

N'APA 278
September 2025



The Official Organ

#278

Next deadline: November 15, 2025

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The official preparer is Jefferson P. Swycaffer - abontides@gmail.com

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.

I apologize for being a week late with this distribution.

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INTERMISSION #156

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, an attack drone for EAPA, N'APA and other lorries with hidden compartments. Still late and lazy with @SFJournalen's newstweets but try them. AI makes life perfect, nothing goes wrong! Fixes all typos too! Early July 2025.

Editorially: Michelism, FBI Vs SF, Ukraine Drones, US BBusters

The History Corner column has over time become a cornerstone of *Intermission*. It tries to dig up interesting, lesser known things from the history of science fiction and its fandom. *Intermission* has always had historical material (because your editor is into genre history since long: the *Fandbook*, fanhistory anthologies, articles etc) but there was a leap forward around #96 when I began presenting the research material found in the digital newspaper archive of the Stockholm Royal Library - and that was a lot! Similar genre research has been added over time.

In this I have some really great stuff: Michelism (from the 1939 Worldcon controversial Exclusion Act), FBI suspecting Asimov and Bradbury for being bloody commies, why Soviet computers were crap, the unknown 17th Century sf authress, the first electric spaceship, the quartet of sf authors who died on the Titanic, the first sf TV show (BBC 1938), how Scotty and Captain Kirk didn't enter space first with Star Trek but with Canada's *Space Command* in the 1950s... To this miscellaneous and some perhaps risky comments: woke CoCs, faulty Gaza stats, a report from this year's Eurocon, and maybe more.

But I must cover news about Putin's for each month increasingly fruitless, stupid and evil war against Ukraine. June 1st the Ukrainians performed the most astounding and successful attack against Russian strategic bombers, shortly thereafter they blew up over ton of TNT (delivered by an underwater drone) at a fundamental pillar of Putin's beloved Crimea bridge, making it unstable for heavy traffic. And on the very Russia Day (their 4th of July) Russian losses, KIA and wounded, surpassed one million (other estimates come close to that figure, which is from Ukraine's general staff).

The attack against the Russian bombers, of which 41 were hit (1/3 of Putin's strategic bomber fleet!) was done with hundreds of cheap drones, released from hidden compartments in lorry trailers, smuggled into Russia right under their noses. It was a brilliant very effective operation which will be studied many decades to come. Not only is it a huge blow to Putin's cowardly, wicked bombing of schools, hospitals, apartment buildings, kindergartens etc in Ukraine, which the destroyed bombers carried missiles for, it also spreads paranoia in Russia. Their transport system is slowed down as every lorry must be checked, the FSB (formerly KGB) becomes a laughing stock, and the ordinary Russian begins to realise not all goes to plan. A

similar operation, according to sources, later destroyed scores of Russian tanks and hundreds of armoured BMPs on a train transport. The Israelis seem to be inspired by (maybe get help from) Ukraine, in their campaign against Iranian nuclear facilities and top brass. In a similar way they released drones inside Iran destroying anti-aircraft systems, to let their air force operate unopposed.

The Ukrainians are smart, adaptable, they are masters of the new drone warfare and they give Putin heavy blows daily. Morale among Russian troops are very low, desertions increase and while they do crawl forward on some fronts, it's at a snail's pace to huge costs. Putin's war chest (the "welfare fund") is ¾ emptied, oil income will drop as more "shadow fleet" vessels are sanctioned, US congress has majority for 500% tariffs on Russia's buyers, drones have knocked out 30% of their refineries, Ruble inflation is 25-30% (independent sources say), Ukraine's drone attacks on military installations, supplies, etc increase (and they'll triple drone production 2025), Europe has stepped up and boosts military funding. And the Russian ass...asset defiling the Oval Office can't do a thing. Putin plays Trump like a fiddle while Donny organises a silly military parade... I suppose the US army is worth respect, but marching through the avenues of the capital to loud-mouthed bragging, that's what troops of dictatorships do.

But the US military certainly redeemed itself with the June 22 attack on Iran's nuclear sites. Fordow



with the underground centrifuges got blasted with twelve 12 ton bunker busters, Natanz received 2, Istfahan only cruise missiles (a nuclear tech center not underground). Fordow with the sensitive centrifuges 90 m underground should have been damaged by shockwaves from the bombs, that reportedly penetrate "only" 60 m down - but the explosives have an earthquake effect tens of metres around.

But I have another suggestion: for at least two of the blasts the B2s managed to aim a second bomb into the holes of the first, thus reaching far more than 60 m. The B2s thus came in two waves, the first dropping just two bunker busters, the second 25 minutes later dropping 10 of which at least two could have pinpointed the holes of the first wave. Net sources says this sort of bombing would be difficult but possible in theory. The ordonnance has precision for it. Pictures don't show 14 bomb holes, so some must have been "doubled". And Pentagon sounds certain they stopped Iran's A-bomb ambitions.

Trump likes golf more than keeping his facts straight and even keeping Putin happy. And it seems he ordered the US Air Force to lob...hole in ones!

Iranian air defence, primarily of Russian origin, couldn't do anything. Much had already been knocked out by Israel. Ruski air defence can't even defend itself! And the holes are doubling in Putin's purse, he's losing Iran as ally, his battered troops loose men and hardware fast, and his opponent knows how to duck and cover, while returning crushing counterblows.

It's only a matter of time before Putin must give in.

--Ahrvid Engholm, editor

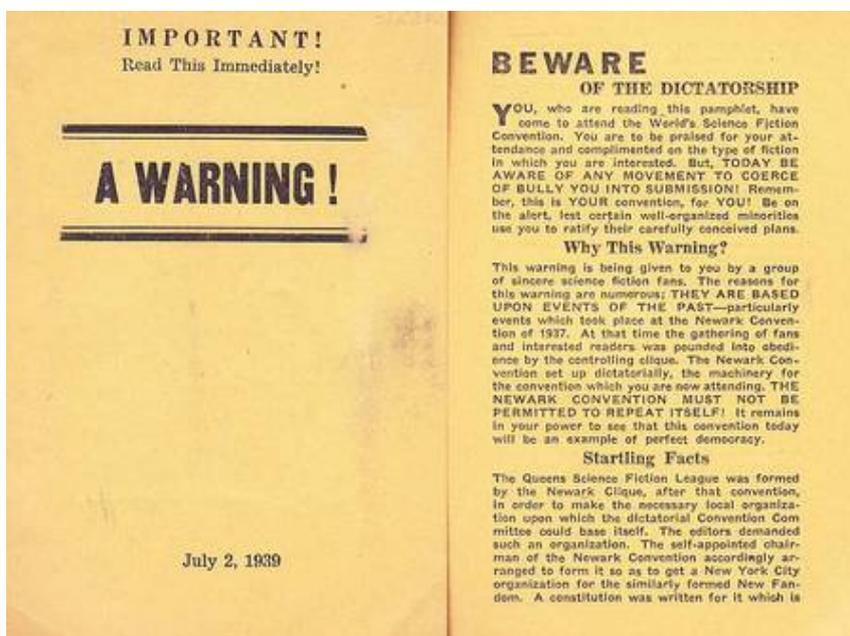
HISTORY CORNER

This HisCor - what this popular, fact-filled History Corner is known as in intellectual circles - will be a bixed mag...mixed bag. We e g learn that this politicising that threatens to overtake fandom (awards to "minorities" only, Code of Conducts to suppress dissent, "include" fans away, etc) isn't new.

Already in the 1930s there were some in the New York Futurian group who subscribed to the movement called Michelism, or: crypto-Communism. It was named after the main spokesman, one John B Michel. Among the supporters we had for instance Don Wollheim, yes the Ghu Archbishop later founding DAW books with the aim to publish as many books as possible by Ken Bulmer (unsure of Nobel chances, Bulmer wrote as Alan Burt Akers).

It was Michelism that lead SaMoskowitz to the opposite of "inclusion" by excluding half a dozen Futurians from the premier Worldcon in New York, 1939. (Called "Worldcon" because it was held during the NY *World's Fair*. The "world" part of it was zero. Not even a stray Canadian managed to find Nycon.) SaM was afraid that the heavily armed - using words, mightier than the sword as you know - suspicious elements of Michelism would lead a revolution taking over fandom, leading to ink sprinkled over endless reams of twiltone paper and lots and lots of talk on club meetings for scores of teenagers, who'd rather read about the galactic adventures of "Doc" Smith's Lensmen.

So out they went, and spent the convention on a café across the street. But suspicious element Dave Kyle managed to sneak in and placed a printrun of Das Fannish Kapital behind a suspicious heating element in the hall. You find it here, <https://file770.com/own-the-zine-that-started-the-trouble-at-the-first-worldcon/> - read A WARNING...BEWARE OF THE DICTATORSHIP. Today's woke activists should take heed, to become even more awake. It's always a good advice to beware of dictatorships. SaM's Exclusion Act missed Kyle who was told he could sit there at the con. He also missed Isaac Asimov, the worst sf author yet unlynched, to his own admission. He was probably disappointed there were so few femmefans there for him to chase. Post-Nycon SaM spent considerable time learning



"Rejected - Convention Committee"

THE SPEECHES BY DONALD A.
WOLLHEIM AND JOHN B. MICHEL
SUPPRESSED BY THE COMMITTEE
OF THE NEWARK CONVENTION
Pamphlet N°2 CPASF

to create boxed pages without a Linotype, revealing how he averted a World Revolution Immortal Storm. Whatever makes you happy.

Anyway, the ousted Futurians were used to be seen as labrats that catwoman C'Mell had dragged in. The year before, at the Newark sf convention, carefully crafted speeches by Wollheim and Michel were rejected by the contra-revolutionary committee! These spectres haunting worldfandom was instead wisely published by the Committee for the Political Advancement of SF. If you're not afraid of ghosts you find it here:

<https://www.fanac.org/fanzines/CPASF/CPASF2.pdf>

Wollheim's rejected speech deals with the science in sf. Fans aren't competent enough to become real scientists and invent specships, he seems to argue, but could always become *defenders of science!* It's always a good advice to defend science (unless its about climate).

Michel was tougher. Fandom's Lenin urged us to: FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM AND FOR A SCIENTIFIC WORLD ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEM! DEFEND SCIENCE AGAINST REACTIONS. ON GUARD AGAINST THE NEW BARBARIANS! It should be explained that communism rests on the delusion that it's "scientific", so "scientific" that virtually everyone trying it has gone bankrupt. (But Michel's idea to fight fascism had some merits.)

But lets commit these seasoned 20-something political philosophers to history. What wasn't known at the time is that chasing skirts was just a cover, because Isaac Asimov was a Russian agent codename *Robprof!* Or so at least, that was what FBI suspected:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/i-robprof-fbi-feared-muchloved-science-fiction-author-isaac-asimov-was-soviet-agent-8929976.html>

FBI feared much-loved science fiction author Isaac Asimov was Soviet agent. Papers show that he was investigated on suspicion of being a spy.

But newly released papers show that, in the 1960s, he was unknowingly embroiled in intrigue more suited to a John Le Carre novel, as the FBI investigated him on suspicion of being a Soviet spy.

Never-before-seen documents reveal that the agency acted to investigate Asimov in 1965 receiving a leaked US Communist Party list which included the I, Robot author's name. The list was of individuals who had either been contacted by the party or were considered "possibly amenable to such as supporters".

There were no notations behind the writer's name and the informant - the New England District chairman of the US Communist Party - said he "could not determine why his name was listed or whether he had been contacted". The FBI files on Asimov show that the agency scrutinised his records to see if he was a notorious Soviet informant codenamed Robprof.

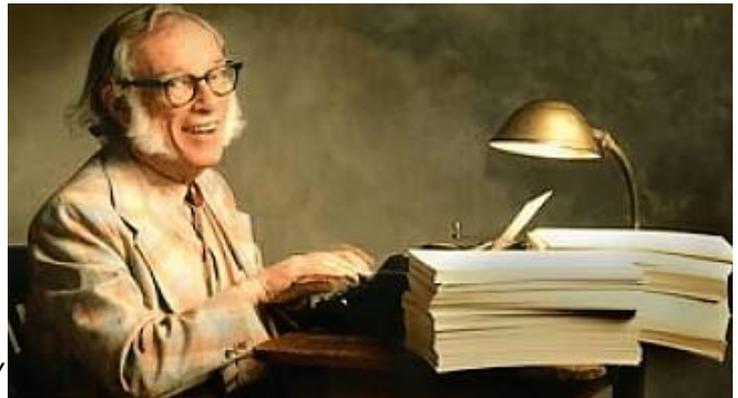
The FBI continued to monitor Asimov for at least the next two years. In 1967 a memo in the files noted a change of address, as well as checks on his credit history and criminal record. Those, and his immigration files, failed to unearth any issues. That marked the last note in Asimov's FBI file.

News of the FBI's suspicions about the sf writer's political leaning emerged after the US open government campaign group MuckRock put in a freedom of information request to see his FBI file. The request also turned up the suspicions of an unnamed informer who accused Asimov of being a communist. The source wrote to J Edgar Hoover, the first director of the FBI, in 1960: "Asimov may be quite all right. On the other hand..." He enclosed his correspondence with Asimov and said his reason for airing his suspicions was "because I question the position he takes with respect to the first nuclear power plants being built by Soviet Russia".

Here's more: <https://www.muckrock.com/news/archives/2013/nov/07/isaac-asimov-fbi-file-ROBPROF/>

J. Edgar was cordial but dismissive. His assistants noted that this was not this particular correspondent's first not-so-hot tip, his last sent in 1957 "regarding the Russian Revolution of 1917." The Director returned all correspondence with thanks and enclosed a few pamphlets on the subject of communism.

This was not the Bureau's last glance into Asimov, though. A 1965 memo notes that Asimov's name appeared on a list maintained by the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) of individuals either contacted for recruitment or "considered amenable" to the party's goals. An informant, who is noted as the chairman of the CPUSA, New England district, provided the list to the FBI's Boston office. The list included an entry for "ISAAC ASIMOV, Boston University Biochemist," but did not note whether the party had actually established contact. /The informant mentioned/ that science fiction "did a large amount of blind' publishing for the CP."



Robprof with a day's production: Foundation Hooray, Rusting Robots, Asimov on Quantum Physics Entanglement and 500 More Dirty Limericks.

The memo's author also reviews Asimov's academic history as a biochemist, weighing whether the author might be a potential match to the Soviet informant codenamed ROBPROF, who was also in academia.

"Boston is not suggesting that Asimov is ROBPROF," the memo concludes, but "he should be considered as a

Hon. J. Edgar Hoover
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D. C.

DATE 4/18/92 BY 2125/MLC/4/1
INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 10/15/93 BY 1043/MLC/4/1

Dear Mr. Hoover,

I am enclosing correspondence exchanged with Isaac Asimov, author of the book INSIDE THE ATOM.

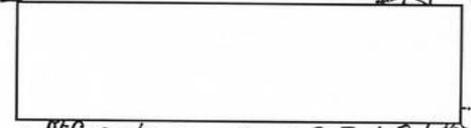
My reason for sending it is because I question the position he takes with respect to the first nuclear power plant having been built by Soviet Russia.

From our college library here I have found that Asimov was born January 2, 1920, in Petrovich, Russia; that he has degrees of B. S., M. A., and Ph. D., all granted by institutions in this country; and that he is presently connected with Boston University, Boston, Mass.

Asimov may be quite all right. On the other hand,

Yours sincerely,

Classified by
Declassify on: OADR



The anonymous letter reporting Asimov.

possibility in light of his background, which contains information inimical to the best interests of the United States." Due to the ROBPROF suspicions, Asimov remained on the FBI's radar...immigration files also failed to uncover any dirt, and a captain of the Boston University Police Department confirmed that he was still employed by the university. The FBI's file on Isaac Asimov ends at 1967, so it seems that their ROBPROF investigation steered toward other suspects.

Instead of bothering agent Robprof, perhaps they should have a look into agent Krasnov?

Anyway, here's the full Asimov File:

<https://www.muckrock.com/foi/united-states-of-america-10/fbi-file-on-isaac-asimov-8300/#comm-47443>

But FBI wasn't finished with these treacherous skiffy hackwriters. Why not have a crack at the illustrated...eh,illustrious man himself:

Re Boston letter 4/19/65.

On 2/24/55 [redacted] made available a list of names which was in the possession of the CPUSA Underground operating in the Boston, Massachusetts area. This list was entitled [redacted] and contained the name "ISAAC ASIMOV, Boston University, Biochemist."

This informant advised that notations indicated that some persons listed had been contacted and others were being considered for contact by [redacted] as possibly amenable to such as supporters for amnesty pleas for issues such as the [redacted] case.

b2
b6
b7C
b7D

The informant advised that there was no notation after the name of ASIMOV and that he could not determine why his name was listed or whether he had been contacted.

[redacted] was a CP member in 1955 and is currently the Chairman of the CPUSA, New England District.

On 4/20/54 [redacted] advised SA [redacted] that she and [redacted] a retired lieutenant-colonel of the U.S. Army, were "science fiction" enthusiasts and in 1952 or 1953 attended a three day convention at the Henry Hudson Hotel NYC. It was confided to her at the convention by [redacted] that Science Fiction magazines did a large amount of "blind" publishing for the CP.

b2
b6
b7C
b7D

Who's Who also lists a number of books authored by ASIMOV. His home address was shown as 45 Greenough Street, West Newton 55, Massachusetts.

[redacted] has advised that Unsub ROBPROF is a noted person in the field of Microbiology, which, according to the medical dictionary, is the science of nature, life and actions of micro-organisms (bacteria). (X)(u)

Biochemistry is the study of the chemistry of the living tissues of plant and animal life.

Boston is not suggesting that ASIMOV is ROBPROF. [redacted] has advised that ROBPROF is in the field of Microbiology. However, as in the case of [redacted] he should be considered as a possibility in light of his background, which contains information inimical to the best interests of the United States. (X)(u)

[redacted] Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Mass., was contacted on 6/14/65 and he advised [redacted] is acquainted with [redacted] but that [redacted] is unknown to him. He further advised that [redacted] is not aware that [redacted] is acquainted with or has associated with any Soviet nationals. (X)(u)

Ray Bradbury investigated for communist sympathies. Science fiction great put under surveillance by the FBI for spreading distrust and lack of confidence in America'

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/aug/30/ray-bradbury-investigated-fbi>

Ray Bradbury was investigated by the FBI during the 1950s, with government agents interviewing his peers and putting him under surveillance before concluding that despite being critical of the US government in his writing, the celebrated writer was never a member of the Communist party.

The 40-page cache of the late science fiction author's FBI files was obtained by the Daily Beast following a Freedom of Information request, and shows the extent to which the FBI had Bradbury in its sights in 1959. "Raymond Douglas Bradbury, a freelance science fiction, television and motion picture scenario writer has been described as being critical of the United States Government," the FBI wrote on 8 June 1959, before laying out its issue with Bradbury's classic collection of short stories, *The Martian Chronicles*. The stories "were connected by the repeated theme that earthmen are despoilers and not developers", according to the FBI...

A named source in the file, Martin A Berkeley, told the agents investigating Bradbury that the author "was probably sympathetic with certain pro-communist elements", and that during a discussion about whether Communist party members should be allowed to join the Screen Writers Guild, Bradbury "rose to his feet and shouted 'Cowards and McCarthyites' when the resolution was discussed".



Ray Bradbury from the LASFS days in the 40s, hot on the chicks. Here with Virginia Laney.

Berkeley, a "self-admitted" former member of the Communist party, went on to tell the FBI "that science fiction may be a lucrative field for the introduction of communist ideologies", and that "some of Bradbury's stories have been definitely slanted against the United States and its capitalistic form of government".

Another informant agreed about the dangerous effects of science fiction, advising "that individuals such as Ray Bradbury are in a position to spread poison concerning political institutions in general and American institutions in particular", and that "Communists have found fertile opportunities for development; for spreading distrust and lack of confidence in American institutions in the area of science fiction writing". Even worse, "the general aim of these science fiction writers is to frighten the people into a state of paralysis or psychological incompetence bordering on hysteria which would make it very possible to conduct a Third World War which the American people would seriously believe could not be won since their morals had been seriously destroyed". Bradbury did not help his own cause by taking out an advertisement in the Daily Variety in 1952, in which, according to the FBI documents, he wrote: "I have seen too much fear in a country that has no right to be afraid. I have seen too many campaigns in California, as well as in other states, won on the issue of fear itself, and not on the facts. I do not want to hear any more of this claptrap and nonsense from you. I will not welcome it from McCARTHY or McCARRAN, from Mr NIXON, DONALD JACKSON, or a man named SPARKMAN. I do not want any more lies, any more prejudice, any more smears. I do not want intimations, hearsay or rumour. I do not want unsigned letters or nameless telephone calls from either side, or from anyone."

Despite this, the FBI concluded in 1959 that "no evidences have been developed which indicate he was ever a member of the [party]"... Ray Bradbury was investigated by the FBI during the 1950s, with government agents interviewing his peers and putting him under surveillance before concluding that despite being critical of the US government in his writing, the celebrated writer was never a member of the Communist party.

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Ray was among the active clientele of the famous Los Angeles SF Society in the 1940s, and they did have some card-carrying communist party members - Ah, Sweet Idiocy! - but he wasn't one. The full Bradbury file is here:

<http://www.mediafire.com/file/r3m17rz4p6w9dov/FBI-Ray-Bradbury.PDF> Below from <https://www.spyculture.com/fbi-file-on-ray-bradbury/>

FBI suspected for some time that Bradbury was born under another name (which is redacted in the publicly available file) before eventually finding out that they were two different people. It also devoted quite some time to looking into the possibility that Bradbury was going to travel to Cuba, at that time illegal under US law, but this also turned out to be a red herring... The notion that SF might be a channel for 'the introduction of Communist ideologies' is not that uncommon but the idea of using depictions of the future (predictive programming) as a means of propaganda is rarely discussed in official documents.

What a luck for hot-blooded applepie Americans that they have the Federal Bureau of Imagination to keep watch. And there's more commie hunting: <https://monthlyreview.org/press/an-un-american-treatment-of-a-leftist-science-fiction-fan-the-prosecution-of-professor-chandler-davis-reviewed-by-hugo-book-club/> reviewing Steve Batterson's book *The Prosecution of Professor Chandler Davis: McCarthyism, Communism, and the Myth of Academic Freedom*:

BERKELEY reported that BRADBURY, during the course of the discussion, rose to his feet and accused "Communists and Mc Carthyites" when the resolution was discussed. BERKELEY stated it has been his observation that some of the writers suspected of having Communist backgrounds have been writing in the field of science fiction and it appears that science fiction may be a lucrative field for the introduction of Communist ideologies. He noted that some of BRADBURY's stories have been definitely slanted against the United States and its capitalistic form of Government.

LA T-3: (1/5/59)

Informant observed that Communists have found fertile opportunities for development; for spreading distrust and lack of confidence in American institutions in the area of science fiction writing. Informant declared that a number of science fiction writers have created illusions with regard to the impossibility of continuing world affairs in an organized manner now or in the future through the medium of futuristic stories concerned with the potentialities of science.

DECLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY DERIVED FROM:
FBI AUTOMATIC DECLASSIFICATION GUIDE
DATE 02-16-2012

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM : SAC, WFO (105-104) (RM)

SUBJECT: RAY BRADBURY
IS - CU
(OO:LA)

DATE: JAN 29 1959

RE: ReFairtel 12/15/67 and 12/29/67, captioned CULTURAL CONGRESS, HAWANA, CUBA, 1/4-11/68, IS - CUBA.

Enclosed for the Bureau are six copies, and for Los Angeles two copies of LHM dated and captioned as above. One info copy also enclosed for New York.

The LHM is classified "Secret" in view of the sensitive nature of [redacted] and to protect the identities of informants of continuing value.

MF T-1 in [redacted]
MF T-2 in [redacted]

Files of the Passport Office, USDO, were reviewed by SA JERRY D. CLOUD on 1/19/68.

CLASSIFIED BY [redacted]
DECLASSIFY ON: 25X 16

100-431061-X
177067

JDC:pab
(6)

Copy to: CIA/State/RM, FSD
by routing slip for info
date 1/26/68 by [redacted]

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

1st page of the FBI file on Bradbury.

Chan Davis (1929 – 2022) was well known to science fiction fans of the 1940s and 1950s. He was a fanzine editor, an early filker, a Worldcon troublemaker, and a regular contributor to *Astounding Science Fiction*. But to the broader public, he's more likely to be remembered as a mathematician and as a political prisoner. Fired from the University of Michigan in 1954, and imprisoned for six months in 1960 on charges of contempt of Congress brought by the House Unamerican Activities Committee (HUAC), Davis has long warranted the sort of examination that biographer Dr. Steve Batterson provides in his new book *The Prosecution of Professor Chandler Davis*.

Almost all HUAC witnesses with Communist connections were avoiding the jeopardy of contempt prosecution either by naming the names of others or declining to answer questions under the Fifth Amendment," explains biographer Dr. Steve Batterson. "Finding both stay out of jail options to be intolerable, Chandler refused to cooperate asserting the Freedom of Speech protection of the First Amendment. He intended to use the standing gained by an expected conviction to obtain a hearing before the Supreme Court and hopefully end HUAC's persecution of the left. During the height of McCarthyism, it was a course of enormous risk and courage."



Chan Davis.

OK, he was a blasted commie, but he did stand up against McCarthy which isn't all bad, so Chan Davis should perhaps be more remembered in fandom. Fancyclopedia notes: "Davis was a member of the Stranger Club and was one of the members who attended Noreascon 3 as Fan GoH. He edited and published the FAPazine *Blitherings* in the 1940s (also published in VAPA) as well as the apazine *macVert* for VAPA. He was a member of the Brain Trust. He had something to do with the fireworks at Philcon, the 1947 Worldcon, where he also played piano and sang his own science fictional songs, and he attended Torcon, the sixth Worldcon, in 1948. He began writing SF in the 1940s, several of his stories appearing in *Astounding*."

Change of /p/a/n/t/s topic: In the 1950s the USSR desperately wanted to catch up with the West in computers. We read of a stalled attempt to create a Soviet "Internjet": <https://aeon.co/essays/how-the-soviets-invented-the-internet-and-why-it-didnt-work>

Glushkov's idea was to inaugurate an era of electronic socialism. He named the colossally ambitious project the All-State Automated System. It sought to streamline and technologically upgrade the entire planned economy. This system would still make economic decisions by state plans, not market prices, but sped up by computer modelling to predict equilibria before they happen. Glushkov wanted smarter and faster decision-making, and maybe even electronic currency. All he needed was the Politburo's purse.

But when Glushkov entered the cavernous room that morning, he noticed two empty chairs at the long table: his two strongest allies were missing. Instead, he faced down a table of ambitious, steely-eyed ministers - many of whom wanted the Politburo's purse and support for themselves.

Between 1959 and 1989, leading Soviet men of science and state repeatedly ventured to construct a national computer network for broadly prosocial purposes. With the deep wounds of the Second World War far from healed, the Soviet Union continued to specialise in massive modernisation projects that had transformed a dispersed tsarist nation of illiterate peasants into a global nuclear power in the course of a couple of generations.

After the Soviet Union's leader Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin's personality cult in 1956, a sense of possibility swept the country. Onto this scene entered a host of socialist projects to wire the national economy with networks, among them the first proposal anywhere in the world to create a national computer network for civilians. The idea was the brainchild of the military researcher Anatoly Ivanovich Kitov.

A young man with a small build and a keen mind for mathematics, Kitov had risen through the ranks of the Red Army in the Second World War. Then, in 1952, he encountered Norbert Wiener's masterwork *Cybernetics* (1948) in a secret military library, the book's title a neologism coined from the Greek for steersman and a postwar science of self-governing information systems. With the support of two senior scientists, Kitov translated cybernetics into a robust Russian-language approach to developing self-governing control and communication systems with computers. The supple systems vocabulary of cybernetics was intended to equip the Soviet state with a hi-tech toolkit for rational Marxist governance, an antidote to the violence and cult of personality characterising Stalin's strongman state. Indeed, perhaps cybernetics could even help ensure that there would never again be another strongman dictator, or so went the technocratic dream. In 1959, as the director of a secret military computer research centre, Kitov turned his attention to devoting 'unlimited quantities of reliable calculating processing power' to better planning the national economy, which was the most persistent information-coordination problem besetting the Soviet socialist project. (It was discovered in 1962, for example, that a handmade calculation error in the 1959 census goofed the population



Soviet computing actually had a good start, with the MESM ("Small Electronic Calculating Machine") 1950 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MESM>. All electronic (6000 tubes), programmable, built in Ukraine, installed in Kyiv, taking up 60 m², using 25 KW. Then infighting and production problems began...

prediction by 4 million people.) Kitov wrote his thoughts down in the 'Red Book letter', which he sent to Khrushchev. He proposed allowing 'civilian organisations' to use functioning military computer 'complexes' for economic planning in the nighttime hours, when most military men were sleeping. Here, he thought, economic planners could harness the military's computational surplus to adjust for census problems in real-time, tweaking the economic plan nightly if needed. He named his military-civilian national computer network the Economic Automated Management System.

As it happened, Kitov's military supervisors intercepted the Red Book letter before it reached Khrushchev. They were incensed by his proposal that the Red Army share resources with civilian economic planners – resources that Kitov also dared to describe as falling behind the times. A secret military tribunal was arranged to review his transgressions, for which Kitov was promptly stripped of his Communist Party membership for a year and dismissed from the military permanently. So ended the first national public computer network ever proposed.



Soviet Agat desktop computer, equivalent to Apple II, but bulkier, using a reverse engineered 6502 CPU, produced 1983-93.

The higher-up central bureaucrats and the military stopped any big network plans, thinking it would fret into their own domains. That's a problem with command economies, that there's always people at the top who lack both knowledge and visions and see to their own positions first. Wikipedia fills in <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OGAS> :

Glushkov proposed OGAS in 1962 as a three-tier network with a computer centre in Moscow, up to 200 midlevel centres in other major cities, and up to 20,000 local terminals in economically significant locations, communicating in real time using the existing telephone infrastructure. The structure would also permit any terminal to communicate with any other. Glushkov further proposed using the system to move the Soviet Union towards a moneyless economy, using the system for electronic payments.

In 1962, Glushkov estimated that had the paper-driven methods of economic planning continued unchanged in the Soviet Union, then the planning bureaucracy would have grown by almost fortyfold by 1980...

Glushkov sought financial funding with an estimated amount of "no less than 100 billion rubles" or equivalent to \$850 billion in 2016 U.S. dollars but believed the saving returns would be fivefold on the first fifteen-year investment. The project failed because Glushkov's request for funding on 1 October 1970 was denied. The 24th Communist Party Congress in 1971 was to have authorised implementation of the plan, but ultimately endorsed only expansion of local information management systems.

Glushkov subsequently pursued another network plan, EGSVT, which was also underfunded and not carried out. The OGAS proposal..failed primarily because of bureaucratic infighting. It was under the auspices of the Central Statistical Administration, and fell afoul of Vasily Garbuzov, who saw a threat to his Ministry of Finance.

If this Internjet had been built, it would have been very, very slow and circuit

based, not packet switched (which was the big thing with ARPAnet, that became Internet). The Soviets had another problem apart from bureaucratic infighting: their electronics had huge quality problems. The higher quality your Integrated Circuits (ICs) has, the higher clock speed it reaches before a crash. Soviet ICs were unreliable and much slower than Western counterparts as they were forced to use snail speeds. It was so bad that the computers running the Moscow anti-ballistic air defence system was run on smuggled in US DEC computers. They didn't trust their own machinery. This is of course an issue in Putin's war against Ukraine. The Russians need Western chips, because their own are unreliable and slow.

That's why it's very important to stop any smuggling routes or purchases via a third country of electronics to Russia. For instance, sales of washing machines to the former USSR central Asian republics have increased ten-fold. But don't expect to see immaculate cleanliness if you walk the streets of eg Tashkent of Uzbekistan. The washing machines are slaughtered, and their ICs are sent north.



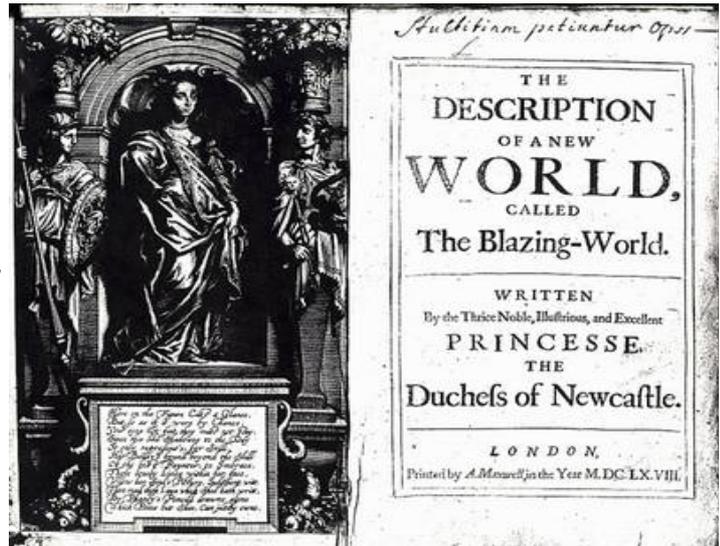
IBM PC launched in 1981 is the basis of today's Windows systems - all Win system are IBM PC backward compatible. But the USSR fell far behind. Left their https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ES_PEVM ES PEVM clone from 1986, running AlphaDOS, a cyrillic MS-DOS. Right their [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poisk_\(computer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poisk_(computer)) PC sort-of-clone Poisk which took until 1989 to launch, until 1991 (!) for mass production. It used a rev-engineered 8088 CPU. Despite a 10 years lag, Poisk lacked: full compatibility, ports for mouse and printer, expansion slots (instead using a system of cartridges). BTW, it was produced in Ukraine, the engineering Soviet republic. (Ukrainian prowess today helps them making drones and outwit the Russians.)

Doc about computing in the USSR: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbfEKucN4zU>
 Documentary about how Soviet computer tech failed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnHdqPBrH8> It was infighting, stupid central planning, quality and production problems, relying on reverse engineering western tech, taking time and curbing innovation.

Over to an early female philosopher, poet, and sciencefictionist:

<https://www.openculture.com/2024/01/read-margaret-cavendishs-the-blazing-world-the-first-sci-fi-novel-written-by-a-woman-1666.html>

...go all the way back to the mid-seventeenth century, where they'll find Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*, readable and downloadable in all its strange glory free online: <https://standardebooks.org/ebooks/margaret-cavendish/the-blazing-world> *The Blazing World* was first published in 1666 and is often considered a forerunner to both science fiction and the utopian novel genres, writes book blogger Eric Karl Anderson. It's a totally bonkers story of a woman who is stolen away to the North Pole only to find herself in a strange bejewelled kingdom of which she



becomes the supreme Empress. Here she consults with many different animal/insect people about philosophical, religious and scientific ideas. The second half of the book pulls off a meta-fictional trick where Cavendish (as the Duchess of Newcastle) enters the story herself to become the Empress' scribe and close companion.

<https://reactormag.com/discover-the-17th-century-science-fiction-of-duchess-margaret-cavendish/>



Duchess Margaret Cavendish (1623-1673) wrote about multiverse utopias. Who said Mary Shelley was first?

a young woman is kidnapped by a sailor and forced to sail away with him and a crew. The sailor 'loves' the woman, but she never asked to be dragged onto the boat. A storm blows up, kills the sailor and crew, and drives the boat northward. The woman finds herself alone at the North Pole, thousands of miles from family, with no crew to help her get home. But then a mysterious portal opens in front of her. Rather than face a cold and lonely death, the woman walks through, and finds herself in a strange new world where all the creatures speak, where there is only one language, pure monotheism, and absolute peace. The creatures welcome the woman as their Empress, and they all work together to make scientific discoveries.

Others point to that *The Blazing World* may be the first story concerning what we call a multiverse! In this video we learn that "The Blazing World features parallel worlds and multiple versions of herself in a story that is as strange as it is prescient":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpR8Hr9rzpc>

"An important landmark in the evolution of interplanetary science fiction", it's claimed, speaking of Louis Guillaume de La Folie's (1733-1780) *Philosopher without Pretension*, using electricity which had just been discovered:

<https://blogs.princeton.edu/rarebooks/2009/03/an-important-landmark-in-the-e/>

A picaresque Oriental romance and conte philosophique that created the first airship powered by electricity. (Benjamin Franklin's experiments with lightning in the 1760s had impressed many observers, including, some years later, a young Percy Shelley.) The fact that fiction soon abandoned this opening to follow the balloon trail of the Montgolfier brothers should not reflect poorly on la Folie, argues /Pierre/ Versin



The first Electric spaceship.

<https://glitternight.com/2016/09/15/ancient-science-fiction-the-unpretentious-philosopher-1775>

The original French title of this work of proto-science fiction was *Le Philosophe sans Pretention ou l'Homme Rare*, but in the 21st Century it's more generally known by the slightly shorter title. One of the central characters of this story is an Earth scholar named Nadir...visited by Ormisais, a space traveler from the planet Mercury. Ormisais regales Nadir with details about life on Mercury and also informs him that he has crash-

landed on Earth and needs rare elements to repair his electrically-powered craft so that he can return to his home planet. The Mercurians had a planetary version of the British Royal Society... called the Luminacie and was composed of just twelve members. Recently a vacancy had opened up and Ormisais was one of sixteen applicants to be considered. The space ship that brought Ormisais to Earth was really created by a Mercurian named Scintilla, a fellow applicant. Ormisais had ridiculed Scintilla's invention and vowed that if it actually flew he would personally risk the journey to the inhabited planet Earth, called Hermione by the Mercurians. Scintilla deftly piloted his seemingly awkward craft through the skies above Mercury, earning the open spot on the Luminacie. Ormisais was held to his insulting bargain and had undertaken the dangerous flight to the Earth, culminating in his crash-landing. Nadir's guest was kind enough to share the scientific observations he had made about interplanetary space and the heavenly bodies as viewed from space. In return Nadir helps Ormisais on his quest to obtain the materials needed to repair the ship constructed by Scintilla so that he can return home. Along the way Ormisais makes the kind of wry and perplexed observations about humanity that countless other aliens in science fiction have since gone on to make. In the end the spacecraft is repaired and Ormisais says farewell to Nadir then flies off to Mercury. Fans of science fiction should appreciate La Follie's statement directed to his staid contemporaries, a statement in which he defends the use of a fanciful narrative to put forth scientific and philosophical speculation. La Follie stated entertainment made an ideal vehicle for making such academic exercises more palatable to a mass audience. A Frenchman to the core, he compared science to "a beautiful woman whose inherent charms are not noticed until she is dressed up attractively enough to excite the curiosity of onlookers."

Yes, complex and difficult topics will benefit from being presented in an entertaining way.

It's interesting what you can find if you turn some stones in science fiction history. Out crawl Ms Cavendish and M La Follie, neither of which I can remember having heard of before. And I hadn't heard of 3 out of 4 skiffy victims of RMS Titanic (Royal Mail Ship).

RMS Titanic wasn't only a disaster for the idea that steel could float in icewater, it also hit science fiction hard! Four

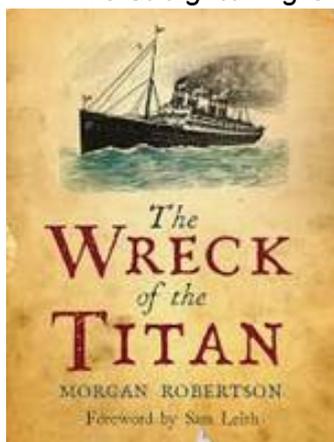
authors of the fantastic perished in the failed steel buoyancy test. *SF Encyclopedia* writes that John Jacob Astor (more soon) "was one of four authors of sf known to have gone down with the Titanic, the others are Jacques Futrelle, FD Millet and WT Stead". Futrelle was known for his scientific detective Professor Augustus S F X Van Dusen, "The Thinking Machine" (<https://www.pdfdrive.to/dl/the-thinking-machine>). FD Millet wrote *A Capillary Crime and Other Stories* (1892), containing mystery tales with sf explanations (<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/62030>), Stead published many things in or bordering the fantastic (<https://www.attackingthediabol.co.uk/full-text-pdfs/>) and JJ Astor is known for *A Journey into Other Worlds* (<https://archive.org/details/journeyinotherwo00asto>), about which we read that it: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Journey_in_Other_Worlds :

offers a fictional account of life in the year 2000. It contains abundant speculation about technological invention, including descriptions of a worldwide telephone network, solar power, air travel, space travel to the planets Saturn and Jupiter, and terraforming engineering projects — damming the Arctic Ocean, and an adjustment of the axial tilt of the Earth (Terra) by the Terrestrial Axis Straightening Company. The future United States is a multi-continental

superpower. European nations have been taken over by socialist governments, which have sold most of their African colonies to the U.S., while Canada, Mexico, and the countries of South America have requested annexation. Space travel is achieved through apery, an anti-gravitational energy force. Jupiter proves to be a jungle world, with flesh-eating plants, vampire bats, giant snakes and mastodons, and flying lizards. The Americans discover a wealth of exploitable resources: iron, silver, gold, lead, copper, coal, and oil. Saturn, in contrast, is an ancient world of silent spirits. These beings provide the explorers with foresight of their own deaths. One of the spirits, a deceased bishop, tells the voyagers about the icy world Cassandra, which orbits the Sun beyond Neptune and is home to the souls of unworthy Earthlings.



These four sf authors died on the Titanic: J Futrelle, F D Millet, W T Stead. J J Astor. Titanic, symbol of a grand failure - just like WSFA!



Spaceship starting, from JJ Astor's Journey into Other Worlds

You have of course heard about the book predicting the Titanic disaster, Morgan Robertson's *The Wreck of the Titan* (original 1898 title was *Futility*, wonder why the title was changed...) about the British passenger liner Titan (!) hitting an iceberg off Newfoundland, with a huge loss of life due to a shortage of lifeboats.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/24880>

Topic jump again. The first regular TV programmes started in Nazi-Germany in 1935, with daily TV schedules, incl the Olympics, shown in viewing rooms in the big cities and a few private TV sets (total viewership in the single thousands). Here's a fascinating documentary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3exBWlwrvsE>

Much of the material was found hidden as reel film in DDR archives after East Germany's demise. Second in the TV arena was BBC, from November 1936 and until the war (when transmitters were turned off not to direct German bombers). The US was only third with TV, more or less official start in april 1939 as president Roosevelt made a televised address to the NY World's Fair. The first FCC approved commercial station opened in 1941 and was never the same again.

But the first science fiction show on TV was made by the BBC, an adaption of Karel Capek's RUR:

<https://history.info/society/culture/1938-science-fiction-tv-program/>



The world's first sf show on TV, RUR by BBC in 1938.

FRIDAY, February 11

3.0 THE HUMBLE AND FASHIONABLE MUSSEL. Marcel Boulestin will demonstrate the making of Moules Marinière and Moules Poulette

3.10 NEWS FILM : British Movie-tonews

3.20 'R.U.R.' (Rossum's Universal Robots). The play by Karel Capek with Harvey Braban, William Lyon Brown, Cherry Cottrell, Desmond Davis, Annie Esmond, Judith Gick, Stephen Jack, Gordon McLeod, Larry Silverstone. Costumes designed by Mary Allan. Production by Jan Bussell

3.55-4.0 PRE-VIEW. Highlights of next week. Presentation by Jasmine Bligh



More from RUR on BBC, shots probably not from the screen (they used a 405 lines system).

On this day /nov 2/ in 1938 the first science fiction TV program in history was broadcast. It was an adaptation of Karl Čapek's science fiction drama RUR

<https://scifi.stackexchange.com/questions/121749/what-was-the-first-science-fiction-tv-show>

...BBC's pre-war live adaptation of Karel Capek's RUR, broadcast on February 11, 1938, the first science fiction television show... The TV adaptation starred Derek Bond,

Harvey Braban, William Lyon Brown and around 10 other actors. The broadcast lasted for around 35 minutes, and was done in black-and-white.

Though here it says it aired in Feb 1939 (it's still the first sf show on TV):

<https://bittergrounds.com/decryptoreleases/rossums-universal-robots/>



More from Captain V/H/S Video.



Title screen of Captain V/C/R Video. Can't it be made uglier, please!

In 1938, the BBC condensed the 3 act, 1 hour and 40 minute play to fit a 35 minuted long live broadcast. The severely abridged version aired on Friday, February 11, 1939 first at 3:20 pm in the afternoon, and re-broadcast at 9:20 pm. The filming took place at the BBC's Alexandra Palace studios, and viewership was restricted to a small audience in the North London area due to the technical limitations of the broadcast tower.



Funny hats, the secret weapon of the Space Patrol. Villains laugh until they are rendered helpless.

The first sf series on TV, was probably Captain Video and his Video



Rangers, starting in 1949 on the later defunct Dumont TV network. Running every weekday it's estimated to have had 1537 (!) episodes. I think *Intermission* has mentioned some of these early shows before, but a recap won't hurt much. Cpt Video was originally aired live from a studio, but some episodes were saved on 16 mm film, a process called kinescope. Here's what's said to be episode 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCzWTP1_6x8

Title screen of *Space Patrol*.

The second sf series was *Space Patrol*, starting in March 1950. As I understand it, it was done live in a studio, and when it was time for a rerun in a new timezone, it was performed in the studio once more:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Patrol_\(1950_TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Patrol_(1950_TV_series))

They couldn't record video signals. The first bulky videorecorder, from Ampex, came in 1956 (tapes were also very expensive and usually reused). But episodes were also saved on 16 mm film (Kinescope). Here's a whole bunch of *Space Patrol* episodes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlygPAXYLFs&list=PLESDrGLwFOLUaMetU4eWG1PxfKleIz7BP>

Tom Corbett Space Cadet was the third sf series, starting in October 1950, taking the hero from Robert Heinlein's book (with permission - RAH probably forced them to pay in blood!).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Corbett_Space_Cadet_\(TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Corbett_Space_Cadet_(TV_series)) Here's an episode: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0a9uqmCrp8>

North of the border the hockey-playing lumberjacks and mounted police were watching and thinking: "The Yanks are crazy about space. We'd better have a go too!" So in 1953 the Canadian

Broadcasting Corporation created *Space Command*:

<https://ingeniumcanada.org/channel/articles/challenging-the-stars-themselves-an-infinitesimal-look-at-what-could-we-be>

CBC had dipped their toes in fantastic water already in 1952 with an adaption of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, but next year they launched into space:

https://lostmediawiki.com/Space_Command_%28partially_found_early_Canadian_science-fiction_television_series:_1953-1954%29 (note my added bold!):

Space Command is a Canadian sf adventure series directed by Murray Cherkover, and written by Alfred Harris. The series aired on CBC Television, from March 13, 1953, to May 29, 1954. The series was **notable for featuring James Doohan, prior to him playing his breakout role as Scotty on Star Trek, as well as a cameo from William Shatner, also of Star Trek fame.** Despite the fact that the series was popular at the time of airing, the series was wiped by CBC Television, in one of the only notable cases of Canadian television

wiping. The series revolved around a space crew aboard a ship called the XSW-1, as they explore the outer reaches of space, whether it be within the containment of their ship, or on another planet. The crew consisted of Captain Steve Cassel, alongside Lieutenant Frank Anderson, and Phil Mitchell (played by James Doohan, prior to Star Trek.) The series featured an educational basis to it, as each episode focused on storylines that stemmed from what was known about the reaches of space at the time. The series also may have been serialized, as the end of the only available episode mentions a plotline to be continued in the future.

All episodes are lost, except this one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3M3lgG3kpI> We can be

certain that the TV bosses made sure to keep every second of



From shooting *Space Command*



Title screen of *Tom Corbett*.



More of *Space Command*. Is that Scotty?



Man in front probably James "Scotty" Doohan.

The video *Rangers* was also the name of a Stockholm fandom let's-gather-to-watch-video club existing for a while around 1981. The Caretaker ("Vårdaren") was a TV figure becoming popular in the club, along with the porn star Seka.

an opera singer yelling "Ich sterbe!", but the science fiction shows...to the dustbin with them! More:

<https://ingeniumcanada.org/channel/articles/challenging-the-stars-themselves-an-infinitesimal-look-at-what-could-well-be>

Our story presumably began in 1952 in a smoke-filled office or conference room in a building which housed offices of the CBC. Sadly, yours truly cannot say with certainty if the meeting which led to the birth of Space Command took place in Toronto, Ontario. It looks as if Alfred "Alf" Harris, age 25 in March 1953, himself an SF fan, came up with the idea for an SF series aimed at a young audience, teenagers really, presumably male ones, and was tasked with writing the scripts for what can be described as one of the first dramatic television series developed in Canada...a

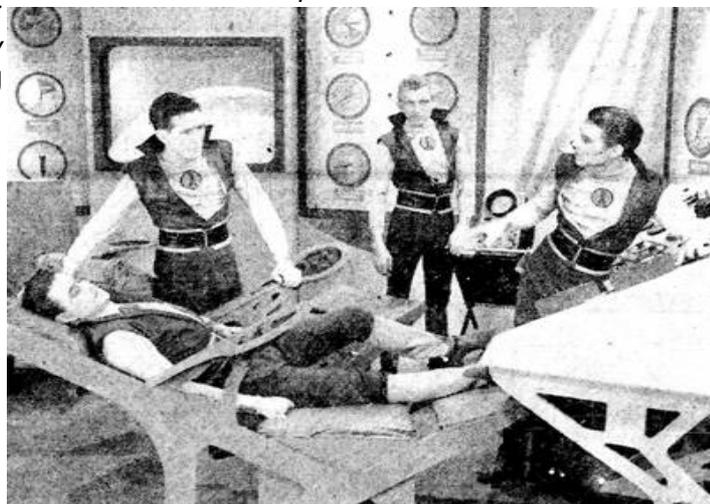


Title screen of Space Command. As designed by Harris,

December 1953 issue of an Ottawa, Ontario, daily newspaper, The Evening Citizen, "Space Command is the name given to a hypothetical, earth-wide organisation of the foreseeable future which directs, maintains and carries out Earth's conquest of Space."

Space Command stuck with scientific principles, plausible hypotheses and known facts. The show's characters were young explorers/scientists who went on adventures for sure, how could it be otherwise, but the motivations and causes of said adventures, not to mention the personal relationships and problems of said characters, were firmly rooted in the fact that they were space travellers. Space Command was most certainly not a space opera, an interplanetary cousin of the soap opera and horse opera much decried by many

SF fans of the 1950s...the series followed the space education/career of a young and white male (Christian?) Homo sapiens. Frank Anderson, played by Robert "Bob" Barclay, learned the ropes of life in space, so to speak, by moving from one division of Space Command (exploration, investigation/scientific, satellite, transport) to another. With each placement, Anderson and, ipso facto, the young viewers, gained new knowledge. The first episode of Space Command dealt with the effect of sunspots on space stations and space travel, for example. At the time, the origin of these dark spots on the surface of the Sun was still not all that well understood...Other themes approached during various episodes of Space Command included evolution, space medicine, the danger posed by meteoroids and the origin of the asteroid belt located roughly between the orbits of the planets Mars and Jupiter.



From Canadian "Space Command", 1953. L to R: James Montgomery "Jimmy" Doohan, age 33, playing Phil Mitchell, John Thomas Howe, age 26, playing someone yet unidentified, Andrew "Andy" Anthony, born Ondřej Antonín Zubak, age 26, playing Dr Joseph Edmunds, Robert "Bob" Barclay, age 22, playing Frank Anderson.

The show aired March 1953-May 1954 and was shot live, though episodes were kinescoped to be run on other CBC stations.

Hamas lying? Impossible! Strange Gaza demographics...

There is something strange about demographic statistics from Gaza. I have tried to squeeze ChatGPT for statistics on Gaza deaths per 1000 for different years. No matter how I phrase the question, the death rate per 1000 in Gaza is claimed to be about 3.5.

The problem is that the same number for Sweden is 9! Gaza numbers should even be higher as Sweden is known for a relatively healthy population and good healthcare.

Gaza is claimed to have barely 1/3 of Sweden's death rate. Who believes that?

It doesn't matter if I ask about Gaza in 2022 (when the current war hadn't begun), 2023 or 2024. The same answer: claimed record low death rates of 3.5/1000. ChatGPT then inserts talk about other, separate death rates due to war and conflict.

There's an inevitable conclusion: since the natural death rate per 1000 in Gaza should *at least* reach the same level as Sweden, or higher, about 2/3 of the natural deaths in Gaza are moved by the Hamas-controlled hospitals to alleged deaths due to the war Hamas started.

Without complicated detailed calculations, it seems likely that about 2/3 of the deaths reported in media from Gaza are *natural* deaths. (And of the remaining 1/3, we know that a significant number are Hamas combatants, according to several sources *at least* 10,000.) Alleged (civilian) war deaths in Gaza should be divided by 3 and then at least 10,000 should be subtracted (combatants).

A figure of Gaza (civilian) deaths often given by several sources is "50,000".

Divide by 3 to eliminate natural deaths: 16,700. Then subtract 10,000 to eliminate combatants.

The approximately 6700 we end up with as civilian deaths should to a significant part be attributed to Hamas using civilians as shields.

Media is largely completely duped by false Hamas "statistics". It was the ancient Greek playwright Aeschylus (526–456 BC) who was the first to state: "The first casualty of war is truth".

Seattle Worldcon Goes Chinese Style Program Censorship

I must begin with admitting last issue's mistake defending the Seattle worldcon using AIs to "vet" the program. Early info on the topic were deceivingly incomplete, giving the impression critique was about AI as dangerous for the environment (it isn't), racially biased (no, AIs are biased the other way) and "stealing work" (no, training is *fair use*). I was mislead and am sorry for that.

The Seattle Worldcon deed is sinister to the very core of intellectual freedom: AI was used to censor the con's entire program. I thought we'd left the Chengdu Worldcon fiasco behind us, but Seattle somehow picked up the Chinese Communist system of information suppression. If you ask the 'Net in China what happened on Tiananmen Square in April 1989 it'll say: Nothing!

Seattle ordered the ChatGPT AI to find "scandals" regarding program applicants for "homophobia, transphobia, racism, harassment, sexual misconduct, sexism, fraud"*. The entire woke ideology is spelled out in that AI sweep, and if you disagree with any of it you're not welcome to the program of the so called Worldcon. (<https://seattlein2025.org/2025/05/06/may-6th-statement-from-chair-and-program-division-head/>).

To identify everyone who don't agree with your political ideology and keep him or her out of the entire convention program *stinks!*

Science fiction literature must exercise intellectual freedom, freedom of speech, tolerance to all kinds of different opinions, openness, free debate - or the genre is dead. Attempts to force everyone to march in steps singing Halleluja is on the road to hell. In speculative literature you think the unthought thoughts, provoke, experiment, irritate. You don't invent "isms" and "phobias" and slams them on things you dislike to make everyone think the same. You take the debate, you discuss topics and respect the rights of others to their own opinions. Anyone who think this is strange must simply hate science fiction!

Our genre depends on being open to all thoughts, or else it is nothing. It needs a wideness of concepts, flexibility of thinking, challenging ideas, thoughts that itch and irritate, that dives into the uncomfortable. Sf relies on "micro agressions" that wokness wants to ban. Opposing opinions shall be met with counter-arguments, not bans. You welcome different even vile opinions as it gives you a chance to air counter-arguments which will sharpen your thoughts. You're not only a fan of science fiction, but also of Voltaire:

I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it!

Swedish High School Graduation

In early summer Swedish high school students celebrate their graduation. Our equivalent to high schools are called...gymnasium (yes!) and it covers approximately ages 16 to 18, three years, of different programs to choose from, making it possible to apply to university. Admission is by your grades, but you can improve your chances by taking the national university test. (Called the "högskoleprovet", "högskola" etymologically means "high school" but here a university level school.) Almost all youngsters high school and many later as university. BTW, tuition is free and government offers favourable student loans (as you still have to pay rent, food, some study material etc).

After receiving a paper with the final grades the students do the "rush out" from their schools, met by



family and friends with flowers. Then they gather at hired lorries (trucks for Americans), climb up to the lorry beds and the vehicle starts going rounds in the city or the nearest big town, while the happy youngsters shout, dance, play music, and drink their brains out. They have their student caps, a white with blue and yellow inner lining, which some think looks like a sailor's hat - but it isn't. This white cap began as a tradition 200+ years ago. Swedish students don't have that black robe and head contraption with a huge square, that makes you look like a real professor (which is a bit exaggerated). Finnish students have a similar student cap, Danish students have somewhat similar (but higher and rounder - I googled a little) and I believe Norwegian students have a totally different design and colour.

This "The Student Song" from 1852 comes from their coarse throats and here' it is on Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pp-QtDh_ItA

*Let us sing of the student's glorious ways, ♪ ♪
 Let us rejoice in youth's brightening days!
 Still beats the heart with a lively sound, ♪
 And the future before us is crowned.
 No storm clouds yet ♪
 In our spirits lie,
 Hope is with us set,
 And we trust it high, ♪
 As we pledge side by side in the glade,
 Where the laurels in honour are laid,
 Where the laurels in honour are laid! ♪ ♪
 Hurrah!*



Archipelacon/Eurocon

Most of this was finished in good time, but just before deadline we had a Eurocon, named *Archipelacon 2*, which I had decided to attend. So I left ca 1.5 pages for a preliminary report. There'll be more about Archipelacon/Eurocon in next issue.

There's a huge archipelago between Sweden and Finland (thus the name*), with the self-governing region of Åland in between. It belongs to Finland but is the most Swedish spot on Earth. +99% percent of the Ålanders have Swedish as mother tongue (far more than Sweden itself with perhaps 90% mother-tongued in Swedish, due to immigration).

There was a movement 100 years back to make Åland Swedish. The League of Nations didn't concur, and that was probably for the better, Åland got special provisions in Finland's constitution, which means they run most administrative things themselves and Ålanders don't have to do military service. Åland cars have their own license plates, there is a special Åland Post company, they have their own flag, but most important is that in alcohol taxation Åland is seen as a foreign state which means the big Finland ferries can sell taxfree booze as long as they make stop at Åland's capital Mariehamn. Of course I bought some. (Knowing the rules I only took a beer now and then *outside*.)

We learned that 860 fen had registered, and ca 700 attended. To me it sounds as a bit hefty No Show number (including even Swedish GoH author Mats Strandberg for unspecified "personal reasons) and it wasn't "supporting" memberships, because the con didn't have that. Could it be that some people nowadays find sf cons have become more boring and begin to derail from the good old days?

Let me start with some criticism. There are indeed several reasons



Registration.



Boring panel: Jeff Vandermeer, Cheryl Morgan, Emmi Itäranta. Missing Mats Strandberg had a note from his parents, or so.



Sf poetry with Emma Kanckos. Such presentations were better than panels!

* Sweden has the most islands on Earth! 267 570 Google says. Finland is second with 179 584 islands.

for complaint:

1. It's *unacceptable* to force attendees to make PR for a controversial ideology. We weren't offered any alternative for the badge carrying stripes other than the so called "rainbow". The badge had a single hole, so you couldn't carry it with a safety pin (that requires two holes). On Eurocons wokeness is impelled! Unacceptable, as said.

2. Except for some filksinging and fan fund presentations (which are borderline), there was no fandom program! We used to have what is called a fan room, with a fan program: fanzines, fannish games, senior fans relating anecdotes, fandom history (which our *History Corner* covers a lot of), parodies, humour... Without the lighthearted fannish slant sf cons become *boring*. I get the impression that many conrunners today are bureaucratic neofans who have no idea of fandom's traditions.

3. And please do something about these endless, pointless "panels"! Archipelacon had one million (or so) "panels" filled with folks talking slowly without preparing any sharp points on the panel topic and letting the audience share views only when time was almost up. 85-90% of the convention was a soft mumbling by complacent dolls. Go for lectures instead. The lectures seemed popular (I tried two science ones, about Mars and the asteroids, both said "Room Full"!). For a lecture one person has to prepare a concrete message (and slides) and a lecturer usually take much more audience input.

Apart from forced woke propaganda, boring panels and no room for fannishness, I guess the con was somewhat OK. (More on the program, people I met, more pics etc in nextish. If you were at the con, I'd like to hear about your impressions!)



Me & my computer. (SKRIVA contest info ↑ was there.) I grabbed a corner in the entrance hall.



Alona Silina talked about Ukrainian sf now in wartime, via video link. Interesting! Pic of sf people in armed service.

LoCs & MCs

Sorry, the boring part of this excellent zine. First LoCs, then mailing comments to EAPA (only, this time, N'APA next month). Comments welcome! I desperately try to be controversial, so you must have something! Do a fanzine! Remember: All knowledge is contained in fanzines.

Cy Chauvin: Hi Ahrvid,

Your note that machine translation is already replacing human translators for publishers is indeed sad, and not only because it takes away an interesting job from a human. It is another case of the homogenizing of fiction. The individual quirks and personality is smoothed out of the author's style, their 'voice' modified; think how the computer with its suggestions of grammar and spelling already does this when writing in our own languages!

I would think that individuality in speaking languages would continue, despite the use of computers.

In some science fiction, although humans and aliens find an easy path to apparent communication through a common language or device, there is still a struggle for each party to understand the other's concepts. Sharing a language does not necessarily lead to shared concepts, motivations and ideals (as the politics around us show). I think the struggle to understand – the author's struggle to present an alien or innocent viewpoint – is one of the most interesting aspects of sf.

I enjoyed most your photos of Bob Bloch. Could Stanley Weinbaum be in that group photo of the Milwaukee Fictioneers? (**Ed:** *It's possible! 'Net tells us he was a member.*) I can't recall what he looks like. Henry Kuttner looks sinister! I also especially enjoyed the photo of the Weird Tales office, simply because of the stacks of boxes piled nearly as high as a person – rather like the old office of the trade construction magazine I used to work for. That's how things used to be, rather than clean and antiseptic. Perhaps another example of homogenization.

Ed: *The drawbacks of homogenization of fiction was a good point!*

Fred Lerner: Thanks for this issue.

The "classic" spelling-reform story that you quote but don't name strongly resembles "Meihem in Ce Klasrum" by one "Dolton Edwards", which was first published in *Astounding* in 1946. It can be found in *The Astounding Science-Fiction Anthology* (Simon and Schuster, 1952).

Ed: *I checked old Astounding. Its version of this "spelling reform" is more advanced (and funnier). Old issues of sf mags can BTW be found scanned at <https://www.luminist.org/archives/SF/>*

Joseph Nicholas: Dear Ahrvid!

Many thanks for the various issues of *Intermission* you've been sending. I apologise for my silence; they are appreciated, and read, but we've been deep into the growing season, which has been and is taking up an increasing amount of my time - as 17th century diarist and horticulturalist John Evelyn once wrote, "A gardener's work is never at an end". (March was unseasonably dry and warm, requiring repeated use of the hose at the allotment - an absolutely unprecedented event -- and the dryness and warmth has continued. A very early spring, indeed, although -- in a repeat of last year -- I seem to be having difficulty getting my peppers and chillies to germinate. (I'm usually quite successful with them.) Ditto the parsnips, although the potatoes, mangetout, broad beans, leeks, cabbages and tomatoes are ramping merrily away.)

Anyway: to business. I think you're far too optimistic, in issues 152 and 153, about Ukraine's prospects in Russia's war against it. Russia is losing men and materiel at a prodigious rate, I agree, but it has far larger supplies of both than Ukraine can muster. Don't forget, also, that Russia has the support of China, Iran and North Korea, the second-named of which is supplying drones (this has been, in a marked departure from any previous conflicts, a drone-led one) and the last-named of which has sent an estimated 10,000 soldiers to fight alongside the Russians. (Although by most accounts they seem pretty useless, North Korea's military having spent most of its existence to date parading in front of the political leadership and never having gained battlefield experience.) What material support China is sending is unknown, but its political support is valuable, especially when placed alongside the Belt and Road Initiative that's been deployed in parts of South America, sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific -- an Initiative that will inevitably lead the countries in those regions to look more favourably on China's efforts elsewhere, or at least not criticise it for those actions.

I of course agree about the idiocy and amateurishness of Trump and his team of inexperienced yes-men (and yes-women). But I think some of the chaos they create is deliberate, because it distracts people from what they're doing to destroy the federal government and crush internal opposition -- assaults on universities and the media, through the withdrawal of funding and the pursuit of spurious litigation, is just the start of it. Trump initially joked that he would only be a dictator on his first day in office, but once an authoritarian gets a taste of power they never relinquish it. As 19th century British writer and statesman Lord Acton said, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

Okay. I will stop at this point because (you've surely guessed!) there's some gardening to be done. The honeysuckle on the front of the house is drooping badly: it may just be lack of water, but I rather think that I may have cut through a vital stem when I was doing some clearing work in the front garden a couple of weeks ago. But I can see that one vine (at least) is still green, so there may be hope for its recovery once I've cleared away the dead vegetation.

Boop!

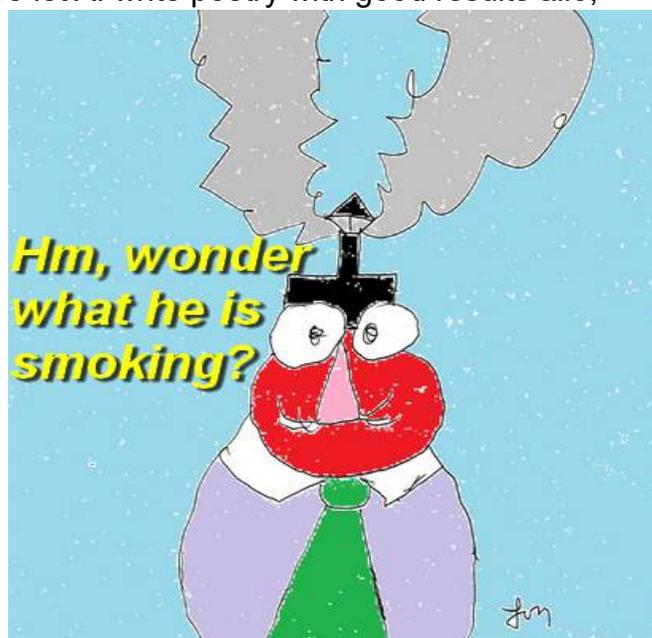
Ed: *My assessment of the war can be found in this's editorial. Russia may have more resources on paper, but corruption, inefficiency and sloppiness, support for Putin faltering, bad tactics, Ukrainian drone attacks (eg 30% of Russias oil refineries knocked out), economy down the drain, Europe stepping up etc eats into it. Even without the US, Europe alone dwarves Russia! Putin's mad plan for USSR 2.0 is dead - he just doesn't know it yet.*

Now to mailing comments, EAPA only this time. And as usual, please join any of these APAs! You are needed! Doing a little PDFzine takes miniscule efforts and is fannish and fun!

William McCabe: The voting in Eurovision is part of the fun! It's interesting to hear what the different voting presnters say and exciting to see how the votes are distributed. (Maybe I'm odd thinking so. I tend to like to sit late and watch vote counting in the general elections too.) ★★ We must get rid of Putin too, of course. (I thought my view of this was clear.) For Trump,, the way to get rid of him is impeachment - the Congress has the right to oust the president, under the right circumstances and with enough votes.

Garth Spancer: Are you really going out...camping? ★★ I know I'm mostly preaching to the choir with anti-Trump (also anti-Putin) rants. But a minority of my readers may like Trump, so my hope is I may irritate them a little... ★★ Regarding your comment on Trump, Putin's war etc, I believe Intermission has replied to it all already. ★★ I don't see plastics in the Ocean (or elsewhere) as much of a threat. About this "plastic island" in the pacific, I'm pretty sure, that if you go there, you'll have to look very hard to even notice it... Micro plastic is temporary, it's plastic on its way to become even more "micro" and finally dissolve (by plastic eating bacteria).

Henry Grynsten: Giving animals human characteristics is called "anthropomorphising" (a long and complicated word) and much of what you write deals with this but also similar things like people wanting to turn into animals. Interesting article! It would have liked more on the most fanatic in so called furry fandom, where they not only carry around a teddybear or two, but they even dress up as animals and crawl around claiming to be that animal. How could anyone find any sense in doing that? They should mentally sober up and return to reality. They belong in a mental institution. ★★ One thing I have noted is that narrators of animal programs do their darndest to pretend animals are people. It could be "The squirrel knows autumn is coming, and decides to hide his stash of nuts. The mouse watches and plans to steal som nuts later." Sorry, but the squirrel doesn't "know" autumn is coming, it feels it instinctively, it makes no "decision" and the mouse makes no "planning" - its instincts. Weather and time factors make the squirrel automatically change behaviour and the mouse smelling food starts an instinctual proceure to note were food will be hidden. And there are *tons* of animal programs on our telly - half of them made by David Attenborough - tens of hours every week with narrators trying to "humanise" critter. This is propaganda for environemntalists and it misleads people to believe animals have human properties. ★★ There is in fact some indications that sf (and perhaps fanzines) had some influence (OK, tiny influence) on the artsy "small press". A 1940s US small press publisher included sf material, a 1950s Swedish publisher of a literary mimeo mag did the same (I've covered it in "History Corner" but csn't find it now - it's difficult to browse hundreds of old issues). The biggest influence on US "small press" was the "small magazines" in France and Britain the early 20th century. ★★ *"You have to check everything you get out of AI and use your judgment."* Of course. It's well known that AIs may "hallucinate", invent or miss stuff, but I have also seen some quite impressive outputs from AIs. On Youtube you can find impressive AI-generated films, and they are getting even better. Another example: as seen in *Intermission* I calculated the excess deaths from covid from the government statistical agency official data, and found they were way, way lower than often claimed. I sent my calculations to ChatGPT and asked it to check it. The AI now had to 1) interpret what I had done, 2) find its own methology to do similar calculatons for comparison (though it only takes basic math there's tons of numbers creating a certain complexity), 3) do the calculations, 4) do the comparison, 5) make the report to me - all without me giving any help. ChatGPT did a fine job with it and besides, *my covid figures were approved*. I've let AI write poetry with good results allo, though ChatGPT sometimes invents words that don't exist to find a rhyme. ★★ Scientists aren't *"mere experts of limited fields"*. This may turn to ping-pong going back and forth...but I maintain that a scientist in any field has a higher capability to analyse anything due to his acquaintance with the scientific method, even if his main field is "limited". It's like a 1500 metres runner, who very likely is better than others in other track and field events simply because he has good basic training. ★★ *"Most of them became Christians before they learned the scientific method"* But that's no obstacle for having rational arguments for being religious. ★★ *"There is a scientific, rational explanation for consciousness, but it hasn't been found yet."* I think it looks like we *have* found it! It's the neural networks these AIs use, though they aren't yet big and complex enough. Extrapolation makes it likely this is the source of consciousness. ★★ *"88,125 climate-related*



From artist Lars LON Olsson

studies surveyed in 2021, 99.9 % agreed that climate change is mainly caused by humans." Sorry, but to support the wolf-shouting climate lobby you must support their thesis, not just partly support it (because that invalidates it). Their claim is that there is a climate change bigger than natural variation, it comes from CO2, which is due to humans and causes a disaster. It is obvious that all parts of this claim must be true for their thesis to be valid. Of your claimed "88 125" only the tiniest minority claims to support the the environment lobby's thesis. It's for instance not certain CO2 levels depend on humans. Volcanos, CO2 ocean absorbtion, changes in plant cover etc must be considered. And that the tiny amount of CO2 we deal with could influence the climate must be questioned. ★★ *"You can't seriously mean that every one of those studies has to prove all four points."* Yes, otherwise it's not a study that supports the climate lobby and that's how science works. (And it's not like having to begin with proving gravity etc. The top of *accumulted* knowledge doesn't need proof. But the four parts of the climate lobby thesis aren't gravity or basic science.) ★★ *"Hardly anybody thinks it's caused by something else."* Oh, there are plenty but media runs away from it, because media is politically red-green. There are many who looks towards the sun on this subject (main guy Dane Henrik Svendsmark). Many study the statistically very unreliable basic data (constant changes of weather stations, 80% of US weather stations have bad placement like close to an AC outlet, a parking lot, etc). There was an anti-IPCC petition signature collection in the US which very fast reached 32 000 (!) signatures of people all having science degrees (though it could be a low one like BSc). ★★ *"Extremely few people think it's caused by something other than humans"* Google *"Polls consistently show a significant portion of the public believing human activity is a primary driver of climate change. For example, a recent poll in the US found that 45% of Americans say human activity contributes a great deal to climate change, with another 29% saying it contributes some."* I agree that believers in climate change are rather many (as media and Zeitgeist stands) but here we see that 55% at least don't think humanity gives a big contribution, of which 29% only sees "some" contribution. "Extremely few"? ★★ *"all the coal and oil we've spewed out over the centuries has had no effect whatsoever on the climate"* But Ghod Lhord Roscoe, fossil fuel is constantly eaten and absorbed by our plant life, which BTW is expanding. NASA satellite studies has found that Earth is greening by 2% yearly. As this is the case, no effect whatsoever sounds strange. ★★ *"It's hardly likely that all that science could be completely wrong."* 1) It isn't "all that science", only a *portion* of science and there are opposing views too. 2) And popular ideas fueled by the Zeitgeist (Spirit of the Time) have been wrong before, like eg the ideas of eugenics 100 years back. ★★ *"in that case we'll program some robots to be dictators and Trumps also, it will be fine. Because I claim that robots that are conscious have to be treated equally to humans."* But creating dictators must be avoided on moral grounds, unlike creating servants. There's nothing immoral about performing service tasks, and as humans also do that robots are treated equal. *"point is that if they are conscious"* which is beside the point. conscious humans perform servants task too. Our DNA program us for it. ★★ *"Ten years, is that all"* Oh that's huge! Many computer tech advances we have now didn't exist in 2015 - eg AI, 5G - and computers were much slower, a 2015 mobile phone is today obsolete (tiny memory, slow net access, bad resolution camera...). And 10 years of computer progress meant even more in the 1960s! ★★ Apollo *"At an enormous cost to the tax payers"*. Not at all. For a short period in the 1960s NASA got just over 4% of US *federal* budget, but averaged over the whole Apollo program it was ca 2%. And the federal budget is ca 1/5 of the US GDP so the cost was ca 0.4% of GDP. It's *miniscule* to many other costs. Americans spent much more on cosmetics or pet food at the time, not to talk about the military... https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Budget_of_NASA ★★ *"It wasn't just space, it was business and governments that needed computers on a large scale."* No, it was just space for a period in the 1960s. The new, small cutting edge circuits launched were very expensive, and NASA was the only entity for which it made sense to pay extra for the weight reduction and reliability. Administrative usage came later. For a company it's not worth it to pay so much extra just to reduce the weight of their mainframe from 10 to 3 tons. ★★ *"do you need to establish a colony on Mars?"* I think a smaller research base on Mars could be useful. For colonies, I prefer and have always preferred the moon (like in my collection *Murder on the Moon*). ★★ *"Problem is we use it (soil) up faster than it's created."* Says who? There's a constant soil creation processes. Just think of the huge amounts of leaves trees discard every autumn, or the thick layer of straw left after harvesting a crop field. All that is pre-soil, shortly to be soil. We don't have and will not have a shortage of soil. ★★ And now / The end is near / And so we face the final curtain / My friend I say it clear: Thish Intermission is unfortunately ending now! (*Tears and sobs.*) Comments welcome! Drink bheer and watch Roscoe's rocket July 4th!

Слава Україні!

(Glory to Ukraine!)

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 278

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24 August 2025

Comments:

Cover: Public Domain fantasy art.

Ahrvid Engholm: Moderated agreement re AI programs using copyrighted material as source or inspirational information. To give a really crude example, suppose I take the Beatles' Yellow Submarine, and invert the sheet music, so that the high notes become low, and the low notes become high. This is obviously a derivative work...but it is significantly different from its exemplar as to be legal to publish. AI programs search for inspiration in pretty much that way. However, I don't agree with the formula "Nobody owns thoughts." Intellectual property is property.

Fun essay on languages. I have only a dim notion of what Korzybski had in mind with "General Semantics." I had a friend who was heavily into GS, and he basically said that it eliminated the equation between a symbol and the thing symbolized. In short, it gets rid of the word "is." Two plus two "is" not four; four is the result of an operation on two and two. Humans "are" not mammals, although we may be members of that set. To me, it seems like the classical difference that makes no difference.



You didn't specifically allude to the most mature science-fictional approach to the question of alien languages: slow, studied translation. This is the approach in Vernor Vinge's "A Deepness in the Sky" and Jack McDevitt's "Omega," which I hold to be the two best "first contact" novels ever written. Here, students take up samples of alien speech, and, in the spirit of code-breaking, work out the meaning.

Robert Jennings: There aren't any real "swamps" in southern California, which is kind of a shame, but there are tidal and delta marshes, which are almost the same. I've personally experienced quicksand seeps, and driven through deep, clingy, sticky clay mire!

Fun gaming cards, especially the God Damn Cat! Fun parody (I think it's a parody!) of Health Care publications, in the HellthChase brochure. I think I have worked with one of their subsidiaries!

I share your dubiety regarding prognostications of Russia's collapse and Putin's ouster. I think that Putin can "win" by a long, nasty, ugly war of attrition, forcing his citizens to accept the cost in lives. There doesn't seem to be an anti-war movement in Russia, comparable to the anti-Vietnam War movement in the U.S. Darn shame, because in a free country, there certainly would be.

George Phillis: I wish I had the energy and time to contribute to The Gentle Stroll. Role-playing-gaming has been a way of life for me, from 1973 forward, and there are few subjects I am more in love with! Alas for my life, I'm not in any RPG games these days, all my old referees having passed away or moved to Kansas.

I can certainly see the problem with readers asking that other readers be banned, especially for violating the "No contemporary politics" rule. I am not participating in FaceBook, which hosts a page for my old SF Club, because at least two members violate that rule consistently, and the moderator refuses to discipline them. I have been told on many occasions that FaceBook turns good people into jerks, and bad people into monsters. I don't want to be either a jerk or a monster!

Engaging section of your story. You do "mentallics" very well, one of the strongest points of your fiction.

Garth Spencer: Computers and cars: we depend on them for so much, and they can go bad, so suddenly, that it seems like a world-shaking catastrophe. Good luck to you (to George, also!) with your computer issues!

Engaging finale to The Jade Ring. It doesn't actually close out all the story-lines or lay rest to all the characters, but it does bring down the curtain on the primary plot.

Re the anti-Trump protest here in San Diego County has been held every Saturday for two months, peacefully and legally. Sometimes I wander by and hang with them a little, but not for long, as I'm too stiff to stand in one place for any length of time. Also, it's hot out there! But most people, driving by, seem sympathetic and friendly. A few middle fingers, but not many!

You ask, "Is it possible to change names dates, and places, and turn fan fiction into saleable stories?" Absolutely yes! For sure and aye! I have seen stories published that were originally about "Kirk and Spock," but which were re-written to be about "Jones and Opann." It's wonderfully legitimate! August Derleth famously wrote a long series of "Solar Pons" stories that were very recognizable as Sherlock Holmes pastiche. They're quite good, and, in fact, there is a significant fandom, the "Praed Street Irregulars," dedicated to Solar Pons.

Kevin Trainor Jr: Incensepunk sounds intriguing! Would there be a natural overlap with Narnia fandom?

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Mark Nelson: Agreement, right down the line, with your responses to the list of things that everyone “should” know how to do. That’s a big “Nu uh!” from me, just as it is from you. Sure, knowledge is good, and competence is wonderful, but people specialize, and that’s fine. Robert Heinlein was a bit of a jerk on this subject.

Rect me re formatting submissions to NAPA, perhaps you’d better ask George. George? Paper size? File type? Help?

Heath Row: PopX sounds like it could have been jolly fun, given that the basic motif is a little limited. Pops are cool, although the aesthetic is not really to my taste. Also, they haven’t released a Pop of Spiral (six-armed X-Men villain) and I’m morally compelled to buy one when they do! I’m torn right in two about the business of keeping them in their original box. Some of my action-figure collection is still in the cardboard-and-blister packaging, and some isn’t. A friend once teased me: “Open them up! This isn’t a toy store!”

I just can’t see Trump as a Russian agent. He isn’t really very competent at it, to begin with. A real Russian agent would have put more pressure on Ukraine. Throwing Zelensky out of the White House was a Russian-agent move, and kissing Putin’s ass in Alaska was also suspect, but he dilutes these things with other actions not in Russia’s favor. I think Trump is simply a jerk, and he is an agent of only one flavor: his own bloated-ego self.

re the very first Fandom, someone once told me that APAs began when printers shared writings in order to show off their new print-fonts. “Printing” fandom goes a long way back!

I’ll track down Abdul-Jabbar’s “Mycroft” pastiche! They could be jolly fun. Someone else wrote some “Moriarty and Moran” fiction -- I’m tempted to call it “fan fiction,” even if professionally published. I just searched, and it was Michael Kurland. They were fairly good!

rect Mark Nelson, I hold LOTR to be one “novel,” even if it was published in three chunks. For instance, you can’t just pick up “The Two Towers” and start reading there, the way you could if they were really separate novels. (Not to deny that MANY novels, as sequels, do not make sense when read as a starting point.)

Samuel Lubell: Cover Art: fun, but why does Tinkerbell have three legs?

The ambiguity in your job situation strikes me as seriously illegal on the part of the administration. People are getting “fired” by tweets on social media, without receiving official HR notification. That’s lawsuit-worthy!

re work as a public relations specialist, can I hire you to promote and publicize the N3F Short Story Contest? (Friendly grin!)

Depressing focus on men not being into reading. I’m a man (nominally) and I read absolutely voraciously! All of my guy friends are readers. The idea of not reading is comparable to the idea of being in jail!

Fun updates on your personal Projects. I read “The Great Gatsby” some years ago and didn’t care for it much...

Tinkerbell in your closing art has two legs. This is what happens when AI gets on LSD!

Ahrvid Engholm: Hilarious notion that Isaac Asimov was a Russian spy! Absolutely inconceivable to anyone who has actually read his essays, as he was heartily in favor of American Constitutional Democracy. His family left Russian tyranny behind; he would have been one of the last souls on earth to want to support it. Same for Ray Bradbury. Just reading his work gives the lie to any such notion. J. Edgar Hoover was a dolt.

Fun retrospective on old SciFi TV shows! I remember seeing re-broadcasts of the rocket-man show -- I don't know it's proper name, but a guy with a rocket backpack would jump out the door of his flying ship. Definitely the inspiration for the more modern "Rocketeer" franchises. The acting was bad, the effects were preposterous, and the writing was as stiff as granite, but it was still fun!

re: Henry Grynnsen, I'm willing to accept rhetorical anthropomorphising to a certain degree. Steven Jay Gould noted that writers often do this with evolution. "Birds evolved flight in order to escape from predators." This implies a volitional stance, whereas evolution is one of the most passive effects ever known. But Gould also said it was okay to write that way, when creating popular science essays. The concept is not invalid, and we aren't writing in scientific journals.

re: creation and renewal of soil, valid point. We are, however, flushing a lot of phosphorus down our toilets and into the sea, and the mechanism for phosphorus renewal is not at all adequate to repair this deficit. Civilization is not necessarily good for our planet! (But it beats the hell out of all known alternatives!)

Comics Books and Books

Robert Jennings was uncomfortable with my note that I'm throwing away my comic books, and offered to take them off my hand, paying shipping costs. How cool is that! Deal accepted! I'm saving stuff up, preparing for packaging and shipping. Probably one every six weeks or so. We'll see. He offered to take my old SF paperbacks too. That's a super fine deal! Thank you, Robert!

Fandomain-N_01

The Praline and Double Almond Soft Cookie edition

8/7/2025

I used to be a part of FAPA and the Turbo-Charged Party Animals APA apas, but international mailing fees and printing challenges made me give up the APA ghost. N'APA is free tho so why the heck not! Instead of introducing myself, I decided to do a "get to know me from the weird stuff that I consume" list.

Art on the right, Tarzan's huffy little brother Marzipan.



Below is stuff that I've consumed recently. Now you know one thing I have in common with Galactus of **Fantastic Four** fame – I consume:

Listening on audible

- Just started **Shards of Earth** by Adrian Tchaikovsky on Audible thanks to a rec by Heath Row in the Review of Books. Cheers!
- Still in the middle of Shirley Jackson's **Dark Tales**. I've finished three stories and enjoyed each one.
- Just finished *The Great and Secret Show* by Clive Barker. It wasn't what I wanted. It wasn't bad, but I wanted an isekai type of deal more like **Weaveworld** with fantastic places and people so I probably should've gone for **Imajica** instead. Maybe next time.
- Just finished **The Thursday Murder Club** for my local Kumamoto-based book club *Kumabon*. Pretty darn good though it took me a while to tell the characters apart. It's seems like a cozy mystery kind of thing, but there are more sinister things going on here (and some less sinister things as well). Two months ago it was **Children of Blood and Bone** by Tomi Adeyemi which I felt betrayed by though I liked parts of it.
- I did a re-read (mostly re-listen) of the whole dang **Murderbot** series by Martha Wells in anticipation of the Apple+ series.
- I plan on also listening to Robert McCammon's **Stinger** and Maria Adelmann's **How to Be Eaten**. The first before I watch the Teacup series based on it, the other in relation with my interest in folk tales with wolves – in this case, *The Wolf*.

Reading on kindle

- **The Authorities** by Scott Meyers. I liked his Magic 2.0 series and so jumped eagerly into this book about an A-Team type team of investigators. A constructed team much like

The Monkees in that they were brought together for a certain look but also had some serious talent (yes, I will die on the Monkees-are-actually-awesome hill if I have to.

- Will read **Story Genius** by Lisa Cron which promise to use BRAIN SCIENCE (cue theremin) to help you write a riveting novel.
- Need to read “**Rapport**” another Murderbot story by Martha Wells. I love this series. Sooooo much.
- I re-read **30 Days of Night** graphic novel and watched the film again. Still good stuff.

Reading on the can

- My toilet book is currently **Spiral**, the sequel to **Ring** by Koji Suzuki. I read a half-page per visit to the can. I’m up to page 101. That’s a lot of flushes.

On my bedside table

- MIZUKI Shigeru’s **Akuma-kun** manga*. It was the first iteration of this character made specifically for the rental manga market a long, long time ago. About a super genius kid who decides to summon a demon in order to bring about a kind of utopia in which those who have a disproportionate amount of power have less of it(?). I haven’t got to that part yet, but it sounds like it will make an interesting article.
- There are also a pile of books that I should either reshelve or effing read like the English/French bilingual compilation of weird fiction I have.

On my big old iPad on which I have a Japanese kindle account

- Zipped right through the 10-volume manga series **Ship of Theseus** by HIGASHIMOTO Shūzō and the first volume of his **Mushibamihime**. The first is a time-travel butterfly effect type of murder mystery in which a son tries to fix his family by proving his father’s innocence of a crime committed decades ago, and the second is a **Single White Female** type of story where a new roommate starts to pattern her look and interests after the protagonist. Both have some nice and creepy moments.*
- Rereading **Berserk** by MIURA Kentarō. Dark fantasy at its finest and darkest.*
- On a recommendation from my 13 yo daughter, I read the two-volume series **Tako-pi`s Original Sin** by TAIZAN 5. A kind-of alternate **Doraemon** story where an alien from the Happy Planet comes to spread happiness on Earth but is not emotionally mature enough to take on the task. In Doraemon, a robot cat from the future is constantly providing future tech (basically magic) to loser Nobita who mostly abuses it before he ends up learning a valuable lesson. It’s as if they took that premise and put it in real world 21st century with complex (broken) kids with effed up family situations. Dark and darkly humorous. All the trigger warnings (except I don’t think there’s any sexual assault, just horrible horrible parents and their shitty kids).*

Watching

- I’ve watched so many things I can’t even begin to list, but my rewatch of **Midnight Mass** on Netflix was such a joy. A perfectly made series that’s a riff on Stephen King’s **Salem’s Lot**.



- In the theater, watched Superman and Fantastic Four. At an arthouse theater (our only one in this small to medium sized city) I saw **Strange Darling** and **Nosferatu**. I loved all of them in that order from EFFING LOVED to FRICKING LOVED with Superman achieving FRICKING EFFING LOVED status. I'm wearing the updated S symbol shirt (based on Alex Ross' design for the Kingdom Come series) as I write this at a Tully's in the local mall as I chomp down on a Praline and Double Almond Soft Cookie and suck down a Chai Tea Latte. Speaking of Latte, there is a cold coffee drink at my closest convenience store actually called Milk Latte. Yep. Milk milk. But it's coffee, so coffee with double milk I guess.
- I watched a shit-ton** of "abused person gets sweet, sweet violent revenge" movies as well as "the most dangerous game (not Monopoly, but humans)" type movies. A WHOLE BUNCH of these. Nothing really scratched the itch. I'm not sure if my need to see certain actual real horrible folks in power get their just desserts can be dealt with by consuming fantasy anymore. The **Becky** movies are light on the abuse part (more just straight up murder of loved ones) and heavy on the revenge part and thus some of my most enjoyable watches in this group, though the original **I Spit On Your Grave** was effing fantastic. Super hard to watch (as it should be) and yet still super satisfying while leaving you with an excess of guilt/disgust/horror/anger. That muthereffer will stay with you for a while.
- My daughter and I are 4 or 5 eps into the seventh season of our **Star Trek The Next Generation** watch. We've only got twenty or so eps left after three or four years of working our way through it. I'm gonna miss it and not sure what to follow it up with. I don't know if you've heard of **Star Trek**, but it is a very important franchise that launched several careers including the star of hit 80's TV show **T.J. Hooker**. Also, its warnings against racism, fascism, and abuse of power ensured that no one ever suffered under tyranny ever again.

*I will likely write a review of my manga readings in the next issue of **Mangaverse**. Stay tuned!

** I am somehow comfortable saying shit, but I just can't effing say the fricking F-word. I don't know what the fuck is wrong with me.

I think that's all I've got for now. Is it enough? Only slime will smell. I guess I better do some work today. These deadlines won't finish themselves!

See y'all in the funny pages. Peace and Love and FLICK all the CLINTS.

– PIW

To the right, one of my more successful attempts at capturing a wolf profile. On the previous page, a one-horned oni or onicorn (a word I came up with to call this character).



INTERMISSION #157

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com (alternate mail last!), a Patriot missile for EAPA, N'APA and other anti-aircraft systems. Late and lazy with @SFJournalen's newstweets, sorry (too much to do). There are to many typos...tyops...typso...tyopos in the world. Beware! Early Aug 2025.

Editorially: Russia Is Smoked!

As a writer, journalist and generally curious about what makes the world tick, I've always been a junkie for news and big events. On the menu the corona epidemic, the US and other elections, cross-country skiing and soccer cups, Eurovision, climate chatter, Musk, skiffy news, AI tech, rocket launches, other space news, science news too, and more...

But Putin's aggression against Ukraine tops my list.

For 3.5 years I have spent 1-2 hours *every evening* (!) browsing war news, mainly on Youtube - and since I watch it in 2x speed I get 2-4 hours of daily news! Sites with maps and statistics have also been useful. I dare say I'm well informed on the subject of Ukraine. Youtube gives you direct news, fast and by people working almost full time distilling everything important - from an Ukrainian academic, a professor, a combat veteran, a philosopher, a Gripen pilot, and others. Newspapers cover surprisingly little and may even echo some worthless Putin propaganda. Other sources are too unstructured, but Youtube actually gives good coverage if you know where to look!* You get varied views (but skip Russian mouthpieces!) and you hear first-hand Zelensky's daily updates, Trump's somersaults, soldiers at the front, Putin's brazen lies...

Things get worse for Putin week by week! We now learn that Russia's central bank is "printing" €200B to bail out several Russian banks that are near collapse and to prop up Putin's failing war budget. Real Russian inflation is already 20-25% (indep't sources say) so hyperinflation is around the corner. NATO buys Ukraine weapons for Billions and EU launches it's toughest sanction package yet (and we'll see if Trump tariffs really comes). Putin is a quagmire. Russia's economy is crashing, their army sucks, losses are huge and the Ukrainians are smart, inventive and resolute.

A few things lately worth detailing:

✓ In 1934 one herr AH in a country he had just seduced ordered what is known as the Night of the Long Knives. He sent hot squads to opponents. Mr Putin does the same. *People die around him in mysterious ways*: falling out of windows, sipping poisonous tea, found dead in their cars. According to this list there are at least 75 cases: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspicious_Russia-related_deaths_since_2022 That Putin does this - go against me and you're dead - is a sign of *desperation and weakness*.

✓ To this comes that Ukraine *increases drone attacks* against military supply chains, factories, fuel production, air bases, depots - and top military officers and occupation administrators. Ukraine has a competent intelligence service, a network of informants (the ease of getting inside Russia is another sign of Putin's weakness) who find Russian command bunkers. When top brass is reported to be there, a missile soon knocks on the door.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Russian_generals_killed_during_the_Russian_invasion_of_Ukraine That list excludes hundreds of colonels who also are pushing up sunflowers, and thousands of lower ranks, besides *1+ million ordinary troops*. Ukrainian drones and missiles have created an effect similar to Stalin's officer purges in the 1930s. *Russia's leadership lives in fear*.

✓ *Russian aviation is in chaos!* Major airports frequently close losing millions when Ukrainian drones flies by against war targets, fearing their own air defence - which has a habit of downing civilian planes. To this comes that Ukrainian cyberwarriors liberated 100 Terrabyte (!) of Aeroflot data, including routes of the stolen children, and then wiped 7000 Aeroflot terminals! Nothing works now for Russia's biggest airline. Brilliant!

✓ Russia is so low on "meat" that we see videos of poor bastards *on crutches forced to the front!* Lower officers are only there to relay top brass orders, unlike eg NATO NCOs who have operational freedom if things change - Russian units stop and wait for new orders in such cases. A Ukrainian unit moves on and improvises. Russian NCOs favourite hobby is to torture their own troops and steal their pay. No wonder Russian tactics suck as the army barely holds together - remember Prigozhin's march on Moscow - equipment is stolen and sold on Ebay, vodka flows freely, morale is rock bottom. Russian soldiers steal toilets and fight for money, not out of conviction. Many desert and surrender.,

*Some accounts to recommend: Anna from Ukraine, UATV, TVP World, Combat Veteran Reacts, United24, Jake Broe, Artur Rehi, Denys Davydov, Jason Jay Smart, Vlad Vexler, Kanal13, DW News, Ukraine Matters, Max Villman...

though that may be difficult since barrier troops shoot them at any sign of this

✓ Could it be true that Donny Trump, a k a KGB agent Krasnov (it was KGB when he was recruited on a Moscow business trip), has turned? He'll *send much needed air defence* etc to Ukraine. Won't there be U-turns? The proof is in the pudding, as the Brits say. Meanwhile, Russia is *running out of old rusting Soviet tanks*. The Siberian armour parking lots are getting emptied. Russia is so low on vehicles they use donkeys to carry supplies...

✓ War in the 2020s is about drones. *Ukraine leads in front drones*, in numbers, operations and innovation. 70% of Russian losses is due to drones! Ukraine's navy without ships has checkmated the remains of Russia's navy through sea drones. Russia seems to lead in terror drones. Recently they aimed 700+ of them on Ukraine's cities (+95% were intercepted and downed). But just as herr AH found out with London in 1940, Ukrainian spirits won't break, it just makes people even more resolved. Ukraine has recently begun producing a new series of very promising *interceptor drones against Putin's folly*. Western military need to take notice and learn!

✓ At a recent donors' conference in Rome *1+ trillion euros was pledged to help Ukraine*. (Zelensky BTW met the new Pope again, who seems very sympathetic to Ukraine.) And on the latest NATO summit, this league of 32, decided to increase military budgets to 5% within a few years. In reality it'll be more like 3.5 % as Ukraine support and investments in infrastructure count towards the 5%. (Sweden for instance wants to improve northern roads to ease NATO military transports.)

✓ Ukrainian cities were recently filled with protests against a new law that would tie the independent anti-corruption agencies to the national prosecutor, ie the end of its independence. EU officials and others protested. 1) Such protests would *never* happen in Russia or China. 2) President Zelensky backed down and a quick new law restored the anti-corruption agencies' independence. (Yes, there is corruption there, but Ukraine fights it. In Russia corruption is the national sport...)

✓ There are different assessments of the B2 bunker bombs against Iranian nuclear facilities. Here's from the American geotechnical engineer Casey Jones: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3h_vnXc3PE First we learn that the bombs targeted ventilation shafts, so it was easier for them to penetrate. (I speculated that penetration was eased by second hits in bomb holes. Difficult but possible. I called it a hole in one... But I don't know if it was so.) This geoengineer points to fracturing of the rock from explosives, which leads to a slightly raised surface. He studied it through satellite radar and concludes the explosions were deep and led to *100 000 m³ of rocks fractured*. This he claims must have led to "total devastation", just what Pentagon says. Other studies may draw other conclusions, but there are arguments for that *Iranian A-bomb ambitions were hit really hard*. (The 400 kg of 60% weapons uranium is less relevant. It's no good for A-bombs - 90% is needed - and can't be further enriched if the centrifuges are destroyed or damaged.)

I estimate that Russia can't continue with the war more than about a year. We may see an economic collapse, a coup or revolt, a successful Ukrainian sudden offensive - e g in Crimea - or Putin may be so pressed he has no alternative than to come to the table. Even if the parties agree to a ceasefire Ukraine will never accept Russia in Crimea, but will bet on getting it back by diplomatic /economic pressure. Russia could be forced to withdraw in exchange for ended sanctions.

It's important that Putin's Russia suffers a substantial defeat, because only that can vaccinate against the warmongering imperialistic virus that infects this deteriorating empire. --Ahrvid Engholm

HISTORY CORNER



Dan Alderson

I think it's time the famous History Corner* goes into a central topic for *science* fiction and its fandom: *science and technology*. Science fiction must in one way or another have with sci and tech to do. We need black holes, spaceships, galaxies, robots... Many, like Isaac Asimov (no KGB agent), say sf is about human reactions to development in science and technology, but this means sci and tech must come *first*. It comes first and *then* you may react to it. You can't react to something that hasn't come around yet.

So I googled around for info on sf and science. I asked AIs. I sifted through my own memory. And here' are some of my find. There must be much more, so your own suggestions are welcome.

First a look at **SF Folks Who Have Contributed To Science**:

■ **Dan Alderson** (1941–1989). A member of of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society and editor the APA CAPA-alpha. But he also Worked at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory as a system engineer,

*I just remember I've been digging in old sources forever! My very first fanzine, Fanarchistic Writings June 1978, had a column titled "Fanzine Digger/Badger" (a pun with similar words). Few have dug up more old sf dust than me, I guess...

writing navigation software for Voyager 1 & 2, including the legendary "Alderson Drive" concept adopted by Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle. His innovations led to astrophysics fiction references and direct technical applications. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_Alderson says "Alderson did not write science fiction himself, but for his own amusement created the imaginary planet of Toadland, a planet where everyone gets his heart's desire. As the ruler of the world, he assumed the title Wibblefubwilda, over the Wibblefubs, Wibbles, and Wibs that populated Toadland."



Jordin Kare speaking at the 2005 Worldcon

■ **Jordin T Kare** (1956–2017) was an aerospace engineer renowned for laser propulsion research (e.g. the Mockingbird light, reusable launching system), the Clementine Lunar mapping and interstellar propulsion. Con attendee and active filker, well-known in fan circles.

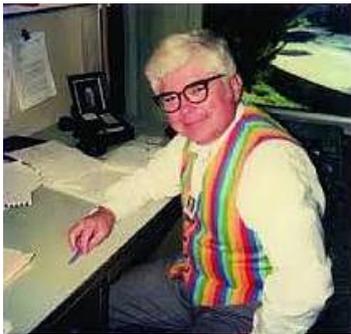
■ **Arthur W Saha** (1923-1999), fan of Finnish-American origin. Member of the Futurians, friend of Don Wollheim and later working for DAW Books, doing many World's Best SF anthologies. But he was also a chemist developing /m/i/m/e/o /i/n/k paints and pigments used on early space satellites.

■ **Milton A Rothman** (1919-2001), a nuclear physicist and professor. But also co-founding member of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society (host of "Philcon" 1936, questionable it was a proper sf con). As a nuclear physicist helped design components for Princeton's fusion reactor and authored the book *The Laws of Physics*. He also wrote sf stories under the pseudonym Lee Gregor.



From the 1936 NYC fan excursion to Philly, the first sf con to some (Philcon): Oswald Train, Donald Wollheim, Milton Rothman, Frederik Pohl, John B Michel, William Sykora, David Kyle, and Robert Madle.

■ **Robert L Forward** (1932-2002), sf writer and physicist, with stories (incl 11 novels) known for high scientific accuracy. At Hughes Aircraft and later NASA, he developed innovative ideas - space tethers, solar sails, gravity gradiometers, and theoretical "Casimir batteries"- bridging speculative and applied physics.



Robert L Forward

■ **Jesco von Puttkamer** (1933–2012), German-American aerospace engineer with NASA (he came to the US in 1962, and wasn't a part of Operation Paperclip) and sf writer. He contributed to Apollo, managed long-range planning for crewed deep-space missions, later contributing to making



Jesco von Puttkamer

space science accessible by writing popular essays and several popular space books. His short stories were published in German prozines.

■ We of course have astronomers Fred and Geoffrey Hoyle who wrote several sf novels! A 2022 study shows 93% of UK astronomers are sf fans. 69% said it influenced their career choice. 93-69 means 24% became sf fans after they began gazing at stars. Its probably similar for scientists of all kinds. You may have heard that *Heinlein*, *Asimov* and *de Camp* worked at a Naval experimental station in Philadelphia during WWII, with eg high-altitude suits, testing navy material and chemicals, aircraft equipment, radars, etc. Finally, Propellerheads of course flocked to the very early ARPAnet's (=Internet) SF-Lovers list, which *Intermission* has earlier covered..

And **Some Swedish SF Scientists!** (Only years for those who have kicked the bucket.)

■ **Leif Andersson** (1943-1979). Chaired Malcon (1966) and edited the short-lived Scandinavian Amateur Press Alliance (SAPA). Postdoctoral researcher at the University of Arizona's Lunar & Planetary Laboratory, Andersson computed the first accurate predictions of Pluto-Charon transits, laying groundwork for the 1970s/80s observational campaigns. His 1974 dissertation "A Photometric Study of Pluto and Satellites of the Outer Planets", is one of the early scientific photometry analyses of outer planet satellites. Co-authored the NASA Catalogue of Lunar Nomenclature covering hundreds of craters on the Moon's far side (and getting one named after himself). Contributing to imaging and characterisation of planets, through photometry, giving dayta needed for



Leif Andersson



C-M Zetterling builds electronics that can stand Venus heat.



"Particle Janne" winning money on TV, around 1987. Now builds nuclear plants.

the Voyagers and ground-based observational campaigns Won Sweden's national TV quiz on the subject astronomy twice at age 16.

■ **Ingvar Svensson** (1931–1985). Active fan from the late 1950s into the early 1970s. Founded the fanzine *Forum Lingua Galaxa* (1958–59), published two thick *Skandifandom* with encyclopedic data, created an artificial "Martian" language, co-founded the Swedish Academy of Science Fiction (though it wasn't long-lived) in 1964 and wrote a fine Tolkien dictionary (that the infamous Åke Ohlmarks distortingly plagiarised). Professionally a

TOLKIERS MIDGÅRD
en uppslagsbok



INGVAR SVENSSON
Ingvar Svensson's Tolkien dictionary.

professor of biochemistry at Uppsala University, where he studied enzyme activity in the context of metabolism or medical biochemistry, worked on purifying enzymes from blood or microorganisms and researched enzymatic markers for disease diagnostics such as liver or metabolic disorders.

■ Professor **Jan-Åke (Janne) Wallenius**. Long-time fan, originally from Trollhättan with the fan group Trollhättefandom. Fanzine publisher. Launched the short-lived prozine *Aniara*. Young Janne followed in the steps of Leif A* and won 1st prize on the subject particle physics on TV's gameshow "Kvitt eller Dubbelt" - and then went along to become a particle physicist! Professor of nuclear reactor physics and has in later years developed a lead-cooled safe Small Nuclear Reactor (through the company Blykalla, <https://www.blykalla.com/>). Hi reactor uses natural convection for heat removal, operates at high temperature, is designed for safe and compact deployment. He's also into transmutation of Nuclear Waste. Research has shown how lead-cooled fast reactors can reduce both volume and longevity of high-level waste. He's also into nuclear fuel in the form of uranium nitride. Fandom's Dr Strangelove... :-)

■ Professor **Carl-Mikael Zetterling**, active in the Scandinavian SF Association, at times editing its fanzine memberzine SF Forum. Professor Zetterling is a world-leader in wide-bandgap semiconductor devices, especially silicon carbide technology - pioneering high-temperature electronics that operate in extreme environments. Your *Intermission* editor heard him lecture on the topic, which may lead to Venus probes with electronics that can stand the intense Venus heat. <https://www.kth.se/blogs/wov/files/2020/10/ZETTERLING-KTH-Life-on-Venus-and-how-to-explore-Venus-with-high-temperature-electronics.pdf>



Site Alchetron claims this is OTF. Maybe it's a masquerade?

■ **Torkel Franzén** (1950–2006), fanzine contributor with a dry humour, member of the 1970's fan group 6th Fandom, logician and computer scientist at Luleå University and later SICS in Stockholm. Did significant research on Gödel's incompleteness theorems and theoretical computer science. Wrote the acclaimed book *Inexhaustibility: A Non-Exhaustive Treatment* (2004), providing a deep yet accessible analysis of Gödel. At SICS, Franzén researched the intersection of computability theory and computational complexity. He explored topics such as recursive function theory, proof theory, and the formalization of mathematical truth, contributing to prevailing discourse about what computers can and cannot demonstrate or decide. He had the blog "Skvitt om vetenskap och samhälle", where he argued against pseudoscience and defended rational skeptical thinking. In fandom he was known as OTF (the Oracle Torkel Franzén). BTW, at Stockholm University, your editor had him as lecturer in logic classes!



Herr Nilson, Peter

■ **Peter Nilson** (1937–1998). Well-known in skiffy circles and successful author of sf novels like *Rymdväktaren* ("The Space Guard"). Professionally an astronomer at Uppsala University, compiling the influential Uppsala General Catalogue of Galaxies containing ca 13,000 entries. (We never got him to any of our cons, because he wanted a not unsubstantial appearance fee.)

■ **Anders Sandberg**. A computational neuroscientist and futurist, with research at Oxford's Future of Humanity Institute on brain emulations, existential risk, and transhumanism (not dressing in silly drag, but life extension). A fan in the sense being addicted to sf cons. I saw him on the latest Eurocon, the latest Worldcon and there's more.



Torben U Marp

■ **Torben U Marp** (1901-1972), well, from our southern neighbour but a same quiz show, Lars "Inka" Persson of club Meteor, Malmö, on the topic South America



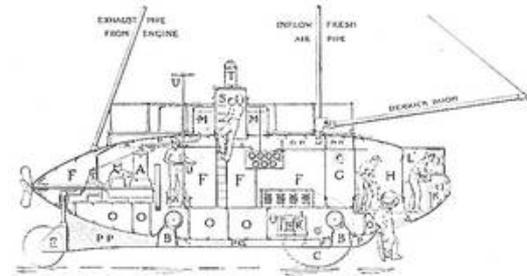
Anders Sandberg, humming: "FAME! I'm gonna live forever! I'm gonna learn how to fly!"

special case. PhD Marp - fan of HG Wells and friend of sf author *Niels E Nielsen* - was consultant with the Danish mimeo manufacturer Rex Rotary (a popular brand here) studying viscosity of printing ink. It was of great importance for the inking systems of their duplicators. He called his field "atramentumosity" ("atramentum" is Latin for ink) and it of course had application for the printing industry in general. Smudgy stencils is your fault, not Dr Marp's!

Inventions Inspired By This Cheap Space Adventure Stuff:

■ American inventor *Simon Lake* had been captivated by the idea of undersea travel and exploration ever since he read Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* as a boy. Lake's innovations included ballast tanks, divers' compartments and the periscope. His company built the Argonaut - the first submarine to operate successfully in the open ocean, in 1898 - earning him a congratulatory note from Verne.

■ *Robert H. Goddard* credited *HG Wells* with igniting his passion for liquid-fueled rockets and spaceflight. His fascination with with spaceflight after reading an 1898 newspaper serialization of HG Wells' classic novel about a Martian invasion, *War of the Worlds*. As Goddard would recall later, the concept of interplanetary flight "gripped my imagination tremendously".



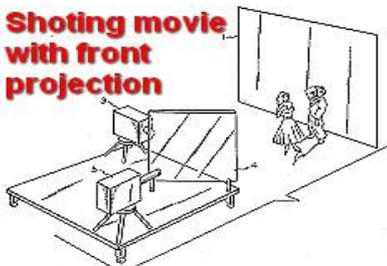
Submarine The Argonaut.

■ Rocket pioneers *Hermann Oberth* and *Wernher von Braun* were profoundly influenced by *Jules Verne's* *From the Earth to the Moon*, shaping their careers, initially through the rocketry group *Verein für Raumschiffahrt* founded in 1927. They assisted Fritz Lang with his film "Woman in, the Moon" (1929). A rare German "technical fantasy" about a moon ship, 1938: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-G-mbmZbLWU>

■ *Tim Berners-Lee*, inventor of the World Wide Web, cited *Arthur C. Clarke's* "Dial F for Frankenstein" as inspiration, where the telephone network reaches enough complexity for consciousness. Tim B-L began working on WWW in 1989, and it was publicly released in 1993, the same year that Mosaic came around, the first graphical web browser available for Windows.

■ *Igor Sikorsky*, inventor of the modern helicopter, was inspired by a Verne book, *Clipper of the Clouds*, which he had read as a young boy. Sikorsky often quoted Jules Verne, saying "Anything that one man can imagine, another man can make real".

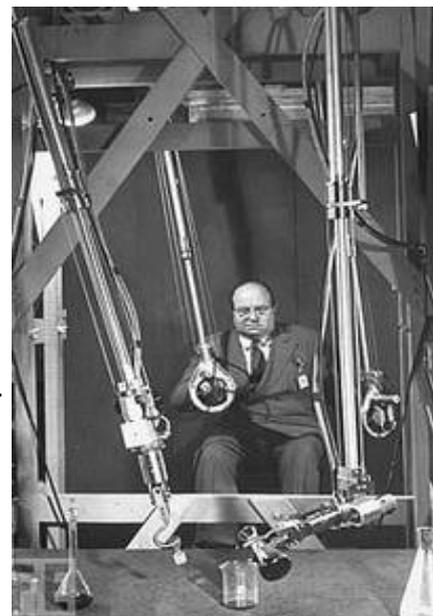
Shooting movie with front projection



■ Physicist *Leo Szilard* read HG Wells novel *The World Set Free*, imagining the emergence of "artificial" atomic energy by 1933, followed by a devastating world war and the eventual emergence of a peaceful global government. It inspired him to solve the problem of creating a nuclear chain reaction - in 1933. The same book would inspire Szilard to campaign for arms control and the peaceful, international use of nuclear power after World War II

■ *Murray Leinster* invented a front projection process fundamental to cinematic special effects.

■ *Robert Heinlein's* short story "Waldo" led inspired real manipulator arms for nuclear and remote-handling applications. His story was about a physically infirm inventor, Waldo F Jones, who used remotely operated mechanical hand. Real-life manipulator arms that were developed for the nuclear industry in the mid-1940s were named waldos, in recognition of Heinlein's innovative idea.

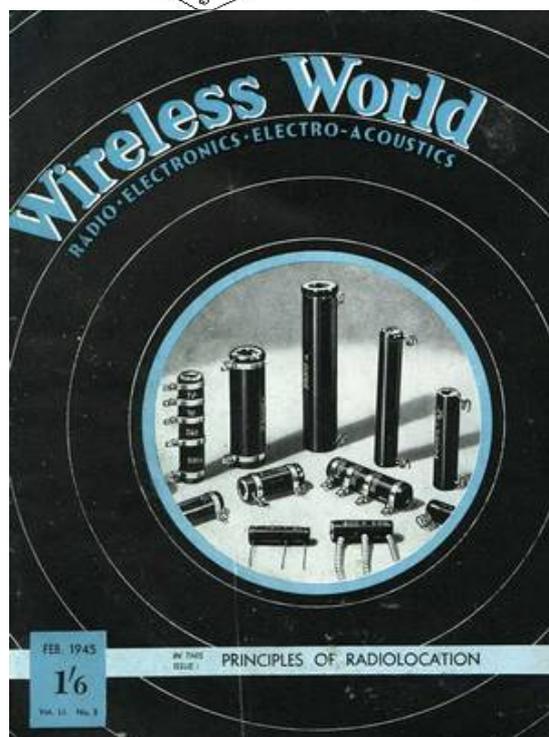


A waldo working with (a guess) radioactive anthrax virus!

■ *Arthur C Clarke* formulated the blueprint for geostationary satellites in the Feb 1954 issue of *Wireless World* - a concept realised with Intelsat in the 1960s

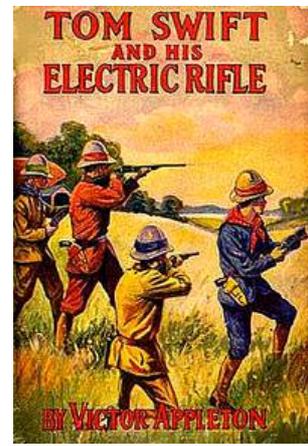
■ Defibrillators are claimed being inspired by *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*.

■ "Taser" is an acronym for "Tom A Swift's Electric Rifle", from a



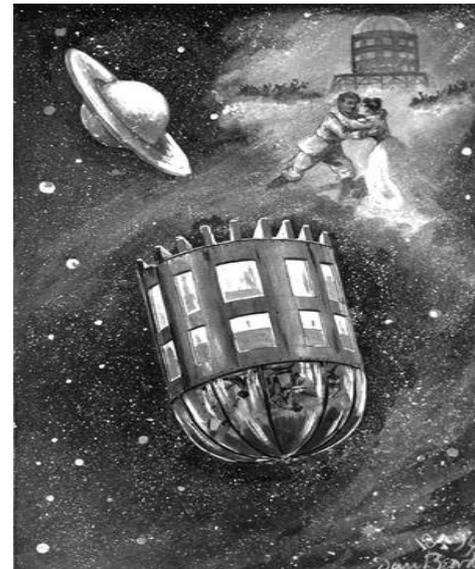
The issue with Clarke's geosat article. And they didn't even give it a cover blurb!

story by "Victor Appleton". The inventor NASA physicist Jack Cover read old Tom Swift magazines, a popular hero 100+ years ago. Cover was a prolific inventor, experimenting with devices like voice-activated switches and an electric toothbrush, while he was still at university. He built a professional career at North American Aviation, a major contractor for NASA, where he worked as the company's lead researcher on the Apollo program.



■ You know how John W Campbell and editor of *Astounding*, received a visit from FBI's Counter Intelligence Corps after publishing Cleve Cartmill's 1944 story "Deadline". They were especially interested in the story's accurate depiction of isotope separation. Campbell took his info from open sources but also suspected that something was going on in New Mexico. "Dozens of *Astounding* subscriptions were suddenly forwarded to the remote PO Box 1663 in Los Alamos" he noted. Scholars suggest that many Manhattan Project scientists - likely in the range 50–200 - subscribed to *Astounding* (based on newsletter info and post-war oral histories).

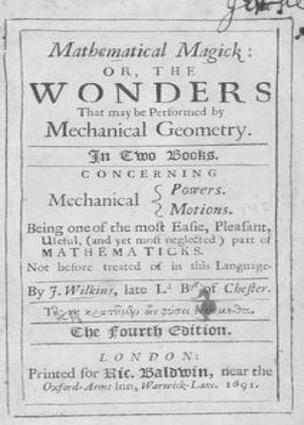
■ It has been claimed (eg by Harry Harrison) that Wernher von Braun, responsible for the successful Saturn V moon rocket, received *Astounding SF* magazine even during the war, "through a drop box in Sweden" (halfway in this speech <https://californiarevealed.org/do/9c78aaaa-3b38-463e-9577-0455c3778330> - it's also in the *Collected editorials from Analog*, that Harrison edited.) Someone in the States purchased or subscribed to the magazine. It could then be sent to Portugal (ie via the Clipper flying boat) and from there to Sweden. AFAIK von Braun himself never mentioned it, but it would certainly have been possible. The organiser could be Willy Ley, a friend of von Braun in the early 1930s in Germany.



■ In lastish *Intermission* talked about J J Astor's interesting, early *A Journey into Other Worlds* (1894). Here's an interesting, long review of it: <https://publicdomainreview.org/essay/colonizing-the-cosmos/>

An AI told us about **Early Descriptions of Inventions or Discoveries In SF**. Among the suggestions were: *From A Journey Into Other Worlds.*

■ *Cyrano de Bergerac's The Other World: Comical* https://archive.org/details/bim_early-english-books-1641-1700_mathematical-magick-_wilkins-john-hp_1691/mode/2up discusses *History of the States and Empires of the Moon* (1657) describes rocket propulsion, not only the more famous traveling to the Moon by bottles of dew.



■ *John Wilkins' Mathematical Magick* (1648) "hypothetical flying chariots, flapping wings, and perpetual motion - he suggests mechanical flight might be possible using clockwork mechanisms" but he also flies with the help of trained eagles.



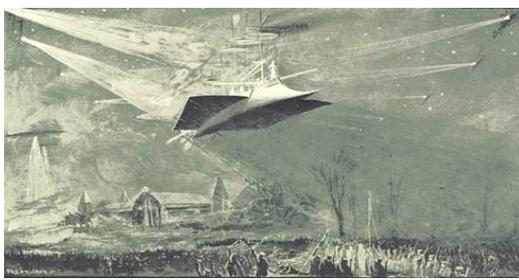
■ *Garrett P Serviss' Edison's Conquest of Mars*

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/19141/19141-h/19141-h.htm> (1898), that continued Wells' War of the Worlds, describes "defense shields that protect ship" long before James T Kirk raised shields



■ *George Griffith's A Honeymoon in Space* (1901) describes space suits to wear in vacuum, in and his *The Angel of the Revolution* (2894)

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/31324>, also *From Honeymoon in Space.*



From The Angel of the Revolution

featuring a "death ray" and a "search ray" for detecting enemies behind walls, before Xrays were discovered and long before radar. He also has one of the first mentions of remote-controlled aircraft, using "ethereal waves", a precursor to radio waves.

■ **Robert Cromie's *The Crack of Doom*** <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/26563>

(1894) talks about a powerful explosive derived from splitting the atom, before the A-bomb-like device in HG Wells' *The World Set Free* (1914). This was before anyone proposed that atoms could be a source of energy (which we got with Einstein's Special Relativity Theory in 1905.)

■ **Adam Seaborn's *Symmes' Theory & The Symzonia*** (1820) describes a ship traveling under polar ice and entering the Hollow Earth. The story was about this Symmes guy's idea of a hollow Earth. <https://archive.org/details/symzonia-voyage-of-discovery-captain-adam-seaborn/page/n3/mode/2up>

■ **Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*** (1888) had voice-Controlled

Machines and hints at telecommunications, e.g. music streaming service delivered by telephone. Actually there was such a system in Hungary in 1890s! *Telefon Hírmondó* operated 1893-1926 (for radio programs to 1944) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telefon_H%C3%ADrmond%C3%B3

■ **Frank R Stockton's *The Great War Syndicate*** <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/427> (1889) describes heat-ray weapons and solar power collectors used for industry.

■ **Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *L'An 2440*** (1771) While vague, it suggests remotely operated mechanisms before electricity was practical future devices like remote communication tools and surveillance machines.

■ **Albert Robida's *La Guerre au vingtième siècle*** (1883)

imagined autonomous or remote-guided aircraft decades before drones existed. He also imagined videophones and chemical weapons.

■ **Ambrose Bierce's short story "Moxon's Master"** of that <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/4366/pg4366-images.html#page88>

(1899) suggests intelligent a self-operating machine capable of independent action (1899).

As coal dust fills the air you realise there was just as much Sense of Wonder in the 19th century...

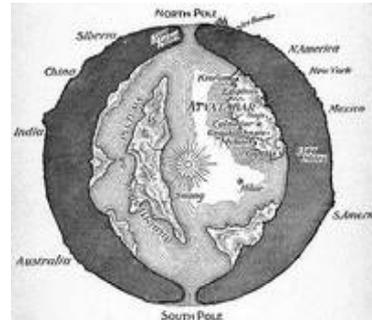
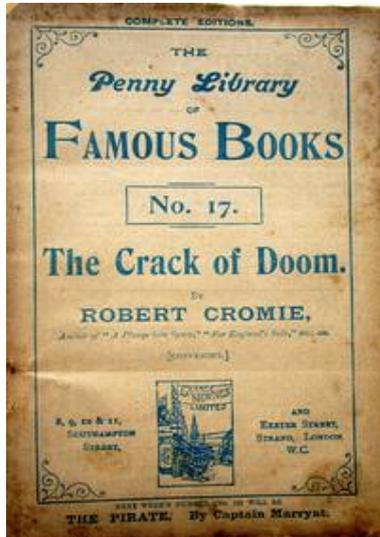
Eurocon Struggles as Today's SF Cons Need to Straighten Up

In lastish we went to this years Eurocon, Archipelacon 2 on the Baltic Island of Åland (Jun 26-29). There's more to report. But first a piece of news, in the form of that a conrunners' con *Smofcon* is coming to Stockholm in December, see <https://www.smofcon42.com/>.

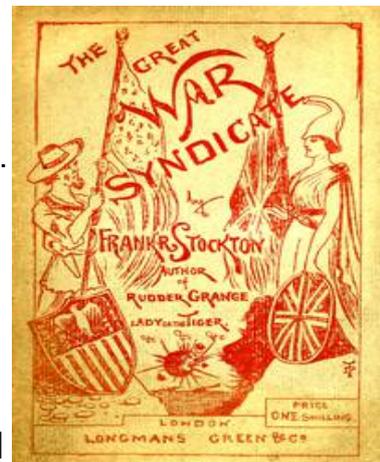
I'm thinking of going, as an old conrunner but most of all having a lot of ideas about sf cons and what's wrong with them today. (Trying to count, I've been in the concom for around 15 cons. In later years I abstain and even refuse to gopher. If you put in scores of or hundreds of hours of work you should at least get a free membership.)

As said, arriving to Alandia convention hall you were assaulted by an intolerant idea: your only option for the strip carrying your badge was in those "rainbow" colours, that we all know what it stands for. The con intentionally tried to force everyone to be poster boys for a controversial ideology. What if some people (and these "some" are likely the big majority!) don't want to walk around on town with PR for the notion that questions around sex and sexuality must be externalised and stories for kindergarten toddlers must be read by blokes in skirts? A Eurocon must be above that.

A substantial majority of attendees were Finns. Fewer Swedes than one could expect were to be found, at least according to the program book membership listing (going to #733, a little over 100 registering after that). Looking for Swedish names I counted to ca 85 Swefen, or about only 10% of the 860 registered. Some Swedish names could be local Ålanders or Finland-Swedes - *kansallisruotsinkielinen* (Swedes from Sweden) - but there could be some Swefen among the 100



A hollow /h/e/a/d Earth.



Registration. "Rainbow" bands whether you approve of that ideology it or not

Archipelagon 2 - Nordic SF and Fantasy
Convention 26-29/6

Konvent med presentationer, paneler och föreläsningar om alla
aspekter av science fiction och fantasy.
www.archipelacon.org

The con should perhaps have a more active media rep. Among many tourist guides, event calendars etc I found only one (this) short note.

late registered, which cancels that. Åland is almost in the middle between Finland and Sweden, equally easy to reach by ferry from either side. We were told that there was about 700 attending, so fiAWOL* was a little high (over 150).

There were perhaps a dozen British fans there, the same number of Americans (some based in Europe, I guess), some Norwegians, Danes, Germans, Czechs, Romanians, Swiss, Poles... I can't make

out numbers of nationalities present but most could be counted on one hand (and for some not needing all fingers). I asked the registration for nationalities statistics, but they hadn't noted that. The Worldcon makes tables of nationalities present. I think Eurocon should do it too. Especially Eurocon!



GoH panel: Jeff Vandermeer, Cheryl Morgan (mod), Emmi Itäranta. (The dog ate Mats Strandberg's tickets...or something.)

A dozen or so Swedish fans I know came with the same ferry (of course attendees I don't know probably came along too, but I don't recognise those). I spent some time enjoying bheer, from the taxfree shop, on deck in the sun watching the unique Baltic archipelago. Sweden and Finland have the highest concentration of scattered islands in the world, and that probably inspired the name Archipelacon. The near half a



"Self-Governing Passage", a monument for the status of Åland.

million (!) islands along our coasts is an effect of the iceage ice caps covering Scandinavia. It created an uneven landscape with sand ridges, peaks of bedrock being freed, and when the ice retracted all these features emerged as lots of small islands and thousands of lakes. Arriving to Viking Line's ferry terminal early afternoon Thursday, the first con day, I missed the official opening and a couple of other program items (among them GoH Interview with Ann Vandermeer, but I saw later program with her, as well as with Jeff).

The weather was mostly fine (but raining a bit one day) so I sometimes spent a little time outdoors in the sun, sipping ferry bheer. Not far away was a shop for used clothes, books etc where I bought a few books. The con itself didn't have many used books, instead a lot of small press publishers mostly from Finland with their newer production. There was one box with older Swedish and some Norwegian skiffy books and I bought some (also Norwegian ones, not hard to read for me). My best find was perhaps Nobel laureate, physicist Hannes Alfvén's *M-70*, a non-fiction follow up to his *The Tale of the Big Computer* where he goes into futurology and speculates about the future. A somewhat rare book, as I hadn't even seen it before. (But when I read it after the con I found it a bit dull, Alfvén warns about overpopulation and resource depletion - things we now know are totally irrelevant.) Together with what I picked up at the first-mentioned shop, I left Archipelacon with about 15+ books, including some crime fiction... (Try Michael Connelly, who has become my favourite for the moment!)



A group of Swedish fen. Fewer than expected.

Archipelacon took place on three floors in Alandia. The bottom floor had registration, entrances to the main stage (seating ca 600 I'm told - a couple of times perhaps 75% full) and a smaller secondary stage. The middle floor had book and info tables and program rooms, and the top floor had further program rooms. Supplemental program place was a hotel just across the street. Among the info tables we had also a pro-nuclear power table, where I had some interesting discussions.

I took a table in a corner on the bottom floor and set up my computer there. I decided not to send tweets from Archipelacon. My Twitter activity has been very low this spring as I simply have had too much else to do. I'm sorry for that, I may make a comeback, but each tweet actually takes me 30-



A fan fund table. Standing Johan Anglemark. At table's end a box with Swedish skiffy (I got some books there).

* Absent With Out Leave, from fiawol.

60 min (news background research, transfer pics from phone, select, edit and crop pic, squeezing everything into 240 chrs, times 2-4...as I have that many topics in postings). I checked mail, researched topics from the program, posted on my writing list SKRIVA (also putting up a little reminder of our Fantastic Story Competition), etc. I roamed hucksters' and info tables, often bumping into folks I know and chatting for a few minutes and I had time to attend perhaps a little more program than usual.

I won't go into all of the program. Some was mentioned in last issue, but let me explain a strange program tactic I employ... When there are conflicting programs I go to one item for perhaps 10-15 minutes, and then over to next, and then perhaps back to the first one again. If you see me running in and out of programs you know now why. Here's on some program items (see lastish too).

Thursday I listened to a writing panel and an anthology panel. Not very interesting. I'll go into my problems with panels later.

On Friday, beside filk and poetry, I also heard about climate change in Swedish skiffy. You all know I'm a climate critic but I have noted that some authors believe in "Just Taking A Sauna" to quote a recent song. But historically a new Ice Age has been just as common in literature, like in PC Jersild's *After the Flood* or Axel Klinckowström's *Skräck över Norden* ("Terror in the North" which BTW can be downloaded



"Climate Change in Contemporary Swedish Fiction" the screen says. It looks like this wasn't too popular to listen too.

here <https://antikvariat.tomasfriberg.se/Hugin-biblioteket/Books/Klinkan.pdf>).

Saturday I heard the interesting Ukraine item with Alona Silina via link, a fan fund presentation and the masquerade. I didn't go to the Mats Strandberg GoH interview because Mats Strandberg himself didn't go. He fiAWOLed for "personal reasons" of unknown nature. Perhaps his dog ate his ticket? I went to a presentation of the Slovenian sf scene, which was very informative. I knew little about Slovenian sf but now I know more. They eg have the sf magazine *Supernova*, that welcome stories from other countries too (maybe I'll try it digging up of my own).

The masquerade had about a dozen contestants. Though many of them were fine I'm not too fond of folks dressing up in strange pieces of cloth. We have far too much of it, and in the ignorant eyes of the mundane public silly clothes has unfortunately become equal to science fiction. Mundane media will be drawn to doltish costumes like magnets when they want to present some half-lies about "sci-fi" (as they call it). I know Forry Ackerman and Morojo came in fancy costumes to the first worldcon, but



Filk panel. KJ Norén shows Sam J Lundwall's LP "Songs In Our Time". He claims it's a filksong album. (I disagree. Only some songs on it have sf connections.)

this masquerading was kept on a low and decent level for many decades. Now it's too much of fabric and palettes, often from younger fannes who are more interested in sewing than reading.

The ESFS awards were also presented Saturday evening. You can find lists of winners on news sites, but let me just mention that among the winners were Swedish artist Johan Egerkrans (well-deserved, a very fine illustrator) and the short-story E-magazine *Brev från Cosmos* (also well-deserved, there are too few serious outlets for short stories). Finally I went to "A Brief history of SF in Finland" presented by Vesa Sisättö, which was quite informative. There was a Tarzan-like Finnish pulp hero in the 1940s, but instead of being raised by apes this guy was raised by...bears. (A similar Swedish hero would have been raised by Moose, I guess.)

Sunday I went to presentation of "microfiction", Tähtivaeltaja's awards (short stop, it was in Finnish) and then a presentation of what skills you need "for fun and survival" when the apocalypse comes. Know how to make a fire and cultivate your potatoes, the best crop for survival. I know it grows rather well even far north in my mother's



My corner of the con.

Lapland. Sunday was short for many as the ferry was leaving half past two and you'd better be at the terminal an hour in advance.

Fortunately I left Monday. Some gathered for deaddogging in a nearby pub. I seldom attend bheer joints nowadays because that tasty blog has become far too expensive for my taste. Instead I bought a small sausage and mashed potato lunch box in a supermarket, took the exciting books I had acquired, some left-over ferry bheer and sat down in the sun.

And I thought about that some things don't feel right with sf cons today. They used to be better! It's not only some shamelessly tries to ram wokeness down our throats (an Uppsala con years back had communist armbands as badges, but it was meant as a joke - todays neofen don't joke) but also:

1) They have no program planning skills, eg relying on *boring, slow and unprepared* panels.

2) They have totally forgotten the highly essential lighter, fannish side of fandom.

As for (1) I'd guesstimate that up to 75% of the program was panels of some sort, but all the panels sounded almost the same. It starts with the panelists taking far too long time presenting themselves, and the panel topic is then covered in long, mumbling, ill-prepared bits where everyone talks too long. The audience gets 5 minutes at most for questions towards the end.

This won't do!

First of all we must have fewer of these mumbling panels. Individual lectures when one person who knows his subject talks to prepared Powerpoints is much, much better. (I found two lectures "Full" on Archipelacon, a sign on the door said, proving lectures were more attractive than panels, It was a lecture about asteroid mining and one about terraforming, but as decades old space advocate I had probably heard everything before anyway, so it was OK.)

Panels should have something like a chess clock. Panelists should get max 30 seconds to present themselves, and max 2 minutes per dialogue piece. The moderator should make this clear and enforce it. But the moderator must also prepare panelists, tell them to find the the 2-3 most interesting things they have on the subject to tell in, say, max 60 seconds. The point is to give the panels a much *higher tempo* and a better coverage of the topic. And each panel must open for questions from the public when at least half the time is left. The moderator should enforce a 30 seconds rule on audience questions, because the spectators can mumble away too.

But I don't see any of this implemented on panels on

today's sf cons.

However, concons

today also lack planning originality. They just think out a number of subjects and sit down to think out what persons should mumble and mismanage the topic... Thats utterly lazy! I've been to probably 150-200 cons (for 49 years, counting on 3-4 cons/year) and have also been in program planning for some. The convention programs have steadily become worse!



Presentation of the Slovenian sf scene. Informative! BTW, a summer sun window is bad background! Use curtains, fill in with spotlights! (A similar presentation from Bulgaria was cancelled for unknown reasons.)



This merry gang weren't actually from - but had connections to - Finland, Iceland, Denmark and Norway.



Danish author Jane Mondrup shakes champy during release of her novel Zoi
<https://www.adlibris.com/sv/bok/zoi-9781951393427>



Vesa Sisättö lectured on Finnish sf history 1803-1944. On screen Finland's pulp hero Tarsa, strong man raised by bears... Informative and interesting lecture.

One important factor of the decline is that the light-hearted fannish angle has been almost totally forgotten. Were are the fannish games? From Finncons I remember tabletop ice hockey games and Robert Jordan book-bowling. For Swedish cons I myself invented both Meteorball (fannish rounders) and the Great Peanut Race, which made it to national news on TV once!. The last was an adaptation of the Great Pork Pie Race which I helped with on Loncon 3, the last Worldcon I've been to that actually had a Fan Program. OK, Archipelacon had filksinging, but filk is today almost on the periphery of fandom. We need fannish games and quizzes, fandom history items, sketches, earlier we could enjoy fannish theatre plays and musicals (Ian Sorensen used to make that for Scottish conventions). Find whimsical, funny surprises, that make congoers relax, have fun, enjoying themselves.

Science fiction is serious enough and a lighter, fannish program is essential as a counterweight!

It was calm water and a blazing sun on the ferry back to Stockholm.



Closing ceremony crowd in main hall. At times it was 75% full, but here ca 60% (fen had begun to leave).



Concom and the other Usual Suspects at the closing ceremony. Next time: cheaper bheer, fewer panels and skip rainbows!



All the masquerade contestants.

Bye-Bye History's Oldest Liner: M/S Stockholm - Her Adventurous Life

She was famous (infamous?) for the Andrea Doria accident. She survived hurricanes, cyclones, even a pirate attack*. She sailed under 11 different names, was refurbished and overhauled several times and after 77 years on the oceans - being a *world record old* faithful servant - M/S Stockholm has now been sold for scrap. (Why not save her and place her beside the Vasa...)

Here's a video about her: "MV Astoria (Stockholm) The World's Oldest Cruise Ship (1948-2020)" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcfcwTGrY4w>

The keel of M/S Stockholm was laid down in 1946 in the main Scandinavian port city of Gothenburg and she was delivered in 1948. The Swedish American Line had a tradition of naming their ships with the suffix "-holm" (isle), so she took the name after the "Capital of Scandinavia". Other major liners from this company were e g Kungsholm (name from a Stockholm district) and Gripsholm (name from a famous palace).

Stockholm was rather small. Other liners or cruise ships were 30-60 000 tons. But a smaller ship can feel more intimate, less crowded, giving a more personal experience. The Swedish American Line, founded in 1915, had several earlier ships named Stockholm but the new ship was a little bit different. She was sleeker than her predecessors, and anticipating that air travel would grab a lot of the passengers, she had reduced (but still rather luxurious) passenger capacity at around 390. And she would also take a lot of freight. You can see the freight cranes fore and aft in the original configuration (above).

Original configuration:

Gross Registered Tons 11,650

*As M/S Athena she was attacked by pirates in the Gulf of Aden, Dec 3 2008. 39 pirate boats surrounded the ship. A US Orion marine patrol aircraft came and circled above causing some pirates to flee. The remaining tried to board but was kept at bay by high pressure water cannons. No one was injured and the ship could continue her voyage to Australia.

Length 160 metres
 Beam 21 metres
 Draught 7.9 Metres
 Running on two 8-cylinder diesels
 totalling 12000 hp
 Speed 17 knots (later increased)
 390 passengers (113 first class), 220
 crew



You can see the freight cranes fore and aft in the original configuration

(above). The reduced passenger capacity made it possible to give every cabin a parthole towards the sea, a luxury in itself and probably appreciated.

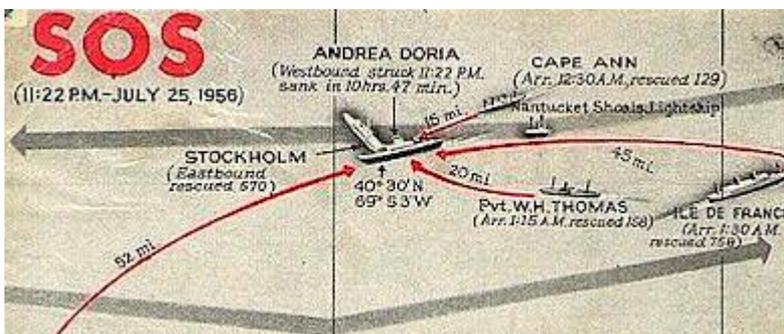
Everything went smooth for M/S Stockholm the first years, though as expected transatlantic passenger shipping was being overtaken by the airlines. The operator's bet on freight and fewer but wealthier passengers was on the spot. Those who choose (could afford) the ship trip wanted a bit of relaxation paired with salty air and a little adventure.

But the biggest "adventure" was yet to come. One foggy July night in 1956, suddenly two modern, radar-equipped ocean liners collided near the American coast, off Nantucket, right on the high seas. Stockholm got her bow totally squashed (5 fatalities) as she hit Italy's Andrea Doria midships (46



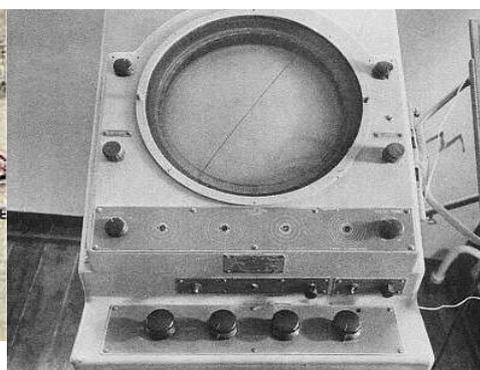
M/S Stockholm entering New York with her squashed bow after the collision

(5 fatalities). Andrea Doria immediately began to list. She was a bit top heavy and had problems with some of the bulkheads of the watertight compartments. She slowly took in water but stayed afloat for 11 hours, until sinking below the waves next morning. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2H62yiqs8>



The collision in graphics.

Stockholm's radar->



Stockholm stayed around and picked up survivors, and other ships came to the rescue. The large majority of passengers and crew survived. Fatalities were mainly from the collision itself.

But how was this accident possible?

Each ship owner and the officers doing the navigation blamed the other side. It seems Andrea Doria just before the accident didn't following the marine code of steering portside but turned starboard. The Italian side instead claimed the Swedish crew must have misread their radar (such equipment was new and a bit crude at the time). That it was a dark and foggy night certainly contributed, and the exact chain of events remain a bit foggy to this day. The two shipping companies settled outside court without any of them taking full responsibility.

It was the worst maritime disaster for Sweden until M/S Estonia in 1994.

Andrea Doria was laid to rest on the sea bottom while Stockholm limped back to New York, was repaired and had a further 69 years of life, which went like this:

1946 keel laid in Gothenburg

1948 launched in Gothenburg

1953-54 major refit in Bremen, Germany.

1956 collided with Italian liner *Andrea Dori* in July, off Nantucket, repaired in New York and back to service December the same year

1959 sold to DDR (East Germany), changed name to *Völkerfreundschaft*

1960 went aground in Stockholm's outer archipelago

1985 sold to Neptunus Rex Enterprises, renamed *Volker* and laid up in Oslo, then towed to Southampton for further lay up

1986-1993 back to Oslo as refugee accomodation, renamed *Fridjof Nansen*.

1989 Sold to Star Lauro Societa per Axion, Italy, towed to Genoa for refit, a major rebuild finished in 1992

1993 renamed *Italia I*

1994 renamed *Italia Prima*. registered to Nina Cia di Navigazione, Italy, began with Mediterranean cruises

1995 moved to the Caribbean and began crusing there

1998 laid up in Genoa, renamed *Valtur Prima*, then began more Caribbean cruises

2001 laid up in Cuba

2002 sold to Festival Cruise Line and renamed *Caribe*

2004 laid up in Lisbon, Portugal. and sold to Nina SpA

2005 renamed *Athena*, during this time she sailed Europe-Australia

2008 registered with First Quality Cruise

2013 sold to Portuscale Cruises and renamed *Azores*, extensive refurbishing done in France

2015 cruising in the Caribbean

2016 sold to Cruise and Maritime Voyages in the UK, renamed *Astoria*

2020 made her last three cruises between Britain and Norway, and then laid up in Tilbury and then Rotterdam

2025 sold as scrap in an auction and then towed off to Ghent for scrapping

According to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MS_Stockholm_\(1946\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MS_Stockholm_(1946)) she had 11 different names, under 11 operators with 14 different owners, being registered in 5 different countries.

Final configuration (after several refurbishings and rebuilds, some quite major)

Gross Registered Tons 15 614

Running on two 16-cylinder diesels totalling 14300 hp

Speed 19 knots

556 passengers

An informative page of the history of M/S

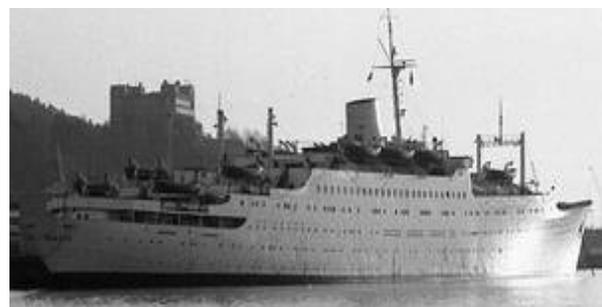
Stockholm <http://ssmaritime.com/Stockholm.htm>

Its author Reuben Gossens has travelled with Stockholm and writes (from ca 2020):

...a good 64 years after her being delivered to her owners she is still sailing and better still she is in better shape today than most modern ships, as she is not only spotless, but her standard of maintenance is better than I have found on most modern cruise chips, in fact she puts all of them to shame!



M/S Stockholm as DDR's *Völkerfreundschaft*



In Oslo as *Fridjof Nansen*, housing refugees.



M/S Stockholm as *Italia Prima* - a quite extensive rebuild.

I enjoyed two cruises on her as MV Athena as she is was then named, from Australia to Portsmouth, UK, for 39 and 40 nights, in 2011 and 2012, and these voyages were so good that I had rebooked another for November 2012 from Marseilles, France back to Australia, but sadly an amazing man the owner of Classic Cruises International Mr. George P Potamianos, one of the world's most respected passenger and cruise ship owner's and operator suddenly passed away on May 29, 2012, whilst I was aboard the wonderful Athena on the way to Portsmouth! His two sons took over, but they rapidly sent the company into liquidation.

New owners found that you just had to apply a little paint and Ole' Stockholm was ready to ride the waves again.

This hints to that her design must have been rather good flexible but perhaps not very exciting. Still her career was exciting! But any chances of starting cruising with her again was probably crushed by the corona epidemic, which hit the cruising industry extremely hard. M/S Stockholm would survive a major collision, storms, pirates* and do her duty for 77 years - but a tiny microbe would be her undoing.

And now the world's oldest liner is sold for €200.000 and will be hacked to pieces. See:

<https://www.tradewindsnews.com/cruise-and-ferry/world-s-oldest-cruise-ship-heading-for-the-breakers-yard/2-1-1836504>

<https://www.travelweekly-asia.com/Cruise-Travel/Goodbye-to-the-world-s-oldest-cruise-ship>

<https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/travel/article/3050173/mv-astoria-worlds-oldest-ocean-going-cruise-ship-set>

Stockholm in it's various guises during her life:

<https://www.doverferryphotosforums.co.uk/mv-astoria-past-and-present/>

Farewell, old lady!



Original 1940s salon of M/S Stockholm, for the tourist class! 1st class was of course one step up!



In her final shape as Astoria.

Eurocon Foists Attendees To Promote Wokeness

Do you fancy walking around a whole weekend with a controversial ideology around your neck? If so, the recent Eurocon, Archipelacon 2, was exactly what you needed!

The convention committee had ordered special so called "rainbow" carrying ribbons just for you. How sweet of them!

No alternative colours were offered. Bad luck for all how don't feel comfortable being turned into poster boys...persons for an ideology a lot of people have doubts about. The idea that gender doesn't come from chromosomes, that sex must be externalised, that grown men in garish dresses are great story tellers for pre-school kids, etc.

Taking a stroll on town between boring, politically correct program items, locals give you strange looks: "Hm, there must be a convention in town for the people busy inventing ridiculous pronouns..."

The Eurocon is a gathering supposedly trying to unite European fandom, but how could it then be acceptable to turn it into a "pride" parade or something? There are many, many who don't feel at ease with this woke ideology that some want to push aggressively. Forcing it down our throats, just because we like to read science fiction, is unacceptable. Science fiction cons turning into political spectacles is a serious *threat* to our genre and its fandom. It corrupts literature and turns people away.

Letters of (and Mailing) Comments

First received comments - more are welcome! - then Ed's own comments to the APAs this intellectual enterprise guests. Why not join an APA? The real Secrets Masters Of Fandom are us of the Written Word and science fiction. It's edifying to publish stuff. Better than sex, some say. (Contact Ed for info.)

Cato Sture: Hi Ahrvid, I don't hear from you very often, but I read what you send! It's a bit different from what

*Dec 3 2008 en route to Australia Athena (ex- Stockholm) was attacked by pirates in speedboats in the gulf of Aden. They were fought off with fire hoses in an 4 hour confrontation. The pirates finally fled when a US helicopter approached. All 450 on board were safe.



Forcing fans to walk around like this is abuse.

I think, because it depends on whether the things you write about interests me. That's how it is. Was Asimov a Russian spy? Of course! He moved to the US with his parents at the age of three, and was already indoctrinated by the Russian state with the joys and delights of Marxism! Perhaps that is why Samuel Delany wrote somewhere that the Foundation will never be made into a film, because it advocates... just that! The joys and delights of Marxism. But it became a series anyway!

However, there is not much Russian propaganda in my first book which - if everything is going well - will be released later in the fall, but you will find a lot of science fiction. That's not bad, is it?

Wishing you a nice summer!

Perry Middlemiss: Thanks Ahrvid. I could visualise Asimov attending a Communist Party meeting but Bradbury? Hardly! Cheers

Roger Sjölander: I don't know how things work, but you seem to have been ending up in the junk folder. Maybe due to the Rocketship address? **Ed:** *No, Many filters put mail with PDFs there.* Anyway, thanks for received fanac. I should really try to find some untempered water to lay in and read, as I right now feel like being in a cli-fi novel by Neal Stephenson: near death (well, not really but in a few years).

Ed: *Referring to the Swedish weather as we write. The North has a heat wave, daytime over 30C, south encounter days with intense rain. I never finished a Neal S novel. He prattles, chatters and gabbles too much.*

Cy Chauvin: Dear Ahrvid. Lots of interesting tidbits here and there. Re: Isaac Asimov's investigation by the FBI, more much a do about nothing, rather like that story predicting the atomic bomb in Astounding during World War II. What do you think the one informant meant by science fiction "did a lot of blind publishing for the Communist party"? That publishers and editors unknowingly published stories that were 'open' to communism, or showed other possibilities than capitalism? (As I read further about Bradbury, that's what it seems to mean. No conception that there might be other possibilities than capitalism or communism.)

I agree that some humor and fannishness at a convention helps prevent it from becoming dull, but I tend to think that this is mostly not something that cannot be planned a head of time. Indeed, some planned things can be very awkward or worse. And you are (as I written before) quite right that individual lectures, slide shows and such are more interesting, but much rarer because it requires more work and planning on someone's part.

In your mailing comments, you criticize those in "furry fandom." There are extremes to everything, but I think wearing these costumes on occasion at a con are a way of taking on another persona, just as a writer may take a pen name, or indeed write or do any number of fan related things because they are not content with every day life. It's not enough. In fact, isn't this part of the fan activity at a con, to counter all the serious programming that you feel may overbalance a convention? I recall at a very early Wiscon (one of the most serious and programmed early conventions), where there was a panel entitled "Will the Real James Tiptree please stand up?" The three panelists were a man, a woman, and someone dressed as a giant Kilbaine cat. The audience could vote on who they thought was the real James Tiptree based on the questions and responses. And the giant cat won!

Surely you can't mind that, not with your sense of humor!

Now, like Joseph Nichols, I have to get back to my garden.

Ed: *I see something omnium in to "take on another persona". First of all, it's to deny responsibility for anything ("It wasn't me, it was Spotted Dick Man..."). Secondly, it perverts your ability to reason. "Stepping into" a hero from your pet space opera, or whatever, you become near-sighted. You must take a step back and see things from the outside to get a grasp of things, which you can't if you step into something. Masquerading is unserious, and harmful when e.g. crawling around in terry cloth pretending to be a dog.*

NN ("No Name"): Was angry about "science denial" in this skiffy E-rag, our stand in environmental issues. He didn't want comment or name published. But I take it as an opportunity to make a few points:

1. "Denial" sounds as it's a religion! To worship or "deny" a deity... But it's about evaluation of facts, preferably without calling names, nothing else.
2. Climate variations we've seen are small. A bounce-back from the well-known little ice age ending couple of centuries ago was to be expected. Exact historical data is also blurry, considering thousands of weather stations changing over the years (some in Urban Heat Islands). And substitute data is only from imprecise indirect sources (sediments, biomarkers etc).
3. Its neither true that "science is settled" nor that an overwhelming majority of scientists agree with the IPCC hypothesis, which is: 1) There is a climate variation larger than a natural one, 2) caused by CO2, 3) from human activity, 4) leading to disaster. Scrutinising science reports you find hardly any that support 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 at the same time. If only one of 1 to 4 falls, IPCC claims fail. As hardly anyone is behind all of 1-4, science isn't "settled" of course.
4. Climate activists need to explain how their slogans can affect the Sun's magnetic field, which scientists find correlates with climate variations. On top of this we also have that the Milankovich cycles showing either IPCC is ignorant or the Neanderthals built a lot of of airports and motorways.
5. This constant whining about climate comes from the 60s/70s Zeitgeist short-circuiting perceptions. Silent Spring, the Club of Rome with their ridiculous Mickey-Mouse computer "predictions", Greenpeace...ce, the 1972 environment conference, flower power, farm collectives with "biodynamic" crops, etc. The conception is that the modern world just "destroys Earth". So we must stop it. To strangle energy and use (inefficient) "green" solutions wants to force the modern world to retreat. Goodbye to reducing poverty in an historically unprecedented speed, slashing infant mortality, increasing average lifespans hugely, etc.

Joseph Nicholas: Dear Ahrvid. Many thanks for Intermission 156, which continues your now-familiar (and, to be frank, getting slightly tedious) war on wokeness, on this occasion directed at this year's Seattle Worldcon's opposition to homophobia, transphobia, racism, harassment, sexual misconduct, sexism and fraud. According

to you, "Science fiction literature must exercise intellectual freedom, freedom of speech, tolerance to all kinds of different opinions, openness, free debate", which in my view is irrelevant: it is the real world which is under discussion here, not fictitious ones. Indeed, the logical corollary of your demand that all opinions be tolerated is that you consider it acceptable to harass people for the colour of their skin or the difference in their gender and sexual preferences, and to practice fraud. I'm sure that you don't believe so -- but that is the absurdity into which your argument leads you. Given that you disagree so strongly with the statements and practices of contemporary convention committees, you might need to seriously consider the nuclear option of ceasing to attend them. /Ed: I already limit my con attending./

For myself, I now very rarely attend conventions, but not for ideological reasons -- attendance began winding down as long ago as the mid-1980s, as other events and activities took on greater prominence and interest. These days, I only attend conventions (a) to which I can commute daily, such as Eastercons held at hotels near Heathrow Airport; or (b) held in places that I have not previously visited, when I can take a few days before or after (or both) to see something of the city, such as this year's Eastercon in Belfast or last year's Worldcon in Glasgow. Otherwise, I stay home, and get on with the gardening.

Incidentally, there's a howling typo in the penultimate paragraph of my letter in issue 156, where I refer to a Lord Action stating that "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely" - a spellchecker "correction" that I clearly failed to spot. It should have been Lord Acton(as in the London suburb),without an "i".

Noting your comments about the lack of fannish programming at this year's Eurocon, I'd only refer you to a previous argument of mine (in issue 147) that fandom as it exists now is wider and more inclusive than it used to be; ergo, fanzines and fannishness aren't as central as they used to be, and never will be again. I suggest that you either have to (grudgingly) accept this or (the nuclear option again) cease attending conventions.

I read all of your History Corner material with great interest, although I have no comments to make on it (Raybinks, as they say in apas). But corner? These pages constitute over half of the issue!

Anyway, enough for now.

Ed: I sent Joe a rather long reply, which I won't repeat to save space, but here're some points. Harassment is of course bad, but should have a narrower, more precise definition. These "Code of Conducts" of later years' cons are biased, allowing harassment of woke critics. Seattle Worldcon's use of AI to make sure all program participants are kept in the same pen is anti-sf. Our genre needs freedom of thought, the opposite. Of this intolerance! Fandom is literature, prose, writing fanzines, etc. Movies, TV, games etc are superficial, kept in the periphery. Fandom isn't for everyone! And we want more humour and a tad of science. **Now MCs...**

Henry Grynsten: "So you mean the future is...even for minorities?? How radical! Up until now, I thought the future was only for straight, white, middle-aged European men!" The point is that constantly giving "minorities" (women are usually a majority, BTW) advantages is discrimination - usually against middle-aged white males. They have no chance because Politically Correctness says they must be locked out. That's unfair! You can't fight claimed discrimination with new discrimination. ■ "it was Christer Pettersson who was the culprit" You might be right. I had CP as the Palme murderer for a long time. Christer A is my dark horse now. He seems to have never been really investigated. ■ "A copy can be exactly the same as the original, but it isn't the original." Hm, have you thought of what "exactly the same" means? ■ AE: "mixing two ethical questions..." You: "No it isn't." It is two ethical questions, since they can be analysed and answered independently of each other. ■ "difference between accepting and programming conscious beings to be servants" Do you suggest that you don't have the right to create whatever you want - as long as it's no threat to others.- and that humans aren't also programmed with certain behaviours? If robots aren't created as being useful as servants, they won't be made at all. ■ "you have to show me that E O Wilson was a fanatic" I infer

this from bios about his life saying he began befriending bugs before school age. Such things typically lead to a life-long commitment on the fanatical side. ■ "species are being extinguished up to 1,000 times faster than before humans" Hogwash. We don't know extinction numbers earlier, and we have very vague graps of it now so we can't know. Take a parking lot: you don't know the number of cars at time A, and not at time B. From this it's impossible to say at what rate the parking lot is emptied.. However: when humans arrived to North America over the Bering Strait Ice, all big mammals disappeared (hunted down, presumably). The Dodo wasn't killed by modern industrial waste, it's extermination was caused by cats. Tabbies have probably killed off more species than humans. Cats could escaped from ships anchoring at isolated islands, and had a field day with birds and animals who earlier had no enemies. Felines are in fact among the most efficient predators we have! ■ "there are some /me?! who are only interested in space ships and science fiction" I read crime fiction too. And I'm also into trams (spårvagnar), the 1930s/40s society (an effect of being also interested in WWII), bad fiction and poetry (Harry Stephen Keeler, Pegas på villövågar, etc),



HEARTBREAKING! The ladies in yellow lost by penalty shootouts to England in the Euro Championships! They had played superb, e.g. beating the Germans 4-1. But now entering 2nd half 2-0 they became too passive so England equalised. Penalties are like coin flipping! A better idea to break a tie (from ice hockey): if still a draw after 10 min extra time remove 2 players from each team and play 10 min more, still a draw remove 2 players, etc. It'll be resolved by normal play and the usual skills of players. It's more fair than tossing coppers. FIFA, listen to me! (BTW, England won the crown, benefitting from several penalty shootouts...)

linguistics, techno history (I wrote the 10-part computer history when Mikrodatorn celebrated 50 years), and more. Yeah, sf and space too. ■ *"lot of species are being lost, so eventually there will be a mass extinction."* My take is that species we care about (basically mammals and birds) the loss rate has *decreased significantly*. It's because 1) We are the in the century making the environment friendlier, bigger and better (laws and regulations, bans on questionable chemicals, etc), nature is getting more space due to urbanisation, 2) we also have a lot of programs to protect endangered species. We directly *protect* species! (Of course insects and other insignificant species aren't covered. But they matter much less. If you count bugs, eventual "mass extinction" thus matters less.) ■ *"Biologists, who actually study and count the animals"* It is extremely difficult to "count" beings that run around in the woods randomly. And "biologists" are biased and want to stand out as important as possible, so they'll cry wolf. ■ *"Many other species, like birds, depend on insects"* They are less relevant since there are so many species of insects that every echo niche is filled many times over. If one species disappear there are ten other similar species in the same niche. Birds won't starve. (There are about 50 species of mosquitoes in Sweden alone. If we had only 49 mosquito species, do you think anything would change?) ■ *"governments should subsidise tabloids to print more headlines about the baby happiness of pop stars and influencers"* Perhaps they should! ■ *"Social mobility is highest in these countries: 1) Denmark, 2) Norway, 3) Finland, 4) Sweden, 5) Iceland"* Says who? You left out the source. Which makes it impossible for me see if the source is biased. The Swedish problem is that heavy regulations and high taxes make it difficult for you to change your situation by your own work which'll lower soc mobility. ■ *"Well yes, but we've drifted off topic."* No, you tried to push us off topic. I talked about that we must have respect for the individual and out of your sleeve came...a hermit! I never advocated people to be hermits. ■ *"Tobacco and alcohol should be on top of the list of damage because so many people use them compared to other drugs."* It can't be done without without a major really heavy infringement upon citizen's rights. An its important to realise those substances usually cause damage in the very, very long term! To kill yourself with tobacco takes decades! To kill yourself with heroine takes months or single years. Concentrating on the short-term danger sounds wiser. ■ *"We will not "evolve" away from it. /ie booze/ That's just an opinion, not an argument."* I did give an argument: bheer has been with us for 10000s of years! We have evolved with it. It's in our biological, evolutionary system. This makes it unlikely we would drop it. ■ *"Many would want us to evolve away from it."* A tiny minority. And nothing stops you from abstaining from booze. But why should you have the right to use force to stop others from having their favourite drink? ■ *"And criminality is often caused by alcohol."* No, alcohol is an indicator, not the cause. The root of criminality has been discussed for 1000s of years. The only sensible conclusion is that criminality comes from a criminal personality. Some have personal properties that make them more likely to be violent and drawn into crime. They don't drink and suddenly become criminals. Alcohol may make it easier for criminal traits to surface, but it *isn't* the cause. I'm sure that any typical day, for every violent assault where the perpetrator have been drinking there are thousands of others who have also been drinking and *not* committed assaults. The one who did had the personality of being close to using fists, and that more than drinks is the main cause. ■ *"laws and regulations that prevent people from harming themselves is because it ultimately leads to society being harmed"* Laws and regulations also cause harm - even *more* harm. It causes an creeping, sneaking harm hard to notice at first but forcing everyone to hold back, to refrain from living their full lives, becoming less innovative and creative, so they don't cross the lines. We have too much regulations and bureaucracy now, so adding to it even more causes unproportionally. much damage. People do less, because taking initiatives is seen as "unfair" and gains will be taken from you. You find it difficult to develop skills, because regulations say that being better than others is bad. ■ *"harm to others as well, just take second-hand smoke"* A myth. Dangers of second hand smoke is microscopic, bordering the non-existent. A while ago when the topic was debated and sources of claims where actually given, I checked the sources. Science demands 0.95 for the so called confidence level, meaning it's 95% certain the result is correct. 0.50 in confidence rate means it's 50/50 if it's correct - ie a flip of a coin. The "scientific" claims of the dangers of second-hand smoke, when I checked the papers, had a confidence rate of...0.6! A tiny bit from it being totally random! Beside that the "science" behind it seems nonsense. Already common sense points to secondary smoke being unlikely as a hazard. You sit somewhere having scores of cubic metres or air around you. Someone near you smokes, some smoke sips into the scores or cubic metres you have - it can't be more than single percents of the original smoke, say 5%. And you aren't there 24/7. Maybe you spend 5% of your time around this smoker who gives you at most 5% of the smoke. The amount of smoke you receive is $0.05 \times 0.05 = 0.0025$ (=0.25%), a quarter of a thousand part of what the smoker gets. There's *no way* this could be significant danger! ■ *"non-smokers who have gotten lung cancer because of second-hand smoke"* Actually, 2/3rds of lung cancer cases are from non-smokers. Second-hand smoke has very little to do with it. Genetics make the majority of lung cancers are non-smoking related. ■ *"I'm not sure why eAPA has to be secret"* Maybe to make outsiders curious, to lure them into the APA just to find out what conspiracies we engage in... ■ And now *Wild Ideas #61*: I suspect that many of the ideas born with the Greek civilisation never took off because information was spread very slowly and randomly - because of the lack of printing presses. When Gutenberg invented how to cast types (that was his real invention, not the printing press which was just a converted wine press) the scientific and industrial revolution didn't take long to start. ■ As for conscious robots, which I think are possible, I see no reason why they couldn't be made to serve us. Performing services isn't being a slave. Most humans spend a lot of time performing services. It's in our DNA that this is a good thing. Helping others means we get help ourselves when we need it. ■ When we construct a robot (in the future, probably not many years from now) with a consciousness, we will probably in its programming include the will to help. I don't see the problem with this? Henry had a long, interesting historical summary of slavery (eg rehashing the American civil

war with the South having slave robots...) but misses the point: There is nothing wrong or unethical with providing services! Homo Sapiens carries this inclination within her. Robots may do that too.

Garth Spencer: "Is the Eurovision Song Contest a form of war carried out by other means?" Not far from...

Robert Jennings: Don't get me started about complaining about mosquitoes... All of Sweden has them, but they're especially annoying in the north. An very mosquito infested place is the Is the Daläven river delta where mosquitoes breed easily. The government usually sprays that area with some repellent (bio friendly they say) every year, otherwise it's be so bad people can't go outdoors. (Stockholm has very little mosquitoes, due to few ponds to breed and, I guess, car exhausts.) ■ Well, Putin may want to go to any lengths, but if everything collapses around him - he can't. ■ No, India, hasn't made "a deal to sell 2500 upgraded T-72 tanks to Putin". You got it backwards. They are upgrading their T-72 and has made a deal to buy T-72 engines from Russia to upgrade their own tanks. Also: Africa has very little military hardware to sell, and N Korean ammo has huge quality problems - its precision is piss. Russian recruitment is slowing down significantly. ■ "Russia is not going to collapse" Eh, give it a year! Russia's central bank just began printing/releasing €200B, which will raise their 25-30% inflation (say indep't sources) even further, money to back the 1/3 of their banks on the brink of bankruptcy. Economic data is now a state secret - wonder why?! Those that sound healthy? ■ The government provided resources to raise the Vasa, but I believe the museum has by now paid it back through ticket fees - with interest. ■ I believe the Wild West became iconic because the US had such an interesting and fast developing history at the time, combined with that the media to spread Wild West adventures came at this time: rotary presses and linotypes, railway for distribution, early cinema. ■ It'd take me too long, too much work to make a book out of "History Corner", and I have already done something similar with the Swefandom history the *Fandbook* (which in the future may be upgraded with stuff from *Intermission*). Everything has to be sorted in some sort of order, *rewritten*, checked, etc I don't have the time.

Jefferson P Swycaffer: Try to read while listening to music. I even watch TV while reading. Multitasking lets you use time more efficient.

George Phillies: Monitoring 80 000 on an FB page sounds like an Herculean task... Personally, I'm for banning as little as possible, preferably nothing. You meet bad scribblings with counter scribblings.

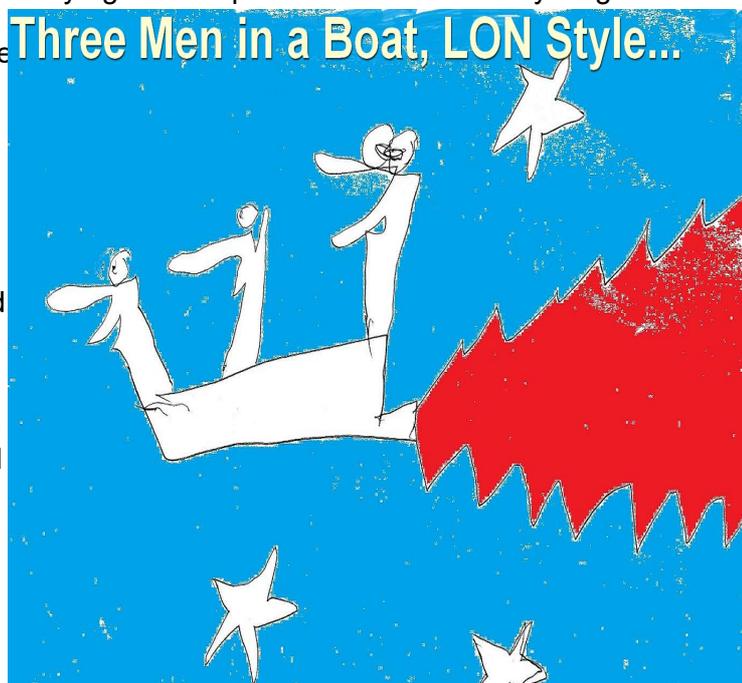
Kevin Trainor jr: "Do you seriously think that a man who has had the entire U.S. intelligence community /etc/...is a Russian agent?" I see a likelihood for that, considering multiple Putin friendly acts: refusing tariffs on Russia, surprisingly voting *with* Russia in the UN, refusing delivering weapons to defend traditional American values, the Oval Office rant against Zelensky, and much more. ChatGPT estimates its ca 1/3 risk Trump is a recruited Russian asset. (Lets see early Sep, if the he really introduces the secondary tariffs. I believe Trump will babble some excuse and won't.) ■ I admit I'm not too well read into the affair of Sad Puppies. I have too much other things to care about. Generally I get the impression it was basically a fight Woke Vs Non-Woke.

Brandy Hall: Sweden's East India Company had quite a few ships for a total of 131 trading trips over more than half a century. A copy of their ship Götheborg has been built in modern times and made a trip to Shanghai. ■ I have had maybe half a dozen short stories in English (translated by myself, in fanzines, semiprozines, small sites, small publications. Except my story "Clues" which has been in a couple of real anthologies). ■ "what does a fanzine feel like to you" I know it when I see it... ■ I think I have heard about that fanzine conference you write about. Interesting! ■ Kjell Genberg is a fast typist, and I think he saw some chances to re-sell some of the Hogan books. ■ Maybe France too had a nuclear reactor before Sweden's R1 in 1954. (Bear in mind that R1 was a small research reactor.)

Heath Row: One important property a first fandom must have is *calling yourself a fandom*. Sf fandom was first with that. ■ Following the Youtube sources I recommend, I have reasons to think they are rather trustworthy. (But if you go there or anywhere, always think and judge for yourself.)

Samuel Lubell: Oh, I didn't mean the WSFA, but the SFWA...

■ #156 was delayed for EAPA due to a typo, sorry for that! (Distributed as a postmailing later.) Time to finish!! have problems with Microsofts stupid Hotmail, comments welcome, but for the time being make a CC: of it to ahrvid@rocketship.com. Ajöss och tack för öhlen!



Слава Україні!
(Glory to Ukraine!)



R.A.I.L. #8

R.A.I.L. #8
September 2025
Adrian Kresnak

railfanzine@gmail.com

Cover: *In August, I went to the Illinois Railway Museum to ride the trains. This was my favorite.*



It's not literally how Autumn goes, but it sure feels like it!

Halloween & X-Men

I've got some things to look forward to in October. For Halloween, I'll be a werewolf! I'm unsure how many trick-or-treaters to expect this year, so I'm planning to stock up on candy... and if all the candy doesn't get passed out on Halloween, I'll definitely enjoy it in the days after!

October also begins the *Age of Revelation* event at Marvel Comics. I'm excited about where my favorite characters are going in this alternate-future story, especially the young mutants in *Unbreakable X-Men*. **Are you planning to pick up any October comics?** I'd love to talk about them!

Food Economics

This week I went to the inaugural Stuckman Lecture on food economics. The speaker was NPR Chief Economics Correspondent Scott Horsley. He started off by describing a charity bike ride that he joined, where restaurants along the way provide food to the participants. (His team's name? "No Pies Refused.")

Food and economics are both political topics, though perhaps one is more obviously so. Horsley walked us through various ways economics influences the American food supply: port infrastructure and supply chains, labor, health. You may remember I talked about egg prices in a previous RAIL. Horsley talked about eggs and chicken meat, how chickens raised for meat have lifespans of less than two months, whereas chickens raised for eggs have to live at least four

months to be viable egg producers. Other topics in the talk included bananas arriving in the US at Delaware ports and how tariffs will raise prices on coffee and other goods.

INTERMISSION #158

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com (alternate mail last!), a FPV drone for EAPA, N'APA and other flying robots. Mail-problem and other work give @SFJournalen's newstweets pause, but I'll be back! We'll fight on the impeaches, we'll fight in the drills, we'll fight in the fields and cleats - we will never sue vendor! (What, did that have types No way!) Early Sep 2025.

Editorially: Microsoft Stinks! Trump stinks!

This summer I've had huge problems with Hotmail, owned by Microsoft since 1997 (though I opened my account ahrvid@hotmail.com well before that). Suddenly those bastards freeze my account, to wait for user "verification" - a system that *doesn't work!* I've gone through proving I am I endless times, answering every question, always being told the info is insufficient. The system is run by robots (algorithms) and I've tried all possible ways to get some useful help with it - in vain. Below something I've sent to those fuggheads of Microsoft, just one complaint out of many:

There's a Special Place in Hell for Microsoft!

"We have detected unusual activity on your Microsoft account ahrvid@hotmail.com, or suspect that your credentials have been compromised. For your security and to ensure that only you have access to your account, we will ask you to verify your identity and change your password" was the message I got in late June as I tried to log in to my Hotmail account, which I have since the mid-1990s (through four decades!).

I tried Microsoft's - owner of Hotmail - "verification" system. It didn't work, despite I filling in every question per instruction, including my granddad's job (he was a policeman).

Big Evil Microsoft has a "support" system that mocks that word. I've been trying their "verification" over and over again in various ways, but it refuses to "verify" that I actually am I. I have learnt that this parody of "support", a hierarchial set of menus and forms, is entirely run by robots (algorithms) and apparently programmed to make "verification" as difficult as possible. It's according to their own silly words to "take user security seriously"...

To take function seriously, that things work, isn't on the table!

I've now been blocked from my regular E-mail for most of the summer. I've tried everything I can think of to get help, preferably by someone with a body temperature of 37 degrees Celsius. No luck so far.

I've faxed (from fax sites) Microsoft's HQ in the US. I've contacted many Microsoft associated E-addresses I googled with pleas for help. I've tried to contact neighbouring Microsoft offices in Europe. Not one single live reply, but sometimes someone must have forward my pleas to some sort of system starting a "support request Number 123456789", which just once more opens this pointless, dysfunctional "verification" system.

Microsoft's behaviour causes huge damagess. I'm sure it violates consumer laws, maybe even criminal code (wilful disregard?). I need my account e g to promote and administrate this summer's edition of the short story competition I have run for 25+ years. The 2025 Fantastic Short Story Contest is now practically ruined, contributions will be minimal and I don't know what to do. Beside torpedoing a quarter of a century writing project, there are other serious harms caused by Microsoft. The SFJ skiffy news are down, which I've run for only 47 years in various forms. I lost contact with the Short Story Masters group and I daren't think of everything else I miss as no one can reach me.

If someone from Microsoft reads this, contact me! If anyone else has ideas of how to fix this incredibly stupid fix, shoot!

Remember: There's A Special Place in Hell for Microsoft.

How can one of the biggest computer companies be so evil and reckless that they block your main communication channel, and then do nothing to remedy it? They leave all to dumb robots. I'm yet not even sure I've managed to get in touch with any human being at Microsoft (are there any humans at Microsoft?) but I sometimes get mail about "opening support requests", all leading to nothing. Microsoft is all robots I suspect, Artificial Unintelligence... If any of my readers have ideas, contacts with or strings to pull at Mordor...eh, Microsoft, contact me.

About evil empires. I knew agent Krasnov, aka Donny Trump, would chicken out. Putin rejects negotiations and stands by his ridiculous demands. No sanctions against Russia, instead the dictator got a grand invitation to the 49th US state (which he believes should belong to Russia!). Trump does everything to disrupt international order - e g with insane "tariff" policies! - and bows to Putin. It's tragic! Congress has the power to act, so put pressure on your local congressmen. The Oval Office houses a freakin' Russian agent! History won't forgive anyone who looked the other way.

Fortunately, we Europeans reject these stupidities. We stand with Ukraine. We have tens of times the Russian (now in deep crisis) economy. Ukraine has developed new long-range missiles and strikes Russian oil and gas. Russia's refineries are 20+% destroyed giving, mile-long lines outside empty petrol stations. Russia is a gas station with a flag - and no petrol. And while European military lags behinds, up-beefing is already decided. Our military is well-trained and has superior equipment compared to rusting Russian junk. We have no reason fear provoking Putin with more sanctions.

1) Meanwhile, Ukraine has begun producing their Flamingo missile. Reaching 3000 km it means more Russian oil resources will go ka-boom! Military stockpiles, factories, airfields will get their share of pink ornithology. Russia goes broke but tries to hide spiralling inflation and many banks and businesses being on the brink of bankruptcy.

2) Ukraine's cyber warriors recently destroyed Aeroflot's entire IT system incl 80 000 terminals. Russia's national airline reversed to paper and pen! Drone activity closes Russia's biggest airports. Planes serving them are shrinking in lack of spare parts. Ukraine has also taken out ATM systems and shopping malls, and found the complete documentation and drawings of Russia's brand new nuclear submarine: <https://www.kyivpost.com/post/57506> Ukraine hacks Russian TV to let viewers see the war's reality, while Putin shuts down the net wherever an oil depot burns, bans popular apps to replace it with "Max", straight from FSB who now knows what every brainwashed Russian thinks...

Russia is fatally wounded and Putin is losing fast. Try telling Trump that...

History Corner: Atomic Fandom

History Corner has been into the A-bomb before. But there's always more to be found about this fascinating subject. I've mentioned *Atomicon*, organised by LASFS January 10, 1946, where eg GoH AE Van Vogt held a speech about the future of atomic energy. What I didn't know is that sf fandom's *Atomicon* was the world's perhaps *first atomic conference not aimed at scientists, politicians and atomic professionals!* Researching the subject I find 4-5 earlier conferences organised by science or policy organisations, but those early ones were by invitation, aimed at their own members and other in the atomic field (and some things covered were possibly classified).^{*} But anyone could register for *Atomicon* (finally about 35 attended). Invites was distributed in LASFS, but I'm sure anyone interested could turn up.

Fandom taking this early lead shouldn't be unexpected, considering that we were the only ones outside the laboratories seriously considering atomic energy. We saw that in e g John W Campbell's *Astounding SF*. And *Astounding* was read in Los Alamos, and here some notes on that:

Freeman Dyson, in his memoir *Disturbing the Universe*, recalled how physicists were avid readers of science fiction, particularly *Astounding*. Edward Teller and others mentioned that science fiction helped them think creatively about physical possibilities, though Teller was more interested in broader implications than fiction itself he also noted: "Cleve Cartmill's 'Deadline' provoked astonishment in the

^{*}Other early Atomic conferences, but closed for outsiders and the public::

- University of Chicago "Metallurgical Laboratory" lectures, Sep-Oct 1945

- The National Academy of Sciences – National Research Council meetings, Oct-Nov 1945

- The May-Johnson Bill hearings, late 1945

- The American Physical Society special sessions, Jan 1945

lunch table discussions at Los Alamos. It really did describe isotope separation and the bomb itself in detail..." Robert Serber, one of Oppenheimer's close associates, mentioned that many scientists at Los Alamos were fans of science fiction.

In an interview in *The New Yorker*, August 1945, Campbell said *Astounding* had been predicting atomic bombs for a decade, and that censorship would only lend excessive suspicion to their efforts. This was followed by an *Astounding* editorial in Nov 1945, titled "The Atomic Age".

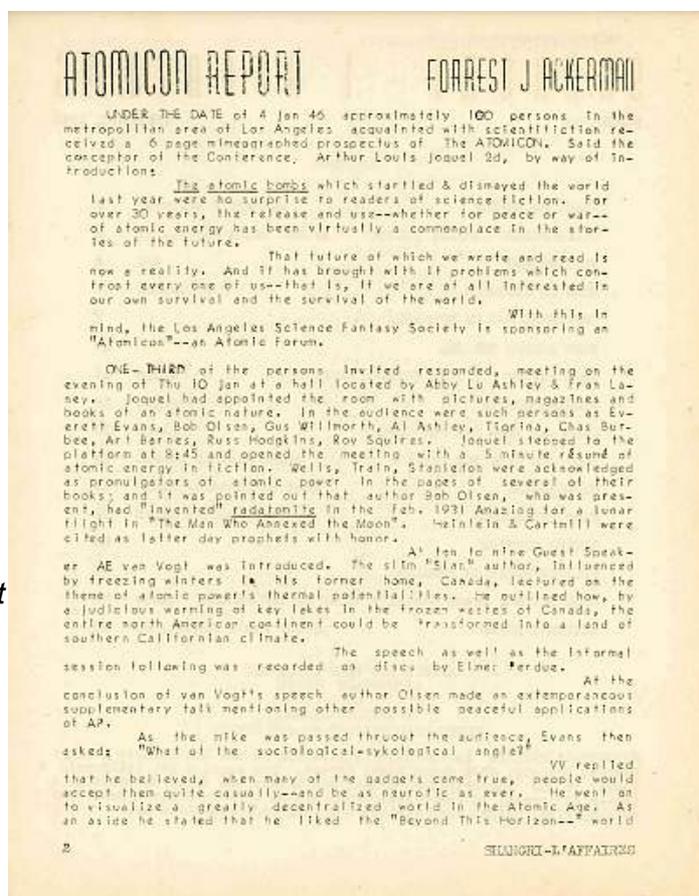
Our internal press, the fanzines, covered Atomicon (/mundane press missed it). The proposal for arranging Atomicon arose on a LASFS meeting Nov 29, 1945. Joe Kennedy's *Fantasy Review* wrote about it:

Art Joquel proposed an Atomicon, a non-technical conference on the subject of the Atomic Bomb and the sociological implications of the Atomic Age. The idea met with general approval, and it was decided that such a project would afford good publicity if interesting speakers could be obtained and the meeting be opened to all who might be interested...It was suggested that Mr Van Vogt, or some other science fiction author, or perhaps someone from one of the universities, well acquainted with the subject of the coming Atomic Age, be prevailed upon to give a lecture, preferably non-technical, with emphasis on the sociological aspects of the Atom Bomb menace. It was further suggested that perhaps notes could be taken and printed in Shangri-L'Affaires. Various times and locations were discussed for the Atomiconvention, but nothing was decided upon definitely, since the date of the conference would largely depend upon the speakers. Director Laney delegated to Art Joquel the responsibility of the project, Fran himself to contact Mr Van Vogt concerning his speaking at the conference.

Forrest J Ackerman then reported from Atomicon in *Shangri L'Affaires* #28, February 1946, <https://fanac.org/fanzines/Shangri-laffaires/Shangri-laffaires-laffaires-seriesb-28-joquel-1943-02.pdf>

"Under the date of 4 Jan 46 approximately 100 persons in the metropolitan area of Los Angeles acquainted with scientifiiction received a 6-page mimeographed prospectus of The ATOMICON. Said the conceptor of the Conference, Arthur Louis Joquel 2d, by way of introduction: The atomic bombs which startled & dismayed the world last year were no surprise to readers of science fiction. For over 30 years, the release and use - whether for peace or war - of atomic energy has been virtually a commonplace in the stories of the future. That future of which we wrote and read is now a reality. And it has brought with it problems which confront every one of us - that is, if we are at all interested in our own survival and the survival of the world. With this in mind, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society is sponsoring an "Atomicon" - an Atomic Forum.

ONE-THIRD of the persons invited responded, meeting on the evening of Thu 10 Jan at a hall located by Abby Lu Ashley & Fran Laney. Joquel had appointed the room with pictures, magazines and books of an atomic nature. In the audience were such persons as Everett Evans, Bob Olsen, Gus Willmorth, Al Ashley, Tigrina, Chas Burbee, Art Barnes, Russ Hodgkins, Roy Squires. Joquel stepped to the platform at 8:45 and opened the meeting with a 5-minute resume of atomic energy in fiction. Wells, Train, Stapledon were acknowledged as promulgators of atomic power in the pages of several of their books; and it was pointed out that author Bob Olsen, who was present, had "invented" radiatomite in the Feb. 1931 Amazing for a lunar flight in "The Man Who Annexed the Moon." Heinlein & Cartmill were cited as latter-day prophets with honor. Attention, the Guest Speaker A. E. van Vogt was introduced. The slim Slan author...lectured on the theme of atomic power's thermal potentialities. He outlined how, by a judicious warming of key lakes in the frozen wastes of Canada, the entire North American continent could be transformed into a land of Southern Californian climate. The speech as well as the informal session following was recorded on discs by Elmer Perdue. At the conclusion of Van Vogt's speech author Olsen made an extemporaneous supplementary talk mentioning other possible peaceful applications of AP. As the mike was passed throughout the audience, Evans then asked: "What of the sociological-psychological angle?" VV replied that he believed, when many of the gadgets came true, people would accept them quite casually - "and be as neurotic as ever." He went on to visualize a greatly decentralized world in the Atomic Age. As an aside he stated that he liked the "Beyond This Horizon" world...minus the guns that fire at the slightest insult. Anderson to Olsen; "Do you think it was good that the



First page of Forry's Atomicon report.

Anderson to Olsen; "Do you think it was good that the

Bomb was developed during war, because it made people aware of the danger of atomic power?" Olsen... "To ensure peace we must have a United States of the World..." Willmorth attempted to clarify the concepts of Van Vogt & Olsen. Nelson Himmel: "I would like to put in a word of respect and admiration for our scientists who developed the atomic bomb." Bob Cohen: "With selfishness removed it could be truly referred to as the Atomic Age - rather than the Atomic Bomb Age." ... Sam Russell...criticized the callousness with which America has accepted the destruction of Hiroshima & Nagasaki...He questioned if future historians would not to judge the US guilty of a crime against humanity for its employment of the A-bomb... "What good a jukebox utopia founded on moral atrocity?" As he left, "Would Russia's possession of the secret mean trouble or mutual respect?" Van Vogt: "The atomic bomb will weld the United Nations together." Visitor: "We must outlaw war - not its weapons." Evans: "Taking the Long View, I remain an incurable optimist." Joquel, concluding: "Let us keep our heads and keep sane - keep our semantic balance - and we may all meet here again in this hall 50 years hence."

Elmer Perdue's recordings would be nice to have, but they are most likely lost. Atomicon should perhaps have invited Robert Heinlein? We read in *Fanews* Oct 28, 1945 (and many of these old fanzines can be found on-line in the Dusty Hevelin collection held by the University of Iowa, <http://diyhistory.lib.uiowa.edu/hevelin>) that the Heinleins were back in California after war work at a Navy "experimental station" in Philly, joining Asimov and de Camp.

Bob /had/ since the Victory has been extremely busy on the politics of "The Atomic Bomb". He is connected with several authorities on the subject and on his trip out here from the Est he stopped off in New Mexico where he had a conference with some of the scientists connected with the Atomic Bomb test they had there.

Heinlein interested in the A-bomb? Does the Pope shit in the woods! But it isn't known, AFAIK, that Heinlein had contacts with the Bomb guys right afterwards. What was his take on this? Has he mentioned it anywhere? Does anyone know?

E Everett Evans also reports from Atomicon in his publication *A Tale of the Evans*, January 1946, <https://diyhistory.lib.uiowa.edu/transcribe/4892/15646>:

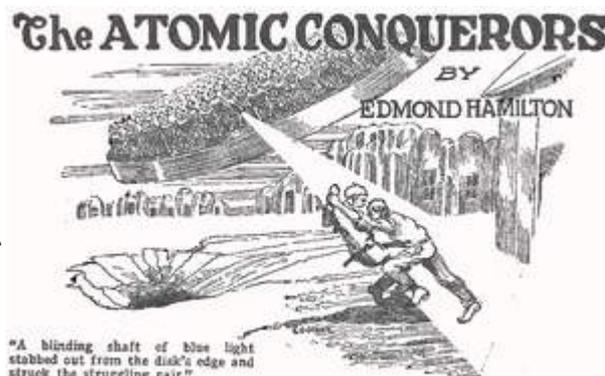
Last night I attended the Los Angeles ATOMICON, where Van Vogt gave us a splendid talk, after which various attendees gave some of their ideas of the new Atomic discoveries, and what will follow these discoveries. And I was amazed! Here we fans have been reading, writing, talking and thinking about such a thing, for the past twenty-odd years. We have investigated, through the efforts of our various authors, the positive effect of such inventions and discoveries, including our own present type. It has been our hope, our dream, that it would arrive in our time. Ad now it is here -

a fact. AND FANDOM DOESN'T BELIEVE IT! It was so plain to see from the things that were said, and not said, last night, that the fans actually CANNOT CONCEIVE THAT THIS NEW AGE IS UPON US! Atomicon speech could have looked similar.) Vainly I tried to steer the talk into serious discussions of the sociological and psychological changes that MUST come to us, because we have reached the end of one era and the beginning of a new and totally different one. And I was stunned to find that Fandom - which I had always thought was so forward-looking; so keenly alive to changes; who would be the first to recognize and welcome the actuality of the new worlds that we have been studying and talking about for the past two decades- our Fandom just can't make themselves FEEL that it is now true. , yes, Van Vogt told us very interestingly, of how we could use the by-products of atomic conversion to change the climate of various parts of the world - and it was a splendid address. But it didn't go nearly far enough - it stopped so far short of the REAL and vital problems that confront us. In reply to a question of mine, asking him about the possible sociological changes, he gave a straight-forward answer - AS FAR AS IT WENT - but didn't seem to see anything more important on the horizon than that the people who lived nearest such possible projects would want the government to bear the expense. The talk quickly degenerated into a discussion of the Atomic BOMB and that probable crisis between US and Russia. Later, I tried in my poor way to bring the discussion back to the important sociological questions - which was what I understood was to be the real basis of the meeting . And got exactly nowhere. On three day the first Atomic bomb was dropped I was proud of Fandom , and proud that I was a fan. For a while the general mass of people were saying "Now we can kill all thee yellow b-----s; now we can blow their damned island off the

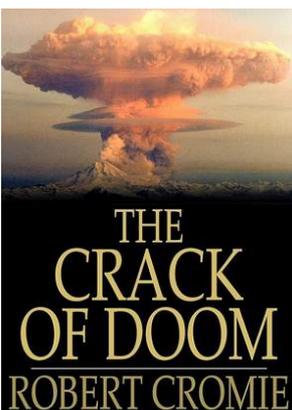


After Atomicon Van Vogt (and wife/writer E Mayne Hull) were GoHs at the Pacificon Worldcon - here he's speaking there. (His Atomicon speech could have looked similar.)

map”, Fans were saying “Now science fiction has come of age; now we have the power to reach the stars. Yes I was proud of Fandom that day. Now, I dunno! It was so terribly apparent last night that Fandom is in a blue funk! They are actually AFRAID to let themselves think seriously and deeply about the very thing of which they have been reading and talking for twenty years. Wise-cracks tke the place of serious consideration of the underlying problems. I have heard that one of our finest authors, who has been well known for his predictions that fans would best survive any coming change, because they had thus been reading and studying about such changes, has now become almost neurotic with fear; and feels that mankind cannot survive another 5 or 10 years. I have talked with those who have been fans from the very beginning of Fandom, and they are afraid to plan ahead for the next few years, because they cannot make themselves believe that man is able to solve the problems that now confront him. One of them is seriously considering if it is worth while for him to continue his habit of saving and trying to make provisions for the future. All this astounds me with the vast underlying implications, that are apparent in the talk one now hears from our supposedly far-seeing, far-thinking Fandom. I have been accused of being an incurable optimist; a Pollyanna. I gladly, proudly, plead guilty to the accusation. I AM AN OPTIMIST ABOUT MANKIND: I feel positive, as sure as I ever have been of anything in my life, that man will solve these tremendous problems he now faces. Not correctly in every single details right away, no! There will be costly mistakes; there will be set-backs; there will be those whose over-weening selfishness will cause them to work for their own glory (?!), rather than for the good of all mankind. But there is a greater majority of clear-thinking and well-wishing man and women who will continue to work for the greater good, and THEY WILL PREVAIL! It is so apparent even today, ,if we will examine more than causally the news of the day, and not just take the croakings of some columnists, who must view-with-alarm each day in order to keep people reading their columns. Fine, great man from every country are meeting constantly to iron out eh the problems that face the entire world. Of course they have different ideas from each other at first, and these are given lots of space and headlines in the papers. A few days later when they reach an accord that is for the greater good, the news is usually relegated to a few lines in the inside pages. But the good work DOES go on man IS achieving peace; man WILL grow. And the Atomic Tomorrow will be a certain thing; and it will be a GOOD tomorrow, albeit most certainly entirely different from the world that we have known heretofore.



Yeah, Evans was a bit optimistic. Atoms weren't the “power to reach the stars”. Reactors are too heavy as propulsion systems to even reach orbit. Van Vogt's warming of Canada's tundra is hugely overstretching atomic power. And soon Stalin's spies would give Stalin the Bomb. (That it was necessary to create “balance” was naive considering the evil of communism.)



AI is a good research tool. It's easy to let an AI-robot find info for you. So I asked it to find me atomic related stories from *before* 1945. Here are some suggestions (Cartmill, Del Rey, Heinlein of *Astounding* are already known and excluded), with comments (and links to the work, since they are so early (c) has often lapsed):

- *The Crack of Doom* by Robert Cromie (1895). A secret society plans to unlock the energy in matter and potentially destroy the world; one of the very first explicit nuclear-energy/weapon plots. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/26563>

- *Krakatit* by Karel Capek (1924). A hyper-explosive whose few ounces can level cities, Widely taken as a prophetic "atomic bomb" parable.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Krakatit_\(1925\).pdf](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Krakatit_(1925).pdf)

- *"The Disintegration "* by Arthur Conan Doyle (1927). A Professor Challenger gadget that reduces matter to its atoms, a popular "disintegrator" motif edging into atomic speculation.



The Skylark of Space



<https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0601391h.html>

■ *The Skylark of Space* by EE Doc Smith & Lee Hawkins Garby (1928). Space opera built on liberating "intra-atomic energy" to power starflight - a cornerstone pulp treatment of atomic power as motive force.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/20869>

■ *Last and First Men* by Olaf Stapledon (1930). Sweeping future history that includes advanced "atomic" energies and planet-scale war tech.

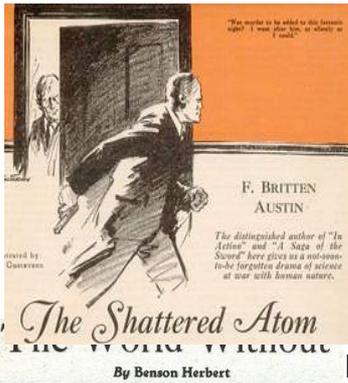
<https://freebookpdf.download/library/Last%20And%20First%20Men%20Book-4896535>

■ *The Atomic Conquerors* by Edmond Hamilton (1931). An early "cosmic catastrophe" novella where atomic power fuels not just weapons but planetary-scale engineering. Starts like pulp adventure, veers into cosmic horror. <http://famous-and-forgotten-fiction.com/writings/hamilton-stories/hamilton-the-atomic-conquerors.html>

■ *Atomic Fire* by Raymond Z. Gallun (1932, Wonder Stories) Short novel involving accidental atomic detonation during experimentation - prescient in its handling of chain reactions and fallout. Gallun wrote it before fission was publicly known.

<https://archive.org/details/AmazingStoriesVolume06Number01/page/n5/mode/2up>

■ "The Shattered Atom" by F Britten Austin. Thriller built around atomic disintegration. https://s3.us-west-1.wasabisys.com/luminist/PU/BB_1932_02.pdf



■ *Public Faces* by Harold Nicolson (1932). British political satire that features an atomic bomb as a factor in international maneuvering - one of the decade's straighter atomic-weapon references. <https://annas-archive.org/md5/57e6316fcd381fadaf116a39bd06df97>

■ *The Man Who Rocked the Earth* by Arthur Train & Robert W. Wood (1915) An atomic death-ray scientist threatens to destroy the world unless nations disarm. More political thriller than pulp - surprisingly modern in disarmament themes.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/19174>

■ "The World Without" by Benson Herbert (1931, UK) A radioactive disaster leaves only one man alive. Has strange, surreal dream sequences and a mystical ending.

<https://pulpmags.org/collections/pdf/won19310200.pdf>

■ "The Death-Cloud" by Nat Schachner & Arthur Leo Zagat (1931, Astounding) Atomic-powered

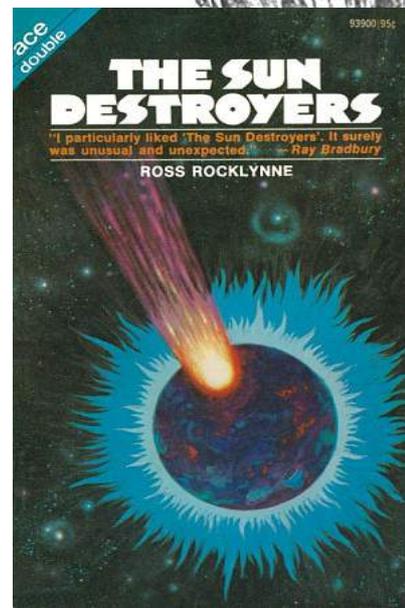
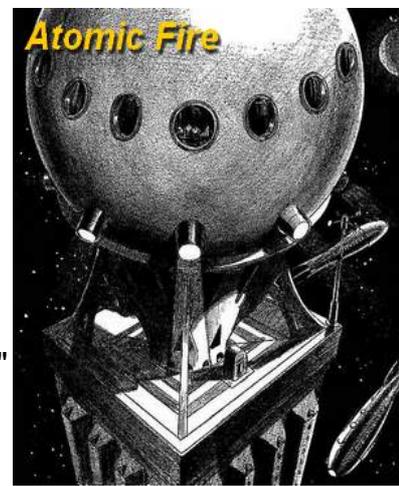
superweapon produces a creeping, inescapable vapor cloud. Mixes weird-menace pulp tropes with proto-Cold War paranoia.

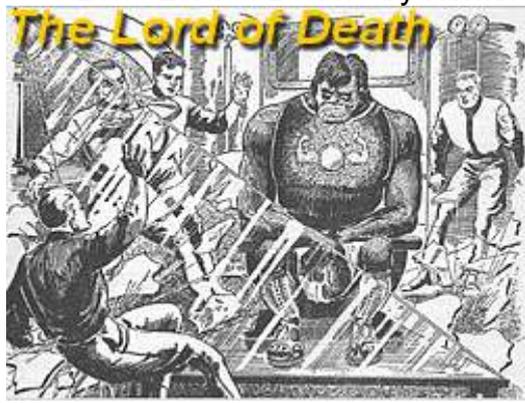
<https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks13/1301601h.html>

■ "The Doom from Planet 4" by Jack Williamson (1931) Alien invasion powered by atomic energy weapons. Mostly space opera, but Williamson treats atomic energy as both magical and frighteningly unstable.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/31168>

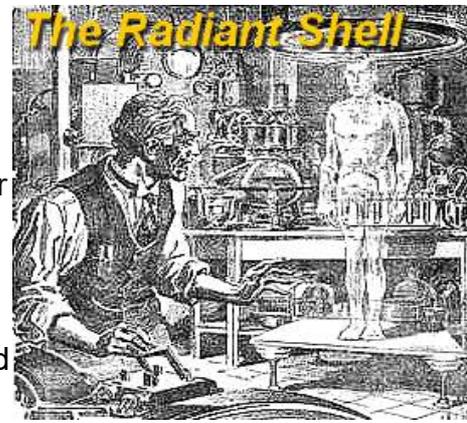
Atomic Fire





■ *The Lord of Death* by Homer Eon Flint (1919; reprinted 1933) Four scientists, aided by reverse-magnetism, travel to a dead planet where they discover that one human's lust for power destroyed all life there except for him. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5703>

■ *The Sun Destroyers* by Ross Rocklynne (1934) - Atomic bombs used to destabilize a star in interstellar war. <https://annas-archive.org/md5/0d2b0c5d89b9b4fa7558c31ca32e76d2>



■ *"The Radiant Shell"* by Paul Ernst (1928) Atomic-powered armor shell used for battle. Ends with a cautionary twist - rare for a Weird Tales style tale to have a moral about restraint. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2217>

■ *"N Day"* by Philip Latham (Robert S. Richardson, 1940) Astronomer protagonist deals with a nuclear chain reaction in the Sun threatening Earth - atomic energy as cosmic-scale hazard. https://s3.us-west-1.wasabisys.com/luminist/SF/AST/AST_1940_01.pdf

■ *Reply Paid*, by Gerald Heard (1942) — short story speculating that a similar atomic mishap destroyed a former planet — part of the alien/pre-human atomic disaster trope.

■ *Gather, Darkness!* by Fritz Leiber (serialized 1943) Atomic bombs are disguised as "miracles" by a theocratic future state. The science is fuzzy, but the political cynicism is razor-sharp. <https://epdf.pub/gather-darkness.html>

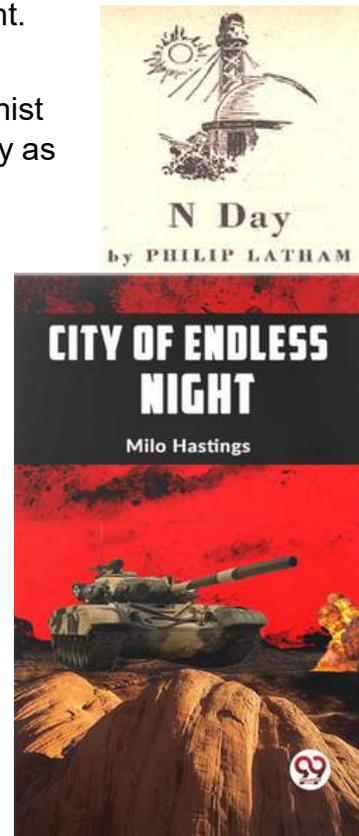
■ *City of Endless Night* by Milo Hastings (1920) German technocratic dictatorship armed with atomic power rules an underground supercity. Half dystopia, half war satire. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/9862>

(BTW, some titles above have quotation marks, some don't. I try to follow the rule that short stories are within quotes, novels aren't. Titles being *a part of something else* (a magazine, an anthology, etc) get quotation marks. I also tend to surround film titles with quotation marks. A movie is usually a part of whole program consisting of commercials, trailers for other films, up to the 1960s a newsreel, perhaps a cartoon - and *then* the main movie.)

But we can tread upon the atomic subject without mentioning Janne Wallenius, Fandom's Dr Strangelove as I jokingly call him. No, he isn't into A-bombs or world annihilation, quite the contrary: he want to supply us with energy building Small Modular Reactors (SMR) that are more flexible and can't have a core meltdown. The cooling agent flows by its self through the laws of physics, in case of trouble the SMR shuts down by itself, and as a bonus it can recycle nuclear waste as fuel. But Janne has a propeller beanie hidden in the closet, as we learn from this radio interview:

<https://www.sverigesradio.se/avsnitt/1714108> It's in Swedish but the partial summary on the page says:

Today there's no recycling of used nuclear fuel. There is experimental recycling, but commercial expansion of it would today become too expensive, Janne Wallenius says. But if it could be done in a safe way the payback would be huge. Since there's a lot of energy left in the waste it could supply Sweden with electricity for hundreds of years, and the waste from it would be short-lived compared to today's waste. While in high school in Trollhättan Janne Wallenius and his friends made a science fiction fanzine that they posted to subscribers. When he later studied in Esronia he ran a little publishing house issuing sf literature in Estonian. The sf-interest and nuclear research have bonded through Janne Wallenius research life.



(*Intermission* has earlier mentioned how the Russian Maffia tried to squeeze Janne's publishing house.) The latest from our professor is that he hopes to build his SMR near the town of Gävle (ca 200 km north of Stockholm) according to an interview in *Gefle Dagblad*. It's behind a paywall, so we won't go into the text. But here's a picture of Janne and by his feet a model of his SRM.

The SMR will be 5x5 metres and be buried 15 metres below the surface, but Putin's damned war has delayed things. Janne need a special steel for the SMR, and it was sent to Russia for important tests, just before Feb 24 2022...

And no results have come from the test since. We read this in Gävle's other newspaper, *Arbetarbladet*, headline "When Nuclear Power Jesus Came to Town". Link to the article's English translation:

https://www-arbetarbladet-se.translate.goog/2025-03-11/nar-karnkrafts-jesus-kom-till-byn/?_x_tr_sl=sv&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=wapp

But only check it out if you can stand a bashing by an anti-nuclear activist. I'm not surprised media newspapers employ such. More than 2/3rds of Swedish media support the red-green inquiries say. Janne is "preaching" nuclear power, the article says, and wants to put "technology from Russian submarines" in the countryside, where unemployment is high and the rednecks are too dumb to protest... *Sigh!*

Swedish Policy Makers Distort UN Declaration

Swedish schools say "all humans have equal value". Swedish politicians say so too. Why? Because UN's Declaration of Human Rights says so.

Except it doesn't.

Eh...except the *Swedish translation* of it says so, but that's a distortion.

When among the many university courses crossing my way, I went into philosophy, I began to see something fishy in the claim that "every man has equal value", because analysing it linguistically, ethically, practically, from any perspective *it's impossible!* A human is a being with "values" in many different fields, the "human value" is multidimensional. I certainly don't have the same economic value as Bill Gates (that's one dimension). Billy G probably doesn't have my skills in digging up historical curiosities and write about them (another dimension). Mondo Duplantis is far superior to me in sports (a third dimension). But Mondo is a terrible writer compared to Bob Shaw (a fourth dimension). And so on.

It's a wicked deception to try to trick people into believing that our differences can be boiled down to that they don't matter. Here's what the UN says, <https://www.humanrights.com/what-are-human-rights/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/articles-01-10.html> - first sentence:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Here's the Swedish deception <https://fn.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Allmanforklaringomdemanskligarattigheterna.pdf> - the first sentence:

Alla människor är födda fria och lika i värde och rättigheter.

Word for word it says "*All human beings are born free and equal in value and rights*".

Since when is the word "dignity" a synonym for "value"?

Well, in Sweden since 1948 when the General Assembly issued the declaration... Who was the head translator in our Foreign Office in 1948? That idiot should be fired...retroactively!

We shouldn't have any problems with aiming for that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity or that equal rights is a good ground. We're all equal before the law (except in Russia). You have the right to vote - one vote each. You have the right to own things or to do anything, as long as it isn't banned. Over here, at least, if you're in hospital it will treat a low-paid cleaning lady with the same care as a multi-millionaire and CEO of Gosh Wow Games (I'm not sure if this is true in the US).

Some political ideologies have a terrible problem with what we may call *differentiaphobia*, Latin for fearing differences. But differences are a strength! Consider:

■ If a group is shipwrecked on a distant island, the more similar people are the less chance they'll

survive. It's useless to have ten hunters. You'll need someone good at fishing, one who knows how to build shelters, another one who can identify poisonous plants, someone who can make tools, *different* skills is what you need.

■ In genetics, it is well known that the smaller genetical *differences* are, the higher risks of genetic diseases, malformations and other bad properties. (A reason why "racial purity" is a stupid idea.)

■ When a dangerous epidemic comes, *differences* mean that some will be immune or be just slightly ill. If you have a very similar population, everyone may die off from a single virus. This may have played an unfortunate role in encounters between Europeans and small groups of indigenous people. A smaller group has higher risk of everyone being susceptible to the same disease. (Europeans have had multiple waves of everything from the Black Death to Smallpox killing off a third of all, which probably meant Europeans had a high level of disease resistance, but could still carry bugs.)

■ If you get 10 million euros, will you put everything in Volvo shares? Of course not. Just some, and then some in HM shares, some in eurobonds, you buy a chunk of gold and finally a house on an address having a rising price trend. You *differentiate*. If one investment goes awry, you don't lose it all. To spread out to *different* solutions means lowering the risks.

We have seen a tendency that what we call the Left have especially big problems with accepting the advantages of differences. They want to flatten out all differences of any kind. No one should be able to earn more or less than others. Housing must be standardised. They don't even accept that genders are different and have different properties. "Quotas" must be used everywhere so that there is no difference in how any group is represented. Having special talents and being better than others is a sin. That differences must be flattened out is because it makes it easier for central planning and to get people to march together with a collective. They hate people rushing off by themselves, taking initiatives and being rewarded for assuming risk (but punished if things go wrong) so the created surplus is minimal. The society of extreme equality is a society of low productivity.

But differences spreads risks, open horizons, creates alternatives and scouts the way forward..

Vive les différences!

Will We Starve When WWII Comes?

I read that Sweden's "self-sufficiency" level in food production was only 50%. So what if WWII came, for some reason A-bombs would miss us - but borders would close - would we starve?

I decided to check. I googled around and landed on the domestic production/harvest figures below for different foodstuff (and ChatGPT said my numbers are in the ballpark):

Grain 5.5 million tons/year (but it's roughly only 1/10th of Ukraine's harvest in wartime)

Milk 2.80

Potatoes 0.98 (incl home-grown)

Meat 0.60 (of all types incl poultry, moose and reindeer)

Fruit, berries 0.69 (incl home-grown)

Vegetables 0.69 (incl home-grown)

Sugar 0.33 (honey included)

Fish 0.19 (we love fish, pickled etc, but land surprisingly little of it)

Eggs 0.15



Cloudberry ("hjortron" in Swedish). Very common in the north. Quite yummy!

I then asked ChatGPT to estimate how much that was in calories and if it would be enough for the population. The answer was just over 25 trillion calories but the population (ca 10.6 million) would only need ca 8.5 trillion calories.

"Even after losses (processing, seed & feed reserves, livestock fodder), Sweden's theoretical calorie output is three times what's needed for the population", ChatGPT concluded. Compare it to WWII when we sometimes would struggle with food supplies, despite then having vastly more farms. Farming 2025 is simply far superior in efficiency and yield.

More than enough food sounded ensuring! But I wonder *why* self-sufficiency figure is claimed to be only 50%? Is it from some who want to lobby for farmers to get more subsidies? It's often a good idea to check statistics put forth, especially if it may be tied to an agenda. (In #134 we showed that Sweden's corona epidemic fatalities, from official excess deaths figures, were only *one sixth* of

official figures! Politicians defending rash panic measures, absurdly inapt statistical models, hospitals boosting their importance, opened for super-wide definitions of “virus deaths”...)

But in case of stopped imports, we could probably even export food! ChatGPT suggested that e.g forest berry picking, fruit and potato from home gardens and fishing could easily be ramped up substantially. There are also many fields that lie fallow, but getting them productive again takes more time. Its estimated that only 2% of the forest berries are picked, despite that we import seasonal workers as pickers - many as far away as from Thailand. Main berries are blueberries, cowberries (a.k.a lingon) and cloudberry. My mother and aunts were enthusiastic for picking cloudberry when I was young and we vacationed up north.

Sweden isn't big in agriculture, but efficient. Only 1.8% of the population work in the agricultural sector (compared to 35% in WWII!), using the latest machines, crops and fertilisers. Small farms are replaced by bigger, more efficient ones (owners of small farms grow old and quit). Yield per hectare is high despite November to March being too cold and dark limiting the growing season (but winter wheat may be sown to be harvested next year). Most crops is grown in the south.

The north is for milk farmers (they are much fewer now), growing hay so their cows have something to chew on. When I was a kid there were perhaps 4-5 milk farmers in my mother's village, every day putting their milk flasks by the roadside to be picked up by the milk lorry. After a few years all that disappeared. Some kept a couple of cows for their own household use for a while. Some grew barley - one of few crops suitable up north - on smaller fields for their horses.

As a kid I experienced a some of the shift from the old days in farming. In the 1960s I saw my granduncle Erhard using a horse-drawn (!) mower on his small barley field. But they grew mostly hay and we kids had lots of fun playing in it!

I still remember the strange smell of hay.

Interesting AI Experiment

The tabloid *Aftonbladet* (one of our oldest newspapers, founded in 1831) has opened a digital archive - but only if you pay. I won't pay for online electrons, so I usually find an alternative or some other solution. Without paying you'll see whole pages in small format on the *Aftonbladet* archive search page, blurry versions of the pages with the search word. Headlines are readable, though, because they are bigger.

There was an article by our local Grand Old Skiffy Man Sam J Lundwall, “The SF Expert Himself Writes” (Oct 16, 1974)! It looked interesting, so I decided to try a trick to read it without paying.

There was another article about the physicist Lise Meitner, a jewess fleeing Hitler to Sweden and involved in splitting the atom.

This article was available both as a blurry full page, but a part of it also as a higher resolution readable text. I gave the blurry page and the readable part to an AI and said: *Try to read the article on the full page, you have a part of it readable, use all words you can*

From original low-res full page. interpret to make good guesses of parts you find harder to read. (I had to try several AIs for best result, I don't remember which did best.)

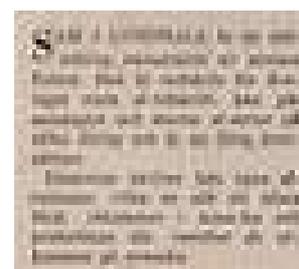
I then gave the AI the blurry Sam J article and let it use what it had learned on reading blurry text. It's worth noting that all the articles were in the same typeface.

The Linotypes could change types, but it was awkward so for ordinary text the typeface usually stayed the same.

Below what Sam J/AI had to say about sf in Sweden 50 years ago. It looks reasonable, but at some spots the AI has guessed a bit wild (I'll comment that in bold)

so while most look acceptable I'm not sure how much is Sam J and how much is from our Electronic Masters of Tomorrow:

The sf wave swept through the Nordic nations in the 1950s. You may believe that sf is only about spaceships and little green men. But Swedish sf has for a long time been rather more subtle - sometimes almost invisible. Sometimes you meet it in books, sometimes on TV or film, but almost always with a certain Swedish air of



Blow-up of unreadable text from above.

melancholy and afterthought. But what is Swedish sf? Perhaps it's melancholy the gloom, the vision that adds to the stories. Around ten Swedish SF novels have come the last few years, most from small publishers with themes feeling both strange and markedly familiar. Many new voices have been noticeable. Among them Lars G Lindblad whose novel Frost moves between fictitious future and beside what's been lost. Anna R Jansson had investigated how humanity collies. And of course there are many warm words about Harry Martinson's Aniara.

Many new fanzines were started by young enthusiasts. Many of these soon folded and only a few survived the glow of the first enthusiasm. Among these we have the Swedish SFSF's fanzine Forum. The Swedish science fiction fandom began to take shape in the mid-1950s, when enthusiasts in various parts of the country started organising into clubs and launching their own fanzines. Among the first and most important of these was Club Meteor in Malmö, which had close contact with fans in Lund and other university towns. SF-Forum continued to be published for a long time even if periodicity and the number of pages could differ. After a few years many of the old readers disappeared and Forum began publishing articles literature and reviews. Forum grew in popularity to become one of Sweden's most important sf publications. In the 1960s new themes developed and the writers became more advanced in their texts, discussing both modern and classic sf.

As early as 1956, the first Swedish science fiction convention was held in Lund. Interest was high, and several fanzines soon appeared, including ones with names like "Meteorbladet" /Ed: **Wrong title, correct is Cilloev/** and other small publications that were distributed among members. More conventions came, though small, in other cities.

It wasn't long before more clubs were founded, including SF Union Scandinavia and eventually SFSF (Sweden's United Science Fiction Fans /AE: **SFSF is correct, what it stands for incorrect/**), which began publishing its fanzine SF-Forum in 1960. SF-Forum quickly became one of the most influential fanzines within Swedish fandom.

At the same time, fans were trying to introduce science fiction into the broader cultural debate in Sweden, including through articles and letters to the editor in newspapers and cultural magazines.

Alongside the fanzine, there were also two professional science fiction magazines - Håpna! (published 1956-1966) and the Swedish edition of Galaxy (1958-1960). Håpna! featured a mix of translated foreign short stories and original Swedish contributions, and became an important source of inspiration for many of the fanzine writers who later emerged at conventions and in clubs.

Galaxy attempted a similar mix but never achieved the same impact among readers.

Over time, the interaction between the different groups grew, and it became common for club members to write articles, reviews, and essays for each other's publications.

Fandom circles often revolved around universities and larger cities – Malmö, Lund, Stockholm, and periodically even Gothenburg /AE: **Gbg was actually more fixed than Malmö and Lund/**.

In the Lund area, interest in science fiction continued to grow. Articles about the genre regularly appeared in Lund-based fanzines, where the discussion often revolved around both classic and modern science fiction, and sometimes about the boundary between science fiction and fantasy.

However, the predecessor to SF-Forum was Meteorbladet, /AE: **No!/** which was published by Club Meteor and served as a hub for contacts between fans in southern Sweden. After reading SF-Forum or one of the other leading fanzines, it wasn't uncommon to immediately want the next issue – the hunger for new discussions, reviews, and convention reports was great.

The contributors analysed both British and American science fiction authors and compared them with Swedish attempts. The reviews could be about books as well as films, and there was a clear interest in reporting on what was happening internationally.

The different fan clubs each had their own distinct characteristics - some preferred literary analyses and theoretical discussions, others focused on illustrations and amateur comics, or wrote poems and pastiches in a science fiction setting. /AE: **No, it wasn't so./**

Over time, the idea of organised science fiction conventions emerged – something that became a reality with Lund in 1956 and was later followed by similar events in other cities.

A recurring theme in the discussions was also the question of the role of science fiction in Swedish culture - was it just entertainment, or was there a deeper literary and philosophical dimension? Fanzines like SF-Forum helped raise the level of debate and inspire new generations of fans and writers."

Beside some details, as sf history it not too bad (but there were several clubs pre-mid-50's). I get the sense that the AI at times have looked up external sf info to patch up holes where it couldn't read.

Bob Shaw - the Soothsayer!

Among my favourite sf authors we have Bob Shaw. I fear he may be a bit underrated today, though he certainly knew his way around a keyboard! But Bob was also a great fan and person. He was GoH on my very third sf con, Bacon 78 in Lund. As GoH the con set him up for a stage event, ingeniously done as the "This Is Your Life" TV Show (this was a time when they put some effort and creativity into con programming). I had prepared meeting the great man, buying half a dozen of his books before the con (and actually reading them!).* I gave Bob a copy of my fanzine and had several chats with him. And after the con he sent a thank-you note for my fanzine, which he couldn't read, with a *copy of Hyphen* enclosed. Wow!

After that I met Bob several times. I attended a couple of his famous "Serious Scientific Talks", and read the rest in collections of them - a unique source of fun and wit! And I have been to some room parties with him (this was a time cons had real parties instead of long lines outside booths in a main con hall). I remember one room party where we both stayed very late. Bob later commented: "You looked so innocent when you slowly gliided down on the floor as you fell asleep..." (this was a time when parties lasted to sunrise, and yeah, I probably snoozzed a bit as the sun rose - nothing wrong, it was probably very late...early).

But over to what I was about to say about Mr Shaw, before I was sidetracked: his visions about slow glass in "The Light of Other Days" has become prophetic, though through other means. Cell phones, LEDs, thin TVs, solar panels and CCTV covers everything we get with Bob Shaw's slow glass!

To recap: slow glass very efficiently slows light so it takes 1 year for light to pass through 1 cm of it (the figure most often cited). It has been called one of the most creative ideas in science fiction. And slow glass is used in various ways:

As street lighting: You put panes of slow glass over the street, and time it so when it gets dark the panes emits sunlight from another day. And, as said, we now have it in a way. Solar panels have become efficient and rather cheap, collecting sunlight sending it as electricity to LED lights, several times more efficient than old light bulbs - voila! a slow glass replacement!

Slow glass can also give views of stunning landscapes in windowless rooms. Just put a slow glass window overlooking a landscape, and then install it in the room. This exactly what the new, huge flat TV screens can do too! 2-0 to Bob Shaw.

Another slow glass usage is to prevent crime. Just spread out little pieces of it in crime-prone areas. Whatever happens will be caught in the glass. Crooks will have a constantly present witness, which we also have today in a way. Hat trick for Bob Shaw!*

CCTV surveillance is everywhere. The British are said to be European champions of it, but I suppose China is surveillance world champions. From what I've read the Chinese communists install cameras everywhere and couple it with face recognition to make the population tame and obedient. They run this with a point system to make people sufficiently

**This was a time when the US dollar stood at ca 4 Swedish crowns, and the British pound weren't much stronger, 7-8 crowns if I remember. Imported books became damn' cheap.*

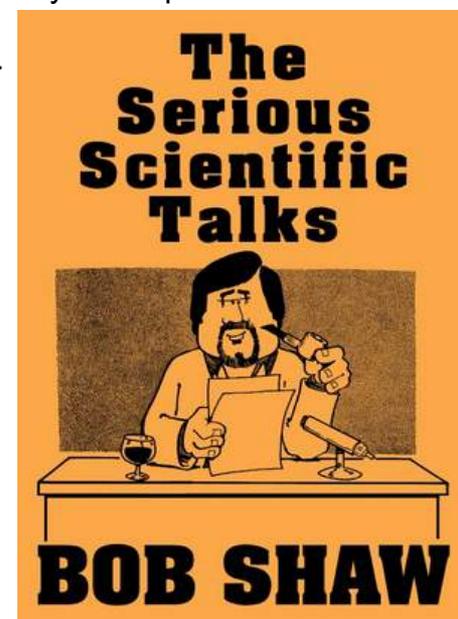
**Despite Bob's scientific skills (as a trained engineer and technical draftsman) slow glass has a couple of major problems. A quick calculation reveals that during the often sited one year of sun exposure, even discounting dusk, dawn and clouds, 1 square metre of slowglass will hold as much radiation energy as 1.5 tons of dynamite! If released instantly it'll be the by far most potent explosive substance ever! My rough calculations says about 50 cubic metres of such slow glass, a 3.7 metre cube, would even rival a 10 Kton A-bomb. The other problem is that the surface of slow glass must be absolutely even on the atomic level, since light of e g a landscape would arrive to the glass surface at different times otherwise.*



Bob Shaw disclosing a universal truth.



Great writer and fan!



Save your day - get one of these!

surpressed and domesticated. If someone behaves "undesirably" he doesn't get enough points to buy a train ticket or get a bank loan. An extremely SCARY system! (Fortunately, face recognition won't cut it since all Chinese look the same... Or so people say!)

Beside cameras in the street corners, we have billions of phone cameras floating around. If you pick your nose there will be at least a couple passers by flipping up their phones. (Soon to embellish someone's homepage under the header: "Preparing Lunch?") Street cameras and phones are our slow glass.

We live in a slow glass world!

And be sure: LED lighting will only increase, wall-TVs will become even better and unfortunately public cameras will multiply to spy even more on citizens. ("Nothing to worry about if you have nothing to hide!" is BULLSHIT! Everyone has personal quirks and stuff not intended for anyone. In fact, Citizen's must have the right to keep even trivialities under wraps - it's the authorities that must show there's seriously sufficient reasons to crack open ones personal integrity.)

As far as I know Bob Shaw never wrote any crime fiction (unlike his Irish Fandom colleague John Berry with his Goon Defective Agency, rush to https://fanac.org/fanzines/Goon_Defective_Agency_Publications/). If he had, he'd be confounded about how our slow glass society has trivialised the mystery genre!

I confess to being unfaithful...reading mysteries too. And there's not a single whodunnit the last 25 years without checking the victim's mobile, finding the GPS coordinates, emptying the nearest street cameras. Any evidence can pop up from a camera or a phone almost randomly, at any time, in today's mysteries. This destroys careful plotting! Intelligent plots are replaced by internal monologues where the hero detective whines about getting an ulcer as his wife divorced him and his estranged daughter is considering prostitution... Just a typical Nordic Noir mystery. (I have earlier pointed to how the verbosity of wordprocessors has corroded fiction. The coming threat now is AI! Authors will use it to create work that's thoroughly mediocre.)

I wonder if Bob Shaw knew how prophetic he was? He left us for the sf heaven - it'd said the eager beaver ghod Roscoe will take us there! - much too early in 1996. He probably didn't know how the world would catch up with his slow glass.

Bob Shaw had a unique creative imagination, just as in his serious scientific talks!

Letters of (and Mailing) Comments

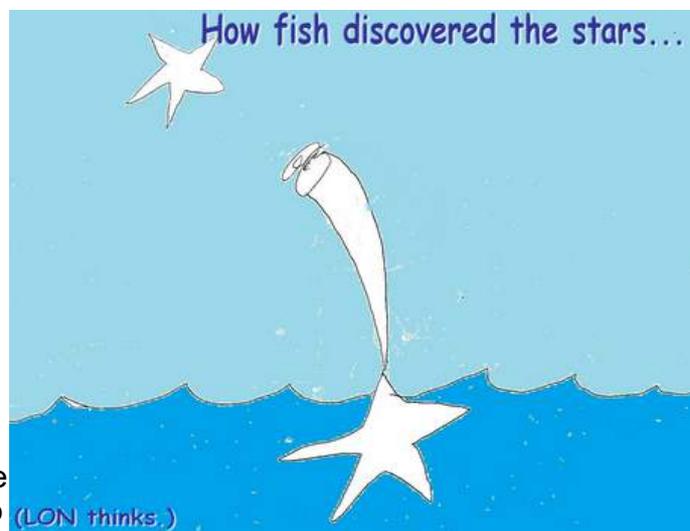
Hans Bernhoff: Thanks Ahrvid. Interestng report from Åland. And I really appreciated the History Corner. Otherwise I have just published my *The Red Leap* on Amazon, so it was extra fun seeing Garrett P Serviss' *Edison's Conquest of Mars*! For the fun of it I made an AI benchmarking of it against *The Red Leap*. Thanks for your input to my writing (I've tried to include a little more conflict and have written another prologue than the one you criticize). It remains to market *The Red Leap* - I have no idea how that works. Tried a little on FB and have offered free reading.

Ed: Hans wrote a hard-sf Mars colonisation novel in English), and I offered some advice. It didn't look too bad. Link to check it out: https://www.amazon.fr/gp/aw/d/B0FL83886C?ref=db_s_r_srch_l_p1_8&storeType=ebooks

J Cowie: So Ahrvid, you are going to SMOFcon /*Ed:* / have many ideas about sf cons and what's wrong with them today, but I haven't decided yet. ■■. Three Worldcon's in a row have blatantly gone against WSFS constitution (Chengdu - site selection venue and date; Glasgow not sending no-show Attending Members publications; Seattle having a virtual business meeting when Constitution in three places stipulates it must be physical at the Worldcon). And too many cons are just fan panel, panel, panel with little else as an actively curated programme... Which brings me on to...

Ed: They have no programme planning skills, eg relying on boring, slow and unprepared panels. So true. Where are the author and publisher interviews, what has happened to the film programme, what of properly prepared talks?

■■ *Ed:* They have totally forgotten the highly essential lighter, fannish side of fandom. As for (1) I'd



guesstimate that up to 75% of the programme was panels of some sort, but all the panels sounded almost the same. It starts with the panellists taking far too long time presenting themselves, and the panel topic is then covered in long, mumbling, ill prepared bits where everyone talks too long. The audience gets 5 minutes at most for questions towards the end. This won't do! Too true...// Joseph Nicholas: I now very rarely attend conventions. Me too Nicholas. My first con was in 1977. I left Eastercon in the 1990s and started going to Eurocons up to 2010 but also went to the one in Barcelona (2016). These days I actively don't bother going to cons where more than 15% of the programme is based on fan panels I did take Friend Membership (over £300) to support the Glasgow Worldcon as back when it was a bid they had a supplement for printed publications, so I thought, great, they are catering for *both* the physical world not just those solely into digital. However, they quickly rowed back on that once they won the bid. And then I could not go (nor could others due to the con's (rightful) CoVID policy) but they said they were not mailing convention publications to no-show Attending Members (let alone Supporting Members as *per* the WSFS constitution) so that was that... Except friends who went said they'd pick up my con package for me. I sent Worldcon an authorising e-mail but they refused to hand over the con package /Ed: *Sounds like typical blind bureaucracy! Sf cons have been taken over by bureaucrats./* which was then simply junked after the con. This was *incredibly mean* spirited and most unfannish, if not downright criminal - they did not provide what was paid for and explicit in the constitution! The bottom line is that I will *never* again support a Worldcon! I wonder how many others, especially Supporting Members who got nothing for their support of Glasgow Worldcon, will take out Supporting Membership in the future? For me, Glasgow poisoned the fan well. I have zero respect for the current generation of SMOFs, especially those who ignore the WSFS constitution (Chengdu, Glasgow, Seattle). Fortunately, fandom is big, and there are still some cons worth going to let alone genre-related film festivals, and local SF groups to visit. So Eastercons and Worldcons can stick it. SMOFs – Secret Mutilators of Fandom. /Ed: *First of all, to me it seems many conrunners today are in the neofan spectra, having little connection to fandom's history and traditions. Secondly, they simply love bureaucracy!* ■■ The other thing that worries me a little is how just two or three (leading) conrunners seem to be motivated, not so much by fandom /Ed: *They don't even know enough about fandom./* as, by their own professional career. If someone puts their conrunning on their employer's website then that is possibly (arguably?) a line that should not have been crossed. (Those concerned know who they are...)

Ed: *Sf cons are today on the wrong track! They go towards the bureaucratic and love to see themselves as a business. The idealistic, non-profit spirit plays a shrinking role. They aim to make cons bigger and bigger by catering for non-fannish groups (gamers, film/TV etc) which also increases the money flow, which feeds bureaucracy. Instead, we should go for smaller cons aimed at the real fandom core (the readers, writers - also fanzine writers), have more light program, getting back to informality and fun.*

Joe Nicholas: I respond to your rant about multicoloured lanyards at the recent Eurocon with the question: have you thought about bringing your own lanyard to conventions? I'm sure the organisers wouldn't mind if you were to wear a neutral black, grey or dark blue one -- after all, it's the badge hanging on the lanyard which is what matters, and what gets you access to the convention, what what?

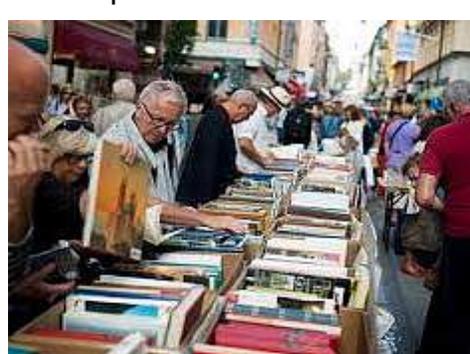
Ed: *You avoid the subject by calling it "multicoloured lanyards" instead of rainbow ones. It's clearly an official convention accessory with a message many don't agree with. It was the only option offered. It's dangerous if literary conventions coerce attendees to appear to support controversial ideologies.*

Henry Grynsten: *"Als are "often bad at maths"* No, I find them GOOD at math. They know the equations and do statistics real well. *"But what is the meaning of rational arguments in that case"* A logical argument or an argument sounding probable. It doesn't mean it's true, because the assumptions it all rests on could be wrong. So religious scientists could very well have logical arguments but still be wrong. ■■ *"You might as well say "Consciousness is neural networks in the brain." Everybody knows that and nobody sees that as an explanation."* Oh, there seem to be many who find it very likely that neural nets is the answer! ■■ *"Volcanos, CO2 ocean absorbtion...have been considered."* More like explained away. ■■ *"All scientific papers only concentrate on small aspects of problems, science is cumulative. The result if they followed your requirements would be absurd; all the scientists behind those 88,125 papers would have to repeat the same research that has already been done"* No, not doing the same research over again. What is required is that they say "I believe in 1) and 2) and 3) and 4)" (see earlier). They *don't*, because they don't believe in all of 1-4. The fact is it's quite common among scientists that say they support any of 1-4, but at the same time raise objections to other parts of 1-4. Most common to disagree with seems to be 1 (many see the small climate changes - they are de facto small! - as natural) and 4 (many understandably don't agree it'll be a disaster). ■■ *(On Hendrik svensmark saying "Who has said "I believe there's no doubt that CO2 is a greenhouse gas...So there's no doubt that CO2 is also affecting climate"* Eh, you forgot the continuation of the quote: *"but it looks as if that the climate sensitivity to CO2 is probably smaller the sun is also part of what is going on"* (BTW, I too believe CO2 is a greenhouse gas, but it's effect is small and by now near saturation. Radiation physics calculation says present CO2 level

needs to *double* to raise temp one single degree.) ■■ "Are you saying we can't trust thermometers?" Only roughly. Temp data have big precision problems due to constant position shifts, urban heating, sloppiness, etc. E g for old USSR temp data: stations had an interest i reporting *lower* temp, because this meant the Central Committe would send them more fuel for heating! (And of course, if historical data is artificially lowered you get an illusion of a steeper climb.) ■■ (*On the 30 000 anti-IPCC signatures*) "*Many of those would be bachelor's degrees in gender studies*". No, science degrees* were required, though it could be BSc or similar. In English "science" points to what in Swedish is "naturvetenskap". "Gender studies" is called "social science" not science. Sociology, archeology, literature etc were excluded. ■■ "*88,125 scientific papers are wrong?*" Rather, they don't say what you claim they do. (But also, there are a lot of science papers that *are* wrong. The known replication problem.) ■■ "*I predict that conscious robots will develop unpredictably, and that will lead to some becoming evil or serial killers*". Yes, that's a risk being discussed. ■■ "*we haven't programmed humans to become servants*" Yes and no. This programming ("helping others is good") has evolved through many, thousands of years because of its benefits. But this benefit have shown itself and been chiseled out by...humans, by ourselves! The way we behave have programmed us through evolution, so humans have programmed humans. ■■ "*The space program in the 1960s cost about \$375–400 billion in 2024 dollars*" That's just ca 40B/year or ca 0.6% of the federal budget. (Or around 0.15% of US GDP). And it's OK to use that on space research, e g due to the extremely valuable science data, the spinoffs and the more metaphysical things (visions, inspiration etc). ■■ "*No, you are wrong. IBM systems for companies and government had a huge influence on computer development.*" I'm not wrong. I've studied computer history, as I think I've already told you. What happened was that just *before* Apollo IBM launched their 7040 computer (Wiki: "The IBM 7040 was a historic but short-lived model of transistor computer built in the 1960s", announced before Kennedy's moon speech, shipped in 1963, just after that), but development stalled there. Saying "transistor computer" meant it used single transistors, not integrated circuits (ICs). It was NASA who had need for the sturdy ICs and could pay the premium for them, so NASA stimulated the IC development - not private businesses - at times buying *half* the world production of ICs and thus creating a 10 year quantum leap. ■■ "*military also contributed to the development you describe*" Probably not at this stage. The Military hade noted how ICs fried under nuclear attacks. ICs were near useless until this problem was solved. ■■ "*Says who?*" "*The scientists.*" No. We very seldom hear of soil erosion as a problem. You claim new soil is created tooslow. That's hard to believe when trees fell leaves, when straw is left on the field after harvest - we talk about layer at least *half a feet* or more. It's difficult to think this massive mass additions year after year don't matter. ■■ "*The erosion is estimated to be double the rate that the U.S. Department of Agriculture says is sustainable.*" But if you check you find the quote applies to a special area of the Midwest where the soil has less protection from wind and flooding and no trees or bushes for protection. Over to *Wild Ideas*: There's probably evolutionary explanations why women read more, learn language easier etc - it comes from interest in social skills, which were useful home as the base camp while the men were out hunting. These social skill interests may also translate to an interest in travelling - but that men took their bride from other tribes (the coming bride had to travel) may also play a role. Still, I believe that men in early modern time (medieval until 20th century) travelled much more, simply because they had the contacts and control of the money it was expensive to travel. Almost all students at universities were also male, and students travelled a lot.

William McCabe: The Bladerunner books, are they both adaptations of the film. Why write a book from a film...that already has a book it was based on? (I read Dick's Do Androids Dream... a long time ago, don't remember much of it but have the principle not to re-read books. The only books I've re-read, as I remember, is Tolkiens LoR and Asimov's original Foundation trilogy. I feared that Foundation would come through as mediocre, but it held up pretty well. The secret is that it isn't one novel - or three - it's eight novelettes and that format invites a reasonable tight plotline.) ■■ Liverpool University's fan archive is with SF Foundation, isn't it? ■■ Apart from being a member of the EBU, Israel has a lot of sympathy in Europe so getting into the Eurovision was natural. As for Australia, the population there have been huge Eurovision fans since the 1980s (and they are also a EBU member, I believe) and as I remember they were first invited when the Eurovison had an anniversary, intended as a one-off, but the host country next year decided to invite them

again... Then it became difficult to get rid of them! ■■ I see the political scale as more of a ring than a ruler. Nazism does indeed have a lot in common with communism/socialism. The name nationalSOCIALISM should give a hint. Volksgemeinschaft is the same colletivism ideal. The communists had five-year plans, in Germany in the 1930s they made four-year plans (they were a bit in a hurry to be ready for war). The Nazis actually had a lot of direct control over the economy, just as with the planed economy of communism. Both communism and nazism aimed for "social reforms".



Stockholm Culture Festival ended with the BookTable Day17 Aug.I found e g folio format aviation history books dirt cheap,just €2 each..

Etc. ■■ I agree that many anti-fascist groups can become very nasty. For some people, especially when you are young, there's something attractive, romantic in fighting on the streets.

Heath Row: A tip about Youtube ads: access Youtube through a browser name Brave. It filters the ads out. It even get rid of the ads of my local, regular channel 4. ■■ For the time being Als mostly just summarise, but they do it so smoothly and...well, smart that you can see they are heading the direction of selfconsciousness. ■■ People marrying body pillows? I've never thought we must honour every crazy idea people may entertain. The human brain is brilliant in inventing crazy ideas and then pretend its real. There's no reason to respect (in the meaning playing along with) someone claiming to be made of glass (like king Charles IV of France or think they are pregnant with an elephant, like the Preussan field marshal Blucher. The topic is of special importance now with a 1000% rise of children believing they are born in the wrong gender. (No, you are born in the right gender the one your chromosomes decide). ■■ It's wrong to characterise robot servants "slaves". ■■ Don Willheim was into cross-dressing? Gee, who would have thought. (I met Don W in the late 1970's, when he was one of the GoHs of a con Sam J Lundwall arranged. Sam was a buddy of Don. DAW published some English translations of Sam's books.) ■■ What was the lawsuit around 1976 Worldcon? I just goggled myself a long report from that con, and noting of the kind is mentioned. ■■ We should be generally sceptical to the idea of throwing disparate individuals together in a collectives and give this hotchpotch special properties and/or privileges. That's one thing wrong with the idea of microaggressions you confer. Another thing wrong is that it attempts to ban "verbal...slights". You have no right to demand respect, you can only earn it. Trying to interfere with people's freedom of expression is highly questionable. Talk-policing, if even if justified, should be for extreme exceptions The same for interference with people's "behavior", as long as it isn't a concrete threat - also questionable. It seems that the concept of "microaggression" is to have an accusation fuzzy as a tribble ready to throw at anyone at anytime. From reports I've seen it seems this "microaggression" circus has been especially damaging at universities, when teachers to their confoundment have been accused of this non-misconduct. In sf we should have the right to express anything in our books, stories, fanzines and so on: if you don't like it, leave it, don't read it, or phrase a rebuttal. Freedom of thought and speech needs this

"microaggression" folly like a fish needs a bicycle. ■■ *"The program committee has every right to include whomever they want on the program"*. Well, we also have the right to point to the wrongs in letting the program show a questionable slant. That science fiction *needs* to be open for any ideas (except, I'd say, ideas meaning some sort of concrete harm). The Seattle con's ambition is this intellectually dangerous cancellation craze in its adornment.

■■ Oh, anyone who isn't blind or deaf knows that what is called HBTQ is controversial. It includes the pseudoscience that gender would be just a social construct (pseudoscience is by definition controversial). The activities of having full-grown men in flashing dresses read stories to pre-school children is certainly controversial. Letting them ruin women's sport (since they are born with genetics for 30% more muscles) is controversial. The general idea that topics concerning sex or sexuality should be externalised is controversial. There is more, *many* more controversies. The rainbow flag and its colours are a symbol of all this, and nobody should be having to carry it around as the sole option for attending a literary conference. (Your "definition" of what this rainbow stands for is totally incomplete.) You misintepret Voltaire. He'd defend anybody's right to wear this rainbow, but not the right to *impel* anyone to wear it. He wouldn't defend Eurocon, that has stepped out of bounds

Garth Spencer: You have hearing problems? Eh, sorry: YOU HAVE HEARING PROBLEMS? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT, AND... Hearing gets worse with age. All the shit you've heard through the years clog the ear. ■■ Alexis Gilliland's idea of robots as incorporated entities sounds interesting. Which book covers this? ■■ No comments to me? Have I become so uncontroversial? Oh, a grand failure! ■■ Time to sign off. Comments welcome. If my ordinary mail doesn't work due to moronic Microsoft, try ahrvid@rocketship.com.



Sweden's northernmost city Kiruna, above the Arctic circle, has to move as the adjacent iron mine undermines it. Also Kiruna's famous all-wooden, archetionically distinct church moved 3 miles live on TV, like a huge camper at 0.5 km/h. Nearby is our space base Esrange.

Слава Україні!

(Glory to Ukraine!)

THE SWAMP SPOT SENTINEL



Issue #1.3 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

LIFE IN THE UNCERTAIN LANE continues to be less than thrilling. Following up on comments made a couple of issues back, my house repair problems continue to multiply, but, alas, the availability or willingness of people to do the necessary repair work seems to be diminishing.

I did finally get that front storm door installed. Meanwhile the gutter along the back of the house pulled loose on the left side, a sure sign that not only did the very old gutter need to be replaced, but also that the backing board along the eave of the house needed to be replaced, since it was even older and had been stressed when the gutter line had pulled away several times previously.

I called a contractor. He came over, gave me estimates on that, and also an estimate on repairing a collapsing half wall in the bathroom at the tub faucets. Expensive stuff, but, it needed to be done.

And, to be fair, the guy said he would start work the following week, but he sent a team over the next day. They took the old gutter and downspouts down and installed a brand new, completely waterproof backing board along the eave. And the day after that the guys came back and replaced and repaired the falling apart bathtub wall.

Then...nothing. For four weeks...nothing. The work crews never showed up again. The new gutters and downspouts were not delivered so they could be installed. I heard NOTHING.

Well, the guy doesn't get paid until the work gets done, so I assume that he will come around and finish the job(s) up sooner or later. I only wish it would be sooner instead of later.

Meanwhile, this past Saturday I arose early, in a bright bouncy mood, ready to head for the warehouse and pull a big comic order and some book orders. Unfortunately when I tried to open the front door, it didn't. The lock was jammed. As in the front door knob would not even turn at all.

I called a local lock service over in Webster, the next town over, explained my problem, and the person there told me a repair guy would be around between ten and twelve that morning.

Great. I could exit the house thru the basement. The repair schedule allowed time for me to get to the warehouse pull those orders, pack everything up, and get everything down to the Post Office before it closed at noon, and still be back in time to meet the lock smith.

Well, I am sure you can guess what happened next. At ten o'clock I got a call from the locksmith. Between my extreme hearing loss and his extremely bad English, I finally got it that he would be around between twelve and two. OK, a normal delay for the weekend.

Around twelve I got another call, in which he said he would be around a bit later than two o'clock.

By now I was sensing a pattern. At three thirty I called their main office to see what was going on. I got their answering machine. Everybody had gone home for the day. Not in a good mood at all, I decided to call a different lock smith on Sunday.

At three forty five I got a call from the guy saying he was on his way and would be at my house in thirty minutes or less.

At five thirty I was contemplating murder.

At six-twenty the lock smith showed up, and banged on my front door. This, even tho I had stated several times that the problem was a jammed l front door lock, he wanted to come in thru the front door.

Well, to make the story complete, yeah, he replaced the lock. He was stunned at how completely the old lock had malfunctioned. It took him a while to untangle the old lock mechanism and extract it from the door cavity. It took him about eight minutes to install a new lock, and demonstrate its workings to me.

Total cost for this stupid disaster, \$315.00. The guy originally didn't want to accept my check, but when he tried to access my credit card some problems developed. As I have mentioned before, I apparently have a wrecked flying saucer buried on my lot. or at least a super magnetic meteorite, because not only is cell phone reception here really crappy, so is remote virtual internet access, which means it takes a long time and plenty of effort to get a credit card to read on any mobile device.

He called his boss (he said), and then accepted my check.

Meanwhile, I need a midget deck on the back of the house replaced. It's a wreck. I haven't set foot on that thing in thirty-five years at least, and I have no intention of ever setting foot on it again. I don't care, but the lady from the insurance company, she cares a lot. She wants that thing repaired or else she threatens to cancel my home insurance.

So, OK, get the stupid midget deck rebuilt. It shouldn't be much of a problem for a good contractor. The problem, of course, is finding a contractor, any contractor who is willing to do the work.

I called several places to come out and look and give me an estimate. One said they were sorry, they were booked up thru the end of September. Two others said, sure, we'll be right out. They never showed up.

I'm thinking I could add my own experiences to the Tragedy card series: picture a skeleton holding a telephone laying under a collapsed fallen wall. The caption would be "Repair Service promised to be right over in answer to urgent call."



I AM TRYING TO AVOID POLITICS IN THESE PAGES, BUT IT'S DIFFICULT--

BREAKING: The Catholic Church enrages MAGA world by coming out forcefully against the "big, beautiful bill" as twenty bishops sign an interfaith letter stating that its "passage would be a moral failure for American society as a whole."

There is nothing less Christ-like than cutting healthcare and food stamps or the poor....

"First, it provides tens of billions of dollars to the government to undertake a mass deportation campaign which will separate US families, harm US-citizen and immigrant children, and sow chaos in local communities," the letter reads. "It will spur immigration raids across the nation, harming hard-working immigrant families essential to our economy and causing widespread unrest like we recently witnessed in Los Angeles."

The legislation would funnel over \$150 billion towards Trump's border policies and immigration crackdowns, with the ICE detention budget alone ballooning from \$3.4 billion to \$45 billion until the end of 2029. Professor Donald Moynihan of the University of Michigan has pointed out that this figure is more than the combined funding for all 50 federal prisons.

In addition to being a gross waste of taxpayer money, this funding will create a self-perpetrating deportation industrial machine similar to our private prison system and military complex. Just like pouring money into military contractors incentivizes new wars, pouring money into this fledgling deportation industry will incentivize more crackdowns and family separations. The more you feed the monster, the bigger and hungrier it gets.

"This funding also will be used to target faith communities, as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has removed places of worship from its sensitive locations list, allowing ICE agents to enter them for enforcement purposes," the letter continues. "We have already witnessed a reduction in attendance at many of our religious services in our denominations, as the threat of enforcement has deterred many families from practicing their faith."

The signatories include numerous prominent bishops such as Cardinal Robert McElroy, Cardinal Joseph Tobin, Bishop John Dolan, Archbishop Paul Etienne, Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski, and Bishop Jaime Soto.

In addition to the Catholic leaders, the letter was signed by the leaders of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas as well as respected faith leaders of the Episcopalian, Jewish, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Muslim communities.

"Moreover, the bill provides funding for a border wall along the US-Mexico border which we believe will drive migrants into the most remote regions of the border and lead to an increase in migrant deaths," the letter goes on. "It also would hurt the local environment along the border and force desperate asylum-seekers seeking safety to increasingly rely on human smugglers."

"As you should know, our faith organizations have long favored the creation of legal avenues for migration and a legalization program for immigrants who have lived in the US for years and contributed their hard work to our economy," the signatories wrote. "We believe the adoption of these policies, instead of the implementation of a mass deportation campaign, would not only benefit immigrant workers and their families, but be in the best interest of our nation."

"Second, the legislation makes severe cuts in health-care coverage and food assistance to millions of both low-income citizens and legal residents, including asylum-seekers and refugees, driving them deeper into poverty," the letter adds. "According to the nonpartisan



Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the bill transfers wealth from those in the bottom 10 percent of income to those in the top 10 percent of income in our nation, increasing the already large gap between the rich and the poor."

The bill will slash nearly \$1 trillion in funding from Medicaid, a move that will directly result in the death and suffering of countless Americans. People will go blind, see their life expectancies cut in half, and end up bankrupt and homeless. Nursing homes and hospitals will shut down.

It also guts funding for crucial food programs like SNAP by roughly \$186 billion by 2034. Americans are literally going to starve to death so that billionaires can afford a few new yachts.

"From our various faith perspectives, the moral test of a nation is how it treats those most in need of support. In our view, this legislation will harm the poor and vulnerable in our nation, to the detriment of the common good. Its passage would be a moral failure for American society as a whole," it concludes.

In a separate statement, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that the bill "takes from the poor to give to the wealthy."

"It provides tax breaks for some while undermining the social safety net for others through major cuts to nutrition assistance and Medicaid," he continued. "It fails to protect families and children by promoting an enforcement-only approach to immigration and eroding access to legal protections. It harms God's creation and future generations through cuts to clean energy incentives and environmental programs."

"I underscore what my brother bishops said in their recent letter to find a better way forward and urge Senators to think and act with courage and creativity to protect human dignity for all, to uphold the common good, and to change provisions that undermine these fundamental values," he added.

Please retweet and ❤️ to thank these bishops for speaking out!



BOOK CLUB INTERVIEWS

I'm on the emailing list for the Worcester Science Fiction Book Club, enthusiastically run by Melody Friedenthal, a long time librarian at the main Worcester library, and a solid science fiction fan for most of her life.

I am not particularly big on library book clubs, or book clubs of any sort. I am all in favor of the concept of SF book clubs, where members read a book a month and comment on it, but the actual process has never worked out well for me. I attended some few book club events many years back, but I discovered that I had specific views about the book of the month, and after I made my comments, that was pretty much it for the rest of the meeting.

A few (very few) people searched for hidden meanings, or complex character eccentricities, or wondered about the validity of the universe the author created, but I have to say that while a few of those comments were interesting, most of them really weren't. Most of the people seemed to have a pretty limited critical capacity to begin with.

There was usually a lot of 'gosh I really liked it', some, 'I didn't like it', and a few who were neutral on the whole subject. Questioning those who didn't like the novel, or were ambivalent about the thing usually did not result in many enlightening analytical remarks. Mostly it was 'I didn't like the world', or 'I didn't like the character(s)', or there was too much action, or there wasn't enuf action, and that about exhausted the range of opinions.

I stopped doing in-person SF book club meetings a long time ago, but I have, in recent years, attended a few virtual meetings sponsored by the Worcester, MA library's SF book club, when they were featuring an author whose opinions I happened to be interested in.

Melody Friedenthal, the SF club lady knows many writers, and has been very good at getting various authors to appear via video links for the virtual meetings.

One of the problems I have noticed about this format is that some of the club members dearly love the sound of their own voices, so they offer rambling commentaries with an actual question of some kind usually hidden among the verbiage near the end. The authors have been pretty even tempered about this, mostly, which I consider extraordinary. I am not sure I could put up with that much BS spread over an hour or so,

but I guess its part of the job requirements you have to expect when you are an author. Write the books, listen to the fans drone on about some part of the book you never even considered relevant, smile and say something encouraging, wait for the next question. It must be a strain for the author. Maybe that's why most of these virtual events only last about an hour.

Unfortunately nowadays the library SF club virtual events are being done via Zoom, which means since I have no direct Zoom account I have to dial in with my mobile phone and link into the meeting. This is a major problem for me since apparently my house is sitting on top of a wrecked flying saucer, or perhaps an abandoned radioactive bulldozer, because mobile phone reception here is really really bad. I keep my land line going because whenever I try to use the stupid iPhone, it breaks up, drops out, completely loses the connection, or fades away. Needless to say this makes for a very uneven, and sometimes nearly non-existent experience trying to follow an author's comments in a virtual SF Book Club event.

I had pretty much given up, but tried again this past April when Ms Friedenthal took my suggestion and made "The Other Side Of Night" by Adam Hamdy the book of the month, and, she managed to convince Adam Hamdy to attend the virtual meeting and answer questions from the club audience.

If I haven't mentioned it lately, "The Other Side of Night" is one of the best science fiction novels I've read in the past five years, a complex, character driven, time warping detective mash-up that challenges the imagination and holds reader interest from page one to the very end of the book. It was one of those stories that I started reading at seven in the evening, and didn't put down until I finished it around two-thirty that night.

Anyway, I really wanted to hear Mr. Hamdy's comments, but alas with the drop outs and disconnects I had a hard time getting much out of it. More aggravating, there were a couple of people who thot their take on the book was more important the whatever Mr. Hamdy might have to say, so while his answers and comments (the ones I could hear) were clear and distinct, and added some background about how and why he wrote that story, most of it was members droning on at considerable length about their impressions of some part of the book.

I think that will probably be my last experience with the library SF book club, virtual or otherwise. For whatever reason, I find

commentary done via letter or email about the merits or problems of a particular book to be much more satisfying and usually more interesting than in-person discussions. I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that these non-personal discussions are usually done with actual fans who have a history with the literature and with fandom in general. Plus, even with email, there is a sufficient pause in the exchange of comments for me (and the other person(s) to gather thots and make some specific insights about the subject; a reflection period which you do not get with face-to-face situations. Maybe I'm just not that fast on my feet, but the fanzine exchange really works best for me when discussing the merits and attributes of an author's work. Or maybe it's just because the discussion is taking place with actual stf fans rather than enthusiastic readers.

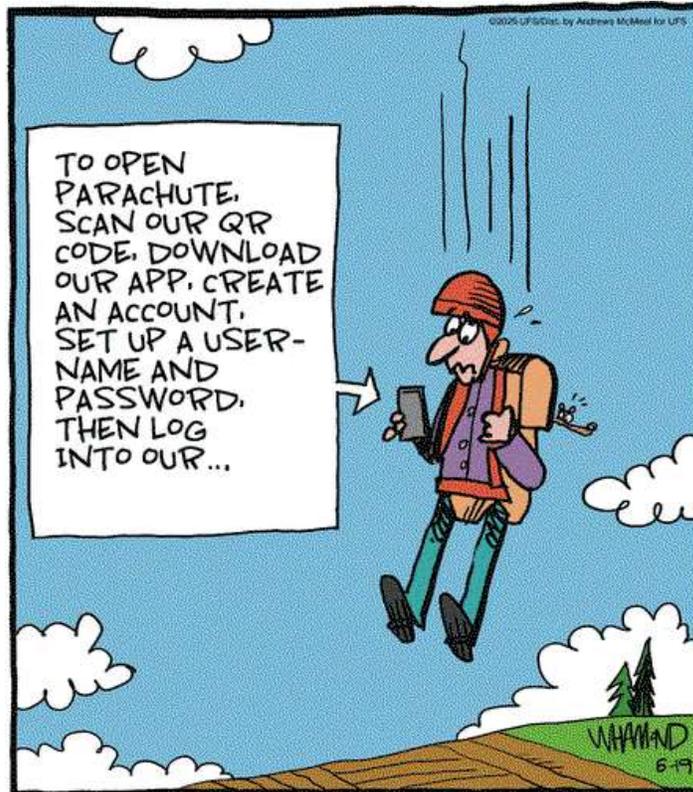
Up until a few years ago I used to send out print copies of my science fiction fanzine *Fadeaway* to total strangers in hopes they would become interested in the fanzine and perhaps be impelled to get involved with stf fandom. These were strangers who bought two or more science fiction or fantasy books from me thru my mail order book business.

In all that time I must have sent out hundreds of fanzines, with a welcoming letter and

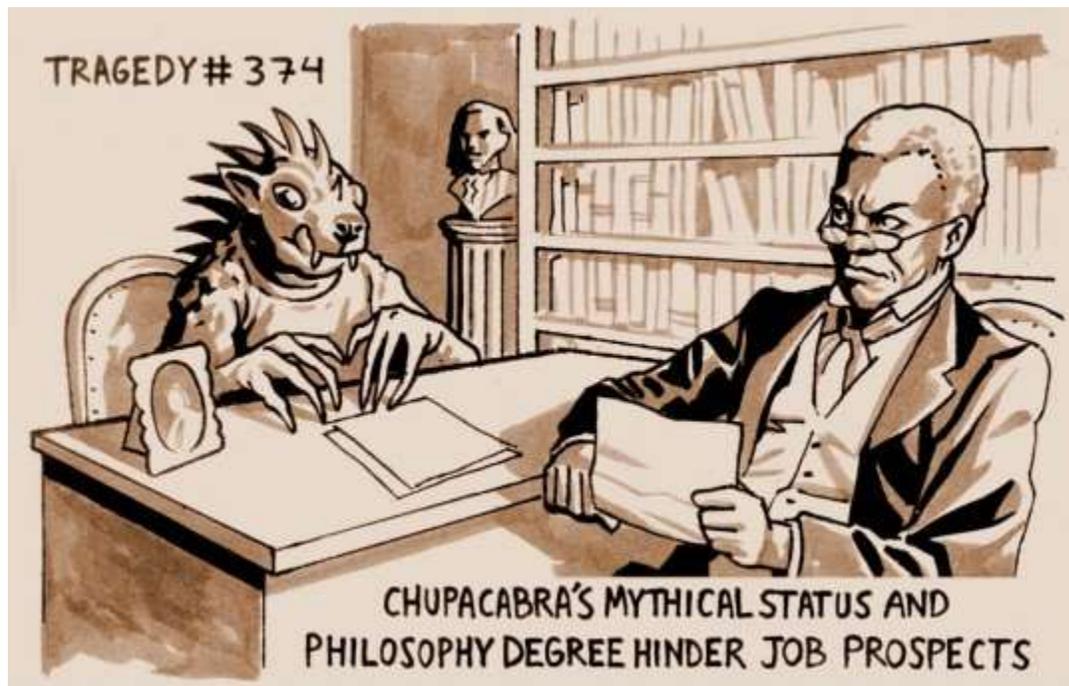
a request for feedback of any kind, and in all that time I got exactly two actual responses. One was from a fan who was aware of stf fandom, but had been reluctant to participate before he got my fanzine, and one was from a guy who told me he liked my zine, but that he only interacted with people on chat boards in real time, so would I please never send him another copy of *Fadeaway* ever again.

OK, got it. There are plenty of science fiction readers and sci-fic enthusiasts out there, but apparently it takes something special, some unique personality quirk to turn an enthusiastic reader into a solid stf fan. With the advent of the internet and immediate person to person contact via the internet that quality may becoming even more rare.

How many active fans are there left in fandom? I dunno, but I am told that a lot of the people who attend conventions now are there mainly for the social event, the chance to check out the dealer rooms, and a chance to party. But they are not interested in going any further into the hobby. Sometimes I think real live stf fans willing and interested in being involved in stf fandom may be a dying breed. But, I'm still in it.



MAILING COMMENTS



ARCHIVE MIDWINTER

I agree that it is a mistake to assume that authors writing about a particular form of government necessarily agree with the setup they propose, but on the other hand in many cases they do. Liberal writers tend to favor heroes overthrowing tyrannical despots and their evil systems, while some conservatives clearly seem to suggest that governmental forms other than democracy would be more efficient. This would possibly hold true when the government covers vast reaches of space where communication might be long delayed and trade or travel routes for military movement even more so.

Like it or not, just judging from our own human history over the past few thousand years, well run empires, despite their problems, have been reasonably successful in caring for the economic welfare and safe survival of their citizens. Problems arise when massive movement of vast numbers of outside peoples press the boundaries of an empire, or when internal civil wars over succession screw things up, or when a more technologically developed enemy shows up. Successful empires change with the times. The British Empire became the British Commonwealth and has managed to do pretty well even into this new century

I don't attend my local town meetings because the agenda is largely spelled out in the town manager's annual newsletter, and meetings almost always bog down over trivial issues about zoning and refinancing outdated school buildings or fringe departments. Often these minor matters develop into loud shouting matches, sometimes requiring the police officers on duty to step in, and sometimes to expel some of the more boisterous individuals. Not for me. I'm too old to put up with that crap any more. If something serious & important & urgent were on the prospective agenda I probably would attend, otherwise, no.

Uh, please do not put your perfectly good comics into the trash because you need to “downsize”. If you are going to throw some of your comic collection away, throw them my way. I’ll cheerfully pay shipping charges and you can send along whatever you feel you can live without.

THE MURDERED MASTER MAGE

I just noticed: no issue number. Is that by design or just an oversight? I just checked, and issue number, 277, is assigned in the 0-0, altho maybe Jefferson was just guessing about a number from your comments about mailing 276.

I have no interest in eating dandelions; only in noting their comings and going in my lawn panorama of native flowers. I also have no plans to try and deliberately introduce flowers into the yard again following my long ago rose disaster. This year my little patch of black eyed susans along the left fence made a surprise reappearance after disappearing completely last year. I am perfectly content to let Mother Nature provide the flowers. The only ones I really object to are the small flat white flowers on the towering thorn bushes which I have been trying to eliminate for years. When those white flowers appear I know that I have managed to somehow miss a growth of the thorn bushes and its time to get the electric hedge clippers out and go to work cutting the things down (again).

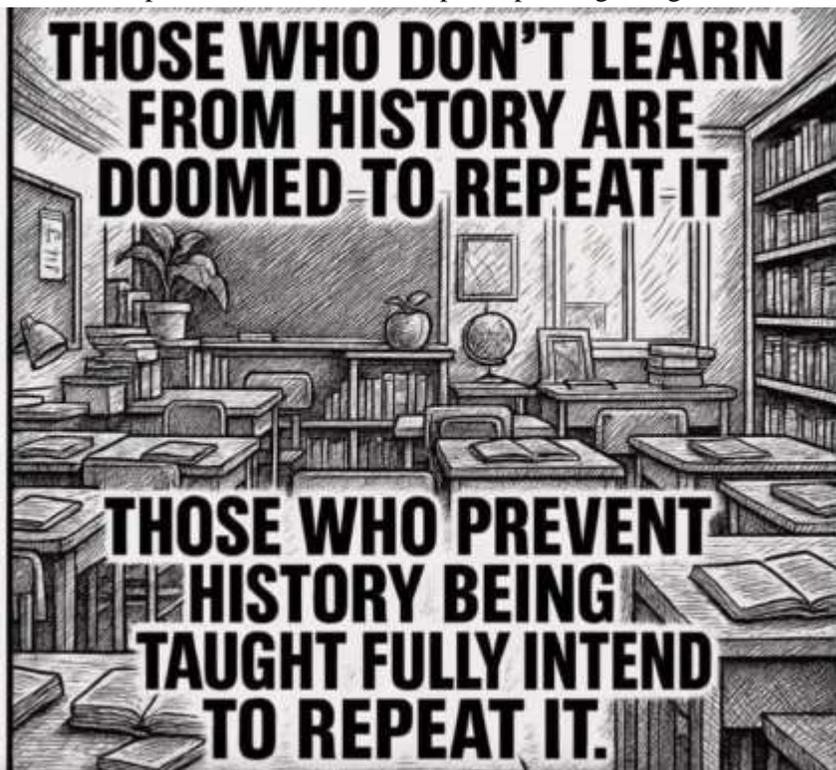
The Antikythera Mechanism may have indeed been a one of a kind item, possibly a prototype, but we can’t know for sure. Almost all of the written records from the ancient past have vanished completely, along with most of the physical effects from those days. There may have been others, but just looking at the designs of the salvaged pieces indicates that it would have taken a lot of time, effort, and likely, money, to produce more of the things, so unless there was some specific highly useful or religious significance to the device it may not have been widely reproduced.

The Moslem “Book of Ingenious Devices” was written and issued in 850 made up of much older records from Greek and Roman periods discovered preserved in libraries and monasteries. The Antikythera Mechanism is not mentioned, nor is anything even remotely like it referenced, so it may have been unique. Here’s the thot that may be in the back of a few academic minds---it may have just been an elaborate fraud, a mechanical hoax designed specifically to bilk money from rich royals who might have believed that they were promoting some wonderful new scientific discovery. At this late date we will probably never know for sure.

I hope that *The Gentle Stroll* participation gaming zine works out. I do, however, wonder how many of

the participants are actually members of the N3F. I don’t think many gamers are involved with either the N3F or stf fandom in general these days.

My interest in the Sad Puppies controversy was never strong to begin with. I am pleased that those fans who bought WorldCon tickets and had the right to vote for the Hugo Awards were able to kick the hell out of the vote stuffing enterprise that year and in the following two years as well. The fact that there is still so much discussion about the whole mess does seem a little odd to me, but maybe that just indicates that the level of scandalous gossip in the hobby is at an all time low, at least right now anyway. Hmmm, no, that clearly can’t be right. This hobby has *never* had a shortage of deplorable scandals and malicious gossip.



Holy Moley! Just reading the convoluted condensed version of your never to be completed piece of fan fiction I can see why you decided not to finish writing the thing. However you did forget to include an inter-dimensional time warp shape-shifting intelligent virus wannabe universe conquering dictator, and the kitchen sink.

BROWNIAN MOVEMENT #14

Let me know if you run a finished version of your serialized story and I'll try to read it. Maybe you could send it to *Eldritch Science*. I would never be able to join any writer's workshop, because altho it is easy enuf to come up with unique and interesting basic concepts for a story, actually working out the details of a plot and structuring it into presentable fiction is beyond me. Writers' workshops want the participants to write something every week, maybe even more often than that. I couldn't do that.

The hearing loss and loss of comprehension is a serious problem for me, but, beyond wearing hearing aids and doing whatever else the docs tell me to do there isn't much I can do about it. My long term opinion has always been not to worry too much about things you really can't do anything about, so I try to save my worrying time for something else. I just wish I could apply that logic to the wonderful world of politics.

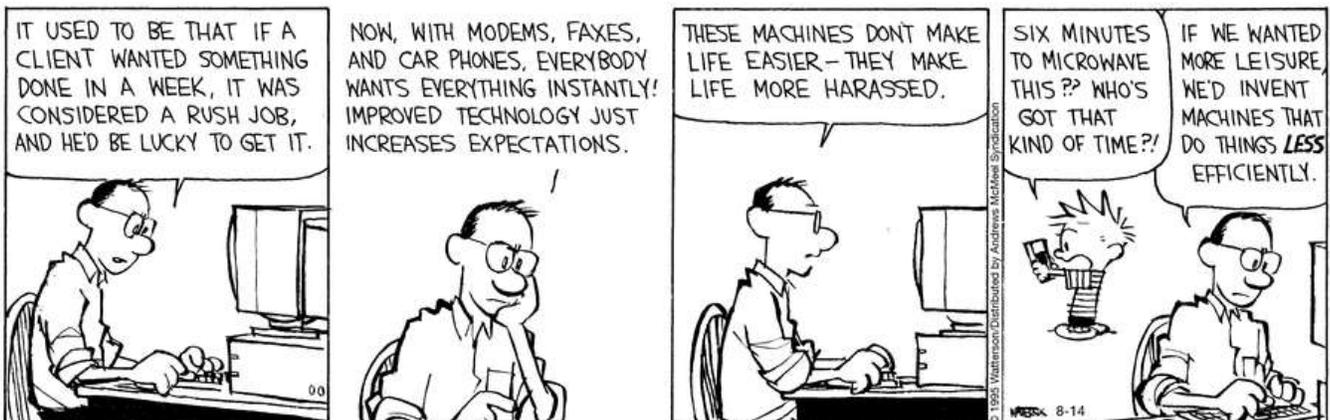
I was initially surprised, and aggravated that people refused to acknowledge my hearing loss and severe problems with telephone calls instead of communicating via email as I requested. It is still aggravating, but clearly the introduction and near universal acceptance of the cell phone has affected all of human society. People these days can't seem to survive without their phones with them all the time, and since they communicate by either text or speaking over their phone, they automatically assume everybody else must do the same, and they consciously or unconsciously refuse to accept the idea that writing emails might be the best way to communicate with anyone. As I say, it's aggravating.

Nope, not a reprint, I'm the guy who wrote the Breaking News alert. Some people appreciate my efforts at political humor; others do not, and let me know using strong language, often using nothing but capital letters for emphasis. Apparently most retro neo-fascists have no sense of humor.

I think a lot of people enter(ed) science fiction fandom for that sense of community, a shared interest in subjects that almost nobody among their circle of friends and family appreciated. The fact that stf fandom is very open and willing to listen to and even accept many divergent opinions, and to (generally) discuss differences of opinion in a civil and respectful manner also had a lot of appeal.

And on that note, I don't think having a university degree, or a science focus really makes for better government leaders. The ability to communicate effectively with people, to recognize problems and be able to properly come up with or to recognize viable solutions and effectively create ways to administer those solutions have always been the core requirements for political leadership, and like it or not, education really isn't a necessary requirement for getting the job done. I think well educated people have a better potential to more rapidly recognize problems/solutions/ways of enacting those solutions than poorly educated folks do, but a good education is not a job requirement. And in fact, think back over the history of the past two hundreds years or so and note the number of brutal, vicious leaders who have been very well educated, but were greedy merciless tyrants solely concerned with their own prosperity and enforcing their own narrow opinions. A good education does not guarantee compassion, or empathy, or the ability to lead.

You may well be correct that fandom, the kind of stf fandom most of us have lived with most of our fannish lives, is dying out. But, I intend to continue on with writing, fanzines, and apas and discussing the literature as long as there are fellow fen interested in that sort of thing.



Thanks for your brief reviews. I had not heard of “Orders of Magnitude” by Yuval Kordov before, but your comments made it sound interesting enuf for me to try and get a copy thru inter-library loan. I hope I can get it. As mentioned previously, there has been some problems getting books thru inter-library loan the past eighteen months for reasons I have yet to figure out. My suspicion is that there is simply so much new material coming out, while library budgets are still so tight that buying new genre material might be more limited than in days past. Still, it’s worth a try anyway.

You purchased the Twilight 2000 game but never played it? Huh! It’s a pretty good game, and is one that has survived into the new century with almost all of the original older material being reprinted and a few new manuals and scenario packs also being released. For short term near future disaster adventure role playing I personally preferred Morrow Project which has the interesting premise that teams of specialists needed to reconstruct civilization were placed in suspended animation so that whenever The Big One occurred and actually destroyed western society at some point in the future, the team(s) would be revived when their talents would be most needed.

Alas, the COVID Crisis pretty much killed local role playing gaming around this area, altho there are still game conventions where dedicated players can still game their brains out for three or four days solid.

There are still mimeo and ditto machines around. Paper, ink, stencils, all of the things needed to make them work are still being sold by supply houses like Quill, and presumably there are people who still use them.

For a long time the cost of ink for computer printers was so expensive that it was much more economically viable to use the old technology for things like club bulletins, church programs, family newsletters and the like, but with the advent of toner printers the print cost per page as gone way down so it makes more sense, not to mention being a lot easier, to just compose and print thru a computer rather than brave the perils of ink/ditto fluid and all the work that goes with those methods of printing.

I still have my trusty old electric Gestetner mimeo and lots of supplies left. Unfortunately the mechanism that raises the paper table to feed the paper into the machine does not work and I don’t know anybody who could fix it. If it could be fixed I would be very tempted to turn out some mimeoed apazines just to use up the old supplies.

I don’t know if you could buy a manufactured hectograph post WWII. They are very easy to make. I made and used one in the early 1960s for short copy zines when starting up SFPA, and a few years ago I bought the glycerin and components to make another one, thinking I might use it for the copy requirements of an apa I was in, but I never got around to making it. I think the idea of typing up ditto masters on my old upright Royal manual typer was the sticking point. It’s just much easier to compose and print with a computer.

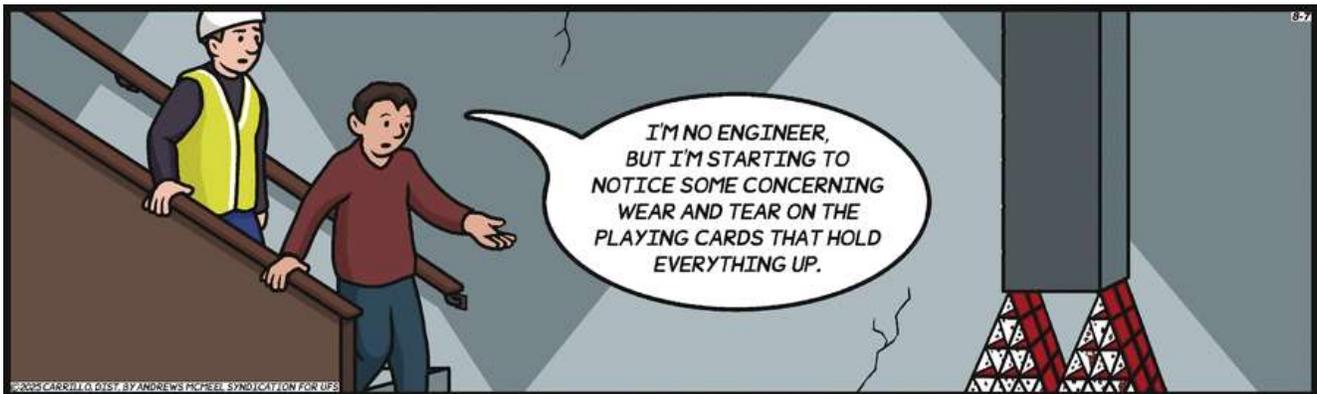
That Marvel series about the NYC city clean-up crew who trying to take care of all the wreckage caused by the constant battles between costumed super heroes and costumed super villains in the Marvel universe was *Damage Control*. None of the team(s) had super powers. It was supposed to be mostly humor, and altho the premise was interesting and the art was good, and there were plenty of guest appearances by assorted Marvel heroes, the stories were mostly lackluster. There were four different mini-series dealing with the subject. Retail sales at my store were very weak for all of the series(es).



R.A.I.L. #7

Interesting info about the Ouija board Mark Twain novel “Jap Herron”. I had never heard of this before. Quite a bizarre concept: trying to capitalize on a famous dead author and still avoid paying the author’s estate any money. I just checked the internet, and it turns out that copies of the novel are posted on several sites including the Internet Archive. However, owing to the bad reviews and the fact that I have a Ton ‘Books that I want to read but haven’t gotten around to yet, I think I will give this a pass.

Despite your saying you have no real interest in eugenics, it seems you actually are interested, as witness your discussion about the X-Men and the postnatural section of the museum you visited. Humans have been fiddling with the real world trying to turn all of it to their advantage since human became a viable thinking species, and that still continues today. I think it is just a matter of time before humans begin to seriously alter the future human race to eliminate disease and produce healthier bodies, as predicted in hundreds of different science fiction stories past and present. Never before have science and technology been able to do so much to alter our genetic traits, and you can be sure we are going to start using that technology soon, if not already.



BRANDY HALL 13

Ha, skills - smills! Building a fire is easy; it’s finding the long sleeve heavy duty asbestos gloves and crystal vanadium steel nails to handle the fire boards that’s hard. That’s assuming someone has already cut the blazing inferno into usable length 4x1” planks already. If not, you’d need a Vulcan crystal mesh solar band saw to cut your own, and boy are those things expensive to rent!

I will reveal my own shocking lack of knowledge about computers by saying I didn’t understand ANY of the stuff you talked about installing/using/adjusting programs and software to your wife’s MAC computer. I’m still using real old software and Windows 7 on my desktop because everything still works fine and I’m firmly of the don’t-fix-it-if-it-ain’t-broke school.

Your musing about how many Australians could actually pass the Australian citizenship test given to prospective new citizens echoes the comments many have suggested about a vast number of US citizens, namely that many of us are so poorly informed about how our government actually works that a fair number could not pass a basic citizenship test. Ignorance leads to inertia and glitches in politics, which leads to problems, as we have seen in recent decades.

I’m with you; I’ve never had the slightest interest in attending any kind of school reunion. I have maintained contact with a few school friends, but not many. Life has more to offer for me than memories of being a cog in the education system, altho I know a few people whose primary interest revolves around their “wonderful” HS or college days. I try to stay away from those people.

I suspect the real reason Trump is so crazy about tariffs is that he wants to eliminate the income tax, and apparently believes that tariffs will somehow bring in enuf money to run the government without an income tax. This is just another example of the delusional fantasies that make up his view of reality. Doing away with the income tax means he and his millionaire cronies get to keep even more money for themselves, but it would be a disaster for the country since tariffs would never bring in enuf money to fund the government.

Before I opened my SF book/comics/games store back in 1979 I always did my own taxes on the short form. After that I always used an accountant and the forms sent to the IRA were one fourth to one half of an

inch thick, including lots of stuff I could never figure out. Nowadays my accountant sends me a paper copy and sends the electronic form direct to the government. Being self employed I've had to pre-pay both federal and state taxes on a quarterly basis ever since starting the retail biz.

Removing historic statues old or new is always controversial. On the one hand they are part of history, on the other hand, some of that history should never have been cast in bronze or stone in the first place. Statues erected by wealthy family members to the memory of some obscure politician or soldier nobody else has ever heard of seem ripe for removal to me. At the same time some statues were erected for propaganda/political purposes that are no longer relevant. Who wants a statue of Adolph Hitler, or Joseph Stalin or Juan Peron or Boss Tweed around? In the US a lot of statues of Confederate military heroes were erected specifically to reinforce the idea of white supremacy and really have no significant historical relevance.

I agree with you that most "alternate history" novels are not really science fiction, since they just explore a potential "What If?" historical prospective, which is why I don't personally care for most of them. If, however, there are genuine science fiction elements injected into the plot, then that does make it SF. There are stories about aliens or super inventions or time traveling mercenaries being part of the story and that changes everything, at least for me. However there is no denying that there is a huge market for alternate history stories, epics where the Romans colonized North America, or the Aztecs conquered Europe and the like. It's more than a cottage industry and a lot of science fiction writers are trying to jump on the band-wagon.



SNOW POSTER TOWNSHIP #22

While I have never been interested in Funko Pops figures myself, I can understand their appeal. There is something intriguing about well made vinyl figures of cultural icons past and present, but it is not something I would ever get involved with. The idea of collecting action figures (basically dolls for boys) or even metal miniatures for gaming just is not something that excites me. There are plenty of people who do collect such things tho, and apparently there are lots of people who collect Funko Pops too. Molded action figures and statues are now an integral part of most comic book store inventories in this new century.

I have to say I also have never seen the appeal of the Vampira TV character, but clearly she is a cult figure to some fans. Mamie Van Doren always impressed me as a lady who could act, but who was wasted in cheap exploitation films and flicks with inept plots that tried to focus on

her beauty rather than paying attention to a plot. Sex Kittens sounds like it fits that niche. Not something I would waste my time watching, but I'm glad you (mostly) enjoyed it.

The question of what was the first "fandom" will probably never be answered. It seems likely there was a strong group of amateur enthusiasts of theater during the Elizabethan era who discussed the plays and the actors, and the theaters, and may have produced and circulated journals talking about the plays.

Popular fiction seems to have automatically created collectors and enthusiasts. The world of dime novels and story papers (with which I am familiar, being a collector myself), created clubs, lending libraries,

dime novel exchange bureaus, and amateur publications. The problem is that we don't know much about it because so little of the material survives. The first regular publication devoted to dime novels/nickel titles/weekly story papers in the US that is recognized and remembered was *The Dime Novel Roundup*, created by Ralph Cummings in 1931 (there were a few pre-official issues). I was friends with Ralph Cummings in the 1970s, and altho he and his fellow collectors became aware of science fiction collectors and their fanzines, his efforts were independently developed without knowledge of stf fandom. In discussions he implied that there had been dime novel clubs back before WWI, but I never saw any club newsletters or knew anything else about it, beyond the fact that there were a lot of serious collectors of the literature. It's probably a moot point anyway.

I read two of the Mycroft Holmes books written by Kareem Abdul Jabbar and Anna Whitehouse. Even ignoring the fact that the use of Mycroft as an active detective completely violates everything Conan Doyle wrote about Sherlock's brother, I was not impressed. I wrote a book review for the *N3F Review of Books* pointing out its many plot and context failures, then I thot, hey maybe I just got the bad apple in the barrel, so I decided to try another one. It was more inept that the first volume I read. The books are clearly aimed at the late grammar school crowd, and feature implausible plot elements and unbelievable coincidences strung along a very thin overreaching basic story line. I don't recommend them to anybody.

I can help with those action series titles within a book. How about---

- Captain Ace Savage Against the League of the Atomic Skull
- Captain Ace Savage and the Kinetic Energy Enigma
- Captain Ace Savage Among the Crystal Warriors of Chaos
- Captain Ace Savage and the Riddle of the Radium Vortex
- Captain Ace Savage and the Graphite Ghoul's Vow of Vengeance

I have the entire run of *Rod Serling's Twilight Zone Magazine* but admit that I have only read about half the issues. There was a lot of coverage of current visual media: movies and TV, and some fiction, mostly horror fiction, some of it very effective, but my interest in horror fiction declined dramatically sometime in the late 1980s and has not returned. I still enjoy supernatural fiction, but stories that try to shock or creep me out or rub mental nerves with detailed brutality and violence do not interest me. The real world is terrifying enuf without adding another layer of discomfort from the pages of fiction.



SAMIZDAT... 32

Not great news about your job being sabotaged by DOGE. While waiting for the case to battle its way thru the courts, I assume you did not go to work, or get paid. If the courts rule that it was a violation of the union and civil service agreements, will the government pay you for the missed days?

I am not so sure that any fewer men are reading than they ever did. The reality is that romance novels appealing directly to the female audience have dominated the publishing biz since the mid 1800s (the earliest that records of such things appear to have been kept). Right now 48% of all paperback books in sold in the USA are romance. The percentage is smaller for hardcover books (about 23%) presumably because hardback books cost a lot more than paperbacks and the average woman interested in romance fiction happens to be a voracious reader knocking down between eight and thirty romance novels per month.

Readers of romance fiction trade and recirculate the books until they literally fall to pieces, and there are stacks of the things available at low prices at yard sales, church bizarres, and library sales.

Most men do not read romance novels. Research, validated often, shows that men tend to read a lot in their younger days, the teen years particular, but they cut way back when they acquire a job with wife & family. Some men never return to being strong readers, but for many, once the kids are out of the house and things progress at a more leisurely pace, they are able to return to reading for pleasure.

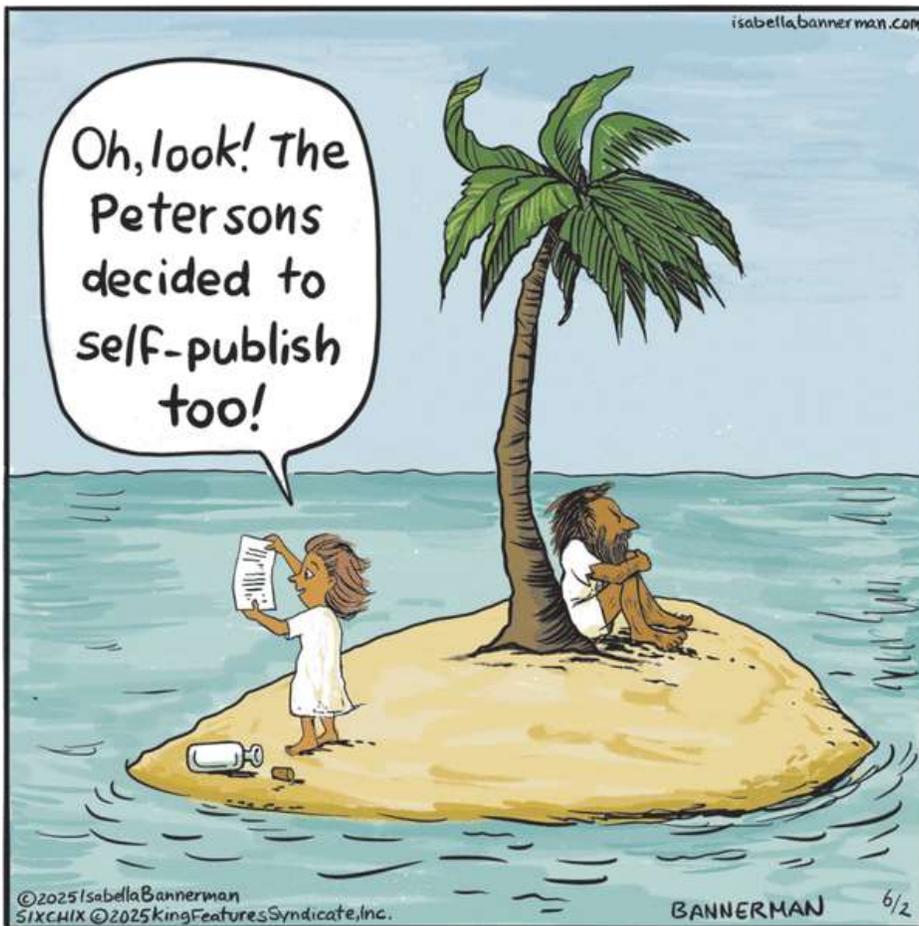
Some genre fiction is specifically male-centric, such as westerns and military themed adventures, plus straight war stories. Generally speaking more women read detective/mystery stories than men, but it's close to 50/50 depending on the year being sampled. Science fiction appears to be about 65% male, with women coming in stronger as readers of fantasy.

I don't think much of this has changed over the years. Since the invention of electronic media: movies, radio, television, and now the internet, the number of people reading anything has been in a long slow steady decline. It is very easy to turn on your electronic device and watch a movie or a TV show. Reading may be more satisfying, but it takes more time and effort, and a great many people believe they just don't have the time to get their entertainment that way. Them's the breaks, and there's not much we can do about it.

I appreciate your reviews of things read and watched, but have no desire to follow in your footsteps with the material you discussed this time round. I tried to read Dickens' "Bleak House" a long, long time ago, but gave up around a third of the way thru it. The story just got too depressing for me to keep going.

Is there some reason why almost all the pages of this issue have the words "Draft Copy" super-imposed diagonally?

I dunno about AI artwork; there seems to be plenty of free artwork available all over the internet these days, including more than a hundred different sites that offer free pics for the taking (you do have to wade thru a lot of ads along the way tho).



INTERMISSION 155 & 156

Wow! A lot of stuff here. The only way I am going to be able to handle your prodigious output is to try and send an LOC direct on the first zine you turn out each month, and do MCs on the second issue, otherwise these mailing comments would overflow with comments about your material.

I keep hoping Ukraine will survive the war with Putin, but they are dealing with a sociopath who cares only about winning, and doesn't mind all the dead bodies and the wrecked Russian economy that has followed his war of conquest.

Final cost of Tiny Hands Trump's birthday military parade came to thirty million dollars. So much for cutting government expenditures. The damage to

the streets of Washington, DC from all that heavy military equipment rolling over it has not been finalized yet, but it will likely be expensive.

The idea that two popular and public science fiction writers were investigated by the FBI in the 1950s is not really surprising. With the nation in the grip of some of the worst anti-communist hysteria in history, the FBI created dossiers on a great many public figures on the off chance that some of them might be fellow travelers or parlor reds. Hardly any were. Our tax dollars at work, yet again. J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI was a vehement anti communist figure who kept files on almost every member of Congress and most of the heads of various government departments, just in case. The amazing thing to me about all this is that any bozo, for almost any reason at all, could accuse some public figure of having anti-American and communist sympathies, without a shred of evidence, and the FBI would initiate an investigation anyway...just in case, I guess.

A lot of people in the US, including science fiction fans, and not just the Futurians, were involved with communism during the 1930s. It looked to a lot of people that capitalism as an economic system had crashed with disastrous results during the Great Depression, and the ideal of communism, shared wealth, shared universal labor, shared social responsibility, and shared ideals seemed like a workable alternative. The CPA was an active political force, at least up until Stalin and Hitler signed their mutual non-aggression pact and decided to invade and split Poland between them. Then it looked to a lot of people that the communists and the fascists were more akin than different, and involvement with communist organizes declined rapidly.

Fascinating history about the attempts to develop a nation wide computer network in Russia to aid in economic development and tighten communication networks. The fact that the soviet system was so bureaucracy heavy and the bureaucracy filled with a lot of people afraid of losing their privileged position might have been a blessing in disguise for the rest of the world. One wonders what would have happened if Glushkov's plans had been accepted. The course of history may have been altered favoring the rapid spread of communist ideology to many third world nations who could have benefitted from Russian technological expertise, had that expertise been allowed to develop.

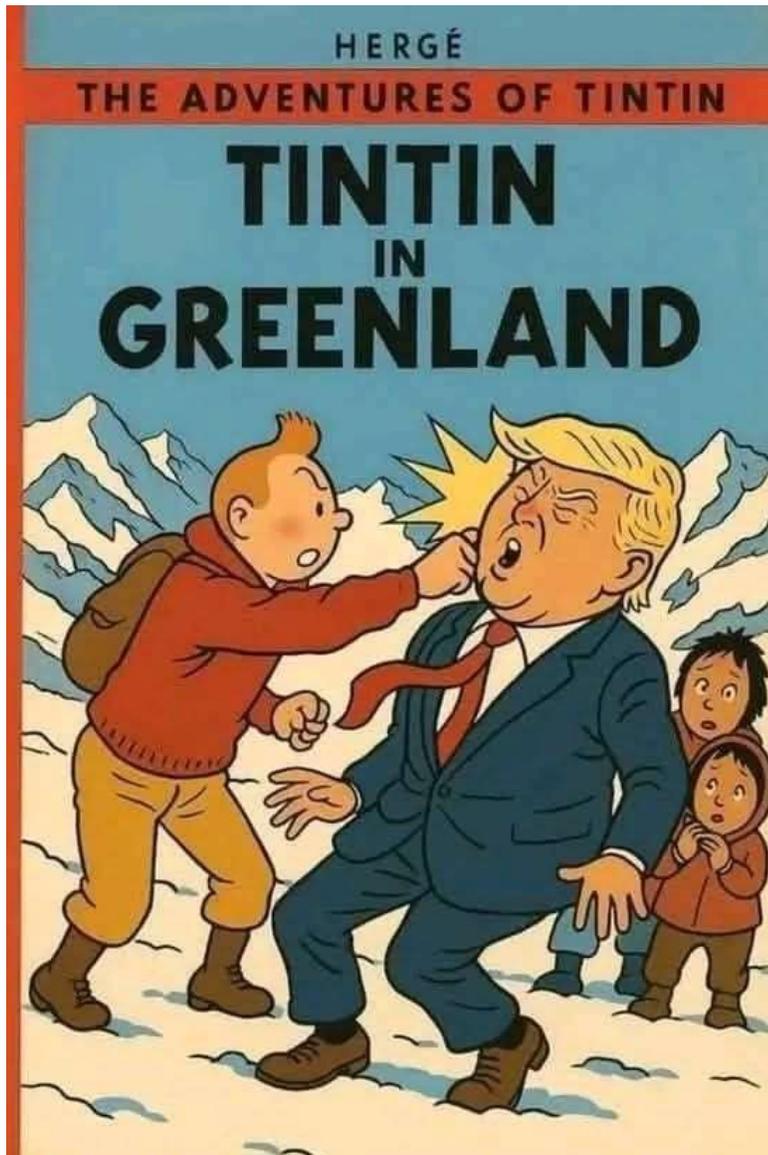
I enjoyed your reviews of the assorted stone-age science fiction stories you discussed, but none of them sound interesting enuf for me to actually invest the time and effort to read the things. Most of these early works were more interested in hyping the author's particular philosophical or religious ideas than presenting an actual interesting adventure. I note the fact that most of the authors and authoresses you mention were wealthy people who could afford to bankroll the publication of their books themselves. Back in those past times rich people collected printed books as symbols of wealth and social status, while writing a book or two themselves was the crowning touch.

I never knew John Jacob Astor was a science fiction writer. I am familiar with Jacques Futrelle from his Thinking Machine detective stories. I tried to read a couple of his science fiction adventures but gave up. His novel "The Diamond Master" for example, has a wonderful opening premise, but when it comes to details and actually developing a believable plot he falls down hard. The story was published in 1909. I haven't been able to force myself to push thru more than the first third of the book. Too many glitches, inconsistencies and slow writing for me. That novel was turned into silent movie serials, twice, in 1914 and 1929 (unfortunately both versions are lost films), while the book itself can be read on Project Gutenberg,

Futrelle and Astor were genuine heroes during the wreck of the Titanic. Futrelle's wife pleaded to be allowed to stay and die with him, but he forced her into a lifeboat, then calmly lit a cigar and discussed literature with Astor as the ship sank.

People who claim that humans are not primarily responsible for climate change and the warming planet may have a point, but human beings are part of the environment, the same as volcanoes and oceans and plants. More human beings means more trees/plants are eliminated to make room for the humans, which decreases the natural pool of carbon/CO2 absorbing natural segments. Burning fossil fuels does pour more greenhouse producing gases into the atmosphere, and whether it has a great effect or very little effect on the weather, it has some effect. Trying to deal with the problem by cutting back on the greenhouse gases humans produce seems like a reasonable response to me. Major adjustments may not even be necessary, but it certainly seems counter-productive to me to dismiss, or eliminate solar energy production, electric vehicles, or discourage companies from switching to more effective and less polluting energy generation, which seems to be what Mr. Trump and his cronies are proposing. An even better response would be to refocus our attention on population control and reduce the number of human beings on this planet. That would really help.

I think that will do it this time round. See you in sixty days.



Remember in “The Lion King” when Scar cheated to win the title of King? And the Pride Land was overrun with the hyenas? And all of the lions lost everything they had built and maintained? Just asking. No reason.

Brandy Hall Issue 14 (September 2025)

Brandy Hall 14 is produced for *N'APA* mailing 278 (September 2025) by Mark Nelson.

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This is West Riding Press Publications ??? This is West Riding Press Publications (Australia) 39.

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. In *Brandy Hall* 12 I explained how I started became a Tolkien fan, courtesy of the BBC 1 children's TV series *Jackanory*. For the first time I used US Letter size rather than A4, but that didn't prevent the peculiar page breaks that had happened when I used A4.

In *Brandy Hall* 14, inspired by some discussion by Heath Row on early fanzines in the fields of football (soccer) and rock I wrote an article about the use of the word `fanzine' in *The Times* from 1958 to 1989. This is mostly taken from a loc that I wrote on *SF Commentary* 116 (June 2024).

The use of the word 'fanzine' in The Times: Part One

Some time ago, in a moment of boredom, I searched for the word "fanzine" in The Times Digital Archive, which provides full-text access to The Times from 1785 to 2019. Ignoring five false hits, from the years 1800, 1846, 1877, 1908, & 1915, the distribution of hits is as given below.

1958	1	1971	1	1974	1	1978	1	1980	1	1981	1	1984	1	1987	2
1988	1	1989	7	1990	12	1991	14	1992	14	1993	14	1994	23	1995	16
1996	17	1997	20	1998	48	1999	44	2000	46	2001	23	2002	21	2003	30
2004	23	2005	49	2006	32	2007	45	2008	57	2009	34	2010	21	2011	56
2012	50	2013	29	2014	30	2015	21	2016	24	2017	31	2018	29	2019	23

From 1997 onwards the word fanzine has appeared in The Times at least twenty times each year, with a high of 57 hits in 2008. The data in the table suggests that the word fanzine went mainstream in *The Times* in 1989. I wonder why there was such a high number of hits in 2008? Perhaps one day I'll find out.

There are sufficiently few hits that one could read the relevant parts of each article to identify the content areas associated with the production of fanzines. How has the usage evolved over time? (There are sufficiently many hits that I'm not considering undertaking this exercise any time real soon). I have looked at the first seventeen uses of the word (1958-1989). The 1958, 1974, and 1978 usages are about SF fanzines.

Last year the fifteenth convention of the World Science Fiction Society Inc., held in London, was attended by some 300 people, mainly "fans", and in recent weeks a British Science Fiction Society has been created. Perhaps a dozen local societies already exist in Britain, the larger producing their own "fanzines".

From Our Special Correspondent. Strange World of Science Fiction, *The Times*. Saturday September 13th 1958.

The 1974 hit is from a review of Science Fiction Monthly

I detected no strong editorial theme threading through, which may be just as well, but neither are there any committed appraisals, always useful in igniting argument in a fanzine like this.

Tom Hutchinson. Science Fiction. *The Times*. Thursday, January 31st 1974.

The 1978 hit is from a review of The Visual Encyclopedia of Science Fiction.

Until last weekend, I would not have known a combozine from a gafiate, a fanzine from a prozine, and if you had told me that First Fandom was the same thing as First Fan Era, I would not have argued with you.

Engage me in debate now, however, and I will astonish you with the breadth, not to say galacticity of my knowledge. This is because I spent the weekend reading The Visual Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, edited by Brian Ash and published, magnificently, by Pan Books, at £5,50.

A fanzine you should know, is an amateur or semi-professional science fiction publication; bind several into one volume and you have a combozine, which is devastatingly logical when you come to think of it. A prozine, predictably, is a professionally produced sf magazine.

If you sever your allegiance to sf, you will be gafiating, and, I doubt if Mr Ash will like you very much.

PHS. The Times Diary. *The Times*. Tuesday February 21st 1978.

The use of the word fanzine: 1971-1988

The 1971 hit was to rock fanzines:

Alongside this enormous interest in original recordings is the spread of "fanzines" -rock magazines published by enthusiasts for no commercial gain. These are now widely read and available in many record stores.

The 1980 hit is from a listing to the TV shows broadcast on Wednesday 5th March 1980.

BBC Two

11.30pm Open Door: Guttersnipe. A report from Telford on what is cryptically called "an infamous fanzine that has been described as decadent and utter filth".

Guttersnipe was a punk fanzine produced by a "collective of punks in Telford". (Web page: Guttersnipe - Fanzine (1979-1980)).

The 1981 hit was to punk fanzines:

All were loosely associated with a musical group called Total Chaos and spent much of their time organizing an empty school over the river in Gateshead as a base for gigs (engagements) and rehearsals, looking for grants from charities, local authorities and the like, and producing "fanzines" (fan magazines --- samizdat publications not normally shown to older people).

(We now move onto material not included in my loc).

A 1984 article about Jack Jaffe's game "Save The President" references a postal diplomacy fanzine:

In Britain Games and Puzzles magazine has disappeared. Save the President! Has just had its first review, in an amateur's duplicated "fanzine" called Mad Policy with a main list of perhaps a few hundred. At least the writer liked it.

Robin Young. One killing only - for gamesman Jaffe. *The Times*. Thursday December 27th 1984.

In 1987 Susan Marling calculated that she had spent £1.20 ringing the Hollywood Hotline to hear "a column of fanzine chat". In a second reference Nicholas Harling notes that the Crystal Palace manager Steve Coppell promised "the club's fanzine the scoop" about Watford's offer to pay £450,000 for Ian Wright. (Ian Wright played for Crystal Palace from 1985 to 1991 before transferring to Arsenal.)

In 1988 Alasdair Riley discussed football fanzines.

Every Saturday lunchtime at Sportspages, the specialist bookshop on London's Charing Cross Road, there can be found a varied collection of individuals, united by a passion for football, who head for the piles of amateur-looking publications costing from 30p to £1.

These books are fanzines, the underground press of the football ground. From a trickle of alternative national football magazines in the '70s, there is now a flood of partisan publications owing allegiance to individual clubs.

[...]

A typical fanzine sells about 50 copies a week. They have magnificently surrealist titles, which include: *Sing When We're Fishing* (Grimsby Town); *Brian Moore 's Head Looks Uncannily Like The London Planetarium* (Gillingham) and *A Kick Up The Rs* (QPR). The contents range from serious articles on the proposed compulsory membership scheme for club supporters to less serious topics . A recent issue of *The Absolute Game*, the Scottish fanzine, devoted a page, entitled The Glorious Greaseballs, to a critique of footballers' hairstyles.

Alasdair Riley. Fans of the fanzine. *The Times*. Wednesday December 14th 1988.

The use of the word fanzine: 1989

In 1989 year's fanzine coverage kicked off with coverage of a football fanzine.

[...] this A-Z column cannot be muzzled. Nor, I am delighted to say, can the Bishop's Stortford unofficial supporters' magazine — or "fanzine". The publication, *Rhodes Review*, has been banned from the ground, disowned by the official supporters' club, and forbidden to display the club badge. The mag is what you would expect: bubbly, obsessive, full of spelling mistakes and bad jokes and a hellbent pricker of pomposities. The cause of the ban was a couple of paragraphs that criticized Harrow Borough, which threatened to report the club for "bringing the game into disrepute". *Rhodes Review* is now dead: long live *Cross Rhodes* , which will be sold — outside the ground — next season, and at Sportspages bookshop in London. But the club badge will be missing. "We were going to change the cover anyway," said David Ryan, the editor.

Barnes, Simon. "I return from the United States agog to hear the plans for the summer." *Times*, 28 Jan. 1989, p. 10.

The following week there was a followup news item.

Last week this column spoke out for the magazine they tried to ban at Bishop's Stortford football club: the unofficial "fanzine" , *Cross Rhodes*. Now I hear that the two editors, Bill Turner and David Ryan, have been banned from following the team for the rest of the season. The club has gone to the trouble of writing to all other teams in the league to make sure the ban is enforced. It follows a bizarre incident on the way home after a recent away match at Marlow . The

driver of the supporters' coach objected to a group singing at the back. His objection was so strong that he called the police. Of the singers, only two were banned for this offence, and by one of those strange, indeed, well-nigh Nostradamian coincidences, they were Messrs Turner and Ryan. The ban was initially for the current season and all the next one, but this has been reduced to the current season only. Petitions have been launched, but the club remains unmoved. As for the singularly harmless *Cross Rhodes*, Turner says the publicity "is really helping it take off".

"Simon Barnes." *Times*, 4 Feb. 1989, p. 10.

An article about Maggie Alderson, appointed editor of *Elle* magazine at the age of 29, notes that in her younger days she had launched a punk fanzine, called *Punkture*. (*Times*, July 19th 1989).

The solution to 5 down in "last Saturday's" concise crossword 1964 was fanzine. (*Times*, 9th September 1989). The clue was "Followers' newssheet".

Simon Barnes discusses another football fanzine.

Salutations to yet another football "fanzine". This one is called *Deranged Ferret*, and serves the supporters of Lincoln City. Why this title, I hear you ask. It is taken from a remark by the Lincoln manager, the extraordinary Colin Murphy, a man famous throughout football for his ability to present the most simple concept in a fashion that baffles the most erudite auditors. He was once asked if he baffled his boys during team talks: "Well, I really think it don't matter how much you talk to a team. I'm convinced about that over the years. The only thing that matters is what they do between three o'clock and twenty to five. You really can do what you like with them during the week and you really can say what you like to them at a team talk. Now if that makes them run around like deranged ferrets for an hour and half you've done the job, haven't you? Because they win!" You simply cannot argue with facts like that.

Barnes, Simon. "Times Diary." *Times*, 16 Sept. 1989, p. 10.

On November 4th 1989 the classified ads contains an advert for a cricket fanzine, produced by one Johnny Miller. The final fanzine reference on the year comes from an article reviewing rock in the 1980s; "the years when rock grew up and became 'serious'." The article suggests that the British music magazine *Smash Hits* started life as a "pop fanzine". (December 27th 1989).

The Mathom House

Brownian Motion 14 (Garth Spencer)

Ryctm #1

Re your comments to Ahrvid ... so, Thatcher was the first British PM with a science degree?

Not just the first, but in 2025 still the only British PM with a science degree. I wrote an article for my ANZAPA zine in which I looked at the degrees held by British Prime Ministers of the 20th and 21st

centuries. Gordon Brown was the only Prime Minister with a PhD, and, as far as I can tell, he kept that hidden from the public during his career as a politician.

Ryctm #2

“It really does seem, sometimes, as if there is less of a social consensus now, and as if there are proportionally more adults who resist any rules or expectations being applied to them – even common courtesies, legislated rules of the road, or legal business practice. Maybe I’m just projecting an impression I got from mass media.”

That’s my impression as well. When it comes to exhibiting common courtesies it’s unfortunate that politicians, who frequently complain about their being “less of a social consensus now”, fail to lead by example. There’s an increasing number of “sovereign citizens” in Australia. Just this week two policemen were murdered by a sovereign citizen when they entered his property. A newspaper article revealed that there are an increasing number of cases in the family courts when one of the parties makes “sovereign citizen” arguments.

It’s only a few days since the right-wing social media personality Charlie Kirk was murdered. I saw a news item in which a Republican member of Congress stated that words to the effect that the Democrats “own” this murder. She didn’t have a reply when one of the journalists asked her if by the same logic the Republicans owned the murder of two Democrat politicians a months previously in Minnesota.

Ryctm #3

“There was a time when I hoped to collate a nearly foolproof Standard Conrunning Handbook, from many curious, divers and sometimes forgotten materials. This ran aground upon two reefs: (1) nobody was interested – it appears all fans who become conrunners want to do Their Own Thing, Their Own Way, and (2) there are no solutions to all problems – conventions are inherently chaotic, no convention committee performs well on all fronts, and there are always situations you cannot foresee or succeed in overcoming.”

I’ve never run a SF convention and have little interest in volunteering to run one. Still, your proposed Standard Conrunning Handbook sounds useful. Perhaps it would have contemporary appeal if it contained scenarios along with suggestions of different approaches to deal with them. Potential conrunners could see how their proposed Code of Conduct handled these situations.

Ryctm #4

“The kinds of situations ran from dealing with a private investigator looking for a runaway (who was potentially a convention member) and demanding complete compliance from Registration...”

My inclination is to say, in the absence of any legally enforceable paperwork to the contrary, no.

Ryctm #5

“through a consuite staff finding themselves involuntarily acting as babysitters for a baby who started running a fever..”

My thoughts here are that you shouldn't get yourself into a situation when you are "*involuntarily acting as babysitters for a baby*".

Intermission #155 (Ahrvid Engholm)

"The copyright industry has in recent decades tried to stretch the copyright fence step by step. It was extremely unjustified to widen the protection time from 50 to 70 years plus the author's lifespan (important, since we live longer today). These extreme 70 years comes from lobbying by Disney..."

The extension from 50 years to 70 years was driven by Disney wanting to protect their copyright on the first Mickey Mouse productions. The legislation that granted this extension has informally become known as the "Mickey Mouse Protection Act". For corporate works, which means work produced for companies by individuals who are hired to produce it, the copyright was extended from **75 years to 95 years** from publication. (That US corporations are sometimes considered to have the same rights as US citizens shows the excessive political power of the corporations.)

"Those who want to ban AIs to use work of others as training data are out on very thin ice. It's not at all a matter of "plagiarism" or "stealing" work..."

My understanding is that one of the objections to the use of copyright material for training AIs is that feeding a complete novel into an AI program can not be considered "fair use". Consequently, the AI industry should have to pay a fee to train their program on a novel. Any other organisation has to pay a fee to use copyright material that goes beyond 'fair use', why shouldn't the AI industry? No one is objecting to the use of material that is not covered by copyright, such as the "*plays by Shakespeare, the math of Newton, the music by Beethoven, the calculations by Einstein*".

"Letters form words that made the stories and readers' letters that built sf and fandom. Movies, games, comics and other peripheral things only came much later and is of secondary interest."

The early prozines were essential in allowing the first SF fanzines to contact each other. From these humble beginnings they influenced the early stages of SF fandom. Whilst agreeing with your sentiments, I would slightly reword them. The first SF movies were released before *Amazing Stories* was a twinkle in Gernsback's eyes. The hugely influential *Metropolis* was released in 1927, three years before the first fanzine. I don't know enough about the early stages of fandom to know when there were sufficient fans/fanzines for fandom to exist. The first SF convention wasn't until 1936 and FAPA started the year after. Notable SF movies to be released over this time period include *Frankenstein* (1931), *Island of Lost Souls* (1932), *The Invisible Man* (1933), and *Things to Come* (1936). My impression is that early SF fans were primarily interested in the written word. It's probably indeed the case that movies were of "*secondary interest*" to the early fans. But it's arguable whether "*Movies... only came much later.*"

"Some languages resist change for other reasons Latin has been nurtured by the Catholic church, needed in masses."

My favourite job advert of all time... I didn't see the advert but read about it in the newspaper. So perhaps I should call it my favourite job of all time. The Vatican advertised for a Latin expert. The job?

The Catholic Church needed someone to construct Latin words for modern technology/ideas. (A bit like the French I suppose, they didn't want to use English words in their communiques.) They wanted Latin words.

"There are several theories of how human language appeared."

I recently read a review of Martin Jones' book "Feast: Why Humans Share Food" (2007). What was the key that unlocked the potential for humans to develop language? One theory is that the invention of cooking is the key. Cooking breaks down fibres in food, making it easier to digest. If food is easier to digest, then the gut can decrease in volume. In turn the energy saved on digestion allows the brain to grow. If we accept this theory, then language may have appeared before humans as there's plenty of evidence that the Neanderthals cooked their food.

Where did I find this review? It's in a collection of book reviews written by John Carey, which originally appeared in *The Sunday Times*. I hugely recommend this collection.

John Carey. (2023). *Sunday Best: 80 Great Books from a Lifetime of Reviews*.

Ryct Heath Row (for EAPA).

*"Interesting ideas of how to get EAPA more members. Do you listen, Garth? (I have myself tried recruiting new members, not very successfully. People don't have the feel for fanzines anymore.]
"Social media" kills it.."*

I'm currently a member of *NAPA* and *ANZAPA*. I occasionally think about extending my involvement to a third apa. Usually when that happens I lay down on the bed and close my eyes. When I wake up I am feeling much happier. More recently I actually sat down and thought about which would be the best third apa to join. The attraction of *EAPA* is that it's electronic, no need to print multiple copies of a fanzine and post them to the editor. The disadvantage is that it is too regular. It's not a challenge to produce a regular apa zine for *NAPA* as the mailings are typically at the 100 page mark. *ANZAPA* is much larger, 500+ pages to read. I'm not sure I could find the time to contribute to a monthly apa. I feel that I should go and close my eyes now...

Female writers tend to have a different approach and select different topics (more "social style" of writing, less heavy action and technology).

That's an interesting thesis. It seems plausible that how an author writes and what they write about *can be* influenced by their socialisation, life experience, and perspective. Thus if the "average female" has different experiences in these areas than the "average man" then they *may* write differently. But there will be exceptions. In the field of SF the most well-known exception is surely James Tiptree Jr. No one identified that Tiptree was a woman writing under a pseudonym. That suggests an interesting exercise. Have there been cases when the gender of writers have been identified by analysis of their writing style? And perhaps your generalisation of female writers selecting different topics is more applicable to "long ago" rather than more recent writing? I imagine that even if you could calculate an 'average' gender score for "socialisation, life experience, and perspective" the standard deviation in the measure would mean that it would have little prescriptive value.

The Swamp Pot Sentinel 1.2 (Robert Jennings)

It will not surprise you to learn that I did not know Tom Mix (1880-1940). Wikipedia tells me that “he appeared in 291 films, all but nine of which were silent films”. His first movie was released on October 21st 1909. Wikipedia also states that his approach to acting in Westerns influenced both Ronald Reagan and John Wayne, and doubtless many others. In fact, Wikipedia states that Mix got Wayne his first Hollywood job: “moving props in the back lot of Fox Studios.”

I was interested in your review of “*Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible, and Why*”. I’ve added this book to the long list of books that I would like to read, though in all likelihood I’ll never read it. As you suggest there is a large amount of human politics involved in the translation of the bible. The Catholic Church was against translations of the New Testament from Latin into vernacular tongues. I don’t know if they had a doctrinal interpretation to support this, but the real reason was that they wanted to restrict the number of people who could read the bible. After all, the scope for disputes on the interpretation of the bible is hugely limited if you have to rely on your local priest to tell you what the Latin text means.

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm

“Even more amazing to me is the fact that the Vasa was actually raised from the harbor and refurbished to become a tourist attraction. That kind of technology was once the stuff of wild fancy. The cost added up over the years must have been enormous. However, one presumes that the sense of history, and the desire to establish a premiere tourist attraction weighed heavily in the financial considerations. I am curious whether the government put up the restoration money or was it donated by ordinary citizens?”

I wonder if someone is crunching the numbers to determine at what point the project to raise and refurbish the Vasa breaks even? It’s not just the money that people spend to see the Vasa. There’s the money that they are contributing to the local economy when they pay for accomodation, go out to eat, when they visit other attractions etc.

Ryct Jefferson P. Swycaffer

“I am only slightly sympathetic to those fans who complain that Multi-track convention programming forces them to make impossible decisions about which events to attend”

I recently bought the program for AussieCon, the 33rd World S.F. Convention. This was held in Melbourne, from 14th to 17th August 1975. I was surprised to discover that this convention did not have parallel programming. Was this the standard for Worldcons of this era? Or was the use of a single stream of programming a historical throwback in 1975?

Ryct Jefferson #2

“Altho I note that a lot of conventions now days are making video transcriptions of some panels and events so that members may enjoy them virtually later on. This seems to have been a development brought on by the COVID crisis. I do wonder how long those videos stick around. I would assume collecting them at the convention website costs money, and after a time, with the convention being over and done, might decide not to pay the costs for pixel storage any more...”

The AussieCon program booklet contains the following.

“The majority of the AUSSIECON Programme will be recorded by the Australian Broadcasting Commission and will be made available to the AUSSIECON committee after preparation of a special programme.

It is also intended that several major items on the AUSSIECON Programme will be video taped by arrangement with the Video Resource Centre, Carlton. These will be available for subsequent replay by interested groups - enquiries to the AUSSIECON Committee.”

I wonder whatever became of the audio and video recordings? I will follow this up in ANZAPA.

Ryctm

“My town library has completely eliminated all genre sections. All books are now either fiction or nonfiction, and then listed in alphabetical order by author last names. If you want a science fiction book, or a detective story, or a western, or anything else, you have to know the author’s last name and hunt him down. I think this is a crappy system, since it discourages people from sampling new material in a genre they find interesting.”

That is such a poor system. I can’t understand why a librarian would want to catalogue their books in this way. It’s almost as if they want to make it as difficult as possible for the public to browse through their collection. If I remember I will make a note of how our local library organises fiction... I thought I’d taken photographs of the sections, but I can’t find them. So perhaps I only thought about doing so.

Ryct Kevin Trainor Jr

“Despite being constantly overwhelmed with new material, the C.S. Forester Hornblower novels are one of the few series of books I have actually reread. I thot they were even better the second time round.”

I don’t remember how old I was when my parents bought me *Mr Midshipman Hornblower*, perhaps twelve or thirteen. I really enjoyed it and I spent the next couple of years tracking down all the other Hornblower novels. Along the way I reread them numerous times. A few years ago I had the urge to reread Hornblower and I’ve been buying them second-hand as I come across them. I’m trying to buy them in chronological order, but that isn’t strictly necessary as I have a good idea what happens in the books I’ve not yet tracked down.

Ye Murthered Master Mage 277 (George Phillies)

“I continue to work toward encouraging n3f members to become more active in their club. We are a fan organization...”

In *Origins* 71 Sam Lubell listed the six oldest science fiction clubs. According to this list, the N3F is the third oldest club. But is the N3F a club or an organisation? Is there a difference between the two?

Is the difference only semantic or is it more profound? I don't have a strong opinion as I can see arguments in both directions, but I lean more towards calling it an organisation than a club. In the space of two sentences you refer to the N3F as being both a club and an organisation.

"Remember, an electronic membership is only six dollars a year."

Membership of the N3F is outstanding value. At the current exchange rate membership of the N3F is AUD \$9.18. You couldn't buy a novel for that. When I moved to Wollongong you could buy a good lunch from one of the Thai restaurants in the CBD for AUD \$8. But that was twenty-three years ago, you can't buy lunch for AUD \$8 in 2025.

Ryctm #1

"I had at least one of the Feynmann Lecture volumes. I thought it was dreadful. Feynmann forgot or didn't care that he was lecturing undergraduates, indeed, freshmen. There were far too many bits and pieces of physics content that a student was unlikely to know."

That's a view that I've heard from elsewhere, but it means more coming from a professional physicist. I have heard that the CalTech *faculty* enjoyed his lectures, but they were not the target audience!

Ryctm #2

"Mind you, I wrote a freshman physics/mechanics book, Physics One. It was based on two equations, namely $F = dp/dt$ and Physics Minus Calculus Equals Nonsense. Selling point: The price of my physics book (\$19.99) may be less than the sales tax on your physics book."

I have added your textbook to the list of science books that I'm interested in reading, though I think it's unlikely that at my stage of life I will be buying a freshman physics book. There are already more books in that list than I'll ever read. The one that I added prior to your book is Philip Ball's *"Designing the Molecular World: Chemistry at the Frontier"*. The first book on the list is Ray Monk's *"Inside the Centre: The Life of J. Robert Oppenheimer"*. I know that I have at least one Oppenheimer biography on my bookcases at work. It's possible that I've already bought Monk's book. In which case the last book on the list is *Popularising Science: The Life and Work of JBS Haldane* by K. Dronamraju.

Ryct Heath Row

"Some years ago, we ran in TNFF profiles of the 64 Immortal Fen. Rather we ran profiles of 60 of them, since absolutely nothing is known about the other four. Jon Swartz did the writing and data collection."

Have you given thought to collecting those profiles and publishing them in one volume?

Intermission #156 (Ahrvid Engholm)

I read with interest your account of proposals to develop a Soviet “internet” in the 1960s and early 1970s.

“In 1959, as the director of a secret military computer research centre, Kitov turned his attention to devoting ‘unlimited quantities of reliable calculating processing power’ to better planning the national economy, which was the most persistent information-coordination problem besetting the Soviet socialist project.”

A long time ago I co-supervised an economics PhD student who was developing an econometrics model for our local area. (At this period of time the university thought it was a Good Idea for PhD students to have a supervisor from outside of their faculty. I took this student on after the original co-supervisor from our school passed away.) Just about the only thing I remember from supervising this PhD student is that the field of econometrics originated in the Soviet Union, it was developed into order to “better plan the national economy”. Some time after this I learnt that econometrics was a strong influence on Isaac Asimov’s development of psychohistory in the Foundation series. (Amazingly, you also covered Asimov in issue 156!)

“Early info on the topic were deceivingly incomplete, giving the impression critique was about AI as dangerous for the environment (it isn't), racially biased (no, AIs are biased the other way)”

I don’t understand what you mean when you write that “AIs are biased the other way”. Can you clarify your meaning? It’s well established that neural networks can be racially biased. This is typically a function of the images that were used to train them.

“Seattle ordered the ChatGPT AI to find "scandals" regarding program applicants for “homophobia, transphobia, racism, harassment, sexual misconduct, sexism, fraud”.”*

I don’t have a problem with a convention committee deciding not to give a platform to someone who is known to be homophobic, transphobic, guilty of sexual misconduct etc. It’s the right of the convention committee to decide who to invite onto their panels. I do have a problem with a convention committee that believes that ChatGPT is a suitable tool for identifying such people.

As usual I appreciate you explaining what you don’t like about conventions, in this case Archipelacon. But how did you travel to the convention? By ferry from Sweden?

Archive Midwinter (Jefferson Swycaffer)

Ryct George Phillies

"I'm in one now with a "true believer." She refuses to change her descriptions of events to improve the drama because the way she wrote it is "the way is really happened." She's also immature in other ways."

It would be interesting to read an article which discusses some of the typical mistakes or misconceptions that members of a writing group have. Are there common problems or does each person who is unable to take constructive criticism have their own way of 'failing'?

Ryct Kevin Trainor Jr

"King David's Spaceship" was quite a good book indeed. I don't believe that Pournelle was arguing that monarchy or empire are admirable forms of government, only functional ones that might exist in an SF future."

A few days ago I was thinking about Jerry Pournelle as he may be the most famous SF author to have played postal diplomacy. I can't be 100% about that since I don't know all the authors who have played postal diplomacy. I've never read any of his books and I was wondering if I should. And if I should, which are the best ones?

R.A.I.L. #7 (Adrian Kresnak)

"I'm not usually a fan of natural history museums. Given the choice, I'd rather visit an art museum – and the closer to modern-day, the better. Maybe it says something about me that I'm always drawn to the new."

Whilst I don't mind going to a natural history museum given the choice I'd pick an art gallery. The art galleries in Australia do not have strong collections of "older" art, so when abroad I'm happy to visit a gallery with a comprehensive collection.

Esmeralda County Line (Kevin Trainor Jr)

David J. Butler has written a brief but excellent history of our genre, The Politically Incorrect Guide to Science Fiction & Fantasy. Unlike other books of its ilk, it is not big enough to stun an ox (even a small one) but nonetheless covers all the bases, all the significant authors, and the major controversies in under 200 pages including the index. Highly recommended.

I have made a note of this book. Under 200 pages? Wow! I've placed your recommendation next to Heath's recommendation of Sherryl Vint's *Science Fiction*, which in turn I added to David Seed's *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*. The Vint book comes in at 218 pages. However, it appears to have a different focus than the other two titles as, according to one reviewer, it "gives a great sense of how sf writers have responded to (and at times, anticipated) changes in science, technology, and society

more broadly.” The book by David Seed is 144 pages. Perhaps I’ll end up buying all three and reviewing them...

Ryct Bob Jennings

“The ‘Peanuts’ strip reminds me of one of my favorite English history books, 1066 And All That, which has mock examinations at several points with similar instructions.”

I used to own *1066 And All That*. I thought that I’d bought it whilst living in Australia, but I can’t find it. So either it’s in a box that I haven’t opened or I bought it when I lived in the UK. I’ll have to track down another copy as it’s both very amusing and to the point.

Ryctm

“The reason we didn’t impose tariffs on Russia is that they’re embargoed, so there would be no point in levying tariffs on goods that could not be imported.”

Thanks for explaining that. Now it seems more reasonable that tariffs were not imposed on Russia.

Ryct Garth Spencer

“I’m not sure that the sundering of fandom into literary and media factions was inevitable, since we all know people (and are people) who enjoy SF in a variety of media, but nonetheless it happened. All we can do is reach out to other fans on the other side of the –ideological?- divide and hope to close up the ranks with the things we have in common.”

I was first introduced to SF through TV and Films and I’ve continued to enjoy them to this day. For many years they were my primary source of SF enjoyment. OTOH, I’ve always enjoyed SF fanzines; the more fannish zines rather than the sercon zines as I’ve never felt I’ve read enough SF to appreciate serious writing on SF. (The exception to this dislike of sercon zines is Bruce Gillespie’s *SF Commentary*, which in any case contains material on much more than SF/fantasy.) But I’ve never come across the media equivalent of fannish zines. In fact, I’ve never come across any media fanzines. I know that in the past there were media fanzines, but the ones I’ve read about seem to entirely focus on fan fiction. (Fan fiction is not something that interests me, apologies to those that enjoy either reading or writing it.)

Snow Poster Township 22 (Heath Row)

Your comments on early fanzines in different genres reminded me of a loc I wrote for Bruce Gillespie... See the fruits of this at the beginning of this issue. Thanks!

My wife went through a stage of buying Pop Vinyl figures, concentrating on anything related to the Winnie-the-Pooh universe and Mickey Mouse. I don’t know if they produced any Doraemon figures, but if they did and she came across them then she would have purchased those. I restricted myself to a few Dr Who items, particularly anything Dalek related. Some years ago Australians went crazy for Pop Vinyl and shops stocked a huge range of figures. The craze has died its natural death and there’s now a much smaller range of figures for sell.

“Even though we now own two Pops, each resting in their box on a nightstand in the bedroom of our furnished apartment, I still don’t understand the appeal. If we were living in a more long-term

situation, I'd be tempted to take them out of their boxes to display them on a bookshelf. Without their packaging, they don't take up much room and might make fun decorations. In the box, they can't breathe!"

I took the Daleks out of their box and put them on my desk at work, where they congregate with a few other Daleks. The non-Dalek Dr Who figures I put on a shelf in their boxes. This wasn't to protect their value, I thought they looked OK like that and I didn't have anywhere else to put them.

Ryct Bob Jennings

"Breaking News!" made me chuckle. If someone supposedly in charge of public health can disregard germ theory in the name of miasma theory, perhaps we'll see steps taken toward bloodletting, trepanning, and babies sleeping on their stomachs."

You won't be laughing about it if someone forwards *Snow Poster Township 22* to Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr - he would take your comments as a serious suggestion!

"So, what do you consider the Lord of the Rings: a series or a novel? I'm sure Tolkien scholars—and purists—have a strong point of view."

That's an interesting question. It was published as a trilogy. I still have the copy that my parents bought in 1979. But because it's showing its age I've also bought it as a single volume. I wish you'd asked that question before I'd mentioned it last issue because I might have said it was a trilogy but now I feel obliged to say that it's a novel.

"In 1897, the Journal of the American Medical Association published a paper that addressed the evils of tea-drinking. Therefore, tea is a tool of the devil."

I start the day with a cup of coffee, thereafter I mostly drink tea. Although not a strict rule, I like black tea in the morning and green tea in the afternoon and evening. The main exception to only drinking coffee first thing is if I am meeting someone for coffee, in which case I drink coffee. I have an aversion to drinking tea at restaurants unless it's an Asian restaurant. In my experience the best tea is to be found at Japanese restaurants.

Ryct Garth Spencer

"How to apologize" might be one of the more important skills. "How to listen" might be the most important."

When I was younger I did not know "How to listen" in a conversation and was apt to jump in with my own opinions. There's still room for improvement, I'm a work in progress. Apologising is certainly an important life skill, it can be difficult to admit that you have made a mistake. However, I make no apology for spelling apologise thusly.

Ryct Samuel Lubell

"We recently returned to subscribing to Disney+, and I've enjoyed having renewed access to the wealth of Doctor Who, Marvel, and Star Wars options."

We don't have a subscription to Disney+, or to any pay-to-view service, and I'm not in favour of subscribing to it. Consequently, I've been unable to watch much of the Disney+ episodes of Dr Who. The exception was on our last-but-one trip to Jakarta, where I was able to watch episodes courtesy of my brother-in-law. (I didn't find the time to watch Dr Who on our last trip). On a recent visit to JB Hi-Fi I was very surprised to see that they had one of the Disney+ seasons available on DVD. Why was I surprised? I'm sure I read that Disney were not going to allow their Dr Who seasons to be released on DVD. I'll have to snap that up the next time we go back to that shop.

Samizdat 31 (Samuel Lubell)

Will you be adding your editorship of *Origins* to your extensive list of ongoing projects?

Thanks for the link to the If I Ran the Zoo con-runners game.

"For many people reading has always been a girlish pastime, with "real men" playing (or at least watching) sports"

On my first read through I had to read that sentence twice. I thought you'd written "real men" playing boardgames. I thought to myself, surely that is not right?

"I also made some more progress on Charles Dickens' Bleak House which continues to grow more melodramatic and soap operaisish by the chapter between spontaneous human combustion"

I had a quote from *Bleak House* at the start of the "Spontaneous Combustion" chapter of my lecture notes, which I used on our second-year mathematical modelling subject. There I explained that even in Dickens' time it was known that human spontaneous combustion was a myth. I finished by talking about an experiment that was carried out at the University of Edinburgh. I forget when, perhaps in the early 1990s since I seem to recall, circa 1997-1999, watching a popular science program which contained details of the experiment. The aim of the experiment was to show that human spontaneous combustion can not occur. It was determined that a pig carcass was the best approximation to a human being, so they tried to make a pig carcass spontaneously combust.

Ryctm

"Legends & Lattes by Travis Baldree is no longer a standalone. There are two other books in the series."

I've now read *Bookshops & Bonedust*. I did not enjoy this as much as *Legends & Lattes*, perhaps because the ins and outs of running a bookshop were not as interesting as setting up and running the first coffee shop! I hadn't realised that the third novel has been published. According to some websites I just used it's now going to be released until November. I suppose I'll buy it when it's released.

Ryct Kevin Trainor Jnr

"Yes, DAW Books is still around. They are part of Astra Publishing House."

I recently purchased a copy of the AUSSIECON (World S.F. Convention 33, August 1975) program book. As part of some analysis that I wrote for my apazine in ANZAPA I looked at the adverts that it

contained. Just over a quarter of the adverts were for publishers (28.2%), with another 14.4% on books (typically a one-page advert for a particular book). I mention this because DAW, “the leading publishers of fine science fiction”, had an advert. The name stuck in my memory.



Esmeralda County Line #12
August - September 2025
A zine for N^oAPA 278

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“I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE SEEN HANFORD”

I went down to Las Vegas Tuesday for the September NSSAB meeting, which dragged on for nearly five hours, and ended with an inarticulate education major from Pahrump being elected as vice-chairman in my place. The good news about that is that I no longer have to show up an hour early for the Intergovernmental Affairs meeting before the main meeting and don't have to log in for the virtual National Advisory Board Chairs meeting at the end of October. The bad news is that I don't get to go to the Hanford Site at the end of April for the spring National Advisory Board Chairs meeting. Meh. It's not like the travel reimbursement is different for the vice-chair vs. regular board members. Thursday morning after the meeting I stopped by the VA on my way out of town and got a new nose hose, which is mostly like the old one but different enough that the technician spent some time explaining the differences.

My Senators finished the season 73-89, fourth out of five teams in our division and seventh out of ten in the American League. After noting that we only had winning records on turf and against National League teams, I was tempted to ask the commissioner if I could move the team to Texas after all – but to Houston, but the moment of temptation passed, partially because I have a couple of very good rookies coming up this year: catcher Jim Sundberg and first baseman Mike “The Human Rain Delay” Hargrove.

Son of Silvercon III went very well, and planning is underway for the 4th iteration, which will be July 17-19 at the Best Western Plus on St. Rose Parkway in Henderson, which was where we started, but this time we'll have Tim Powers as guest of honor.

BOOKS & OTHER MEDIA

Once again I have been sucked into a thing as a result of memes perpetrated by its creators and fans, and that thing is Kamen America. I have so far taken part in two kickstarters: [Kamen America 10: Liberating Strife](#), and [Kamen America Omnibus 1](#), which came with [Kamen America Alpha](#). I'm not entirely certain whether Timothy Lim and Mark Pellegrini are satirizing the superhero/masked hero genres with their super-powered burger-chomping heroine and her teammates, but the art is good, the stories are interesting, so I'll probably keep following it.

Last year's Son of Silvercon GoH Brad Torgersen has a collection of his short stories out, [Footprints in the Firmament](#), and it's pretty good stuff. You can find it on Amazon for your Kindle and in hard & soft dead-tree editions, or you can order an autographed copy from the man himself through his website.

Finished [Fate/Kaleid Liner: Prisma Illya](#) (The Complete Manga Collection) which doesn't quite cover all the stuff in the first season of the anime, but life is full of disappointment. For those unfamiliar with the story, in this timeline Illya is pretty much shanghaied into becoming a magical girl and given the task of recovering class cards along with Miyu Edelfelt, a girl in her class who has also acquired the magical wand Sapphire. Their mentors are the perpetually-squabbling Rin Tohsaka and Luvia Edelfelt, whose squabbles are the reason the magic wands Ruby & Sapphire ditched them in the first place. Just as it's good to read the book sometimes after seeing the movie, it was good to read the manga after seeing the anime.

Comments on N'APA #277

Intermission #155 Ignored on account of brainless political slop. Maybe there was something worth reading in the rest of the ish, but after the opening comments I didn't care to waste my time finding out.

Swamp Sport Sentinel I can attest to the truth of swamps in Massachusetts. One of my cousins has a house in the Ward Hill section of Haverhill, and about a third of his back yard is swamp. . 🍄🍄 [The Mercy of Gods](#) looks interesting, and yours is the second positive review I've seen of it. I'll have to check it out.

🍄🍄 HellthChase bears an unfortunate resemblance to a lot of civilian medical portals. At the VA, on the other hand, we have the dubious comfort of knowing that if our medical records got screwed up, it was by an actual human being. Fully automated things like pharmacy refills and travel reimbursement seem to go smoothly enough. (N.B. this is not a plug for this system to be expanded to cover civilians. They can get in line to die for their country like we did.)

(RYCTo Jefferson) My opinion of multi-track programming is that it often gave me options in case I didn't like what was in main programming – a feature, not a bug, if you will.

(RYCTo Mark) I was surprised to see that my local casino/hotel Tonopah Station has a cigarette machine. It's on the casino floor, where minors aren't allowed without their parents, so there's not much risk of some underage hoodlum putting \$5 in the machine and making off with a pack of nails. 🍄🍄 It's not so much a matter of the equipment not being available as it is a lack of funds to obtain that equipment/have it made. Even the Smithsonian's Air & Space Museum, richly endowed though it may be by corporate sponsors, doesn't have a bottomless wallet for such things.

(RYCTo me) Well, as you saw, I was none too impressed with Parkinson's fictional biography of Admiral Lord Hornblower either. 🍄🍄 This has not been what I have observed with Moms for Liberty and other groups trying to get porn out of public school libraries. I am afraid that many public schools do indulge in ideological brainwashing at the expense of teaching students (at a minimum) the three Rs. 🍄🍄 You misunderstand. I am very aware that fan fiction cannot be sold unless you have done enough work to file the serial numbers off and repaint it so as to avoid being sued, in which case why not write an original story instead? Still, thank you for the information about *Amazing*. 🍄🍄 (re: DAW) Tonopah does not have a bookstore; neither the local gas stations nor the grocery store carry books. I am usually too busy when I'm in Las Vegas to scout the sole remaining B&N there for SF, and from what you say I doubt they would have much of interest to me in any case.

(RYCTo Sam) For all that you complain about the current administration, the new head of the Civil Rights division at the Department of Justice has brought down the hammer on a number of online recruiters for practicing age, citizenship, and racial discrimination. So there may be hope for your friend the accountant yet.

Archive Midwinter

(RYCTo Mark) “Civilized men are less polite than barbarians because they don’t have to worry about getting their skulls split for their rudeness.” – Robert E. Howard. Mike Tyson, of all people, has a similar quote.

(RYCTo Garth) We may be getting close to that technology. I see items in the news about depression being treated by electrostimulation of the brain – not ECT/EST, but low-power stimulation of the “joy circuit” in the brain. ~~Paging Gary Numan & Tubeway Army...~~

(RYCTo Me) Indeed, one of Niven’s Laws pertains to people who think the protagonist(s) of a novel are speaking for the author. I knew Pournelle well enough to know that he was no advocate of the monarchy.

The Murdered Master Mage

(RYCTo me) Indeed, at this point trying to explain the whole Sad Puppies affair will most likely cost the explainer and explainees both a non-trivial number of SAN points. As with many other things in fandom, the whole mess has gotten infected with mundane politics, and what you think of the whole wretched business will depend on who your friends and favored authors are.

Brownian Motion

I am genuinely sorry to hear of your computer problems and even sorrier that I have no useful advice.

(RYCTo Mark) I think you are absolutely correct in your assertions about conrunners, having been one in the past and again nowadays. The successful ones learn from others’ experiences.

(RYCTo Me) I see what you did there. Well played, sir! 🍀🍀 I agree. It’s always time to invest in an external hard drive!

RAIL

(postnatural natter) We have indeed bred dogs for all manner of reasons, but many of them are lacking in purpose. We no longer use borzoi (or the other wolfhounds) to hunt wolves, dachshunds to hunt badgers, or Chihuahuas to fill burritos, and one wonders if the ill-temper of the smaller breeds is related to the “bad” behavior of Malinois who aren’t strenuously exercised daily. They’re not fulfilling their purpose any more. Well, maybe the Chihuahuas are just naturally cranky little monsters. 🍀🍀 The firefly petunia reminds me of the (so far) theoretical “raycats”, which are supposed to be cats whose fur fluoresces when exposed to gamma radiation.

Brandy Hall

(RYCTo Garth) I too have not acquired a lot of survival skills, and those I used to have have lapsed. If civilization collapses I’ll be in a world of hurt long before I need to use those skills. (RYCTo me)

Good luck in collecting the remaining Hornblower books. 🍀🍀 It sounds like the early retirement will be a Good Thing, then. 🍀🍀 You make a good point about one’s politics affecting one’s view of history. I still entertain the childish notion that there is such a thing as an objective view of history which we should strive for, whether we like what that view shows us or not. 🍀🍀 IIRC public schools in Australia and the UK are what would be called private here. Once again, we are a people divided by our common language. 🍀🍀 The justification for alternate histories being SF is that these are true histories of parallel universes “adjacent” to ours, one which is made more explicit in *The Man in the High Castle* (the TV series) than it was in the book; I didn’t finish watching the series, but I do recall that there was an episode where Gruppenführer Smith visits a laboratory where a portal is being built to allow the Third Reich to intervene in our history. Anyway, that’s my reason for shelving alternate histories with the SF as opposed to mainstream fiction. (See also Bob’s complaint about his town library eliminating genre shelves in favor of simply sorting books between fiction and non-fiction.) 🍀🍀 I can’t really complain too loudly about the main newspapers here in Nevada (the Las Vegas Review-Journal and the Reno Gazette) since they do a good job of covering state and local news, more so than the Washington Post and Minneapolis Star Tribune, which are the other major city newspapers I’m familiar with. 🍀🍀 We have a second! George, I move that we vote on these propositions!

(RYCTo Heath) They will indeed need an adapter since Europe runs on 220v current as opposed to American 120v. If their stereo has a turntable, they'll need to get a Portuguese stereo guy to tweak it for the same reason.

(RYCTo Sam) Harris was very clear that she intended to make no changes from the policies of the Biden Administration. That was enough for a lot of people to vote for Trump, especially among black and Latino working-class voters.

Snow Poster Township

(con report) I don't get the attraction of Funko Pops either, but apparently they're quite popular. I daren't be too critical, being the owner of a statuette of the Celtic Goddess of Death as she appears in Fate/Grand Order.

(RYCTo me) The Starquest series is indeed full of old-fashioned pulp goodness, and I cannot recommend it highly enough. 🍀*🍀* Thank you for your support! Most things went smoothly, much fun was had, and we're going to do it again next year. I promise a fuller report later in the zine, or nextish at the latest.

Samizdat

(natter) As any veteran can tell you, no, the Federal government doesn't care about you, and your state & local politicians are arguably worse. Still, I hope things get sorted out for you, and while things are being thrashed out in the courts, I hope they are at least continuing to pay you. 🍀*🍀* Men generally aren't reading mainstream fiction or tradpub SF because it isn't publishing the kind of books they want to read. Meanwhile, guys like Nick Cole and Larry Correia (to name but two) are doing quite well writing things men (and more than a few women) want to read. You would think people would be asking a writer who bought his own mountain how he did this if people aren't reading, but I guess actual journalism is beyond these people.

(RYCTo Mark) "You'd get thrown out of banks or restaurants for lots of behaviors tolerated at sf conventions." Amen to that.

(RYCTo me) (re: SF magazines) Is this a reference to the abolition of the Printed Matter rate that others have referred to? It seems to have been a serious mistake if so, since it affected far more than just the SF prozines.

POST-NATTER

This Sunday might as well be N3F Sunday in the burrow; in addition to finishing this zine for N'APA, I'll be updating the membership roster, doing the treasurer's report for George, and writing a Director's View thingy* for the monthly newsletter. At least I'm getting a jump on it by starting the Friday before.

*It will not be turnip-shaped. Control your disappointment.

Brownian Motion #15

A Garth Spencer apazine

For NAPA 278 | September 2025

Puzzled for Good

It's the night before Labour Day Monday as I type this, and I'm puzzled by some of my own behaviour. I now have to master senior life, my failures of motivation, and my occasional failures of memory.

Resist it as I may, I have to confess I have been having "senior moments" for a while now: forgetting why I came into a room, where I put down my tablet, or when I have appointments. Probably that is one of the reasons why I invented a clasp notebook I call "Garth's Life Manual," updated monthly: in part I use it to remind myself of *everything I have to do*.

Not that this is the only reason. Unlike some people, I guess, I did not learn a very clear idea of how to design my whole life – how to allocate time and attention to material needs, social needs, or self-development needs ... or, indeed, any other design. I had to work out my own design for living.

That's all very well, but what do I do with the fact that I keep losing all *motivation*?

Some people have a lot of drive and focus and ambition and all them there kind of things. As for me, I just muddled my way through the last 60-odd years. I got the misconception that anything *I* wanted wasn't important and was, in fact, not allowed. Well, you get a lot of misconceptions when you're forming the foundations of your mind and character – probably because you do most of it before the age of reason. Took me decades to realize that some personal ambition was *demande*d, especially when you're graduating from high school, and choosing a trade or an academic program.

Now that I'm finally straightening out some misconceptions, I am already semi-retired. Go figure.

These observations may sound like complaints. In fact they're more like observations in a log book: I am noting traffic hazards in some difficult waters. Numerous people in the last half-century have expressed opinions about the changing navigation requirements of life, and the treacherous reefs and shifting sandbars facing our careers, marriages, family lives, and . All I can contribute is that there are a *lot* of mismatches between the advice we got and the challenges we actually face.

So: what really motivates me?

I don't know about you, but I still feel like a small boy fascinated by construction toys, like Meccano. I think of story ideas and science news and standup comedy skits as construction pieces you can put together and take apart, sometimes with creative effect.

Gradually, though, I realized how very few people are on this wavelength. It was a very disappointing thing to realize, especially about science fiction fans. I really did want to

find a community of friends who shared my interests. But, like romantic love or rewarding employment, it didn't appear to be in the cards for me.

I seem motivated to return, again and again, to some ideas I have already exploded: the idea of finding out, finally and conclusively, what kind of social behaviour or design for living my contemporaries expected me to conform to; or what kind of influence I could exert to get people to communicate in plain language I could understand. Probably there are much more achievable and satisfying goals, like eliminating global pollution or world climate change or educating the world managerial class to make sustainable plans beyond the next fiscal quarter.

Now what did I want to do before I started this apazine?

A Crank Theory

Is it fannish to try and work up one's own original crank theory?

My own idea of a crank theory would be to figure out my version of psychohistory, or a social calculus ... some kind of symbolic system like formal logic notation, adapted to describe social events.

Obviously people in many professions and social sciences (and criminal careers) use some kind of reasoning to observe, identify, and predict how individuals or groups behave. Equally obvious is that demographers, insurance agencies, advertisers, publicly-traded corporations, political parties and governments try to shape how large groups of people will behave. It is not obvious, though, what a rigorous – or disciplined – social calculus would look like.

Again and again, I had the feeling that the basic facts in such a field are not quantitative, as the basic facts of mechanical physics, chemistry, or electronics are quantitative. We can measure time, space, mass, identify elements, measure heat and light and other radiations, electrical current and magnetic fields, and calculate their interactions ... but how do we measure and predict human motivations, drives, perceptions, impulses and reactions?

(Clearly I was never exposed to psychology, sociology or anthropology courses with any mathematical rigour, so in classic crank fashion, I am starting out by reinventing the wheel.)

Several times I have started to work out an adaptation of symbolic logic, flavoured with things I learned about set theory and probability theory. I encountered technical problems, of course, but as time went on it emerged that I didn't have a lot of the basic factual information to inform this effort.

A lot of what I was trying to work out depended on observing people's tells – tones of voice, microexpressions, gestures and stance – all the nonverbal, or connotative information that goes over the head of mildly neurodiverse observers.

This basically made nonsense of the whole effort. Until there is a body of data, there is nothing to process with any kind of formula.

Anyway, a poker player or a con artist doesn't have to scribble symbols and formulas in order to watch the people he's playing. The effort is intuitive, not cerebral; implicit, not explicit.

It now appears that this was a fool's errand.

Mailing Comments

Intermission 155, by Ahrvid Engholm

Not much to say that I haven't said before. "Woke" doesn't mean whatever you think it means. Copyright, if you didn't know, is the reason people get paid for writing anything; without it, you get no compensation. I am surprised that you appear not to know that. "Fandom" means whatever fans are doing at the moment, and I'm sorry to tell you, it isn't primarily about language and words anymore; that applied to the fandom you and I are used to, but things have changed, and readers are now outnumbered by screen watchers, comics fans, costumers and gamers.

I could go on, but you get the idea; we could go on nit-picking all day, and it would be a waste of our mutual time.

Your paragraphs on linguistics in SF interested me, but I have quibbles (again) about your description of Noam Chomsky's thesis on our universal language capability. Look up "transformational generative grammar" and you may see what I mean. Not that it's a current theoretical issue anymore, people have moved on in the past half-century.

Thank you for referencing Poul Anderson's article "Uncleftish Beholding" – I rather enjoyed that little exercise in Germanizing English.

The Swamp Spot Sentinel, issue 1.2 (CORRECTED), by Robert Jennings

Thank you for the article about your local swamp. Until recently, I didn't know there were technical differences between swamps, bogs, fens, and I don't know what else. One of my correspondents in Stipple-Apa likes a current theory that swamps or bogs help trap carbon dioxide instead of releasing it, which is a Good Thing to encourage if it limits climate change; then she added to this the theory that mammoths helped create and sustain bogs, which led to her writing stories about mammoths being de-extincted (de-extincted? De-extinctified?), and basically herded around Minnesota and other places.

Apart from the intervention by a rich guy with carbon dioxide traps, the Massachusetts swamp sounds a great deal like Northern Ontario.

I enjoyed the "Tragedy #65" cartoon. Who produces this series?

Your review of *The Mercy of Gods* gives us food for thought. How often are aliens merely cardboard characters, or humans in silly costumes, rather than reasoning people who are really *not* human? And what follows from that? I have to wonder how many non-human people actually display the cold arrogance, or devotion to

dominance – and especially, display a complete lack of empathy – when they are aliens who maintain a civilization. You would think that requires a social species.

Your review of *Misquoting Jesus* held my attention because I am one of the people who read their way into heresy, and then out of Christianity. There have been several attempts to get at the original doctrines of the rabbi Jesus, such as the Jefferson Gospel, but you have to wonder sometimes if anybody is on his wavelength.

Re the new N3F gaming publication: My understanding is that George Phillies was starting up a new Amateur Publication Association, which I tend to put in a different category than zines or fanzines. One of these days somebody is going to have to clear up which of these sets contain which others, and according to whom. Nobody has set up a Fannish Academy to clarify these definitions yet, unless I'm behind the times.

Emily Schleiger's "Hellthchase" satire was droll, especially to someone who has wrestled with online health care systems. (I'm in Canada, so I actually get some results ... slowly ... but I understand what Ms. Schleiger is getting at.)

Re your mailing comments:

- To *Intermission* #153 and #154: What is likely to happen to the United States as a result of the Trump administration? I am contemplating a story in which the U.S. becomes a failed state, essentially with civil war between the states (and much the same dividing lines); U.N. peacekeepers have to come in to provide interim social services while an American administration rebuilds itself, a network of uninformed survivalists and Trump supporters promptly sees them as an occupation force and undermines everything they can, and the Canadian peacekeepers find their job essentially impossible.
- To *Archive Midwinter*: my personal observation of changing social standards focuses mainly on the change between a rather hard-nosed, unsympathetic view of the disabled in the early 1960s – especially newborns judged incapable of surviving – and the view publicly expressed today. I remember my mother, a nurse at a western Canadian hospital, admitting that children deemed incapable of surviving were quietly allowed to die. Doris Lessing, in one of her interviews, also expressed a survival-of-the-fittest attitude. Apart from extreme Republicans, the current attitude seems to be to provide any support possible to the disabled. Or maybe I'm generalizing from my limited Canadian experience.
- To Bradley Hall 12: I beg to differ – there is, in fact, a good deal of computer data being lost. My own experience, and a report by David Langford in Britain, supports this. It is pretty difficult *here* to find computer drives for 3.25" disks, let alone 5.5" floppy disks, which is how I have lost a good deal of my documents. If you have access to drives that can read them, more power to *you!* David Langford reported that the BBC carefully preserved a number of 8" disks, but nobody, to his knowledge, preserved the drives that could read them. That sounds like a British stereotype, but I rather think Langford is not making things up.
- To *Brownian Motion* #13 (your comments to me): The common knowledge/life skills checklist you saw is a draft, and neither complete nor limited to very

likely, contemporary skills. I don't wonder if you and other readers find many of the listed knowledge and skills far beyond your ken; that's the point, that we now live such specialized lives, there is far less common ground – less common *sense* – than we believe. || I have now completed the “Jade Ring” serial, and now have to stitch the episodes together into a complete draft. Which I intend to edit. I see you got the point, that mediafans seemed to display a lot of obstinate ignorance – and obstinate misconceptions.

- To *Esmeralda County Line* #10: You raise a question that I hadn't considered: where can fanfiction be submitted for publication (at least, fanzine publication)? NESFA Press? LASFS Press? Fictionzines like *Pablo Lennis*? Maybe I should think hard about doing a fictionzine myself.

Archive Midwinter, by Jefferson P. Swycaffer

Yeah, *sigh* my list of life skills is kind of a first draft, or a test of what other people's differing concepts might be.

Thank you for your kind remarks about my fiction.

Re your comics collection woes: I am beginning to face a similar situation with my fanzine library. As always, the matter seems to be where you may dispose of a collection. I will have to review my list of fanzine repositories/special collections, since there is little resale value in fanzines. You may wish to index/catalog your collection and dictate its disposition in your will.

The Murdered Master Mage #277, by George Phillis

Kudos to you for your continuing work for N3F!

Question about Ever & Anon ... for some reason I think of this as an alternative-history APA. How far off target am I?

Concerning your recent problems with MS Office products ...

I wish I had the specific solution for you. For all I know, you might have to save all your documents outside of your computer, run a really thorough virus scan/debugging/software disinfection series of programs, and reinstall the whole MS Office suite. Or, you can find out how to use OpenOffice to reproduce the same graphics effects as you used to produce. Granted, I haven't been very adventurous in using illustrations in MS Word.

Recently I installed Linux Mint on my laptop, which relieved me of Microsoft-related problems but required me to relearn the Linux-based office programs. I have yet to explore the graphics capabilities of the Linux-based word processor.

Re your comments to me: Thank you for your kind words about my fiction!

As to N3F duties, I think you're running into something I ran into small leisure interest groups ~~like SF clubs~~ from the outset. You have to find dependable people to

delegate tasks to, and you have to keep the tasks to a size that isn't too onerous, but not so mechanical that they won't make it their own and take pride in it.

Esmeralda County Line #11, June-July 2025, by Kevin Trainor Jr

Good personal journalism there, just not enough of it. Good book and media reviews.

Thank you for correcting me about the SP/RP/Sasquan fiasco.

“The people have spoken, but since they all spoke at once I can't tell what they said.”
(a saying in the Royal Swiss Navy)

R.A.I.L. #7, July 2025, by Adrian Kresnak

Re your comment to Jefferson Swycaffer: something must have prompted me recently to think along the same lines – that is, trying to find any difference between superheroes and other emergency first responders, like search and rescue teams. (Well, except for flamboyant costumes.) Fun fact: a comics fan in Quebec once launched an independent comic book about masked and costumed crimefighters operating under government licenses, which had to be renewed regularly at an office in someone's Ministry of Agriculture.

Brandy Hall Issue 13 July 2025, by Mark Nelson

You had so much going on, I can hardly blame you for mixing up the NAPA deadline with another date. I've done similar things.

Re your comments on references in *The Obdurate Eye* – the reason I referenced a jackass repeatedly attending VCON and using a hibachi on his residence room balcony was that the balcony was maybe 4 square feet in size, attached to a room in a student residence serving as a convention venue. (The University of British Columbia used to offer the Gage Residence and Totem Residence buildings as conference venues, back in the 1970s and 1980s, up until the regrettable Westercon 44 in 1991.) My point was, here was a person who simply would not agree to some reasonable safety precautions. The same person also served “atomic cherries” at his room parties – maraschino cherries marinated in vodka, that is – and did not prevent teenagers from partaking. I think you begin to see why he was a problem for the convention.

The only reason I referenced so many life skills, or points of life knowledge, is that we continue to reference “common sense” when it seems that we actually share very little contemporary know-how. But I've pointed this out above. You were never under an obligation to answer all the questions listed. I just hoped people would point out which are actually not part of common knowledge (which you have done), or point out how very much I have left out.

Fun facts: “barbecue” (or “barbeque”) here means the manly art of cooking burgers, steaks, pork products, chicken, lamb, or fish on a grill over an open fire, usually gas-fueled. There are whole restaurant chains dedicated to varieties of barbeque, as elaborated by Americans, Brazilians, and presumably Greeks and other Mediterranean

peoples. “Brew,” when the verb is applied to coffee, is what we do in an espresso machine, coffee maker, or French press.

Re your comment to Jefferson Swycaffer (responding to Kevin Trainor): as long as we’re comparing how different governments require people to do their taxes – until recently, in Canada, post office branches helpfully provided letter-sized booklets printed on newsprint, including bilingual tax returns with useful bilingual directions for filling them out. Now, everything you need is allegedly available on the Canada Revenue Agency website. But I regularly got confused about where different figures were supposed to be input somewhere on the third page, and finally gave in and started resorting to the services of H&R Block.

Re your comments to Adrian Kresnak: I picked up the saying “All knowledge is contained in fanzines” from previous fanzine fans. It seems to be truer now to say that all knowledge is out there on the Internet ... somewhere.

Snow Poster Township #22 by Heath Row

Glad that you appreciated some of the points I was making with the life skills list, and my comments on codes of convention conduct.

I am still, at my age, growing out of the misconception that I had to conform to a social code everyone else knew. How I managed to get this impression while growing up in the 1960s, I must leave you to imagine.

Samizdat Ish #32, July/August 2025, by Samuel Lubell

I keep getting the sense that editorial articles lamenting the paucity – or decline – of men who read fiction are all missing the point. Granted there is always a plurality of rednecks and meatheads in every generation, and granting there are always people deprived of access to education and to literature, still there are large numbers of men and women who honestly aren’t interested in reading. Mark Twain observed that “a man who does not read is at no advantage over a man who cannot read,” still there are people who have no problem reading easily, who will do so for professional reasons ... but take no particular pleasure in fiction.

Pluralities grow and shrink over time. There may, or may not, be a relative growth recently in the plurality of rednecks and meatheads and others who think reading is somehow unmanly. (I have trouble getting my head around this idea, but there it is.) I guess I am so far removed from the matter, I have trouble taking it seriously.

Onward. In your “Status of Projects” I was absorbed by your paragraph about reading *The Source*. I read this meganovel a number of times, being engrossed by the characters and conflicts and tragedies, and the intriguing shifts between entirely materialist and sometimes mystical worlds of experience, from the prehistoric hunter-gatherers to pre-Classical Hebrews to Jews under Greek and Roman rule to medieval Jews to modern Turkish and later Israeli residents.

Under your “Project Paperback” heading, I was interested to see the latest Steven Brust title, but I got lost in Vlad Taltos’ adventures about the time he broke up with

his wife. I mean, I barely had a grasp of the sequence of the novels and the progression of Taltos' biography, and then couldn't follow it anymore. Is there a list anywhere to tell us which novel comes after which?

Onward. In your mailing comments to *Intermission* #153, your mention that you were secretary of the Washington SF Association gave me pause. I want to ask, do you, or does anyone else know why the Gillilands were ever shunned by WSFA? I have a vague idea that someone was inventing rumours about Dolly Gilliland for some reason.

Thank you for your comments to *Brownian Motion* #13. I should gently correct you, if you had the impression that I was "relying on 'Common Sense' or 'Common Courtesy' ..." I have, for decades, been trying to *discover* what common sense or common courtesy are imagined to be. You see, I grew up being regularly accused of lacking "common sense" – by someone who not only *lacked* sense, but imagined everyone knew her extraordinarily uncommon assumptions (such as the elaborate Edwardian etiquette she absorbed from a private school, or the unspoken Victorian social expectations she absorbed from her family).

It now appears that this, too, was a fool's errand.

Intermission 156, by Ahroid Engholm

I would like to ask you, and indeed everyone in this APA, what we should rationally expect to follow from the developing crises in Eastern Europe and in the United States, in Gaza and Yemen. In fact I would like to ask this of all of my correspondents. What are people worrying about that we can ignore, what are we ignoring that we should prepare against, and what actually matters to our future?

Here in Canada, both I and some of my correspondents wonder whether we should actually be prepared for an invasion from the United States ... or prepare for the United States to implode, and a UN peacekeeping force to put a halt to an incipient Second Civil War. Or, perhaps, to try and help clean up the mess afterwards.

(Please don't make Canada try and form a caretaker administration oh please oh please oh please oh please oh please)

Onward.

Of course I was interested in your coverage of early television SF, particularly your coverage of *Space Command*, the early CBC series ... so early that only one episode survives in video. Wherever did you find your research materials? Who are you quoting, in italics?

Onward.

I'm not terribly surprised you're having problems getting useful information about the Gaza death rate from ChatGPT. The problem is that you're resorting to ChatGPT. Robert Sawyer, the Canadian SF writer, recently disseminated one of his blogs showing how useless he found ChatGPT.

No wonder it bugged the Seattle Worldcon's attempts to vet its program participants.

The Murdered Master Mage

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N3F Matters

Thanks to Jason Hunt and Jean-Paul Garnier, your officers, directors, editors, and Life Members, those who were able to attend, held a Zoom meeting to discuss improving publicity and other issues for the N3F. Various possible projects were noted.

The first of these was to generate some thousands of N3F advertising bookmarks and mail every member for whom we have a papermail address a cover letter, return envelope, and several bookmarks that members could use for themselves or distribute someplace as publicity. Several members who were planning on attending conventions and willing to handle the distribution are in the process of being sent larger numbers of bookmarks. It is a bit early to tell what response we're getting, other than for a small number of the letters we had a return that 'the address was no longer valid'. However, five names out of two hundred, with a mailing list that has not been used for physical mail in some years, is pretty good.

In support of the same effort, the directorate appropriated money to pay for printing the

bookmarks. It also appropriated up to five hundred dollars for electronic media advertising, the details of which had not yet been completely worked out.

The same people will be meeting again later this week to discuss what has been done and where we are going. Your suggestions, and more important your offer of volunteer work, will be most appreciated.

Comments

The Swamp Spot Sentinel: yes, Massachusetts has plenty of swamps. All you have to do is go out for a drive in the country and look for flooded areas where beavers have built a dam. Black flies sound unfortunate. My home is on enough of the hill, relative to local areas, that we rarely see any mosquitoes or anything else interesting. A year or two ago I did have a praying mantis whose body was larger than my thumb, but that's a bit unusual.

Thank you for the historical background on Tom Mix. I am aware of the name, but had known nothing about his motion pictures. You corrected a bit of my ignorance. Thank you.

The Mercy of Gods sounds to be an interesting novel but I am probably too busy to read it. The numbers I am aware of for literacy among the Roman citizens are rather higher than that, but that really doesn't matter. Literacy in Western Europe largely disappeared from the collapse of the Western Roman Empire.

A Drop of Corruption sounds to be an interesting mystery novel. "615 pages and I wish there had been more to read" is a very high recommendation, especially from someone who occasionally refers to fantasy novels as goat-chokers.

HellthChase the medical support system would've been really amusing if it didn't exist.

Let us see how the Russians are doing by the time of the next N'APA mailing. Ukraine is doing what it should, namely strategic bombing of Russian oil refineries. As is been known for the last half-

century or more, oil refineries are the very sensitive target in most westernized economies. They are large, immobile, complicated, difficult or impossible to repair without technical expertise, and for some reason they tend to be flammable. Can't beat that as a target.

Your town library is apparently being run on the high intellectual standards of the Academy of Lagado in Gulliver's Travels. With respect to cell phone, if you have not done so you might investigate the German hearing support devices which sit in one ear and the other, have volume settings that you can control with your cell phone (Gee, a use for the cell phone other than as a boat anchor), and apparently do a trick with phase-sensitive detection so the noises directly in front of you are picked up and noises to the side are not. You get to adjust the volume. Furthermore, unlike hearing aids of the last century, they cost a few hundred instead of a respectable number of thousands of dollars.

The reason The N3f Review of Books is bimonthly is to create a gap in which Eldritch Science can readily be published. The schedule was being maintained. The amount of material is sensitive to how many people are writing book reviews, but the schedule will still be maintained.

My impression of the Locus list is that it tends to resemble Hugo award winners. I occasionally have asked reviewers for The N3f Review if they would consider reading and reviewing Hugo nominees or winners. The responses, to put it very mildly, were negative. The reviewers felt that Hugo nominations were an indication of lack of quality. I don't entirely agree myself, but I'm not the one writing the reviews.

Protecting alligators from Gatorade manufacturers is certainly a noble cause. The current program involves trying to kill the pythons in the Everglades Swamp, which appears to be a difficult task. Perhaps you should work instead on protecting the millions of innocent baby velkers who are sacrificed to make Velcro.

The magazine covers were amusing. Who did

them? I'm sure there is a signature and zine name in there someplace, but I do not see it.

Archive Midwinter. Thank you for your comments on Shepdon Fields. I am not currently in a writing group. I simply do not have the time.

I agree with you on Jade Ring. With respect to being a collector, I gave recently a modest section, perhaps 500 titles, of my board wargaming collection to a museum, the Strong Museum of Play. I was running out of space and had to decide what to do about it. Here, collection might be able to do the same.

In the last issue I said something was to my taste. I meant to say it was not to my taste. These two phrases are not exactly equivalent.

Brownian Motion: we are both having computer problems, alas. Are Canadian water supplies being doped, or was that a joke? That was a fine piece of fan fiction. It actually came to an end, too. Well done! As a next step, consider writing something with your own characters, perhaps in a remote part of the Star Trek universe.

Engineering limitations were significant for Leonardo da Vinci and for Isambard Kingdom Brunel, whose creations did not quite come up to design specifications. Da Vinci needed a better power source. The engines of the Great Eastern delivered something like half or third of design horsepower at three times design coal consumption. Instead of sailing to India without refueling, that ship could sail across the Atlantic under power, if the captain was careful with fuel usage.

The disappearance of fandom is an issue. My other hobby is in even worse shape. New members of AHKS report that they have been in the hobby for fifty years, give or take, a hobby that they took up typically in high school or college.

Esmeralda County Line: For SF/F that is respectable of religion, note the Saint Tommy and Love at First Bite series and tales by Declan Finn and John Ringo. All very well done.

For a Tale of robots that did not follow the Three Laws, you need go no farther than the contemporary tales by Jack Williamson.

You were kind enough to shill for the N3F at Son of Silvercon, and recruited a bunch of members. Thank you.

I have moved in my life all of the times ever I want to, and hope never to have to move again.

R.A.I.L. Did Twain's daughter win the lawsuit?

Brandy Hall: Moving is a challenge. You raise interesting questions about historical records of N3F. Records of the first, I believe, thirty years were largely destroyed in a house fire, or so I have been told. I actually don't know. Our webpages are believed to list every N3F fanzine issue published. For some of them, especially the more recent ones, we have scans. For the first couple of decades records are extremely spotty, though I did obtain this interesting one of our letter zines noting that a member had been banned from the US mails for unclear reasons. It appeared that he had accused a popular well-known charity of existing to pad the incomes of its lead executives. If you want to see what we do have, most of it can be seen on the N3F webpages N3F.org.

With respect to the 64 Immortals, at one point recently The National Fantasy Fan ran a bio of each of them, with the minor complication that absolutely nothing is known or can be found about four of them. I am reasonably sure, but would have to look, that we have the mailing addresses for the 64 founders as of the time the club was organized.

Snow Poster Township: Hi, Heath! I see that your move is advancing. Your reviews of older sf/fnal material and related items are extremely interesting. My impression of Sad Puppies was it involved people who had been active in science fiction and fandom for a long time, but who had simply moved in very different circles from traditional Hugo fandom. Matters did not go uphill after that.

Samizdat: You present an interesting review of

material on the question of who was reading fiction. It is not particularly surprising that people who come from the direction of literary fiction are quite insensitive to the existence of science fiction. There are interesting questions as to how many people actually read literary science fiction. I see occasional claims that this, that, or the other electronic survey captures book sales reasonably accurately, and indicates that many of these writers of literary science fiction have quite limited sales. Of course, it depends what you think literary science fiction is, so I'm perfectly happy to believe that some people have a different interpretation on the matter.



Author's notes: I have no idea why my last ish got stamped with a Draft Only watermark. It did not appear that way on my computer. I hope people read it anyway. Happy Halloween!

...Capclave Programming

Here is some of the programming we will run at Capclave, the SF convention where reading is not extinct. Capclave will be held in Rockville, MD on September 19-21. Our guests of honor are Joe and Gay Haldeman and Naomi Kritzer. www.capclave.org Please join us! I developed much of the programming and am chairing the convention.

Are Shorts Still the Heart? - It has been said that short stories are the heart of the science fiction field. Shorts can be more creative and more experimental than novels. Is this still true? Why should people still read short stories? And what is happening to the digest magazines? Panelists discuss the role of short stories in SF and why they are still important in the modern world.

Benevolent AIs - Not all artificial intelligences (AI) are violent SkyNets. Some just want to rearrange your life to make you happier (perhaps in exchange for cat pictures). What makes an AI benevolent? Can an AI understand humanity well enough to be really good for people? Can we depend on benevolent AIs? How can we be sure it will stay benevolent? Can a benevolent AI still be harmful? Let's discuss the world of AI.

Building Your Worlds from the Ground Up – SF and Fantasy frequently take place in invented worlds/societies. How do authors design worlds and reveal them to the reader? How much detail is needed? And how much info should the writer give the reader before it becomes too much info dumping? How do you create fully realized worlds that their readers can almost see, touch, and smell?

Can Humanity Colonize Other Worlds? – Much science fiction depends on humanity going into outer space and living on other planets. But how realistic is such a goal? Whether solving challenges of terraforming or even finding worlds that support human life, colonization offers more practical and ethical problems than solutions. What scientific advancements or cultural shifts have to happen to make colonization possible and how long would it take? What books have the best colonization stories, and what have authors done to make settling worlds seem plausible?

Common SF/Fantasy Tropes – Authors often use tropes as shorthand to push the plot forward. But when overused, they can make a story feel too predictable. Should writers avoid tropes entirely, or can authors strike a balance between creativity and genre expectations? Which tropes are overused, and what are examples of beneficial tropes in current novels, short stories, films, or TV? How can (or should) writers free a story from tropes and create more complex and original works?

Genre v Literary Fiction – Genre is mostly a marketing tool; yet, for many years, reviewers and academics have seen genre fiction as inferior. They even denied that literature-oriented SF was SF (such as 1984 or *The Handmaid's Tale*). Is this still true? Has this changed since many respected literary authors are incorporating science fictional and fantasy elements? Is SF/Fantasy still in the literary ghetto?



Hopeful Fiction in Dark Times – The world seems to be in a dark place, such that “peddling hope” could appear irresponsible. Panelists will talk about hopepunk, cozy fantasy, and other forms of “lighter” fiction, giving examples, and talking about how hope is particularly important.

Humor and Satire in SF/Fantasy – Funny fantasy and humorous SF have long been a part of these genres, frequently in short-shorts ending in a groan-worthy pun. Then came writers like Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett who made careers out of writing novels with laughter. How can writers use humor and satire as the main course of a novel, not just occasional comic relief? What is the role of humor in SF/Fantasy today, and how has it changed? Is there a reason why so many genre humorists are British? Is there still a stigma against writing humor?

Learning the Craft – How do writers learn to become writers? There are options like an MFA; workshops like Clarion, Odyssey, or StarCoast; or even writing fanfiction. What worked for you and what would you recommend for others? What are the roles of groups like SFWA or critique groups and writing circles?

Morally Grey Characters – Not every protagonist is all good. There are anti-heroes, redeemed former villains, flawed heroes, and others who are not evil but not the conventional good guy. What makes morally grey characters catnip to many fiction readers? How do these morally grey characters balance the tightrope between the traditional hero and the traditional villain? Who are some of the best morally grey characters and what makes them work?

Small Press or Self-Publishing or Big Press – Authors have options for their publisher – small press, self-publishing, or big press. What are the advantages and drawbacks of each method? How can an author choose which to try? How can a new writer get started with each?



Image by Johnny from Pixabay

Turning Points in Alternate Histories – In alternate histories, one detail can lead to entirely new histories. Yet there are numerous ways to achieve that divergence, from changing historical details to adding new significant characters to the setting. What are the techniques for deciding these turning points, and what makes them work? What works have used turning points effectively?

Writing at Different Lengths – How does an author approach writing a short story from writing a novella, to writing a novel? Do you know what length a piece of writing will be when you start? Or does this change in the editing? What can you do in a short story that you cannot in a novel and vice versa?

Writing Both Fantasy and SF – Many writers write both science fiction and fantasy. How are these two genres similar, how different? What do you do differently as writers when you write one rather than the other? At what point do you decide if a work will be fantasy or science fiction? Or do you just write it and then decide on a genre?

If these panels sound interesting and you want to hear them discussed, come to Capclave, September 19-21 in Rockville, MD. www.capclave.org

...Reading for Fun Drops 40%

I've been running a number of articles on literacy in past this publication. And there are some recent studies with alarming news.

A new study based on time-use research found a drastic drop of 40 percent in the percentage who read for pleasure over the last 20 years. Researchers from University College London and the University of Florida evaluated the American Time Use Survey and found a consistent 3% annual drop in reading for fun among adults between 2003 and 2023. The drop is higher for men than women, Blacks more than whites, rural more than urban, and those with lower income or education level. Highly educated people had over twice the percentage of readers as the least educated, and the reading rate for high-income Americans was 1.5 times that of low-income Americans.



The percent of Americans who read for pleasure on a typical day fell from 28% in 2004 to 16% in 2023. Black Americans went from 20% to 9%, while white Americans went from 29% to 18% in the same time period. However, those who did read increased their reading time from 1 hour 23 minutes per day in 2003 to 1 hour 37 minutes per day in 2023.

The study counted e-books (as of 2011) and audiobooks (as of 2021) as reading. It also included reading nonfiction, newspapers, magazines, and some electronic reading (although some respondents might not have counted this).

Why the drop? While the research did not go into this, researchers speculated this could be due to more time on social media, more non-reading electronic options, economic needs, less leisure time, and uneven availability of books.



The report cited earlier National Endowment for the Arts research that found that the percent of American adults who say they read any book for pleasure in the last 12 months fell from 61% in 1992 to 49% in 2022. This means that half of Americans did not read (or even partially read) any book at all in a year. The National Assessment of Educational Progress in 2023 found that just 14 percent of American students read for fun every day.

Articles on the drop cited the benefits of reading benefits people including effects on further education, mental and physical health, career growth, civic involvement, emotional intelligence, reasoning and comprehension skills, imagination, and empathy. The report claims, "Reading may also promote health, reducing stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, supporting better sleep and slowing cognitive decline in older

adults, as well as increasing longevity.” [https://www.cell.com/iscience/fulltext/S2589-0042\(25\)01549-4](https://www.cell.com/iscience/fulltext/S2589-0042(25)01549-4)
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I was sent an Australian article published in *The Crunch* that asserts claims about a decline in men reading has been exaggerated. It found that when one breaks down Australian reading data by generation and look at the confidence intervals, only Generation X shows a significance difference in reading by gender. It also speculates that differences among the generation could result from being in different stage of life as older people have more time to read.

They also cite other studies that clearly show declines in reading. The percentage reading books nearly every day fell from 21% in 2012 to 16.4% in 2020 while never went from 14.6% to 22.1%. The percent who haven't read any book in the past 12 months fell for males from 79.7%(2012) to 73.1%(2020) while for female from 90.8% to 82.3%, although males were more likely to read news and magazines. It concludes that the overall decline is much more significant than often misleading focus on gender. https://www.theguardian.com/news/2025/aug/17/men-books-reading-rates-data-statistics-women-children-australia?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

An industry facing a continual drop of 3% a year has only a few options. They can increase the cost of the product (and risk further drops due to higher prices), they can limit the supply of the product (but the large number of small presses and the explosion of self-published books make this very difficult), or they can try to reverse the drop (through advertising and other book promotions). What publishers seem to be doing is phasing out the cheaper mass market paperbacks and expanding their use of the more expensive trade paperbacks (which are not returnable by bookstores). Trade paperbacks usually have bigger print than the smaller mass market paperbacks (perhaps recognizing their aging customer base). Increasingly, price-sensitive buyers are turning to ebooks as a replacement for the mass market paperback.

...Author Spotlight: Charles de Lint

Urban Fantasy is fantasy set in the present day, usually in urban environments. One of the early creators of modern Urban Fantasy is Charles de Lint, especially with his imaginary city of Newford.

Charles de Lint was born in the Netherlands in 1951, but grew up in Canada with stints in Turkey and Lebanon due to his father's job with an international survey company. He has lived in Ottawa since age 11. He married MaryAnn Harris in 1980 and she helped him as editor, business manager, and musician until her death in 2024. In addition to writing he is a poet, songwriter, and musician, playing Celtic folk.

He wrote stories for fanzines and chapbooks, mainly Triskell Press, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The earliest professional publication that I could find was "Night of the Valkings" in *Space and Time* October 1978. His first novel was *The Riddle of the Wren* (1984) although his second novel, *Moonheart*, his first urban fantasy, gained much more attention.

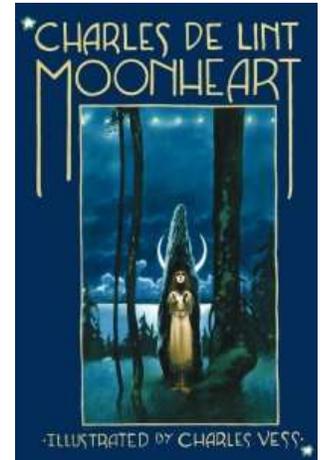


Charles de Lint is best known for his Newford stories. Newford is a city set in Canada, first created for his 1989 story "Timeskip" that seems normal on the outside but is full of magic and strange creatures visible only in the corner of one's eye or if introduced by one who knows. There is an entire subculture of street people, musicians, and artists who interact with the magic. At times, de Lint's fantasy is close to magical realism as many characters just accept the magic without trying to find scientific rationales or impose a system. His characters wander in and out of his novels and stories with a main character in one book often appearing in other works. One of his most frequent characters is Jinny Coppercorn, a former homeless girl turned bright, happy artist. She appears in several

books, most notably *The Onion Girl* and *Widdershines*. His Crow girls, crows who can turn into human girls (without really understanding what it means to be human) are also popular.

Although his earliest works brought European folklore into the modern world he also adopted Native American (Indian) influences and set some of his later books in the American Southwest.

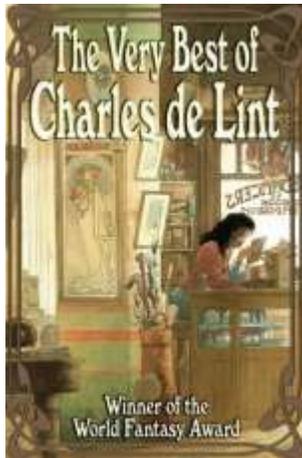
He has written over 70 books (including collections). He has written horror and children/YA books. Many of them have won Locus and World Fantasy Awards, as well as the Canadian Aurora Awards. He won the 2018 World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement.



De Lint is also a book reviewer, writing the *Books to Look For* column in *Fantasy and Science Fiction* from 1987 until Summer 2024. He often reviewed self-published and small press books.

If you enjoy reading fantasy, especially urban fantasy and somehow have missed reading Charles de Lint, you are missing out and some wonderfully fantastic stories and books.

De Lint continued to write stories throughout his career and many people (including me) say they are better than his novels. A good starting point is *The Very Best of Charles de Lint* with stories selected by his fans. If you are lucky and can find a used copy of his omnibus anthology *The Newford Stories*, which collects three of his other anthologies, buy it. His *Tapping the Dream Tree* is also an excellent collection of Newford stories. For novels, I recommend *Memory and Dreams*, *The Little Country*, *Moonheart*, and *Someplace to Be Flying*.



...What's the Matter With Kids Today: A Book Review Essay By Samuel Lubell

From time to time I find myself reading several related books and combine my analysis. As an education policy analyst, I have a strong interest in books analyzing adolescents and their behavior. I recently read three books discussing problems with modern teenagers showing high levels of anxiety and depression. Jonathan Haidt, in *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*, blames the ubiquitous smartphones and social media. Jenny Anderson and Rebecca Winthrop, in *The Disengaged Teen: Helping Kids Learn Better, Feel Better, and Live Better* blame these problems and lower student achievement on schools' not holding the interest of students. And Jennifer Breheny Wallace, in *Never Enough: When Achievement Culture Becomes Toxic and What We Can Do About It*, highlights how top students in well-off suburbs show more stress and anxiety than low-income students in troubled urban areas.



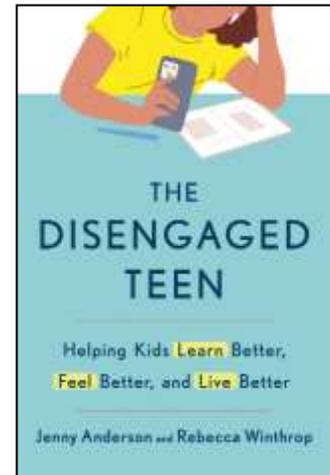
The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness, by Jonathan Haidt, claims that Generation Z (those born after 1995) faced a change from “play-based childhood” to a “phone-based childhood” that has caused greater anxiety. In addition to the Internet, he sees a shift toward overprotecting children and restricting their autonomy. Parents are charged with neglect if they take their eyes off their children for even a short time or let them walk to the store or a park. The book starts with the evidence for a decline in adolescent mental health and wellbeing, with higher rates of anxiety, depression, and self-harm, especially for girls. He claims this is due to the use of smartphones and social media which have replaced real experiences (and time outdoors) as well as sleep deprivation, social deprivation, attention fragmentation, and phone addiction. This “Great Rewiring” also hurts people spiritually. He recommends:

- No smartphones before high school

- No social media before age 16
- Phone free schools
- More unsupervised play and childhood independence.

In *The Disengaged Teen: Helping Kids Learn Better, Feel Better, and Live Better*, authors Jenny Anderson and Rebecca Winthrop point to the drastic drop in 15-year-olds scores on the international PISA test. Students no longer see the point of school, lose motivation, and check out. They see the problem as one of engagement. The book postulates adolescents have four modes of reacting to school:

- Resister – These students disrupt class or avoid school. They take initiative in something other than school, from which they are actively disengaged. “Resisters are children with problems, not problem children.”
- Passenger – Quietly quitting. These are passive students who do the minimum to get by. They may see school as too hard or too easy or not connected to their life. They are bored in school.
- Achiever – These students work hard and aim high but do so for praise and grades, not because they care about something. These are engaged but many do not enjoy school, are “plagued by perfectionism and haunted by a fear of failure.” They have the worst mental health outcomes.
- Explorer – This is the most desirable state. They are engaged and care about something. They are willing to take risks and are less concerned about grades than about learning. They shape their own learning.



The same kid may use different modes at different times and for different subjects. The second half of the book gives strategies for parents of children in each mode. They say parents should move “from nag and control to autonomy supporting.”

Finally, *Never Enough: When Achievement Culture Becomes Toxic and What We Can Do About It*, by Jennifer Breheeny Wallace, describes how American teens are overworked and over-committed with overwhelming pressure to succeed in high school to get into a good college. This “toxic achievement culture” creates anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and self-harm. Research shows teens in well-off suburbs actually have more of these than inner-city youth due to the greater pressure to succeed and growing competition to maximize their potential. Based on interviews and surveys, she traces the problem to economic inequality, fear they will do as well as their parents, and a shrinking of opportunities for those who are not among the top elite. Parents and educators should stress the children are important in themselves, not for what they do (which she calls “mattering”). Much of the book stresses what parents (and other adults) can do to help. The book recommends that parents reverse toxic achievement culture by:



- Emphasizing to children that they matter through affirming their worth, modeling self-care, and encouraging volunteering and other ways to serve others.
- Redefining success by broadening the definition of success to mean things other than going to an Ivy League college, focusing on intrinsic goals rather than competition with others, and recognizing that failure is an opportunity for growth, not the end of the world.
- Building support networks inside and outside school while encouraging schools to support wellness over competition and reduce over commitment expectations
- Addressing societal pressures by challenging the ideas that there is just one path to success and advocating for policy changes that reduce the pressure on children.
- Promoting internal values by limiting media exposure, prioritizing relationships, and helping children develop their own sense of purpose.

...Philcon Panel: Spirit of Youth

Notes taken by Samuel Lubell, Originally published in *The WSFA Journal* January, 1999

Speaking of reading declines, this has been a continuing concern in science fiction. Here are my notes on a 1998 Philcon panel, "Spirit of Youth." Participating on this panel were Nancy Kress, Andrew Wheeler (moderator), Charles Sheffield, a scientist and writer of hard SF, and Matt Ruff, the author of fantasy-tinged mainstream (who would later write *Lovecraft Country*).

AW - Are kids still reading SF?

NK - I have two kids and two step-kids. All sort of read SF. One reads real SF, one fantasy, which is a great disappointment to me, one reads YA if it has romance. My 11-year-old will read SF if it has bears in it. I don't think the golden age of SF is 12. As it grew up, it took on complexities and moral shadings. It is not a bad thing that so much of it is out of their reach.

AW- Reading SF in the 1970s, people complained too juvenile, no room to do anything for adults. The audience was presumed to be children. Now we've blown the top off.

NK-I see Matt Ruff's book is from Atlantic Monthly Press [not an SF publisher.]

MR-Yes, I'm coming from the mainstream. Disappointing because SF didn't really address adult themes. *Forever War* should have been a tragedy but has a tacked on happy ending giving the hero back everything he's lost. It should have ended before. When I was 12 I was upset at *1984*. What do you mean the good guys lost?!? Now, I see a happy ending would have ruined the book.

<Quick discussion of *Forever War* omitted>

AW-Have you been following Jonathan Latham's piece in the *New York Review of Books* where he says SF is dying and he wants to make it die faster so he can write what he wants to.

CS-SF has changed since Frank Paul's (Fred Pohl?) day. It was more into science, more male. That audience still exists as a subgroup in SF, the rocket and ray guns group. They are generally 12-14 years old and read the [media] tie-ins. We've changed the definition of SF to be more inclusive. Some of us look down on that.

NK-I actually agree with you for once. SF expanded so rockets and ray guns are still there. People who like Campbell and Asimov still exist. People who like New Age SF, like Latham wants, still exist. When British published *Brave New Worlds* there was no sense of new genre. Now SF is moving into mainstream. SF is changing the mainstream. My mother will read Michael Crichton because she can see cloning in the newspaper and accept it in her fiction. Mainstream and SF are merging.

AW-Not for aging baby boomers. That's just the Locus poll. SFBC research shows the average member is in the late 30s.

CS-We ignore the biggest audience for SF, the under 20's reading for escapism.

NK-No, the largest audience are those buying Michael Crichton and Stephen King in HB. Kids don't buy HB. They can't afford it. The biggest audience are those buying books not labeled as SF.

AW-But Robert Jordan opened at #1.

CS-Booksellers see bestsellers as a separate category

NK-The lines are blurring

CS-Too many authors

NK-*Handmaid's Tale* by any standards a work of SF, she drops in and out. The lines are blurring.

MR-As you were saying the lines are blurring because we are living in a SF world. Ordinary people are interacting with technology.



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NK-My book, *Stinger*, is set in the present. The difference is that malaria has been genetically altered. The genetic engineering is not out of our reach today.

CS-It's more a Tom Clancy type thriller.

NK-But Tom Clancy is Michael Crichton.

Audience person - The reading market has collapsed except for SF. Essential SF leaked out and absorbed other pulp genres.

AW-Pulp died. Short fiction died because of the paperback revolution. The average reader would rather read a continuous narrative than ten stories for the same price. SF survived because wanted adventures.

NK-Short stories are struggling. You have to have a stranglehold on a publisher for a single author collection.

CS-In the early 1900s, PG Woodhouse could be paid \$1,000 for a story. F. School Fitzgerald \$3,000. The going rate for stories has gone down.

Audience member-The audience is going to television for their fiction fix. Casual readers migrated off. Don't have the skills for it.

MR-People have been worrying about this for decades. I read *The Glass Teat*, Ellison was upset that only 8% read more than one book a year.

NK-I noticed that the young people are saying they don't have time to read. But once in the adult world, they go back to reading. The young mothers I know read. They don't have the constant socializing [of teens.] My mother and her circle read.

CS-We tend to dismiss media tie-ins. Frequently, someone who sees the *Star Wars* books and realizes one can see the movies only a certain number of times will then turn to the *Star Wars* novels because s/he loves the universe.

NK-Quality has always been a minority taste. For everyone reading Trollope, ten were reading penny dreadfuls. We shouldn't react like this stage is different

AW-Star Trek and Star Wars books are quite better than the routine adventure stories from the 40s and 50s that don't get anthologized.

NK-Brian Aldiss said adventure fiction was where all women and no clauses were subordinate.

AW-*Publishers Weekly* does annual statistics. Each year the biggest books sell more copies. The growth of superstores and number of titles increasing.

CS-But talk off death of midlist. IT is harder for an established writer in the midlist to get books published. New writers still get published since ask for little.

NK-Yet we all are midlist and we're still here.

AW-Hardest thing to publish is fourth novel because they see the figures from the first two. Bookstores are ordering to the net. You publish a book and the bookstore orders 10 and sells 6, next time they buy 6 and sell 4.

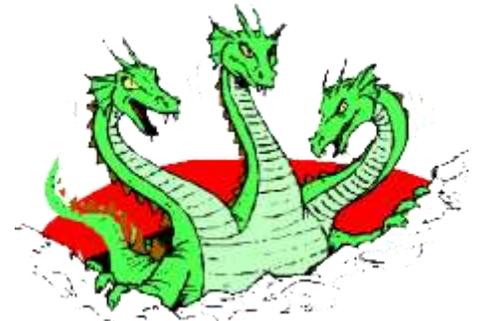
NK-Publishers used to stick with writers. John Irving's first three books flopped before he wrote *World According to Garp*.

AW-See people who had a bad track record switch publishers.

CS-Or change names or genres. John Jakes started off as a SF writer. R.L. Stein didn't sell for a while but when his books started selling like hotcakes, he was asked what he was doing different. He replied, nothing. I don't know.

CS-It's depressing that with *Star Wars* books the authors don't matter. Zann's *Star Wars* books made the best seller list but not his other books.

AW-Some of these are better than others. Some of the established writers just churn them out when doing licensed works.



Audience member-Craig Shaw Gardner said 2% of his tie-in audience seek out his other works. But 2% of his *Batman* audience was a lot.

CS-It is hard to blame the publishers for wanting a book that sells a million rather than 1,000 copies.

NK-But can you have the next John Irving that way?

MR-Problem with superstores is that since books can be returned, publishers think they sold thousands but they get returned.

NK-There is some resistance to using even good SF in schools. Teachers still think of SF as ray guns and for 14 year olds. When I taught SF as literature most of the people weren't SF readers, but said afterwards that they read good stuff and were surprised. I never saw a 9th grader who liked *Silas Mariner*. Take it out and put in LeGuin.

MR-Can make an end-run of the teachers by making them available in book fairs.

CS-But many SF books use words that school boards would say is inappropriate, or scenes. So SF writers are not helping themselves by putting this in.

AW-Still a reaction to books you are forced to read. Finally discover it on their own. Fact of being forced to read something makes it less interesting, even if would have liked it on their own. Was a panel on bridging the gap because were afraid of Goths. I'm wondering if we were sending them away.

NK-Conventions are bad places to judge SF. They cost money and attract those who like to talk, not just read

AW-Younger fans think convention fans don't want them.

NK-Does the SF Book Club deliberately aim at a younger audience?

AW-Fantasy sells to our audience. We try to have half and half. But people think the things they don't like, like the *Star Wars* books, don't count [as part of the SF half.] Fantasy tends to attract females and female readers tend to be the big audience.



CS-Grateful that many readers in SF don't care about how well the story is told because when I started, I didn't know how to write. No other genre would have published me.

NK-That is so bogus. Look at Danielle Steele. She can't write but her audience gets something out of her.

...Favorite Halloween Tricks on the Moon

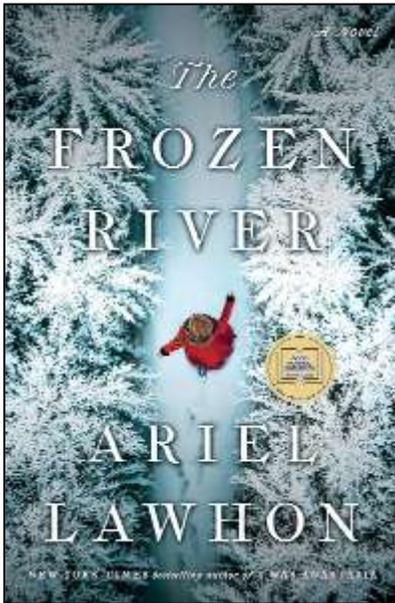
1. Relabel the signs for the airlock
2. Steal the American flag from the lunar landing site and replace it with Russian one.
3. Construct a giant monolith and set the sound system to play "Also Sprach Zarathusa"
4. Bob for apples in the zero G chamber
5. Dress up as lunatics
6. Use AI to make video messages from Adam Selene (of *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*)
7. Rewire mission control to play the sound track from old episodes of Space 1999
8. Dress up as werewolves and refuse to take off the mask, saying I can still see the moon.
9. Wear a sign, Have spacesuit, will travel.
10. Collect candy from space - Mars bars, Milky Way, and Pop Rocks.

...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. Since I've been jobless recently, I've had more time to read.

Project Classics: I finally finished *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens. I mostly listened to it while driving thanks to Librivox, which makes free recordings of public domain books. This isn't Dickens best work but not his worst either. The book is somewhat rambling and often melodramatic. Soap opera writers could mine the book for

stories for years. I completely anticipated the result of the court case that was the impetus for much of the book's events. I saw the marriage ending about 200 pages out, but did not anticipate how it would happen.



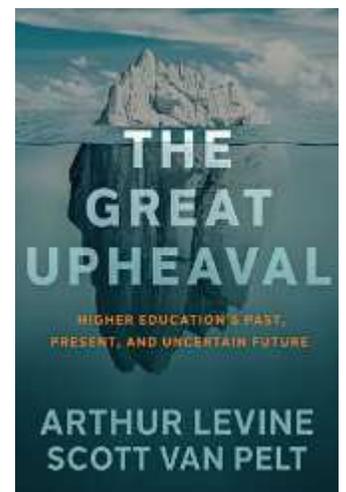
The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon. Although this 2023 historical thriller is not really a classic, this is where I'm putting my non-SF fiction reading (maybe I need to read more contemporary non-SF to justify a category). It is based on the journals of Martha Ballard, a real midwife in 1789 Maine. When the body of an accused rapist is found in the frozen Kennebec River, Ballard examines the body and found that the man was hung and beaten first. A lot happens in the book that seems improbable for an 18th century woman, even in a rural area whose main transportation (the river) is frequently immobilized. Still it is a fun read with an interesting, authentic-sounding voice.

The Three Musketeers - I just started this. I have a vague memory of reading this while I was in middle school so technically this is re-read, but from 40+ years ago so it hardly counts. Already I learned why the book has four main characters, but Three in the title. It is because d'Artagnan is not yet a Musketeer, and is told he needs to be a guard for a few years first. The book has 67 chapters and 630 pages. I'm on Chapter 17.

Project Nonfiction: *Freedom's Dominion: A Saga of White Resistance to Federal Power* by Jefferson Cowie. This Pulitzer Prize-winning book focuses on how a typical southern community, Barbour County, Alabama, the home of George Wallace, used freedom as a way to fight against the federal government's efforts to preserve the rights of non-whites. It is a study of white resistance to federal power by claiming that such federal action goes against their own freedom. The book consists of case studies on: 1830s and federal efforts to use the military to remove illegal white settlers from Creek Indian lands protected by a federal treaty; 1860s - Civil War and Reconstruction when the federal government tried to free slaves and protect their voting rights during Reconstruction; post-Reconstruction with federal inaction as Southerners created Jim Crow laws; and 1960s with George Wallace's defiance of federal desegregation efforts, literally standing in the schoolhouse door to block the admission of black students. The book emphasized how Southerners claimed "freedom" and local authority gave them the right to deny freedom to non-whites.

Medieval Europe: A Short History (Fifth Edition) by C. Warren Hollister. This was the textbook to a Medieval History course I took in 1986 as a college freshman. I underlined practically everything. This is a very well-written and organized textbook. It focuses mostly on England and France, but lives up to its title with just 370 pages. It is mostly political history but does have a chapter on Literature, Art, and Thought. It is standard textbook history, although better written than most, with little historiography. It would be interesting to compare this with a newer edition.

The Great Upheaval: Higher Education's Past, Present, and Uncertain Future by Arthur Levine and Scott Van Pelt. I led a discussion of this book for my nonfiction book club. The book's premise is that higher education was built around the needs of the Industrial Revolution and will need to change for the digital age. Changing demographics, rise of the knowledge economy, and the advance of digital technology and globalization will drive a transformation of higher education. Traditional classroom based higher education is established, staid, complacent and unhurried while postsecondary education, through digital or outcome-based (competency) certification is more disorderly but vibrant and in a hurry. The book looks to past changes in higher education and found them to be caused by pressure to change from economic factors and the rise of the knowledge economy. These pressures led to the establishment of new models at the periphery, diffusion of new models to more prestigious institutions at the center, standardization, and finally scaling up and integrating the changes. In the future higher education will



need to adapt to population changes with whites becoming a minority, shrinking populations in the Northeast while population increases in the Southwest, generational clashes over resources, and rising costs of traditional higher education. This will lead to a shift to more competency based credentialing with new credentials. Higher education will move from a traditional time-based model to fixed outcomes with flexible time. The authors see new content producers entering, increased consumer power, anytime accessibility, outcome-focused education, and a shift to non-degree certifications for mastering competencies. This will cause many institutions to close or transform due to competition from lower cost nontraditional postsecondary providers with anytime education. They recommend:

- Don't plan for business as usual – colleges are closing. Confront forces that drive them to focus on past rather than future – magical thinking, complacency, assumptions of institutional exceptionalism, short term vision, tendency to view failed innovation to be an affirmation of current practices, and campus politics.
- Recognize that Higher Education is in the Education Business, not the campus, degree, or credit business. Learn from newspapers. Don't equate current practice with the business.
- Know tomorrow will not repeat yesterday – acknowledge transformation, establish a change unit to research change
- Restore Connection with the Real World – avoid being out of step, recognize that students come to college for job prep, update programs to incorporate 21st century skills. Make Institutions distinctive. Give them a value added or plus that distinguishes them from their peers.
- Promote shared social bonds and stress the value of higher education for everyone

Why Nothing Works: Who Killed Progress—and How to Bring It Back by Marc J. Dunkelman. The book states that the reason for America's failures to do more with construction and other large projects is the division within Progressives into a Hamiltonian wing that wants to use centralized government power to do good things and a Jeffersonian wing that is afraid that using government power will lead to bad things happening. The book uses the example of Robert Moses, the architect behind NYC's Central Park and other projects without listening to opponents and often bulldozing minority neighborhoods. Too often good intentions lead to abuses of power which causes the Jeffersonian wing to require some checks. Unfortunately, these checks become exploited by those who want to stop a project (Not In My Backyard) or have their favored solutions instituted instead. So, what was intended as a quick check becomes broadened into a huge amount of paperwork and hearings, stalling and frequently preventing progress.



Project Video: *Matilda* (movie) – The movie is frequently funny and charming. It features a young girl who loves reading who eventually goes to a school with a wonderful teacher, but a horrible headmistress. Fortunately, she has telekinetic powers she can use to set everything to right. However, one can view the movie as a supervillain origin story. Yes, her parents are horrid and the father a criminal used car salesman. They certainly neglect her a lot of the time, rip up her books, and fail to enroll her in school. But she is always fed and clothed and is never physically abused. There are too many children in this country who have it a lot worse. And, even as a young child, she gets back at her parents in ways like gluing her father's hat to his head. She breaks into the principal's house (admittedly after her teacher says it was really the teacher's family's home) and steals a doll (that the teacher says was hers).

Jack the Giant Slayer (2014)– I rather liked this one. This live action film is based on the fairytale of Jack and the magic beanstalk. In the film Jack does exchange his horse for some magic beans that grow into a beanstalk that leads to the land of the Giants, who once menaced the kingdom. But the princess is caught in the growing beanstalk and taken prisoner by the giants. The king's second in command, Lord Roderick, gives chase, but secretly plans to use a magic crown that controls the giants to seize the kingdom. Jack has to defeat the giants and Lord Roderick while saving and wooing the princess. There were a lot of special effects to make the giants big and I thought they worked well. While the film had negative reviews and bombed at the box office, I rather liked it. It wasn't great, but it was entertaining. I think the biggest problem was it was an adult film but marketed as a kid's fairy tale.

Across the Spider-Verse (2023) – This computer animated film is the sequel to *Into the Spider-Verse* and ends on a cliffhanger for a third movie. The movie starts with the Miles Morales version of Spider-man obsessing over Spider-Gwen (from another universe), who he met in the first movie. When he encounters her again, Miles learns that Gwen has been recruited by a multiverse society of Spider-Men and that for the safety of the multiverse, Miles' father has to be killed by new villain The Spot. So Miles has to escape an army of Spider-Men from different universes in order to go save his father. But the movie ends before this is resolved. The movie suffers from some of the usual second book/film in a trilogy syndrome in that everything has to be bigger than in the first book/film, yet cannot resolve things. It is well worth watching. It is interesting that the idea of a multiverse has become so common in entertainment that it doesn't need elaborate explanations anymore.



Dungeons and Dragons : Honor among Thieves – This was a better movie than I expected. I assumed it would be the standard D&D plot of a group forming at a tavern to explore a dungeon to kill monsters and get gold. Instead, it was a much more human story. Chris Pine plays a bard-thief who wants to capture a magic tablet that can resurrect his dead wife. The bard and his female barbarian friend escape prison to find that a former ally has led the bard's daughter to think he had abandoned her and is only interested in treasure. The bard has to put together a team to defeat their former

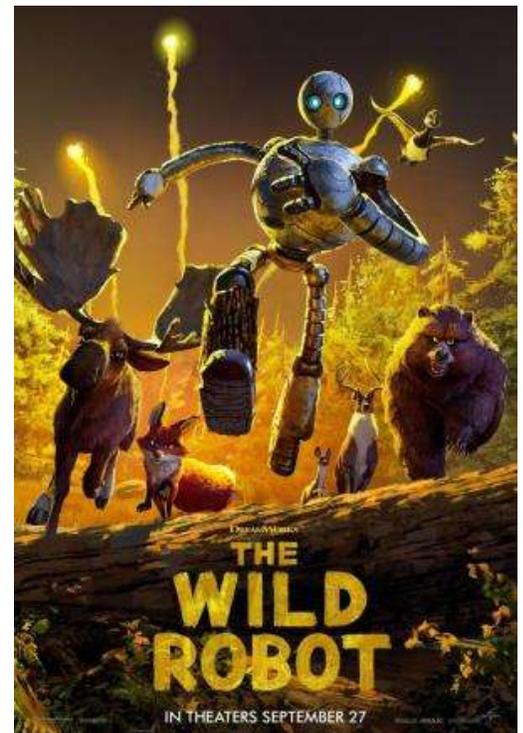
friend and a Red Wizard who wants to turn the town into an army of zombies. There's lots of action and adventure, but some good characterization and personal growth too. File this one under an entertaining movie that is better than one would expect.

Bambi – This is a Disney movie with wonderful animation of nature. There isn't much plot except near the end. The story is mostly that of Bambi as a young fawn discovering the world, an older Bambi losing his mother (carefully out of view so the audience just hears the hunter's gun), and a full-grown Bambi fighting another stag for his mate and then fighting hunters. There was actually more violence at the end than I remembered. The film has wonderfully hand-drawn animation of the natural world.

Wednesday Season 2 Eps 1-4. This is brand new so I want to avoid spoilers. So far it is maintaining the quality of Season 1. Her family is much more of a presence than in S1. Wednesday, despite saying she doesn't want to be seen as a hero keeps acting like one. There is much less emphasis on romance than in S1, a good thing in my opinion, although Enid does have a love triangle. I have not yet watched the last four episodes of this season.

The Wild Robot – This 2024 animated film based on a children's book has beautiful animation. A robot designed to complete tasks winds up on an island with no people. It learns the language of the animals. When an egg hatches, the baby goose imprints on the robot and thinks it is his mother. The robot accepts the task of raising the goose and preparing it to migrate before winter. With the aid of a fox, it succeeds, but then it must save the lives of all the forest creatures during an unusually bad winter. And then the company that built the robot comes back to the island to capture the robot and wipe its memories. This is a great story about a robot forced to exceed its programming through the power of love.

Project Health: I'm folding Project Exercise into this broader project. I'm



cutting sugar out of my diet. I've resolved to no longer buy candy, ice cream, cookies etc. since if I don't buy it, I won't be tempted to eat it. I've also started daily climbing upstairs (I live on the 15th floor) and going to the gym once a week (with a goal of bringing this up to twice a week).

Project Activities. I went to the local county fair. I'm not a big roller coaster fan, but I went on some of the other rides including a mining car ride that actually hurt my teeth from the constant rattling. I saw two shows at the Kennedy Center (a friend gave me her tickets). Since I was with friends, I saw some of the exhibits of local arts, crafts, and agricultural products. I saw *The Twenty Sided Tavern*, which was an interactive play based on the Dungeons and Dragons. The players rolled the dice on stage and from time to time asked the audience to make decisions using smartphones and these votes determined the direction of the plot. I could tell that the dice really did make a difference because at one point the plot was clearly moving in one direction, but the character rolled the dice and had to get above an 18 to not do what the plot was clearly foreshadowing, and s/he got a 19 and the plot moved in a different direction. I also saw *Parade*, a musical about the false conviction and lynching of Leo Frank, a Jew who was accused of killing a girl who worked in his factory in Atlanta. I thought musicals were supposed to have happy endings (although *West Side Story* didn't). It still seemed an odd choice of a subject for a musical. Most of the songs were there to move the plot along, with only two I consider standouts, "This Is Not Over Yet" and "All the Wasted Time"). I also attended the Library of Congress Book Festival and the SFWA tent at the Baltimore Book Festival. I was good and only bought one book. I did not attend the Worldcon although I watched some of it online.

Project Shorts - I'm behind on my magazine reading. I did read and ranked the stories in the WSFA Small Press Award. I'm reading the short stories from the 1930s in *The Mammoth Book of Classic Science Fiction: Short Novels of the 1930s*.

Project Fanac: I wound up not only chairing Capclave, but also putting together its program. I included some of the program descriptions above. For the Washington SF Association's Book Club I led a discussion of Poul Anderson's *The High Crusade*, about aliens landing in 14th Century England only to have the local knights defeat them, take control of their ship, and ultimately conquer their empire. We concluded that it still held up well today (and even Sir Roger's wife gets a moment of redemption). I also led a discussion of *Liberty's Daughter* by Capclave GoH (and recent Hugo winner) Naomi Kritzer. This is a fix-up novel (a novel adapted from multiple short stories) about a girl growing up on an offshore Libertarian community who gradually recognizes that slavery and the mistreatment of workers is wrong and becomes involved in a secret rebellion against its rulers (including her father). Beck is a wonderful character and the book, although marketed as YA, has much to offer an adult reader. For the Baltimore SF Society's book group, I led a discussion of Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War*, one of the all-time great classics of SF. The book, based on the author's Vietnam experiences, show that war, although usually glorified in military SF, is really a horrific mess. I also led a discussion of Samantha Mills, *The Wings Upon Her Back*, the winner of this year's Compton Crook Award for Best First Novel. This book is both an excellent action story and a character study of a woman who falls under the sway of a charismatic leader only to learn that she's been lied to the whole time. And for N3F, I revived and put out my first issue of *Origins*, the N3F history of SF/Fandom zine. I will try to avoid duplication of material between my two N3F zines.

Project Paperback - I'm reading my paperbacks while my eyes can still manage the small print. I read more paperbacks than usual in order to give them away at Capclave. Books read include:

- *Tales from the Vulgar Unicorn*
- *Commitment Hour*
- *Path of the Fury*
- *Impossible Odds*
- *Cat's Claw*
- *Magic to the Bone*
- *Staying Dead*
- *Godspeed*
- *Carpe Demon*
- *Out of Time*

No progress on Projects Cleanup or Shakespeare.

...Letters of Comment on N'APA 277

Thanks to everyone for their kind words about my being RIFFed. I've not found a new job yet, but I am still looking.

Intermission #155—Wokeness isn't really defined and people who use the term generally lump together everything vaguely leftist that they don't like, from Black and Hispanic Disney princesses to changing the Cracker Barrel logo. But you are the first I've seen to add vegetarianism to the list. I'm glad politics and protests didn't stop Israel from winning 2nd place in Eurovision. I don't know much about Finland/Swedish history (except from Eric Flint's 1632 series) so thanks for providing some background. I agree the AI controversy in Worldcon was greatly overblown especially since the concom only used it to flag possible problems for humans to examine. I'm glad Disney finally realized they couldn't keep lobbying Congress for extensions to keep Mickey Mouse in copyright. We can live with a few Disney characters appearing in horror movies. I liked your essay on languages (Old joke: Someone who is trilingual speaks three languages, a bilingual person speaks two, what you call someone who only speaks one? An American.) I recently read E.E. Doc Smith's *Skylark of Space* (see my first issue of *Origins* for a review), which got around the problem by having an alien telepathically teach their language to the Earthlings. I like your list of books. I've read 26 out of 35 (counting as of a series as one).



Image by [Bianca Van Dijk](#) from [Pixabay](#)

ReYCT McCabe: Unfortunately, there is no way the Democrats will acquire enough votes in the Senate to convict Trump (even if they somehow manage to impeach him again) since it takes two-thirds of the Senate to convict (not a majority). ReYCT Garth Spencer: The problem with relying on common sense is that it isn't so common, especially for an international, multi-generational event. Note that apparently you and the Glasgow committee differ on what speech should and should not be tolerated. The Hugos, 2023 possibly excepted, go to the nominees based on members' votes. If people are voting for "woke" authors it is because they prefer them. I don't expect people in foreign countries to have heard about the WSFA Small Press award, I used it because it is one of the only awards I know about that uses blind judging. And I disagree with your claim that people can distinguish between male and female authors based on their style. Remember, when rumors started that James Tiptree Jr. might be a woman, many people refused to believe it. Robert Silverberg even wrote that "It has been suggested that Tiptree is female, a

theory that I find absurd, for there is to me something ineluctably masculine about Tiptree's writing." So maybe you are a better judge of writing than Robert Silverberg, but I doubt this is true for most of fandom.

Swamp Spot #1.2 - Readers of my zine will not be surprised to learn that I am a big fan of reading too. I liked *The Mercy of Gods*. I will have to seek out *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible, and Why* by Bart D. Ehran. It sounds interesting. I haven't read *A Drop of Corruption* by Robert Jackson Bennett but read the first book in the series and didn't think of it as SF, as there were a few magical aspects. Your FAQ on HellthChase was completely believable.

I think the interest in the Wild West is the same as for jungle tales like Tarzan. In the various frontiers, more visceral action/adventure stories can take place that cannot in the more settled (citized) regions of the world. Ancient Israel had the Jubilee where every 7 years, all Jewish slaves were set free. When I schedule a convention, I try to vary the offerings at any one time. But if a person is interested in many things, it would be hard to avoid having two activities of interest simultaneously. Last year's WorldCon make recordings available to members until the end of the year and this year's WorldCon is doing the same. I am about due for a re-read of *Lord of the Rings*. Maybe if I'm still jobless in 2026. My local library shelves fantasy with the general fiction books but science fiction has its own section. (No, I'm not sure what they do about mixed sf/fantasy books.) Some of the objections to the Trekkies were that they were younger than the print fans and had a higher percentage of females. And, of course, there were the usual objections to different/new. I've tried C.S. Forester's *Horatio Hornblower* books. Maybe I should give them another chance. There are lots of online SF magazines such as *Clarkesworld* and *Uncanny* that pay SFWA rates for fiction. DAW publishes male and female authors. Their summer catalog showed an even split. Their

Summerween catalog had more female than male. Their Spring 26 catalog had an even split (if you don't count all the Seanan McGuire reprints).

There's been some talk about a lawsuit for those at the Department of Health whose jobs were cancelled (like mine), but nothing has happened yet. I'm almost 59 so I'm worried about ageism too. *Shards of Honor* was Lois McMaster Bujold's first book (and adapted from a fanfic idea). Maybe give some of her later books a try. I've noticed that a lot of nonfiction books do better at pointing out problems than recommending solutions. I agree that those who rely solely on Fox News are getting a very distorted look at what's going on. Alas, *The Washington Post*, under the ownership of Jeff Bezos of Amazon, is moving in that direction. Too many Americans are so used to the media portraying politicians as corrupt that they don't see how Trump and crew are different. With your hearing problem, have you started using captioning? A lot of DVDs and streaming services have this as an option and I've found it very helpful.



Archive Midwinter for 275—I agree that Trump isn't a Russian agent. But he is easily manipulated and has a soft spot for dictators. Slaves with implants so they enjoy their work sounds like the way *Brave New World* uses drugs. Don't throw away comics. See if you can sell them to a comics shop or donate them to a library or a school.

Mater Mage for 275—Asimov admitted he created his Three Laws of Robotics more as a way to create situations for stories than any belief they would be used in real life. Sorry about putting too many graphics into my zine. I'll condense them. Texas has a policy of letting the top 10 percent of students from each school into their flagship public university. I'm a fan of James Schmitz, especially his Telzey Amberdon stories. It seems to me that it would be fairly easy to take Telzey fanfic and put it in an original universe to make it publishable.

Brownian Motion #14—Yes, I think we need an anti-fascist movement around the world before it becomes too late. Interesting point about Tolkien consciously trying to create a new mythology. Yes fandom simultaneously doesn't learn from past experiences and yet tries to come up with the universal solution. Although media fandom is huge with people flocking to hear about Japanimation or big Marvel movies, there are still some of us who are fans of the written word. I'm sorry that you faced so much trouble in higher education with having to choose your own future. My problem was the reverse, so many interesting possibilities. I wound up taking extra courses and majoring in the broadest available liberal arts major - history and literature. And, now 40 years after starting college, I am still reading both.

Esmeralda #11 - I will have to look for David J. Butler's *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Science Fiction & Fantasy*. I'm trying to find books on fan history. I agree that most science fiction fans enjoy TV, movies, and books/magazines. But as I've shown earlier in this issue, the percentage of people reading print is on the decline. There have been analyses of the benefit of college that breaks down income by major. As you'd expect, the math/science majors out earn the liberal arts majors, especially for the first couple of decades after graduation. It is too soon to see differences in Asimov's and Analog magazines under their new owners, especially since they kept the same owners. There have been problems with the new contracts causing some writers to find other venues. I hope your Son of Silvercon goes well. My Capclave is less than 2 weeks away as I write this (September 19-21).

RAIL #7—I'm about due for another trip to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. Interesting idea of humans' effects on the natural world being postnatural. But what about things like beaver dams? Or termite mounds. Why are human works not considered natural while works of other creatures are? Experimenting on oneself seems like a very bad idea. From Dr. Jekyll to Bruce Banner, it never ends well.

Brandy Hall #13—I was 13 when I bought my first computer, a TRS-80, level I, 4K of memory (I upgraded to a whopping 16K), 47 by 127 graphics black and white, tape drive, and uppercase only. Things have changed considerably since 1980. Yes, *The Man in the High Castle* is worth re-reading. There's a reason why people in England call the *Daily Mail* the *Daily Fail*. The Trump/Musk mass firing of federal workers was poorly handled. There was no attempt to find out what people did and if those jobs were necessary. In the U.S. 53% of those 18-24 have at least some college. Many jobs that require college do not look at transcripts to see what potential employees studied and how well they did. They just use college as a screening. Graduating from college shows that a person can work toward a long-term goal, will show up, and can get things done. Yes, these soft skills are more valued by most employers than any specific content learned. Full agreement that the value of a college is not determined by the salary of its graduates. In the U.S., in the absence of universal healthcare, the educated are healthier than the non-educated too. I agree that *Interstellar* was greatly weakened by the mystical/time-travel solution to the problems shown earlier in the movie. I live in the state of Maryland, where grocery stores cannot sell alcohol at all (not even beer). You have to go to a state-licensed liquor store. Even in the U.S., this is unusual. We are already seeing some states trying to impose the posting of the Protestant Ten Commandments and even (in Texas) bringing back school prayer. I don't think one should limit one's reading only to authors of my own country. I read British authors quite frequently and enjoy those of non-English nations in translation (I'm reading *The Three Musketeers* right now).

Snow Poster #22-I occasionally go to media cons to promote Capclave/Balticon. I don't see the appeal of buying Pops (and other toys) and then leaving them in boxes in the hope their value will increase. A lot of people got burned doing that with Beanie Babies and Cabbage Patch dolls. I remember Pandemonium Books & Games, which took over the Science Fantasy Bookstore spot in Cambridge, MA. Many series offer a continuing narrative, so I regard the Lord of the Rings as three novels, but one continuous story.

Intermission #156—Lots of good SF/fandom history in this issue. I didn't know that the 1939 Worldcon was called that due to the World's Fair. Nor did I know about the FBI investigating Ray Bradbury and Isaac Asimov (you didn't mention that Asimov was born in Russia, but you probably assumed everyone knew that.)

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, nonprofit organization, or for profit employment. Graphics are from clip art discs, the Internet, and AI programs (including crayion, ideogram, canva, and myedit).

Happy Halloween, everyone! Trick or Treat!

