobby. It had, since the 1840's, spread over the entire country. There were dozens of more or less enduring local organisations devoted to its purpose" (ie to amateur journalism). NAPA was formed around 1876. Around 1895 United APA popped up, an organisation with hot-headed youngsters soon engaged in merry feuding in a manner later recognisable in sf fandom: <https://thefossils.org/horvat/aj/organizations/uapa.htm>

During his /1899 elected UAPA president DeHayn/ administration a curious situation arose, many unusual actions were taken, all leading up to the first of those divisions which mark the record of this Association. Bitter rivalry arose between the members of the local clubs of New Jersey and New York. This led up to a series of charges being brought against Harry M. Konwiser, of Newark, NJ, editor of the Bomb. A formal trial was held before the Board of Directors, each side being represented by counsel. The decision was evidently based upon partisan lines, as Ex-President Bresnahan of New York voted for acquittal, and Charles W Heins and Edwin Hadley Smith of New Jersey for conviction. The friends of Konwiser at once set out to reverse the situation and to reinstate him. This led to a bewildering series of resignations, suspensions and removals from office, upon a variety of grounds, many of these charges not being recognized, and two sets of officers acting simultaneously. Secretary Thomas McKee, of Butler, Pa, first suspended Heins, one of the Directors, for non-payment of dues. President DeHayn insisted that Heins be restored to membership. McKee retaliated by suspending President DeHayn from membership for non-payment of dues, and recognized the Vice-President, Guy N Phillips, of Sioux City, Iowa, editor of the Westerner, as President.

Charges were preferred against McKee, and President DeHayn suspended him from office, pending the action of the Directors. McKee was tried before a reorganized Board of Directors and found guilty, and DeHayn appointed J William Townsend, of Long Island City, editor of the United Amateur, Secretary. Townsend's paper, although having that name, was not the official organ, but President DeHayn removed the Little Star, of Mankato, Minn, as the official organ because it refused to recognize him as President, and appointed Townsend's paper in its stead. Thus practically two organizations existed, each claiming to be the United Amateur Press Association.

Your head may be spinning and your eyes should be rolling at this point...

Up to 1886 when the Linotype appeared, all printing relied on what we call a letterpress, ie letters in the form of lumps of lead, manually put in a flat box in the right order. But just before the linotype we saw the first methods for simpler and faster office printing, in the form of the mimeograph. Thomas Alva Edison invented it as a flatbed apparatus in 1876, the company AB Dick that cooperated with Edison later added a drum. To this we also had the hectograph.

The hectograph, also known as a jellygraph, is so simple: just jelly, glycerine and aniline ink, the latter a product of the industrial revolution. Aniline was extracted from the tar left when coal was gasified for the street lamps. It has been noted that the hectograph was a favourite gadget for the early communists, who used it extensively to spread their evil gospel in Tsarist Russia.

That the typewriter was getting better step by step in the late 1800s also helped self-publishing. Text in longhand takes longer to create and it's more difficult to read.



Our own Defoe, Olof von Dahlin, with "The Story of the Horse" (1740), a satire where the history of Sweden is seen as the career of a horse.



The last of the office printing methods to come before Xerox* was the spirit duplicator, arriving as late as 1923. The dittograph as it's often called became common in schools.

Amateur or self-publishing has long been a thing for cultural circles. The French literature scene in the early 20th Century included many literary magazines, often called "little magazines". Alfred Jarry of 'pataphysics fame published his own magazines, and so did the dadaists, the Italian Futurists (despite the promising name for this art movement, they were a rowdy bunch!), and the US "beat generation" published their poems via mimeograph after WWII. Historians talk about the "mimeo revolution" of the 1950-60s (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mimeo_Revolution) when avant garde poets discovered this machine, that random had cranked for a couple of decades already:

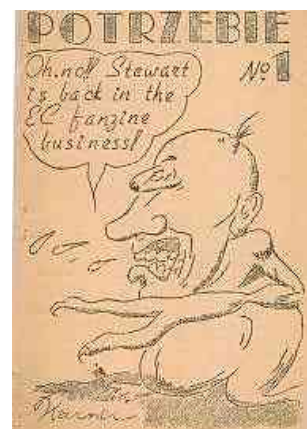
A "mimeo revolution" poetry mag, *The Floating Bear*, 1961.

poets, writers and artists ignored by mainstream magazines. Their emphasis was often (but not always) on poetry, including work by the Black Mountain poets, the poets of the Beat Generation, the New York School, and the San Francisco Renaissance, as well as such experimental genres as Concrete Poetry... Significant Mimeo Revolution magazines and presses include 7 Flowers Press, Angel Hair, Beatitude, Big Table, "C" Press, Duende, Floating Bear, Fuck You, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, Little Caesar, Ole', Toothpaste, White Rabbit Press, Wormwood Review and Yugen

Presses associated with the Mimeo Revolution often published experimental and underground work, and were important venues for

More in *From a Secret Location - Poetry, Little Mags, Small Presses and Transient Documents from the Mimeo Era and Beyond* <https://fromasecretlocation.com/pre-face/> You'd like to HOWL to them: Look, those starry-eyed sf fans did this first!

But fanzine movement didn't come from or spread with the Ginsbergs or Keuracs. Our fanzine fans slipped into comics, to begin with. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fanzine> writes:



Ted White had mimeographed a four-page pamphlet about Superman.. and James Vincent Taurasi Sr issued the short-lived *Fantasy Comics*. In 1953, Bhub Stewart published *The EC Fan Bulletin*, which launched EC fandom of imitative EC fanzines. A few months later, Stewart, White, and Larry Stark produced *Potrzenie*, planned as a literary journal of critical commentary about EC by Stark. Among the wave of EC fanzines that followed, the best-known was Ron Parker's *Hoo-Hah!*.

All these were from regular sf fandom. Fans also began music fanzines:

By the mid-1960s, several fans active in science fiction and comics fandom recognized a shared interest in rock music, and the rock fanzine was born. Paul Williams and Greg Shaw were two such SF-fans turned rock zine editors. Williams' *Crawdaddy!* (1966) and Shaw's two California-based zines, *Mojo Navigator* (full title, "Mojo-Navigator Rock and Roll News") (1966) and *Who Put the Bomp* (1970) are among the most important early rock fanzines.

Comics fanzine, but it came from sf fandom!

And of course regular sf fans also gave birth to the Star Trek fanzines:

Media fanzines were originally merely a subgenre of SF fanzines, written by science fiction fans already familiar with apazines. The first media fanzine was a Star Trek fan publication called *Spockanalia*, published in September 1967 by members of the Lunarians. They hoped that fanzines such as *Spockanalia* would be recognized by the broader science-fiction fan community in traditional ways, such as a Hugo Award for Best Fanzine. All five of its issues were published while the show was still on the air, and included letters from DC Fontana, Gene Roddenberry, and most of the cast members, and an article by future Hugo and Nebula winner Lois McMaster Bujold. Many other Star Trek 'zines followed, then slowly zines appeared for other media sources, such as *Starsky and Hutch*, *Man from UNCLE* and *Blake's 7*.

Sf fandom *invented* the fanzine - the economically limited interactive publication with its own style - and then took it into comics, into music, into Star Trek, and it spread from there.

It has been claimed there are a lot of football (soccer to some) fanzines. This far I haven't seen evidence that sf fans were also responsible for those...

The future for fanzines looks bleak, unfortunately. It may be better in the US and UK but over here in the cold north hardly any fanzines come, even as PDFs((except that stubborn *Intermission...*) In last issue I reported from mailing procedures (going to Denmark, having a party) for the SFF APA, now

* Invented by Swedish-American Chester Carlson, getting a patent in 1942.

dead. But I have a suggestion:

Revive SFF as a convention APA (or call it something else than SFF). On a convention you can hand out mailings for free! It would be good if such a thing had official support by Swecon (our nat'l con). We announce that anyone wanting to participate should make a specific number of copies of a publication (say 50 or 100) and deliver it at the convention on Friday. Contributions are then collated and distributed on Saturday. First of all to those contributing, and left over copies to those who show most interest in fanzines. There is a system for this for the Worldcons (Worldcon Organisation Of Fanneds, WOOF) and we could introduce it here. To my Swedish readers, *would you be interested in participating?*

Semitjov - Dreams of a Better World

Intermission has several times covered the Swedish (of Russian origin) space journalist and artist Eugen Semitjov, a guy I happened to know quite well, not because my long-time interest in space - though that counts too - but primarily because we were both working for the popular science/tech magazine *Teknikmagasinet* in the 1980s. I wrote articles, edited the small news pages, fixed manuscripts, ran errands etc, and Eugen was columnist in every issue.

He delivered his manuscripts to me, I checked them over (they were perfect!) and then he'd sit down in a corner and talk about his work, his life, space, sometimes for a couple of hours. But somehow this giant in popular science seems to be a little forgotten today, despite being given our highest accolade of journalism ("The Grand Prize of Journalism", 1972).

So a documentary to remind the populace of the remarkable Eugen Semitjov is welcome!

Here the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fe0sj-2xWgs>

I could bring a couple of guest to the preview, one had to cancel on short notice, but Martin Kristenson came along to the classic Scandia cinema. The lobby was full of people as I arrived, including Eugen's grandchildren (whom I don't know, but they were later pointed out from stage). I also bumped into Magnus from the Short Film Festival and saw a couple from the Comics Association. Eugen was a prominent comics creator in the 1950s. Soda pops were available and we got a small goodie bag with snacks. Officially this preview was a part of the Monsters of Film festival for sf, fantasy and horror flicks. People from the festival and director Micke Engström himself said a few intro words before "Semitjov - Dreams of a better word" began. (They also took the stage after the film). Here is an interview with him in English: <https://www.kapownews.com/single-post/premiere-of-semitjov-with-director-micke-engstr%C3%B6m-in-stockholm-sweden> And in the national Culture News program in Swedish: <https://www.svt.se/kultur/har-ar-varens-svenska-filmpremiarer-2025> A longer discussion about the film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OyslmTWa9g>

Micke Engström, the director for whom the film was a project of passion, is a well-known name among filmmakers. From the sideline I saw some of his earliest short films at the yearly short-film festival (he won that festival's main award in 1989) and among later work we have his documentary about Hans Arnold, the horror artist who eg earned world-wide reputation doing the remarkable cover to ABBA's Greatest Hits album.

Eugen was also an artist. But on top of this also author, space expert and journalist, photographer and above all the Great Communicator of the emerging Space Age. As son of a family fleeing from the chaos in revolutionary Russia, he spoke Russian and had easier access to Russian space circles, though he probably spent more time in Florida, USA, where he rubbed elbows with NASA's people.

The documentary about Eugen - and his family, with



Presentation before screening, director Engström talking.



Crowd to the preview of the Semitjov documentary.

a father and a brother both having major successes - has taken Engström at least three years to produce. We got in touch rather early in the process. As you know, I combed the newspaper archives of the Royal Library a few years ago, saving thousands of articles about science fiction, space, futuristic things and people connected to this. I probably had about 100 articles by and about Eugen Semitjov and I let Micke have my entire Semitjov inventory. I saw a lot of it used in the film, though headlines and articles flashed by rather fast. I also shared my memories of Eugen (and was given thanks in the end credits).



Computer depiction of a Semitjov spaceship.

"Semitjov - Dreams of a Better World" is a remarkable biography, graphically very advanced with cutting edge computer animation. Since you can't go out in space and shoot you must visualise it by other means. But it's also remarkable through the storytelling, which borders the poetic, almost philosophical. We start with the family Semitjov fleeing from the Russian revolution in 1923 (a few years after 1917, it was a messy affair with a civil war and things) through Konstantinopel, Prague and for some reason ending up in Stockholm. They had no means, all father Vladimir had was an address to a Russian actress in Stockholm. She kindly directed him to the famous film director Mauritz Stiller which landed him a job as a stage worker.

But this job was seasonal and post-season, as son Eugen was born, the family was once again without means. Vladimir knew how to swing a pen and asked a newspaper if they needed material. "But I write in Russian", he said. "Don't worry, I'll translate it," the editor said. Vladimir continued to write and write and write, with the drawback he always had to



Bertil Falk: "Semitjovs gave us three great writers!" (Pic warped due to bad camera angle.)

share the income with someone who translated.

But the family survived. Vladimir had to write much - articles, reports, short stories. Journalist and sf historian Bertil Falk notes (fortunately Micke was able to interview Bertil before he passed away in 2023):

"Vladimir Semitjov was the leading Swedish sf author in the 1920s and 1930s. He who granted the Semitjovs a visa to Sweden should be commended. It resulted in three great authors who have contributed a lot to us."



There was an Allan Kämpe comic book.



Semitjov from a TV show, unknown which, probably early to mid 1960s.

That Eugen would be one we already know. His brother Volodja became

a journalist (eg reporting from Warsaw in early WWII when the Germans attacked) and film script writer, responsible for 40 movies. Volodja scripted "One Summer of Happiness" (1951), the outrageous love story claimed to be Sweden's biggest film export ever. The explanation is that it showed Ulla Jacobsson nude from behind and one of her breasts for a second. Moviegoers lined up around the block for this "hard core porn" and Sweden undeservingly acquired the reputation of a land of wild sex.

Eugen got space into his blood through father Vladimir, who beginning in Russia had had a



Anders Palm, disciple of Eugen, made "Wonders of Technology" fact comics.

long-time interest in astronomy. Vladimir would feed his son space sagas as good night stories and those stuck. Vladimir unfortunately passed away (from complications from an ulcers operation) when Eugen was about 16 years old, but the son had seen what the father worked with. So he decided to try the newspapers and magazines himself. It helped that he had huge natural talents as an artist. He became a staff artist of *Jules Verne Magasinet*, eg doing the covers for the issues following the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. *JVM* also printed some pages of comics, eg Superman by Siegel/Shuster and Alex Raymond's Jungle Jim (Raymond's Flash Gordon was available in other Swedish weeklies) and Eugen became inspired by this.

His adventure comics hero Allan Kämpe first appeared in 1943. (It was sold abroad under other names, to the Nordic countries, Germany, Britain and as far away as Argentina - the name means "Allan Fighter".) Here's a short film, "How Allan Kämpe Was Created" from that year, shot by Eugen



Anders Palm (pic a bit warped due to bad camera angle).

and his buddy Charlie Bood: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZXj1OTdgbQ>

Allan Kämpe works for the Brain Trust who has a secret HQ at the North Pole and uses fantastic inventions like rayguns and rocket planes going into space.

"Allan Kämpe is the most successful Swedish adventure comics", says comics expert Sture Hegerfors. Eugen drew it alone for 14 years (1943-1957) but quit to get more time for covering the space age when Sputnik was launched. He had begun writing about space much, much earlier already in the early 1950s. With the Russian metal ball of a battery and a radio transmitter the whole world woke up (a much better "woke" than you-know-what!) and Eugen's material became hot as the exhaust fumes of a rocket. He became very busy.

When Yuri Gagarin visited Stockholm, Eugen could interview him in Russian. He travelled to the States and learned about the American space program, but also went to Russia and learned what he could about what the Russians were doing. They were more secretive but Eugen probably got more out of them than others. And when Apollo 11's lunar lander touched down, Eugen sat in Swedish TV's studio and explained what we saw. (Unfortunately, those programs weren't saved and were unavailable for this documentary - video tapes were expensive and re-used).

Another one we meet in the documentary is Anders Palm, editor in chief of mentioned *Teknikmagasinet* but also a friend of Eugen since the days of the moon landing. Palm told us how modest and kind Eugen was as a person, and he took upon himself to mentor Mr Palm who also

began covering space and popular science. Palm did his own sort of comics, technical news in the shape of the comics page "Wonders of Technology",

Through the documentary we follow a parallel, imaginative story of a space journey, taken from one of Eugen's many books, narrated by the famous actor Stina Ekblad. It's the journey of a "galaxy cruiser" on the way to a new planet, a flight taking 60 000 years, Earth subjective time - it implies it's to the far end of the Milky Way - but only 80 years spaceship subjective time. This thread of the story has very impressive computer graphics. Micke Engström who had a modeller as co-worker put lots of efforts into it. Towards the end of the

film the cruiser reaches its destination and we see a planet full of vibrant, beautiful alien trees and leaves and flowers. It's the new, better world we've been dreaming of.

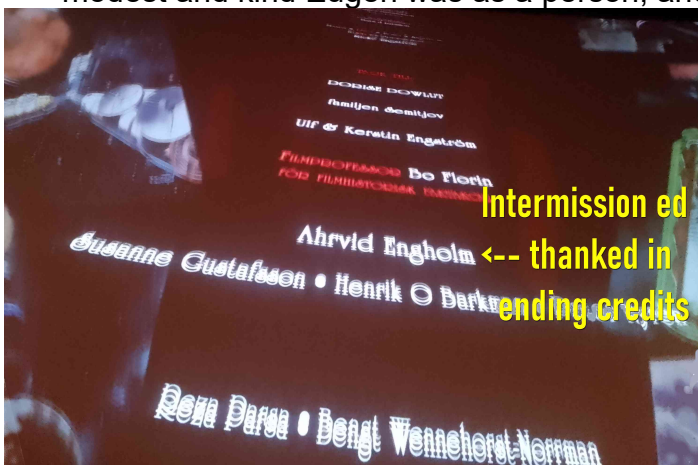
I left the showing with so many impressions and details that it's hard to summarise it all. (One example: it seems that Vladimir Semitjov, the father, met Lenin during the first Russian Revolution in 1905!) It's a unique documentary about a unique man in a unique format: facts and poetry, poor refugees in 1923 and a future galaxy ship, newspaper clips and computer animation, mundane problems Vs the far away stars...

For local readers, some opportunities to see "Semitjov - Dreams of a Better World"...

1 Apr, Klarabiografen, Stockholm Culture House

3 apr Biograf Pandora, Malmö

Intermission ed
--- thanked in
ending credits



6 apr Bio Fyris, Uppsala

11 apr more cinemas, info: <https://bio.se/film/ST00023096/semitjov-drommen-om-en-battre-varld/2025-04-11/>

<https://www.filmstaden.se/film/semitjov-drommen-om-en-battre-varld/>
<https://www.bioguiden.se/>

12 apr Bio Roy, Göteborg

12 apr Biograf Spegeln, Malmö

13 apr Royal, Luleå

17 apr Royal Luleå

21 apr Folkan, Gusum



Me and director Engström.

Lettuce of Comments & Mailing Carrots

First letters (more are welcome!) and from McCabe and on mailing comments to latest EAPA and N'APA. Not very important, so if you skip it Earth won't explode. However Earth may explode if you don't straighten your tie, search your soul and decide to make a fanzine and join an APA. You are needed! And BTW we'll let you in even without a tie. Hurry! (Ask ed for APA info.)

Bob Jennings: Hi Ahrvid! Received *Intermissions* #152 a few days back, but only got around to reading it today. Consider yourself lucky if you don't have many mass shootings in your country. Easy access to automatic weapons in the United States is clearly a factor in these problems, and I personally think that if automatic and military grade firearms could be banned that the rate of mass shootings and their lethal consequences would decline.

However, we are dealing with a certain kind of personality type, a person with a sick twisted outlook on life that can justify the taking of multiple human lives for reasons that make no sense to the rest of the world. Barring some method to mass screen and identify those types of people, the problem will continue. And unfortunately in the US we have this constitutional amendment passed over 200 years ago that is so broadly interpreted by our court system that doing away with military grade and automatic weapons is impossible unless that part of the Constitution were changed, which is not going to happen in our current political atmosphere.

It is difficult not to think about Trump and his reckless destruction of our US government these days. I think a good part of the problem is that his cognitive abilities have deteriorated seriously. The man is clearly suffering from senile dementia, as a spot check on a most of his past speeches from 2024 can attest. He is also a self centred narcissistic egomaniac convinced that he is always right about everything. Our federal government is supposed to have a system of checks and balances built in, but unfortunately the Trump worshippers control both houses of Congress, and the court system has been packed by his ardent supporters.

There have been signs of public unrest and rebellion against his recent moves, with some few small successes in legal challenges to his executive degrees. His popularity polls are dropping, but it remains to be seen if anything is going to change with his agenda in the near future. In my opinion Mr Trump has clearly violated his oath of office and the US Constitution, but his chances of getting impeached (yet again) are almost non existent right now. I'm probably too old to emigrate to some other country, but its beginning to look better and better all the time.

I enjoyed your coverage of the history of stf fandom in Sweden and nearby countries, but not a lot of comments come to mind. I will note that back in Ye Olden Days it was indeed a Proud And Lonely Thing to Be A Fan. I got involved with science fiction/fantasy literature and fandom just before entering high school, and I found nobody to talk about it with. My option was to try to convert friends to the cause.

It was easy enuf getting them involved with the science fiction movies of the day, of which there were plenty, of varying quality, but getting anybody to read the literature, let alone buy the magazines and get involved in the world of fandom was a different matter entirely. I did get a close friend involved, but as soon as he hit college he started dating the woman who would become his future wife and his other interests, including producing fanzines or reading science fiction disappeared. I tried to organize a science fiction club in college, but altho I got a few inquires, nobody was seriously interested. The mail was the only way to reach other like-minded individuals, and for me personally, the few science fiction conventions were always too far away for me to get to. Times have definitely changed.

One thing that changed for the worse was that sometime in the 1980s, the US Post Office decided to declare war on amateur publications of all kinds. Third Class Matter, which was a cheap way to distribute fanzines, as well as church bulletins, company business publications, family newsletters, and community organization literature was cancelled. /Ed: Same here. Category Printed Matter was replaced by more expensive and bureaucratic Association Mail./ Rates were also raised on bulk mailings and magazine subscriptions sent thru the mail. It decimated a lot of community outreach communications, but it wrecked stf fandom. Luckily the number of conventions suddenly exploded, to the point that there were hundreds of the things showing up everywhere, which really helped the hobby. There are even more conventions around these days, but clearly the internet and email have changed the whole fabric of stf fandom.

A news item today said people in Sweden are banding together to stop buying American goods./To a degree. No "mass movement", but all of Europe is deeply dissatisfied with Trump!/ I personally doubt that any boycott actions in Europe will have the slightest effect on Caligula Trump and his programs./Well, some want to cancel

orders of the super-expensive F35 fighter. That should be noted./ It's not only beyond his event horizon; but the boycott will probably wind up hurting a lot of Swedish businesses instead of actually having much of an effect on American businesses. Many US companies have a co-operative style of doing business in other countries. McDonald's restaurants, for example, are almost always owned by local people in the nations where they are established. Still, it should be interesting to see how this plays out.

Another good issue. I am amazed you can turn out so much stuff on such a tight schedule. Nitpicking and babbling. */I know that the campaign against the HG Wells statue in Woking was a few years ago, but I hadn't heard of it and I guess neither had you, so it was worth writing about./*

Rich Zellich: IM 152 was "interesting". WRT Trump and his minions, you were far too polite in your discussions about them and their preposterous doings.

As a Federal government employee of many decades, what I don't understand is why absolutely everyone doesn't just say "No" to everything they're illegally ordered to do. Musk, in particular, is a particularly loose cannon, but he is not in anyone's "chain of command" and has zero authority to make any demands of Federal employees. Even setting aside that pretty much 100% of what he orders or demands is flat-out illegal, both in law and WRT security regulations, he simply has no authority over anyone. If you tell him No, he can't fire you because he can't - he can't even order your boss to fire or discipline you because he has no authority over that person, either. Even if he gets Trump to fire or discipline you, there's a whole cascading stack of employee rights and protections in his way. */I think Musk's "authority" is just a question of referring to Trump who'll sign anything Musk presents.../* The only people Trump can fire are heads of major Agencies and Departments, because they're appointees and not government employees. They can fire or discipline you, but you have tons of official appeal rights, and no other Federal employee in the chain of people who hear or otherwise act on your appeal has to go along with them, either. If every Federal employee just tells them No, there's not a damned thing they can do about it - Trump can't even legally call in the military to force anybody, either - they didn't swear to obey the President's orders, but to obey the President's *lawful* orders...they can say No, too.

Lyndon Johnson understood very, very, well how the government works, and even he was frustrated by "the government's" ability to route around what it perceived as damage. He called it "the damned government" every time he got frustrated by faceless employees doing what was right instead of what he wanted to be done. I saw this at the working level in my employment as an Army software engineer. Every career person I worked with believed, as I did, that we were not working for "the Army", but for "the soldiers" and what we did reflected that reality, not necessarily the desired reality of the top-level policy wonks.

It's a really frustrating time in this country, not only seeing our "leaders" trying to overthrow the Constitution, but hordes of people actually applauding and supporting them for it. I'm beginning to think the French revolutionaries had a good idea when they removed not just their unpopular royal leaders, but employed that new invention, the guillotine, in the removal process. Technology at work. Of course, our leaders have rights and protections under the Constitution, too, but it would seem Congress - both parties - must eventually say "Enough!" and employ the impeachment remedy. One can only hope, because the alternative lies in the existence of the Constitution's Second Amendment and we already had one Civil War too many.

William McCabe: No, the texts eg on magazine covers were illegible to begin with on that newsstand picture. (I really tried to improve it to get a hint about what year it was from.) ★★About sex offender Dermot Clemenger: evening tabloid Expressen did what the police couldn't. They found him in a London hotel. When confronted he ran away. One thing is clear: he doesn't have much of a TV career left.

Henry Grynsten: *A copy of Windows 11 is more than a copy? How exactly? What matters to me is that the copy isn't me* The copy works exactly the same, identically. Thus it's more than "just a copy". And it is you, another copy of you. ★★*so if we manipulate the fetus in the womb* That's still adding an implant. It needs to be programmed in the DNA to count as original, pre-programmed. ★★*robots that are conscious that like being tortured to death by sadists... what kind of damn society will we have if people become used to treating conscious beings any way* If they like it, it won't be torture! Having or making a pre-programming isn't "treating" (=an ongoing action). ★★*You read my essay, the definition isn't that reproduction only happens through one or a very few individuals* It is. I googled "eusocial definition" and got: "showing an advanced level of social organization, in which a single female or caste produces the offspring and non-reproductive individuals." So: one or a very few individuals, as I said. ★★*Some biologists, like the respected E O Wilson* E O Wilson deserves no respect. He was a maximise-area-for-trees-and-frogs fanatic. He launched a hypothesis about species loss that's been proven wrong. His on the back of an envelope approximations still reverberates in the environmentalist echo chamber, alas. ★★*Academics and intellectuals often reproduce less than workers* I'm unsure if that is true, even if it is we don't know if holds in the future. The fascistoid E Musk (but still intellectual) has 14 children. ★★*end result /of urbanisation/ is still collective action* A collective action is a group getting together and from that decide or being forced to do the same. If you don't gathering and plan and by chance do the same as others it's not collectivism. ★★*Me: Today there's struggle between collectivism, which is to the left, and individualism, which loosely is to the right. HG: That's an oversimplification.* I believe this

EXPRESSEN

Här hittar Expressen Dermot Clemenger – då flyr han direkt

Publicerad 20 mar 2025 kl 13.01
Uppdaterad kl 13.20

Dermot Clemenger är internationellt efterlyst och ja Europa för en lång rad sexköp. Han håller sig undan – medan brotten preskriberas ner ett efter ett. Men Expressen hittar honom på ett hotell i London.

Här springer Dermot Clemenger från Expressens frågor

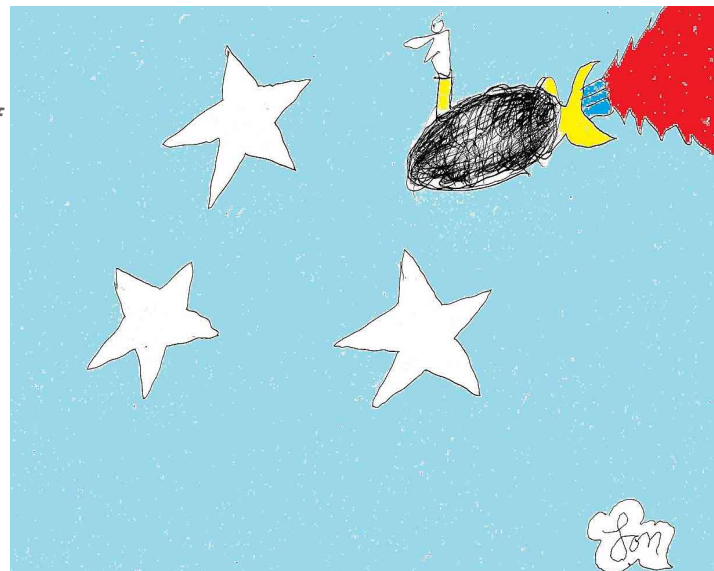


Expressen finds Dermot Clemenger here. He flees at once.

is a factor at the very core of the polarisation of society. ★★*the welfare state allows people to follow their inclinations to a higher degree than its opposite... There are more opportunities for upward mobility in more equal societies with welfare states* A so called welfare state doesn't, as soon as it goes beyond fixing food, lodging and low level basic services. Stepping beyond the low level basics it sets up a maze of bureaucracy which stops people from following their inclinations, instead following the inclinations of the politicians setting up the maze. "Equality" will *by definition* to slow down or stop mobility. It requires action to flattening out differences, which intervenes in the lives of people and their right to choose their own way. ★★*The left has more of internationalism...while the right has traditionally been nationalistic* There are different kinds of "right". Today: The SD party may very well be defined as nationalistic, but in the current European crisis the Moderates have acted internationally in a strong manner. The prime minister and the foreign minister are travelling almost daily, consulting with foreign counterparts, attending meetings, calling for international actions! ★★*the King and to God. Everyone takes off their hat and bows* Religion plays tiny and shrinking role. And the king is just a symbol. ★★*a hermit with no contact with other people or civilization can be free in one sense, but in that case, if he can't get any supplies or help whatsoever, his options are more or less limited to those of an animal* Such a hermit could in fact have his own technical and other resources. ★★The *main* reason we'd have difficulties to reach utopia, is that we can't agree upon exactly *what* this utopia would be. For example, you talked about recreative substances. We'd live longer, have less violence etc if this or that was banned! Already here, many won't agree! My own position is that some recreational substances must be legal, as long as their potential damage is below a certain level. (Basically: alcohol must be legal, narcotics not.) Creating a society suppressing the use of all recreational substances requires a health dictatorship, which would be...unhealthy. People won't accept it, which results in tensions and violence (and smuggling and a black market with speakeasies - we saw that it in the US last century). I know one certain Henry G who very much would like to ban coffee. Good luck with creating an utopia where coffee is banned! The first step towards utopia, isn't banning this or that. It is rather to analyse what people want, how humans work, and trying to find the kind of society structure that is as close as possible match whatmost people would like or a least tolerate. A very good tool in this is to simply create more wealth. With wealth comes resources, which may be used towards creating the structures most people would like.

Heath Row: Sorry, I don't know who founded EAPA. I remember two earlier OEs, though: Peter Sullivan and Chuck Connor. Yes, it seems new members of EAPA can access old mailings. The mailings are available at eFanzines.com and there's a list of old passwords that you can have as a member (ask Garth!). ★★As for my short fiction, some of the best is already in my two short story collections. What's not in there may not be worth being collected. Some of my short fiction is rather esoteric. I for instance have 25+ Xmas/New Year stories, written at the spur of the moment, usually with a humorous touch, that perhaps only worked that year. ★★"Fingerspitzengefühl" is a rather important concept, to know what seems right - something Mr Trump has difficulties with... We have that word in Swedish to, as *fingertoppskänsla* ("fingertip feeling") ★★What did Joss Wheldon do? ★★Why on Earth did you reprint the Kronblom comics?

Garth Spencer: (On B Motion #12) No, Ranelid isn't at all like Clancy or Cussler (I've read some Cussler and he's in fact entertaining, in a naive way). ★★Sweden had many bad poets, and most legendary of them is perhaps the Uppsala confectioner Erik Ofvandahl, subject of mock celebrations by the Uppsala students, that he played along with. He became a legend. He and many other bad poets are collected in the classic *Pegasus Astray*, where you meet eagles swimming in the river Seine, eulogies to asparagus and mental contacts with Norse gods... ★★I issue warnings for typos in every issue, so maybe there was one in the link to *If Crisis or War Comes*. This should work: <https://www.msb.se/sv/publikationer/om-krisen-eller-kriget-kommer-pa-engelska/> ★★You want me to define possible problems with trade marks and sf cons in the EU? I see few problems. As far as I know conrunners here don't care for the hassle etc with getting a trade mark for their con name. It's extra job and costs. But for bigger cons, I don't know. Are "Eastercon" or "Eurocon" registered trade marks? If so the words should be printed with an R within a ring, but I don't see it. (But I can imagine that commercial media cons, like Comic Con, is trade mark protected.) ★★Moving to B Motion #13. It seems Trump has a secret deal with map makers... (BTW, news agency AP was banned from the White House as they refuse to use the name "Gulf of America".) ★★You want me to elaborate on "*if a consciousness can't be replicated in something material, then magic exists, and we know it doesn't*". What I mean is consciousness must be an effect of something and that effect can only be caused by something material. Otherwise it'd be an effect without a cause, popping out of nowhere. And things that pop out of nowhere is...magic. (Real magic, not to be confused with the illusion of magic à la Penn & Teller.) ★★As said earlier, I have in an indirect way done a history of Swedish fandom, in the form of the *Fandboken* fancylopedia. ★★You mentioned the "fabula story-building card deck". Sounds interesting! Tell us more! ★★(Moving to Thursdays #231) Well, I've been writing short stories for a long time. In the 1970s wrote crappy stories I sent to Sam J Lundwall and *Jules Verne Magasinet*. I took me to 1984 before I finally had a story published (it was still still a crappy



LON speculates... Could it be Space-Musk crashing?

story, by what I think now...)

Mark Nelson: I didn't hear the Swedish 70/80s Cons panel, so I have no comments. About Codes of Conduct, they didn't have anything written earlier. I remember older cons as wilder, more fannish and more fun. (I have very few if any conreps of early Swedish cons. When I write a conrep I'm usually boring, anyway.) ★★Intermission #1 is undated, but from contents I can deduct it came in 2012 and it was only two pages. It has always been in PDF form. Early *Intermission* was rather unassuming, but slowly evolved. From around #20 or so contents began to be more substantial. But there were silly things in it, like playing around with the orthography (how letters and symbols are used) of headlines. I had sf/fandom historical material early on, long before I had the opportunity to ransack the Royal Library newspaper archive (that began with #96). The longest running Scandinavian fanzine is perhaps Henry Grynnssten's *ALHASH*, with well over 200 issues. The fanzine running the longest time is no doubt *SF-Forum* from the Scandinavian SF Association, which has been published since 1960. ★★There was a government phone monopoly (given up in the early 1990) known as "Televerket" ("The Tele Agency") which now operates under the name Telia, and they published the phone directory. Google claims the last phone books for private phones came in 2012, and a couple of years later came the last "yellow pages" phone book. Such things are now replaced by phone search engines on the net, of course. ★★I think you shouldn't remove statutes due to not following today's ethics norms - perhaps only in rare extreme cases. We only become more stupid by doing cut< and paste in history and such virtue signalling won't actually change history.

George Phillies: Sorry, find nothing desperately needing comments...

Jefferson Swycaffer: Ditto. (A good way to get me into commenting mode is to ask for further details on something or disagreeing with something, so I have to reply...)

Adrian Kresnak: Congrats for your Masters Degree! ★★I have never heard of "omniheurists" before... This Dennis Shasha seems to be a little bit like the legendary Martin Gardner. I've read some of his books with enjoyment. ★★I've heard that the sf magazines (*Asimov's*, *F&SF*, *Analog*) are in deep trouble. Circulation has almost collapsed (*F&SF* has had problems coming out at all, the others - could that be right? - are down to selling perhaps 15 000...). It's the same as for newspapers and other magazines. Swedish tabloid evening papers that used to sell 3-400 000 copies but are today are down to 30 000... Selling the sf mags to someone who loves the genre, and may be ready to do something for them, may be the only way to save them.

Heath Row: I don't see "woke" as generally a good thing. It's not a matter of only being "aware" of certain social issue, it's about being "aware" in *special way*. Wokeness *requires* "affirmative action", which is discrimination. It *requires* that you are blind to that many are "included" away. Wokeness *requires* that you accept the pseudo-science that gender would be only a "social construction", not a fact. It *requires* that you believe that flattening out differences between individuals would be ethical. And so on. A very special sort of "awareness", indeed.

Samuel Lubell: Internal fighting in the WSFA? Well, not everyone agree on how officers have been selected. There have been several resignations. Some are elected on the basis of PC ideology rather than author merits. Woke critics are denied membership. Still worth remembering is the heavy attacks on Barry Malzberg and Mike Resnick for "sexism". (When I studied "argumentative analysis", a part of more general philosophy studies, we used the term "persuasive definition" for nonsense "definitions" that only cover what is considered positive and skip problematic areas. I have never seen the sloppy term "sexism" defined by anything but persuasive definitions!) ★★No, many parts of "Codes of Conduct" haven't risen out of "someone made it necessary". See my critique of the Glascon (Worldcon 2024) CoCs. Why would it be "necessary" to kick a panel moderator out of a con because he starts a debate with PC critique? Banned are "comments that are intended to reinforce social structures of domination", so why would that be necessary? It's called a free debate otherwise. Why would it be necessary to ban what a CoC claim is "misgendering"? (Quite the reverse: it is necessary to defend everyone's right to supreme control of your own words. No one has the right to force you to say this or that (except taking an oath to office, I suppose.)

Kevin Trainor: President Zelensky has recently explained that though the Ukrainian Army is in the process of setting up 12 new brigades - they only have equipment for two. So they need the equipment, but seem to have enough soldiers. Ukraine's male population is 20+ million after all. Recruitment goes reasonably well despite equipment shortages, eg thanks to a program that allows the draftee himself to choose assigned unit (within limits). ★★At least, if you cross into Rhode Island they suddenly won't speak incomprehensible rhodeislandish... But cross into Denmark and you need a Babel fish! ★★I don't think fandom was mistaken snubbing Trekkies. Associating with them made fandom look bad. We got numerous news stories about sf and sf cons being running around with pointed ears and coloured pyjamas uniforms shouting "Beam me up Scotty!". Mundane news media gather around the Trekkies - and today around anyone in a silly dress - like flies to sugar water - on cons. It's essential to try to distance yourself from that. ★★I didn't know that Willy Ley was a feet fetiscist... ★★ *News 30 Mar: 16th Swedish Ukraine package announced, worth €1.5Bn.* ★★ *Unfortunately, time to end... No, don't cry! There will be a new dawn, a new hope, a new Intermission! Soon.*

Слава Україні!
Dump Trump! And elbows up!

THE SWAMP SPOT SENTINAL



Issue #1.1 is a fanzine for distribution within the sacred auspices of N'APA, and is produced by
Robert Jennings; 29 Whiting Rd.; Oxford, MA 01540-2035 email: fabficbks@aol.com

THE NEWEST KID ON THE BLOCK says hello to all the long-time regulars in N'apa. For those who don't know anything about me, I'm an old fan. I've been active in stf fandom since the late 1950s, which is when I originally joined the N3F. I owned and operated a science fiction/comic book/games store in Worcester, MA for about twenty-two years, closing in August of 2000 to turn the biz into a mail order operation. I continue to run the mail order business today. Over the years I have turned out hundreds of different fanzines dealing with science fiction, comics, OTRadio and closely related subjects. I expect to continue discussing those subjects in N'apa.

One of my main concerns these days is my ongoing hearing loss. Most people experience some loss of hearing as they get older, and for some it becomes a serious problem. I'm one of those people. The situation was aggravating, but manageable up until last year. 2024 was not a particularly good year for me on many fronts, but that was the year my hearing took a severe decline.

It turns out that in addition to losing my hearing that I have also suffered damage to the auditory nerves between the ears and the brain so that I have a 40% loss of comprehension. This means that even tho with the help of hearing aids I can hear much better, I cannot understand all of the words being spoken. The best way to demonstrate that is to say that as time goes on I will continue to be able to listen to music, but I will not be able to understand most of the words the singer is performing.

Needless to say this has created many new and disagreeable problems. One of the major problems is the inability of most people to accept my situation.

I tell people that I am very hard of hearing, and that the problem is at its worse when trying to speak on the telephone. I ask that people please try to communication with me via email whenever possible.

You would think people would pay attention to this simple request, but as a matter of fact, most people don't. Either they skim right over my description of the problem, or they somehow assume that the situation doesn't really apply to them. I regularly get telephone calls from people who want to commiserate and discuss the situation. Even when I explain, in detail, that my hearing problems are at their worst with telephone communication, people insist on calling me over the phone anyway.

The situation is so persistent that I am considering looking around for one of those phones that displays spoken words as text along a screen at the bottom of the device. I suspect those things cost a bundle of money, but it may be worth it, considering that most folks simply will not heed my request to communicate by email. Updates on that may follow in future issues.



"You'll be in charge of the music down here."

FLOWER POWER The time of late spring into the beginning of summer has been one of extraordinary plant growth around here, with the lawn growing so fast that I'm out there almost every day cutting some section of the grass back.

I had hoped that my patch of black-eyed Susans would reappear this year, but alas, no blooms came forth. I got two years worth of those beautiful flowers, but nothing this year. The insects may have had something to do with that.

Toward the end of last summer I noticed the petals and leaves of the Susans showed clear evidence of heavy insect damage, altho I never discovered exactly what kind of six legged critters were chewing on them. This year, not even a single new shoot came up.

That doesn't mean there are no flowers in the yard. During dandelion season the neighbors make an all-out effort to eradicate the plants from their lawns, mostly successfully, from what I have been able to see.

I gave up fighting the dandelions a long time ago, which means the yellow flowers were everywhere this year, a veritable riot of yellow. One of the reasons I don't particularly mind the dandelions is that they disappear when the weather turns warm, and meanwhile, those flowers provide a much needed source of nutrition for the bee population around here.

I don't know if there are any honey bees in the area, but there are a lot of bumble bees. I must have several nests of the insects around my house and lawn, because they are flying everywhere.

It is entertaining to see these very large fat insects buzzing around, in lopsided loops, settling on the flowers and taking off, headed back to wherever their burrows might be.

In addition, the dandelions stalks are a favorite food of the wild rabbits, which I am happy to say have reappeared again. The bunnies usually come around at the end of the day, and the batch this year are especially rambunctious, hopping all over the place, chasing each other around, and of course, gobbling down lots and lots of dandelion stalks.

After the dandelions, the lawn suddenly sprouts tiny white daisies. These things grow so fast that it's almost impossible to keep up with them. If they would grow along the stone wall or along the foundation of the house it would be one thing, but alas, they sprout in the middle of the lawn, which means that whenever I mow the lawn they get mowed down. But these are very hearty plants. They grow so fast that they start to reappear within two days after being mowed.

The other flowers that appear right after the small white daisies are the yellow poppies. These are delicate five pedaled flowers perched on an impossibly thin stalk. The stalks are so skinny that I think no bee could possibly land on them to gather nectar or pollen, so some other, much smaller insect species must be in charge of pollinating the things.

Whoever these symbiotic insects are, they are doing a champion job, because the yellow poppies are all over the yard, almost as abundant as the dandelions were.

And alas, since they are in the yard, that means that I mow them down, regularly. Their time in the lawn only lasts about four weeks before clover flowers, and some sort of squat dark yellow flower takes over, augmented with delicate little five pedaled purple flowers. The purple flowers mostly hang around the edges of the fence, or at the stone walls, so it is easy to not mow them down when they begin to bloom.

Once, many years ago, I tried to grow some roses. It was an expensive, labor intensive failure. The rose beetles and aphids turned the plants into tatters. That was the last time I tried to introduce flowers into the landscape, but fortunately Mother Nature has noticed and has provided home grown flower varieties on her own. I deeply appreciate her efforts.



LIVING IN THE USA...

I envy people who are lucky enuf to have local handymen and contractors willing and anxious to do work on their homes. I wish I could say the same in my location. Here in my part of the world the contractors are swamped with jobs, charge really big bucks for anything, and take their own sweet time getting around to you. Even when they agree to do the work, a significant number of times they don't ever bother to show up at all.

A typical recent example: Back in early March we had our usual awful March weather, including extreme winds to go along with the snow and freezing rain. I went to the warehouse, pulled my one book order of the day, filed some magazines, rearranged some stacks, cleared out some trash and headed home. Not only

was it very cold, it was extremely windy. I got home, moved back the trash containers that had been turned over and blown down the driveway by the high winds, and went inside to do some work on an article I was writing, hoping to also write an LOC or even two to some zines I had recently received.

A few hours later there was a tremendous CRASH from the front of the house. I ran to the front, and looked out, thinking maybe there had been a car accident. No, it turned out that the high winds had ripped open my front door storm door and slammed it against the iron railing on the left side of the concrete steps, hard enuf that the entire window pane section of the door was ripped loose, and had landed on the frozen lawn.

Luckily the panes are made of plastic not glass, but this was a horrible situation. Without that storm door the March winds cut right thru the front door with ease and the temps inside the living room dropped noticeably.

Clearly something had to be done. It was too late to call anybody to get a new storm door installed (and since it was Friday in March, how many of those places were even going to open after the noon hour anyway?), so I got bundled up again, and went out to see what could be done.

The entire glass section of a storm door is really heavy! I managed to manhandle it up the steps and to get the thing mostly settled into the grooves. Part of the inside frame had been bent and twisted by the accident, but I was able to get it all in anyway. Then I tried to tape it into place temporarily with Gorilla Tape, which is supposed to be super strong. Hahaha. Right. Remind me never to believe any company's hype about how effective their products are supposed to be.

Still, it held, mostly because I got it sort of wedged into the remains of the grooves.

The next day, Saturday, I started checking possibilities for people to replace the storm door. Monday I started making calls, and discovered that getting anybody to actually do any kind of work at your home is a) really expensive, and b) nobody really wants to do the damn work. There are excuses, there are delays, there are problems. Finally I arranged a purchase and install thru the local Home Depot, indicating that I would really appreciate speed as this was a serious problem.

Hahaha, again. Those considerations meant nothing. These folks have infinite power, and individuals such as myself who are not handy with their hands, or lack knowledge of how to make necessary repairs on our own are at their mercy. I had to fill out an on-line form. I got an email back, telling me to call. I explained about my severe hearing/comprehension problems, got another email saying they understood, and to place call.

Finally I did call. It took several calls, but eventually I explained the problem, namely, that I needed another replacement storm door as soon as possible, and the sales rep started the process going, including making note of my serious hearing problem on the form. He also took my credit card info, explaining that a trained installer would come by and expertly measure for the door. I tried to tell the guy that I already knew the measurements, but no, this was a necessary part of their service, which would cost me an additional \$40 for that professional service. Right. Sure.

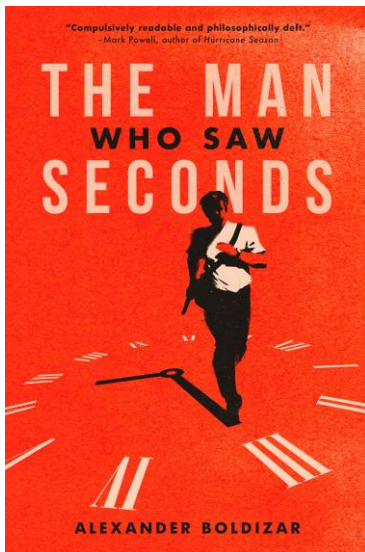
Five days passed. Thankfully the temperature warmed up during the interim. A HomeDepot rep emailed asked if the measurement guy could come around the next day. I was happy. The measurement guy came around the next day confirmed the measurements that I had already made, said he would report his info at the end of the day and the Home Depot re lady rep would get back to me.

Six more days passed. The lady rep a "blue apron specialist" emailed me, wanted to help me with the style and cost of the storm door. I had already done the homework. It turns out that there were three replacement storm doors in the style of the busted one, but, guess what, all three were exactly the same, with exactly the same price, but all with three different s catalog numbers. I passed along the info, and got a telephone call back just to confirm what I had already sent out by email.

Five more days passed. Then I got an email confirming the details, again, and saying they were setting up the purchase and appointment. Three more days passed. Then I got a demand for payment, in advance. The installer will call me. I tried to send an email back reminding them of my serious hearing problem, but no reply came back.

Five more days passed. I emailed my concerns. No reply. Three days after that I called and asked what was going on. There were apologies, but I was assured that the installer would get right back to me. Six days later, and after yet another call of complaint, the guy finally called. He will be around tomorrow morning to install the storm door.

Total time elapsed, seven weeks and three days. This is not a unique situation around here either. I have other things that need to be done around this house, but I may not live that long



The Man Who Saw Seconds by Alexander Boldizar

Preble Jefferson is a man with a strange power. He can see five seconds into the future. He doesn't think this is particularly strange. He's an easy going guy who likes to play chess, talk abstract political philosophy with his friends, and use his power to grab enuf money from gambling casinos to provide himself and his little family with a secure life.

But things are about to change. Let me quote from the publisher's hype---

"Otherwise, he lives an ordinary life. But when a confrontation with a cop on a New York City subway goes tragically wrong, those seconds give Preble the chance to dodge a bullet—causing another man to die in his place.

Government agencies become aware of Preble's gift, a manhunt ensues, and their ambitions shift from law enforcement to military. Preble will do whatever it takes to protect his family, but as events spiral out of control, he must weigh the cost of his gift against

the loss of his humanity.

A breathless thriller that will keep you on the edge of your seat until the very last page, *The Man Who Saw Seconds* explores the nature of time, the brain as a prediction machine, and the tension between the individual and the systems we create. Alexander Boldizar provides an adrenaline-pumping read that will leave you contemplating love, fear and the abyss."

Brief, but mostly to the point. The story explores what happens when one person runs accidentally afoul of the law, and what happens when that situation escalates. Mr. Boldizar makes a clear and telling case that society is set up to maintain conformity to accepted social rules, and when anyone, for any reason at all, steps outside those norms, even accidentally, then society unites to crush the individual as quickly and as effectively as possible.

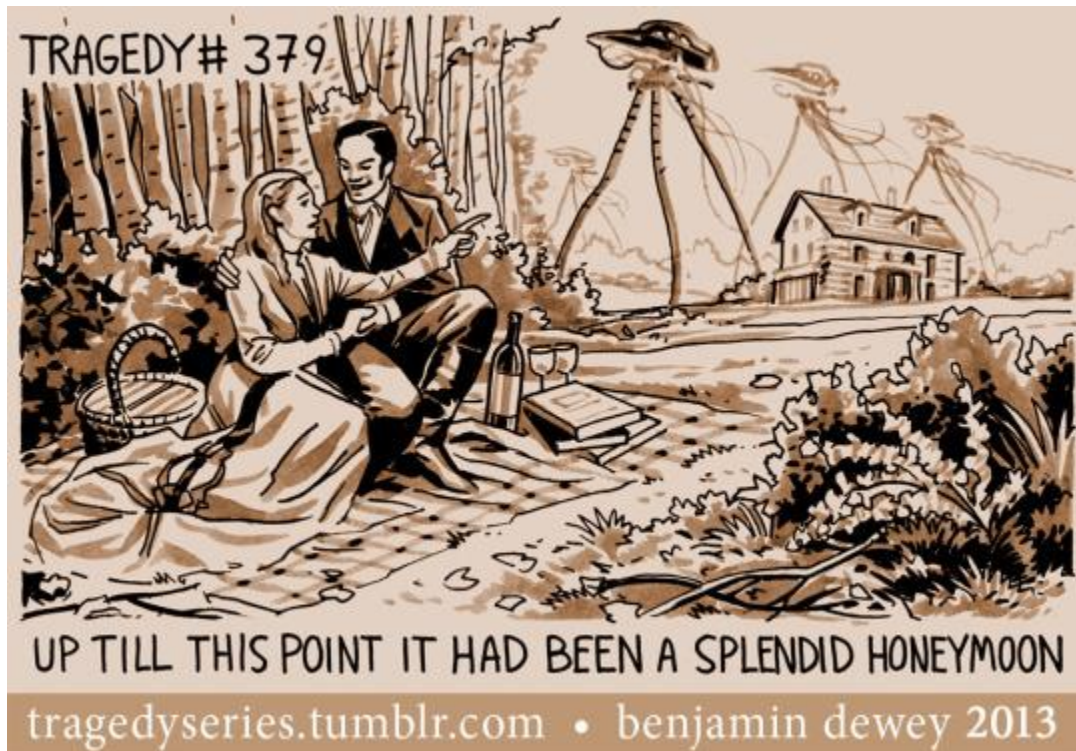
In this case society is up against something it did not expect; a man with a minor power, but it's a power that can effectively disrupt the entire structure of the social order. In the book's opening chapters, Preble calls the police to let them know that two of their officers on a subway car have "accidentally" shot themselves. Officer Down is a code word for immediate action by the police. They have Preble's picture due to all the surveillance cameras everywhere in New York City, and when he tries to just get away and go home, he is confronted by dozens, then over a hundred cops who are convinced he is a dangerous criminal, especially when they start shooting but cannot hit him at all, because he can see five seconds into the future and he knows what to do to avoid being shot. Instead the police often manage to shoot each other. Over 500 rounds of ammo are fired and he isn't even scratched.

When he tries to surrender and clear the problem up, he suddenly becomes a major menace so far as the police and the federal government are concerned. A man who can escape an all out assault by the city's finest must be either an enemy agent or have access to a top secret weapon. At the least he is a menace, and he must be neutralized.

The feds go for the jugular, threatening his family, and things escalate rapidly from there. How much damage can a man who can see five seconds into the future do? How can he escape lethal force ruthlessly applied by every resource available to the federal government? Then there is the question of what might be the cost to Preble's humanity trying to protect his family while the government is trying to kill or neutralize him?

That is the real gist of this novel, and it makes for a high tension thriller that is also filled with comments and observations about the philosophical underpinnings of government, of human civilization as a whole, the working of quantum mechanics, how society protects and yet degrades the human elements that comprise the units of that civilization, time and probability math, and harsh political realities.

There are plenty of unexpected twists and turns as the story progresses, and the ending provides a double twist. This novel was voted one of *Locus Magazine's* top ten science fiction novels for the year 2024. I echo that judgment. This is a superlative book, a gripping page turner that you absolutely need to read. If you don't trust my opinion, check the rave reviews on the Amazon web site, and then get your hands on this book. This novel gets my highest recommendation.



BREAKING NEWS!

Robert Kennedy Jr. head of the federal Department of Health and Human Services held a press conference to discuss his department's efforts to stabilize the prices of mandrake root, eye of newt, dried bat wings, and new-born baby's blood.

"Too many people are deliberately exploiting the medical market place to rake in excessive profits" Kennedy said in answer to a question from the reporter for *Witch's Cauldron Weekly*. "Many ads in respected journals such as The Daily Stormer and Keep America White clearly show that the renewed interest in traditional, proven, effective all natural folk remedies has created a shortage of these vital ingredients and is forcing Americas to either pay outrageous prices to greedy price gougers or to seek these ingredients from unreliable foreign suppliers."

Discounting the rumor that Elon Musk had launched a hostile takeover bid for the Hex Herbal and Voodoo Icons Warehouse that supplies many traditional components to most of the top necromancers in the southern region, Mr. Kennedy said the problem was entirely due to rabid liberal Democrats trying to undermine his leadership of the Health Department.

"I have advised President Trump of this troubling situation and I have urged him to issue an executive order restricting the dangerous hoarding of essential natural ingredients by woke speculators and to also freeze the prices of these essential components at their January 2025 prices. This is the only best way to keep our essential medical supply chain clear and accessible to everyone."

Asked if leprosy and measles, which have enjoyed a significant comeback under his administration, were worrying trends, Mr. Kennedy replied that the only worrying trend he had noticed was the flood of fake news stories criticizing President Trump's efforts to make America great again. He referred the reporters to Secretary of State Marco Rubio's new book "CNN: Threat or Menace?" and declined to take any more questions.

The Legendary Antikythera Mechanism May Have Been A Piece Of Junk

Story by Benjamin Taub



The Antikythera Mechanism functions using gears with triangular teeth. - Image credit: Alexandros Michailidis/Shutterstock.com© IFL Science

The world's oldest analog computer may be no more than a 2,000-year-old lemon, according to the findings of an as-yet un-peer-reviewed study. Discovered at the site of an ancient shipwreck, the world-famous [Antikythera Mechanism](#) is lauded as one of the technological marvels of the Greco-Roman world, yet it turns out that the gadget might not actually have worked.

The second paper, by Mike Edmunds, used CT scans of the gears in order to highlight manufacturing errors, such as irregular spacing and uneven distribution of teeth. "Under our assumptions, the errors identified by Edmunds exceed the tolerable limits required to prevent failures," write the study authors. Thus, they explain that "while the triangular shape of the teeth alone produces negligible errors, manufacturing inaccuracies significantly increase the likelihood of gear jamming or disengagement."

For instance, the researchers calculate that if the errors identified by Edmunds are correct, then the device's solar pointer would probably get stuck before completing one-third of its rotation. Moreover, "since the Antikythera Mechanism has a single input of motion and all gears are interconnected, the jamming of any gear pair would bring the entire mechanism to a halt," they write.

“As a result, two possibilities arise: either the mechanism never functioned, or its errors were smaller than those found by Edmunds,” conclude the study authors.

Of course, the second scenario is certainly not off the table, since the Antikythera Mechanism had been significantly damaged by the time Edmunds created his scans, which means the errors he observed are likely to be far greater than those originally present when the device was manufactured.

However, as the new study indicates, the mechanism would have had to be produced with an incredible level of precision in order to function as intended. For this reason, Edmunds has proposed that the Antikythera Mechanism may have been more of an educational display than an actual tool for making precise astronomical measurements.

Yet the authors of the new study insist that much of the data produced by Edmunds is “speculative”, and that any findings about whether or how the ancient computer worked “must be interpreted with caution”.

A preprint of the study is available on [arXiv](https://arxiv.org/).



**He’s a compulsive stf collector; she’s a banded Madagascan Buttonquail!
---together they produce fanzines!**

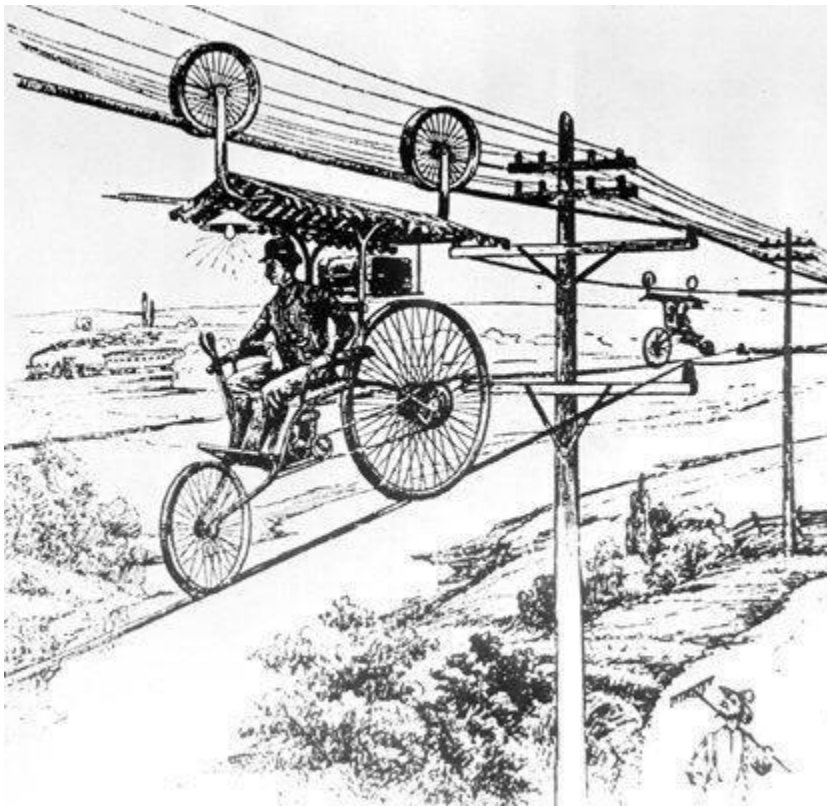
Bob Jennings here---I am telepathically receiving the thots of **Matildia**, the banded Madagascan Buttonquail, which, I’m sure I have no need to explain to savvy N’APA members, is a largely ground dwelling bird that lives in Madagascar.

The Buttonquail society is an absolute matriarchy, with the males incubating the eggs once laid, and also raising the chicks, also bringing in all the food for the youngsters, which is sometimes shared by the female parent, when she’s not off attending swanky parties and gala social events. Female Madagascan Buttonquails have brightly colored plumage, which they like to show off in the local rotogravure Sunday sections, so their social lives are one mad whirl of parties, charity events, lawn soirées and of course, the mid-afternoon romantic trysts which have become a trademark of their species.

Because of this formal matriarchal structure built along a strict social status system Matildia feels she must hide her deep interest in science fiction movies and super hero comic books and must communicate telepathically thru me.

She tried to communication with another fan before approaching me, but this unnamed male happened to be a closet misogynist who deeply resented the fact that he has no steady girl friend at the moment, someone who would empty the cat's litter box, or maybe heat up some Flaming Buffalo Wings when he staggered home from working late hours trying to decypher computer fuck-ups and other IT glitches at his customer sites; work that leads to plenty of teeth grinding and repressed hostility towards corporate nitwits (his customers seem to be top-heavy with dim-brains, at least according to him). I suggested that what the guy really needed was a Glock .44 automatic pistol and an hour or two at the local firing range to work some of that frustration off, but did he listen to me? Noooooo, of course not. He refuses to communicate with Mataldia, so I do that.

Anyway, Matildia wants to discuss important and weighty subjects of deep interest to fandom such as why we park in the driveway, and drive on the parkways. Uh, this is not exactly what I had in mind when discussing her participation in this fanzine. However, I do have a suggestion for resolving this ageless riddle, specifically ---



Maybe next issue we can have a more meaningful, or at least a more relevant exchange of ideas that specifically relate to science fiction & fantasy. Or maybe not. I've never been in telepathic communication with a banded Madagascan Buttonquail before. Maybe tired and outdated trivial clichés are the extent of their intellectual curiosity.

More next issue

Summer Reading

by Richard Thompson



I'm reading "Operation: SNAFU" by a newly disillusioned Tom Clancy. In this one, CIA agent Jack Ryan is demoted to Junior Assistant Esperanto Translator in the Des Moines office after he blows a terrorist investigation & half the U.S. gets wiped off the map.

I've started "Harry Potter & the Something Something" by J.K. Rowling. It's just roughly sketched in outline form and she's padded it with doodles & photocopies of her royalty checks. It's the best Harry Potter yet!



I'm reading "How I Created Western Civilization and Spider-Man, Too" by Marvel publisher Stan Lee.



'Nuff said.

I'm reading the newspaper's front page headlines from ten feet away.

If the typeface is unduly large & threatening or if it features a grim-visaged Rumsfeld photo, I run to the basement & hide under a mattress.



Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 275

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9 March 2025

Comments:

Cover: Public Domain fantasy art.

Garth Spencer: I'm sad and sorry, and I feel a similar sense of anomie in fandom and in our civilization in general. I hope things are only temporary and cyclical, and good times are a-comin'. Happy Days will be here again. One of the sad things about the aging of fandom is that, for many of us, we won't live to see the next epoch of good times, but we can, in our rough way, prepare the groundwork – make straight in the desert a highway – and lay out a map for the future of fanom. The best way to do that is to be fannish! Buy and read good sf literature, buy and collect nice sf artwork, share our joy with reviews and letters of comment, actually write to authors and artists to tell them how much joy their work brings, and so on. Fandom is a way of life!

Ahrvid Engholm: re Putin and Ukraine, I fear a bad outcome. I do not see Ukraine as being able to hold out against a “death of a thousand cuts,” with Russia stealing land in dribs and drabs. Putin is willing to pay the price in lives. The only meaningful hope is that Europe keeps sending armaments, and that, maybe, with time, the U.S. regains its santiy and also sends arms.



Sad agreement re Neil Gaiman. A great writer, but, perhaps, a bit of a louse in his personal life. I almost said “private life,” but that’s almost oxymoronic in this day and age.

Very delightful History Corner, talking about the computer revolution of the 1950s and 1960s. That revolution – and Moore’s Law! – still haven’t played out. There is a rich future ahead for microchips and data processing on a very large scale. And Quantum Computing is just only beginning to hit its stride!

Meanwhile,I, personally, am at a distinct risk of losing my job to “AI” processing. It won’t happen in 2025 – but it won’t happen later than 2030. (I do data entry for a health insurance company.)

Re codes of conduct, you are looking at VERY different sets of codes than any I have ever seen. The codes I’ve seen (and implemented as the Secretary of sseveral small conventions and a few large-ish conventions) were commonsense and ideologically unbiased. No groping. No stealing. No breaking furniture. If someone asks to be left alone, leave them alone. It is sad that such things need to be set down in writing – “common sense” is another modern oxymoron. I have never seen the variety you are referring

to. Yes, the codes ARE a weapon to be used to evict people from the convention – and rightly so! We don't accept gropers and shoplifters!

Mark Nelson: Condolences on your involuntary voluntary severance! That's no fun at all. Re formatting, so long as you send us either a Word-compatible document or a pdf, we're good. pdf files are pretty close to universal. If George has trouble with your format, he or I will get back to you.

Rct Ahrvid Engholm on judging the past by our standards, and judging the past by the standards of the past, I think both approaches have much validity. I am currently reading a book about Queen Mary of England, who, among other sins, burned more than 300 people to death for not being Catholics. By the standards of her time, this was legal, tolerated, and even expected. By our standards, it is a sin of poisonous enormity, and must be condemned roundly. I will not give up my standards of morality when I examine the past; I will not "tolerate" such sins. The concession I make is that I will endeavor to ^understand^ them in the context of their own time. I will not let, "Oh, that's just how things were back then" serve to negate my moral stance.

Re Walter Scott, "Ivanhoe" is readable and entertaining, containing the famous archery contest with Robin Hood. It's an easily digested classic, although a bit of fluff withal. In my opinion, you aren't mssing a whole lot!

George Phillies: I like the idea of fan fic writing being an official N3F activity. I'm sure the Writers' Exchange Bureau would be glad to provide reading and critiquing services!

Pleasant short section of your story. Amusing – and believable! -- that someone unfamiliar with kittens might mistake purring for respiratory distress!

Ahrvid Engholm: Very detailed history corner, covering the local history of fandom. I'm astonished at the depth and detail here; I couldn't write a tenth as much, even about the history of fandom that I have witnessed personally!

Agreement re Trump and Vance and their childish ambush of Zelensky in the Oval Office. Zelensky doesn't come away well either; he had one job, and that was say, "Yes, sir" to whatever was put before him. When he raised his voice back at Trump, he failed, and he put his country at risk in doing so. The injustice is stark, and the moral odium is entirely against Trump, but Zelensky lost his poise, at a time he simply could not afford to do so.

U.S. Constitution, it is certainly possible to impeach more than one person at the same time, either in a single Bill of Impeachment, or, more likely, in two separate ones. I can think of two separate U.S. Supreme Court Justices who ought to be impeached, one for the high crime of bribery, the other for merely being a big jerk.

Rct Henry Grynsten, "Any property of a brain NOT made to reflect reality (=being rational) will be purged by evolution." Not at all! Exactly the opposite is true! We have evolved emotions, which bypass rationality, and they serve us very well for purposes of survival. "Fear" is very often not rational. As humans, many of us are afraid of the dark, even when we know we're perfectly safe. We can evince exaggerated fear of strangers. We are extremely bad at making rational assessments of threats, risks, and danger. Evolution has rewarded this by making it a survival strategy.

Rct Health Row, Elon Musk was not approved by the Senate, which is required of Cabinet Secretaries. There is good reason to believe that Musk is behaving illegally, although it would take a decision by the Supreme Court to verify this, and, frankly, I don't trust those bastards to rule honestly.

Adrian Kresnak: Congratulations on earning your Master's Degree!

The Puzzling Adventures of Dr. Ecco sounds right up my alley! I will obtain a copy forthwith! Thank you for the review!

Interesting Search and Rescue section of the Foxhaven Disaster. Good detail. I wonder if such a strong earthquake could actually have resulted in no deaths. But rescuing people from toppled bookshelves is different, of course, from rescuing them from collapsed buildings.

Garth Spencer: re misdated and missing N'APA content, that's all on me. I goofed, blundered, boobed, and messed up. Errare Humanum Est, as I live daily to prove! My apologies, and if we ever meet in person, you get to hit me on the arm real hard! (Then we'll buy each other drinks!)

Re codes of conduct, agreement.

Re geographical features, yeah, well, there is some idiocy going on, that is for sure.

This section of Jade Ring was fun. The best part was explaining "fiction" to James Bond. He took it remarkably well! Whether or not he is "real," he is highly skilled, and thus a great asset for the project!

Rect me, the fuzziness of the cover art, ish before last, was because I used "Paint" to enlarge it, and that was a tactical error. Paint is actually a pretty good program, but no process of enlargement can be "smooth."

Re Adrian Kresnak, I am currently playing/writing a world with superheroes – most of whom are fairly bland, with "ordinary"

superpowers. Strength, flight, toughness, etc. They're working as first responders for fires, earthquakes, floods, etc. They haven't turned up any "supervillains," and so ordinary disasters are their meat and potatoes. One specializes in removing stalled cars from freeways. This is basically from a role-playing-gaming session that has sort of leaked into prose fiction.

Heath Row: Interesting warning about software piracy. I can say with some pride that I've never done that...although, in the past, I have pirated music, making copies to cassette tapes and giving them to friends. I was young...and the process was so easy! Cassette tapes might almost have been tailor-made for music piracy! I was very disappointed when the US Supreme Court declined to accept the logical solution of a surcharge/tax on blank cassettes, to be divided among the victims of such piracy. Obvious solution! Idiot court.

Samuel Lubell: re convention panel discussion programming, I once had a very nice and earnest young fan complain about multi-track programming, saying, "You make it impossible for me to see everything!" Well, yeah, that's quite true... I took it as a good sign that he would have ^wanted^ to see all the panel topics we programmed!

Re fanfic, I recently discovered the Sherlock Holmes pastiches of Hugh Ashton, who does a sterling job of "counterfeiting" Arthur Conan Doyle's (and John H. Watson's) style. These are some of the best Holmes pastiche I have ever read...and I am an ardent fan of the genre!

"Asimov's laws were constructed to provide story ideas, not as any guidance intended for the real world." I sometimes wonder if Asimov, himself, was completely aware of that. He was known to criticize other people's writing, when they depicted murderous robots, crying, "That violates the First Law of Robotics." No, Isaac,

my robots do not subscribe to your laws... The man was a genius, but there were some moments when he behaved erratically...

Fun list of the books that influenced you the most. I can, for my own influence, bring it down to three authors: Friz Leiber, and the “Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser” series, for fantasy; Poul Anderson, and the “Dominic Flandry” series for SF, and Esther Frieser, and her book “Sphynx’s Wild” for “Urban Fantasy,” which is what I’m writing these days.

Delightful April Fool’s presentation on James Bond under the control of Amazon! All too plausible!

Fun canva pictures! I used canva for cover art for three of my ebooks; they do good work!

Kevin Trainor Jr.: For taxes, I go to an accountant. A bit expensive, but it gives me reassurance. I have Social Security and a pension, so the numbers are quirky. (Old Age isn’t ^all^ bad!)

Agreement that U.S. States have remarkably different cultures. (Here in California, it’s also true of our counties!) The U.S. has become homogenized in a lot of ways – McDonald’s and WalMart and so on – but we do still retain a significant degree of local culture and cultural expression.

Re travel, I’ve done a little, both for work and for fun. The work-related travel was “okay.” I never went “out on the town,” but just went from training center to hotel and back. But a good road trip can be wonderful! One of the most haunting, miraculous, soulful moments of my life was driving on the UFO Highway through Nevada, through Skull Rock Pass, under a full moon, at midnight, listening to “The Lone Ranger” on a distant radio station. That might possibly be the most significant moment of my entire life.

I Participated in a Protest!

For the first time since the Viet Nam War, I got into a public protest this weekend! I was driving along, and saw a big crowd. They were holding up signs, which, I quickly observed, I agreed with completely. So I found a place to park, got out, and walked over to join in! I didn’t carry a sign, but I stood and waved to passing traffic, and chatted happily with others in the protest. It was a lovely throw-back to the days of my youth. Everyone was cheerful. Negative, to be sure. There was a ^lot^ of negativity! The language used was particularly condemnatory. But there was almost no cussing, and a lot of smiling and cheering and happy expressions of optimism. I saw no violence of any kind. Some people, driving past, flipped us off, but that’s to be expected for a group of people holding ^any^ opinion! You could hold up a sign that says “2 + 2 = 4” and someone would flip you off!

It gave me a good feeling, and I was able to go away believing in the basic goodness of people – some people? Most people? I did not see any news cameras, and so I don’t know if it got any local evening news coverage. I can hope.

Upon getting home, I wrote to my Congresswoman and spoke of my belief that democracy was under threat, and that I was not wholly certain that there would be mid-term elections next year. I see it as entirely possible that a partisan-controlled FEC might intervene, a la Russia and Turkey, to ban certain candidates. I don’t think it is highly likely, but I believe it is possible.

Brandy Hall Issue 12 (May 2025)

Brandy Hall 12 is produced for N'APA mailing 276 (May 2025) by Mark Nelson.

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This is West Riding Press Publications ??? This is West Riding Press Publications (Australia) 35.

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). *Brandy Hall* 11 was the first issue to be written using pages, the previous issues having been written using LibreOffice.

“To make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from.”

Inspector Morse by way of T.S. Eliot.

The final part of my series on how I became a SF fan makes its end by starting at the beginning by discussing how I became enamoured by J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of The Rings*. For if I hadn’t been a fan of *TLOTR*, then Alex Holt might not have so readily enticed me into the world of role playing games. And if I not played role playing games then I would not have subscribed to role playing game fanzines...

I have enjoyed reading for as long as I can remember. Similarly, my brother, the younger of three siblings, has always enjoyed reading. My sister, the middle child, has never enjoyed reading. The idea of reading for pleasure is alien to her. A regular complaint of my mum’s is that, with the exception of a couple of recipe books, there are no books to be found in her home. I doubt that in the thirty-nine years since she left school that she has read more than one or two books for pleasure.

Jack-a-Nory

I'll tell you a story
About Jack-a-Nory,
And now my story's begun;
I'll tell you another,
About Jack and his brother,
And now my story is done.

(English nursery rhyme. First recorded in the book "The Top Book of All For Little Masters and Misses", published circa 1760.)

In addition to being a nursery rhyme, *Jackanory* was the name of a children's TV series that ran for many years on BBC1 (1965-96). The format featured an actor reading a children's novel. Each episode was 15 minutes in length and a novel was usually covered in one week, Monday through to Friday. My memory is that in addition to the actor sitting in their chair, illustrations were also provided. It was a rare event for me to watch Jackanory. I didn't need my interest in reading to be stimulated through hearing a story being told. However, my sister did watch it regularly. But then she usually watched everything that was broadcast as part of the BBC's coverage for children. (I vaguely remember the BBC broadcasting programs aimed at school children from about 4pm to just before the news at 6pm).

To mark the 3,000th episode of Jackanory the BBC prepared a special adaptation. Instead of a single actor reading a story, there was a group of actors. Instead of broadcasting a story over five days, the story was broadcast over ten days (October 1st to October 12th, 1979). The story chosen was J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. I don't remember watching all ten parts, but I must have watched sufficiently many to remember the broadcast and that one of the actors was Bernard Cribbins. (ChatGPT informs me that the other actors were Maurice Denham, Jan Francis, and David Wood). ChatGPT also informs me that "This adaptation was later released as an audio CD on October 3, 2013, by Penguin Books UK". I did not know that.

My sister must have really enjoyed the adaptation because not only did my parents buy her the book but she read it. Or so she claimed. Forty-six years later I have my suspicions about that... I wasn't that interested in the broadcast of *The Hobbit* and didn't ask to read the book.

Some time later... The date is late 1979, after October 12th, or early in 1980. Our family routine was to go shopping on Saturday mornings. One Saturday morning we are in W.H. Smiths, a long standing British retail store that at this time was a mix between a bookstore and a convenience store. At the front of the store were paperbacks, with the most popular ones facing customers as they entered the shop. I remember my mum picking up "*The Fellowship of The Ring*" and asking my dad if the runes on the cover meant anything. They recognised the name of the author and putting two and two together they bought the Lord of The Rings trilogy for my sister to read, on the strength of her allegedly reading *The Hobbit*. She never read them. Not only did she never read them, she made no attempt to read them and she made it plain that she wasn't going to read them.

Some time later... I remember that I was in the first year of Secondary School. This means that it was prior to July 1980. I have a feeling that it was still 1979. Returning home from school I informed my mum that I was bored and needed something to read. Seeing the unread volumes of *The Lord of The Rings* she replied, "Why don't you try this? Your sister didn't read it".

Typically there was a forty to fifty minute interval between my arriving home from school and our evening meal. I started to read *The Lord of the Rings* in this pre-meal interval. My slow but steady progress through the trilogy echoed Frodo's equally slow but steady progress, first to Rivendell and then all the way to Orodruin. When I finally made my weary way to the end of the trilogy, it was time to reread it. And then to reread it for a third time. And a fourth. And a fifth... Not only in the short interval between arriving home and eating. But in the evening. Any time we went on a car trip. It wasn't the only book that I read for the next few years, for starters I was also working my way through C.S. Forester's Hornblower series. But I did read it obsessively. Along the way I read other books by Tolkien, including *The Hobbit* and *The Silmarillion*. My Tolkien addiction must have come along fast and furious since I bought *Unfinished Tales* in hardback when it was published in 1980. I never got into the First Age of Middle-Earth, it was the Second and Third Ages that fascinated me.

Why did I enjoy the world of *The Lord of the Rings* so much? Why did it exert such a hold over my imagination? Nearly forty-five years after the fact, that's an unanswerable question. I certainly liked the huge number of little details that I only started to pick up upon subsequent readings. Not so much details about the plot, but details about the history of Middle Earth. Working out that some obscure reference in the first volume was amplified by some equally obscure comment in the third volume. I liked the feeling of entering a fully formed world which had its own history, a history that was mostly only hinted at. I liked the maps, full of place names mostly not mentioned or barely mentioned in the text. My mind had been slightly prepared for reading *The Lord of the Rings*. I knew a little bit about Norse mythology. I'd already collected and read C.S. Lewis' Narnia books. But undoubtedly it was unlike anything I'd ever read previously. And unlike many of the fantasy novels that I would read in later years, *The Lord of the Rings* really was comparable to Tolkien at his best.

It's easy to look back upon your life and to identify a certain event as being a watershed. But truthfully, we don't know how our lives would have turned out if we had taken a different road; there's no knowing where we might have been swept off to if we had taken a different path. Still, had I not read *The Lord of the Rings* I would not have been so receptive to Alex Holt when, three years later, he sat next to me in Chemistry class and told me about role-playing games. Had I not made friends with Alex Holt I would not have started playing role playing games. (I would not have also started reading science-fiction novels and *Analog*.) Without an obsession with role-playing games I would not have started reading *Imagine*. *Imagine* had columns on games played by post, fanzines, the latter predominantly, but not exclusively, being role-playing fanzines, and, in the earlier issues, a gossip column about role-playing fandom. Had I not been exposed to these columns I would not have started reading role-playing fanzines. Without the exposure to role-playing fanzines I would not have not started publishing my own fanzine, which slowly transitioned from role-playing games through what passed for a personal zine in role-playing fandom into a postal diplomacy fanzine. If Alex Holt had not also awakened an interest in science fiction writing I may not have joined the Leeds University Union Science Fiction Club. And absent an involvement with role-playing/postal diplomacy fanzines I would not have made much of what Steven Glover had to say about SF fandom. And absent of my friendship with Steven Glover I would not have had my first foray into science fiction fanzines (and conventions).

Had I not dipped my toes into the murky waters of science fiction fandom in the late 1980s and early 1990s I would not have had a brief fling with ANZAPA in 2001 and 2002. Without this flirtation I would not have rejoined ANZAPA in 2023 and consequently I would not have looked to join a second apa. And thus we come to the logical, or perhaps equally illogical, conclusion that had I not read *The Lord of the Rings* at the age of eleven then at the age of 56 I would not be typing these words for distribution in *N'APA*.

But was the pivotal moment when I stepped out the door and stated my journey the moment when I picked up *The Lord of the Rings* for the first time? Perhaps it was when my sister told my parents that she had read *The Hobbit*? Or was it in fact a decision by the BBC to adapt *The Hobbit* for the 3,000th episode of Jackanory? Perhaps this is not a story of a brother, but of a sister?

Jack-a-Nory

I'll tell you a story
About Jack-a-Nory,
And now my story's begun;
I'll tell you another,
About Jack and his brother,
And now my story is done.

In writing this account, which I swear to be an approximation to the truth, the whole truth, and something of the truth, I am also reminded, to return to the *Lord of the Rings*, of a Bilbo Baggins quote.

"I don't know what you will do, but I am going to step out of the door. I am going to see what I can find, and I may find a little of what I want or a great deal of what I do not want. I am sure that I will find a great deal more than I expect. And if I do not find what I expect, I may find something else instead. And there are many things that will not come to pass, which might be expected. But I will go to find what I am meant to find."

PS As mentioned earlier, thirty-four years after the BBC1 broadcast their adaptation of *The Hobbit* it was released on CD. I have tracked down a copy on eBay and ordered it. I'm looking forward to working my way, for the first time, through the ten fifteen-minute episodes. I wonder what my wife will make of it? She has seen the three Hobbit movies so she should have an understanding of the story.

Miscellaneous

An article in The Guardian reported that grade three to five pupils in Lamar consolidated independent school district (Texas) are no longer able to access a lesson about Virginia on their online learning platform. The reason for this is that the state flag of Virginia violates "the school board's local library policy banning any "visual depictions or illustrations of frontal nudity" in elementary school library material." If you knew that the Virginia state flag contains an exposed female breast then you can have one point. (I did not).

The Mathom House

The Official Organ 275

“And here is the latest N'APA, its file size pushing against our outer limits.”

Technically, that was a comment from the President's email which included *NAPA* 275 rather than a comment in *The Official Organ*. I like receiving *NAPA* as an email because it minimises what I need to do before I can read it. However, I would hate to think that size constraints of attachments in emails could prevent *NAPA* expanding. Perhaps it's time to consider other mechanisms for distributing mailings? For example, *NAPA* has its own web page as part of the N3F pages. I note that the most recent mailing has not been uploaded yet, perhaps not a good omen. If mailings could be uploaded to the webpage expeditiously then an email could be sent to members that it's ready for download.

Brownian Motion 12 (Garth Spencer)

“There used to be another widely-shared, level-headed attitude that this is a civil society, not a religious one.”

In 2016 the Australian Bureau of Statistics declared that Jedi was not an acceptable answer for the census question on religion. This was after the 2016 Census in which over 70,000 individuals listed Jedi as their religion. The grounds for this decision was that Jedi was a fictional creation and as such could not be considered either an established religion nor a recognised belief. Though I might counter that all religions are a fictional creation.

Intermission #151 (Ahrvid Engholm)

The only place I read a thorough account of the effect if the Ukraine war on the Russian economy is in *Intermission*. Keep up the coverage.

“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.”

It was a good thing that he was caught and prosecuted. However, six years seems a very short sentence for “rape, buying sex, pimping, violent assaults...”

“The latest news is that British police has finally given in (after some doubt, buying sex isn't illegal in the UK)”

Although it isn't illegal to buy sex in the UK solicitation is illegal. So the female prostitute can be prosecuted, but her male client is not.

“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).”

An interesting period, when non-computing companies could develop their own machines. I'm sure that I read that there was a British non-computing company that developed what was considered to be an important computer in the 1950s and 1960s. Unfortunately, I've forgotten it's name. ChatGPT was unable to help me, but a google search tells me what I'd forgotten. The company was J. Lyons and Co, a tea company. The LEO (Lyons Electronic Office) computer was built in 1951 to solve production

scheduling and delivery problems. Not only was LEO England's first commercial computer it may have been the first office computer in the world. They setup a subsidiary company in 1954 to sell the LEO II and LEO III computers to other businesses: 11 and 94 of these were sold respectively. Amazingly, the General Post Office continued to use them to produce telephone bills as late as 1981. How could they keep these old machines in working order for so long? They had to buy machines discarded by other companies and cannibalise them for parts.

For a while future Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher worked as an industrial chemist for Lyons. Something that I had long forgotten is that Thatcher was prouder of being the first British Prime Minister with a science degree than being the first female Prime Minister. She is still the only Prime Minister who graduated with a science degree.

“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.”

I'm not sure where I picked up the following, probably in some mathematics related publication about twenty years ago. The Japanese were worried that there was nothing preventing under-age children from obtaining cigarettes from vending machines. But the Japanese are great at technology. Therefore, before putting your money in you had to stand in a certain location. The vending machine took a photograph of your face, estimated your age, and then determined if you were old enough to buy a packet of cigarets. That is a good application of technology. But children are devious. They discovered that the software could not tell the difference between a photograph of the face of a real person and the photograph of a face that was contained in a magazine. If you were under-aged and wanted to obtain a packet of cigarettes all you needed to do was to hold up a magazine that contained a suitable sized photograph of a sufficiently old person...

“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.”

Those early computers always needed plenty of tender care and attention to keep them working. I'm always fascinated to learn about what was required.

Re Leigh Edmond's comment.

“To us it isn't Russia that's the worry, it's China.”

In the 1860s and 1870s the Australian colonies started to build coastal defence systems to deter an attack by the... Russian Navy. It seems incredible now that the authorities were frightened that the Russians might attack them. But it was perceived as a real threat. I've visited one of the more prominent of these installations: Fort Denison, which is in Sydney Harbour.

Ryctm

“Thanks for the Sven Eklund article! I hadn't seen it before.”

I'm chuffed that you liked it because the primary reason for retyping it was that I hoped you'd find it interesting. (That other *NAPA* members found it interesting is a bonus). Thanks for your corrections. I should really add those to the article in the way of footnotes, but I don't know how to do that in pages.

Ryct Kevin Trainor Jr

"Supporting Ukraine is a very cheap way to weaken a traditional enemy, without even risking your own soldiers!"

Is there any evidence that Trump contains Russia to be an enemy? On 2nd April when Trump introduced his tariff policy Russia was the only country to escape. He applied a 10% tariff on Australian imports despite the fact that the US has a trade surplus against Australia. He also applied tariffs to several uninhabited islands.

Ye Murthered Master Mage 275 (George Phillies)

Congratulations (?) on being President for a decade. Does N3F have a list of all previous Presidents? I see that on the N3F web page there is a partial list of Presidents. I see that there is also a list on the Fancyclopedia. These two lists are not always in agreement.

Ryctm #1

"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?"

I will follow this up in *ANZAPA* and amongst some of the postal diplomacy players I'm still in contact with. I think the name of the first Australian postal diplomacy fanzine was *Tau Ceti Phoenix*, but that wasn't 50 years ago.

Ryctm #2

"The historians' analysis of Presidents that you quote is strange. It reads as people attempting to impose modern opinions on a time long ago."

I don't know any more about the analysis than I reported previously. I think that any evaluation of past Presidents is bound to involve some amount of being wise in hindsight. Did the Presidents do a good job of dealing with the issues of the day and the issues that would become important later?

Intermission #152 (Ahrvid Engholm)

"Hunters protect the forestry industry and provide meat you'll find in the supermarkets."

Is Moose a regular part of your diet when it's in season?

"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."

As a young boy I used to like watching the "winter sports" coverage (Sunday afternoon on BBC2). Ah. Ski Sunday, that was the name of the program. It's theme tune, Pop Looks Bach, is an iconic memory for me. One good thing about watching winter sports is that you didn't need to worry about how well the British representatives would do - they weren't any.

I enjoyed reading your examination of how fandom has been portrayed in academic studies. I hope you continue working in this vein and submit an article for the next issue of *Australian Journal of Fandom Research*. I enjoyed the fact that it was cheaper to post a fanzine from Denmark than from Sweden. Was that still true if you take into account the cost of catching the ferry to Denmark?. Still, regardless of the cost of the ferry, I think it's cool to post a Swedish fanzine to Sweden from Denmark.

"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(!)."

I thought, how fantastic. How fantastic that a Norwegian SF fan was able to visit Ellington. But then I was puzzled, I never knew that Ellington had produced a fanzine. Surely I would know that. Then I had to reread the sentence. Cato Lindberg hadn't visited *Duke* Ellington. No, he had visited *Dick* Ellington.

Fascinating to read about the origins of fanzines in Czechoslovakia and the necessary approval required from the authorities.

Archive Midwinter (Jefferson Swycaffer)

Ryctm

"Total agreement that the fantasy genre, these days, have been dominated by gigantic multi-volume epics, and that it would be nice to see some more accessible and convenient one-book fantasy novels."

I have just finished reading a stand-alone fantasy novel, which I very much enjoyed. It's "*Legends & Lattes*" by Travis Baldree. This was originally a self-published title, but as a consequence of word-of-mouth it has been republished by TOR. Besides the actual story, there were two meta reasons for my enjoying this book. Firstly, it's a stand alone fantasy novels. Secondly, it isn't about a plucky band of heroes who defeat, against all the odds, some ancient evil, which makes elementary mistakes because they think they are auditioning for the role of the next Bond villain. Instead, it's a down to earth story about what happens when someone decides that their days as an 'adventurer' are over.

R.A.I.L. #5 (Adrian Kresnak)

Thank you for sharing the photograph about the shortage of eggs in Michigan. There has been a similar shortage for about a year in New South Wales. There are two main supermarkets in New South Wales. The shelves of one of them have often been bare for the last year. When they are not bare you are

restricted to purchasing two boxes. The same restriction applies to the second supermarket, whose supply lines have held up better. There was an article in the newspaper today (30.04.25) that I didn't read about whether we will shortly be paying \$1 egg. It's a Federal Election on Saturday. One of the minor, very minor, talking points during the campaign was when both the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition were asked how much a carton of eggs cost: the answer given by the latter was the more inaccurate of the two. I'm not voting in the election as I'm not an Australian citizen. But if I were voting then my choice of party would not be determined by whether their leader knew how much eggs cost in the supermarket. I don't know how much eggs cost, because when we do our weekly shopping we pay for everything in one go and I don't pay much attention to the prices of the individual items.

Why has there been a shortage of eggs? Approximately 10 percent of Australia's egg laying flock have been killed in Avian flu outbreaks in 2024 and 2025. That's 10 percent across the whole country. However, the outbreaks themselves have been localised. The worst hit area has been the Northern Territory. Not because they have suffered a huge loss of birds. Far from it, there are no commercial egg farms in the Northern Territory. It's been reported that supermarkets there have had no eggs for weeks.

Older houses in Australia, perhaps most houses built up to the 1960s, have sizeable back yards. One of my friends in Canberra, with a family of four, had a chicken coop in his backyard with sufficient chickens to cater for their own needs. One consequence of the shortage of eggs is that there has been an increase in the number of people owning chickens. There was an article in the media recently about a farmer in Tasmania. Every year they sell off their older birds to local "chicken enthusiasts". This year they announced on social media that they were selling 1,000 birds. These were sold within one hour - normally it takes them three to five weeks to shift that number.

Congratulations on being awarded your master's degree.

Brownian Motion 13 (Garth Spencer)

"One of the outcomes of this babel is the growing realization that conventions need to publish explicit Codes of Conduct. 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."

I believe that society has become less well-mannered than it was in the recent past. I don't know how this general increase in poor behaviour is reflected amongst the types of people that attend conventions. Types of behaviour that are now considered unacceptable were either socially acceptable in the past or people were less likely to complain about them. For example, consider the experience of Genevieve Valentine at Readercon 23 in 2012. (Readercon did have a code of conduct.) But that kind of behaviour almost certainly occurred at other conventions in the pre Code-of-Conduct era.

"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?"

There have been a number of cases in Australia where CEOs, or other senior executives, have lost their positions because they thought that the company Code of Conduct didn't apply to them. However, it's also thought that there have been many more cases where CEOs have been able to get away with egregious behaviour. They get away with it by agreeing financial settlements with the victims which are conditional on the victims signing non-disclosure agreements.

Ryctm #1

“Medieval books and Classical-era scrolls are fragile today, but have endured for centuries. Mesopotamian clay tablets have endured for millennia.”

Doubtless you have heard the following before. Some years ago NASA needed some very particular information (about the moon?). Someone remembered that they had collected that data in the 1960s. Good news! NASA still had the magnetic tapes on which the data had been recorded. Bad news. They hadn't kept the equipment to read the tapes. I don't think it's apocryphal. I'd like to think it's not apocryphal. But I don't remember where I read it. Still, there are plenty of other instances where electronic data is very hard to access.

Ryctm #2

“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?”

I'm sure that it's impossible to define a few books to capture the basic skills and knowledge any culture needs to build on. However, there is a famous statement from Richard Feynman which is along these lines.

“If, in some cataclysm, all of scientific knowledge were to be destroyed, and only one sentence passed on to the next generation of creatures, what statement would contain the most information in the fewest words? I believe it is the atomic hypothesis... that all things are made of atoms — little particles that move around in perpetual motion, attracting each other when they are a little distance apart, but repelling upon being squeezed into one another.”

— Richard Feynman, *The Feynman Lectures on Physics* (Volume 1, Chapter 1)

I have heard it said that his undergraduate lectures on Physics are perfect for physics staff, and good for postgraduate Physics students who want to revise undergraduate physics, but are not so good for undergraduate physics students. I wonder if George has an opinion on this? (The opinion that it's

fascinating to learn how Feynman thought about undergraduate Physics but that you already need to know undergraduate Physics to appreciate his perspective).

Ryct Jefferson Swycaffer

"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."

That makes a great deal of sense. Explains a lot.

Snow Poster Township 20 (Heath Row)

Let's thank the Post Office for finally delivering your package from 2012.

Ryctm #1

"Let us know if you find any other international "scene reports" during your research!"

I reprinted the article on "Science Fiction in Scandinavia" as I assumed it would be of interest to Ahrvid. *Australian Science Fiction Review* 14 (February 1968) also continued "Science Fiction in German", and "Science Fiction in Argentina". All three of these "Science Fiction" articles were especially written for *ASFR*. The letter column contained contributions from Samuel R. Delany and John Brunner, amongst others. Those were the days.

Ryctm #2

"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."

Thanks for the recommendation. I have made a note of this. At the moment I am slowly working my way through, at the rate of two books a year, the various Very Short Introduction books on British History. Only when I've finished those will I branch out to some new area. At least that's the plan.

Samizdat 30 (Samuel Lubell)

Inception (2010) is one of my favourite science fiction movies of "recent years". Not so recent now.

Ryct Ahrvid

"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."

I would love to see some examples of such problems. Is one of the point of this game that life becomes easier if you have covered matters in your code-of-conduct? Of course, a code-of-conduct is not going to cover every possible problem. It's not really the same thing... but in the postal diplomacy hobby zine editors sometimes pose some hypothetical GMing problems and ask their readers how they would handle them. The idea answer would be something like "According to my house rules I would handle this as follows..."

Thank you for providing an overview of Michael Swanwick's work - not an author I have heard of. As with all your summaries, I've made a note of the books that most appeal to me and/or the ones that you recommended. Though that doesn't mean that I'll ever read them.

"He took temp jobs as a typist, wrote term papers for students..."

It's useful to be reminded that students paying someone to write term papers for them is not a recent phenomenon. Probably as long as there have been students there have been the equivalent of "essay mills". I wonder when the first recorded case of a student being caught for using an "essay mill" was?

I've read zero of your "7 books that influenced you the most". I think you are cheating by counting the four volumes of SF Hall of Fame that you've read as a single book! But it's your list, so it's your rules.

"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)."

One educational initiative that I read about a while ago... I don't remember the state, was it Texas? Anyway, the state introduced a program whereby the top graduating student of every school was provided with a tuition waiver for their first year of college. Has this had a positive effect? Clearly, it can't be a panacea for low-income students since it's only a waiver for one-year and doesn't help with living costs.

Esmeralda Country Line 9 (Kevin Trainor Jr)

"the week after that there is an NSSAB meeting in Las Vegas"

According to the internet the number one hit for the abbreviation NSSB is the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board, which "is responsible for accrediting non-State schools in Australia, particularly in Queensland". I'm guessing that isn't the one you're involved with. A second suggestion is the Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board. Las Vegas is in Nevada, so perhaps that is the one. (I know you have mentioned NSSB before, but I do not remember what it stands for.)

Ryctm #1

"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."

Likewise I have made a note that I should read the story you mentioned.

Ryctm #2

“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.”

The SF selection at our local library is small. Although it does contain some Star Trek and Dr Who spin off novels, it also has a range of non-media tie-ins. They put the newer books on the top shelf and I’ve made note of some interesting titles to pursue in the future. One of the librarians recently recommend Daniel Keyes’ *Flowers for Algernon* (1966) on the library's Facebook page, which the library has in a new edition. As I hadn’t read it, I read it on this recommendation.

Ryctm #3

“I certainly agree that authors ought to be able to write standalone novels without dragging things out over six or twelve sequels”

I’ve recently read a stand alone fantasy novel that I really enjoyed: Travis Baldree’s *Legends & Lattes* (2022). (I mentioned this in an earlier mailing comment). I’ve now finished his prequel to this: *Bookshops & Bonedust* (2023). I didn’t enjoy this one as much, but perhaps I had an unrealistic expectation of it. I might have enjoyed it more if I’d had a longer interval between reading the two.

INTERMISSION #154

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and other who don't get US gov secrets via Signal. Try @SFJournalen's newstweets - a bit truce now, as the owner of X is mad as a MAGA hatter. Don't let your eyetracks stumble on typos here and there! Early May 25..

Editorially: Dump Dumb Trump!

The US president Donald Trump must have been recruited by the KGB in a visit to USSR in the 1980s, because he does everything to benefit Russia in the war they started. "Ukraine started the war" this moron claims. In his "peace" attempts, he hasn't put any pressure on Putin - who is instead rewarded with No Tariffs. Trump's envoy to Putin, the totally Witless Witkoff, wants to give southern Ukraine to Russia, oblasts (regions) he doesn't even know the name of. In the UN, the US votes with Russia and refuses to condemn Putin's aggression. Last year he used his leverage over the Republican party to stop all military aid for half a year, and now he does his best to delay all aid Joe Biden appropriated (Trump's administration will of course not give Ukraine further aid). He tries to trick the Ukrainians to hand over their natural resources and spread total fantasy figures about how much the US has given Ukraine - the word is *given*, but Trump wants to retroactively send a bill.

As if that wasn't enough, he threatens friends and destroys US economy. His tariff policy is incomprehensible. He invents his own back-of-envelope tariffs by a formulas economists have never seen before, and as counter tariffs are to be expected (unless Trump backs down) it will only feed inflation, slow world economy, kill growth and jobs, corrode the US dollar and bring us all into recession. But his Russian puppet masters didn't think of one thing: the attempts by agent Krasnov (his KGB cover name sources claim) to destroy US economy slows the economy globally so much that the oil price falls, And Putin needs the oil to finance his war. Those missiles he launches to kill children and destroy apartment blocks cost money. Soldiers too and widow payouts,

Russia is estimated to be around a year away from collapse. The interest rate of 21% strangles businesses (1/3 of Russia's companies are near bankruptcy) but it should be even higher to curb the inflation of 20-30% (from reports of the real price hikes in shops, official Russian lies say ca 10%). The Russian military is running out of tanks and APCs. Siberia's parking lots for armour, left from Soviet times, are running empty satellite pictures show. Left are only wrecks cannibalised for spare parts. A typical Russian meatwave assault now relies on golf cars and cheap Chinese motorcycles, led by a handful of museum armour. And it's quickly knocked out by Ukrainian drones. Russian advance has dropped to a virtual standstill - at huge costs. By the time this reaches you more than 1 million Russian soldiers have died or been wounded.

Many Russian banks are near defaulting because Putin has forced them to give bank loans to the armament industry. Russian equipment is crap (body armour is delivered with cardboard ballistic plates) and troop morale is low. Officers steal paychecks and equipment (then sold on Ebay) and those protesting are sent to the first line of the next suicide attacks. Injured are sent to Ukrainian lines on crutches. Ukrainian drones dominate the lower sky and any Russian soldier could meet the creator any moment from a dropped grenade.

To learn this, don't bother with Fox, Twitter, Facebook (often dominated by Russian Trolls, tens of thousands paid by Putin), Here are some reliable Youtube sources - I like YT and go there every day: UATV, TVP World, Anna from Ukraine, Denys Davidov, Combat Veteran Reacts, Jake Broe, Professor Gerdes - just write the names in the YT search field.

We must get rid of Trump (and JD Vance too). If Congress republicans don't rebel now, there's an election next year so people will have a chance to throw out MAGAites. And my hope is that a new majority could then successfully impeach this White House Russian asset.

There is a Ukrainian plan: withstand Putin long enough for his regime to run aground and see it sink.

--Ahrvid Engholm, editor-in-chief

Breaking News: Ukraine and the US just signed the long debated Mineral Deal. Most comments are positive, saying it'll benefit both Ukraine and the US. A result of the Vatican tete-a-tete? Does it indicate Trump's getting slightly less moronic? (BTW, Trump more than anyone made de Liberals win the Canadian election....)



Africa and Eurovision

Previous issue went into the *Eurovision Song Contest*, the melody extravaganza that is the biggest music show on Earth. In the 1980s, before cable/satellite TV was common and we got 100 channels, ESC had 500 million viewers! Today as competition for viewers is more intense, it's 200-250 million - to this comes tens of millions on Youtube etc where they watch and discuss the entries. And if your network doesn't carry it, you can easily find and watch coming ESC on the 'Net, semifinals and final 13th, 15th and 17th of May. 2025 looks like an exciting ESC year with many good entries, including the surprising Swedish one. So *Intermission* can't avoid staying with the Eurovision a little.

This year Swedish TV crossed the Baltic Sea to engage the Finland-Swedish group KAJ (ie from the Swedish language minority in Finland, members are Kevin, Axel and Jacob = KAJ)) which then won our selection shows. Their song "Bara Bada Bastu" - "Just take a sauna" - (Bastu=Badstuga=Bathing Cabin=Sauna) has created a *lot* of buzz. Check it out for yourself: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WK3HOMhAeQY>

Saunas are very popular in Finland, an obsession really, but also very common in Sweden and the rest of the Nordic region. KAJ has a catchy tune with a lively choreography and it went to the top of the odds charts. Even as I'm writing, their odds are getting better - I can't believe my eyes. A while ago Sweden had odds 3 and nearest competitor Austria 3.5, but now Sweden has 2 and Austria 5. Golly! Could the Sauna Boys really grab the trophy? Some may be tired of the Swedes winning (we could pass Ireland in ESC trophies, both now at seven). There are certainly questions about the Swedish entry. It's very *odd, not a typical ESC song at all*. And while it will probably do well with the public televote, the *juries are another matter* (they hand out 50% of the points). I mean, A song about saunas in a language most won't understand? Still, the "market" doesn't seem to worry...

Anyway, The KAJ trio does have a very lively act, they've been going on for 15 years, in all kinds of styles from rap to opera, from humour sketches to musicals, and they seem to be charming, humble and talented boys. On the net there're hundreds if not thousands of reaction videos, folk doing sauna dances, alternate versions, etc for "Bara Bada Bastu". The song does well on the top lists too. The "Sauna song" is heard in all corners of Europe, people even sing along after learning the lyrics phonetically, in a dialect of a northern language descended from what wildmen with long swords spoke when they attacked their shores 1000 years ago.

If they don't go to the top I have skimmed the competition and any of *Cyprus, the UK, Italy, Malta, Australia, Finland, Germany* and *Ukraine* may very well prevail. (I've devaluated Austria as I saw a live stage version of their entry and it sounded bad, really...) You easily find all entries on Youtube. And Sf fans should hear the Czech entry about a *time machine* (!) or the Irish one about the *space dog Laika*...

KAJ isn't taking only Europe. We find reactions from Asia, the Americas and oddest of all...Africa!

Here's the first clip, of a group of students in Uganda dancing to "Bara Bada Bastu" <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/irUtZe3SITQ> using the KAJ moves from stage.

It originates from a newspaper explaining that a teacher at the school had acquired an interest in Swedish music after being acquainted with a Swede.

Here's another African enjoying



More African Bastu dance.



Bastu dancing in Uganda.



Bastu dancing in Burkina Faso.

the song: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/t5aH7RAHEmY> It doesn't say from where, but the landscape behind doesn't look Nordic, but African.

Then we have this clip from Burkina Faso, a country lying at the edge of the blazing hot Sahara desert. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YskVAuti4k> It's no fake, They dance in rhythm to the



A big group Bastu dancing in Italy. Notice how Elbows Up is a part of it!

music, make the Bastu moves and sing along. Why Burkina Faso? It's a bit away from Uganda and could you in their hot desert climate really long for entering a 100 degree bastu?

Here we get a big group of Italians doing a synchronised Bastu dance, led by one Andrea Stella.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yK2ChYsWQI>

And here someone who gets even agent Donald Krasnov doing the Bastu moves:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O72zNf9WPR>

Finally, the global interest in KAJ and bastus made Finland's president Alexander Stubb visit KAJ's hometown Vörå, meeting them on a concert. The whole event (in Swedish):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnXUSDcK_B0 left from the official reception. A military reenactment squad

fired off a salute for the president with muskets from the 1808-09 war, in uniforms which at the time where the Swedish yellow and blue. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_x6qHX7YDTw

The president is there and people dance all over the world. It's insane that this simple - but well performed! - song has had such an impact. Surely it must take home the ESC!

Or?

Zitavision Film Contest

There's a lot of buzz about a certain competition where people in funny dresses jump around on a stage to music - the Eurovision Song Contest, or whatever-it-is-called. But how many know about the superior Sweden's Short Film Festival?

This time it was at Cinema Zita, Stockholm, during the weekend (with a Friday prelude at the Aspen Cinema in Aspudden). The reason for abandoning Bio Rio, used in previous years, was economic: a substantial rent increase. Fortunately, the new location made no difference. Everything was more or less as usual: a narrow foyer giving your elbows a workout, up to 150 expectant film aficionados, queues to the WC, a reception table hawkishly supervised by Magnus, a little tavern next door, and eager mumbling in the bench rows before each film block.

As usual, I grabbed a front seat. The is easiest to get into and out from. And gives your feet space. I like space.

There were nine film blocks of two hours each, plus the Minute Films, a Friday panel debate featuring Bianca Kronlöf, known from TV, and a children's screening Friday morning (your square-eyed reporter missed that, I must confess). The final event on Sunday was, of course, the award ceremonies. (For the awards, go to <https://sverigeskortfilmfestival.se/2025-priser/>, but I will mention



Cinema Aspen.

any award won by films in my selective summary.)

There was a 36-page program book presenting the films in their two classes: Film Schools and the Individual Class (i.e., everything not from a film school). Next time, I wish for an additional list with the films in the order they are shown, so you don't have to flip back and forth in the alphabetical listing to keep track.

87 ordinary films were shown, selected from the 240 entered to the festival, plus 92 Minute Films of 60 seconds each.

Master of Ceremonies Aase Högfeldt - she was also the Artistic Director - introduced each film block. The blocks were screened with a break in the middle and end where attending filmmakers were called to the stage and interviewed.

"Film for all" was this year's motto, and among the trends were films connected to immigrants, some about youth gang criminality, and possibly more animated content than usual (a couple may have had AI assistance, but I'm not sure). As usual, human relations were often a topic. Generally, there was a wild mix of genres, themes, and styles: human relations, comedy, documentaries, poetry, thrillers, music, horror...

The Minute films were shown in a complete sweep Saturday, and then on Sunday as the cup itself with 16 finalists. I won't go into the complex voting system, involving balloons and the audience sometimes called to raise arms, but the final winner was *"Bovieran"*. In it Cecilia Frode, known from TV, chairs a committee meeting deciding a gated community must continue to be gated. But then someone has a heart attack... A worthy winner, with a message.

Below are brief notes about around half of the films. I translate the film title (some had an English title originally), note main filmmaker according to the program book and length in minutes. Films are subjectively selected based on my direct impressions taken down when watching. The notes were scribbled in the dark in world-class bad handwriting, so it's possible your Cineastic Masterpiece was unfairly missed...

THE FILM SCHOOL CLASS

"Be a man" (Ida Jordeskog, 10m), a man talks about how his girlfriend wants "rough sex" but fears he'll be seen as a rapist.

"Conscience of a killer" (Amanda Henriksson, 14m), about hiring a murderer by someone who wants to commit suicide this way. But the hitman unexpectedly hesitates at the critical moment and gives advice to the prospective victim to contact helpful institutions instead. **GOLD IN FILM SCHOOL CLASS**

"Den oönskade" ("The Unwanted", Jonathan Lundgren, 15m), with two men camping in the woods. Suddenly a third man appears and he has a gun. Quarrel erupts and a shot is fired among the trees... Fine filming and acting. But it lacks a proper conclusion. (A problem with several of the films. A plot should end with an analysis or a



Cinema Zita.



Some of the film makers interviewed. Left in red Aase Högfeldt.



A standoff in "Conscience of a Killer".

resolution. That the filming just stops is no end. Script writing is hard, especially fixing the conclusion!)

"Den sista anhalten" ("The Last Station", Tim Wästfelt, 12m), a documentary about a facility providing care for the homeless. An engaging and sweet story. Since filming this facility has been forced to close, alas. **BEST DOCUMENTARY IN FILM SCHOOL CLASS.**

"En alien i Noras sovrum" ("An Alien in Nora's Bedroom", Elma Nilsson, 15m) in which Nora suddenly gets a visit by an alien named Trem, who's there to study humanity. I liked the guy playing Trem the alien (name unknown and Google unfindable.)

"En dos av min mor" ("A Dosis of My Mother", 15m) is a documentary about a mother filmed by the son. Among other things she's an "anti-vaxer" and argues that vaccines are suspicious. The son disagrees (and so does this festival reporter) but they still love each other.

"Ett hjärta av hopp" ("A Heart of Hope", Roba Burham & Oyun-Erdene Munkhbat, 10m) in which we drop in to a Syrian family who have fled the civil war there. Their house was destroyed in the bombings. The mother was a teacher and now teach immigrant classes in Sweden. A touching documentary.

"Härmapan" ("Mimicker", Magnus Hertzberg, 9m) were we met a couple driving in the countryside, but they are suddenly stopped and hunted by (what for me appears as) zombies. A blood-stained miniature horror flick. **HONORARY MENTION IN FILM SCHOOL CLASS.**

"Ibland är du ett sånt jävla ägg" ("Sometimes You're Such A Bloody Egg", Sophie Säter-Mahfouf, 15m) a strange comedy mainly set in a woman's uterus (!), which is shown as a room swept in pink textiles. A group of human eggs (women in pink dresses) waits for visits by men in sleek white overalls (representing You Know What). Rather funny!

"Mannen med mobilkameran" ("The man with the Cell Phone Camera", Mikael Högman, 9m) is a "meta film", you may say., about filming. The guy filming, in the film, doesn't exactly reach Steven Spielberg levels. It all reminds us that everyone today has a film camera in the pocket.

"Maria" (Mira Barkhammar, 12m) gets a new neighbour, but other neighbours deny that anyone has recently moved in. This contradiction isn't really explained, as I remember.

"Om vi ses igen/På tu man hand" ("If we see each other again/The Two of us", Filip Edlund, 14m) in which two lovers after being separated find each other again one New Year's Eve. Well filmed, using a split screen to tell the story from two different angles at the same time. **BEST EDITING IN FILM SCHOOL CLASS.**

"On a cloud of cotton candy" (Miranda Lunnerhag, 8m) is an animation. The director says it's based on common imaginations she and her father had in younger days. **BEST ANIMATION IN FILM SCHOOL CLASS.**



Nora (left) meets alien Trem (right) arriving to study Earth.

"People watching" (Kalak Qlamari, 5m) in which a bird watcher gets a surprise visit to his bird watching tower with unexpected results. (Lithuanian dialogue.)

"Quidditas" (Frida Stenberg, 12m) is a comedy exploring man's relationship with animals, by letting people step into the role of animals. Interesting idea well executed, and the cause of many laughs. (No award for this minor gem, alas.)

"SNAP" (Dea Lundström Lilliestierna, 15m) takes up a difficult problem: sexual bullying on the net. Young Stella is pressed to send a nude picture to a boy...who then spreads the picture! A film with a message worth noting. **BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR IN FILM SCHOOL CLASS** (for Zara Fredriksson)



"Svart taxi" (English title is quoted as "Time's Up", Filip Berglund & Angelica Jonsson, 10m) forces a girl who's a rap artist to drive taxi illegally to pay for "Press the Button!" the astronaut is urged in the film with the same title. **BEST LEADING ACTOR IN FILM SCHOOL CLASS** (for Halla Alrefay).

"Tryck på knappen" ("Press the Button", Samuel Fjellner, 3m) puts an astronaut in danger, who must press a button while fighting for air. As said, I like space.

"Vi är Occrasy" ("We are Occrasy", Sandra Österlund, 9m) is a documentary about a rock band by that name. They are a bit rowdy but seems to have fun, and you have a bit fun too as a viewer.

"Wingman" (Christoffer Ling, 9m) tells about a man grieving his best friend who has died. Suddenly he begins to have sightings of the friend, who wants to help him in an unexpected way.

THE INDIVIDUAL CLASS

"Ansökan.mov" ("Application.mov", Saga Samuelsdotter & Jakob Ekvall, 8m) shows three art students beginning to perform an art project late one night on a public square, but they are interrupted by a passer by and have to run.



From "Cleaning Finale".

"Arbete pågår" ("Work in Progress", Ann Engqvist, Anna Bokström, Lena Ingestam, Johanna Norrbo, 14m) presents a real environmentalist disaster scenario, letting all trees in Sweden being felled, except a few in cities. But now the chainsaws lust for the famous Japanese cherry trees in Stockholm's Royal Gardens. Fun but doesn't feel very convincing in its message.

"Cleaning Finale" (Sofia Ekberg Ekendahl, 14m) is a documentary about the 68-year old cleaning lady Elisabeth, who continues to work despite some ailments here and there. She also hosts parties for old-age pensioners. Heart-warming!

"Dunklet" ("Murkiness", Anton Zaitzewsky, 8m) is an animation about a man struck by sleep paralysis. (The director claims the stop motion animation took over 300 hours.)

"En dag efter jobbet" ("One day after work", Lars Vega, 8m) a colourful story of a man sitting in his kitchen going through all bitter setbacks in his life, while his wife heckles him from the TV room. This leads the man to som very drastic action. Very dark humor and well played by Lennart Jähkel, known from TV. **BRONZE IN THE INDIVIDUAL CLASS.**

"Ett öga för film" ("An Eye for Film", Jonas Eriksson, 8m) takes us to a couple in a cinema. He has just lost his dear father and begins to cry, with tears that soon gets worse (or so he and we imagine). Hot Wheels play a role.



From "A Day After Work".

"Farfar knuts memoarer" ("Memoirs of Granddad Knut", Michaela Box, 9m) is a documentary about the life of the director's granddad. She found a sound recording by him from the early 1980's where he talked about his whole life. 40+ years later she decided to make a film of it and illustrate his life. Interesting idea and the granddad's life was also interesting.

"Fucked up" (Edvin Åhrström, 10m) tells the rather odd story about how a gang of boys met a much older sexy girl at the bus stop. Then the youngest of the boys becomes subject to something unexpected.

"Hemtjänst.majd.undersökning" ("Homeservice.majd.investigation", Leandro Netzell Ceron & Samori Tovatt) follows an immigrant "home service" employee, investigating how the city council spends the tax money and how their services work." We get an inside view of the "home service".

"Hur blir jag svensk?" ("How do I become Swedish?", Ksenija Komazec, 14m) a documentary by an immigrant lady who hits the city streets with her "How to become Swedish?" survey. What is being Swedish? Citizenship? Language? Culture? Interesting project.

"Brev till mitt ofödda barn" ("Letter to My Unborn Child", Ida Åkesson, 3m) about how a failed pregnancy is difficult in every way. A counselor urges a woman to write a letter to her unborn child. Several years later, the woman finds a forgotten document, LTMUC.doc, on her laptop. The jury liked it, though I found it a bit humdrum. (It seems the festival jury looked for artistic films, preferably with a message. I look for entertainment and odd, interesting ideas.) **GOLD IN THE INDIVIDUAL CLASS**

"Kalla mig Kalle" ("Call me Kalle", Alfred Nilsson, 11m) a girl heading to the cinema with her new date is caught by her friend Kalle, who obviously has a crush on her and jealously follows to the cinema. Well played by the "stalker", and a bit cringy.



Sara is in trouble in "Mimicing".

"Konrad 32 år" ("Konradi look foreseeable 32 years", Konrad Pstocs & Alessandro Brellini, 6m) a dark and bloody comedy - maybe somewhat exaggerated - about a murderer who lives in the forest. Very funny and well played by the main character.

"Kontrasternas kontrast" ("Contrasts of Contrasts", Per Lundgren, 6m) is a documentary about the Henmåla triathlon, arranged for charity and showing the contrast to the commercial multi-million-dollar Iron Man triathlon. A warming little film.

"Kvar" ("Remained", Simon Andersson, 10m) follows a young man preparing a school reunion party, for class mates who have mostly left the little town while he has remained. But they are late showing up and he becomes angry. The end is a bit disappointing.

"Lång resa" ("long Journey", Anders Österberg, 15m) documents what happened to some of the Afghan youngsters who arrived to Sweden in 2015. Some of them now e.g. works for the city council. It seems results are mostly positive for those boys.

"MAMMON" (Max Shore, 13m) in which the main character is collapsing and throws up from a "burnout" in the middle of the city. A little horror flick.

"Min granne Linnea" ("My Neighbour Linnea", Emma Hellgren, 15m) follows a young girl in northern Sweden who appears to be very independent and energetic (for instance having a licence for driving heavy lorries) though she wasn't the brightest in school.

"Min jävla uppgift" ("My Blasted Assignment", Julia Ammouri, 13m) is about a student having the assignment to interview her mother about the history of the Cold War, but the subject seems difficult to discuss. (Have people already begun to forget about the Cold War? It's important background to what happens in Ukraine right now!)

"Nattlekär" ("Night Games", Emil T Jonsson, 13m) has a young boy in a problem family uses his imagination to hold the family together. Well played by the young actor (Dylan Kjellin) who also visited the festival. A charming little boy!

"Perro betyder hund på spanska" ("Perro Means Dog in Spanish", Marie Strömberg, 15m) takes us to Spain where a Swedish woman spends her time during the pandemic, among other things getting acquainted to a homeless man with a dog. It was filmed *after* the actual pandemic and still makes realistic recreation of it, e.g. with a scene when the whole neighbourhood applauds the medics.



From "Night Games".

"Prov" ("Test") a dark comedy about a man taking the test for getting a driving licence. The test examiner is bored and happens to fall asleep, and then...! The film was shot in one take without editing, from a camera placed on the dashboard. **BEST LEADING ACTOR IN THE INDIVIDUAL CLASS** (for Josefin Neldén).

"Skivhandlaren" ("The Record Dealer", Clara Noreen, 14m) is a documentary about the last days of the music record shop "Dirty Records" in Gothenburg, which had been open for 40 years. We know that fewer buy records - even if vinyl seems to make a slight comeback - so the shop must close. Filmed by the owner's daughter. A melancholic film.

"Skulden" ("The Debt", Anton Björkölund, 14m) is about a drug dealer, no stranger to violence. But he sails into dire straits himself when both stuff he promised to deliver and money is gone. Well directed and played, but as with some other films no real ending. In the last scene we see the main character being taken by his foe and the plot just stops. Not a real ending.



Both driving teacher and student look scared. Maybe for a reason... From "Test".

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR INDIVIDUAL CLASS (for Josephine Bauer).

"The Stroll" (Jona Zart & Lisa Hugosson, 10m) takes us on a stroll with two distinguished ladies from the 19th Century. They discuss the invitation list to a party, and are followed on their butler. He has problems keeping their pace since he has crutches. A bit of a comedy thanks to the butler's strivings!

"Söt/How to Boil a Frog" (Clara Vida, 9m) in which 16-year old My has to deal with being raped by her boyfriend on his birthday.

"Tristess" ("Boredom", Mattis Olsson) deals with that a deadly disease is spreading called...boredom. Interesting idea.



The Award Winners.

Time to roll the end credits:

Title: Zitavision Film Contest

Producer: A-v:d E-holm

Director: A Engholm

Writer: Ahrvid Engholm

Edited by: J A Engholm

Music: None

Length: Ca 2 700 words

Special Effects: Open Office Writer, Photo Filtre, Google.com

PG-13 rating, may be read accompanied by an adult.

THE END

Ben Hogan Rides Again

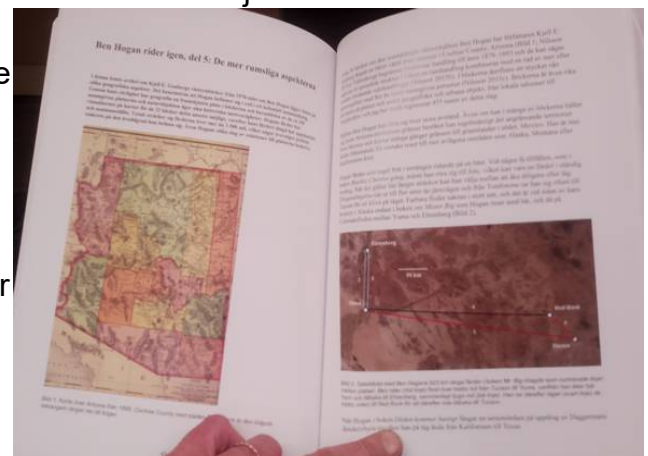
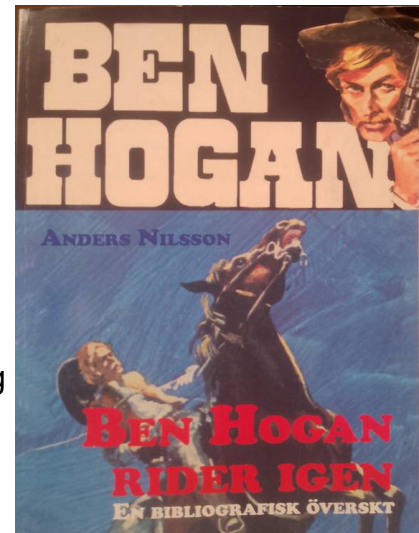
Kjell Genberg of the little Short Story Masters society is probably Sweden's most prolific writer, responsible for by now over 300 titles. Mysteries is his speciality, but on second place in his output we have westerns. At the latest Short Story Masters meeting Kjell gave me an interesting study, *Ben Hogan Rider igen* ("Ben Hogan Rides Again"). In it Anders Nilsson goes through all the books in Kjell's Wild West newsstand paperback series, written under the pseudonym Matt Jade, about the blond gunslinger Ben Hogan.

Between 1972 and 1977 Kjell wrote a total of 56 books in this series. It's about the Swede Johan Hellgren, who emigrates to the US away from being suspected of killing his own mother. There he changes his name to Ben Hogan (that name also happens to belong to a US golfer, 1912-1997, with no relation to the books) and begins chasing down his mother's real killer, who had also thought it was a good idea to cross the pond. (Our hero will of course get his revenge.)

Each Ben Hogan book of 128 pages - slightly on the low side - took a week to write as Kjell produced 20 pages per day. These massmarket paperbacks sold for SEK 2:75, in the beginning, rising with inflation to 4:95 at the end (ca \$0.5-\$1, in the 1970s exchange rate), in the "kiosks" (newsstands). At least 10-15000 copies were bought. Kjell himself in a 1973 interview, says 20-30000 copies, and in 2015 he said 40-45000 copies. (The higher figure could be explained by that many of the books were reprinted and also came in new formats - E-form, audio - which adds to the total.) Ben Hogan was also translated to Danish, Finnish, Spanish and Portuguese, and made into a comic book (one issue). The lengths were between 280000 and 42000 characters (ca 47000 to 70000 *) words. The whole Ben Hogan series is around 10 million characters.

Anders Nilsson had the advantage to get all the books in file format directly from Kjell, which has made it possible to do so some deep studies of the texts. This means that Kjell had taken the time to type the books into his computer, because in the 1970s they were of course produced by trusty old typewriters. The publisher wanted 36 lines/page with ca 74 characters per line, resulting in manuscripts having between 95 and 130 pages per book.

The books are set in 1879 to 1893 in the area around Tombstone, Arizona (although Ben Hogan can make longer excursions sometimes) which is classic Wild West grounds. (There's also a much later novel when Ben Hogan returns to Sweden as an old man in the year 1914, *A Stranger Comes Home*.) It was in Tomstone the gunfight



Maps of Ben Hogan's aera of operation.

* Over here text lengths are measured in characters (incl space, periods etc), not words. One word usually equals ca 6 characters, but that varies hugely between an academic paper or a children's book. Characters give a better length estimate. Lengths in "words" is actually a legacy from the longhand manuscripts of the 19th Century, as individual characters are hard to distinguish in those.

at OK Corral took place, with Wyatt Earp and others. But at least in the beginning Kjell didn't have much to go on, and took much facts of the area from journalist Jan-Olof Olsson who had visited the place and described it in his 1958 book *Good Morning, Wild West!*

But Kjell would later make a lot of research, studying history, the weapons gunslingers used, the flora, animals, getting detailed maps etc. Nilsson's study also reprints some of the maps. Hogan will later in the book series change his gun from a Colt Peacemaker to a Frontier 44, for the reason that the latter uses the same ammo as a Winchester rifle so our hero is spared having to carry two types of cartridges. An interesting detail is that Ben Hogan is partly inspired by a Swedish emigrant to the area named Johan Hansson (Ben Hogan's original name is Johan Hellgren).

Kjell's research would result in the non-fiction (I translate the title) *Wild West - the Story of the Big Promising Land Once Inhabited by Indians* (1974, a new edition came in the 1990s, I was at the release party for it - it's a fine volume full of facts). Kjell by the way originally named his hero Kid Hill, but the publisher came up with the name Ben Hogan. (And as Benji Hogg we meet our hero in Kjell's sf epic *The Avenger from Tellus*, 2022, where he has simply taken a regular Ben Hogan book and exchanged words, like a six-shooter becoming a lasergun, a stagecoach a spaceship, Death Valley the asteroid belt etc.)

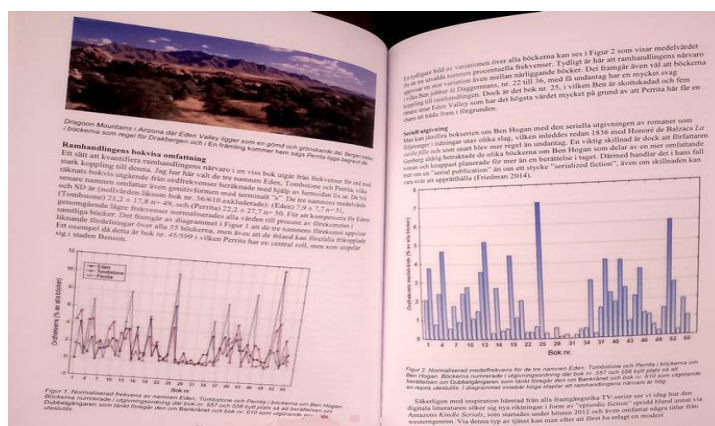
The Ben Hogan books are told in third person by a universal narrator and have between 25 and 50 percent dialogue. Nilsson put the text through the readability analysis called LIX, landing on level 26 to 30, meaning the text is easy to very easy. You should refrain from frowning, because writing so that your eyes fly effortlessly through the pages is much more difficult than spewing out complicated, convoluted texts full of pompous words, subordinate clauses, long winding sentences to get lost in. He also analysed the texts with the word variability index OVIX, which I don't know much about (but apparently it also shows the Ben Hogan books don't need the NSA decryption centre). Nilsson even go as far as to compare Ben Hogan with the ancient Norse Njal's Saga and finds some similarities...

Around 1000 persons are named in the book series, about 20 per book, and Hogan kills 200 of them! There are few tuckerisms: names referring to Mike Watson, a musician Kjell knows, and authors Jean Bolinder and Frits Remar are used - but it's not much. In one book the devil gets into Kjell and persons are suddenly given names hiding names of car brands. They didn't even have cars at the time...

455 geographical names are used, inclusive streets and saloons. Nilsson also analyses how Hogan travels. Through the series he travels 35 000 km, almost around the world, the longest trip being 2785 km (mostly by train, of course) and the longest he rides on his horse is 1063 km - poor critter! By the way, even if Nilsson's study goes into minute details, I can't remember we ever learn the name of Ben Hogan's horse. That's a definite oversight. A western hero usually has a special relation to his four-legged friend. (I would guess Hogan changed horses now and then.)

We of course learn a lot of Hogan's friends and life. He has a steady female partner in Parrita, a woman of the Apache tribe. They both live in a house a little bit away from Tombstone in what is called Happy Valley. In one of the books it's suspected that the valley sits on a rich oil field (but there was very little oil) in another there's a conflict around water rights (the place is dry as teetotaler meetings). I don't get the impression Ben Hogan drinks a lot, but it happens now and then that he forgets his Indian woman for a fling. Parrita is several times declared being pregnant, but it always ends in a miscarriage. Hogan has a halfbrother named Mark and his best friend is Hobo McKim (far from a regular at the teetotaler meetings, very far). Hogan's dog is named Bonzo.

Hogan has a very busy life. He hunts murderers, robbers, kidnappers and cattle rustlers, gets accused



Graphs of word usage in the Ben Hogan adventures.

of crimes (but is exonerated), helps out with cattle wrangling and is for a time employed by Daggerman's Detective Agency which results in a series of titles Nilsson describes as more of crime fiction. (Which is Kjell's favourite genre. His debut outside the westerns was a Whodunnit from 1974, while doing the Hogan series.) There's even a little MacGyver in Hogan as he in one book stitches together a hot air balloon to get out of a deep valley...

Ben Hogan Rides Again is a fine, fun and odd study. I've never read anything like it. We are spared gibberish like the symbolism of the plot in relation to post-colonial structures, the exposition of gender metaphors in narration, characterization of modernism through pseudo-realism and blah blah blah. Second-hand bookshops I visit often have boxes with dirt cheap mass-market paperbacks. I'm tempted to look out for more of the illustrious Ben Hogan.

While reading I thought of a few things I wanted to know more about, so I contacted Kjell. Here's some extra info in this mini interview (done though Email)

Ahrvid Engholm, Western fiction reporter: *How much were you paid for the Ben Hogan books? (Take it easy, I won't tell the IRS!)*

Kjell Genberg Wild West writer: No worries. I paid the tax. For the four first I got SEK1500, for all rights. Then it became SEK1600 and after book seven when the series began selling I got SEK2000. It was then raised a few times up to the top royalties SEK4000. But this was in the 1970s. Money had a value then. /AE: *The exchange rate at the time was around SEK5 for \$1, so divide by 5.*

How did you come up with the plot? Did you sit down and make a complete outline in advance, or did you start with a loose idea and improvise? A mix of that? Or something completely else?

Povel Ramel /famous musician and entertainer/ said there were only seven different gag stories. It probably goes for other stories too. I've went through everything from revenge, cattle rustling, water war, fights between cattle owners and sheep keepers. Much comes from man's ego, wanting to own things, greed. When I found an idea good enough for a whole book I sat down and wrote my 100 pages. I had to deliver a manuscript every fourth week, preferably being a bit early.

Can you describe a typical day when you worked with Ben Hogan?

Woke up at 8 pm, saw to that the kids went off to school, read the morning paper while having coffee and then sat down to write today's quota (at least 20 pages, 36 rows with 74 characters per page and could stop anywhere on page 100). It had to take the time needed. Sometimes I worked late.

Did you get any reactions from readers? If so, what did they say?

A letter now and then. Most of them appreciative. But also complaints like I had placed a railway station where none was built. When I pointed out that it was all made up I was reprimanded for having falsified both geography and history.

The traditional newsstands paperbacks began to die off in the 1980s. What's your impressions of the reasons for this?

By and large it was connected to that those who liked the Wild West and crime stories had their urges satisfied through TV. My friend Nils Eric Baehrentz /a previous TV boss/ had been making sure that the screen was filled with cowboys and English Whodunnits. So those buying the books bought other things. The newsstand chain /there was only one/ saw the dividends dropping and stopped taking the books. There was hardly any other distribution channel so the business disappeared not with a bang but more of a whimper.

AE: There was also a heated debate at the time about how the cheap paperbacks turned people into uncultivated simpletons. The government thus began subsidising the "Book for All" paperbacks. There was some but limited success getting Strindberg and Sarte into the coarse hands of sanitation workers and nightshift nurses.

History Corner

The newspapers have recently begun flaunting headlines like:

"Sweden Should Consider developing Nuclear Weapons", Expressen, January 12

"Europe Would Have Needed the Swedish Atomic Bomb Now", Norrköpings Tidningar, March 4

"A Swedish Atomic Bomb Signals the Enemy", Expressen, March 5

"Thanks Macron, But Sweden Needs her Own Tactical Nukes!", Fokus, March 8

"Swedish or Nordic Nuclear Weapons Needed", Omni.se, March 11

"Time for Sweden to Get Our Own Nukes", Göteborgs-Posten, March ?? (GP lacks dates)

"Suggestion: A Blueyellow Atomic Bomb", Göteborgs-Posten, March ??

And there is more - also of course articles against getting nukes. So let's talk A-bombs.

It's become topic due to the Russian war against Ukraine, of course, with Tsar Putin constantly threatening to use nukes. Commentators on warfare and politics are certain the threats are empty*, though they have still managed to scare some coward politicians (like Germany's Scholz and most of all that Russian Asset and foreign politics amateur D Trump). Sweden had an A-bomb program until the mid1960s. The big science delegation we sent over the Atlantic right after WWII gained knowledge about computers (as mentioned before when this column covered that subject) but also sucked up whatever they could about atomic energy - and Bombs. As noted earlier, the secrecy wasn't all that total. Newspapers had a good insight and John W Campell and *Astounding* found enough to warrant a visit by government security operatives. A lot of the Swedish atomic secrets I unveil comes from <https://teknikhistoria.nyteknik.se/langlasning/den-svenska-atombomben/144778> ("The Swedish A-bomb") but there are other sources too. You can google info and use G-Translate if in Swedish. Here's a summary in English, *The Swedish Plans to Acquire Nuclear Weapons, 1945–1968: An Analysis of the Technical Preparations*,

<https://scienceandglobalsecurity.org/archive/sgs18jonter.pdf>

The Swedish government (Social Democrats = slightly to the right of Bernie Sanders) and military began their A-bomb immediately after the war. Initially they imagined they could buy A-bombs from the US, but the Americans said No thanks! (of course). So we had to build the Bomb ourselves. Luckily we have huge deposits of uranium. A uranium extraction factory was built in Kvarntorp, in the province of Närke (in mid-Sweden), that by 1953 began delivering uranium (5 tons the first year). Another factory was opened later in Ranstad, capable of delivering 120 tons of uranium yearly. A factory for producing heavy water is built nearby, as the heavy water type of reactor is most suitable for producing weapons-grade plutonium (but initially we bought the heavy water from Norway) and could run on natural uranium..

Of course you need to test the technology first, so in 1954 our first nuclear reactor, a small research plant called R1 (top effect 1MW), was opened in the bedrock beneath the Royal Technical Institute, actually bordering Central Stockholm. ("Safety? Security? Oh, nothing can go wrong!"). R1 was finally closed in 1970 and after rather extensive sanitation its underground cave is now an exhibition and culture events hall. Another research reactor (R2) was built at a place named Studsvik (operative 1959-2005), where they also had couple of so called zero-effect plants for research (but that doesn't count). The third reactor was



1950s demo: "Atomic weapons? NO!" Signed "The Social Democrat Women".

*For several reasons: 1) Should it happen, NATO would see it as an existential threat, informed sources say, and while not fling nukes back we would engage our superior air force and wipe out all Russian military units in the occupied parts of Ukraine. 1000 airplanes working a few days would do the job (starting with obliterating air defences). 2) China, India and others (the BRIC bloc) who in any way support or tolerate Russia would turn 180. Oil incomes would dry up. Russia would be cut off from the world. 3) We talk tactical nukes (Hiroshima size) and they have limited battlefield effect. They'd affect a few square-km against troops that already most of the time dwell in dugouts and shelters. Each Bomb would only take out at most few hundred troops, and the Ukrainians say: If the Russians use nukes...we'll still keep fighting! 4) Using nukes could be a strong destabilising factor for the Putin dictatorship. Both oligarchs, army and ordinary people could turn against him.

the one to Do the Job. It was called R3 and was as the tradition went placed awkwardly precariously close to the Stockholm city borders at Ågesta. You can reach it by metro and a short walk. Beside weapons plutonium the Ågesta plant also provided district heating for southern Stockholm. It operated 1964-1974, but its plutonium was never used for Bombs, and in the 1970s bigger and better placed plants were built.

As the necessary facilities were in place the parliament took the decision in 1956 to pursue with building the Bomb. In 1957 a huge BAAANG echoed through the wilderness at a place called Nausta in northern Sweden. 50 tons of high explosives were used to simulate an A-bomb (it won't affect square miles, but structures and stuff put close to 50 tons of TNT will be subject to A-bomb forces). While technicians and engineers continued with research and design for the A-cracker, doubts began to grow among folks on the street and some politicians. A big public debate ensued: should we really go nuclear? The Social Democrat Women's federation (ie from the party in power) were especially active. Youth organisations and celebrities joined.

The public opinion actually managed to convince the parliament to ban active Bomb research, but "atomic protection" research was allowed. Many SocDems and the Military were still horny for nukes, so as I understand it the actual Bomb design continued in secret under the label "extended protection". We bought weapons-grade plutonium from Britain (R3 was not yet running) and began constructing the implosion "sphere" for a plutonium Bomb. How to go about with that isn't all that complicated or secret, and we have excellent physicists. A-bomb making is more getting the material, and less design. As you could read in #141:



1960s A-bomb test in Northern Sweden. (AI picture.)

MOT SVENSK ATOMBOMB

Svenskt kärnvapenförsvaret är:

**Militärt meningslöst
Politiskt oförsvarligt
Moraliskt förkastligt**

Aktiongruppen mot svensk atombomb (AMSA) bedriver en energisk kamp mot planerna att införa kärnvapen med Sveriges försvar, en kamp som föres i Svenska folket och hela mänsklighetens intresse.

AMSA:s program består av följande två punkter:

- 1 Vi motstår oss under alla förhållanden att kärnvapen införas med svenskt försvar.
- 2 Vi vill fortsätta debatten angående möjligheterna att övervinna de resurser som nu går till militära ändamål, för uppbyggande syften.

Sänd AMSA! Inom Er adress till AMSA, Jungfrugatan 30, Stockholm O

Navn:

Adress:

The blueprint for a Swedish A-bomb was ready already in June 1959. In a patent application, unknown until now, from the ASEA director Ragnar Liljeblad, approved in 1963, as "a solution for "arranging the fissionable substance in A-bomb".

The electric power company ASEA was atomically involved and designed A-plants as ASEA Atom (and was the company from which members of the Atomic Noah sf- and spaceship club came). A plutonium lab was built at a place named Ursvik, north of Stockholm, and at Grindsjön south of the capital there's a facility for building A-bomb parts. Sweden possessed 5 kg of weapons plutonium, just under what's needed, but just add a little - Ågesta starts soon - and we're ready to go. Planning starts for a live test at Nausta. The "blast lens" sphere needed to compress the plutonium is actually tested (a contraption of slow and fast explosives set up to compress the right way) and seems to work. Some even claim no real-world test is needed, they are confident it will work. (Just as Los Alamos was confident the uranium Little Boy would work. Hiroshima was the first "test" of that design!) We read:

1965: Sweden is ready to produce her first A-bomb within half a year, and after that a further two."

But other things stop the Bomb when it's almost a fait accompli. Ågesta

**Suppose we took the opening headlines seriously, could the Swedes build an A-Bomb? We could.*

We own 850 kg of Plutonium, stored in the UK (where waste was sent to be processed) and we have hundreds of tons of Pu in locally stored nuclear waste. Separating it is relatively easy and done chemically. The material is the key. Throwing together the pyrotechnics is a breeze - there're drawings in the local patent office. In the 1960's Sweden was six months from it, now it'd take maybe two years with the longer start stretch. We could ask our own Dr Strangelove - it's a joke, Janne! - fan and nuclear professor Janne Wallenius to help out.



Prof JW

would be able to provide about 10 Bombs/year and the military thought about 100 would be nice and round figure to have. SAAB had worked on designing the weapons carrier, the supersonic SAAB A36 Wolf, but it was scrapped due to high costs. Existing attack plane A32 Lance was instead modified to carry A-bombs (that proved to be lighter than originally thought). Not only is it a problem that the practical work has been done virtually in secret from the parliament and others, and that the public opinion if anything is even more against these Bombs, but the Americans began to wake up.

The US was worried about more countries going nuclear. The more states having the Bomb, the higher the risk of a WWII actually arriving. The contacts between our respective governments were of course secret - Prime Minister Tage Erlander had been over the pond and reportedly had good relations with the US prez. Sources say the Americans were suddenly ready to *sell* us A-bombs, but with a big caveat: the Americans would have final say on how they were used. The Swedes weren't too interested in this. A leading argument against A-bombs had always been that if you store them you become a nuclear target. At this point the US instead offered to extend her "nuclear umbrella" over us if we just quietly closed our A-bomb program.

And so we did. No official announcement was made, but the Soviets knew that A-bombing Sweden would cause a nuclear reply (that's the meaning of a nuclear umbrella). A little protection research continued until 1972, but that was it.

I'm not very keen on Sweden going nuclear. The arguments against are strong: the more nuclear states we have, the higher risk something goes awry. And if you have the Bomb, you are a primary target. It was OK of Ukraine to give up it's nuclear arsenal - the fault is that the powers guaranteeing Ukrainian freedom didn't live up to their commitments. The US, UK and others should have sent troops, jets, etc to Ukraine as soon as Putin began gathering forces at the border. It should have been done already in 2014 when the Kremlin madman threatened Crimea.

A thug only understands force.

More atomic...

I recently found a stack of Dagens Nyheter (our biggest morning paper, at most it had 400 000 subscribers but it's much less now) from 1955, and found some articles in it relating to A-bombs and things nuclear. The articles sometimes became a bit wrinkled as I unfolded the old newspapers, but here is an interesting selection. Variations in paper shades, slanted lines etc comes from the wrinkling and my attempts to improve the clips in a picture editor.

Moskvamöte om A-kraft Sverige med

Två svenska atomforskare, professor Stig Claesson i Uppsala och docent Sigvard Eklund, Stockholm, har av Sovjets vetenskapsakademi inbjudits att delta i ett möte med vetenskapsmän från 41 länder i Moskva första veckan i juli. Mötet skall behandla frågan om fredlig användning av atomkraften. Det är första gången vetenskapsmän från icke kommunistiska länder får en sådan inbjudan.

Inbjudan kom till Vetenskapsakademien i Stockholm för endast några dagar sedan, och de båda svenskarna har ännu ej definitivt bestämt sig för att resa. På dagordningen för mötet står 77 föredrag av ledande sovjetiska atomforskare, och bland de ämnen som skall behandlas är användning av radioaktiva isotoper i biokemin, utforskning av klyvningsprocesser och radiokemisk analys av klyvningsprodukter.

Den danska vetenskapsakademien har enligt Reuter tackat nej till inbjudan att delta i konferensen.

The first Soviet A-bomb was tested in 1949, after they had stolen the plans from Los Alamos through the slime Klaus Fuchs. We read June 22, "Moscow meeting on A-power with Sweden":

Two Swedish atomic researchers, prof Stig Claesson in Uppsala and doctor Sigvard Eklund Stockholm, have been invited by the Soviet Science Academy to a meeting with scientists from 41 countries in Moscow the first week in July. The meeting is about peaceful use of atomic power. It's the first time scientists from non-communist countries get such an invitation. The invitation came to the Science Academy in Stockholm a few days ago. And the two Swedes haven't yet decided if they will go. On the Agenda is 77 lectures by leading Soviet atomic scientists, and among the topics are radioactive isotopes in biochemistry, the fission process and radiochemical analysis of fissioned material.. The Danish Science Academy has, says Reuters, rejected taking part in the conference.

One theory is that Claesson and Eklund were invited because KGB wanted to see if they could find out more about the Swedish A-bomb program (which they certainly knew had begun). Eklund worked with nuclear physics and was involved in both Sweden's Research Institute for National Defence and IAEA, where he later became director <https://www.iaea.org/about/sigvard-eklund> Claesson worked with eg fast chemical reactions, which could have relevance for the explosive



Lise Meitner and Sigvard Eklund.

lenses of plutonium Bombs. But if either of them were involved building the A-bomb is not clear. Eklund became a friend of Lise Meitner, the German and Jewish nuclear scientist who together with Otto Hahn described splitting the atom (but Meitner was sidestepped when it resulted in a Nobel prize). She fled to Sweden in 1938, and was together with Eklund involved in the R1 reactor.

The Russians preached peaceful use while busy building A-crackers... July 4 in our year 1955 Dagens Nyheter had an editorial by the legendary Herbert Tingsten (a sworn anti-communist) about Russian "peace", "Russian Peace Propaganda" (I only quote the beginning, the rest is in the same style - Swedish readers may try the complete text in the posted clip):

Just like Germany under Hitler Russia has accompanied her conquests with peace propaganda. Before marching into Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and other occupied states it was declared that Russia guaranteed the freedom and independence of these states. After WWII and her huge gains in conquered areas the peace propaganda has become more general and systematic, and peace conferences have become a part, intended to attract not only collaborators and other gullibles. Russia wants peace, only Russia wants peace, that motto has followed taking over Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the communist infiltration and espionage in other countries, the abuses and offensives in other parts of the world. This peace propaganda has, just as with nazism, been a propaganda of incitement.

The above is still true.

I mentioned how Sweden naively wanted to buy A-bombs from the Americans. But civilian Atomic cooperation was more successful, July 2 (in 1955, all DN material is that year) we read that "Atomic Agreement USA- Sweden signed in Washington":

An agreement creating grounds for cooperation between USA and Sweden was signed on Friday, concerning peaceful use of Atomic energy. The agreement is similar to what has recently been signed between USA and a series of other countries - eg Denmark - and it makes it possible for Swedish institutions to get information on construction and operation of reactors, also a

quantity of enriched uranium and to this other material for scientific and technical research.

This could

be of use when it shortly, July 27, was announced "Atomic station No 2 will soon start being built" (text became fuzzy but is readable with some effort):

The first building stage of the atomic research station in Studsvik - the country's second reactor - is expected to start shortly. The cabinet decision is awaiting during the summer as well as construction funds of SEK8.4m...During Friday there was a conference with Atomic Energy Corp CEO Harry Brynielsson and representatives of the housing direction...about 150 persons need housing until 1956 and when fully completed 450

D · N
4/7 1955

Den ryska fredspropagandan

På alldeles samma sätt som Tyskland under Hitler har Ryssland ackompanjerat sina erövringar med fredspropaganda. Före inmarschen i Polen, Estland, Lettland, Litauen och den av andra ockuperade stater förklarades att just Ryssland garanterade dessa staters frihet och oberoende. Efter det andra världskriget och dess väldiga vinster i nya områden har fredspropagandan blivit mera generell och systematisk, och särskilda fredskonferenser, avsedda att locka inte bara medlöpare, utan också andra lättnagna, har blivit ett inslag i verksamheten. Ryssland vill fred, endast Ryssland vill fred, den parollen har beledsagat inlemmandet av Ungern och Tjeckoslovakien, den kommunistiska infiltrationen och det kommunistiska spioneriet i andra länder, övergreppen och framstötarna runt om i världen.

Denna fredspropaganda har, liksom hos nazismen, samtidigt varit en hetspropaganda, en metod att förbereda aggressioner och krig. De stater som upprustat och slutit sig tillsammans inför det ryska hotet betecknas som fiender, redo att kasta sig över det oskyldiga Ryssland. Till och med länder som Sverige har i årtal sagts vara styrda av en kapitalistisk och därför krigisk grupp av politiker, som mera fördolt och finurligt än Atlantpaktstaterna gör sig redo att angripa Ryssland på Amerikas order. Inom landet kombineras starka rustningar — de rustningar som slutligen drev Västern att upprusta — med skildringar av motståndarnas onda avsikter och obegripliga grymhet; barnen uppfostras att lära sig sköta bajonetten och handgranaten och blivnings den rätta andan genom att amerikanerna tecknas som bödlar och sadister. Genom förkännelsen att kommunismen är kallad att härskas över världen och att det krig som kapitalisterna förbereder skall leda till denna egen undergång fulländas denna komposition av freds- och krigspropaganda, denna hetspropaganda. Med krusna nävar och svandande blickar talar man om sin vilja att "obbligt försvara freden", det lugnande ordet och det brutala hotet blir sidor av samma sak.

Det drag i denna propaganda blir särskilt understrykt. Vid de angrepp som görs mot andra länder undantas i regel "folket", detta folk säges vända sig mot allians- och försvartanken och kräva intim vänskap med Sovjet. "Folket", det är den enkelt enligt det ryska ideologiska just kommuna-

va önskat förena sig med Ryssland — det han sade var på svenska en löga, på det kommunistiska språket en banalitet.

Den ryska propagandan och i viss mån den ryska politiken har på senaste tid genomgått en av de många förändringar inom den givna ramen som visar parti- och statsledningens smidighet. Man talar inte bara om fred, utan om avspänning, man har i några fall tagit konkreta initiativ. Värp beror denna taktiska omläggning — det vore än så länge absurd att tala om en nyorientering — och på vad sätt har den kommit till uttryck?

Orsakerna är omstridda. Det har talats om en sinnesändring hos den ledande kretsen i samband med Stalins död och Berijas likvidering. Svårigheterna inom livsmedelsproduktionen har ansetts göra det nödvändigt att begränsa rustningsindustrins utbyggnad. Västerns upprustning och allianser och inte minst Västtysklands inlemmande i säkerhetssystemet påstås ha gjort de ryska ledarna benägna för uppgörelse eller åtminstone för en ny strategi i det kalla kriget. Möjligen föreligger alla dessa med varandra sammanhängande orsaker. Säkert kan anses vara att Västtysklands självständighet och anslutning till Atlantpikten inte — som t. ex. var utrikesminister och hans informatorer i öster trott — lett till en skärpning av den ryska politiken, tvärtom.

Men vad har då skett, vari består den "avspänning" som hela världen talar om? En uppgörelse, en lösning av betydelse finns att anteckna: Österrike. Det österrikiska fördraget är en rysk eftergift, om man med eftergift kan mena förhållandet att en stat som många år saboterat en uppgörelse under svikande av hög-

tidliga löften antligen går med på att göra sin skyldighet. Att här talar om en eftergift, om ett ryskt tillmötesgående, förklaras självfallet av att när Ryssland gör något anständigt gläds den förvänas hela världen; som vanligt firas "den förlorade sonen". För de andra staterna var uppfyllelsen av förpliktelserna mot Österrike en självklarhet, som de är efter år sökt förmå den ryska statsledningen att acceptera.

I övrigt är det välvilliga uttalanden, inbjudningar till konferenser och ett par förslag som är mindre omöjliga än de förut framställda som konstituerar den nya linjen i rysk politik. Molotov räknade upp vad Ryssland gjort för freden under dessa år: Indokina (i realiteten en fransk kapitulation), närmandet till Jugoslavien, inbjudningen till Adenauer, initiativet till Genèvekonferensen, det nya förslaget till nedrustning. Efter denna uppräknning — jämte en serie anklagelser mot Västern — förklarade den ryske utrikesministern att nu "är det alltså de andra staternas tur att handla".

Av allt att döma har vi här kampunkten i Rysslands nya giv. Ryssland sägs ha redan gjort sina eftergifter, visat sin vilja till fred — nu måste dess motståndare vara lika tillmötesgående. Denna otroliga förvanskning av läget beledsagas med hotelser, undflyende formuleringar inför de andras konkreta krav, fortsatt freds- och krigspropaganda inom Ryssland. En överblick av de senaste veckornas ryska debatt ställer det utom tvivel att huvudtanken denna gång, som förut, är att förvirra, splittra, försvaga väststaterna och deras folk.

Belgiern Spaak, en erkänt framstående politiker, yttrade i San Francisco: "Låt oss inte försöka att förklara eller ens att förstå varför och hur det sker; låt oss bara fastslå med glädje att över hela världen det finns en önskan att talas vid." Det är denna ovilja att förklara och förstå, att bara vara idiotiskt glad inför tecknen på rysk vänlighet som kommunismen just nu bygger på — för att komma ifrån Västerns berättigade krav och i stället göra nya framstötter.

Cont from left (and then go up)

När vi ser på folket tänker vi på vårt kommunistiska parti. När vi talar om partiet tänker vi på folket. Dessa sätter ut en artikel i en basen av freds- och krigspropaganda, denna hetspropaganda. Med krusna nävar och svandande blickar talar man om sin vilja att "obbligt försvara freden", det lugnande ordet och det brutala hotet blir sidor av samma sak.

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Atomavtalet USA-Sverige undertecknat i Washington

En överenskommelse som skapar avtalsmässig grundval för ett samarbete mellan USA och Sverige när det gäller atomenergis användning för fredliga ändamål undertecknades på fredagen i Washington, meddelar UD.

Avtalet, som är en motsvarighet till de överenskommelser som nyligen träffats mellan USA och en rad andra länder — bl. a. Danmark — öppnar möjlighet för vederbörliga svenska institutioner att från den amerikanska d'affaires minister C. Douglas skall ka atomenergikommissionen erhålla dels informationer rörande bl. a. konstruktion och drift av forskningsreaktorer, dels också en kvantitet av

enriched uranium and to this other material for scientific and technical research.

This could

be of use when it shortly, July 27, was announced "Atomic station No 2 will soon start being built" (text became fuzzy but is readable with some effort):

The first building stage of the atomic research station in Studsvik - the country's second reactor - is expected to start shortly. The cabinet decision is awaiting during the summer as well as construction funds of SEK8.4m...During Friday there was a conference with Atomic Energy Corp CEO Harry Brynielsson and representatives of the housing direction...about 150 persons need housing until 1956 and when fully completed 450

The rest of the article is about how to get housing for the personnel! My thought: as this was a part of the A-bomb project it was difficult to get information. Secrecy, you know. But the paper took a shortcut and contacted the nearest city council and their department for planning housing, and this way they got information about eg how many people were involved. Smart journalism!

But R1 was already running...in central Stockholm. They decided to check if any radioactivity leaked. 8 July: "Radioactivity is checked in the air around the atomic station":

Radioaktiviteten kontrolleras i luften kring atomstationen

uranmetallfabrik i Stockholm, som Dagens Nyheter tidigare nämnt. Flera av stegen i framställningen av uranmetall ur urankoncentratet, som man får från anläggningen i Närke och som överförs till oxid, har nu också provkörts i projekterad skala

Avloppsvattnet oskadliggörs

Vid extraktionsverket i Kvarn-
torp har man tagit i bruk en anläggning för att oskadliggöra avloppsvatten från verket. Utredning pågår om att bygga ut anläggningen till större produktion. I samband

utan hög varmeeffekt som följd. Dessa studier är av betydelse för att man senare skall kunna studera hur reaktornas väldiga radioaktiva strålning påverkar konstruktionsmaterialet i anläggningarna.

Från Chalmers tekniska högskola har bolaget övertagit en s. k. kaskadgenerator för 400 kV. Högspänningsanläggningen skall anslutas till ett accelerationsrör som är under byggnad.

Luften övervakas vid Drottning Kristinas väg

Strålningskontrollen inom företaget har upprätthållits genom s. k. penn- och filmdosimetrar. Det är små filmpaket eller pennliknande apparater som all personal får bära i arbetet med strålande preparat. Genom att se efter hur mycket filmemulsionen svärts av strålning kan man avgöra när en person kommit i för intensiv kontakt med radioaktiviteten. Särskilda

härmed har i laboratorie- och teknisk försökskala drivits undersökningar som syftat till rationaliseringar och att även införa helt nya utbyteshjälpande processer.

Vid avdelningen för fysik har man utom de nämnda experimenten med R1 även konstruerat en s. k. pileoscillator. Det är en apparat som svänger ett materialprov inuti reaktorn och därmed påverkar radioaktiviteten. Vidare har man byggt en s. k. långsam chopper. Det är en utrustning vari en roterande blandare klipper av en stråle av neutroner som släpps ut ur reaktorn. Sedan mäts på ett visst avstånd det frisläppta "neutronpaketets" hastighet. På så vis får man veta vilken energi neutronerna i fråga har. Denna långsamma chopper kan användas när reaktorn körs vid hög effekt.

För en snabb chopper har man börjat spränga ett hål genom berget rakt ovanför reaktorn. Anläggningen befinner sig fem trappor under jord, och genom att ta upp ett hål i taket till markytan får man en bekväm plats för denna andra chopper uppe vid markytan på lagom avstånd från själva reaktorn.

Vid kärndrivningarna i en uranreaktor bildas värme, som kan användas t. ex. för att driva ett elkraftverk. Det utvecklas för litet värme i R1 för att detta skall vara praktiskt utförbart där, men med tanke på framtida konstruktioner har bolagets fysiker teoretiskt studerat olika värmeöverföringsfrågor och s. k. högluxreaktorer med anrikat bränsle. En högluxreaktor har hög neutronintensitet (med eller

...Several of the steps in producing uranium metal out of uranium concentrate from the plant in Närke, now transformed into an oxide, is presently tested in projected scale....At the department of physics they have, beside mentioned experiments with R1, also constructed a so called pile oscillator. It's a device that turns a material samples inside a reactor and thus influences radioactivity. They have also built a so called slow chopper. It's a device with a rotating shutter that cuts a beam of neutrons released from the reactor. And then at a certain distance it measures the speed of the "neutron package". In that way you can learn what energy the neutrons have. This slow chopper can be used when the reactor is running at a high effect....The plant is five floors below ground, and by making a hole to the surface they get a convenient place for a second chopper on the ground on a good distance from the reactor. When uranium fissions you get heat which can be used to power eg an electric generator. R1 gives off too little heat for it to be practical there, but thinking of future constructions the physicists of the company have made theoretical studies of heat transfer and so called high-flux

reactors. A high-flux reactor is neutron-intensive but without high heat effect...Radiation control has within the company been through pens and film dosimeters. It's small film packages or pen-like devices that everyone carry when working with radiating material. By checking how much the film emulsion has been blackened by radiation you can judge if someone has been in too intensive contact with radioactivity.

Checking the speed of the neutrons is essential for knowing if they will cause a chain reaction or not. These early reactors were for research and the A-bomb project. But commercial electricity-producing plants were already planned. We read July 8, "Tripled reactor effect, atomic powered electricity plants speeded up":

Atomic Energy Corp has begun

Atomstation nr 2 börjar snart byggas

Första byggnadssteget för atomkraftstationen vid Studsvik — landets andra reaktorstation — väntas kunna påbörjas inom kort. Konstruktionsarbetet avvecklas under sommaren om det byggnadsställande på sammanlagt 8,4 miljoner kr. AB Atomenergi beräknar. Arbetet har behandlats av de centrala byggnadsmyndigheterna.

Under onsdagen hölls en överläggning med AB Atomenergis verkställande direktör Harry Brynäs och representanter för bostadsstyrelsen, Tyngsberga kommun och Nyköpings stad om byggsplanerna i samband med den nya reaktorstationen.

För kommunerna står det att man anslutit sig till planerna för att få en ordentlig bostad för personalen vid atomkraftstationen i Studsvik, väntas kommunstyrelsernas ordförande Nils Lagerlund vid samtal med Dagens Nyheter. Till 1960 behöver 150 personer få bostäder och vid en framtida full utbyggnad cirka 400. Till nästa år är det inte mer än några få bostäder som behöver ordnas och kommunen räknar för sin del med att med egna medel och utifrån de låga bostadskostnaderna klara i första omgången 25 bostäder och vid behov det tredje året.

Av onsdagens sammanträde framgår att man från bolagets sida inte personligen eller yrsligt var den vill bostäder sig. Samtidigt kommer kommunen till övervägande beslut att bostäder ska i Nyköping med hjälp till bostadsmyndigheterna. Kommunen räknar dock med att 25 skall stå i en av bostadsmyndigheterna som en "del" av kommunen, som genom bostäderna ska i Nyköping. Dräkningen mellan Tyngsberga och Nyköping tycks komma att drivas med att Nyköping ska bostäder bostäder och till sig bostäder av personalen vid atomkraftstationen.

Vätebomben inför FN

Den svenska tanken — framförd av hr Uden i riksdagen den 3 maj i år — på en hänvisning till FN med förslag till utredning av atomvapens, speciellt vätebombens, biologiska verkningar har nu genom ett amerikanskt initiativ tagits upp till diskussion inom organisationen. På tisdagskvällen förelagde den amerikanske delegaten Cabot Lodge att alla länder "skulle ställa sina informationer till förfogande i fråga om den radioaktiva strålningen vid atomförore". Det uppges att förslaget dryftats med representanter för Storbritannien, Frankrike och Sverige — syftet är att till generalforsamlingens sammanträde i september ha upplysningarna samlade.

Det förekom ett karaktäristiskt tillägg i Cabot Lodges yttrande om att det engelska institutet för atomforskning, John Cockcroft, kommit till. Den i England hittills uppmätta ökningen av radioaktiviteten vid vätebombsexperimenten i Förenta staterna är i England sannolikt inte mer än en tiendedel av den ökningen som kan innebära fara från ärftlighetspunkt. Den är en tiendedel så stor som den som kunnat konstateras i USA; spridningen skulle således vara långt mindre än man tidigare befart.

Det är klart att materialet för dessa slutsatser är mycket litet, att det, som de båda förarkarna framhåller, endast är fråga om beräkningar. Därför är det nu i FN tagna initiativet så viktigt, forskarna behöver helt enkelt få ett mer omfattande material att bearbeta. Förmodligen kommer dock ej ens

rande. Informationerna skulle samlas, förklarade han, "så att världen kan bli övertygad om att den inte har något att frukta vid dylika experiment". Det är den officiella amerikanska inställningen, så som den kommit till uttryck främst i atomenergikommissionens rapport, där de genetiska farorna om inte direkt förnekades så dock nedvärderades till ett minimum.

I själva verket vet man ännu ingenting mer bestämt om riskerna, framför allt inte om riskerna för en större spridning genom radioaktivitetens "vandring" runt jorden, vid atomvapensexperimenten. Om de också från ärftlighetspunkt katastrofala verkningarna av ett vätebombskrig synes däremot inga tvivel kunna råda. Redan den jämfört med vätebomber relativt svaga radioaktiva strålning som Hiroshimabomben framkallade har beviligat givit upphov till skador i arvsanlag vilkas följder enligt den amerikanske ärftlighetsforskaren Nobelpristagaren Herman Muller "kommer att sträcka sig över ett stort antal generationer".

Muller har för någon månad sedan polemiserat både mot försöken att helt förneka de med atom- och vätebombsexperimenten förenade genetiska farorna och mot påståendet att hela människans arvsanlag skulle allvarligt hotas genom experimenten och att dessa därför borde förbjudas. Det senare är lika falskt som det förre, förklarar Muller, och det "propageras på ett sätt som kommer mig att tro att det är kommunister som drar i trådarna". Liknande slutsatser har också

Cont from right:

Tredubblad reaktoreffekt ATOMDRIVNA ELKRAFTVERK PÅSKYNDAS

Aktiebolaget Atomenergi har börjat undersöka möjligheterna att forcera sitt program för att få i gång energialstrande reaktorer, dvs. atomdrivna elkraftverk, i Sverige. Möjligheterna att även genom internationellt samarbete kunna påskynda utvecklingen följer nog, framgår det av en rapport till atomkommittén i vilken de senaste framstegen i bolagets arbete sammanfattas.

Den första reaktorn, R1, som startades i Stockholm den 13 juli i fjol har nu börjat köras med 100 kW effekt. Den inledande lägeperioden avslutades i stort sett under detta första år. Efter reparations- och justeringsarbetet på reaktorn, varvid en del små tekniska fel åtgärades, och en del av arbetet med tanken för tungt vatten, varit uranstartarna är också, kan körningen vid konstruktionseffekten 300 kW nu påbörjas. Tillstånd skall dock först bibras från strålskyddsmyndigheterna.

Till för någon månad sedan har effekten på R1 hållits vid 1-10 kW för att möjliggöra s. k. ZEBRA-försök. ZEBRA är en förkortning av Zero Energy Bare Reactor Assembly. Provet innebär att man i en mindre kärna för tungt vatten påverkar uranstartarna och pincer utan att reaktorn blir kritisk, dvs. utan att den spontana kärnreaktionen påverkar sig vid drift. På det sättet kan man av konstruktörerna räkna ut i fråga om uranstartarnas maximala diameter m. m.

Cont from right:

investigate to speed up its program to get energy producing reactors going, ie atomic power plants, in Sweden. The possibility to speed up development through international cooperation is carefully followed, according to a report to the Atomic committee, in which the latest progress in the corporation's work is summarised. The first reactor R1 that was started in Stockholm July 13 last year is now run with 100 KW effect. The initial low-effect period was just about finished then. After repairing and adjusting the uranium rods - by which some almost microscopic cracks in the aluminium capsules were mended and some work with the tank for heavy water that holds the uranium rods, they may now commence running it at the construction effect of 300 KW. They must first get permission from the radiation protection agency. Until a month ago, the effect of R1 had been kept at 1-10 KW to make it possible for so called ZEBRA tests. It is short for Zero Energy Bare Reactor Assembly. The test is to inHitoshima-bomb a smaller heavy water tank check the form and placing of the rods without making the reactor critical, ie without getting spontaneous nuclear reactions like when running. In this way they test if the designers has calculated the maximum width of the uranium rods correctly.

Sweden did build commercial nuclear power plants, but it took until 1972 for the first one to open. At most there were 12 plants, half of them were closed beginning in the late 1990s (blame the environmentalists!), partly compensated by increasing the output of the six remaining. However, studies show we need far more E-juice (windmills won't cut it, and the sun isn't a friend in the far north) so now politicians plan for building new plants. Wouldn't it have been better to *not* to decommission the ones we had?

Back to 1955. The US tested her first hydrogen Bomb in 1952, and as it was hundreds of times more powerful there were cause for worry. "H-bomb to the UN", 23 Jul, worried about eg genetic effects:

...Tuesday evening the US delegate Cabot Lodge suggested all countries should "make their info available regarding radioactivity from atomic tests". It was discussed with Britain, France and Sweden - purpose being to have the info collected when the general assembly meet in september..."So that the world can be assured it has nothing to fear from, such tests"...In reality little is known about the risks, especially of the bigger risks from radioactivity "migrating" around Earth from A-weapons tests. But there's no doubt of the disastrous genetic effects of an H-bomb war. Already the relatively weak radiation from the Hitoshima-bomb has demonstrably caused genetic damage that according to geneticist Nobel laureate Herman Muller "will last over a great number of generations".

But Muller doesn't think mankind's entire genetics is threatened, that's just "propaganda that makes me think it's the communists behind it". The USSR didn't yet have the H-bomb and wanted to stop it. Later in the article British findings are saying effects are far less than feared. But they worried a bit.

Finally, as if it wasn't enough getting fried by atoms, cooked by gamma rays, having your DNA entangled and torn...you also have to worry about the weather! July 31 "A-bomb makes the weather bad, French theory":

An A-bomb blast may under certain circumstances influence the weather for major areas for a considerable time, the chief of the French weather bureau's research department said, Roulleau, during a conference about the effects and possible dangers of radioactive substances that opened in Paris' Museum of Natural History on Friday and continued on Saturday. Another French researcher highlighted that the radioactive "poisoning" the Earth's atmosphere has undergone most likely will invcrease the cases of cancer.

There you have it! We all want a sunny, warm summer, but should it rain and be cloudy...it's the Bomb's fault!

Lattice of Commies & Nailing Commands *

Jim Meadows: Thanks for sending me Intermission #153, if only for the article about Sweden's entry in the Eurovision song contest. I watched the music video for "Bara Bada Bastu" on YouTube, followed by a 20 minute video featuring clips from EVERY entry in this year's song contest. Listening to that many songs, none of them understated, is a bit of a headrush. I'll be interested in which one wins, now that "Bara Bada Bastu" is an earworm living inside my head.

The origins of science fiction fanzines may be forever lost to history. But I agree with you that fanzines have qualities that a lot of amateur publications do not. I was thinking of a couple of publications by young men who later became famous. L. Frank Baum, American author of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" rais*ed show * chickens as a hobby in his youth, wrote articles about how to do it (for magazines that specialized in that sort of thing), and then had his articles collected in a privately published volume, his first book. There are elements of a beloved hobby, special knowledge, and self-publishing, but it doesn't feel like a fanzine. The American inventor Thomas Edison sold newspapers on a passenger train as a teenager, and eventually published his own newspaper (The Grand



Trunk Herald, "published by the Newsboy on the Mixed Train"). Definitely not a fanzine, since it seemed designed to make money. /AE: *I've written about Edison's train paper earlier.*

Actually The Recluse, the amateur press publication you mentioned, seemed at least a little fannish for its era, with its stories and poems with bylines from people I recognized as fantasy and science fiction authors, not to mention the long article by Lovecraft. There have been fanzines that take themselves this seriously, even if they can't afford letterpress. But I was intrigued by your identification of publications started by people from SF fandom, which carried the fannish spirit into other fields and topics. Your identification of three key points in the fanzine tradition help describe what I think I mean by fannish spirit, but I would be hard-pressed to give a definition of my own.

Pascal Thomas: Hi Ahrvrid, The subject line on your e-mail reminded me of the time you housed us in Stockholm and we discussed the merits of Abba. Great! You know, my wife still cites you as an example of Swedish drinking habits /AE: *only parties and cons, which are equal to a party*/, even though we since then had occasions to meet and get acquainted with many more Swedes - an occupational hazard, you might say, as we're both mathematicians!

I admire your courage in going to yet another WorldCon. I have to admit that after Dublin (where I glimpsed you in passing but did have the last chance to meet the sweet, lamented Eve Harvey), I lost heart, and when I debated with myself about going to Glasgow, I finally decided against it on account of the summer being already crammed with other obligations (even though I'm now a happily retired professor--well, emeritus, actually, which means I keep doing research and am kept quite busy).

To borrow a phrase from Paul Simon, you're "still crazy after all these years". I shall I say "outspoken". It's refreshing! It won't make you many friends, perhaps. I hold some of the same opinions as you about political correctness, but I see it as initially well-meaning gregarious stupidity. And so I try to let it pass without saying much. About Ukraine, I'm 100% with you - hey, you should spend more time with the Poles, they'd agree with you too. OK, perhaps I would phrase my opinion of current-day communism with less invective, and I have to admit that people today don't want to call Putin a communist, and most people in France who call themselves communists have actually deviated a lot from the original stalinism that Putin enthusiastically embraces...

On page 12, you have a photograph of Hélène Cruciani's SF puppets. She's a friend--I'll send her your fanzine (and perhaps you should add credit to her in the next issue). She's quite an original personality in fandom, got into it late after a brief career as an engineer followed by some theater studies. She's also a writer (a couple of novels and some short stories, but I guess she's part of that huge crowd of "minor" writers that modern publishing means permits, quite readable and interesting, still).

You should try coming to smaller conventions, since you like them, and especially the Corflus. /AE: *I go to smaller cons in Sweden sometimes. Going abroad for it is a bit costly.* After attending the first three in 1984 - 1986 (by chance, really), I went to the one in Belfast in 2023, and it was a lot of fun. There I did meet again some of the people I'd met at the first Corflu in Berkeley, and OK, it may make fandom seem like an old boys-and-girls' club, but what the heck.

Marty Cantor: Well, here is a loc of sorts on Intermission116.

And I think it has been too many decades since I last communicated anything to you. My genzine HOLIER THAN THOU has been sleeping since the late 1980s and its successor, NO AWARD, is also sound asleep.

Basically, aside from my major interest in board gaming, my fanzining has been APA hacking. Currently, I only contribute zines to the weekly APA-L and the monthly LASFAPA, both of which I also run. If you mention joining APAs and I am always interested in getting new members for the two paper APAs I run. However, you mention two e-APAs and I find myself totally disinterested in that method of communication. I am in several mailing lists; but, in the slowdown of my old age - 86 and still doing a few things - I am in the process of shedding some activities.

I have been on the LASFS Board of Directors for several terms (and have been the Board Secretary for most of that time) but I did not run for re-election last month and I will be off the Board starting January 1. I pubbed the LASFS monthly newsletter, DE PROFUNDIS, for the past many years, but I gave it back to the board last month. I have read Rob Hansen's history of the 1940s LASFS and found it interesting. However, as I did not discover fandom (and LASFS) until 1975, the early days of LASFS are history to me. I am interested in LASFS' past, but I did not participate in it.

In 1975 I was active in what was LASFS' first clubhouse that they owned. Since then, in 1978, LASFS sold Clubhouse 1 and purchased Clubhouse 2 (which had twice the space as the first clubhouse). In 2011, LASFS sold Clubhouse 2 and purchased Clubhouse 3 (which was twice the size of Clubhouse 2). Clubhouse 3 was sold several years later for three reasons: maintenance of the property was costing too much money, the neighborhood was deteriorating, and we again needed more space. Unfortunately, at the time of selling our third clubhouse, property had become so expensive that LASFS went into rented quarters and invested its money. We hope to purchase another clubhouse; but, because of the pandemic, we are now meeting via Zoom. /AE: *Isn't the pandemic over?*

My years of enjoying rock music - and, also, playing various instruments in American folk music and blues - are long gone and I mostly just listen to my first love in music, classical. And, now, mostly, music of the Renaissance (from the mid 1500's through the early 1600's). Also, Beethoven symphonies and the nineteenth century Russian composers. Now I gotta go. It is good reading you again. (Now, mailing comments.)

William McCabe: I'm repeating myself, but take care of your health!

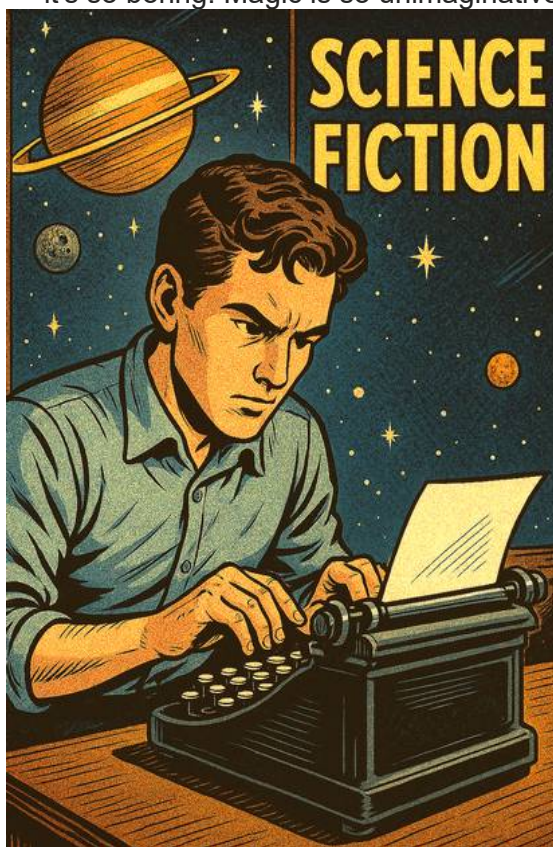
Henry Grynsten: Good analysis of the hippie era! Most of what you say makes sense. I connect this era very much to the youth protesting against the Vietnam war. There was a strong "FNL movement" in Sweden. (FNL=Vietcong.) The hippies - many of them at least - stood outside the department stores, Metro stations and liquor shops and sold the Vietnam Bulletin. (In hindsight, I think it was relevant to resist the communists, but

the US could have done it in better ways than going to war: sanctions, information war, to isolate the communists as much as possible.) The hippies were also a result of a) young adults getting better economy and more freedom after WWII, b) the expansion of higher education, as much of the events of the era was centred around universities. Now over to your comments in the Mailing Comets section. [§§] I have small fragments left of my Royal Library dig, but History Corner won't run out of material. There's so much in the history of sf and fandom! [§§] *"I've seen no improvement /of AI/"* I have definitely seen improvement. The pictures and videos AIs make are getting better. The level of hallucinations are goes down, you get fewer fake answers. The prose AI creates is better (somewhat better, at least). But there's room for more improvement. [§§] As for our brains... Evolution will favour making our brains observing and analysing reality as close to truth as possible. There's no point in having a brain that lies. However, data processing attempting to be truthfully detailed, is very energy intensive. So evolution will also favour balancing truthful processing against shortcuts to save energy. The shortcuts are usually of no consequence except on rare occasions. (The figure you refer to does show equal lengths, in any scrutiny taking longer than 10 seconds.) [§§] All scientists must have some basis in the scientific method, and this method is applied in any science for any topic. So any scientist (a "mere" expert of a "limited field" according to you) has a basis in the scientific method and thus the fundamentals for rejecting superstitious beliefs. (Yes, I know some may believe in a "god", but they do it with what they see as *rational* arguments, eg a divinity's nature is such that it is beyond methods to acquire knowledge.) [§§] My mention that the protecting your group's turf also influence how you interact with the unknown, wasn't an example of a superstition, but an example of that rational and useful properties may have unexpected, less useful side-effects (incl superstition). Evolution may create useless side effects, as a byproduct of reaching what is useful. [§§] *"There is nothing limitless in the universe."* Sorry, we don't know that. Club of Rome's tired old "Limits of Growth" don't apply for, the "forseeable future". And the further away unforeseeable future is irrelevant. We won't be around then and so much have happened in the unforeseeable future, forecasts are impossible - new inventions, crises, discoveries. We won't know if there will be a limit or not to growth. [§§] Puppets aren't organised to mimic humans. They don't move by themselves as humans directly steer them. [§§] I'd argue that (the minority of) philosophers, who claim consciousness isn't an emerging property from complexity, *believe in magic*. And magic doesn't exist. [§§] We may spend slightly more time on the sofa today, but we have machines that work for us! Productivity has shot up like a rocket. [§§] Coffee houses were under any circumstances common and of vital importance for spreading new ideas. Coffee houses got hold of the newspapers and pamphlets so people could sit there and read about all the new ideas. [§§] There is empirical data behind that humans want to spread. It's simply what has happened so far! And empiricism is science. [§§] To get the *best* spinoff and new data it must be activities from the most *challenging* circumstances, and space is exactly that. We would have a hard time to find other, similar challenges more cheaply. It's been shown over and over again that when we must flex our muscles unexpected findings appear. [§§] *"You reserve the right to dismiss 10 000s /studies on/ climate change."* Sorry, there *aren't* "10 000s" of studies supporting the climate "crisis" lobby's claim. What young Greta "How dare you" Thunberg, infamous Michael "Data Massager" Mann, Johan "Agronom and Cow Expert" Rockström claim is this, and note that all points must be valid *at the same time*: 1) There is a climate change bigger than natural variations, 2) This is caused by the (slow) rise of CO2, 3) Which comes from human activity, and 4) will result in a disaster. If any of 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 is invalid the climate lobby position falls apart. And there simply aren't "10 000s" of studies claiming that 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 are all valid! That some studies attempt to support one or two of the points isn't good enough. If climate change only equals natural variations, what the heck is Greta talking about? If whatever happens isn't caused by CO2, Michael Mann may manipulate as many diagrams he wants - he's still wrong. If it isn't caused by humans (CO2 levels have varied greatly despite Neanderthals building very few motorways), Mr Rockström is fantasising. And finally, whatever else if there's no disaster ahead IPCC belongs in the waste basket. [§§] We don't need "two studies" to contradict a failed, woke social science study. If the study is unsubstantiated it has zero worth, it's disqualified. If a runner, say, in Athletics is disqualified it doesn't take two others to run faster than him for the disqualification. [§§] No, robots will be fine having being servants built in. It's actually just as with humans, since we to a high degree also are preprogrammed to be servants. There aren't laws written to ban it, rather written to regulate it ("arbetsmarknadslagstiftning"). [§§] Laws about "animal protection" is really about *human feelings protection*. Many humans feel bad about certain treatment of animals. The human brain has a property called "mirroring". When we see something a (mental) mirror opens and we see it as if we are ourselves in the situation. We imagine that anything happening to an animal is as if we were don to ourselves, which causes a disturbing feelings. The "animal protection" laws tries to protect our feelings. Animals have no self-consciousness for which it would matter [§§] You can't "enslave" robots if they are built to be servants. [§§] No, computer technology benefited *hugely* from NASA and the Apollo program. The earliest Integrated Cicuis (ICs) were enormously expensive, but for space probes and spaceships reducing weight and size is of such importance that NASA was prepared to pay a big premium for the expensive ICs. And they were actively involved in making the ICs smaller and better and faster. In the mid-1960s NASA bought up to *half the world IC production*! This made the ICs being made in bigger batches that lowered the prices. Space gave an enormous boost to the IC industry, and it has been estimated it was a leap worth 10 years of extra development. In comparison, computer development 1940-1959 was painfully slow. The only development was that tubes were replaced by the early transistors on one-by-one basis. Space gave turbo speed to computers! [§§] It's uncertain, very uncertain, that automatic probes could find any subtle traces of earlier Martian life, which would be one of the most important finds in science history. To find the traces of it may need humans. We have, after decades of studies, found the first traces of Earth life from ca 4 Billion years ago. But it has required the finest sifting of material and the most advanced microscopes and analysis methods. That needs human scientists. It'd would also be of value if we could rule out early Martian life (it goes into into the

Drake equation). ☼☼ Yes, it's true that technological development also comes from war. Unfortunately. (Right now, eg drone technology in Putin's Ukraine war.) Space is a better progress booster. ☼☼ 1) We recycle a lot. 2) We use resources more efficiently and invent things. 3) We can get extra resources from the solar system and to this should be added: 4) Just look at the world, nature copes very well! It's in fact getting better. (I've gone through it before: banned substances, species protection, urbanisation increasing space for flowers and frogs, more efficient resources use, etc etc). ☼☼ BTW Aluminium is among Earth's most common elements on Earth, it won't be depleted. And soil is constantly created by nature, so we can take a certain erosion.

Heath Row: David Drake looks interesting. I might grab one of his books if I see it. ☼☼ Fascism/nazism and communism are about equally threatening. Communism killed more, nazism murdered more systematically. The problem is both believe they stand for the "ultimate good". Ultimate means that *any* sacrifice is justified. Communism and fascism allows you to inflict any damage, because in the end you reach the *ultimate* good... That's being dangerously fanatic. ☼☼ Unfortunately I haven't had any response to the suggestion of a Swecon WOOF. ☼☼ I have already been in Contact with Jaroslav Olša and he gets *Intermission*.

Garth Spencer: About practical jokes, a student prank said to have happened in Gothenburg: Students bought a park bench from a surplus store, of the type actually used in the parks. They carried it around and were stopped by the police who thought they'd stolen it. But they showed the receipt of the purchase, so a message went out on the police radio: "Some students carry around a park bench, as if they'd stole it from a park. Don't fall for it, they have bought it, so don't bother..." What happened now was that more students went out and stole *all* park benches. Without being stopped. ☼☼ I fear Trump may make it more difficult to come to US sf cons. ☼☼ I've seen the Seattle Worldcon's "Code of W/o/k/e Conduct" - not good! It seems they deleted sections from last years stupid "CoC", but there's a lot of stupidity left. (I should give detailed critique, but this is getting too long already. Nextish perhaps.) ☼☼ New weightloss drugs are arriving, and that may save Americans from the obesity epidemic. The best drug is one named Ozempic (a diabetes drug originally), but there's a catch: it's made by a Danish firm. Now, if Agent Orange wants to take Greenland, the Danes could retaliate by cutting the supply of Ozempic. So what to choose: Greenland or weightloss? ☼☼ We actually see plastic erode! We see microscopic plastic fragments: they have been bigger before, so it's plastic eroding (from plastic-eating bacteria). Plastic is hydro-carbon chains not too difficult to break up. Microscopic fragments becomes nanoscopic and then - gone. ☼☼ This constant medieval slant of fantasy is one reason it's so boring. Magic is so unimaginative, and being ruled by kings for real is undemocratic. (Yeah, Sweden has a king, but he's a figurehead without power.)



To my Swedish readers. Just asking for writing contest donations:

Dags för Fantastiknovelltävlingen 2025. Att skrapa ihop till prispotten har visat sig tufft, inte minst i dagens osäkra omvärldsläge. Därför vädjar vi till dig att stödja kreativitet, fantastiska noveller och Sveriges äldsta novelltävling med ett litet pekuniärt bidrag till vinst-potten! Eller lagom stort bidrag för all del.

Tävlingsadmin har inte Swish, men direkt bankbetalning går ju. Sätt in ett lagom belopp på konto 330 324 578 hos Handelsbanken (clearing-nr 6153, om det krävs) tillhörigt A Engholm. Och meddela ahrvid@ hotmail.com om din donation! Du kan vara anonym, men annars avtackas donatorer i tävlingsutlysanden! Tack på förhand!

Ps. Preliminärt tävlingsutlysande har nu gjorts på SKRIVA-listan (arrangören). Nu måste du

bara /b/a/d/a /b/a/s/t/u skriva fantastiska noveller!

С л а в а У к р а и н е !

Elbows up! Coudes levés !

Ye Murthered Master Mage 276

George Phillies
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester, MA 01609
508 754 1859
phillies@4liberty.net

N3F: We are doing somewhat better with club activities. Ionisphere rose from the dead. On the other hand, the count of dues-paying members is not increasing. I gradually have time to write members asking them for their ideas. I see that Jacqueline Lichtenberg's fanfiction proposal has given us several writers practicing their writing of fan fiction.

Comments

Brownian Motion: I am sorry to read that so many traditional fannish activities are folding up. The news that Broken Pencil would cease publication is particularly sad, as it relates to political harassment of its founding editor over foreign policy issues.

I will try to write more clearly, but my writing has for better or worse started to resemble Asimov's later tales: A lot of conversation, not much scenery.

I agree that gadgets come and go. For example, I have large number of friends who use cell phones, a device I do not own. My home has wired T-3 ethernet cables, not the more recent and less reliable wi-fi wireless.

Brandy Hall: I wish you well with your change in life activities. I retired and stayed active in research, though I also write novels. With respect to Trump winning, note that his opponent outspent him by roughly a three to two ratio. The math method has led to a math methods paper and a major research paper.

Archive Midwinter: I will continue to publicize our short story contest. I confess that I am not bothered about Good Art by Bad People, because I know nothing about most of the authors whose material I read.

RAIL: Thank you for telling me about Dr. Ecco. The tales sound amusing, not that I have time to read them.

A fine bit of fan fiction, with superheroes using their powers in positive ways. Hopefully the 'teleported away' sent the injured person to someplace useful. At the fundamental technical point, I saw no issues with your writing at the spelling, grammar, paragraph construction,... level. That's actually an enormous first step for each new writer.

Brownian Motion: Two issues in one APA! Yay! Even if the reason is a bit unfortunate. James Bond recovering from mental issues is a truly clever idea. Translating spy/commando operations to LARP terminology so that participants could understand it was a novel use of parallel customs. Once again, the fundamental technical aspects of writing are well in hand. (I've suffered through writing groups in which one loud, belligerent participant could not write at the sixth grade level, and did not take well to being given corrections jotted on a copy of her manuscript and returned to her. "After my novel is accepted, my editor will fix that.")

Glad you liked my fiction, though the current tale is approaching an end.

Snow Poster Township: Your mail transmission issue was surprising. You give an interesting note on software piracy, going back many years. Looking back in time is sometimes quite educational, not always in expected ways. I vaguely recall Byte as a very thick magazine to which I subscribed for some years.

The N3F Review has transitioned to bimonthly. The Eldritch Science Slush Pile is good for

several years of publishing, when last I looked. However, the new editor needs to step up to the plate, which is sometimes easier said than done. As you mentioned it, I have SF books I purchased at A Change of Hobbit.

Samizdat... If you write book reviews, The N3F Review of Books would be happy to receive them. There are debut novels from Baen, though I would have to research 'Is this his first novel, or his second?'

Esmeralda County Line I agree with you that prejudice against Star Trek and Comic fans was a tragic mistake for SF fan. The Serviss novel is indeed *Edison's Conquest of Mars*. Many authors have done better with the topic. Yes, someone is still fussing about the proposed outreach..which no one ever really did.

Shepdon Fields, continued

"Oh, no," Mrs. Baskerville said. "Kittens are the bravest of all baby animals. Other baby animals, if mom disappears, they huddle, getting colder and colder and hungrier and hungrier until they die. Not every time, but every so often, a kitten will gather up its weak strength, totter to what it hopes is a friendly door, and scratch on the wood, hoping that the human inside will give it shelter. Kittens are truly brave, especially this one, which must have been barely old enough to walk, and still tried to find a home."

"Oh," a chastened Charlotte said.

"Now I have to take care of them and their mom until the vet visits the village."

"I might be able to help with Orange," Charlotte said. "No promises. But I won't make things worse."

"Can I help?" Mrs. Baskerville asked.

"It would be easier if you were in your kitchen," Charlotte answered. "An extra mind in the room – that's you --makes it harder for me to fix what's wrong. No, I don't know how to explain that better."

"I don't need to understand. I'll take your word for it," Mrs. Baskerville answered. "But what will you do?"

"I'm going to help Orange doze off," Charlotte said, "then put her into deep sleep, and block the pain in her leg. Then I can fix things. Her leg has a very clean break in one bone, and a lot of bruising near where it broke."

"How...how can you tell?" Mrs. Baskerville asked. "It won't hurt her, will it?"

"I can see, not exactly see, it," Charlotte answered. *Yes, Charlotte thought, she is going on a bit, but she is worried about her very old cat.*

Momma cat was presented with three more kittens, who hungrily descended on their mother.

I can do this, Charlotte thought, no matter how demanding it is. She eased Orange into a deeper and deeper sleep, a contented Orange beginning to purr when Charlotte blocked the pain in the cat's leg.

Charlotte's aura flared into the violet. Sweat poured from her forehead. She gently adjusted the leg until the two bone ends seated. Healing processes that might have taken a week happened in the space of a few minutes.

Finally she stopped, gradually bringing Orange back to awareness. The cat shifted its position to cradle its kittens, who continued to suckle hungrily.

"All done, Mrs. Baskerville," Charlotte said. "She should walk as little as possible for another

week or two. May I please use your sink to wash my face? I'm a bit of a mess."

BROWNIAN MOTION #13

An apazine from Garth Spencer

May 2025



A Code that You Can Live By

A fair amount of text in the last mailing revolved around Codes of Conduct.

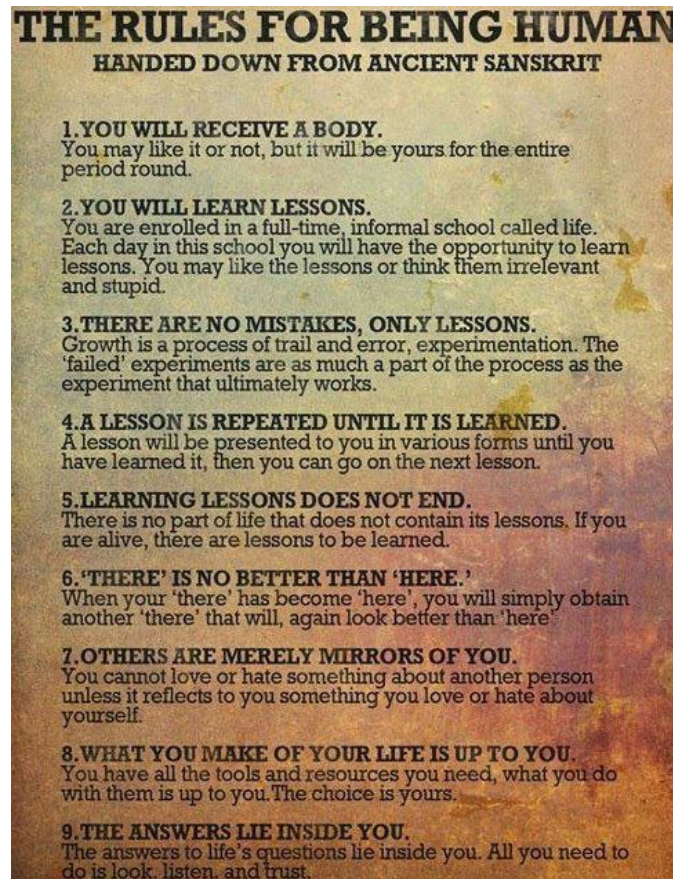
Based on the great argument about it and about, I have to conclude that contemporary conventions **do** need to publish Codes of Conduct. It isn't as if people necessarily have any idea of 'common sense' or 'common courtesy' – after all, neither families nor schools teach these things as a matter of course, now do they?

To give you specific examples: the long-running Vancouver convention, VCON, was bothered by a jackass who repeatedly did things like setting up a hibachi on the balcony of his rented room (this was when we rented a university dorm, and the balconies were ever so tiny), and then he felt put upon when the convention told him to shut it down or we would be kicked out. This was the same man who persisted in giving minors "atomic" cherries (these were maraschino cherries marinated in vodka) and objected when we told him to stop it.

So, rather unfairly, it falls to convention committees to tell congoers that they have to wash regularly, respect other people's personal space, refrain from touching (or even photographing) people without consent, control their speech and actions even when they've been drinking, etc., etc.

Based on the issues raised in our mutual comments, I don't see the evidence that Codes of Conduct are unfair to impose 'politically correct' standards on congoers, or muzzling free speech. In fact they're trying to point out what behaviour is legal, and common courtesy, to people who seem unaware these things apply at SF conventions.

Dragging 'woke' attitudes into the controversy can be ignored; if we aren't using the same definitions for these things, we're not speaking or writing with any intent to communicate. (And *don't* get me started on the basic rules for communication I expect from fully-qualified people.)



Life Skills: A Proposed Encyclopedic List

How many of these 'common sense' things does everybody know? (This is a checklist to see how common alleged 'common sense' is.)

- _____ How to access health care
- _____ How to address an envelope
- _____ How to apologize
- _____ How to apply some science to your home, to renovations, to health, to gardening or your workspace
- _____ How to arrange flowers
- _____ How to ask for a raise or a promotion
- _____ How to ask someone out
- _____ How to bake chocolate chip cookies

- _____ How to balance your chequebook
- _____ How to barbecue
- _____ How to be a citizen
- _____ How to be a good houseguest
- _____ How to be a gracious host
- _____ How to be aware of your environment
- _____ How to breathe properly
- _____ How to brew coffee
- _____ How to build a fire
- _____ How to build and drive a go-cart
- _____ How to build and maintain a website
- _____ How to buy a diamond
- _____ How to buy fish
- _____ How to buy groceries
- _____ How to care for a houseplant
- _____ How to care for your skin
- _____ How to catch fish
- _____ How to change a diaper
- _____ How to change a tire
- _____ How to change your oil
- _____ How to clean a house
- _____ How to clean and deodorize shoes
- _____ How to clean clothes
- _____ How to conduct a background investigation
- _____ How to cook
- _____ How to cook eggs
- _____ How to create a family tree
- _____ How to decide what you have to do next (executive skills)
- _____ How to decorate a Christmas tree
- _____ How to deliver bad news
- _____ How to detect opportunities
- _____ How to detect threats
- _____ How to distinguish weather from climate

- _____ How to do laundry
- _____ How to do push-ups and sit-ups
- _____ How to dowse for water
- _____ How to draw and/or read a blueprint
- _____ How to dress conventionally
- _____ How to drive a stick shift
- _____ How to eat at a table
- _____ How to eat properly
- _____ How to exercise authority
- _____ How to exercise properly
- _____ How to find and use public services
- _____ How to find your way by the sun and stars, when you don't have a compass and map
- _____ How to find your way with a compass and map, when you don't have GSP
- _____ How to fireproof cloth
- _____ How to flirt
- _____ How to fly a flag
- _____ How to garden
- _____ How to give a gift
- _____ How to give a massage
- _____ How to give and receive a compliment
- _____ How to grind an italic pen nib
- _____ How to grow sunflowers
- _____ How to handle a job interview
- _____ How to hang a picture
- _____ How to have a great smile
- _____ How to have good posture
- _____ How to hold a baby
- _____ How to house-train a puppy
- _____ How to hunt and cook a rabbit
- _____ How to identify cloud formations (and what they mean)
- _____ How to identify dinosaurs
- _____ How to identify fossils

- _____ How to identify insects and spiders
- _____ How to improve your vocabulary
- _____ How to improvise a battery
- _____ How to iron a shirt
- _____ How to jog
- _____ How to juggle
- _____ How to kiss
- _____ How to learn
- _____ How to learn (and when to apply) self-defence skills
- _____ How to learn a foreign language
- _____ How to learn and use math
- _____ How to listen
- _____ How to look for a job
- _____ How to maintain your personal, financial, and home security
- _____ How to maintain, repair, and use computers
- _____ How to maintain/repair a bicycle
- _____ How to make a bed
- _____ How to make a catapult
- _____ How to make a light
- _____ How to make a paper hat, a paper boat, or a paper waterbomb
- _____ How to make a paper plane
- _____ How to make a periscope
- _____ How to make a toast
- _____ How to make an educated guess
- _____ How to make an electromagnet
- _____ How to make an essential toolkit
- _____ How to make and use a bow and arrow
- _____ How to make and use a pinhole camera
- _____ How to make and use a workbench
- _____ How to make and use secret inks
- _____ How to make and use timers and tripwires
- _____ How to make coffee
- _____ How to make conversation

- _____ How to make crystals
- _____ How to make tea
- _____ How to manage your time
- _____ How to measure time
- _____ How to mow a lawn
- _____ How to negotiate
- _____ How to organize
- _____ How to organize a pantry/a kitchen/an attic or basement
- _____ How to organize and calculate your personal finances
- _____ How to pack for a trip
- _____ How to paint a room
- _____ How to perform coin tricks
- _____ How to perform first aid
- _____ How to perform investigative research
- _____ How to pick produce
- _____ How to plan a wedding
- _____ How to plan for a trip
- _____ How to play chess
- _____ How to play marbles
- _____ How to play pen and paper games
- _____ How to play role-playing games
- _____ How to practice an art
- _____ How to practice personal hygiene (even in the wild)
- _____ How to practice verbal self-defence
- _____ How to prepare for a disaster
- _____ How to prepare for the seasons
- _____ How to protect your privacy
- _____ How to pursue continuing education
- _____ How to read a newspaper
- _____ How to read aloud
- _____ How to read body language
- _____ How to read critically
- _____ How to read history

- _____ How to read naval flag codes
- _____ How to recognize cons, frauds, and scams
- _____ How to recognize constellations
- _____ How to relax
- _____ How to relocate (move)
- _____ How to remember and use Latin phrases
- _____ How to remember and use measurements (Imperial and metric)
- _____ How to remember names
- _____ How to remember poems (and the best ones to pick)
- _____ How to remove a stain
- _____ How to save money
- _____ How to set a formal table
- _____ How to set a place at table
- _____ How to sew a button
- _____ How to shake hands
- _____ How to shave
- _____ How to shine shoes
- _____ How to shovel snow
- _____ How to skim stones
- _____ How to sleep properly
- _____ How to smile for the camera
- _____ How to speak in public
- _____ How to speak, write and read English
- _____ How to speed-read
- _____ How to stay warm
- _____ How to swim
- _____ How to take a joke
- _____ How to take a picture
- _____ How to tan a skin
- _____ How to taste wine
- _____ How to teach a dog tricks
- _____ How to tell a joke
- _____ How to tell a story

- _____ How to think clearly
- _____ How to tie a Windsor knot
- _____ How to tie useful knots
- _____ How to treat boys
- _____ How to treat girls
- _____ How to uncork a wine bottle
- _____ How to understand a pet
- _____ How to understand and practice navigation
- _____ How to understand and use (English) grammar
- _____ How to understand and use cell phones (critically)
- _____ How to understand and use longitude and latitude
- _____ How to understand and use the Internet (critically)
- _____ How to watch and understand television (critically)
- _____ How to understand phases of the Moon
- _____ How to understand the origins of words
- _____ How to use and break codes and ciphers
- _____ How to use area codes
- _____ How to use carpentry tools
- _____ How to use chopsticks
- _____ How to use electrical tools
- _____ How to use metalworking tools
- _____ How to use quotations (for example, from Shakespeare)
- _____ How to use time zones
- _____ How to vacuum a carpet/room
- _____ How to wash a car
- _____ How to wash your hair
- _____ How to wash your hands
- _____ How to wrap a present
- _____ How to write a cheque
- _____ How to write a letter
- _____ How to write a personal note

Jade Ring V (Conclusion)

By Garth Spencer

Hrothgar had to admit, a Starfleet holding cell was palatial, compared to the pit that the Evil Empire thugs flung him into. Unlit, filthy, stinking, he saw crystals of nitre between the stones of the walls, the only sanitation was a hole in a corner surrounded by a yard of mud, or worse ... It reminded him of outhouses in some parks he had camped in. He tried to compose himself by mentally drafting a letter of complaint to Amnesty International. After a long time, some thugs came back for him.

"Is it time for my appointment?" he asked brightly.

"Shuddup," the taller thug barked at him. The fatter thug just growled as they unhooked his manacles and chain from the hook high on the wall, letting the chain drop behind his back. Hrothgar shut up, thinking the Evil Empire's thugs could be a lot cleaner, and keep their gear in better order; their armour and weapons were in almost as bad a shape as the cell. Hrothgar wondered if the thugs should be unionized, or just needed better officers.

The two thugs hustled Hrothgar along several progressively cleaner halls, through a few turns and one higher floor, to a wood-paneled corridor that might almost have been in a British heritage building. A uniformed officer opened one office door and, before it closed, he thought he heard a voice, high and loud and full of pain, telling an interrogator what he could do with all his sharp and blunt instruments. It might have been Mick's voice.

Hrothgar abruptly realized this scene was absolutely for real. And he simply had to buy time, and distract his interrogators.

The office he was dragged into had only two chairs. The thugs pushed Hrothgar into the vacant one, and locked his manacles and chain behind him, to the back of the chair. His feet were also manacled to the front legs. There was a hole in the wooden seat, and an odd, levered contraption below it.

The other chair was occupied by a black-robed figure with a long hood obscuring the face. Presently it said, "Speak, or suffer." Something must have happened to the interrogator's throat, Hrothgar realized; something like coarse sand, or undiluted acid.

"Certainly," Hrothgar said brightly. "What would you like to know?"

"Who you and your companions are, which enemies you work for, why and how you came, and what you intended to do here." There was a practiced sound to the slow words, as though the questions were a standard formula, but each had to be pronounced precisely for the prisoner to understand.

"Well, my name is Hrothgar Weems. My companions are a science fiction club in Spuzzum, British Columbia, nicknamed the Jade Ring because we wear jade rings. There's a fair amount of jade in British Columbia," Hrothgar babbled. "It's sort of a

joke, really, because if you go to tourist shops in the area, they sell a lot of cheap trinkets including rings and pendants made of jade. Only something weird started happening recently, apparently because we were wearing jade rings. We ended up visiting the universes of stories we read about—”

“Who. Do. You. Work. For?” the interrogator said slowly and distinctly. He did not raise his voice. *Is it a he?* Hrothgar wondered inconsequentially. *Does it even have a sex?*

“We’re working for ourselves, if I can even say ‘working’,” Hrothgar said. He didn’t have to fake sounding scared. “We finally figured out that we entered the story universes we had been thinking about, and decided it was time to find out what was causing these out-of-world excursions, and that was when we ended up here. Where is here, anyway? I have to say, if it’s against the law for us to visit other universes, we’re sorry and we won’t do it again. But I have to point out that if we can stumble on this phenomenon by accident, so can others, which puts the phenomenon in the class of attractive nuisances—”

“Stick. To. The. Subject.” The grating, frightening voice was obviously annoyed.

#

Polly, James Bond, and Ernie barely escaped the thug patrols in the dingy, ancient-seeming citadel, crouching behind some large, unidentifiable objects. “What do we do now?” Ernie whispered fretfully. “How do we break our friends out, or find the, the thing that powers these jade rings? How—”

“Be. Quiet.” Bond was visibly back in his element, looking focused and intent, and clearly aware how to improvise in their situation.

Polly was worrying about the same questions, and more, but held her peace.

Bond scanned the dimly lit chamber around them. It appeared to be a kind of entrance hall: not a first-class lobby, but more like a loading dock. That suggested the large objects scattered on the floor served as cranes and forklifts. There were several closed exits spaced around the chamber, and what appeared to be ...

“There,” Bond barely whispered, pointing at one of the complications on the wall at about shoulder-height, beside a closed door. “What?”

Polly looked, expecting to see a control panel, but saw a stylized map.

Ernie looked and started to get up. Bond reached over and pulled him down by the shoulder.

“Map,” Polly breathed into Bond’s ear.

Since the loading dock held few workers, at least after thugs came and apprehended most of the Jade Ring, Polly and Bond and Ernie were able to evade attention by sneaking their way from one machine to another. When they finally approached an exit door, and examined the doorside map from behind a freight loader, they realized it oriented them to this floor of the citadel, and one fluorescent red dot showed their location. But the door controls below it were indecipherable, written in a language none of them had seen before.

“Closer?” Polly breathed.

Bond compressed his lips. There was no obvious cover for anyone standing close to the door.

CLANG!!! Across the chamber a collision echoed. Voices were raised in alarm. Evidently some kind of load had fallen, badly, and now some screams and shouts were raised. It seemed some people had been injured.

“There’s our chance!” Bond said, as a magician producing a surprise says “*Voilà!*”

#

“... and these guys on the Combination Con committee can’t seem to stick to a budget,” Hrothgar was nattering, “as if their limitations don’t matter, as if fast talk and flashy advertising conquers all, and then they expected me and my friends to be only too happy to volunteer our spare time to work for them and make them money, can you imagine?, I mean my friends and I are all college students, it isn’t as if we have that much spare time, even if we were interested in a mediacon ...” He was imitating his aunt Mabel, whose conversation was a model of stream-of-consciousness associations, and seemed to have no stopping point. His bum was still smarting from the use of the carpet-beater rigged under his seat, but the thugs hadn’t quite hit his family jewels. Yet.

“What. Enemy. Sent. You?” the interrogator said through gritted teeth. “What. Is. Your. Purpose?”

Hrothgar looked at him as if astonished. “Enemies? You have enemies? No wonder you treat uninvited visitors this way, why didn’t you say so? I don’t know what enemies you mean, nobody sent us, I told you why my friends and I came here, to find out why we keep visiting other story universes and how to stop it from happening—”

“Stop it? As if any power can—”

“The existence of enemies is an interesting thing, when you come to think of it,” Hrothgar said with sudden inspiration. “I mean, after all, if you’re going about your business, simply trying to look after family and friends and your daily job, you wouldn’t necessarily expect enemies to pop out of hiding and obstruct you, now would you? Or ... do you live in a neighbourhood where you *should* expect that kind of behaviour? Maybe it all depends on the conditions you live in.

“Enmity has a number of causes, I guess,” he forged on. “If you have a job that creates enemies, like managing a criminal organization that abducts women and for human trafficking, or making and distributing addictive drugs, or selling guns that can’t be used for hunting but some people think can be used for self-defense, then I can see how police and intelligence agencies might become enemies. Even neighbours and housing organizations could be against you, if you run jackhammers in the street at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, or simply mow your lawn at 7:00 in the morning. I have a correspondent in Australia with neighbours like that. Bogans, I think she called them. We need more words like bogan, don’t you think?”

“I think I’ve heard enough,” the interrogator said.

“Don’t interrupt,” Hrothgar said kindly. He thought he was getting the hang of Jophan’s style, as Ernie described it. “If there are any number of people like the

Combinationoids, no wonder fannish fans disparage mediafans, and mediafans think fannish fans are enemies. I once saw an old mimeographed edition of *File 770* that described the kind of convention the Combinationoids want to hold, but back in the '70s they were just ripoffs that some guy named Neill Cream operated all over the Los Angeles Basin, offering naïve Star Trek clubs the chance to do volunteer work on his prepackaged events, that were only stage interviews with actors, plus a big dealer's room where individual dealers had to compete with Cream's outfit to sell the same types of merchandise. You wouldn't know anything about that, would you? It sounds like a scam and somebody should put a stop to it."

The hooded figure pulled its head back sharply. "How did you know about that?!"

"What, that film studios have been conning naïve mediafans all over North America and beyond, running the same type of 'conventions' as Neill Cream did?" Hrothgar asked. "Oh, that's a twice-told story now, almost everyone in fandom knows about it. Have they somehow started the same racket here in your universe?"

The interrogator stood. "And *now* I understand. You pathetic ignorant creature. You lunatic idealist," he hissed. "You thought to foil these, these Combinationoids in your hometown. You *fool*! We are everywhere! Half the cons and scams in your world, as you call them, will build the resources for our beachheads! Defeat one of our ventures and ten will take their place!

"Guards!" the interrogator called. "Take this one back to his cell."

#

"This is taking too long," Bond muttered.

"Hey, at least we found some of our people," Ernie said. By sheer chance Polly found that her ring would open doors, and then, very luckily, James and Ernie found the next corridor led to prisoner's quarters. It was almost too easy.

But Bond was right, Polly realized. They found Mick Michelob beaten and groaning in one filthy cell, and Remy Picard and Rudi Sterner in another, and Dolly Micawber weeping alone in a pit. Coaxing them out and keeping them following their course slowed the troop down, and they were coming no closer to the hypothetical engine that allowed cross-time travel.

And if they found it, then what would they do?

Ernie halted at the next intersection of stone-walled corridors, squinting at the doorside map.

"Hurry up," Bond hissed.

"No, wait, I think I've found something here." Ernie traced a line from their location to the centre of the nearly circular floor plan. "If I didn't know better, I would say this centre is what we're looking for."

Bond took a long look at the map. "Because?"

"Because of these green lines, radiating in all directions." He traced the lines, which followed the stylized walls and ended at the icons indicating doors. "We know

the doors are powered somehow, and open to contact with our rings. These lines look an awful lot like power lines, in an architect's building plan."

"And you know this, because ...?" Bond said doubtfully.

Ernie looked at him. "Because my uncle is an architect."

"Oh."

"Guys," Polly said, "I hear someone coming!"

#

Hrothgar was thinking about his grandfather.

Commander G. Armstrong had recently passed on, and (as usual in the Weems and Armstrong families) a flood of family history came out only at the funeral. Hrothgar learned that Cmdr. Armstrong had not only served in the second World War, escorting convoys shipping supplies across the North Atlantic; he had fought several nasty engagements, hitherto classified, against the U-boats that tried to destroy them. It explained things like Grandfather Armstrong's habit of treating everyone like able seamen under his command.

My life is in jeopardy now, the way his life was. Hrothgar had known this intellectually; now the reality hit him, hard. It changed something in him, but he could not say what it was.

This whole venture may have been futile! I risked other people's lives ... well, no. We all risked our lives, but for what? The interrogator's last words burned: the Combinationoid venture, funded apparently from another timeline, was only one of uncounted ventures on Earth by the Empire, one of scores or hundreds of gateways for the enemy.

If some miracle hands me and my friends back our lives, someone had better organize a more effective resistance than a random collection of SF fans, he thought. *But how would you organize a covert, worldwide, volunteer underground resistance against such an enemy?* His sense of terror and defeat was nearly total.

Far preferable to daydream about resistance plans.

There was a knock at the door. Hrothgar looked up. Polly's face looked at him through the grille.

#

"We think the main power engine is here," Ernie pointed at a doorside map. "We hope that it will lead us to whatever powers the Empire's cross-time ability, and incidentally our jade rings."

Really, Hrothgar thought but did not say. He exchanged glances with Bond, the fictional character who looked anything but fictional. Bond reminded Hrothgar of Cmdr. Armstrong, somehow. He thought it was the grim edge to his expression.

"And then?"

Ernie looked at Polly, who looked back uncertainly.

“If this is a power centre, we have to suss out how to turn off the power,” Bond said incisively.

Can we do that, and still go home? Hrothgar thought suddenly. But he remembered that for his grandfather, and those who served with him, going home had not been a priority.

Hrothgar just nodded.

#

The power centre was guarded, of course, and fully manned. Bond’s troop found themselves exposed in a side corridor with nothing to hide behind.

“What next?” Polly mouthed at Bond.

Bond looked again at the maintenance door beside him, decorated with a cartoon of stairs. He eased the handle open very slowly, fearing to make the least sound. It started to squeak as he turned it the last quarter, but he stopped and turned it even more slowly, then eased the door open. The whole troop nipped inside almost as silently.

“Halt! Who goes there?”

Bond let the door close quickly and leaned against it. “Jesus!”

Hrothgar looked hard at the door, then motioned Bond away and twisted a lever above the handle. The door clicked. “I think that’s locked,” he said, pulling on the handle. The door did not budge. Turning to the stairwell, he tried to decide which way to go.

Bond pointed. “Upstairs! *Two* floors!” The whole troop thumped up the stairs accordingly.

Ernie looked at Bond. “Where now?”

Bond looked at Hrothgar, which surprised him.

“See if we can access the power centre from this floor?” Hrothgar suggested. Bond nodded and opened the maintenance door cautiously, looking both ways first. Then voices and footsteps were coming from the stairwell and the floor below; the troop hastened out into the corridor.

“Out of the frying pan ...” Hrothgar muttered.

Bond pointed in the same direction as the power centre lay, two floors below. As they came to a corresponding entrance Mick said sharply, “We’re being followed!”

“—and into the fire,” Bond completed.

The troop barely entered the new door in time. Rudi Sterner yelped as a bullet creased his shoulder before the door closed.

“So that’s the power generator,” Polly said.

Hrothgar turned from Rudi Sterner; he had sacrificed his handkerchief to give Rudi a basic bandage. He saw a large, vaguely columnar machine, reaching three floors up and two floors down, surrounded by two circular mezzanines, with bridge-like extensions leading to some control surfaces on the machine. Glowing irregular

vertical lines of St. Patrick's Day green scored the surface, reminding Hrothgar of the neon lines in *Tron*. The movie had given him a bit of a headache, and seeing this machine started to give him another one.

"What's our move now?" Hrothgar asked. "Stroll up to one of the consoles and play hell with the pretty coloured buttons?"

Bond opened his mouth as if to speak, then stopped to think. "Actually that sounds like the best thing we can do," he said. "Particularly if we do that to two or three control stations ...". He scanned the mezzanine ahead.

Ernie pointed left. "I'll take that one."

Polly pointed right. "I'll take this one," she said grimly.

"Guess I'll take the middle," Hrothgar said, shrugging.

They were halfway across the bridges from the mezzanine when some thugs downstairs yelled "Halt! Who goes there?", and the trio started running to the central column. At the consoles they began pushing buttons and switching levers randomly. The even humming sound of the machine began to rise into a loud, shuddering discord of notes.

"Stop! Step away from the generator, all of you!" There was a ripple of gunshots. Polly ducked, and her hand with the jade ring slapped on the console, touching a green-glowing surface ...

(Next issue: Epilogue)



Mailing Comments

Front Cover: Public Domain Fantasy Art

Always good to see a gryphon. A gryphon is on my alleged family shield.

Intermission 151, by Ahrvid Engholm

You know, I've gotten tired of catalogues of public madness: madness on the part of heads of state, insanity and hypocrisy on the part of public officials and celebrities and names in the news and writers, and mental deficiencies on the part of elected representatives.

(Maybe it's time someone suggested Neil Gaiman, among others, was subjected to a smear campaign and trumped-up charges? It would be typical of public controversies nowadays.)

I'm not specifically complaining about your writing, about a Swedish police chief and a British writer; I'm also listening to CBC Radio as I write this, and of course the surreal news is divided between the entity in the White House, and an entity that is a sitting premier in a Canadian province.

(Danielle Smith, premier of Alberta, actually thinks she has enough grievances against our federal government to move for secession.)

It is as if we are forced to live in a substitute for reality ...

No. I performed that routine already.

Re your mailing comments:

You quote Henry Grynnssten as writing "*It doesn't matter if Africans are "slaves" if we put a brain implant in them so that they like doing our chores*" – what the ring-tailed rambling hell??? WTF?? Didn't we fight a World War against just this sort of crap?

Re your comment to George Phillies - I'm surprised you don't already know about the Sad Puppies episode in Hugo Award voting. Very briefly, some apparent neofans felt unhappy their kind of favourite fiction from their favourite authors (mostly military SF of a sexist, right-wing orientation) didn't get more recognition in the Hugos, so they engaged in block voting. This, of course, was Viewed With Disfavour. Much controversy followed, as if there were anything to be said for the Sad Puppies' side of the affair.

Brandy Hall Issue #11, March 2025, by Mark Nelson

Interesting to read how you're handling the inconvenience of losing the use of your University laptop. (For my part I've generally found myself using PC-compatible computers, and Microsoft platforms and software, with occasional excursions into Ubuntu.)

The curious thing is that in the last 10 or 20 years, I have been buying my own computers and software, not always at discounted prices, despite my limited income. Maybe I have been penny-wise and pound-foolish.

Re your comments to Ahrvid Engholm – I am beginning to be surprised and dismayed at some of Ahrvid's expressed positions. Maybe I am a bit slow on the uptake.

Re your comments to Jefferson Swycaffer – I am entirely unsurprised that some readers dislike slow passages and chapters in contemporary fiction. Popular entertainment now conditions us to a swifter pace, and more frequent action, than any popular entertainment presented right up to, oh, twenty to thirty years ago.

Ye Murthered Master Mage #275, by George Phillies

From your remarks I infer, deduce, and conclude that you are now ready to start cultivating your potential successors to the position of N3F President. How is that going?

One of my besetting sins in fan activity is that I keep soliciting responses and participation from fans, without in some way interesting and motivating them. I do this because I am completely clueless. What motivates human beings to do anything, let alone participating rather than just watching?

Intermission 152, by Ahrvid Engholm

Is there a word in Swedish for an entity like Donald Trump? Inquiring minds want to know.

Re the Australian Journal of Fandom Research – I wrote to Leigh Edmonds about this on April 2nd; no response as yet.

Good on you, for profiling Czech fan publishing.

Archive Midwinter, by Jefferson P. Swycaffer

Re your comment to Kevin Trainor – thank you for the definition you quoted, about literary vs. genre fiction.

Re Amazon e-books – somehow I have evaded the Amazon rent-not-sale business model. However, I have rarely been buying e-books, just reading a number of action/adventure series more or less modeled on the *Da Vinci Code* model, and returning one book in the series when I want to read the next one. I chalk this up to writers' research, and tell myself I am planning a satire. Or should I say parody?

R.A.I.L. #5, March 2025, by Adrian Kresnak

Congratulations on receiving your Master's degree!

Not sure why your brother's classmates were joking about deportation – where do your folks originate? (Mine originate in all sorts of northern European countries, or Commonwealth nations.)

You have little need to apologize for giving the impression you're male. English is full of ambiguous bigender names, ranging from loanwords like Kim to my father's name Leslie to my brother's name Sidney to British names like Evelyn and Noel. For my part, I used to think the Australian fan Leigh Edmonds was a woman, until my misapprehension was corrected.

Re your photographs: I have also had my mail munched in the postal system before it reaches me. Not recently, to be sure, but when I had a rather thick parcel coming from out of my country.

Re your story: I'm going to have to go to the previous N'APA or two, and see the previous instalments, to find out if this earthquake is supposed to happen on the Madrid tectonic fault. (I was working on an aborted disaster novel set here in Vancouver, based on predictions of the eventual Juan de Fuca/Gorda fault earthquake.)

Snow Poster Township #20 by Heath Row

A suffusion of wonderfulness! Read and enjoyed! But, alas, I have no comments.

Samizdat Ish #30, Mar/Apr 2025, by Samuel Lubell

Your apazine is good reading.

I read *The Source* myself, a few times. This and *The Wanderers* may have been the only James Michener novels I read; I must broaden my mainstream reading.

Perhaps I should review my loose-leaf manual for organizing my life, in view of your self-improvement projects?

Esmeralda County Line #9, by Kevin Trainor Jr.

I see you were busy in February and March!

So you started Michael Flynn's *In the Country of the Blind*. I read this a few times, perhaps uncritically, because I was interested in the idea of a form of mathematical analysis applied to history – or to shaping current events. (I actually started drawing together some ideas for a notational system for social behaviour, but kept giving up on it because I don't have the social perception to record the information necessary for basic input.)

Re your comments to Ahrvid (Intermission #149) –

Yes, one of the basic lessons given me in linguistics was that if you expose quite young children to other languages, they learn them more easily. (I am still annoyed that the mediocre 1960s grade-school system I was exposed to would not teach foreign languages until after the age of 12, which is well after the age of maximum linguistic plasticity.)

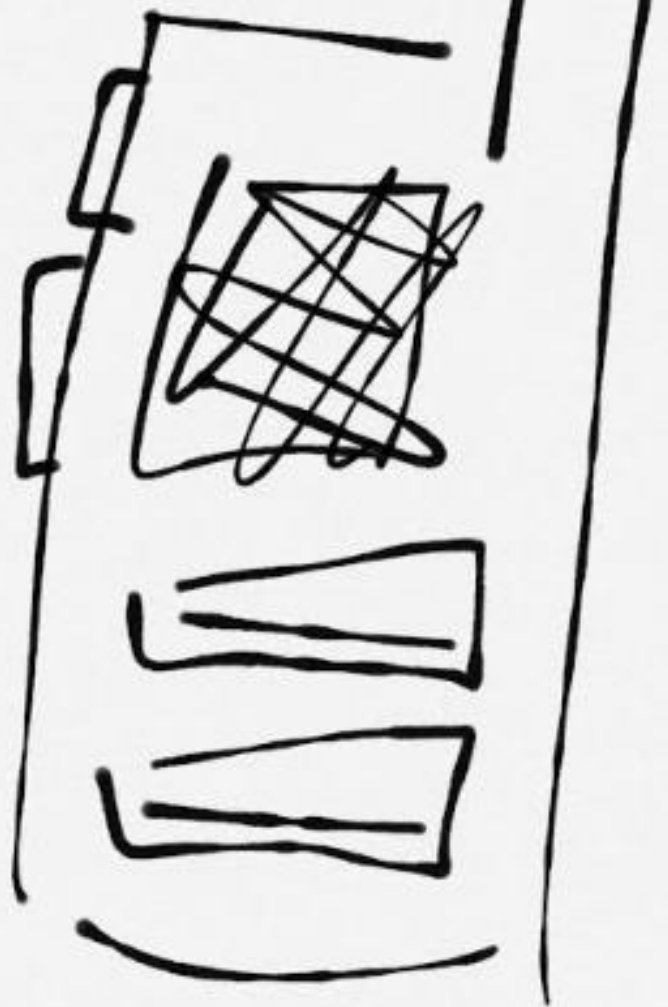
As to the mutual attitudes that developed between what used to be mainstream fandom, and the increasingly large *Star Trek* fandom ... I don't know who offended

whom first, and the offense was probably imaginary anyway. In fact the alienation between fandoms was probably inevitable. As it stands, different fandoms simply don't have much taste for each other's interests, and generally don't relate to each other.

In fact my attempts to draw together calendars of upcoming Canadian conventions, or Pacific Northwest conventions, seem to turn up *almost nothing* but conventions for specialized fandoms. General-interest conventions, or conventions for fanzine fans, seem to have evaporated or gone into suspension.

Enough of this. The people have spoken.

R.A.I.V.



May 20 25

R.A.I.L. #6

May 2025

Adrian Kresnak

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Cover art by me

*

Hello All,

There's this Dutch TV show called *Wie is de Mol?*, based on a Belgian TV show. There's an American version that's just called *The Mole*, and the rebooted seasons are on Netflix.

About a decade ago one of the players was this police officer called Ellie Lust. (That last name is pronounced with a long-U, so *Loost*.) I learned about her from a trivia question in the 2025 season – the question got translated as something like “What term did Ellie Lust introduce to address radio miscommunications?”

“Etherdiscipline,” the player says (or so the subtitles say she says.) “I think everyone in the Netherlands knows that.”



So, without context, I thought Ellie Lust was perhaps a pioneer in telecommunication technology. It created a whole alternate history in my head, this Lust developing something to help people talk to each other. I thought it was some kind of receiver or transmitter, something to cut down on noise so the signals could get through.

The Dutch Wikipedia Dictionary lists etherdiscipline as a single word. It apparently means the protocols people agree to before using the communication technology. In *Mol* challenges, that tech is usually a walkie-talkie. Good etherdiscipline could mean, for example, that when one is done talking they say “over.” This means that the listeners should wait for the “over” before replying, which prevents them from interrupting the original speaker.

I liked this term because it made me think about how just putting things into words changes how one approaches them.

*

What I’m reading:

If you’d asked me if a future-tense, second-person story would be readable, I would say that it sounds like it would be confusing. Then I read *Lucious Lake* by **Erin Brown** in Baffling Magazine. This short story builds up the horror right up until the violence at its core, then keeps the tension going.

Right now I’m reading one of **Ormond Sacker’s** Sherlock Holmes puzzle books, *Adventure of the Two Flying Scotsmen*. The story is set around the “Race to the North,” where trains in the late 1800’s would race each other from London to Edinburgh. It’s an absorbing story. I’m finding the puzzles just challenging enough to be fun.

*

Replies:

Brownian Motion: Sorry about the fund. It sounds like it did a lot of good during its existence. I’m glad to see Jade Ring continuing (railway yards!!).

Intermission: You might be happy to hear that I ended up deleting the app a few days after downloading it. I think we (TikTok users/social media users) made our point about the unfairness of how the American government approaches social media.

Brandy Hall: I hope things work out with the university! Are you allowed to tell us some of what you might research?

Ye Murthered Master Mage: re: Xiaohongshu translating to Little Red Book – I don’t know if the original creators intended it that way, but I’m sure the translators keep it in mind when deciding how to refer to it.

*

Happy summer! I hope to report good news next time...



Esmeralda County Line #10
April-May 2025
A zine for NAPA 276

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Missed It by That Much

Well, the tax season is over, and while I only got a little over 100 returns done this season, I missed collecting a bonus by \$10 and some change. Which is frustrating, because unlike last year when I was handing out 10% discounts to everybody that walked in the door of the Dayton office, this year I only comped my little brother and my ex, both of whom needed a break for different reasons. April was unusually slow; usually it's incredibly busy from the first through the 15th, but this year it was very slow until the 14th when all of a sudden people remembered the deadline was tomorrow. It was stressful enough that I begged out of the virtual NSSAB meeting on the 16th and spent most of the day in bed reading and recharging.

I did not, however, skip the National SSAB Chairs meeting the following Wednesday, which was mostly interesting because we got to hear from the top brass at the Energy Department's Environmental Management office and the other NSSAB chairs, who in many cases have very different perspectives than us here in Nevada, where we are just about done demolishing and cleaning up the last of the sites where that's necessary. Unfortunately the last 45 minutes of the meeting lasted three hours (at least it seemed that way) as people felt compelled to agonize over the precise wording of the welcome letter to the incoming head of the EM office, who has been appointed but not yet confirmed. At last it ended, and we all logged off, and perchance the next meeting, which is supposed to be hosted at the Hanford site, will be in meatspace instead of virtual. I certainly hope so, because I've wanted to go to Hanford for quite a while now.

BOOKS & OTHER MEDIA

Because tax season was slower than usual, I managed to get a fair bit of reading done. The most enjoyable of the lot was Larry Correia's Heart of the Mountain, which brings his Son of the Black Sword series to an end. Much like GRRM's *A Song of Ice & Fire*, this is really SF cosplaying as fantasy; unlike ASOIAF, it is ~~actually finished~~* set in a society that isn't a knockoff of medieval Europe and doesn't have battalions of viewpoint characters clogging up the plots.

Because I am the kind of person I am, I reread Leonard Wibberley's The Centurion on Good Friday, as is my habit. Wibberley assumes that the various Roman officers mentioned in the Gospels are the same fellow, Longinus, who draws the unpleasant duty of supervising the crucifixion squad for one Jesus of Nazareth. This is a heart-rending book, but nonetheless I recommend it.

On a much lighter note, I was surprised to find that C. Northcote Parkinson had written a biography of C.S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower, The Life & Times of Horatio Hornblower, though I have mixed feelings about it. On the one hand, it is a pleasant reminder of Forester's epic series, but on the other, there are some dark and questionable assumptions made about Hornblower's marriage to Lady Wellesley which I frankly think the book would have been better off without. Still, overall it is a good book, and I didn't regret buying it.

I was also pleased to read Ted Leavengood's Ted Williams & the 1969 Washington Senators: The Last Winning Season, which does not confine itself solely to the 1969 season but covers (briefly) the long and mostly unhappy history of baseball in Washington as well as covering the last years of the Senators in DC and the first of their many miserable years in Texas. Mr. Leavengood does a good job of showing how Ted Williams coached and inspired the team to its only winning season without beating us over the head with a tedious recounting of each game in the season. Leavengood also weaves in the contemporary history of America and the owners' skullduggery as well as showing Bob Short's utter ineptitude at running a baseball team. Good, if occasionally painful.

Ralts Bloodthorne is in the body & fender shop waiting for a lung transplant, but he managed to do a quick edit and get The Lengths We Go out the door before his impending surgery. This is the 18th in his series of Behold! Humanity! novels, and the second of the Inheritors War arc, in which the various races of the Confederacy move to crush the last fortresses of the time-meddling Atrekna. It's not all war in the grim future of humanity's allies and friends, though; cats and dogs, cured of the Friend Plague, seek out the few remaining humans for tearful, joyous reunions, and Saint Dambree the Silent leaves her convent to return to normal (?) life among her fellow Hesstlan as her nephew has to cope with both his past and...girls.

Finally, ~~as foretold by the prophecy~~** John C. Wright's Secret Agents of the Galaxy continues the rewriting of the execrable *Star Wars* sequels into the pulp adventures they should have been. A deadly war of extermination against one of the core races of the Republic is about to break out, but the few who can see the danger can't seem to make others aware of it. (Indeed, Senator Napoleon Lone seems rather Churchillian here.) Still, the Senator, his Space Patrol brother, and the renegade temple priestess who connects them both persevere, and perhaps we shall see in the next book if they succeed.

* The Son of the Black Sword series, all six books of it, is indeed finished, and Larry took the opportunity to tweak Martin about it in the foreword to Heart of the Mountain: "See, George? It isn't that hard." This triggered legions of fanboys, fangirls, both, and neither (who probably none of them had read Martin's books) who descended on Larry with great REEEEing and other stupidity, unaware that he and his fans enjoy beating such people like piñatas until the candy falls out. Much lulz were had.

** I refer of course, to John's critical analysis of *The Last Jedi*, The Last Straw. If you haven't read it, you really should, since he does a good job identifying just where Kathryn Kennedy went wrong in her bastardization of what should have been heroic epics throwing off multi-megabucks in profit.

Comments on N'APA #275

Brownian Motion

For some reason I thought I'd already read this, but apparently I was wrong. 🍷🍷 Regarding that Old Timey Fandom, the only thing one can do (if surrender is not an option) is to do the best you can to revive it on your own.

(RYCTo Jefferson) The topic of media that can't be read any more also crops up in the late Michael Flynn's Spiral Arm novels, which I am currently rereading. I may have mentioned this already, as I find this series fascinating.

(RYCTo Ahrvid) One could in fact use IBM Selectric typewriters as computer printers if you had the proper cables & gizmos. I don't know anyone who actually did so. 🍷🍷 Perhaps if Gene Roddenberry had had Starfleet employing clamshell communicators instead of flip phones they might have been more popular.

Intermission #151

I think you are so used to professional politicians holding office that you can't recognize a salesman when you see one in the Office of the President. 🍷🍷 WRT Ukraine, I despair of figuring out what the actual truth is. There are people on all sides retailing details, some of whom I trust more than others, but the net effect is like looking into a fish tank where a squid has just shot its load of ink. The only thing that seems to be certain is that a lot of vehicles are being turned into junk and a lot of people are dying, not all of them soldiers. 🍷🍷 Regarding Gaiman, I am beginning to wonder if any of the authors feted by the mainstream publishers in the last 25 years are not sex pests, rapists, pedophiles, or some other species of deviate.

(RYCTo George) If you are interested in the Sad Puppies kerfluffle, I strongly recommend you proceed to Larry Correia's blog, Monster Hunter Nation (.com) and refer to the Sad Puppies tag. There is also a very accurate summation of the whole business (and the Rabid Puppies offshoot) in Vox Day's [SJW's Always Lie](#). Having been on the periphery of the whole mess, I should probably assemble a collection of links to sundry blogs (Sarah Hoyt's, Brad Torgerson's, John C. Wright's) that also have posts on the topic.

(RYCTo Jefferson) I think a lot of SF is affected by trends current when they are written, for example, the whole ecology craze that started in the 1960s and the internet in the 1990s when the common people started getting access to it. IMAO, the best SF transcends this and isn't clearly tied to a particular time.

(RYCTo me) I don't disagree with you about Ukraine. Keep in mind that I voted for Trump because the alternative was four years of having a drunken moron of a DEI hire as figurehead while White House staffers did the actual governing.

(RYCTo Adrian) This strikes me as sound advice. I didn't bother loading Azur Lane onto my new phone for two reasons: one, the owning company is Chinese, and the second being that it was becoming boring to play. I don't play gacha games just to accumulate waifus loosely based on WW2 warships.

Brandy Hall #11

I'm not sure whether to congratulate or commiserate with you on your early retirement. Paradoxically, I find myself busier now that I am "retired" than I was when I was driving for Uber.

(RYCTo Ahrvid) I am confused. I was informed by reliable sources that microplastics, like urine, were stored in the balls. 🍷🍷 How much do they spend on the script? Not enough. 🍷🍷 I am against the removal of statues for the same reason I am against the editing of history to suit a particular political tendency. I do, however, think pornography should not be on the shelves of school libraries. Adding contextual displays to statues and allowing parents veto power over what schools are buying for their libraries seems like a reasonable compromise.

(RYCTo George) I think the lumping together of fantasy and SF as fantasy was something Damon Knight wanted to see, much like the later New Wave insistence on the term “speculative fiction”, but outside of small circles of critics it never really caught on. Most people are pretty clear on the difference – one has magic, one has science – although there are certainly edge cases where you can’t tell whether what’s going on is science or magic. This I attribute to the psionics fad of the 1960s, the influence of Japanese anime & manga, and nanotechnology, not necessarily in that order.

(RYCTo me) Perhaps you were too jet-lagged to enjoy any post-conference activities. I know I would have been happier if I’d had more sleep before the tour of Oak Ridge.

(RYCTo Sam) There have been several recent articles about college professors discovering that their students have great difficulty reading assigned books because nobody in their secondary schools had required them to do so. Most bizarre, and unsettling besides. Your suggestion regarding a better newspaper than the Daily Mail is funny to me since among American conservatives it’s a truism that the Mail does a better job of covering events in America than most American newspapers.

I’m pretty sure RYCT is older than ANZAPA; it’s just one of several acronyms I associate with APAhacking such as HHOK/HHOS (HaHaOnly Kidding/Serious), S,AS (Smiling, Always Smiling) and other such expressions. The late OOK of Stipple-APA, Judie Cilcain, compiled a page-long list of them in one of the long-ago disties ~~when I was young and marched with the Owls~~ which is no doubt in one of my boxes Somewhere. I am saddened that most of the SF magazines that got me into ~~this mess~~ SF fandom are extinct or no longer resemble what they were in the 1970s, particularly ASF. Part of the problem is that many writers are no longer willing to write for the magazines because the pay rates are so low - 8 to 10 cents a word, not much improved from the 5 cents a word the much-maligned John W. Campbell Jr. was paying during the Golden Age.

Ye Murthered Master Mage #275

(natter) We need not just more members but more voting (paying) members as well. All we can do is keep reaching out and hoping people find us interesting and useful enough to join and contribute.

(RYCTo Mark) This obnoxious ~~heresy~~ practice of evaluating past heroes by current standards is called presentism.

(RYCTo me) Thank you for your kind words and support for Son of Silvercon. Since lastish, I have acquired an additional hard drive for my desktop box and a Surface Go tablet with cover/keyboard and a USB hub so that I can more easily blog on the tablet. This amuses me, because for a while there was a common belief that laptops were mostly used for producing content while tablets were a device for consuming it; with me, it seems to be the other way around.

(RYCTo Heath) Not only was War Against The Chtorr published after Haldeman’s novel, unlike Forever War, it is not yet finished.

(fan fiction) I have a considerable amount of fanfiction already written and am struggling to finish stories that I can actually sell.

Intermission #152

(natter) I remember filling out a survey at the 1974 Worldcon by some fellow who claimed to be doing research on fandom. I wonder if it was Mr. Axler? You really ought to collate all this stuff into a history of European fandom.

Archive Midwinter

(RYCTo Ahrvid) So now I know the rest of the story (or as much as I need to now) about Bob Asprin/Yang The Nauseating.

(RYCTo Mark) I find myself uninterested in historians’ opinions of the Presidents. As a group, they esteem Wilson and FDR far too highly. I think fantasy writers are adjusting to readers being gunshy of huge multivolume epics and are instead writing smaller self-contained novels.

(Amazon Kindles) Can't help thinking some smart cookie is going to find a way to jailbreak .MOBI files so that they can be sideloaded onto normal tablets or saved onto hard drives. Either that, or someone is going to sue Amazon as (IIRC) Bruce Willis did Apple, and establish that the e-book they paid \$15.99 for is by God theirs outright and not merely on loan. Either that or Smashwords and Bookfunnel are going to get a lot more business.

R.A.I.L. #5

(natter) Now that replacement cluckers are pooting out eggs, the price and availability of eggs has improved. 🍷🍷 Congratulations on your Master's degree! 🍷🍷 I too am curious how the new ownership will treat their prozines. 🍷🍷 Some people are unclear on the distinction between legal and illegal immigrants, and I'm being charitable about this.

Brownian Motion #13

Hallo, Garth. Fancy meeting you here (again).

I recognize Lake Manitoba to the north of Superior, but what are those blue features northeast of Lake Huron? Is this some devilish plot of the BQ?

(RYCTo Ahrvid) It seems more likely that Alberta and Manitoba will decide they've had enough of the government in Ottawa and secede, but not necessarily join the U.S. What would we want with the rest of Canada anyway?

(RYCTo me) Even if they are somewhere over the curvature of the earth from you, I hope my experiences and comments are useful, or at least entertaining. 🍷🍷 Given the efficiency of our federal and state governments, I'm sure there's some analog to the BBC's 8" discs around somewhere. 🍷🍷 FWIW, I have found the Surface Go to be lightweight and suitable for doing most things on the intertubes, especially since it has Office Mobile built into Copilot, which saves me money and irritation at spending money on Office 365, which is a tool of the Devil. 🍷🍷 I'm glad my concerns about your social interactions were misplaced.

Snow Poster Township #20

(mail) Wild that the mailing from the Burroughs Bibliophiles finally reached you after all those years. 🍷🍷 I also enjoyed the movie ads you used as illos. Otherwise, RAEBNC.

Samizdat #30

(RYCTo Ahrvid) I might even argue that Facebook has been a detriment to fandom, and the rest of social media (possibly excepting Twitter) is just as bad if not worse. 🍷🍷 It's hard to believe the stupid crap people get up to at cons if you haven't been involved in running one. 🍷🍷 I'm old enough to remember the outrage of many reviewers at Niven and Pournelle for postulating a constitutional monarchy for the Empire of Man in The Mote In God's Eye. Why they were surprised, I don't know; Pournelle had used exactly the same setting for A Spaceship for the King* years before.

(RYCTo Mark) Interesting to compare American and Japanese attitudes toward fanfiction. The production and sale of dojinshi is tolerated by manga publishers, and in fact there are huge conventions where dojinshi "circles" buy tables to sell their products in a way that's completely unthinkable here.

(RYCTo me) Remember it? Hell, I lived through it – and am doing it again! 🍷🍷 DAW is still in business? I haven't seen a new book from them in literally decades. Agree with you about tribute anthologies; with

some it is more obvious than others. 🍷🍷 Many of the things you complain about regarding Trump have since improved. Stock market is up, employment is up, NATO is actually taking action to increase their defense budgets, and as for the Federal government, it has been hiring and spending too much for too long. 🍷🍷 Did I imply that the Chengdu mess had anything to do with the Sad Puppies? I did not; as you noted, the events are a decade apart.

(books) I agree completely with you concerning the SF Hall of Fame. The early volumes of The Hugo Winners are good too. 🍷🍷 LOL at Amazon's James Bond.

* Later expanded and republished as King David's Spaceship. I liked the original better, and not merely because of the Kelly Freas cover.

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.



AI art from canva.com

...President Trump Took My Job

I have been careful to keep my work life out of this zine. However, in this case, my personal job life is part of a major national issue – the massive firing of U.S. government workers. For over five years, I have worked for the Department of Health of Human Services (HHS) as a Communications Specialist. So, naturally I had been carefully following the efforts of President Trump and Elon Musk to dismiss federal workers. Originally, they started by dismissing probationary employees, those in their first year who had fewer job protections than more experienced employees. The government encouraged others to leave through incentives for early retirement and the “fork in the road” deferred retirement that let workers agree to resign effective November, but go on administrative leave (with full pay) until then.

However, there also was talk of a potential Reduction In Force (RIF), the federal procedure for eliminating the jobs of large numbers of government employees at once, essentially firing workers without an actionable cause. Early in March, the U.S. Department of Education cut nearly half of their remaining employees. Needless to say, there was a lot of fear and worry among government workers, especially when Elon Musk started requiring us to submit bullets on what we did each week.

On Monday March 31, my division within HHS had an emergency meeting that told us there would be a RIF with email notices going out that evening. I brought my laptop home with me at the end of the day and checked my email late that night. Since I did not get any emails, I thought I was safe. But when I checked before going to work just in case the next day, there was a 5 am email labeled “Personnel Notification” that said I was part of the RIF. I later learned that the government let 10,000 people from HHS go, including two-thirds of the civilians in my

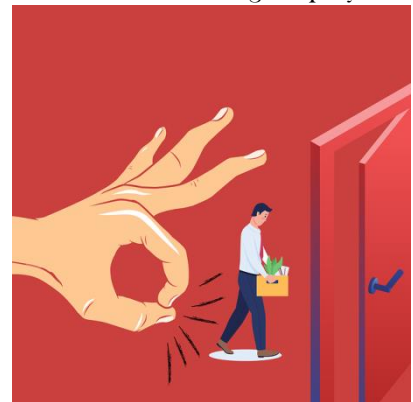


Image by Rosy / Bad Homburg
/ Germany from Pixabay

office. Even though I knew it was coming, even though I had been talking about this strong probability since February, I was still shocked and upset. The email said that this action did not reflect on my performance, but it still hurt. Part of me felt that since I did not deserve to have this bad thing happen, it would not happen to me. It took a while to reach acceptance.

As of the beginning of May, over 260,000 government workers have been let go or took a buy-out offer. While there have been RIFs in the past, in prior dismissals the government took months to consider what positions were needed and who could be let go without interfering with the mission. This time, there was none of that. There was no time to train others in the duties performed by those who were RIFFed, or even just to list them. Our email and building access was revoked that very day. Others in my department only found out they were included in the RIF when their electronic cards to get into HHS buildings stopped working. Because so many people were fired so quickly and indiscriminately, including many in human resources, information about benefits, severance, health care, etc. has been slow to arrive.

I am now job hunting. If anyone knows of a position for a policy analyst, writer, or public relations/communications specialist with experience in education and health policy, please contact me [samlubell at verizon.net](mailto:samlubell@verizon.net). Thank you.

...Author Spotlight: Lois McMaster Bujold

Lois McMaster Bujold writes very popular science fiction and fantasy. She is probably best known for her science fictional *Vorkosigan Saga*, which has 16 novels and a few stories. These started out as mostly space adventures, but then turned into detective stories and even domestic comedies. The main character, Miles Vorkosigan, is the son of Admiral (and Regent) Aral Vorkosigan and a woman from the highly rational Beta Colony. Due to an attack on his parents, he is born a dwarf, considered inferior in Barrayar's highly militarized/aristocratic society, but he has a genius intellect. He can talk his way into (and out of) almost everything. When he is rejected by the military academy, he has a series of adventures that wind up leading him to create his own mercenary troop. Many of the early books focus on his adventures balancing his service to the Empire with his secret second life as Admiral Naismith of the Dendarii Free Mercenary Fleet.

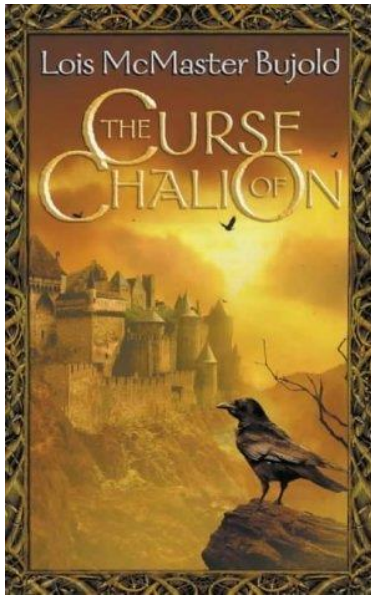


Lois-mcmaster-bujold-by-kyle-cassidy.jpg from Wikipedia

Although fanfiction legends say that her first novel, *Shards of Honor*, grew out of a Star Trek fanfic, Bujold has said that the Star Trek version was just an idea that was never written down even as a draft. And ironically, her Captain Lord Aral Vorkosigan's concern for honor is much closer to the *Star Trek Next Generation's* view of Klingon culture than original series Klingons even though TNG had not yet premiered when the book was published.

On the fantasy side, she has her *World of Five Gods* series with four novels and over 10 novellas. This series does not have a central character although many of the novellas feature Penric and the demon Desdemona.

Her rise to popularity was remarkably quick. Her first publication was a short story "Barter" in the March-April 1985 issue of *Rod Serling's The Twilight Zone Magazine*, in the March-April 1985 issue. She published her first novel, *Shards of Honor* in 1986 and won her first Nebula (for *Falling Free*) in 1988 and her first Hugo (for *The Vor Game* in 1990). She also won the best novel Hugo in 1991 (*Barrayar*), 1994 (*Mirror Dance*),



and 2003 (*Paladin of Souls*). She won best series for both her main series and the SFWA Grandmaster award in 2020.

People who have not yet read Bujold should probably start with *The Warrior's Apprentice*, the first of the Miles books. Although it is the second book in the *Vorkosigan Saga*, I think it is more representative of her works, and is better written than *Shards of Honor*. It can be found in the omnibus, *Young Miles* (that also has the Hugo and Nebula award-winning novella "The Mountains of Mourning" and the Hugo-winning novel, *The Vor Game*. So read the others in the omnibus too. Readers who prefer fantasy may want to start with *The Curse of Chalion* and its sequel *The Paladin of Souls* which won both the Hugo and Nebula. Since she is published by Baen, many of her books have been combined into omnibuses.

...Hugo Finalists

Here's how my Hugo ballot picks did on the Hugo Finalist ballot:

- Best novel – Two of my picks are finalists – *The Tainted Cup* by Robert Jackson Bennett and *A Sorceress Comes to Call* by T Kingfisher.
- Best series – Two of my picks are finalists – *InCryptid* by Seanan McGuire and *The Tyrant Philosophers* by Adrian Tchaikovsky.
- Best novella – I had one pick as a finalist – "The Butcher of the Forest," by Premee Mohamed.
- Best novelette – I had one pick as a finalist – "The Four Sisters Overlooking the Sea," by Naomi Kritzer
- Best short story – None of my picks were finalists

...Is College Worth It?

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York, in its Liberty Street Economics blog, asked the question "Is College Still Worth It?" <https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2025/04/is-college-still-worth-it/> by Jaison R. Abel and Richard Deitz.

The article makes the argument that the rising cost of college and the difficulty many graduates face in finding a job have led many Americans to question the value of college. The bank did the math and concluded that the return on a college education for the median graduate is 12.5 percent, far above most solid investments (8% for stocks, 4% for bonds). But their chart shows this rate of return rose between 1975 and 1992, but has been largely flat ever since, bobbing up and down around 12%. They also found that while the tuition costs have gone down (when inflation is included), the opportunity costs of not working while in college have gone up. So, they say that the "average total cost of a college degree... increased from around \$140,000 in the late 1990s to \$180,000 in 2024."



Art by Evgenia on pixabay.com

They also found that the benefits of college have gone up. The median wage for a high school graduate is \$47,000 compared to \$80,000 for a college graduate, about \$33,000 more or a 2/3rds increase, which the report says is close to the record.

But the report admits that some of the difference may be due to differences between the type of student going to college and not due to anything the student learns there. The comparison also doesn't take into account the many students who start college but do not graduate.

A second article, “When College Might Not Be Worth It” (<https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2025/04/when-college-might-not-be-worth-it/>) points out that while the first article was true of the median college graduate, half of graduates fall below the median. College does not pay off for at least a quarter of college graduates. They also acknowledge that the rate of return drops for students with higher tuition or living costs. Taking longer than four years to graduate also raises the cost and lowers the return. If a student takes six years to graduate, the rate of return drops to 7.1%. Students with a GPA in the bottom quarter of their class have a rate of return of just 2.6%. The return also drops depending on majors, with Engineering, Math, and Computer majors having a return of 18% but Social Sciences 10%, Liberal Arts 8%, and Education below 6%.

One problem with this argument that the authors do not address is data showing that even though those who do not finish college earn less than those with a bachelor’s degree, they still earn more than high school graduates. According to the Bureau of Labor Studies, high school graduates earn \$930 a week, those with some college earn \$1020, an Associate’s degree earn \$1,099, and a Bachelor’s degree \$1,543. So, those with some college earn \$90 more a week or \$4,680 a year compared to a high school graduate. (<https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2025/data-on-display/education-pays.htm>) According to the College Board, the average cost of in-state public tuition at four-year public colleges/universities (including financial aid and discounts) was \$2,480 in 2024-5. (I’m not using the rate including room and board, since a person would need that even if they did not go to college). This means that, even for students did not graduate, the increase in their salary would more than cover the cost of a year of college. (<https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/Trends-in-College-Pricing-and-Student-Aid-2024-ADA.pdf>)

And of course, any purely economic analysis omits many of the intangible benefits of college resulting from greater exposure to advanced academics and culture. Colleges are not just job training but preparation for life in teaching students how to think, reason, assemble facts, and structure a convincing argument. People are more than just workers, they are parents, citizens, consumers (and frequently participants) in culture, and beings with their own lives outside of work. Any education expands the richness of these lives and opens new possibilities.



...Non-Male SF Authors

This was originally in my LOC responses, but I’m making it its own article since it is long. Somehow, I missed I Ahrvud Engholm’s statement in *Intermission* #149, that “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 strongly disagree. Even if the premise was true (which I don’t believe), we all know that statistically the individual can vary greatly from the average. There are many female scientists and technologists. And there are many excellent female science fiction writers. No one who reads Andre Norton, Ursula LeGuin, C.J. Cherryh, Octavia Butler, Lois McMaster Bujold (profiled this issue), James Triptree (pen name of Alice Sheldon), Anne McCaffery, Margaret Atwood, Connie Willis, Elizabeth Moon, Catherine Asaro, C.S. Friedman, or N. K. Jemisin (to name just a few) can deny that female writers can write SF just as well (or better) as men can. And it is worth noting that *Frankenstein*, arguably the first science fiction novel, was written by a woman.

I don’t think that non-white, non-middle aged, non-men are prioritized in awards. For evidence, I can point to the WSFA Small Press Award, handed out at Capclave, which uses blind judging. The names of the authors of the stories are removed before the committee sees the stories. Neither the committee

recommends the finalists nor the club members who vote on the winner, know the author's name (and therefore gender). Since 2007, the winning story was written by a woman 11 times and by a man 7 times. This cannot be due to bias, since the author's name was hidden from the voters.

...The Growing Economic Disparities in America

I'd normally put this under Status of Projects as it refers to three books I recent read. But since the three books are connected, I'm making this a separate article too.

There is a perception, if not an outright reality, that in America the Gilded Age, with large disparities in wealth led to the Great Depression. Attempts to fix the causes of the Depression, as well as historical circumstances that spared America's industry from the great European devastation after WWII, led to American prosperity and greater economic equality up through the 1970s. Then, with the election of Ronald Reagan, disparities began to grow again with billionaires paying less in taxes than many in the lower classes. The share of America's wealth controlled by the super-rich grew while that of the poor and even the middle class declined. Today, economic disparities are greater than those of the Gilded Age with the Trump Administration an oligarchy of billionaires. Why did this happen and what are the effects? I recent read three books with some answers.



Image by [Gerd Altmann](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Ours Was the Shining Future: The Story of the American Dream by David Leonhardt (2023) examines economic history from the Great Depression to the current Great Stagnation and shows the conflict between capitalists who strive for a shared prosperity and a better, richer, and happier life for nearly everyone and capitalists who favor giving more (and endless more) to the wealthy. The book traces the origin of the idea of the American Dream and the conflicts between Progressive ideals and business interests. He shows

that, compared to other high-income countries, the overall life expectancy of Americans has become

increasingly lower over time, especially in the 21st century. As a result, the chances of economic advancement have dropped. While 80% of Baby Boomers out earned their parents, only 60% of Generation X did so at the same age. And for babies born in 1980, this is a coin toss at 50%.

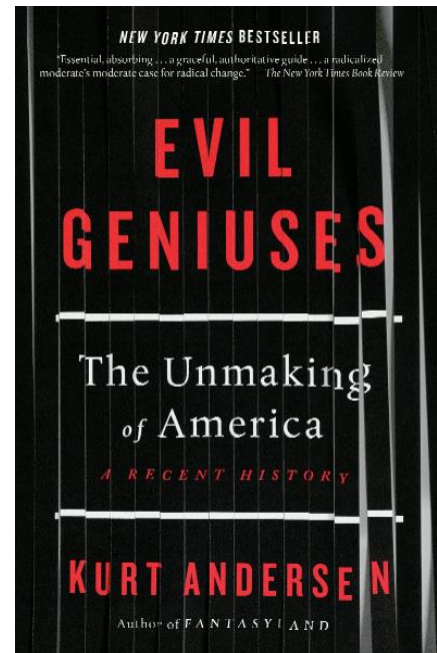
Starting in the 1930s, the U.S. government made investments in people and systems to help get people out of poverty and expand the middle class. But then in the 1970s and 80s, liberals began to focus more on social and identity issues while allowing conservatives to push “free-market” ideas like deregulation that led to greater inequality. Too often, liberals were dominated by technocrats emphasizing “meritocracies” that allowed the elite to perpetuate their elite status. To solve this disparity, Leonhardt advocates for increased government investment, strengthening unions, building a new liberal coalition movement that includes the lower classes and non-college graduates, balanced immigration policies, and a revival of democratic capitalism.

Evil Geniuses: The Unmaking of America: A Recent History by Kurt Andersen (2020) asks “When did we give up on fairness and progress and decide that big business gets whatever it wants, that only the rich get richer, and that nothing can ever change – or should.” The author shows an organized campaign by the rich and right wing leaders to tilt American governance in their favor using their wealth and influence over society. The book briefly mentions innovation of opportunity in America leading up to the New Deal and

progress up to the 1970s, but it focuses on efforts by the radical right to undo all the progress since the New Deal.

In the 1970s, the rich used the backlash against the cultural extremes of the 1960s to start building their counter-revolution by building support for deregulation and free-market thinking. Conservatives created organizations like the Heritage Foundation, Federalist Society, and lobbying firms to reverse progressive reforms. Then in the 1980s, using the amiable portrayal of Ronald Reagan, they created neoliberalism, fighting against unions and the welfare state while calling for tax cuts and an end to the nanny state (deregulation). Cultural nostalgia through movies like *Wall Street* created a “Greed is Good” mentality. Even liberals like Clinton found themselves supporting globalization and neoliberalism. Andersen calls them “Useful Idiots.” As a result, the rich have won the class war. Andersen also claims that America’s culture has stagnated since the 1980s. It used to be that you could tell when movies were set based on the cars and clothes and music, but not anymore.

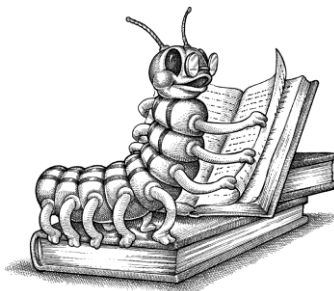
Andersen does introduce some solutions to restore fairness such as empowering workers by rebuilding unions, taking advantage of crises to reduce corporate power, and finding alternatives to corporate dominated information sources like Google and Facebook. He warns that corporate leaders are trying to use technology to replace workers, so Americans need to insist on fairly distributing the wealth that AI, robots, and automation produce. We need to rebuild Americans’ trust in the federal government, reach the majority of Americans who lean left on economic issues (often while supporting Republicans due to distractions of social issues), reset the balance of power away from the rich and big business, and stop allowing the right to set the agenda and define their ideas as the middle ground.



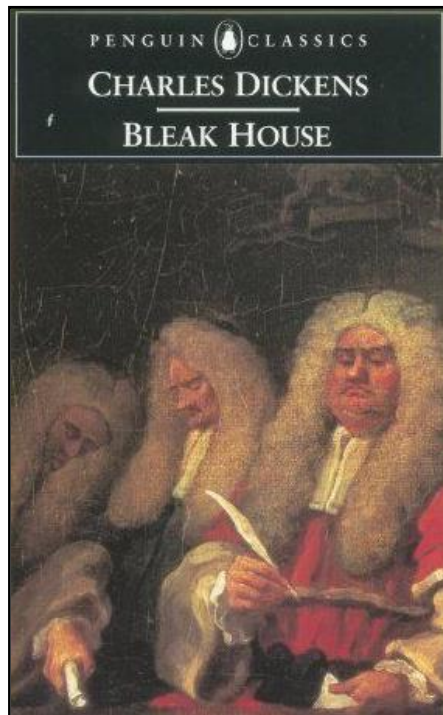
In *Tightrope: Americans Reaching for Hope* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn shows the effect of the problems discussed in the previous two books on regular people in a regular small town, Yamhill, Oregon, where Kristof grew up. Kristof found that his town did well for most of the 20th century but started declining when manufacturing jobs evaporated. Many of the people he knew as children are dead, dropouts without a future, drug and alcohol abusers, impoverished, or caught in generational cycles of violence. They also show how some avoided succumbing to despair. The authors tell the personal stories of people they know as well as the political issues that caused these problems (although not in the same depth as the other two books). Finally, they raise solutions – better education, especially preschool, and more vocational education; universal healthcare with more and better drug treatments; and more job creation efforts in small towns and rural America.

...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’m a little further into *The Source* by James Michener. I’m now on page 703. I read two chapters focused on non-Jews—*A Day in the Life of a Desert Rider* about Moslems and *Volkmar* about a German lord who reluctantly goes on Crusade. This chapter shows how the Crusaders not only deliberately massacred Jews wherever they went, but also killed Christians who did not look like their conception of Christians.



I am also reading *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens (1853), which is much less bleak than the title would indicate. Much of the book is focused on a legal case involving a disputed will that has gone on for many years. Dickens insinuates that the lawyers are continuing the case until all the money is consumed on legal fees. The novel actually spurred a legal reform movement in England. The main character, Esther Summerson, of unknown parentage (although there are hints her guardian is really her father), becomes ward of one of John Jarndyce, one of the principals of the legal case. He is also the legal guardian of two young cousins also named in the will (Ada and Richard) and Esther is meant to be Ada's companion and manage John's house. The two cousins fall in love, with Esther's encouragement, but Richard keeps changing professions and increasingly pins his hopes on gaining a fortune when the legal case is decided. Yes, parts of this sound like a soap opera, but Dickens was there first. The book shows Dickens' genius for creating interesting characters. I'm on chapter 17 (of 67).

Project Video - I completed Season Two of *Black Lightning* (16 episodes). This picks up where Season One ended. There was a secret government conspiracy to create metahumans when Jefferson Pierce was young. He used his superpowers to become Black Lightning, but stopped when he got married. But when an old enemy, Tobias Whale, becomes crime boss of Freeland, Jefferson resumes his Black Lightning identity. Much of Season 2 focuses on trying to revive the super powered children put into life-suspending pods, the efforts of both of Jefferson's children to learn about their own superpowers, and the younger daughter's romantic involvement with Tobias's lackey. Many of these plots are resolved with the older daughter missing love interest still missing. Part of the fun is how the show twisted many of the characters from the old Outsiders comic in which Black Lightning was a main character (the country of Markvia, Looker, Dr. Jace, and Grace all play prominent roles). It is worth noting that nearly all the characters in the show are African American and there are frequent references to race and racism.

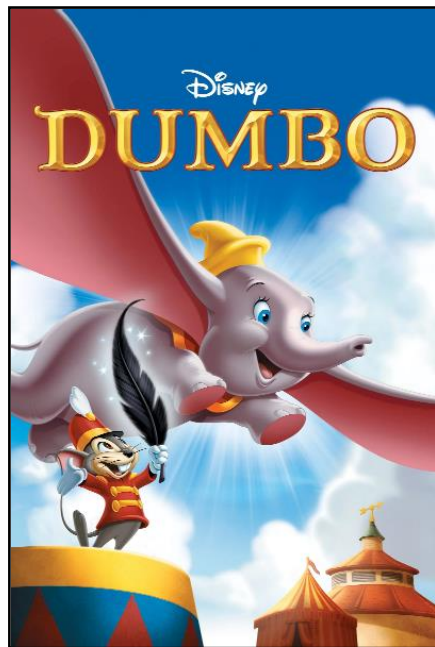
I re-watched *Interstellar* (a 2014 movie directed by Christopher Nolan). The film is set in a rather bleak future in which the Earth is dying, weather has gone crazy, crops are failing, and schools deny science. Joseph Cooper, a former astronaut discovers the strange happenings in his daughter's room are actually a message with coordinates that takes him to secret base where the remnants of NASA, including his former professor, are trying to save humanity by using a wormhole to visit possibly inhabitable planets. Cooper agrees to pilot a spaceship to find a new Earth. Due to time dilation, many years pass on Earth and his daughter Murph grows up to become a mathematician who is helping developing an equation needed to construct giant spaceships for Earth's population. Cooper's crew agree to sacrifice themselves in the wormhole to provide data that Murph needs to solve the equation. That's when what was a reasonably hard SF movie goes mystical as Cooper winds up on the other side of Murph's room making the original message that allowed his earlier self to find the base and then providing the needed data to the now older Murph. I liked the movie much better than I did when I originally saw it and understood the mystical part better (although I still think it was a deus ex machina solution).

I watched *Dark Phoenix* (2019). This was the last of the Fox X-Men movies (not counting the related New Mutants movie). It continues the cast of the "prequel" movies, that started with *X-Men First Class*. The story starts with Jean Grey's powers increasing after she absorbs a solar flare. This breaks down



barriers Professor X put in her mind, leading to great emotional stress that caused her to fight her fellow X-Men. Aliens offer to help Jean get rid of the power, but in reality, their leader wants to transfer the powers to herself. This results in a three-way battle between Jean, the aliens, and the X-Men. What I did like in the movie is the suggestion of a darker Professor X that the other X-Men have to force into retirement. Although the comics' Dark Phoenix storyline had been originally incorporated into X-Men: Last Stand, the movie people felt the time travel changes in previous movies allowed them to revisit the story (and few people liked *The Last Stand*, anyway.) This movie was even less successful. This is really only for fans of the comics storyline who is curious to see a version in live action.

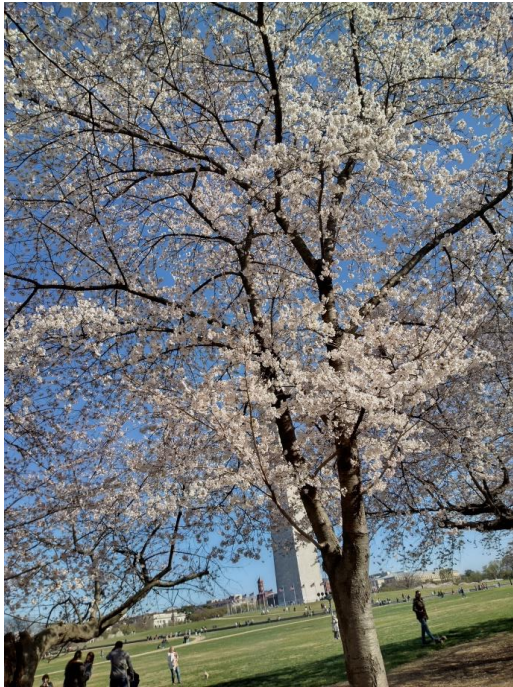
I watched *The Marvels* (2023), a Marvel movie and sequel to *Captain Marvel* (second Marvel version, not the Fawcett/DC version) as well as two of the Marvel TV series. The movie was a huge flop, earning just \$206 million while costing \$374 million to make. In the movie, the powers of Captain Marvel, Ms. Marvel (from a self-titled miniseries that I haven't watched), and Monica Rambeau, who gained superpowers in the WandaVision miniseries (which I have seen), are somehow tied together so that when two use their abilities at the same time, they switch places, even if light-years apart. This produces a funny scene where the 16-year-old Ms. Marvel suddenly finds herself in outer space with no idea of what is going on or how she got there. I suppose fans of the Ms. Marvel character who liked the mini-series would be



interested in the movie, as Ms. Marvel, as a fan girl turned hero herself, is easily the best part of the movie with her young enthusiasm contrasting nicely with Captain Marvel's more serious, almost jaded, character. I found the multiple plot holes to weaken an already minor film.

My watch of the Disney films in order has taken me to *Dumbo*, the 1941 animated film about an elephant who flies. I last saw the film as a child; I remembered some scenes and a few of the songs – Baby Mine, Pink Elephants, and the crows' song. I had completely forgotten the mouse, who is arguably the main character, especially since Dumbo has not a single line in the whole movie. Basically, all the other elephants tease baby elephant Jumbo, due to his big ears, and rename him Dumbo. The humans lock up his mother for defending him and use Dumbo in a clown fire rescue scene. Then, when he learns to use his ears to fly, thanks to a "magic feather" the crows gift him, he becomes a big hero. Yes, essentially this is an elephant version of Rudolph the red-nose reindeer, which first appeared in 1939. That was the same year as the book of "Dumbo, the Flying Elephant" so it is possible the two similar stories were developed independently."

Project Nonfiction – I turned my analysis of three related nonfiction works into a separate article above. I also read *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (1988) by Joseph A. Tainter, for my non-fiction book club. This book had the thesis that complex societies collapse when new complexities lead to diminishing returns. He rejects claims that collapse is due to environmental causes, running out of resources, social reasons, or outside invasions, saying that these only matter when society is already collapsing due to economic forces. Tainter also does not see collapse as all bad, but part of natural lifespan of civilization and collapse allows the civilization to remove some complexity and reorganize. He uses the history of three cultures to develop his model—The Roman Empire, the Maya of South and Central America, and Chacoa (in the American Southwest). I would have liked to have seen a more modern example (although he does say that modern globalization makes it hard for a civilization to fail since other nations would help it stay in power). The writing of the book is very dense with turgid, textbook-style prose. It really needed an editor to refine the writing and maybe do some reorganization.



Project Activities - I had a few days from a time-off award that I wanted to use in March (since I suspected the RIF was coming and knew I would not gain anything by holding on to this time-off). So, I went to DC and toured the Museum of African American History. The very next day, I read in the paper that Trump was seizing direct control of the Smithsonian museums and would be removing exhibits that he felt reflected negatively on America, including several at the museum I just visited. I also walked up to the Washington Monument and looked at the beautiful cherry blossoms. I also went to Ravencon to do tabling for Capclave.

Project Exercise - I have started going to the gym. Since I'm not working, I have no excuse. I'm starting with once a week and when the weather warms up, will start swimming too.

Project Shorts - I read issues of Asimov's, Analog, Clarkesworld, and Lightspeed. I also read a few more stories in *The Ascent of Wonder*.

Project Paperback - I read *Pillar of Fire* by Judith Tarr and am in the middle of *Staying Dead* by Laura Anne Gilman.

No progress on Clean-up, Shakespeare, or Project Trek.

...Letters of Comment on N'APA 275

Congrats on reaching #275 everyone. I look forward to seeing #300 in about four years.

Brownian Motion #12 - I don't know about Canada, but I think the U.S. is a lot less religiously Christian than it used to be. At one point stores were closed on Sunday and schools opened with prayers. We've backslid too much lately, but we still aren't teaching Christianity as the truth and forbidding mentions of evolution. I'm sorry to learn of the death of the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, the Broken Pencil zine, and OryCon. We in the U.S. seem to be having a similar problem with WesterCon, another con with no fixed home. The first computer I ever saw was a teletype terminal in elementary school that had no screen but printed on green bar paper. I first learned to program on that using an early version of BASIC. People complaining about the lack of student engagement and involvement in their studies goes back to ancient Greece, if not before that.

Oh, I think we have more than two cultures in the U.S. But there are certainly a lot of people whose ideas of common sense differ. Some of this is generational and some is regional, as well as divisions between liberals and conservatives.

Intermission #151 - I thought that a lot of what Trump said was bluster and just to get his name in the papers. But, now he is doing a lot of what he threatened to do in terms of curtailing civil rights, going after immigrants, and firing government workers. So, I no longer think the world can just ignore his statements about taking over Greenland and Canada. Trump seems to attack our friends and coddle our enemies like Putin. I hope you are right about Ukraine versus Russia, but it is hard to see a good end to the war there (especially since Trump wants to start negotiates by giving Russia nearly everything). I covered Neil Gaiman in Samizdat 29. I believe it is possible to separate an author's personal life from their works. I enjoyed your history of electronic brains in Europe. Of course, concerns over mechanical brains go back even further. There was the fake chess playing "Mechanical Turk" in the 1770s that had a human chess player hidden inside. I disagree about Codes of Conduct. They are needed so con organizers can point to written rules rather than face disagreements over what constitutes common sense. Nearly every rule in a Code of Conduct came about because someone's behavior, at some convention, made the rule necessary.



Brandy Hall #11 - Sorry about your involuntary Voluntary Redundancy. As I mention in this issue I'm going through a similar termination. I agree that Harris did not adequately communicate her positions; but I am not sure doing this would have helped. I agree that discrimination should not take place regardless of whether it is for a majority or minority group. However, in judging the merits of an individual, it is fair to look at what they had to overcome to get to where they are. So, I think affirmative action should apply more for a white applicant from a low-income family who is the first in their family to attend college over a black applicant from a high-income family both of whose parents went to elite colleges.

Let me point out that in the U.S. it is the conservatives who are getting books by minority, feminist, and homosexual authors out of schools and military academies. I agree that we need to accept, but also acknowledge, that people in the past had different views and not remove them for violations of today's norms. Thomas Jefferson was a great man even though he could simultaneously write "All men are created equal" yet keep men as slaves.

Ivanhoe is worth reading, even if you don't read anything else by Sir Walter Scott. I admit that very few people read 19th century classics for enjoyment and without taking a class in which they are assigned. I completely agree with you that art should be judged separately from the politics/morality of its creator, but that the flaws of the creator should be included when the work is discussed. Most cons in the US have their own Code of Conduct. I do agree that some training for those investigating violations would be helpful but recognize that this may be a problem for small cons.



Good question about analyzing college courses' reading lists to see if there has been a decline in the amount of reading. I'll have to look to see if this has been researched. I imagine most people in science fiction fandom are readers and that even those who consider themselves primarily anime or media fans do more reading than the average non-fan. Since you said you read a number of Margaret Atwood's novels, you must have liked them. So why not read *The Handmaid's Tale*? I wish I was good at time management. What I am is a fast reader who doesn't watch much television. I agree that most things work when done in a small class of motivated students. Interesting question "Who is better, Dickens or Shakespeare? My immediate reaction is that they were writing in different time-periods, in different formats (serial novels versus plays). Thanks

for explaining Ryctm=Re your comment to me. I've not seen that before.

Master Mage 275 - I have some time on my hands now that I'm jobless. Get back to me about editing something after Capclave in September if I haven't found a new position by then. I disagree that the Compromise of 1850 settled the slavery issue before the Dredd Scott decision. The Compromise only addressed the expansion of slavery and even its advocates recognized it was at best a temporary solution. There certainly has been a greater focus on math and science in the US public schools since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. I think fan fiction should have disclaimer saying the original source.

Intermission #152 - I'm sorry that America's gun violence is spreading to other countries. I don't think Trump has been honey-trapped by Putin. I think Trump admires all dictators and wishes that he could have that same level of authority (and is now trying to achieve it). I like the idea of academic studies of fandom. I enjoyed your long piece on fanzines, especially your mentions of Samizdat. I think email and pdfs have replaced the need to print, copy, and mail fanzines. If someone really wants a paper copy, they can print the pdf themselves. I strongly disagree that there was no overlap between fanzine writers and writers for professional publications. Frederick Pohl was a fan before he was a professional writer and after, winning the 2010 Hugo Award for Best Fan Writer. Marion Zimmer Bradley had her fanzine *Day*Star*. And many fanfiction writers, including Naomi Novik, Seanan McGuire, and Keith DeCandido wrote fanfiction before turning pro.

It is not possible to impeach both the President and VP in the same impeachment measure but separate impeachment measures could be drawn at the same time (although the hearing and voting would be separate). Still, as long as Republicans control both the House and the Senate, calls for impeachment won't go anywhere.

Archive Midwinter March 2025 - Good point about always being people who resist change; it seems sad though when science fiction fans, who love to read about the future, are the ones resisting change. Yes, I prefer series that are the continuing adventures of rather than one long novel chopped into multiple volumes. I like your definition of literary fiction being more about why and how something happens rather than just on what happens. I also think literary fiction puts more emphasis on character and the characters' internal lives and emotions. We're starting to see some cozy fantasy, so why not cozy military science fiction (one could actually classify some of Bujold's work that way)? Yes, let's give a hearty thank you to George Phillies for all he does for N3F.

Rail #5 - Congrats on your Masters' degree. I don't see any reason to be alarmed with the sale of the digest magazines. Penny Press used to own Asimov's, Analog, Ellery Queen's, and Alfred Hitchcock's. So the new publisher is just adding one more magazine, F&SF, to an already existing stable. And considering that F&SF only had two issues in 2024 and none so far in 2025 (as of May, 2025), it hardly counts. The new owners are keeping the existing editors in place.



Brownian Motion #13 - I only wish our world was fictional. Many non-fannish boards and corporations already have their equivalents of codes of conduct. Your fanfiction about Bond learning that he is a fictional character reminds me of Jasper Fforde's *Thursday Next* series where fictional characters are policed by Jurisdiction. Reading may have been a minority interest at least since the development

of television, but there is reason to believe that the numbers of people reading books have declined and that this decline is affecting schooling (and is getting worse since AI makes it easy to skip reading the book and get AI to write your paper on it).

Snow Poster #20 - Your paper on piracy was not bad for an eighth grader. Thanks for your nice comment on Samizdat #29 being an excellent issue.

Esmeralda County Line #9 - I confess, I've not started George RR Martin's Song of Ice and Fire because I'm waiting for all the books to be finished first. I've not been to a Buc-ee's.

...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 current or former 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 any government employment. Graphics are from clip art discs and the Internet.



Snow Poster Township #21

May 16, 2025

Snow Poster Township is an apazine published by Blasted Heath Row from an Undisclosed Location, 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 Association (fwa). This is a Karma Lapel publication.

Natter: Preparing to Move

As previously reported in other apazines that contribute to my monthly fanzine, *The Stf Amateur*, we're selling our house in the Los Angeles area in order to move to the Midwest for a couple of months before immigrating to Portugal.

Mother's Day weekend, we took a rare day off from our labors and tasks on Saturday in order to relax and enjoy the community we've called home for the last 14 years. Having entered the escrow process for the house sale, the buyers were conducting their inspections of the property, and we couldn't work on site to continue dispensing the belongings that weren't packed up to ship overseas.

Saturday morning, we headed to the ocean, parking near Del Rey Lagoon to enjoy the shore at Toes Beach. (I never knew that beach had a name until just now!) We stopped at a very crowded Tanner's Coffee in Playa Del Rey for bagels and cream cheese with lattes and spent a couple of hours lounging and reading in the sand. It was a beautiful morning.

When we were done at the beach, we ventured back into Culver City, to Jackson Market and Deli for sandwiches. Tucked along a residential street near downtown, we've been hearing about the market

increasingly over time but have never gone to check it out. They were doing brisk business—the Culver City Car Show took place that weekend! The order counter was crowded and the wait was relatively long. After we reclaimed a sandwich from a fellow who walked off with it mistakenly, we explored the courtyard seating outside before deciding we'd be more comfortable eating at our Airbnb. At least we wouldn't be sitting in direct sunlight.

Returning to the car, we ran into a couple of friends whom we first met through Cub Scouts. As I texted Jay afterward, he's one of my favorite people to bump into randomly on the street, and I'm always glad he says hi. We almost always see him and his wife while out and about; I last saw her at the Culver City Book Festival. (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #121) Before we move, we should perhaps plan to spend time together on purpose. I'd last texted Jay in 2020—after another such encounter.

The rest of the afternoon was uneventful. We ate our sandwiches in our Airbnb's back yard, read a little, watched TV, and napped. It was a much needed day of rest. The next day, Sunday, we returned to our labors—returning to the house to continue going through what remains.

I assessed the state of our camping and outdoor equipment in the garage, dropped what remained off at a neighbor's for their son's Cub Scout pack, and weeded through a couple of drawers in the bathroom. Meanwhile, I ran several loads of laundry while Caitlin worked in the back room, preparing our stereo components to ship to the Midwest ahead of us. I returned to the Airbnb to fold the laundry and spend time with Spooner, our cat, before returning to pick up my wife. That morning, we also completed more of the paperwork associated with the escrow process. There are so many things to initial and sign!

That's what our remaining evenings and weekends here will be like: full of tasks and labors. We'll head out on the road May 31, taking a week to get to Wisconsin, so we're at T-minus just a couple of weeks before departure. A few nights ago, we talked to our son about what he'd like us to do with the belongings he left behind when he went to college in Tokyo. I think we'll be able to empty the house completely before we leave town, but it'll be a push until the end.

Fantastic Streaming Services

Since moving into the Airbnb a couple of weeks ago, my wife and I have been watching TV and movies on the room's Amazon Fire TV using our Roku Streaming Stick and its apps, but I've also started watching movies on my mobile. I used to seriously pooh-pooh watching videos on such a small screen,

but I've found that it's a good way to occupy 15-30 minutes of free or in-between time, and that it's not too intrusive or disruptive for someone else with whom you might be sharing a limited space.

Fen of fantastic media might already be aware of streaming services such as Shudder (<https://www.shudder.com>) and Crunchyroll (<https://www.crunchyroll.com>), which are good sources for horror movies and anime, respectively. I've also recently become acquainted with a handful of other, specialized streaming services that might also be of interest. All offer their fair share of science fiction-, fantasy-, and horror-related eye candy.



Los Angeles Times, Dec. 18, 1959

Night Flight Plus

<https://www.nightflightplus.com>

\$59.99/year

Launched in 2016 as a video-on-demand service featuring original episodes of the 1980s USA Network TV show *Night Flight*—which focused on music videos—this service continues to expand, including music documentary, concert, horror, and cult movies. If you like punk rock, new wave, and other music from the '80s, that sensibility carries over to Night Flight's movie selection.

Current offerings include options curated by Scarecrow Video, titles from Vinegar Syndrome and Grindhouse Releasing, Something Weird Video's back catalog, flicks directed by Lucio Fulci and Dario Argento, Roger Corman favorites, and more music than you can shake a stick at.

Full Moon Features

<https://www.fullmoonfeatures.com>

\$59.99/year

This streaming service offered by Charles Band's production and distribution company is somewhat top heavy with Full Moon and adjacent fare. Sf titles currently available include *Arcade*, *The Day Time Ended*, *End of the World*, *Laserblast*, *Specimen*, and other intriguing items. The service sits squarely in the 1980s and '90s in terms of its sensibilities.

Searching the streaming selections by genre, Fantasy yields 16 movies, Sci-Fi 45, and Horror 96. I've populated a promising list of flicks to explore, but *Full Moon* is definitely best suited for viewers who are predisposed to Band's tastes and productions to date. If you enjoy his movies—Trancers, Puppet Master, Gingerdead Man, Evil Bong, and other such series—you'll love Full Moon. (If you don't, be sure to check out Screambox below!)

Full Moon also fuels Delirium TV, a Roku channel offered by *Delirium* magazine (<https://deliriummagazine.com>), which is published by Full Moon.

Eternal Family

<https://eternal.tv>

\$99.99/year

This streaming service was entirely new to me, and I first encountered it via social media advertisements. According to one redditor, Eternal Family's catalog is "even more eclectic and obscure than the Criterion Channel." They're not wrong. On Roku, which carries the service, the channel is described as "presenting hidden gems from the past, obscure lost media and surreal entertainment." That's also pretty spot on.

If you're looking for true sense-of-wonder—as in, "What the heck is this?"—Eternal Family will deliver in spades. In addition to categories such as Sci-Fi & Fantasy, Horror & Thriller, and Silent Films & Old Ones, the service also offers Lost & Found Oddities and a healthy dose of Animation.

Currently promoted collections focus on the work of Bruce Bickford, Viktor Kubal, Piotr Kamler, James Duesing, and material from the National Film Institute Hungary, Estonian Film Institute, and Czech Film Archive—broadening the global perspective of fantastic films.

If you only check out one of these fantastic streaming services, I recommend Eternal Family. It is truly weird and wonderful. (And I've only watched one cartoon, the seven-minute final 1995 episode in the Latvian animated series *Fantadroms*, "Daddy.")

Arrow

<https://www.arrow-player.com>

\$69.99/year

If you still watch or collect physical media such as DVDs and Blu-rays, you might recognize the imprint Arrow Video, the physical media arm of Arrow Films, a British independent film distributor and restorer that specializes in world cinema, arthouse, horror, and classic movies. Arrow also hosts FrightFest. (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #163) Arrow's DVDs are wonderful productions, as are their booklets, and they do a lot to encourage genre film history, scholarship, and analysis, as well.

Arrow's streaming service concentrates on similar fare. Consider it a cross between Shudder and Eternal Family: a healthy collection of horror and adjacent genre cinema, with a more global perspective. Searching by genre, I found 12 Folk Horror flicks, 14 J-Horror, 22 Sci-Fi, and 25 Monsters.

Providing a smarter and more savvy set of options than, say, Full Moon, this could easily be considered the Criterion Collection for genre fen. I haven't spent a ton of time with the library yet, but I'm inspired by its combination of older classics and newer independents. Besides, if Arrow streams the movies for which it releases DVDs, this'll be glorious stuff indeed.

Screambox

<https://www.screambox.com>

\$59.99/year

I might be relatively new to Screambox, but my experience so far is similar to how Shudder used to feel before it started to focus on original content in addition to its general catalog. It didn't take me long to identify about 20 sf flicks I wanted to watch—including an alternate title for a 1985 movie I last watched (and reviewed) in 2009. My watchlist currently includes movies such as *The Astrologer*, *Coherence*, *Dead Space*, *Empathy Inc.*, *The Honeymoon Phase*, *Interpreters*, and *Nightwish*.

The sf might largely be sf-horror given the general focus of the streaming service, but it all looks like a lot of fun. I'm also intrigued by the impressively long timespan covered; my watchlist ranges from roughly 1944 to 2019. Screambox could very well be the new Shudder.

Klassiki

<https://klassiki.online>

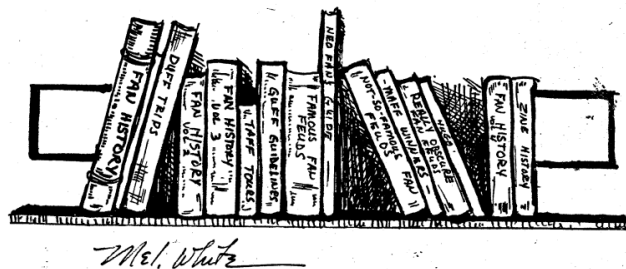
\$79.99/year

This streaming service offers a little less for genre fen but was still worth including in the roundup because of its international intent. Concentrating on contemporary and classic cinema from Eastern Europe, Klassiki offers options from "Ukraine to

Uzbekistan with all 28 post-Soviet nations in between."

I've already put all three of its explicitly sf or horror selections on my list: *Per Aspera Ad Astra*, *Aelita*, and *The Ballad of Piargy*, as well as a short, "Introducing Soviet Sci-Fi." Since the last time I searched by genre, there's a new horror trailer featured, for *Darkling*, so that suggests more fun to come.

Regardless, there's plenty on hand for other adjacent genres: five Mystery movies, nine Fantasy (mostly shorter films and animation), 13 Crime (some overlap with Mystery, granted), 14 Animation, and 78 Classics. I look forward to learning more about Eastern European cinema—regardless of its genre. I have high hopes for Eastern European crime movies, for example.

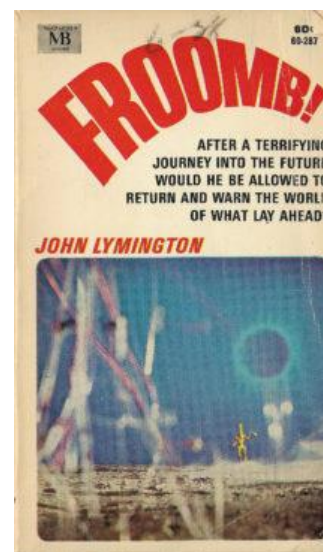


From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

Froomb! by John Lymington (MacFadden, 1967)

After reading a couple of e-books on my Kindle because my personal library has been packed up to ship overseas, I returned to this paperback novel, which I'd set aside for the in-between time. I didn't hold back many physical books while packing our belongings. Truth be told, I miss my books.

I was drawn to this paperback because of the title, which is explained before the first chapter:



A famous cartoon, published first in *The Detroit Messenger* and later in all countries, depicted the world at the wheel of a motorcar which was rushing at great speed down a slope to the final abyss and crying out, "The fluid's running out of my brakes!" Shortened to *Froomb!* it so perfectly fitted the international picture that its cynical truth caught on very widely.

It posed so many questions: Why didn't he try the brakes before he started down? Who made the brakes leak? What difference does it make, anyway?

It is unclear whether that cartoon actually ran in any newspaper (I am skeptical), but *Froomb!* the novel definitely exists, a source of great fun for participants in Bubonicon in New Mexico. 14 years ago on *Goodreads*, Lori S. reviewed the book thusly: "So I bought this at a charity auction for Bubonicon many years ago, and though I read it, I still couldn't really tell you what it's about. This book has been used for raising money for charity at Bubonicon for a long time and is full of written comments on everything from the prose to the plot (or lack thereof) as well as syntax, sentence structure and its various other literary, erm, merits."

Personally, I didn't find the book that bad—though the book is verbose and a bit heavy handed in its didacticism—and I quite like the idea of sf fen passing around an annotated copy of a book, contributing to the conversation between readers themselves before handing it off to another poor ~~sub~~ reader. Those marginal notes must be fun to read!

The gist of the 224-page novel is that adventurer John Brunt is sent to the brink of death by a scientist so he can report back on the Otherworld. Instead, Brunt is sent into the future, which he presumes to be the afterlife, treating the people he encounters—presumably finding himself in purgatory—as though they were St. Peter or someone similar.

Brunt spends quite a bit of time figuring out just where—and perhaps when—he is, who the people he's encountered are, and what he might need to do to return to his own time. Meanwhile, the scientist who sent him into the future spends most of the book forestalling people from finding out what happened to Brunt—and arguing with colleagues about whether he should even bring him back. Professor Packard spends so much time saying, oh, so much while he does next to nothing in the book. That is remarkable.

The title comes into play because Brunt eventually realizes that the future in which he finds himself has been affected by some events that haven't yet occurred in his home time—but of which he is aware. That leads him to intensify his efforts to return home in order to try to stop those events from occurring.

It's a compelling story about unintended consequences, and the negative environmental impact of human innovation. "I wish you wouldn't keep thinking about side-effects," one character says. "They don't mean anything." Oh, but they do. They do! Despite Bubonicon's long-running fundraising

gibes and *Kirkus Reviews* describing the book as "an utter fizzle," *Froomb!* is a cautionary tale that might be worth reading even today.

The remaining natural environments are set apart as theme parks, only civic leaders and the wealthy are able to access them, there's a dominant matriarchy of sorts, people eat plastic food, books and history are largely outlawed, the environment has generally been ravaged, men satisfy their hungers and desires by taking pills, and the women who encounter Brunt—a real man—aren't quite sure how to handle themselves, or him.

I enjoyed the portions of the book focusing on Brunt in the future the most. His exploration of his new environs, childhood memories intersecting with current events, and his discovery of a history book proves quite entertaining. The Packard side of the story is largely uninteresting, which made me wonder whether the people in the dystopian future were better or worse off.

All in all, however, I want to determine whether the cartoon that ostensibly inspired the novel actually existed. Who drew it? The fanciful history of the text might be more intriguing than the novel itself.



—William Rotsler

Screened at the Colby: Movie Reviews
Doctor Mordrid

The first movie I watched on Full Moon Features (see above) was this 1992 supernatural superhero flick produced by Charles Band, directed by Albert and Charles Band, and featuring a score composed by Richard Band. *Doctor Mordrid* is truly a family affair.

Initially intended as an adaptation of the Marvel Comics character Doctor Strange, the studio's rights expired before the movie could be produced. Full Moon pushed on, regardless, renaming the character and introducing other changes to avoid litigation. The end result is still very much a Doctor Strange film, almost note for note, and sits comfortably between the 1978 television movie and the 2016 beginning of the current Marvel cinematic series. The movie, despite a small cast, is very well done and worth watching.

Starring Jeffrey Combs, who also appeared in *Re-Animator* and *Castle Freak*, the movie pits Combs's Mordrid against an evil sorcerer portrayed by Brian Thompson. Thompson's Kabal provides the movie's Baron Mordo. Kabal is striving to collect the alchemical ingredients needed to free demons from Hell. Mordrid, stationed on Earth to protect it for more than 100 years, teams up with a law enforcement consultant—a neighbor and love interest—to thwart Kabal's evil schemes. Given the small cast, Kabal, in turn, enlists the assistance of two street thugs.

Relatively well produced, the movie is notable for its lavish set design, its costuming, and pretty decent special effects. Those include a stop motion-animated museum battle between the skeletons of a Tyrannosaurus and an American Mastodon near the end of the movie.

One aspect that doesn't resonate fully with the *Doctor Strange* comic book is Mordrid's occasional invocation of the Monitor. Portrayed by a pair of eyes superimposed over a star field, the Monitor reminded me of *Mork & Mindy*'s Orson.

Comments on N'APA #275

In *Brownian Motion* #12, **Garth Spencer** mourned the dearth of fanac in his local community. The statement "[M]y interests are represented by no local SF events" intrigued me. Is it that there are no local sf events, or that the local sf events that do exist don't interest you?

There's a Vancouver "classic" Sci-Fi/fantasy Meetup Group with more than 260 members. (<https://www.meetup.com/vancouver-classic-sci-fi-fantasy-meetup-group>) In April, that group gathered to discuss Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*. There's also the Vancouver Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club (<https://bookclubs.com/join-a-book-club/club/vancouver-science-fiction-and-fantasy-book-club>), which is currently reading Katherine Addison's *The*

Tomb of Dragons. The UBC Science Fiction & Fantasy Society (<https://amsclubs.ca/science-fiction-and-fantasy-society>) might focus mostly on students. They weren't on my list of sf clubs from when I edited *De Profundis* for the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, so I just added them.

I'm sure you've already checked those out, but even if their ongoing activities don't always interest you, you could certainly meet some fellow fen and potential co-conspirators. The UBC club seems closest to the organized fandom with which we might be most familiar, but I was surprised how many options were available to literary fen where you live.



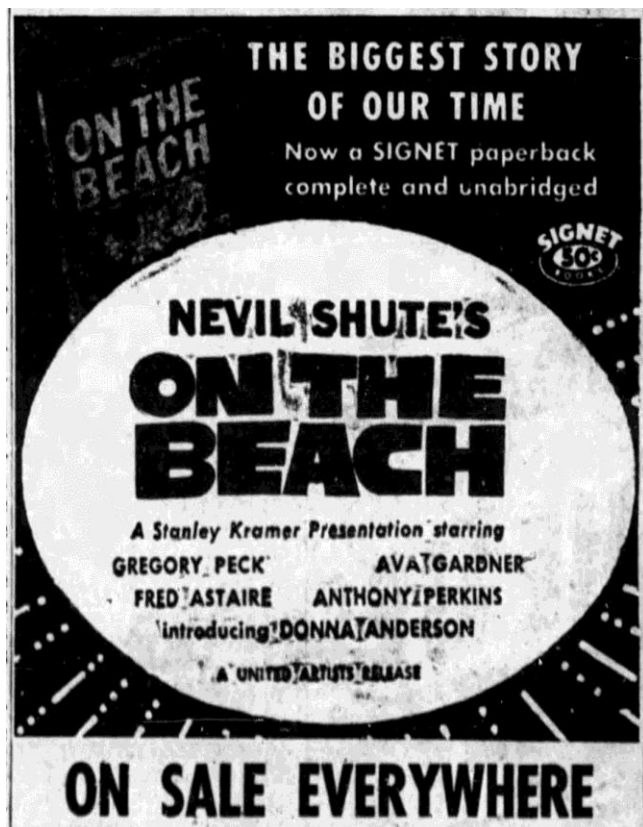
Los Angeles Times, Dec. 18, 1959

In the Los Angeles area, in addition to the LASFS, there are several other options of which I was unaware. Those include the Los Angeles Whedonverse Scifi Meetup (<https://www.meetup.com/losangeles-angel>), a book discussion group at the Van Nuys Branch Library (<https://dola.com/events/2025/4/30/science-fiction-book-club-ender-s-game-by-orson-scott-card-tickets>), a Queer Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club based in Culver City (<https://bookclubs.com/join-a-book-club/club/queer-science-fiction-and-fantasy>), and a book group at the Torrance Public Library (<https://www.library.torranceca.gov/government/library/programs/book-groups/science-fiction>).

I've never really dabbled in Meetups, book clubs, or library discussion events, but they might prove interesting—even if they attract and involve people who might not already be swimming in the fandom we know and love.

Your mention of William Lyon McGonagall interested me. That he didn't pick up on the mock fandom was probably good. Realizing that people you thought appreciated you didn't could be devastating. Your invocation of Gregory Benford also resonated with me. In mid-May, Benford's brother took to the *Facebook* to air some of the recent legal disagreements and proceedings related to the author's guardianship and conservatorship. People such as Kathryn Cramer, Richard Man, and Steven Barnes have weighed in to amplify and discuss an initial post

by Joe Haldeman sharing Jim Benford's point of view on the situation. Craig Miller and others have also provided useful context and clarification. (It's also been discussed on the Trufen mailing list.)



Los Angeles Times, Dec. 18, 1959

Fen and pros alike seem to be lining up on either side of the debate, and it's a sad situation: family members seeking control of a sibling's assets, accusations of elder abuse, a possible domestic partner and caregiver (and reportedly mother of one of Gregory Benford's children) who isn't legally recognized as a spouse (or who might be keeping Benford from his family), and what seems to be a sympathetic judge who might not be recognizing or respecting the validity of Benford's wishes. Regardless of your personal situation, setting up an estate plan, power of attorney, trust, and similar documents can go far to avoid such skirmishes. The fannish discourse isn't yet informed by all the details; the developing situation would make a great series of articles for *File 770* and *Locus*.

I previously remarked on Ahrvid Engholm's *Intermission* #151 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #28 for eAPA as follows: "[I]n *Intermission* #151, Ahrvid Engholm explored President Trump's lack of Fingerspitzengefühl. I'd not encountered the concept of 'finger tips feeling,' a phrase meaning intuitive flair or instinct, but it's applicable. So many

currently in positions of leadership in America don't have the skills required to do their jobs well, the intent or interest to do so, or interest in acting on behalf of the American people. Instead, we have some people doing whatever the heck they want to regardless of the voice or needs of the people. The people have become a liability.

"In addition to Neil Gaiman and Walter Breen, fandom has also experienced controversies related to Joss Whedon (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #4), Marion Zimmer Bradley (whom you mention, also *T&T* #4), David Eddings (*T&T* #147), and Piers Anthony (*T&T* #41). I, too, am interested in such controversies.

"Your report on Kjell Genberg's birthday was enjoyable, as was the posthumous celebration of Thor Modéen. The quotation 'If you mix an appropriate amount of farmer's maid novels with an appropriate amount of Swedish humour you get a lager film' [intrigued me]. I think I need to read these farmer's maid novels.

"Admittedly, I scrolled through the 'History Corner' focusing on the computerization of Sweden, but I was impressed by the selection of articles and translations offered. Thank you [for] recommending Karin Tidbeck, Anders Fager, John Ajvide Lindqvist, and Johan Theorin. I also appreciated your exchange with Mark Nelson. 'Let's pretend we had a con.' Brilliant! Who else is going to EarthCon—or is it UrfCon? I've seen both spellings on different fliers—later this year?"

Mark Nelson's *Brandy Hall* #11 reported on his retirement from the University of Wollongong. Even though it was involuntary and earlier than planned, I hope that you're weathering the transition well. For the purposes of N'APA, preparing your pages in A4 should be okeh, but I'll defer to them what prepare it. If selected as an Honorary Academic, what would you research? Perhaps this isn't retirement after all, but a role change.

I shall enjoy reading your fanzines here, as well as in ANZAPA. Already, we're commenting on each other's writing in both apae! In regards to your conversation with Samuel Lubell about acronyms used in apae, in my wide-ranging wanderings, I've found them oft used in *Alarums & Excursions* and to varying, though lesser degrees in other apae. I think they were more commonly utilized when we were using older modes of production and design, and had to conserve space on the page for as much text as possible, economically and effectively presented. I tend not to use them because PDFzines and the Internet allow for infinite real estate and page count.

In A&E #592, the penultimate issue (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #163), the "Brief List of Some Phrases Used

in A&E”—most of them roleplaying game related—ends with the following: “re yr ct, ryrcr, ryct, ryc, ry = re (in regard to) your comment.” Elsewhere, “Acronyms (and Things That Look Like Them)” (<https://learn.getgrav.org/content/media/acronyms.txt>) offers additional examples. Some are not dissimilar to acronyms used in online chat and social media.

In *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #275, **George Phillies** remarked that he’s now served as president of the N3F for a decade—longer than any other president. Congratulations! And, perhaps, my apologies, given the thankless role I’m sure it is. (When I was serving on the directorate, I considered running for president but decided against it. I would have been honored to lose to you.) There are multiple gaps in our list of presidents (<https://tnfff.org/presidents-of-the-n3f>), so we can’t determine the longest-serving nonconsecutive president, but as the longest-running consecutive president, you are certainly the pre-eminent consecutive executive.

It might behoove us to flesh out that list, if not just to identify them others what served. Looking at *Fancylopedia 3*’s entry for the N3F, I was drawn to the list of the federation’s charter members, the 64 “Immortal Fen.” Has anyone ever profiled all of them? That, too, would be a worthy effort. That reminded me that Jean-Paul L. Garnier recently took on the editorship of *Ionisphere*. (<https://tnfff.org/12116-2>) He now has not one but two issues under his belt, and I’ve yet to explore the results. I shall have to rectify that!

Your remark to Kevin Trainor Jr. on Son of Silvercon reminded me that as a new participant in APA-V, a recently relaunched Las Vegas-based apa, I inquired whether any of the fen active in those circles participated in Son of Silvercon.

I commented on **Ahrvid Engholm**’s *Intermission* #152 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #29 for eAPA as follows: “Ahrvid Engholm’s *Intermission* #152 described a national minute of silence in response to a mass shooting. It pains me to say this, but I don’t think that would happen in the United States, and it should. Every single time it happens. Instead, here we have leaders who decline to fly flags at half mast to honor the death of other presidents. Your mention of cross-country skiing resonated with me. I love cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Both are like hiking in the snow, and hiking is awesome.

“I appreciated your mention of Leigh Edmonds’s *Australian Journal of Fandom Research*. Your ‘History Corner’ on academic papers and articles about fandom was interesting. I occasionally flirt with academic approaches to sf and fandom, at one time

subscribing to *Science Fiction Film and Television*, *Extrapolation*, *Foundation*, and *Science Fiction Studies* and belonging to the Science Fiction Research Association. While I find the academic point of view interesting, occasionally challenging my understanding of the genre, I also don’t see much enthusiasm or passion in the scholarly approach. A little more fandom would be welcome in fandom studies.



Los Angeles Times, Dec. 25, 1959

"I was particularly interested in your discussion of Sveriges Fanzine Förening and SAPA. 'Everyone had to pretend to have a club and apply for the "Association Mail" rubber stamp,' is a wonderful sentence. *Gothenburg's Faanwheekly* #21 sounds glorious. I've played with the idea of writing using pseudonyms in my own fanzines, especially in the letter column, but that hasn't happened yet. Maybe I'll experiment with that after UrfCon. Have you all booked your rooms?

"In ANZAPA, there's been discussion recently of faneds who've published fanzines in more than one country. If you once mailed *Fanytt* or *Science Fiction Journalen* from Finland, you'd qualify! A Swecon version of WOOF sounds like a good idea to me. Once we move to Portugal, I hope to drum up enough interest for a Portuguese apa—perhaps calling it P-APA—but we'll see what happens. I'll have to check out the November 1954 issue of *Peon*. Jim Harmon, Terry Carr, and Isaac Asimov contributions bode well for its quality.



Los Angeles Times, Dec. 25, 1959

"Jaroslav Olša Jr., consul general of the Czech Republic in Los Angeles, is likely to be interested in your discussion of Czech fanzines. I will send him a copy; I've been meaning to reach out to him after Loscon but have neglected to. The article you reprint

even names Olša! You can learn about the current state of *XB-1* at <https://www.casopisxb1.cz>. I see you've already been in touch with him. I'll still send him *Intermission* #152. He probably already gets it.

"The lettercol was an enjoyable read, and I look forward to future letters of comment. I'll have to look for your two short story collections, which I'm sure you've mentioned previously."

Jefferson P. Swycaffer's *Archive Midwinter* dated March 9, 2025, pulled no punches expressing his concerns about Trump. Is it true that "All information exists, neither able to increase or decrease"? That "evolutionary algorithms can, in fact, create information"? I was unaware that information could be considered constant, but that might be the case. According to a cursory read of materials from the National Institutes of Health and related to Maxwell's demon, information is considered constant in physics—and cannot be destroyed. While information can be reshuffled or transformed, the total amount of information remains the same. That principle relates to the second law of thermodynamics, which holds that entropy—disorder—can increase, but the amount of information in a closed system remains the same. (The interesting question, then, might be whether a system is open or closed.)

In a 2023 article by Chris Ferrie, "Nothing Is Real—There Is Only Information," he states that "The Second Law of Thermodynamics, in the language of information, is that the total information contained within a system can only increase or remain constant over time." That seems more in line with my uninformed point of view. It could be that even if information remains constant, *known* information can increase. You've given me something to learn more about! May the information available to me increase.

I was unaware of Robert Asprin and the Mongol horde invasion of the Society for Creative Anachronism. Something else to learn more about. Your news item on Amazon ending Kindle file downloads resonated with me. I continue to read e-books on my Kindle, but I'm more likely to obtain and utilize such texts with my Kobo, which still allows less-restrictive file sharing.

In *Renovation and Innovation* Letter #5, Adrian Kresnak reviewed Dennis Shasha's *The Puzzling Adventures of Dr. Ecco*, with which I was unfamiliar. It looks like an intriguing series! Thank you for clarifying your gender—my apologies if I utilized male pronouns when responding to you.

Garth Spencer's *Brownian Motion* #13 remarked on the incorrect issue date on the cover to N'APA's previous edition—and the exclusion of his fanzine! I, myself, had a brief "senior moment," confusing this

apa with eAPA, in which you recently asked, “Have I missed anyone’s contributions? I have this haunting feeling... .” Perhaps you inquired in that forum because of the N’APA gaffe!

Our ongoing discussion about convention codes of conduct intrigues me. I’m almost inspired to gather a representative sample of such codes in order to pose questions such as “What do we think we ought to be able to do that we cannot do at this con?” or “What does this code restrain us from doing that we should reasonably be allowed to do?” (This line of inquiry isn’t aimed at you individually, Garth, but the apa.)

This fall’s Loscon 51 offers a Harassment & Hate Speech Policy (<https://loscon.org/harassment-policy>) that actually seems quite reasonable. The only nits I’d pick—and I didn’t volunteer (and wasn’t asked) to help craft the policy—might include that the definition of “harassment” seems slightly vague. “Harassment is generally any behavior that causes discomfort or alarms or threatens another person or group.” What “causes discomfort” feels potentially general and open for debate—is one’s discomfort, any discomfort, legitimate and worth acting on?—while the concerns about alarm and threat (safety issues) seem totally reasonable. If you’re uncomfortable being asked questions, and I ask you a question, is that discomfort worth acting on? If I know you dislike being asked questions and I *keep asking you questions*, perhaps. Harassment might be a pattern of or repeated unwelcome behavior rather than any behavior.

The listed “examples of harassment” are all pretty clearly things that one shouldn’t reasonably expect to be able to do with impunity. The section on hate speech seems to presume that we all agree on what “hate speech” is, which offers a loophole that might be worth closing. Applying a basic dictionary definition —“abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or similar grounds”—helps clarify things. Discussing politics, religion, or gender isn’t hate speech. Disagreeing about politics, religion, or gender isn’t hate speech. But abusive or threatening conversation —aggressive disagreement—related to those topics would be. The concern is with the abuse and threats, not the topic of discussion. Again, that seems reasonable to me.

But the difference between the relative value and merits of comfort and safety also interests me. Not that my intent or goal is to make someone uncomfortable, but at what price comfort? If anyone has examples of codes of conduct that include actions or behaviors in which you think you should be able to engage, I’m curious. Because otherwise, it feels like a discussion along the lines of “I just don’t like being

told what not to do.”

Thank you for the reminder to mail you the heathen materials I’d mentioned. Unfortunately, they’ve been packed up with the rest of our belongings to send overseas, so it might be some time before I do so. Regardless, do so I will, Real Soon Now.

In *Samizdat* #30, **Samuel Lubell** commented on convention attendance. I think the last couple of Loscons have drawn about 400-500 people, so 270 for Swecon feels like an okeh number, even if it’s smaller than it usually is. Regardless, I agree that downward trends in con participation counts are generally concerning.

I was unaware of the con runners’ game *If I Ran the Zoo*. I’m curious whether that’s ever been documented in a shareable way. It seems like knowledge worth making more widely available rather than recreating every year at the local level. (Even capturing it for sharing at the local level would be worth doing!)

Thank you for the Author Spotlight on Michael Swanwick. I quite like that *TriQuarterly* published one of his first stories; I attended Northwestern University and fondly remember its little magazine. I’ve long conflated Swanwick’s writing with that of Mike Resnick. At some point I’ll have to more confidently disambiguate the two.

Kevin Trainor Jr.’s *Esmeralda County Line* #9 updated N’APAns on tax season and healthcare appointments, along with other travel. As we prepare to sell our house and relocate (see above), my world has gotten substantially smaller. Our new living quarters, a nearby Airbnb, is a single room with refrigerator, closet, and bathroom. When I’m there, I usually recline on the bed. I wash dishes in a tub in the sink and place the drying rack on the bath mat. My daily commute remains about a 12-minute drive, though I spend more time at the office given the size of our Airbnb—I’ve returned to being a 9-to-5’er—and venture to the house to pick up mail most days.

Now that we’ve planned our road trip to the Midwest at the end of the month (see the forthcoming *Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #164), the aperture of my existence will open a little. I look forward to that! Wait a minute... the National Air & Space Museum houses a collection of erotic photographs of feet? The things one learns. Thank you for the brief conrep on ConFinement VI.