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An index with links to the issues of the MT VOID since 1986 is at [http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back\\_issues.htm](http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back_issues.htm).

**Nothing Is Easy** (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

In March I changed the bank account Optimum withdraws from.

In April they withdrew from \*both\* accounts. Okay, I figured it was just an overlap problem.

In May they withdrew from neither because I had a credit.

In June they withdrew from both again. I called and apparently there are two steps to changing your account, and the second isn't obvious. They issued me a credit for the extra withdrawal.

In July they withdrew from neither, and then told me after a couple of weeks that I was past due.

It turns out that it takes a full cycle to add a different account. Apparently I was supposed to pay manually for one month, but of course this wasn't obvious either.

I think they have the billing correct for August.

As part of all this they offered me a free upgrade on my speed, which sounded good, so I took it.

After a couple of weeks, a box from Optimum appeared. In it was a modem. Apparently, I needed to get a new modem to get the new speed.

It appeared that I also needed Internet access to install the new modem.

But since I had no data plan on my phone, only whatever WiFi there was, this was a Catch-22. Okay, I wanted to change to a real phone plan with data, so this was incentive.

So I \*finally\* got to T-Mobile to change over to a real plan, including data, and also change the name on the account from Mark's to mine. I got the latter accomplished, but it turns out that the credit freezes I have (because of all the recent breaches) block T-Mobile from changing me to a standard plan. So I had to come home and unblock the two freezes I had (the third had already been turned off for some reason).

Then I went back a few days later and finished getting the account transitioned.

So when I finally had some time to swap modems, I did that.

I could just disconnect the old coax and Cat-5 cables from the old modem and connect them to the new. But the power cord had a different jack, so I needed to use the new one.

The new plug is wider than the old one and wouldn't fit in the multiplug adapter I had in the wall outlet, so I needed to run it to a power strep. (I still want to run it to a different, harder-to-get-at power strip. Eventually.)

The old modem was horizontal. The new modem is vertical. Luckily, this isn't a problem (unless it falls over too easily).

As I suspected, I needed access to the Internet to update the router. In this, I was wise to do the phone before the modem.

However, the URL given on the instructions was wrong.

So I gave it a try using the QR code and thank goodness that worked. (The URL they gave was missing the next level.)

Then everything was fairly straightforward for a while.

However, I had to name my WiFi and I wasn't sure if I could re-use the previous name, so I gave it a new name, which of course meant that all my devices had to log into the new Wifi. The Mac and the phone were straightforward, but I still have to figure out how to get my Wifi extender connected to the new network. (It's a Linksys; any tips are welcome. I've tried unplugging it and pushing the reset button on it; that did not seem to do anything.)

As I said, nothing is easy. My solution is to just buy a new extender; they're cheap enough.

And when I tried to cast/mirror something on Kanopy from my phone to the TV, it took me only a f\*cking hour and a half to make it work! Almost all the pages I found assumed I had a much newer TV that had a network settings menu, or that I could change the input to the HDMI when nothing was flowing through it. The ones that didn't do either of those assumed a Google Home app that didn't look like mine. I ended up doing a factory reset, and then eventually found a menu item in the Home app that did what some non-existent icon supposedly did.

Now everything ends in "2". My user name got changed in the process of bringing up the new Mac (it's now "markleeper2" and I'm not even going to try to change it, because God knows what that would do to the Time Machine backups), the WiFi name is "VOIDnet2", and the television name is "Den TV 2". (The Time Machine is "G-Drive ArmorATD", because I didn't want to risk a name clash or a problem if I changed it after it started up.)

I put off watching my Kanopy movie until the next day (a 1952 Finnish folk horror film based on pre-Christian Finnish mythology and Sami shamanism). Suitably enough, the year ends in a "2" also. :-)

The printer turned out to be fairly easy, other than having to enter the password using arrow keys rather than just typing it. But it's amazing how many things I had forgotten were using the WiFi.

The new extender arrived Monday. It came with no instructions.

Luckily I had found a web page for Linksys on manually setting up their range extenders when I was trying to use the old one. The first instruction was to plug the extender in and wait for the light to blink orange.

The second instruction was to connect the computer to the extender's default WiFi: Linksys Extender Setup -- xxx. The "xxx" was the last three characters of the MAC address--which was on the \*back\* of the extender that I just plugged into the wall.

Well, it does turn out that the correct name will magically appear in the list of networks, but I didn't know this until I walked back to where I had plugged the extender in, unplugged it, and wrote down everything off the back, just in case.

Then I connected the computer. This took two tries. Then I opened the web page it told me and went through the steps. It told me the extender was too close to get maximum range.

So I moved it (another walk to the other end of the house). Now it told me it was too far away. At no point were any specific distances mentioned. I moved it back to where it had been and where the old one had been (yet another walk to the other end of the house), and finished the set-up.

But, wait, there's more! No, not a Ginsu knife, but yesterday (Thursday) my printer finally decided to go four paws to the moon after printing two of the ten pages I needed to have to ship my eBay orders. It had been acting up in multiple ways--the paper sensor kept saying there was no paper when there was, and I'd have to re-seat the paper every few pages, and a couple of times it had said the print head was bad and needed repair. Before, I was able to try a couple of things suggested on the Internet, but this time none of those, nor even removing the cartridges and print head, cleaning the print head, and replacing everything, worked. So I just ordered another printer, which is supposed to arrive Saturday. I also went to the library, two doors down from the Post Office and printed my pages, although I had problems logging in, because it didn't accept my library card number from the numeric keyboard, and the print station didn't like my PIN at all. Then I took them and my orders over to the Post Office, packaged them up, and shipped them out. One must always have a backup plan ... or two ... or five. [-ecf]

**Jury Duty** (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

Mark just got a call to jury duty.

I think I answered it in the manner he would. I said he wasn't a resident of Middlesex County and gave his address as Mount Sinai Cemetery in Marlboro (Monmouth County). I said he wasn't a citizen, could not read or understand English, and could not mentally and physically perform the functions of a juror. Oh, and he was also more than 75 years old (which I guess is right), and that would have been excuse enough.

I think he'd be proud of me.

P.S. He got excused.

P.P.S. Oh, and apparently to fill in the questionnaire on-line (though there was a phone number), the person had to have a cell phone and an email address.

[-ecf]

**A Television in Your Head** (letter of comment by Tom Russell):

In response to the quotes at the end of the MT VOID, Tom Russell writes:

Does anyone know the source of this exchange?:

"Does anyone have an idea of how human vision works?" Woman (?) raises her hand; "Maybe it's like you have a little television in your head" "Good! But who is watching the little television?"

[-lrf]

[More can be found at <https://askaphilosopher.org/2012/09/24/there-is-no-tv-in-your-head-true-or-false/> -ecf]

Hugo Awards:

BEST NOVEL: THE TAINTED CUP by Robert Jackson Bennett  
BEST NOVELLA: THE TUSKS OF EXTINCTION by Ray Nayler  
BEST NOVELETTE: "The Four Sisters Overlooking the Sea"  
by Naomi Kritzer  
BEST SHORT STORY: "Stitched to Skin Like Family Is" by Nghi Vo  
BEST SERIES: "Between Earth and Sky" by Rebecca Roanhorse  
BEST GRAPHIC STORY OR COMIC: "Star Trek: Lower Decks:  
Warp Your Own Way"  
BEST RELATED WORK: "Speculative Whiteness: Science Fiction  
and the Alt-Right" by Jordan S. Carroll  
BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, LONG FORM: DUNE: PART TWO  
BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, SHORT FORM: STAR TREK: LOWER DECKS:  
"The New Next Generation"  
BEST GAME OR INTERACTIVE WORK: "Caves of Qud"  
BEST EDITOR SHORT FORM: Neil Clarke  
BEST EDITOR LONG FORM: Diana M. Pho  
BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Alyssa Winans  
BEST SEMIPROZINE: UNCANNY MAGAZINE  
BEST FANZINE: BLACK NERD PROBLEMS  
BEST FANCAST: "Eight Days of Diana Wynne Jones"  
BEST FAN WRITER: Abigail Nussbaum  
BEST FAN ARTIST: Sara Felix  
BEST POEM: "A War of Words" by Marie Brennan  
LODESTAR AWARD FOR BEST YOUNG ADULT BOOK: SHEINE LENDE  
by Darcie Little Badger  
ASTOUNDING AWARD FOR BEST NEW WRITER (sponsored by Dell Magazines)  
Moniquill Blackgoose

**This Week's Reading** (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

WOMEN IN PURPLE: RULERS OF MEDIEVAL BYZANTIUM by Judith Herrin (Princeton University Press, ISBN 978-0-691-09500-4) is about three Byzantine empresses during the period of iconoclasm: Irene, Euphrosyne, and Theodora. Herrin makes a lot of assumptions and guesses, in large part because there is not much (reliable) written about these women, or indeed about most women in the Roman and Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empires. Perhaps this is why one sees the first person singular pronoun at times; traditionally historians have eschewed it for a more distant stance. (I might as well add that the proofreading isn't perfect either, but that is becoming far too common these days.)

The "purple" referred to was a color so expensive to produce that it was reserved for emperors and empresses. And there is even a word, "porphyrogenetos" ("born in/to the purple") indicating those children born to an emperor or empress after the parent had achieved that title.

Which brings up my biggest complaint about the book: Herrin's constant use of Greek (or less frequently, Latin) terms to describe things. Even if, for example, she has defined "strategos" the first time she uses it, the reader may not recall the definition a hundred pages later. I realize that not everything has a precise English word that defines it and can be used, but a page peppered with Greek is not easy for a non-academic reader to follow.

Listening to the history of Rome and the history of Byzantium, I found myself wanting to know more about the various women who managed to wield power in a society that didn't normally give women any sort of power, even over their own lives. Overall, I found this too light on facts and heavy on theories and guesses.

WHAT I ATE IN ONE YEAR: (AND RELATED THOUGHTS) by Stanley Tucci (Gallery, ISBN 978-1-668-05568-7) doesn't actually list everything Tucci ate in one year. Early on, for example, he describes the food he ate in Italy while on location there, but doesn't cover what he ate when he flew back to England for a weekend there.

It also seems to be aimed at experts in Italian cuisine, because he very often gives the Italian name of what he ate, and gives no translation of it, or even an indication what its main ingredients are.

Not a terrible book, but not one I can recommend to a wide audience. [-ecf]

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Quote of the Week:

"I am so small I can barely be seen. How can this great  
love be inside me?" "Look at your eyes. They are small  
but they see enormous things."  
--Rumi

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