

# **NAPA 279**

**November 2025**



# The Official Organ

## #279

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**Procedure: Please Read:**

Submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer, [abontides@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net); 508 754 1859; and on facebook. To join this APA, contact George.

We regularly send a copy of N'APA to the accessible (email address needed) N3F membership, in the hope that some of you will join N'APA. Please join now!

Currently the frequency is every other month, with the deadline being on the fifteenth day of odd-numbered months. The mailing will normally be collated in due time, as the collator is retired and the preparer has a full-time job. N'APA has been in existence since 1959, but has transitioned from being a paper APA to an electronic one.

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# INTERMISSION #159

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com) Oole-vaulting to new heights! Microsoft's mail sabotage and lotsa things to do have given our @SFJournalen's vacation for now, but one day it'll hit back! Typos are just a social construction...or? Late Sep 2025.

## Editorially: Ukrainian Drones Crush Putin!

About two days after *Intermission* gave *Microsoft* heavy bashing for sabotaging your editor's mail through the summer, this arrogant multinational corporation finally managed to restore the mail account. Getting the balls squeezed in your favourite international cultural magazine was more than



they could take! I used to like *Microsoft*, up to *Windows 95* or *97* in the 1990s. Since then their software has only turned to the worse. They want to take control over your computer by *forcing* "upgrades" on users. They make maintenance difficult with file policies and polluting the OS with thousands of unnecessary file. They act paranoid towards users and don't want their input. Their programs get more and more bloated for each version. *Microsoft* is a toxic waste dump run by a zealous accountant masquerading as a software vendor...

But this column is supposed to be about Ukraine. Western media is *betraying you!* It doesn't give you the real news from Putin's war against Ukraine. Maybe you'll find it in corner of page 6, so few know that Ukrainian drones are absolutely *hammering* Putin's economy. Up to 1/3 of Russia's refineries and other oil and gas installations have had visits from Ukrainian drones and missiles. It's estimated that more than 25% of Putin's gas and oil capacity is destroyed, and that's what Putin uses to finance his war.

Play Russian oil refinery Bingo!  
You're guaranteed to win.

Price caps and sanctions also cuts into his war finances. His only method to lure soldiers to suicidal meatwave assaults - usually from non-Russian minorities - are huge signing bonuses to contract soldiers paid in /b/l/o/o/d oil. He can't order new mobilisations as it would spread more discontent in an already fragile society.

Russian economy is on the brink of the abyss. Inflation and interest rates are at fever-level, many banks are near collapse, Russians withdraw money from accounts in a bank run as they don't trust the system and the so called welfare fund is nearly empty. Putin's purse is running empty and losing income from oil and gas is critical.

And Ukraine will continue to successfully attack Putin's oil, whether our media reports it or not. They have new long-range missiles - especially one called *Flamingo* with a 3000 km range! It takes time and sanctioned Western tech to repair oil installations, if at all possible. It has been claimed that Ukraine has no plan to win the war - but they do! The plan is to destroy Putin's war chest and Zelensky's missile operators follow this plan relentlessly. Russia has been called a gas station with a flag, but it's now running out of gas. All over Russia queues run for miles outside the gas stations.

Ordinary Russians now feel the effect of Putin's war. Russian airports are often forced to close due to the drone attacks (so their incompetent anti-aircraft systems have clear skies, otherwise they'll down commercial jets). 100 000s of Russians sleep on the airport floors waiting for delayed departures, not to forget that there's already problems upkeeping planes as they lack sanctioned spare parts. On top of that Ukrainian hackers recently broke in to and destroyed *Aeroflot's* (their main airline) entire IT system of 80 000 terminals. Not a single western newspaper AFAIK reported that Russian aviation had to revert to paper and pen.

Beside destroying Russian energy income drones also attack Russian air defence installations, strategic war industries, troop concentrations, railways and similar targets. How much of this does your newspaper or TV news report? Not much as far as I can see. As I'm writing Ukraine's on a successful



Queue outside a Russian gas station. If it has fuel at all the price is astronomical.

counter offensive around Pokrovsk surrounding Russian troops in pockets that can't be supplied. I haven't this far seen anything about it in the papers or on TV. I fear some news reporters imagine that they are "balanced" if they choose to forward some Putin propaganda and dismiss real news from Ukraine. Should you really take a neutral position between evil and good?

Putin is driving Russia towards collapse but we're not told. His soldiers gain a few hundred metres here and there - to huge losses: 1000 KIA and wounded/day. Tank losses have been so huge they have almost no armour left. Satellites show that Siberian armour parking lots are near empty. Russian armoured attacks are therefore now rare, instead they do suicide runs on electric scooters and bicycles supplied by pack mules...

Another example of Putin's weakness is the huge number of suspicious deaths around him: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspicious\\_Russia-related\\_deaths\\_since\\_2022](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspicious_Russia-related_deaths_since_2022) CEOs of big companies, generals, high officials, people in media and others are committed "suicide" by jumping out a window in droves, or found dead under other suspicious circumstances. Wikipedia list over 80 cases. But there are probably many more not being reported. Putin controls Russian media and keeps many "windows cleaning" activities of his death squads out of the public eye. Odds are there are hundreds who have spoken out against Putin's disastrous war, who have been "persuaded" by the henchmen of FSB (the renamed KGB) that they can fly. But this management by fear just *shows Putin's*



*Ukraine's promising Flamingo missile delivers 1 ton of explosives up to 3000 km, hitting Putin's oil income.*

*weakness!* He kills any sign of opposition to instill fear and keep his inner circle in line. By getting rid of more clear-sighted people who disagree, he's left with only Yes-men, dumb as ducks, quacking bad advice, holding back relevant information. Over 20 generals and admirals are among those "removed", many six foot under and others are side-stepped to be in charge of counting the number of forks in the mess hall of Novosibirsk.

Putin's war doesn't go well.

And Putin's asset in the Oval Office is pathetic. He gives deadlines he constantly postpones. Donny claims to be ready for sanctions if *all* of Europe joins - knowing that Hungary and Slovakia won't. That's deceitful. (Recent hints to the opposite need to be backed by concrete actions.) Fortunately Europe is

stepping up, now issuing it's 19th sanction package. And Ukraine's new missiles don't need US or any approval from others to perform their own sanction policies - to destroy Putin's economy. And while Ukraine aims at legitimate infrastructure targets, Russia aims for the cities' apartments, hospitals, schools, shopping malls, kindergartens, churches. They deliberately kill civilians, either that or their missiles have really lousy precision. How much of this is in your local news outlet? Maybe in a corner on page 8 or with 10 seconds before the weather report...

I follow the Ukraine news closely, using hours every evening for this, and I tell you: Putin is losing badly. Ukraine is of course under huge pressure but can take it. They hold back the Russians on every front and if they withdraw (slightly) they cause Putin's troops unsustainable losses.

Ukrainian drones fly freely and crushes Putin's insane dreams.

### **History Corner: Bad Movies Ain't the Worst**

I'm not a great fan of movies and TV shows, that is: of the sort they produce *today*. TV/movie makers are getting desperate in their pathetic attempts to lure people to watch their repetitive, bland, computer-generated crap with plots based on things constantly exploding. The more effects your computer may provide, the less interesting it becomes for me. Special effects were better when it was analogue and used miniature models on thin wires.

And today, a TV series has a plot that just goes on and on and on without end. I prefer episode-based series, where each show is a complete whole, and each episode has the same starting point. ("Character development" is overrated. The fact is that people in real life do *not* change in any substantial way after the age of the mid 20s.)

But I like *old* movies and *old* TV. If something is in black and white and the camera stands still (today the camera shakes and there's a cut every second second - computers makes editing too easy) it may be something for me. So I decided too look up some old, odd movies you may not have heard off, some from the tattered back alleys off Hollywood Boulevard or with a script from the USSR politburo. Since they are old they are usually in the public domain, and I'll give links so you can watch them. After that some sf and fandom notes: Asimov, Clarke, Willis etc. And a bomb about DAW!

Descriptions are based on IMDB or Youtube texts. All have English soundtrack or subtitles, unless otherwise noted. Here we go...

**"Just Imagine"** (1930) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4l8qgw5H1Js>

A pre-Code science fiction musical comedy,

innovative and visually striking. It presents a whimsical and fantastical vision of the future, with humor, romance, and groundbreaking special

effects to transport audiences to the year 1980! A man named Single O, struck by lightning in 1930, wakes up fifty years later in a new world is filled with technological marvels and societal changes that bewilder and amuse the time-traveling protagonist. Airplanes have replaced cars, numbers have replaced names, and babies are born from vending machines. Single O's new friends include J-21 and LN-

18 (Maureen O'Sullivan!). J-21 is a dashing pilot who dreams of marrying LN-18, but he faces bureaucratic hurdles. Marriages are now controlled by the state, and J-21 must obtain a permit to wed LN-18. However, the authorities deny his request, favoring a rival suitor, MT-3

**"Cosmic Voyage"** (1935) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBrIPCYSkEY> (coloured version with music track) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCcS2ChTL4U> (b/w version) Cosmic Voyage or The Space Voyage (Kosmicheskiy reys: Fantasticheskaya novella) is a 1936 Soviet science fiction silent, one of the earliest films to represent a realistic spaceflight, including weightlessness as well as one of the last Soviet silent era films. In the year 1946, the Soviet space program is undergoing turmoil. Professor Sedikh, who is planning to lead the first crewed exploration to the Moon, is denounced by his rival Professor Karin as being too old and too mentally unstable for the mission. Professor Sedikh, aided by his assistant Marina and a youth named Andryusha, disregard Professor Karin's authority and make a successful landing on the Moon. Although a few problems occur at the Moon.

Weightless in a "Cosmic Voyage"



The city of 1980  
- just imagine!



The ray apparatus in  
"Another Wild Idea"



**"Another Wild Idea"** (1936) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZeZTHY6li8>

Betty Mack's father has an invention that looks like a fancy camera; it emits an ultra-lavender ray that temporarily rids the ray's target of inhibitions. To test it, Betty's father zaps Charley hoping his newly aberrant behavior will cause Betty to end her affections for the milquetoast. A short comedy film.

**"The Invisible Woman"** (1940)

<https://m.ok.ru/video/3051164338894>

Eccentric Professor Gibbs, brilliant but impractical, invents an invisibility machine and advertises for a guinea pig. What he gets is Kitty Carroll, an attractive, adventurous model, who thinks being invisible would help her settle a few scores. Complications arise when three comic gangsters steal the machine to use on their boss. The striptease scene would be much more interesting if the lady wasn't invisible...

From "The Invisible Woman"



Both Mickey Rooney and Elaine Deyry  
(Mrs Rooney) stars in "The Atomic Kid"



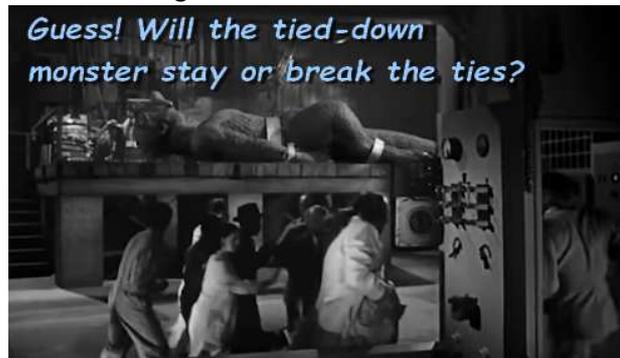
**"The Atomic Kid"** (1954) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bajq0JbZBI8>

While uranium prospector "Blix" Waterberry is in the desert, he wanders into an active atomic bomb test site and is accidentally exposed to radiation from a direct overhead A-bomb blast. He miraculously survives, becoming radioactive, and in the process gaining special powers.

**"20 Million Miles to Earth"** (1957)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Fm0LLsB9FM> The first US manned space flight from Venus crash lands in Sicily causing them to lose their precious cargo of reptilian eggs retrieved from the planet's surface. An Italian zoologist recovers the eggs and watches as one hatches into a rapidly-growing monster. Animation by legendary Ray Harryhausen.

Guess! Will the tied-down  
monster stay or break the ties?



**"The Day the Sky Exploded"** (1958) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbIN55j0ILA> in which scientists discover that a group of meteors are hurtling on a collision course with Earth, and if they hit, the planet will be destroyed. The film is unique for its unusually jerky pace, clever low budget effects, odd use of stock footage, and strange cinematography. It begins as if it is going to be a space-flight adventure, but instead treats the space flight in a realistic, almost mundane manner, before proceeding to reveal the real plot, concerning the meteors. The astronaut is forced to eject from the nuclear powered rocket and the rocket flies off to ....



Women who hate men found on Venus with The Queen of Outer Space

where? Before you know it, a cluster of meteors, probably blown off of some planet or perhaps the moon, is threatening to destroy the earth.

**"Queen of Outer Space"** (1958) <https://m.ok.ru/video/9565249997518> A mission to Venus discovers the planet inhabited only by women led by their evil Queen Yllana. Yllana had all the men of Venus killed, now that's she met Earth men, she wants them dead, too.



The (Really) Red Planet

**"Angry Red Planet"** (1959) <https://m.ok.ru/video/4431667333838> The first spaceship to Mars, presumed lost, is found in space and brought back to Earth by remote control. Only two from an initial crew of four are still alive, but one is unconscious due to an attached alien growth, while the other is traumatized. Given just nine days to film, financial and time constraints necessitated the use of "CineMagic", film-processing technique that combining hand-drawn animations with live-action footage. The relatively inexpensive process was used for all scenes depicting the surface of **Mars**, which become extremely red.



Here "A Satellite of the Sun" from the 1959 movie

They tracked the movements of ships in the oceans,

**"I Was A Satellite of the Sun"** (1959) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dvo7zF2raFw> Soviet dramatic sf film of 1959 with animation elements. Told as an autobiography of the astronaut character Andrew, and set in the future, where space flight is common. Scientist/Astronaut Petrovich pioneers the way to the Sun, but his spacecraft is never heard from again. Later, Andrew's laboratory investigates means of protection from deadly radiation. Andrew repeats Petrovich's journey, and risks his life to rescue an orbiting science laboratory, which holds the solution to the problem.



Space helmet in "Space Men"

**"Space men"** (US release as **"Assignment: Outer Space"**) (1960) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bg7EHR9r3GY> Follows an assignment by Interplanetary News reporter Ray Peterson aboard a space station in the 21st century. Despite problems with the base commander, he is eventually responsible for stopping a space ship which threatens to destroy the Earth. This film is interesting for having a black protagonist, American choreographer, Archie Savage, in a pivotal role.

Based on the classic Lem story, full of library music and science waffle, but a really interesting watch, trying hard to feel 'factual'.



From "A Bomb Was Stolen"

**"A Bomb Was Stolen"** (1962) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBCGesLGR0E>



Futuristic vehicle in "Planet of Storms"

A dialogue free Romanian science-fiction spy-comedy that draws upon farce, satire and surrealism as it subversively deconstructs the spy thriller with the protagonist's accidental discovery of a nuclear suitcase bomb and the subsequent fight over ownership between the rival powers of the criminals and the military. Sounds interesting, doesn't it!

**"Planet of Storms"** (1962) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VTF23EFvEM> ("Planeta Bur")

Kluchantsev. But in the US the movie was later edited and dubbed as "Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet", released in 1965. It was later in turn used to create "Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women" (1968). All for the drive-in cinemas with pop corn and girls on rollerskates...

**"Journey to the 7th Planet"** (1962)

<https://m.ok.ru/video/4460281793230>

Danish-US science fiction adventure film. Earth sends a five-man team to explore the frozen planet Uranus, only to find a temperate forest and sultry women from their past on it, courtesy of an alien brain with evil designs.

**"Creation of the Humanoids"** (1962) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Otcht1mbJ-I>

In a post holocaust society, robots take it on their own to help the dying human race by giving them android bodies. "Think Bladerunner with absolutely no action..."



Italian fashion in "Planet of the Vampires"



**"The Mouse on the Moon"** (1963)

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8rtgyz> The mini-state of Grand Fenwick, created by some clerical error described in "The Mouse that Roared" enters the space race... Hilarious!

**"Planet of the Vampires"** (1965)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zblN55j0ILA>

follows the horrific experiences of the crew members of

two giant spaceships that have crash landed on a forbidding, unexplored planet. The disembodied inhabitants of the world possess the bodies of the crew who died during the crash, and use the animated corpses to stalk and kill the remaining survivors. An Italian film, aesthetically noteworthy with interesting costumes and alien environments.



**"Luna"** (1965)

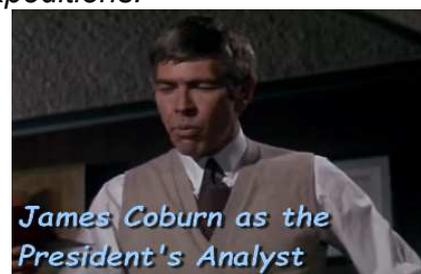
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aT1s5s2LurM> Science fact by Pavel Kluchantsev. The film consists of two parts: popular science and science-fiction. In the first part the modern (as in 1965) scientific knowledge about the Moon is presented. In the second part the director and the artist create a picture of future moon expeditions.

**"The President's Analyst"** (1967)

<https://m.ok.ru/video/2475052436054>

The President's Analyst is James Coburn, whose

position makes him privy to any number of delicate government secrets. Thus Coburn becomes a most desirable prize for several secret-agent organizations. Coburn becomes expendable, he finds a pair of strong allies in the form of likeable political assassin Godfrey Cambridge and gay Soviet spy Severn Darden. a terrific satire of every sacred cow of the late 1960s, so potent that when the NBC broadcast it in the 1970s, they removed the picture's punchline.



**"H2S"** <https://m.ok.ru/video/2522546637478> (1969) Surreal science-fiction fantasy about a student revolt at a futuristic University "H2S" was never released outside Italy. The story is a puzzling one- it begins in London where students are controlled by a dictatorship, sex is outlawed. The set designs are stunning, especially the second half where the runaway lovers end up living in the Italian mountains in a colourful 'fucked-up' igloo! But the film is slow and bemusing, blending political statements with sf which was to emerge as a popular genre in the US. The musical score by Ennio Morricone is superb. "H2S" was never released outside Italy. Rarely seen since its original Cinema release in 1968 This film has never been shown on TV anywhere



**"Eolomea"** (1972) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAOMXamP7fY> DDR-Soviet co-production.



From "Eolomea"  
 Eight space cargo-ships disappear without a trace within three days. And the orbit station "Margot" has suddenly fallen silent. The space council is faced with a mystery and the scientist in charge, Maria Scholl, sees no other solution than ordering a total flight stop to this mysterious sector of space. Her colleague, Prof. Tal seems to be suspicious since he knows things before they are even released.  
 (German dialogue only.)

"Damnation Alley" (1977)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbn-ZodvtSE>

, based on a story by Roger Zelazny, and takes us on a trip in an armoured vehicle through a post-Armageddon USA, if Putin gets it his way. (Not a bad movie, if I remember.)



"Star Odyssey" (1979) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=An-eZcYf1-0> Amateurish - almost like an Italian 1970s version of an Ed Wood film! The film begins with what might be the crappiest electronic music in the history of movies! The plot involves some intergalactic baddie coming to attack the earth with his silly looking robots "Star Odyssey" that features really bad acting and amazingly low production values for an sf movie. Add that to the cartoon-sounding sound effects and you've got a worse-than-Starcrash movie that'll satisfy any B-movie fan! .



"Visitors from the Galaxy" (1980)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3azjxDMLq0> ("Gosti iz galaksije")

Yugoslav-Czechoslovak film directed by Dušan Vukotić, is a heartwarming and imaginative science fiction film set in a quaint rural village. This endearing tale follows the adventures of two curious siblings who stumble upon a crashed spaceship and befriend its quirky alien occupants. As they collaborate to help the extraterrestrial

visitors repair their spacecraft and find their way back home.

"Hard to Be a God" (2013) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvOq6GUS3W8> ("Trudno byt bogom") an epic medieval science fiction film directed by Aleksei German who co-wrote the screenplay. It was his last film, based on the 1964 novel by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. Scientists travel to the planet Arkanar that is centuries behind - stuck way back in the Middle Ages. Anybody the inhabitants of the planet consider an intellectual is instantly executed. The scientists are ordered to not interfere and work undercover, but one of them, Rumata, wishes to stop the senseless murders of brilliant minds.



"Sex Mission" ("Seksmisja") (1984)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RH2jr9pk\\_9k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RH2jr9pk_9k) A Polish satirical comedy from the period of a certain thaw after Solidarity was established. Two scientists are placed into a 3-year hibernation, but when they wake up, it turns out to have been 50 years, and they are the only two males in a new underground society composed exclusively of women. Max used to be woman-chaser so he finds himself in heaven. Albert, on the other hand, forgot all about love and sex as a serious scientist, but is willing to learn. A much talked about movie, eg here in "Comedy Vs Communism"



Female only offspring through test tubes in "Sex Mission"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mtrs2HgTmWc> There was even a computer game made based on the film, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.D.\\_2044](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.D._2044) See also <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexmission>



These feature films are probably all worth watching. I tried to find odd and interesting ones! But Youtube - the best invention since sliced bread - has more to offer. Eg a collection of nuclear war info films, newsreels and similar, from the 1940s and on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF0r1OdDIME>

And here's a report on the deeply naïve HG Wells and how he courted both Lenin (whom he met

in a trip to Russia in 1920) and Stalin (who he interviewed in Moscow in 1934, in which he said: "It seems to me that I am more to the Left than you, Mr Stalin"). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFIRYo0h-ZU> Here his Stalin Interview: <https://www.openculture.com/2014/04/h-g-wells-interviews-joseph-stalin-in-1934.html>

Als are increasingly used to make illustrations, like book covers (real artists are expensive), though they will sometimes give persons six fingers... Here's a comparison between the illustrations created by different AIs when given the same prompt for doing an sf book cover: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/zS-7nm6AFNs>

I have always had a soft spot for pulps. The thing is that polished advanced "artsy" fiction is so damn *boring*! Pulp stories don't pretend, the author presses the accelerator and takes you for a ride. One important property of literature is to inspire you, make your heart beat a little faster, taking you on exotic and exciting trips - the pulps did exactly that! Here's a history of the old pulp magazines worth seeing [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_TAZkrwmKN8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TAZkrwmKN8) interviewing e g Ray Bradbury, Fred Pohl and Otto Penzler. 18 years old Pohl wasn't only editing two cheap pulps (so cheap he had to beg fellow Futurians for free manuscripts) he also started a literary agency. He had a bad start, however. Ray Bradbury contacted him and asked if he'd represent him. Pohl said No! Bad move. Pohl missed the chance to sell Bradbury's early masterpiece "I, Rocket" ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I,\\_Rocket](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I,_Rocket), <https://amazingstories.com/2014/05/rocket-ray-bradbury-introduction-jm-stine/>). We also learn that it cost Ray US\$9.80 to create *Fahrenheit 451* which he wrote renting a typewriter by the hour (US¢10/hour) at the UCLA library.

Finally a horror story! When Condé Nast bought the publisher Street & Smith (doing *Astounding/Analog*) for US\$3.5m in 1959 they wanted to clean out their old inventory. That included 900 (!) old pulp magazine covers. They tried to sell them, and got no offers. Not even the staff wanted the artwork for free. *So it was thrown away!* (They could have tried to auction it off at an sf cons. Some artwork was sold there, rather cheap actually.) BTW, this documentary claims that the paper used for the pulp magazine covers tended to fade colours, which the artists compensated for by using lots of bright primary colours. That may be a reason why old pulp magazine art is so appealing!

I'm an Asimov fan! Here's the Good Doctor talking about the history of the sf genre from 1938 when Campbell entered *Astounding*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcSJRupGloc>

He seems to be around 50 years when this was recorded (see picture), so it's probably from the early 1970s. He for instance says Campbell's more realistic skiffy laid the ground for the Moon landing.: "The climax of science fiction is July 20th when Neil Armstrong set foot on the Moon, the appearance of him in his spacesuit, the spaceship from which he descended, the quality of the terrain, everything about it was precisely what I had been reading in the 1940s."

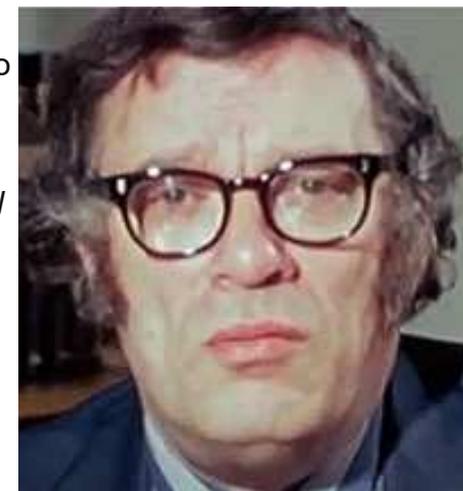
Here he is later, in the early 1990s, talking about artificial intelligence. Asimov correctly



An AI-suggested cover for space opera, but it can't even spell!



2nd best Science writer in the world.



2nd best SF Writer in the World.

identifies robots as examples of AI and believes we in the future will have robots as personal servants and co-workers. He had of course already described this in his stories.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGib6vluVds> And of course he was also guesting David Letterman [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIB1b\\_8hqB0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIB1b_8hqB0) This was from 1980. Asimov eg said he had three book manuscripts going at the same time, switching between them. He believed that in the future everybody could have his own TV channel (hm, Youtube...) but also warned: *"In 30 years time there won't be any war or there won't be any of us."* Putin is doing his best to make this true...

Let's go from the Best Science Writer in the world to the Best SF Writer in the world (both being second best to each other, according to the Clarke-Asimov Treaty). Here's Arthur C Clarke in the 1960s talking about the future...the faraway year 2000! But predictions are difficult he warns, as advances in science and technology make them sound "ridiculously conservative" and a real prediction of the future would sound "so absurd that everybody would laugh...the only thing we can be sure about the future is that it'll be absolutely fantastic". He sounds rather correct predicting remotely working with things from anywhere in the world: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwELr8ir9qM> But seriously, Arthur, you really think we should evolve apes into servants? Anyway, though the present generation of electronic brains are "complete morons", further generations will begin to think *"and eventually outthink their makers...we should consider it as a privilege to be a*

*stepping stone to higher things"*. He also talks about suspended animation to reach the stars. But beware of the machines outthinking their creators and killing the crew!

But over to fandom and stencils! Here's talk about "The Mimeograph and Science Fiction Fandom in the UK" with Rob Hansen and Oscar McFall from the 2019 conference "The Art of the Mimeograph" arranged by the University of Westminster: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FJoA62Ohoc> There seem to be a newborn interest in mimeographs and fanzines in academic circles in recent years. You see academic papers and stuff popping up here and there, though some of the authors have only the vaguest ideas what they're talking about. No, it didn't start with comics zines in the 1950s and definitely *not* with punk rags in the 1970s!



Rob Hansen presenting old fanzines (here: *Hyphen!*)

Fandom historian Hansen (author of *Britfandom history Then* [https://fanac.org/Fan\\_Histories/Then/](https://fanac.org/Fan_Histories/Then/)) mentions bestseller writer Stieg Larsson, who was also a fan and fanzine publisher. I must correct Rob, noting that Stieg wasn't living in Malmö but far north in Umeå. However, it sounds not too unlikely that Stieg was contacted by a rather extreme right-winger (LG Hedengren, if I remember) and this may have contributed to Stieg's later anti-Nazi engagement. (However, at the glorious days around the SFSF HQ on Pioneer Street Stieg seldom talked about such things.)

Over to Walt Willis, FLEAC, that is *Fandom's Leading Expert and Critic!* In the 1950s Walt was the World's #1 Fan, as editor of *Hyphen*, co-author of the classic faaanfiction gem *The Enchanted Duplicator*, the object of the first fan fund leading to TAFF and much more.

Guesting Magicon (fan-GoH) in 1992, he's here interviewed by Ted White: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPVf1E30z3o>

One thing Walt reveals here, and unknown to most people, is that the fannish game of Ghoddminton actually began at Walt Willis' job (I believe he worked for the Belfast constabulary), it was different, using a ball instead of a badminton cork - but the name Ghoddminton was used. But the game was transformed and moved to Oblique House at 170 Upper Newtownards Road, the only official ghoddminton court. Walt also mentioned some of the quirks of the game. (Another unknown revelation is that Walt also wrote a "mundane" version of his classic *The Harp Stateside*, with many fannish references removed, but it was rejected for publication. He would later publish the book *The Improbable Irish* (1969), using the name Walter Bryan for the simple reason using his own name he'd had to ask his employer for permission to be published.



Walt dreaming of Guinness!

*"Worlds We Build Together: SF Fandom, Fanzines, and the Culture of Connection"* (April, 2025) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBBLyXgGTXg> on the history of science fiction fandom and the production of fanzines spanning, and the big Rusty Avelin collection donated to the University of Iowa and now being digitalised, <https://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/hevelin>. Presented by Phoenix Alexander (Jay

Kay and Doris Klein Librarian for Science Fiction and Fantasy at University of California, Riverside) and Pete Balestrieri (Curator of Popular Culture, University of Iowa Libraries). Led by Boaz Nadav-Manes, University Librarian. Digitalising old fanzines is a very valuable thing. It preserves the history of fandom, which I think is worth preserving as a unique, creative culture group. Someone called fandom “history's only working anarchy” (but shouldn't it be called a *fanarchy*?) BTW, they explained how they handled the rights to digitalise: “We sent a query to our legal department, which answered: go ahead, put it on line!” They are ready to remove certain material if someone protests - but that has only happened *once* in over a decade.

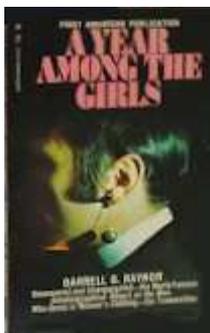
Now over to a startling story. *Intermission* has the habit of now and then drop, well, if not a bomb at least a firecracker: the superfan and legendary publisher Donald A Wollheim was a crossdresser.

It seems few people knew this, and it was news for me. I've read tons about the career of Donald A Wollheim (leading early fan with the Futurians, founder and editor of DAW books, author etc) but nothing I've read this far has mentioned this:

Don Wollheim was a transvestite.

There's open information about it, but not much, see for example <https://zagria.blogspot.com/2023/05/donald-wollheimdarrell-g-raynor-part-ii.html> As I understand it transvestites are men who like to dress up as women. They are not “transgender”, folks with the delusion that they are of another gender than genetics and science says. Neither are transvestites usually homosexuals. (Donald was married, had a daughter.)

I'm not the one to give a psychological analysis of the phenomenon, but one may suspect there's a parallel mindset with confused kids who dress up as and believe they are animals. I've recently seen several articles about “therians” as they are called. (Morning paper SvD recently wrote about “An Adult World with Donkey Ears” about schools allowing pupils to attend classes dressed as animals, <https://www.svd.se/a/Oo4w2E/en-vuxenvarld-med-asneoron> - it's in Swedish, but also



Doris A Wollheim

behind a paywall.)

Wollheim's dressing-urges were kept secret at the time, through his wife Elsie knew and daughter Betsy suspected it (becoming fully aware of it as adult). It began in the 1950s and lasted until the late 1960s. He frequented Casa Susanne, a place for cross-dressers (Elsie drove him there) calling himself Doris. Especially in 1963-64 after which he wrote the book *A Year Among the Girls* (1966, reprinted in 1968) under the pseudonym Darrell G Raynor. The book is available here:

<https://archive.org/details/a-year-among-the-girls-darrell-g-raynor/page/9/mode/2up>

. Here it is hinted that Wollheim did it as a one-time under-cover investigation

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/35167888-a-year-among-the-girls> “The author spent a whole year exploring the psychology, literature, domestic and social lives of the male cross-dressers of America”. But did Wollheim really fake being a transvestite just for a year to write a book?

No. I've only had time to skim *A Year Among the Girls* but it's clearly an interest deeper than occasional. His first encounter (in the 1950s) with it was when he was invited to dinner by a successful businessman, who at the dinner donned a dress and called himself “Virginia”. It showed he had also founded a national network for transvestites: Wollheim writes:

*What is transvestism? In the simplest definition, it is an irrational, compulsive desire to wear the clothes of the other sex. There are more complex definitions, but this will do for now. Such a desire may be suppressed, it may be transmuted into other manifestations, or it may be catered to. But it exists, and it arises, like all human lusts, out of the depths of the subconscious mind - out of factors molded in infancy and in childhood...For me, transvestism was a fantasy that occasionally penetrated my night dreams or my erotic considerations; but it had remained primarily a deeply buried stream of thought never rising to the surface, never possessing my active interest, never obsessing my activities.*

The book gives no hint of the author being into publishing, so cracking the pseudonym would have been difficult. It all gives a different perspective of the man who was very important for early fandom and later for publishing and editing our genre, especially through DAW Books. But what he did when he wasn't busy proof-reading is his own business, at least as long as he didn't go to libraries and insisted on reading stories for pre-school kids dressed in gross, sexually suggestive clothes. (Such behaviour shouldn't be accepted, to throw gender delusions never asked for down the throat - of

children who are especially sensitive.)

When I met Donald Wollheim on Sam J Lundwall's sf con in 1979 (if it wasn't 1977) he was completely normally dressed.

## The Alternate Way to Quote

If you stumble upon Swedish fiction, and even quotes in newspapers, you'll see something like this:

- To quote or not to quote, the writer asked.

That's right. While ordinary quotation marks are also used in Swedish, we may alternatively mark quotes (including dialogue in fiction) with a dash. For my part I prefer using this dash for dialogue when I write fiction. The magazines I've worked with have for the most part preferred the dash, which we call "tankstreck" ("tought line") or "pratminus" ("talk minus"). I also think it makes it clearer when a section of dialogue starts.

(The dash is supposed to be a bit longer than an ordinary hyphen, though I who grew up with ordinary typewriters stick to using the hyphen, as typewriters didn't have a longer dash. As a writer you only deliver a stream of words. Orthography is something for an editor.)

According to ChatGPT this quoting with a dash is common in Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, German, Russian, Polish, Hungarian and Romance languages (except Italian), though ordinary quotation marks are also used.

A "talk minus" only marks the start of a quote. The end is marked by either the " , he said" part or an end of paragraph. If you want the quote to continue in the same paragraph, you may insert a new dash (unless it continues directly after "he said"). If you want to make a quote within a quote, you'll use the ordinary quotation marks:

- Did Neil Armstrong say it was a small step for "Man" or "a Man"?, I wonder.

Note that I don't think a question mark may end a quote. I want an end-of-quote comma there.

I BTW often wonder if English prefer the double (which I use: " ) or single ( ' ) quotation mark. I've seen both in use. BTW I don't like and avoid using the curly quotation marks looking like mini commas. It just complicates the orthography as they are supposed to curl in different directions before and after a quote. The ordinary straight quotation mark is good enough for me and that was also the only alternative on a typewriter..

An extra point: in dialogue with quotation marks the "said comma" is inside the marks in English text, but *outside* in Swedish text!

"Fandom Is a Way Of Life," he said. (English text.)

"Fandom är ett sätt att leva", sade han. (Swedish text. Also note that the word order here becomes "said he" not "he said".)

You BTW sometimes see »quotes like this« which as I understand is just a further development of the ordinary quotation mark, to make it more noticeable. The *Nova SF* prozine I edited in the 1980s only had those »gåsögon« ("eyes of geese") as they were called, and that was on a IBM composer made in the US of A. So I guess »...« is known over the pond (where geese swim...).

And if you don't behave, dear reader, I'll next time lecture on why machine text (typeset, typewriter etc) shouldn't use abbreviation periods. It's Sam J Lundwall, not Sam J. Lundwall, except his magazine "Jules Verne magasinet." used a period in its logo.

## Reading And Listening - Quite Different

I saw a debate in one of the newspapers about how audiobooks may be a threat to traditional printed literature. Operations like Storytel, Bookbeat, Nextory etc have close to 50% of the market today, or have already surpassed that mark.

But consider the following about the fundamental *differences* between reading and listening.

When reading, at varying speeds depending on the content, one constantly makes micro-pauses for reflections that process and test the information. Additionally, the "inner cinema" is triggered (at least in me, probably others too). Your creative brain creates a flow of images from the words, which may be fragmented but complements the text. When listening, the focus on the reading voice drowns out both reflections and the inner cinema. This voice that drags on at a constant speed without adapting to the content. You need to concentrate on the voice so you don't miss anything, while if you read a text you can easily go back anytime at will. Also, reading means that you'll have a peek at 2-3 points of a line and your brain will "build" the complete text for you. Catching the content when listening is a totally different and slower process. Printed text and reading aloud are siblings but *different art forms*.

Generally it is true that new media technologies and new media content always tend to affect old technology. New media always chip away a bit of the market for old media, so audiobooks eating into

– Absolut ingenting...  
– Självfaller inte...  
– Det skulle bara fattas a  
Fru Ebba kände sig mer o  
– Vad Carl Stigman berä  
Inte annat än jag kan förstå  
*A piece of dialogue in a  
Swedish book.*



*Sam J nicked the period from the newspaper Dagens Nyheter. he once said.*

the printed book market is no mystery. But reading and listening are so different that it's unlikely audiobooks could kill off print. I prefer reading.\*

I have a little suggestion for those who wants books feed into their ears: search out Old Time Radio (OTR) plays! Many books were made into radio dramas back in the days before TV took over. Here's one OTR site <https://archive.org/details/oldtimeradio>, but there are many more. Look for the science fiction dramas in the *Dimension X* and *X Minus One* series, usually based on famous skiffy novels!

## How High Would the World Champ Jump on the Moon?

Swedish-American pole vaulter Armand "Mondo" Duplantis won an expected gold medal in the recent World Championships in Tokyo. (Dual citizenship, with a Swedish mother, an American father, so he could choose to compete in Swedish yellow and blue.) He set a new world record (his 14th) with the medal, at an amazing 6.30 metres (ca 20 feet + 8 inches). Mondo jumps around 0.3 metres higher than the competitors! Many consider him the greatest star in track and field today.

But as sf fans, aren't we curious about how high he would jump on the Moon? Your hard-working editor asked ChatGPT:

*Armand Duplantis just set a new WR in pole vaulting, with 6.30 metres. Considering all factors and a pole adapted for lower gravity (and the rules say the pole may be of any length!) how high would he be able to pole vault on the Moon (indoors in a moonbase gym)?*

**Reply:** If everything else (takeoff speed, technique and energy available) stayed the same, Mondo Duplantis clearing 6.30 m on Earth would translate to about 33 m on the Moon. Accounting for likely practical changes (reduced run-up speed, pole dynamics, etc.) a realistic range is about 20–40 m.

I use an energy approach: the mechanical energy per kilogram that Duplantis uses to raise his centre of mass (COM) on Earth is the same energy available on the Moon (assuming same run-up speed/technique and a pole redesigned for lunar conditions). Height against gravity goes like  $E/(mg)$ , so lower  $g$  gives proportionally more height.

Common vaulter detail: the bar is higher than the vaulter's COM at peak because of body shape/technique. I assume the COM passes about 1.00 m below the bar for an elite vaulter (a standard rough value). You can change that and the numbers scale accordingly.

- Earth gravity  $g_E = 9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$
- Moon gravity  $g_M \approx 1.62 \text{ m/s}^2$
- Earth bar height  $H_E = 6.30 \text{ m}$
- COM below bar  $\Delta = 1.00 \text{ m}$

### Step-by-step arithmetic (digit-by-digit)

1. COM rise on Earth:

$$H_{\text{COM},E} = H_E - \Delta = 6.30 - 1.00 = 5.30 \text{ m.}$$

2. Mechanical energy per kg used (specific energy):

$$E/m = g_E \cdot H_{\text{COM},E} = 9.81 \times 5.30 = 51.993 \text{ J/kg.}$$

3. With that same specific energy on the Moon the COM rise becomes:

$$H_{\text{COM},M} = \frac{E/m}{g_M} = \frac{51.993}{1.62} = 32.0944 \text{ m.}$$

4. Add the 1.00 m offset to get bar height on Moon:

$$H_M = H_{\text{COM},M} + \Delta = 32.0944 + 1.00 = 33.0944 \text{ m.}$$



One day on Stockholm's Metro I suddenly saw former Prime Minister (1986-91, 94-96) Ingvar Carlsson taking a ride (left, right former SocDem party secretary Bo Torresson). The parliament opened the same day but they weren't going (not costumed up for it). Mr Carlsson took over when Olof Palme was assassinated, having the nickname "The Foot".



\*But in antiquity reading and sound were combined, because people always read text aloud! Silent reading was very unusual and seen as an odd talent. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent\\_reading](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent_reading) It may have to do with that spaces between words weren't invented yet, so reading aloud let you mentally separate words. Reading silently only became common in the early Middle Ages.

That scaling assumes Duplantis can produce the same mechanical energy on the Moon. In practice:

Run-up speed & traction: on the Moon you have 1/6 the normal force, so friction and sprinting dynamics change. Without special footwear, run-up speed will likely drop. If takeoff speed falls by 20% (so energy falls by  $0.82=0.64 \cdot 0.8^2 = 0.64 \cdot 0.82=0.64$ ), the moon height drops to about 21.5 m. Pole design: you allowed any length - a custom longer, more flexible pole could recover more of the run-up energy and even boost energy capture; that could plausibly add 10–20% energy, pushing the optimistic side to ~40 m.

Atmosphere/drag: inside a moonbase gym the atmosphere will likely be Earthlike, so no big drag advantage. If it were low-pressure, small further gains could occur.

Human biomechanics: muscle force production, planting the pole, timing and balance in low-g are complicated. Some actions (fast plantar push) may be harder, others (time in the air) are easier. These effects could move the result up or down.

Combining these practical effects gives a reasonable plausible range of 20 m (pessimistic) to 40 m (optimistic), depending mainly on run-up speed/traction and improvements from pole design, with a central estimate near 33 m if Duplantis somehow achieves the same effective mechanical energy per kg as on Earth.

## Copyright and Clarke

The poptech/science mag *Teknikmagasinet* in the 1980s had the good taste to run an sf story in each issue, just like what popular tech magazines did back in the good old days. As second in charge (editor-in-chief was oldfan Anders Palm, active in the Futura Club already in the 1950s) I had the responsibility to select and translate the stories and hook up with pen-master Steven Hägg to get an illustration. It wasn't always easy to find stories of the right length and type, but it made me discover Robert Sheckley who often had what we wanted. (We didn't have direct contact with the authors, but with a Swedish agent - Lennart Sane or Gunnar Dahl. One exception was Isaac Asimov, who we wrote to, and got a reply from by postcard - I kept that genuine Asimov memorabilia, of course.) BTW I met Sheckley on Stockholm on some event with Sam J Lundwall (they were buddies), definitely a fine writer. He eventually fell ill on a visit to Ukraine and died half a year later.

But I'm going to present another author that *Teknikmagasinet* published, one of the wittiest tales by none other than Arthur "Ego" Clarke. Here he opens the throttle and goes full O. Henry on us. The story is in the public domain, like much published in the US of A up to 1963. The reason is that until 1978 US copyright was for a period of 28 years, which could be renewed once for another 28 years for a total of 56 years. This Clarke story from 1949 wasn't © renewed (I let ChatGPT checked the register for this and...nope!) so it went PD in 1977.

(Do you wonder why Youtube is full of wonderful, old movies? It's because much US material up to 1963 had copyrights lapsing due to the 28-year rule. Congress refused to retroactively apply copyright once something had entered PD. The majority of old material wasn't © renewed. Why waste money and effort on renewal on decades old stuff of doubtful value? In many cases, the original 28-year © holder had quit or merged and the archive for possible renewals had been placed in a dark cellar in the bottom of a locked filing cabinet in a disused lavatory with a sign on the door saying Beware of the Leopard.

Arthur C Clarke is funnier than you'd think! I loved his tall *Tales from the White Hart*, based on London fandom's classic pub gatherings at the White Horse on Fetter Lane (still on, at another place). In fact, I liked the *White Hart* stories so much that I wrote about a dozen of my own versions: tall tales from the "Binary Bar". The name refers to the pub meetings of a group of computeristic sf fen - computers are binary. We were the filk behind the Peanut Defence Initiative of Nasacon and the sf cons of 1993 and 1995 and we met through the 1990s. I borrowed some characters from the attendees for my tall tales, but our gatherings were of course not nearly as illustrious. The best half of my Binary Bar tales were in my latest collection, *Spacetime*.

However, the following brilliant Arthur C Clarke tale isn't a *White Hart* one:

### History Lesson by Arthur C Clarke

No one could remember when the tribe had begun its long journey. The land of great rolling plains that had been its first home was now no more than a half-forgotten dream.



We had an sf story in each issue. Here's #1, 1983, about eg colonizing Mars.

For many years Shann and his people had been fleeing through a country of low hills and sparkling lakes, and now the mountains lay ahead. This summer they must cross them to the southern lands. There was little time to lose. The white terror that had come down from the Poles, grinding continents to dust and freezing the very air before it, was less than a day's march behind.



Shann wondered if the glaciers could climb the mountains ahead, and within his heart he dared to kindle a little flame of hope. This might prove a barrier against which even the remorseless ice would batter in vain. In the southern lands of which the legends spoke, his people might find refuge at last. It took weeks to discover a pass through which the tribe and the animals could travel. When midsummer came, they had camped in a lonely valley where the air was thin and the stars shone with a brilliance no one had ever seen before.

The summer was waning when Shann took his two sons and went ahead to explore the way. For three days they climbed, and for three nights slept as best they could on the freezing rocks, and on the fourth morning there was nothing ahead but a gentle rise to a cairn of gray stones built by other travelers, centuries ago.

Shann felt himself trembling, and not with cold, as they walked toward the little pyramid of stones. His sons had fallen behind. No one spoke, for too much was at stake. In a little while they would know if all their hopes had been betrayed.

To east and west, the wall of mountains curved away as if embracing the land beneath. Below lay endless miles of undulating plain, with a great river winging across it in tremendous loops. It was a fertile land; one in which the tribe could raise crops knowing that there would be no need to flee before the harvest came.

Then Shann lifted his eyes to the south, and saw the doom of all his hopes. For there at the edge of the world glimmered that deadly light he had seen so often to the north—the glint of ice below the horizon. There was no way forward. Through all the years of flight, the glaciers from the south had been advancing to meet them. Soon they would be crushed beneath the moving walls of ice . . .

Southern glaciers did not reach the mountains until a generation later. In that last summer the sons of Shann carried the sacred treasures of the tribe to the lonely cairn overlooking the plain. The ice that had once gleamed below the horizon was now almost at their feet. By spring it would be splintering against the mountain walls.

No one understood the treasures now. They were from a past too distant for the understanding of any man alive. Their origins were lost in the mists that surrounded the Golden Age, and how they had come at last into the possession of this wandering tribe was a story that now would never be told. For it was the story of a civilization that had passed beyond recall.

Once, all these pitiful relics had been treasured for some good reason, and now they had become sacred though their meaning had long been lost. The print in the old books had faded centuries ago though much of the lettering was still visible—if there had been any to read it. But many generations had passed since anyone had had a use for a set of seven-figure logarithms, an atlas of the world, and the score of Sibelius' Seventh Symphony printed, according to the flyleaf, by H. K. Chu and Sons, at the City of Peking in the year 2371 AD.

The old books were placed reverently in the little crypt that had been made to receive them. There followed a motley collection of fragments—gold and platinum coins, a broken telephoto lens, a watch, a cold-light lamp, a microphone, the cutter from an electric razor, some midget radio tubes, the flotsam that had been left behind when the great tide of civilization had ebbed forever.

All these treasures were carefully stowed away in their resting place. Then came three more relics, the most sacred of all because the least understood.

The first was a strangely shaped piece of metal, showing the coloration of intense heat. It was, in its way, the most pathetic of all these, symbols from the past, for it told of man's greatest achievement and of the future he might have known. The mahogany stand on which it was mounted bore a silver plate with the inscription:

Auxiliary Igniter from Starboard Jet Spaceship "Morning Star" Earth-Moon, AD 1985 Next followed another miracle of the ancient science—a sphere of transparent plastic with strangely shaped pieces of metal imbedded in it. At its center was a tiny capsule of synthetic radio element, surrounded by the converting screens that shifted its radiation far down the spectrum. As long as the material remained active, the sphere would be a tiny radio transmitter, broadcasting power in all directions. Only a few of these spheres had ever been made.—They had been designed as perpetual beacons to mark the orbits of the asteroids. But man had never reached the asteroids and the beacons had never been used.

Last of all was a flat, circular tin, wide in comparison with its depth. It was heavily sealed, and rattled when shaken. The tribal lore predicted that disaster would follow if it was ever opened, and no one knew that it held one of the great works of art of nearly a thousand years before.

The work was finished. The two men rolled the stones back into place and slowly began to descend the mountainside. Even to the last, man had given some thought to the future and had tried to preserve something for posterity.

That winter the great waves of ice began their first assault on the mountains, attacking from north and south. The foothills were overwhelmed in the first onslaught, and the glaciers ground them into dust. But the mountains stood firm, and when the summer came the ice retreated for a while.

So, winter after winter, the battle continued, and the roar of the avalanches, the grinding of rock and the explosions of splintering ice filled the air with tumult. No war of man's had been fiercer than this, and even man's battles had not quite engulfed the globe as this had done.

At last the tidal waves of ice began to subside and to creep slowly down the flanks of the mountains they had never quite subdued. The valleys and passes were still firmly in their grip. It was stalemate. The glaciers had met their match, but their defeat was too late to be of any use to man.

So the centuries passed, and presently there happened something that must occur once at least in the history of every world in the universe, no matter how remote and lonely it may be.

The ship from Venus came five thousand years too late, but its crew knew nothing of this. While still many millions of miles away, the telescopes had seen the great shroud of ice that made Earth the most brilliant object in the sky next to the sun itself.

Here and there the dazzling sheet was marred by black specks that revealed the presence of almost buried mountains. That was all. The rolling oceans, the plains and forests, the deserts and lakes - all that had been the world of man was sealed beneath the ice, perhaps forever.

The ship closed in to Earth and established an orbit less than a thousand miles away. For five days it circled the planet, while cameras recorded all that was left to see and a hundred instruments gathered information that would give the Venusian scientists many years of work.

An actual landing was not intended. There seemed little purpose in it. But on the sixth day the picture changed. A panoramic monitor, driven to the limit of its amplification, detected the dying radiation of the five-thousand-year-old beacon. Through all the centuries, it had been sending out its signals with ever-failing strength as its radioactive heart steadily weakened.

The monitor locked on the beacon frequency. In the control room, a bell clamored for attention. A little later, the Venusian ship broke free from its orbit and slanted down toward Earth, toward a range of mountains that still towered proudly above the ice, and to a cairn of gray stones that the years had scarcely touched ...

The great disk of the sun blazed fiercely in a sky no longer veiled with mist, for the clouds that had once hidden Venus had now completely gone. Whatever force had caused the change in the sun's radiation had doomed one civilization, but had given birth to another. Less than five thousand years before, the half-savage people of Venus had seen sun and stars for the first time. Just as the science of Earth had begun with astronomy, so had that of Venus, and on the warm, rich world that man had never seen progress had been incredibly rapid.

Perhaps the Venusians had been lucky. They never knew the Dark Age that held man enchained for a thousand years. They missed the long detour into chemistry and mechanics but came at once to the more fundamental laws of radiation physics. In the time that man had taken to progress from the Pyramids to the rocket-propelled spaceship, the Venusians had passed from the discovery of agriculture to antigravity itself - the ultimate secret that man had never learned.

The warm ocean that still bore most of the young planet's life rolled its breakers languidly against the sandy shore. So new was this continent that the very sands were coarse and gritty. There had not yet been time enough for the sea to wear them smooth.

The scientists lay half in the water, their beautiful reptilian bodies gleaming in the sunlight. The greatest minds of Venus had gathered on this shore from all the islands of the planet. What they were going to hear they did not know, except that it concerned the Third World and the mysterious race that had peopled it before the coming of the ice.

The Historian was standing on the land, for the instruments he wished to use had no love of water. By his side was a large machine which attracted many curious glances from his colleagues. It was clearly concerned with optics, for a lens system projected from it toward a screen of white material a dozen yards away.

The Historian began to speak. Briefly he recapitulated what little had been discovered concerning the Third Planet and its people.

He mentioned the centuries of fruitless research that had failed to interpret a single word of the writings of Earth. The planet had been inhabited by a race of great technical ability. That, at least, was proved by the few pieces of machinery that had been found in the cairn upon the mountain.

"We do not know why so advanced a civilization came to an end," he observed. "Almost certainly, it had sufficient knowledge to survive an ice Age. There must have been some other factor of which we know nothing. Possibly disease or racial degeneration may have been responsible. It has even been suggested that the tribal conflicts endemic to our own species in prehistoric times may have continued on the Third Planet after the coming of technology.

"Some philosophers maintain that knowledge of machinery does not necessarily imply a high degree of civilization, and it is theoretically possible to have wars in a society possessing mechanical power, flight, and even radio. Such a conception is alien to our thoughts, but we must admit its possibility. It would certainly account for the downfall of the lost race.

"It has always been assumed that we should never know anything of the physical form of the creatures who lived on Planet Three. For centuries our artists have been depicting scenes from the history of the dead world, peopling it with all manner of fantastic beings. Most of these creations have resembled us more or less closely, though it has often been pointed out that because we are reptiles it does not follow that all intelligent life must necessarily be reptilian.

"We now know the answer to one of the most baffling problems of history. At last, after hundreds of years of research, we have discovered the exact form and nature of the ruling life on the Third Planet."

There was a murmur of astonishment from the assembled scientists. Some were so taken aback that they disappeared for a while into the comfort of the ocean, as all Venusians were apt to do in moments of stress. The Historian waited until his colleagues reemerged into the element they so disliked. He himself was quite comfortable, thanks to the tiny sprays that were continually playing over his body. With their help he could live on land for many hours before having to return to the ocean.

The excitement slowly subsided and the lecturer continued:

"One of the most puzzling of the objects found on Planet Three was a flat metal container holding a great length of transparent plastic material, perforated at the edges and wound tightly into a spool. This transparent tape at first seemed quite featureless, but an examination with the new subelectronic microscope has shown that this is not the case. Along the surface of the material, invisible to our eyes but perfectly clear under the correct radiation, are literally thousands of tiny pictures. It is believed that they were imprinted on the material by some chemical means, and have faded with the passage of time.

"These pictures apparently form a record of life as it was on the Third Planet at the height of its civilization. They are not independent. Consecutive pictures are almost identical, differing only in the detail of movement. The purpose of such a record is obvious. It is only necessary to project the scenes in rapid succession to give an illusion of continuous movement. We have made a machine to do this, and I have here an exact reproduction of the picture sequence.

"The scenes you are now going to witness take us back many thousands of years, to the great days of our sister planet. They show a complex civilization, many of whose activities we can only dimly understand. Life seems to have been very violent and energetic, and much that you will see is quite baffling.

"It is clear that the Third Planet was inhabited by a number of different species, none of them reptilian. That is a blow to our pride, but the conclusion is inescapable. The dominant type of life appears to have been a two-armed biped. It walked upright and covered its body with some flexible material, possibly for protection against the cold, since even before the Ice Age the planet was at a much lower temperature than our own world. But I will not try your patience any further. You will now see the record of which I have been speaking."

A brilliant light flashed from the projector. There was a gentle whirring, and on the screen appeared hundreds of strange beings moving rather jerkily to and fro. The picture expanded to embrace one of the creatures, and the scientists could see that the Historian's description had been correct.

The creature possessed two eyes, set rather close together, but the other facial adornments were a little obscure. There was a large orifice in the lower portion of the head that was continually opening and closing. Possibly it had something to do with the creature's breathing.

The scientists watched spellbound as the strange being became involved in a series of fantastic adventures. There was an incredibly violent conflict with another, slightly different creature. It seemed certain that they must both be killed, but when it was all over neither seemed any the worse.

Then came a furious drive over miles of country in a four wheeled mechanical device which was capable of extraordinary feats of locomotion. The ride ended in a city packed with other vehicles moving in all directions at breathtaking speeds. No one was surprised to see two of the machines meet head-on with devastating results.

After that, events became even more complicated. It was now quite obvious that it would take many years of research to analyze and understand all that was happening. It was also clear that the record was a work of art, somewhat stylized, rather than an exact reproduction of life as it actually had been on the Third Planet.

Most of the scientists felt themselves completely dazed when the sequence of pictures came to an end. There was a final flurry of motion, in which the creature that had been the center of interest became involved in some tremendous but incomprehensible catastrophe. The picture contracted to a circle, centered on the creature's head.

The last scene of all was an expanded view of its face, obviously expressing some powerful emotion. But whether it was rage, grief, defiance, resignation or some other feeling could not be guessed. The picture vanished. For a moment some lettering appeared on the screen, then it was all over.

For several minutes there was complete silence, save for the lapping of the waves upon the sand. The scientists were too stunned to speak. The fleeting glimpse of Earth's civilization had had a shattering effect on their minds. Then little groups began to start talking together, first in whispers and then more and more loudly as the implications of what they had seen became clearer. Presently the Historian called for attention and addressed the meeting again.

"We are now planning," he said, "a vast program of research to extract all available knowledge from this record. Thousands of copies are being made for distribution to all workers. You will appreciate the problems involved. The psychologists in particular have an immense task confronting them.

"But I do not doubt that we shall succeed. In another generation, who can say what we may not have learned of this wonderful race? Before we leave, let us look again at our remote cousins, whose wisdom may have surpassed our own but of whom so little has survived."

Once more the final picture flashed on the screen, motionless this time, for the projector had been stopped. With something like awe, the scientists gazed at the stiff figure from the past, while in turn the little biped stared back at them with its characteristic expression of arrogant bad temper.



For the rest of time it would symbolize the human race. The psychologists of Venus would analyze its actions and watch its every movement until they could reconstruct its mind. Thousands of books would be written about it. Intricate philosophies would be contrived to account for its behavior .

But all this labor, all this research, would be utterly in vain. Perhaps the proud and lonely figure on the screen was smiling sardonically at the scientists who were starting on their age-long fruitless quest. Its secret would be safe as long as the universe endured, for no one now would ever read the lost language of Earth. Millions of times in the ages to come those last few words would flash across the screen, and none could ever guess their meaning:

A Walt Disney Production.

## Letters of (and Mailing) Comments

**First LoCs - more are welcome! - then MCs to first EAPA, then N'APA. And please make a little fanzine and join an APA. It's easy and fun and the opposite sex will find you very attractive!**

**Richard Dengrove:**

I thought Swedes were too smart to make an atomic bomb.

**Ed:** *We were, so we didn't.*

**Perry Middlemiss:**

Thanks Ahrvid.

Very interesting and informative essay of yours in the first issue of AJFR.

**Ed:** Available here <https://efanzines.com/AJFR/AJFR-1-1.pdf>

**Jim Meadows:**

Dear Ahrvid, Thanks for sending me Intermission156, which I happened to read, coincidentally, right after watching Space Command on YouTube. Apparently, I watched the only known surviving kinescope from the series, even though, as you note, kinescopes of the series were sent to CBC stations across Canada. I'm holding out hope there are other kinescopes from the show out there somewhere. It's one thing to erase a reusable video or audio tape, but another to destroy motion picture film unless you really have to. When researching archival materials for the centennial of the university radio station I work at, I found that hundreds, if not thousands of old recordings on acetate records still existed from the 1940s and 50s, carefully preserved at the university archives. But when it came to tape recordings, finding old materials was much more difficult, because evidently somebody at some time felt they had to reuse the tape and clear out storage space. That's why in the US and Britain, for instance, many TV shows that could still find an audience (and revenue) today are apparently lost because some people couldn't think more than 18 months ahead. I'm sure there are examples of this loss in your country as well. **Ed:** *The problem was that early video tapes were very, very expensive!* That single surviving episode of Space Command was interesting to watch for a couple of reasons. First, for something labeled as a kids' show, it seemed like a fairly mature adventure show, limited by the need to have actors pantomiming the effects of ship movement and high gravity, to a degree even beyond all the lurching about I used to see on the starship Enterprise). It was also interesting to note that each scene of Space Command was shot with a single camera (although a camera that did a lot of panning and dollying). The action in the episode was spread out over three sets (two on the spaceship, one back down on the ground), and perhaps they only had three cameras in total and decided to divide it up among the sets. Kinescope, to my knowledge, is a particular way of filming images off the TV screen to keep the picture from appearing to flicker. I believe it wasn't invented until 1948, which is one reason we don't seem to have any (or nearly so) film records of TV images before that year here in the U-S. On the other hand, there may not have been much of a need for kinescopes (from a business point of view) until the late 1940s, when TV networks were launched, and needed kinescopes to extend the reach of their distribution, and perhaps to show to their advertisers. The histories of broadcasting that I read tend to be very USA-centric, so I don't know how other countries, like yours, were handling these same challenges in TV's early days.

**Ed:** *Both Britain and Germany were early with TV (before the US, in fact). Especially in Nazi-Germany, which had daily broadcasts from the 1936 Olympics and on (but few TV sets, instead communal TV viewing rooms in the big cities). An interesting documentary about Nazi TV, from footage found in East German archives after the*



*Aug 30 I happened to pass Stockholm Half Marathon, with 20 000+ runners (there's also a full Marathon in June): BTW, my brother - though an elite medium distance racer - actually won*

*Athens Classic Marathon 1990! Time 2.26:33*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athens\\_Classic\\_Marathon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athens_Classic_Marathon)



Year ↕	Men's winner ↕
1990	 Johan Engholm (SWE)

German reunification: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3exBWIwrvsE&t=811s> BBC had a good start, but had to shut down TV during the war so that transmissions wouldn't direct German bombers. (Sweden was very late, with TV test transmissions in 1954 and regular service from 1956.) Now over to comments about the September EAPA - and BTW: join! New, fresh blood is needed. You just have to do a little fanzine every second month, say only one page... Are you too lazy for that? Fanzines are better than other social media!

**Henry Grynsten:** Anders Sandberg, Nick Bostrom, Max Tegmark - three Swedes who are well-known for their philosophical and futurological ideas, and who I think always get everything spectacularly wrong. Could be, Predicting the future is very difficult. // what do you mean by "exactly the same" I mean that if you put it before your eyes, it'd be impossible to tell the difference even with the most advanced instruments. ■■the copy doesn't take up the exact same space as the original It doesn't have to. If we speak of something mental or data processing, those functions aren't dependent on place. ■■ your "own" mind is in your head where you are now. There will be two consciousnesses. That's my point. There will be two you - odd and strange to think of, but so it is. I suspect that your insistence there can only be one original you is because you have difficulties fathom the idea of two you. ■■metaphysical view of the mind, that it can fly around in the air Rather that it's a matter of data processing, which can be performed anywhere. ■■No, you don't have the right to create whatever you want. I covered that in "as long as it's no threat to others". ■■ You can make robot servants driven by "simple" AI, without consciousness. The problem is that consciousness may appear anyway, simply because the data processing reaches such a high level that it appears spontaneously. ■■Humans aren't programmed the way robots could be. Their behavior is determined by genes and environment. That's just another way to express programming, ■■Give me one argument why you would need conscious robots as servants It may be unavoidable. Consciousness may appear as an unintended effect of a complex enough system. ■■As far as I know /EO Smlth/ didn't "befriend them". Reading about his developing interest, I think befriending little bugs is a fair description. ■■So you are saying that it's possible that we have an accelerated extinction rate? Possible, but very unlikely since we actively do a lot to keep species (at least mammals and birds). ■■"habitat destruction" But we also expand habitats, an effect of the rapid urbanisation which leaves areas for nature to reconquer. ■■Birds, for example, eat insects. If insects decrease dramatically, so will many bird species. Insects aren't decreasing. From all we know about insects, the little buggers we call insects are extremely resilient. They appear everywhere in huge numbers. One species of insects may disappear, but as a whole - insects stay. They'll be the last to give in if Putin presses the button. ■■we can't protect them from climate change. Weather fluctuation is many times bigger from year to year, than the tiny climate change - and animals are used to that. ■■all scientists are as biased as biologists? No, I think biologists and others dealing with animals and nature are *more* apt to be biased than others. The reason is that nature carries a very strong emotional load. Nature is described in poetry and art with strong emotions and beautiful words, and that carries over to anyone dealing with nature. ■■Birds are often dependent on specific insect species No, that must be very, very rare since being dependent of a single species as food source would be an enormous evolutionary disadvantage. ■■You seldom give your sources yourself. I usually give a source the first time I mention something, but perhaps not always repeating it if the topic comes up again. And I sometimes give sources saying who said what, but not as an URL. ■■"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." That is just an opinion that is contradicted by the facts. I question your "facts". You just gave us a list, but it's very vague on what calculations and what data is behind it. Lists based on social factors typically always include what is called "beauty contests", i e mere opinions There's a very, very strong logic - basic cause and effect! - in that change is difficult if you can't change through your work and actions. ■■Alcohol is Amazing. "Every year it kills more people than terrorism, wars, homicides and car accidents combined." That means well below 500/year for Sweden! Not even the most militant sobriety groups make so low claims! But it's typical that the positive effects of alcohol aren't considered. As an important social lubricant it brings couples together which creates *new humans!* People who feel depressed become a little happier from it, which may prevent suicides. And keeping alcohol legal spares us many smugglers and bootleggers and their violent, often deadly *turf wars and clashes with the police.* ■■And today, it's a minority who drinks alcohol of any kind - 44 % Wrong. IQ.se says 82% (aged 16-84) have drunk alcohol the last 12 months, 75% do it every month. ■■So I don't know how it can be in our biological system if only a minority drinks alcohol. It comes from way back in our evolution! It may have started with our mammal forefathers even before any branch of Homo existed. Animals will now and then get drunk on fruit and berries which have fermented, so the body evolved methods to take care of it. And those properties followed down the line in our evolution. ■■Drinkers are a minority. No, a substantial majority. ■■Younger generations...are drinking far less True, a bit less ("far" is overstating it!). We may fear, however, that they on the other hand replaces booze with marijuana and other narcotics. ■■Drinking can justifiably be restricted if it causes harm to or infringes on the freedoms and rights of others. Not generally! The ethical way is that bans or restrictions need: 1) That the harm to be avoided reaches a certain, reasonably high level. You don't load the anti-aircraft guns for mosquitos. 2) That the risk of harm is reasonably acute, i e near in time. You don't impose a ban for something that may or may not happen several years in the future. 3) That it's directed at the right cause and will lead to a desired effect. You don't ban, say, Lego with the intention to reduce traffic accidents. Lego isn't the cause of that, and a Lego ban will have no effect. Everyone shouting for bans must

remember: a high enough harm, acuteness, cause and effect! ■■ One person's "enjoyment" cannot override the right of an innocent other Many disagree. Someone's actions may very well override others. Many tend to be a bit like the princess and the pea (in the HC Andersen story). To habitually ban this and ban that is serious harm in itself. People need freedom of action, but constant restrictions harms us and society as a whole.

■■ "The Swedish problem is that heavy regulations and high taxes make it difficult for you to change your situation by your own work which will lower soc mobility." That is just an opinion that is contradicted by the facts. I question your "facts". Your "facts" are from Wikipedia. A good principle is that Wikipedia isn't trustworthy on topics that are debatable or controversial. The reason is that as some see Wiki as the Ultimate Truth, there are activists doing their darnedest to get their opinions into Wikipedia. I saw the factors claimed to represent "social mobility" and I'm flabbergasted. Most of it doesn't concern social mobility at all! Eg: Health doesn't, education maybe seen as a prerequisite but it isn't social mobility in itself, and what the heck has "lifelong learning" with this to do? I could go on and on. The "index" you use is more what some may believe are good social policies in general, but *not social mobility*. Arguments you want to make on the grounds of this "index" are worthless. Sorry. What should be measured is this (but it isn't!): get the income for a random selection of families for year 0, get the income for these families for year 25 (or year 50 for a longer study), how much has economics change? (Money is usually a good indicator for social levels.) That will show mobility: bigger change, higher social mobility. And another problem: lists aiming for social factors typically always include what is called "beauty contests", i e mere opinions. Use of the the expression "index" usually indicates a level of beauty contests. Finally, we must think and draw conclusions *ourselves* and there's a very, very strong logic - basic cause and effect! - in that change is difficult if you can't change it through your work and actions. ■■ *It's true that serious damage only appears after a long time, but it starts early* The early damage is very tiny, and thus doesn't reach the level that would motivate any infringements. Possible harm isn't near in time. ■■ *There are cases like Keith Richards, now 81, who used heroin for many years* Two factors: 1) Keith Richards as a member of one of music's most successful bands going strong since the 1960s must be a very disciplined guy and that may keep drug use under control. 2) He has money and probably access to good health care. Doctors keep him afloat. (I don't know enough about W Burroughs to comment him. I'm more of an Edgar Rice man.) ■■ *a strong positive relationship between alcohol consumption /and/ the commission of crimes* But what comes first? Do you live a lousy criminal life because you drink, or do you drink because you live a lousy criminal life? I believe that criminality has a lot to do with personality types and genetics - and that's the cause. Having a little drink helps you put up with your lousy criminal life. ■■ *it's pretty clear that consuming less alcohol is associated with lower odds of crime* Not very clear. The murder rate in Saudiarabia is 1 per 100 000 inhabitants, compared to Sweden presently at 1.15 per 100 000. Though alcohol is totally banned in Saudlarabia and there are harsh, deterrent penalties (death penalty for murder) it still only manage to make the Saudis marginally less criminal. ■■ *Restricting alcohol would decrease crime and suffering* What do you mean with "restricting"? A ban? Alcohol is already restricted in most countries (not Russia, it seems...) And a total ban had rather interesting, bad effects in the US during the prohibition period... Comparisons with countries where alcohol is banned don't unambiguously support the thesis. ■■ *If anything makes people hold back, it's unwritten social rules* Those too, but government has the most clutch in holding people back unnecessarily. ■■ *And yet Sweden is #2 in innovation, above the US* I note another "index". One must suspect that the Swedish computer game industry has a lot to do with it, but that's not innovation. You may *innovate* a new integrated circuit or some computer gadget, but you *design* a game. This "index" (partly a beauty contest) may not point to innovation, as we read "the index has been criticised for giving excessive significance attributed to factors that are not integral to innovation". ■■ *It's not a myth. It can cause "coronary heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer* No, probably only to a microscopic degree! *Second hand smoke causes the air to contain probably around 1% of the smoke a smoker gets.* And as most people will sit around a smoker at most, say, 10% of the time, the exposure is 1/10th of 1%! You try to fool people into believing that tobacco smoke exposure in the order of 0.1% compared to a smoker casues "coronary heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer". *Think, for heaven's sake! That's not possible! And when I checked studies in this area, they relied on easing the "confidence level" to 0.6, when 0.95 is scientific standard and 0.5 means it's a random effect. The reason those studies used near-random confidence is that they falsely tried to "prove" something impossible.*



Bad news, Lars LON Olsson is presently in hospital, so this is from the archives: Sheriff hit by evil. Extreme outrage by Lutor. What is Froggy Gordon doing?(You don't have time for everything)

Our world is full of shitty “scientific” studies used to promote special interests. ■■*Maybe you would say “Great idea! Let’s give it /a robot/ different settings so that it can be whatever the owner wants!”* Great idea! ■■*the government decided: your kid should be a servant.* Straw man. I'm not talking about kids, which you do to trigger sympathy (robots are adult from day 1) and it's more the owner of a robot that decides, not the government. But the government already set up some directions, through other means: laws and paragraphs, police, the justice system, bureaucracy is used to direct people to do this and not do that. You ask if it's OK? It's OK *to a certain degree.* (Another straw man, trying to give the impression that if you disagree you're against every regulation.) There must be a balance between what decisions we start with and what the individual then has his rights to decide. (I'm for weighing that balance more to the individual.) The government should have some say in what robots are programmed for. They can't murder, steal, defraud etc. Robots shouldn't do nasty deeds, just like we program our kids for - to the best of our ability. ■■*“There is nothing wrong or unethical with providing services!”* So *there is nothing wrong with having slaves?* Don't forget your fire extinguisher - straw men are a fire hazard! Slavery is forcing people to do what they don't want, using force and without paying a salary. But people (as well as future robots) are willing and happy to voluntarily provide services and they'll get some compensation for it too. (Salary to a robot is pointless. But it can get compensation in the form of electricity, oil and being repaired if damaged, a house to be protected against weather and wind.) ■■**Over to Wild Ideas:** *Kafka must have consciously or unconsciously transposed his childhood persona into narratives set in adult life.* Interesting observation. Could be true. ■■You make a similar observation of another author: *Nabokov might in other words actually depict parts of his own childhood* Could also be true. ■■And then you move to a third author, about an adult and a boy switching minds. Sounds interesting (and goes with the “childhood” theme) and perhaps I should read it. *Vice Versa or A Lesson to Fathers* by F Anstey is available here: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/26853> Unfortunately, I haven't seen any of the films mentioned. ■■I disagree with that you couldn't call these tales science fiction! Sf doesn't have to use scientific tricks, just a fundamental change in the world as we know it. (Fantasy on the other hand needs a degree of magic.) ■■*You are intimately tied to your body, and your mind cannot leave it.* I disagree. “You” are complicated data processing, which can be performed anywhere. (But we are nowhere close to uploading a mind to a computer. It may be so difficult as to be impossible...) ■■You mention that the brain is fully developed around the age of 25. It has been noted that individuals therefore rarely go through any personality changes beyond the mid-20 age. I see that as an argument against “character development”. Most people in fiction are above 25 years of age and therefore won't change. I'm tired of critics demanding “and at the end the hero must have changed, through the events in the story...”. That's against that's against human nature and what makes us tick - we don't change the clockwork once it reaches a quarter of a century. At the end of the story the conflict should have been resolved, but the persons stay the same, thank you! ■■About fixing the body, prolonging life: when the two dictators Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin recently met in Peking (I refuse the ugly sounding “Beijing”) the microphone of a translator wasn't turned off as they walked together, so we heard their private chat. They talked about “Organ transplants for immortality: Might Xi and Putin be onto something?” <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1w9z72r6o> They want to live longer so they can be dictator's longer...

**William McCabe:** Wouldn't an extension cord solve the boiler problem? ■■I believe that crime fiction is most popular among women readers over here. So called romance fiction is probably No 2. ■■As a young teenager I spent several months in southern England each summer, along the coast, on what was called “language travel”. You stayed with an English family for 3-4 weeks and had classes in English daily. It was very nice. You got better in English and got to know the English people. And the small coastal towns were very nice. ■■Smaller cons are better! ■■I cover Putin's war in Ukraine elsewhere in this issue.

**Heath Row:** Is a Renaissance fair about the historic period we call the Renaissance? ■■You review books I probably won't read. Presently I read some sf and to this have a thick stack of crime fiction and have no time for other books which may be difficult to find anyway. ■■When I was in book devouring age I read among other things Biggles, Enid Blyton, Sherlock Holmes, The Twin Detectives (crime for youth by two Swedes combining their names to “Sivar Ahlrud”)...but *then came science fiction.* The cheap so called LP paperbacks got me hooked. ■■The “Aniara” opera is to be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09yk-oVkpLk> As Far As I Know it's the version by the Royal Opera in Stockholm from 1959. You may not pick up what they sing, but that's often the case with opera in general... ■■I know you like old films, so I hope this's “History Corner” has something to your liking...

**Garth Spencer:** Idiots running around beating up transvestites has happened in Stockholm, but is very rare. Conflict situations with immigrants is more common. There's still a problem with what we may call the “gangster war”, drug gangs fighting for turf. They use under-



*Among my earliest skiffy. The LP paperbacks were cheap but had some good authors, like Jack Vance here.*

aged kids to shoot each other. You can't be sent to prison under the age of 15, instead you are "taken care of by the social services". These gangs make murderers out of 13-14-year old boys. It's horrible! ■■But I can't see why things like this should make the woke discrimination of white middle-aged men acceptable! To let innocent suffer is a bad idea, even if you try to defend it with rubbish about "social structures". The white middle-aged authors who are denied eg literary awards under these practices, are innocent of discriminating immigrants! And members of the choosen "minority groups" have done nothing to deserve extra privileges. I have always been against so called "affirmative action". ■■Oh, tu parles français. Je suis désolé, mais je ne parle pas français! ■■Time to stop.Se ya'!

**Jefferson Swycaffer:** On AIs and copyright: Your example of changing some Beatles music with a simple mechanical operation does *not* in any way reflect how humans or AI work when inspired by work of artl. An inspiration process is much more complex and creative. And nobody *owns* thought. Immaterial rights are all limited *concessions* for "thoughts". Immaterial rights, aren't "property" but more like e g mining concessions..

**Fandomain:** And who are you? I find no name of the fanzine editor.

**Adrian Kresnak:** About food supply, you may notice how I in latest *Intermission* analysed Swedish food production, with the help of AI. Despite being far from geographically ideal (we are a bit to the north, though there is good farm land in the south) we produce *more than three times* the amount of food needed to feed our population, counting everything incl berry picking and moose hunting.

**Robert Jennings:** I think Donny Trump is reckless with his Big Expensive Bill, putting the US into even more debt! Presently thre US of A's debt is 120% of GDP. China probably buys some of the debt and may use it as leverage against the US. *Cut spending!* I believe the last balanced US budget was under Bill Clinton...a long time ago. (Sweden had a rarther heavy debut up to the 1990s, hovering around 100% of GDP. We then began cutting it, and our debt is now around 33% of GDP, which is among the lowest in OECD. ■■I like your illustrations! Tintin was hilarious.

**Mark Nelson:** When the Royal Library had its digital newspaper archive open on-line a few years ago I searched for the use of "fanzine" in Swedish newspapers (all "national" papers and some regional) and found the first use in the mid 1960s (I wrote about it in *Intermission* but don't have time to look it up now). It appeared a few times in the 1970s, and more frequently from the 1980s and on (some of it related to punk fanzines). ■■ Feeding a novel into AI is fair (and thus by definition also fair use!) because it doesn't infringe upon what copyright deals with. Copy-right (intentional hyphen) gives exclusive rights for *publishing* (the right to copy = publish) but not for other activities. Feeding a novel into an AI isn't publishing and should be legal. What the AI does in its internal processes (similar to "being inspired") isn't publishing the novel., so there's no breach of copyright. It' will make something of its own out of the process.. ■■There weren't AFAIK a fandom for sf movies until sometime in the 1950s or even 60s. ■■ What I mean with that "AIs are biased the other way" is that creators of AI services tend to add a built in wokish slant. ■■"*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*" I have. First of all, the crowd on that side of the spectrum have a tendency to be very, very intolerant and can declare virtually anyting "homophobic, transphobic etc". So hunting for such will land in virtually anyting. Secondly, as a matter of principle even the "homophobic, transphobic etc" have freedom of speech, and a worldcon should be neutral ground in this respect.■■Yes, I took a ferry from Stockholm. It's not very far.

**Kevin Trainor Jr:** So you don't like "brainless political slop", neither do I.,

**Garth Spencer:** Copyright gives you pay because people spend money when what you produce is *published* - your publisher will then send some of that money to you. But you have no right to demand money from being *inspired* by your work. "*Copy*" means publish, the right to make copies = publishing. Copyright doesn't cover eg rigths to stop others from being *inspired* by a published piece. Publishers demaning pay for that constitutes an unjustified attempt to unfairly widen "the right to copy", as they feel a stress from the growth of other media. ■■Sorry, my understanding of Chomsky is a bit thin...

**George Phillies:** I should have a look at Charles de Lint's work.

**Samuel Lubell:** I add vegetarianism to wokeness because 1)it's justified it with environmental concerns (which is wokish, red-green), 2) ditto demands to "decrease consumption" to leave the "capitalist rat race" (meat is expensive luxury), 3) it follows the woke pattern of declaring something being "oppressed" - right or wrong - here: animals. And anyone declared as "oppressed" is to get woke support

Rather short comments to N'APA, but I was short on time and its mailing was late. Anyway, time to sign off! See ya'!

**Слава Україні!**  
(Glory to Ukraine!)

# THE SWAMP SPOT SENTINEL



Issue #1.4 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](mailto:fabficbks@aol.com)

I'm hardly the first person to make the point that another country could not do more damage to the US than what is being done from within, but it did occur to me a long time ago that this was the case. If you were an evil dictator trying to destroy and take over the US, you could hardly do a better job than eliminating scientists and medical researchers, healthcare infrastructure, highly qualified military officers, basic corporate and environmental regulations, and economic data statisticians — to name a few. You'd hobble the government financially by plundering it. And you'd eventually put troops in the streets to intimidate the public and quash civil unrest.

---Jen Sorensen (1974--)

## THE PROBLEM WITH DOING A PERZINE

editor/publisher. I'm fine with the commentary and opinion part, but woefully short on real life personal adventures.

As I have mentioned several times previously, I don't want any adventure in my personal life. I'll take my adventure in books, thank you very much, not in my personal life. I like thing to be sedate, dull and continuously humdrum. Anything new or unusual in my life tends to be dangerous or disrupting, or expensive or all of those together. Discussing these sorts of events means me recounting the problems associated with the situations, which winds up sounding a lot like complaining and whining.

Unfortunate events trivial and not so trivial occur in everybody's life. At my advanced age I would just really prefer that they not occur in my life at all. Unfortunately this summer leading into fall has not been sedate and humdrum. Unfortunate events have occurred in a random but continuous fashion.

Those who would prefer to avoid a long stretch of complaints and whining are advised to skip the remainder of this section and go on to other parts of this fanzine. This is a Fair Warning!

The summer has been a long series of events that have made my life less than pleasant this year. For example, a "minor" car accident that could have been avoided, but wasn't, that left a lower part of the front fender hanging sort of loose and the inside noise level much louder than before. Or the bird that got inside the warehouse, and a "helpful" fellow tenant who decided to shoot the bird with a pellet pistol and almost took out the fire sprinkler valve. Or my credit card company being switched to a new owner who doesn't want to mail out physical bills or take checks in payment.

There's more, but most of the aggravation this season was the effort to get home repairs done. I'm usually good for one big home repair project per year, if needed, but unfortunately by the time 2025 rolled around there were a number of home repair problems that were long overdue. Some were small and mostly cosmetic, others were major. Many of these had to be done this year in order to appease the lady from the home insurance company who insisted that the homestead needed some sprucing up, and threatened to cancel my home insurance policy unless certain things got done, as in immediately.

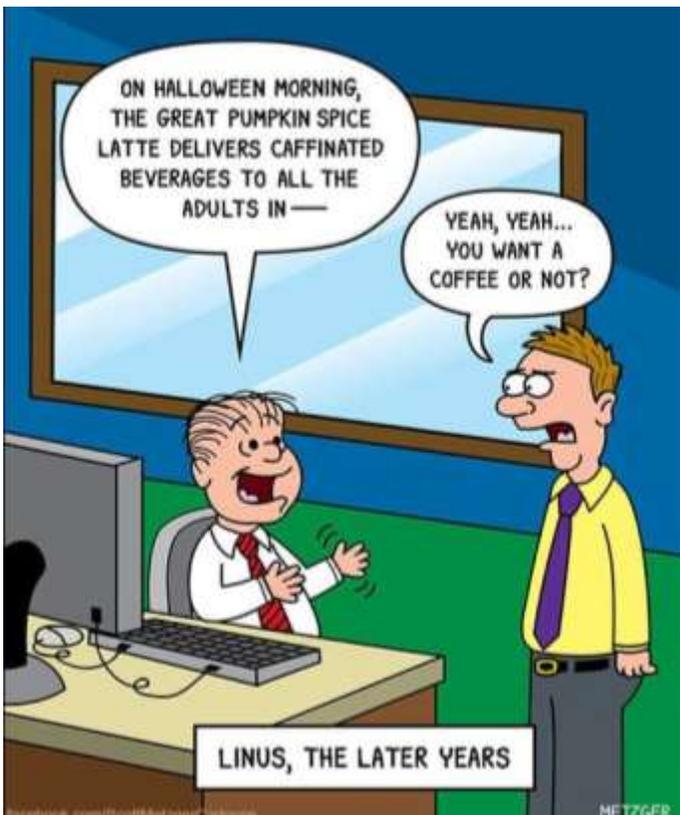
The primary problem with that (besides the enormous expenses involved), is and has continued to be finding somebody, anybody, who would do the work. It is not that I am unaware of problems here, or that I am unwilling to get the specific problems fixed, the real problem is finding somebody, anybody, who will do the work.

I tried contacting several contractors at the middle of May. One said he was already booked up to the end of August and was not accepting any new business. Two never returned my calls. Two others said they would come out and look over the situation and give me estimates, but they never showed up.

A gutter contractor did show up, and gave me an estimate on replacing the back gutter, and the eaves board, with a four day projection on how long the job would take. Right. What with delays, and excuses, it took this guy and his crew almost six weeks to tear down the old gutter, replace the board and install a new gutter system.

I had similar problems with other contractors. The paint contractor I engaged to repaint the window frames and sills said he would be in on the third Monday of July, but he didn't show up until that Friday. To be fair, he and his team got the entire job done in one day. I consider this to be a miracle, after having to deal with other contractors.

One bright spot was a guy who took a look at



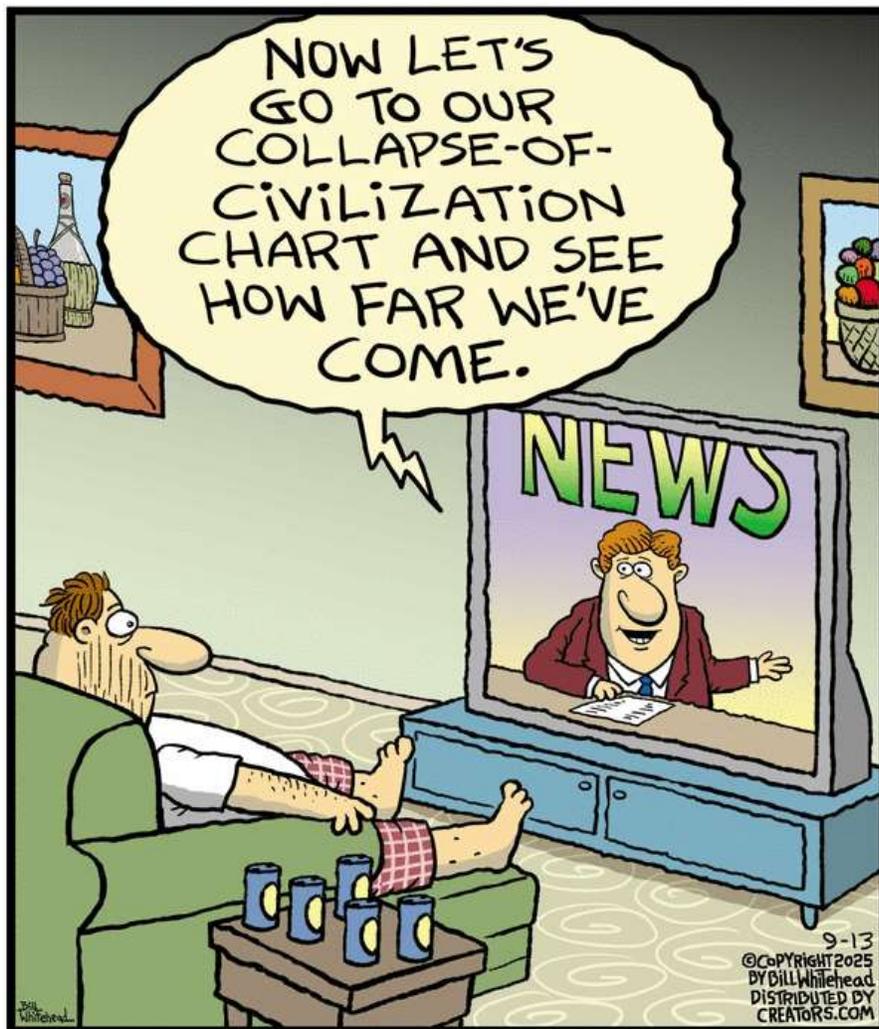
the rotted section of wall at the front of my bathtub with falling tiles, gave me an expensive estimate, but came right back the following morning and got the work all done by the five o'clock that afternoon. I wish other contractors were that conscientious.

The man who agreed to replace the disintegrating back mini-deck came around two days later, pulled down the old deck, and carted away the pieces. Great. He said he would be back the next day, but of course he never showed up. Several telephone calls and eleven days later he got back to me. His team tore out and replaced the rotting wood along the back wall, and weather sealed it. There was another week long delay before he and his crew returned to build in the new mini-deck.

Getting the house siding power washed seemed like a simple, easy job, but it took that contractor almost two weeks to get a few people over and do the work.

Once again, it was not that I am unwilling to get problems with my house repaired; the problem is finding people who will actually do the work. I am happy to say that after a tense summer, and after shelling out a whole lot of money, that everything has been squared away by the end of September.

**FALL FOLIAGE FAILURE** Probably not of much interest to anybody else in the reading audience, but this year's leaf peeper season was a bust here in New England. Every year thousands of tourists flood the area to look at the region's often dramatic fall foliage, as trees of assorted types shed their chlorophyll for the changing season and reveal their basic colors minus the green camouflage. Tourists spend vast amounts of money here, but due to a summer of erratic temperatures with not much rain, plus a fall with much warmer than expected temps, the leaves have been changing and shedding in chaotic order. No consistent bright patterns were anywhere this time round. The economy hasn't been great in this part of the world since the new year rolled around, and this is just to make a weak regional economic situation even worse.



# DOJ does damage control as staffer admits Republicans will be redacted from Epstein files

Story by David Edwards



FILE PHOTO:  
U.S. Attorney  
General Pam  
Bondi, then as  
U.S.  
President-elect  
Donald  
Trump's  
nominee,  
testifies at a  
Senate  
Judiciary  
Committee  
confirmation  
hearing on  
Capitol Hill in  
Washington,  
U.S., January  
15, 2025.

REUTERS/Elizabeth Frantz/File Photo/File Photo© provided by RawStory

The Department of Justice attempted to do damage control after conservative political activist James O'Keefe released a video of a staffer claiming the government would "redact every Republican" from files about sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

In a Thursday [post](#) on X, O'Keefe shared a video that he claimed was of a deputy chief at the U.S. Department of Justice, led by President Donald Trump and Attorney General Pam Bondi.

The Department of Justice later [responded](#) on X with a letter from Deputy Chief Joseph Schnitt that appeared to confirm that he spoke to someone who worked for O'Keefe.

"I met a woman named Skylar on Hinge, a dating app, in July 2025, her profile is no longer findable," Schnitt explained. "We had two dates (August 4 and August 16)."

"She gave no clues that she was a reporter or recording our dates. Had I a clue, the first date would have ended immediately and there never would have been a second one," he continued. "The comments I made were my own personal comments on what I've learned in the media and not from anything I've done at or learned via work."

"I recall that she asked if I had any knowledge about Maxwell and I specifically said I only know what's been reported in the media." Yeah, right.

# **Have You Been Offered a Pill Disguised as Cheese?**



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# After cost-cutting blitz, Trump administration rehires hundreds of laid-off employees

Story by JOSHUA GOODMAN and RYAN J. FOLEY



Musk-Apple-OpenAI© Evan Vucci

MIAMI (AP) — Hundreds of federal employees who lost their jobs in [Elon Musk's cost-cutting blitz](#) are being asked to return to work.

The General Services Administration has given the employees — who managed government workspaces — until the end of the week to accept or decline reinstatement, according to an internal memo obtained by The Associated Press. Those who accept must report for duty on Oct. 6 after what amounts to a seven-month paid vacation, during which time the GSA in some cases racked up high costs — passed along to taxpayers — to stay in dozens of properties whose leases it had [slated for termination](#) or were allowed to expire.



Trump© Alex Brandon

“Ultimately, the outcome was the agency was left broken and understaffed,” said Chad Becker, a former GSA real estate official. “They didn’t have the people they needed to carry out basic functions.”

Becker, who represents owners with government leases at Arco Real Estate Solutions, said GSA has been in a “triage mode” for months. He said the sudden reversal of the downsizing reflects how Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency had gone too far, too fast.

GSA representatives didn’t respond to detailed questions about the return-to-work notice, which the agency issued Friday. They also declined to discuss the agency’s headcount, staffing decisions or the potential cost overruns generated by reversing its plans to terminate leases.

“GSA’s leadership team has reviewed workforce actions and is making adjustments in the best interest of the customer agencies we serve and the American taxpayers,” an agency spokesman said in an email.

Democrats have assailed the Trump administration's indiscriminate approach to slashing costs and jobs. Rep. Greg Stanton of Arizona, the top Democrat on the subcommittee overseeing the GSA, told AP there is no evidence that reductions at the agency "delivered any savings."

"It's created costly confusion while undermining the very services taxpayers depend on," he said.

# Could gravity be evidence that the universe is a computer simulation? New study suggests so

Story by Melvin M. Vopson

We have long taken it for granted that gravity is one of the basic forces of nature—one of the invisible threads that keeps the universe stitched together. But suppose that this is not true. Suppose the law of gravity is simply an echo of something more fundamental: a byproduct of the universe operating under a computer-like code.

But if we consider just location rather than energy, then there's lots of information disorder when particles are distributed randomly in space—the information required to keep pace with them is considerable. When they consolidate themselves together under gravitational attraction, however, the way planets, stars and galaxies do, the information gets compacted and more manageable.

In simulations, that's exactly what occurs when a system tries to function more efficiently. So, matter flowing under the influence of gravity need not be a result of a force at all. Perhaps it is a function of the way the universe compacts the information that it has to work with.

Here, space is not continuous and smooth. Space is made up of tiny "cells" of information, similar to pixels in a photo or squares on the screen of a computer game. In each cell is basic information about the universe—where, say, a particle is—and all are gathered together to make the fabric of the universe. If you place items within this space, the system gets more complex. But when all of those items come together to be one item instead of many, the information is simple again.

The universe, under this view, tends to naturally seek to be in those states of minimal information entropy. The real kicker is that if you do the numbers, the entropic "informational force" created by this tendency toward simplicity is exactly equivalent to Newton's law of gravitation, [as shown in my paper](#). This theory builds on earlier studies of "entropic gravity" but goes a step further. In connecting information dynamics with gravity, we are led to the interesting conclusion that the universe could be running on some kind of cosmic software. In an artificial universe, maximum-efficiency rules would be expected. Symmetries would be expected. Compression would be expected.

And law—that is, gravity—would be expected to emerge from these computational rules. We may not yet have definitive evidence that we live in a simulation. But the deeper we look, the more our universe seems to behave like [a computational process](#).

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## MISSING AIRSHIP: THE CASE of the RCN-100



This fascinating story on the little known RCN-100 and its Ottawa connection has been re-printed from [Vintage Wings of Canada](#). It has been edited for length.

Today marks the 95th anniversary of one of the great mysteries in Canadian aviation. On the night of March 31st, 1930, after one last garbled radio transmission was heard from the Royal Canadian Navy's massive HMCD Samuel de Champlain (D was for Dirigible) seeking refuge from an Arctic storm, she disappeared from history. The Great Blizzard of '30 brought about the deaths of 30 Canadian Navy airmen, two First Nations guides and ended the short but glorious period of dirigible operations in Canada.

In the morning of April 1st, or perhaps on one of the following 6 days, Samuel de Champlain and crew met their end. It was thought for decades that the crash site was over open water somewhere on James Bay. For months afterward, RCAF aircraft and northern RCMP patrols searched from Ungava Bay to Fort Churchill and as far south as the Laurentians. No signs of wreckage were ever discovered.



Samuel de Champlain docks at her mooring ship HMCS *Joseph Mufferaw* in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in July of 1929. The Royal Canadian Navy had invested millions of dollars in support ships and bases to create the RCNRAS (Royal Canadian Navy Rigid Airship Service) as a weapon to both deter and counter submarine threats in the shipping lanes to North America. HMCD *Samuel de Champlain* along with a planned four more Los Angeles class dirigibles (HMCD *Louis Cyr*, HMCD *Georges Vezina*, HMCD *Daniel McGrew* and HMCD *Laura Secord*) would be based from two newly built facilities at HMCS *North Forchu* on Cape Breton Island and HMCS *Toutlegang* on Anticosti Island. After the loss of the airship, the RCNRAS was disbanded and the *Joseph Mufferaw* (*Big Joe* to her crew) was placed back in RCN service as an oil tanker. Ironically, ten years later she would be sunk by a German U-Boat on the Grand Banks Photo: RCNRAS Archives

On Thursday, March 27th, 1930, while on a goodwill tour of mining sites in Northern Quebec, a Ford Tri-motor carrying seven passengers and three crew was forced down en route from St. Ciboire de Tabarnouche to Matagami. Engine failure was compounded by radio trouble and the Ford's crew was unable to radio their position or that they had landed safely. Unfortunately, no one knew this. Given the star status of three of the passengers - Howie Morenz, La Bolduc and Guy Lombardo - when they failed to arrive at their next destination every effort was made to find them. On hearing of their disappearance, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King asked the RCAF and the RCNRAS to coordinate the search. Employing thirty crew members searching from every porthole aboard would be the best and most stable search platform available. Thankfully the three Canadian icons were safe, but sadly thirty-two lives were lost trying to find them.



Left to right: hockey legend Howie Morenz of the Montreal Canadiens, Guy Lombardo (sans his Royal Canadians) and La Bolduc, the French Canadian folk singing phenom. It was deemed absolutely critical that these three important Canadians be found at all costs. Unfortunately, the cost was indeed high.



The pride of the Royal Canadian Navy Rigid Airship Service floats above Montreal's harbour en route to an appearance over Ottawa in September of 1929. Photo: RCNRAS Archives



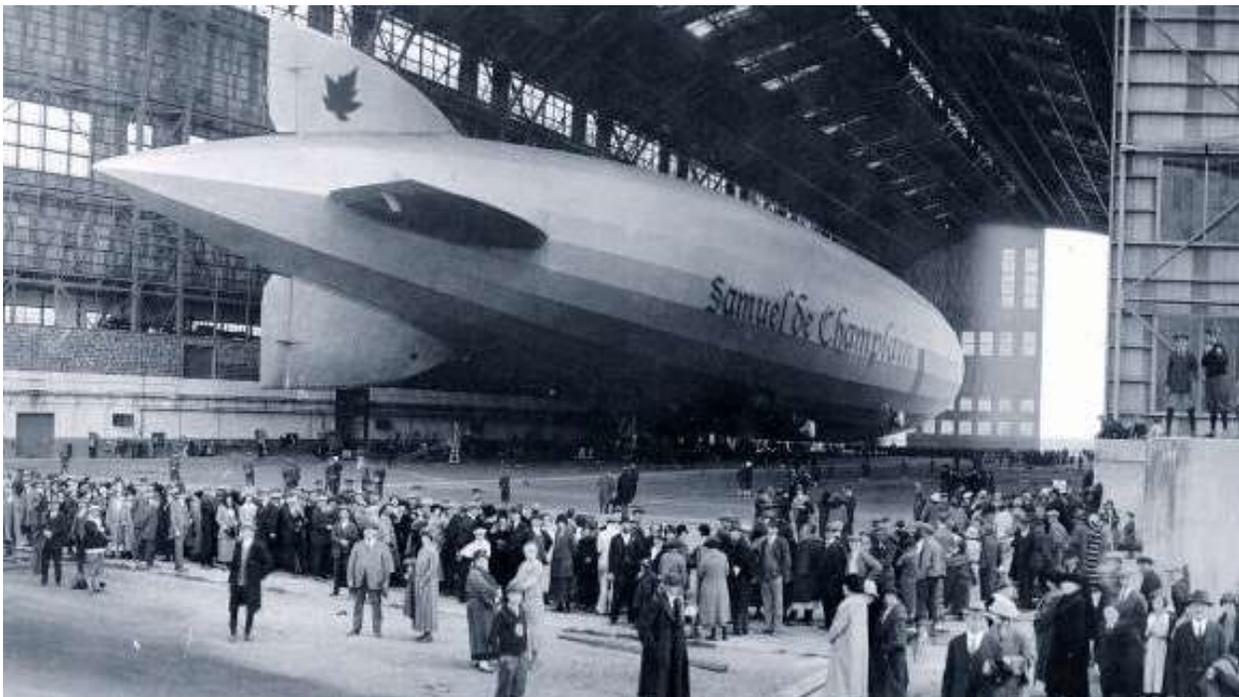
Samuel de Champlain was a 2,472,000 cubic foot rigid airship built by the Zeppelin Company at Friedrichshafen, Germany of the same class as the USS *Los Angeles*. Here she rests at Lakehurst, New Jersey after her delivery to North America. Her RCN facilities were not yet complete in 1926 and Canadian crews would train with their American counterparts at Lakehurst for nearly 8 months before she made an appearance over Canada. Her construction was partially funded by German World War I reparations. Completed in August 1924 under the builder's number LZ-126, she departed Germany in mid-October 1926 for delivery to the Royal Canadian Navy. After a three day trans-Atlantic flight, the airship arrived at Naval Air Station *Lakehurst*, New Jersey, where the hydrogen lifting gas was replaced with non-flammable helium. This greatly increased her safety, but also significantly reduced her payload and range. Photo: RCNRAS Archives

It took two days for Samuel de Champlain to make it to Montreal where she was quickly loaded with enough fuel and supplies to last for four days of searching. Her commander, Commodore Morris S. Crosby (great grandfather of hockey legend Sidney Crosby), let loose all mooring lines from Ile Ste H elene in Montreal and turned into wind as thousands of Quebecers waved from rooftops along her track. The massive Maybach engines droned against a strong northeast headwind, beating their way towards Notre Dame de Doleur Eternelle on the north shore of Lac Beegphishinapan where they were met by two Innu guides. A large mining drill rig was used as a mooring mast as the two hunters climbed aboard. The weather seemed to be holding - not great, but considering the urgency - good enough to get at the search.

Samuel de Champlain lifted off from the Grand Trou Mine at 1440 hrs on March 30th and disappeared over the horizon - never to be seen again. There were no reported sightings of her from that moment on, and radio contact was intermittent but strong until the early hours

of the 31st when the Great Blizzard of 1930 struck. Weather forecasting was rudimentary at best, non-existent north of the the Laurentians and a gamble for all those who operated there. By 0630 hrs on the morning of the 31st, the winds had shifted nearly 90 degrees, now blowing up from the south east. Into this unknown lumbered the delicate behemoth.

There were four radio transmissions received from Crosby on the 31st. At 0855 hrs only parts of a message were received '... RCN100, in distress... winds pushing us northwest at ... Maybachs [the Engine type]...trouble... ballast... '. At 1630 hrs a transmission was received, just three words were heard over the powerful static, '...ice weighing us.....' Shortly after that another partial transmission was received '... uncontrolled rolling. Rudder struck at .... will make her... '. Finally, at 2356 hrs radio operators at both Matagami and Ste. Couche Tard heard the same words: '... weighed down. Men in panic. Seven lost at 1032 hrs... less than fifty feet... God help us live through... '.



When her hangar was finally completed at HMCS *North Forchu*, thousands came out to gawk. Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King was on hand to open the facility and go for a ride from North Forchu back to Halifax. Photo: RCNRS Archives



The members of Samuel de Champlain's crew pose at HMCS North Forchu in 1929. Many of these men would be among the 32 lost on the ill-fated search mission to Northern Quebec in the Spring of 1930. Photo: RCNRS Archives



In the late summer of 1929, *Samuel de Champlain* paid her first and only visit to Ottawa. Ottawa Journal photographer Len S. Canon accompanied the dirigible from Montreal arriving late in the morning of Labour Day. She made two passes over the city from east to west and then swung south to the site of the new Ottawa airport at Uplands where just two years before Charles Lindbergh had landed. Looking down from *Samuel de Champlain* you can see her shadow crossing the Rideau Canal, Union Station and the Parade Grounds at Cartier Square. Photo: Ottawa Journal Archives

While the ten men and women that *Samuel de Champlain* was looking for were found only 30 miles from Matagami within two hours of the storm's lifting, her would-be rescuers became the new object of the search. For months the North was scoured from the air and on the ground in the hope that survivors would be found. Nothing, not a piece of her fabric skin and massive structure, telltale oil slick or human remains would ever be found. She became a ghost overnight.

For the nine decades since her loss, *Samuel de Champlain* became somewhat of a Flying Dutchman ghost story. Cree hunters as far south as La Taboggan de Jesus, Hudson's Baymen from Fort Smallpock and Inuit snowmobilers as far north as Watalotarok would sometimes hear engines howling in the night. Many have seen a ghostly shape passing across the cold northern sky on nights of high Aurora Borealis activity. For decades, this apparition has been known as *Le Fantôme de Nord*. Others could hear static-filled radio calls

on their sets that they swore were cries for help from RCN-100 (Samuel de Champlain's call sign).

The entire episode had forced then Prime Minister King into pressing the dirigible into service for the search. After King lost the national election just four months later, Richard Bedford Bennett, the new Conservative Prime Minister shut down the Royal Canadian Navy Rigid Airship Service. The construction of the four remaining airships on order from the Zeppelin Company was cancelled.

Since the recent discovery of the bones of explorer Samuel de Champlain on the Northern shore of Strutton Island in James Bay, the search fever has been renewed. Heading the search will be Vintage Wings of Canada and Les Amis des Trente-deux, a society of Samuel de Champlain researchers and self-named 'blimpniks'. It is believed that the structural elements found at an old hunting blind were similar to the framework of the ill-fated dirigible - similar to these seen in a photograph of the crew quarters aboard HMCD Samuel de Champlain. Metallurgic tests are being carried out by Vintage Wings of Canada.

HMCD Samuel de Champlain probably went down in this area - a zone roughly 30 kilometers square. The channel between Fool's Island and the estuary of the Waskaganish River has been open water during winter for more than half of the time since ice conditions have been recorded. The Hudson's Bay Company outpost at Charlton Depot on Charlton Island recorded open water from late March in 1930. The RCAF conducted search flights across the North for nearly two months after the disappearance - but no sign of the airship was found.



Last year kayakers paddling around the north shore of Strutton Island came across an old hunting blind used by Innu hunters during Canada goose hunting season. Nearly invisible and much deteriorated, the blind was made from strange aluminum structural elements and a

fabric no one could identify. The kayakers took photos and returned south, showing them to the RCMP. It was determined from the images that they were part of Samuel de Champlain's unique lightweight structure. However follow-up investigations were unable to re-locate the camp-site or to supply any additional information.



HMCD *Samuel de Champlain* moored to a temporary mast erected at Uplands. Photo: RCNRRAS Archives

A more remote and inhospitable search site cannot be found, but the Vintage Wings of Canada de Havilland Beaver floatplane and a crew will fly north to James Bay in June of this year to begin setting up a base camp for the search.

Vintage Wings of Canada has promised to fund the first search in the summer and if enough of her wreckage is found, to transport her back home to Ottawa and rebuild this icon.

The residents of Ottawa's downtown neighbourhood known as the Glebe have lobbied hard to have the Aberdeen Pavillion put to a historic use. As Ottawans are now searching for a suitable use for this massive exhibition building we are pleased to announce that pending discover and recovery of the dirigible, agreements have been finalized to use it as a dirigible hangar. It cannot be determined how long the rebuild will take, but residents in the area are now happy that this venerable old building will be put to a suitable and historically authentic use. This massive building will soon to be known as The Gothic Blimpworks and will house the rebirth and daily operation of a fully restored *Samuel de Champlain*.

Unfortunately, this search was not successful. From that fatal day in 1930 to the present, what became of the HMCD *Samuel de Champlain* remains a mystery.

---article by **Evad Yellamo**



Samuel de Champlain flying over the mansions of the Village of Rockcliffe Park in early September, 1929 when one resident took this snapshot.

YOU ARE PROBABLY NOT AS FASCINATED WITH AIRSHIPS AS I AM

but I hope you found this article about the

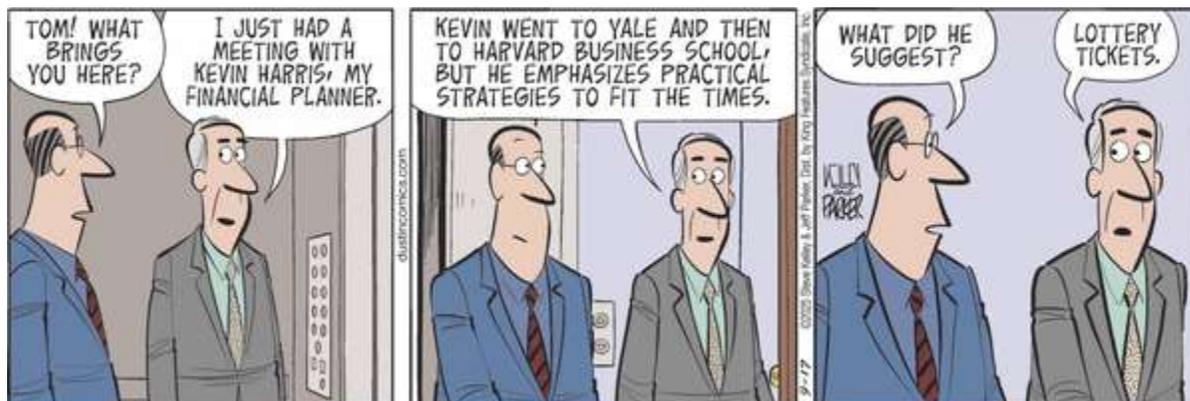
dirigible *Samuel de Champlain* as interesting as I did. Perhaps, like me, you were wondering why you never heard about this epic rescue expedition that ended in such unparalleled tragedy.

And well you might wonder, because this entire article and everything about it happens to be a gigantic hoax. Conceived and developed as an elaborate April's Fool Joke for the April 2010 issue of the *Vintage Wings Of Canada* magazine, the hoax was an immediate hit with the club's readers, and it was also picked up by the Canadian news media of the day.

What no one expected was that the elaborate hoax would gain traction as an independent news story on its own. The advent of cheap printing plus the internet insured that the article would be widely dispersed and that along the way the information that it was all a joke would simply be forgotten, accidentally or otherwise.

This is where I came in. Doing some more curiosity research on the history and development of lighter than air craft this summer I stumbled across this article in the *Vintage Wings* magazine archives. I was amazed, and riveted to the article. I recognized some of the photographs, but couldn't connect them with Canada. Maybe my memory was slipping. Then I got to the end of the article and discovered it was all an elaborate April Fool's joke. Great Stuff!

So, after a little editing, I decided to share it with you. I hope you enjoyed it.



# MAILING COMMENTS



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ARCHIVE MIDWINTER #278

I dunno, intellectual property is only recognized or has property status if it gets registered somewhere in some form. Just having a great idea isn't sufficient; the creator or controller has to produce some physical copy, or some digital entity that has form and substance before any court will recognize anything. I recall back in the early 1980s a bunch of computer people all over the place claimed that they had this great idea to make a portable computer style hand held screen device that would let the owner read books stored in the device in pixel form. There were a ton of practical problems at that stage of the game, particular the heat generated by the device and the problem with keeping enuf immediate memory to support very long stretches of on screen print displays. Nothing actually got produced for many years, but that didn't stop a bunch of these people from trying to claim they had "invented" the concept. The courts, naturally, did not agree. A physical, working device had to be produced to provide a patent right, and that didn't come along until around 1998, when both the SoftBook and the Rocket eBook came on the market.

The reason that there is no current public anti-war sentiment in Russia is because whenever anti-war opinions or people supporting the concept show up Putin's police promptly arrest them and they are quickly convicted of the crime and sent to prison. This has pretty much wiped out any public complaints about the ongoing Ukrainian war. The Russians who bailed out and left the country are somewhat more vocal, but a lot of them fear that if they speak out too loudly against Putin that their relatives back home will be persecuted.

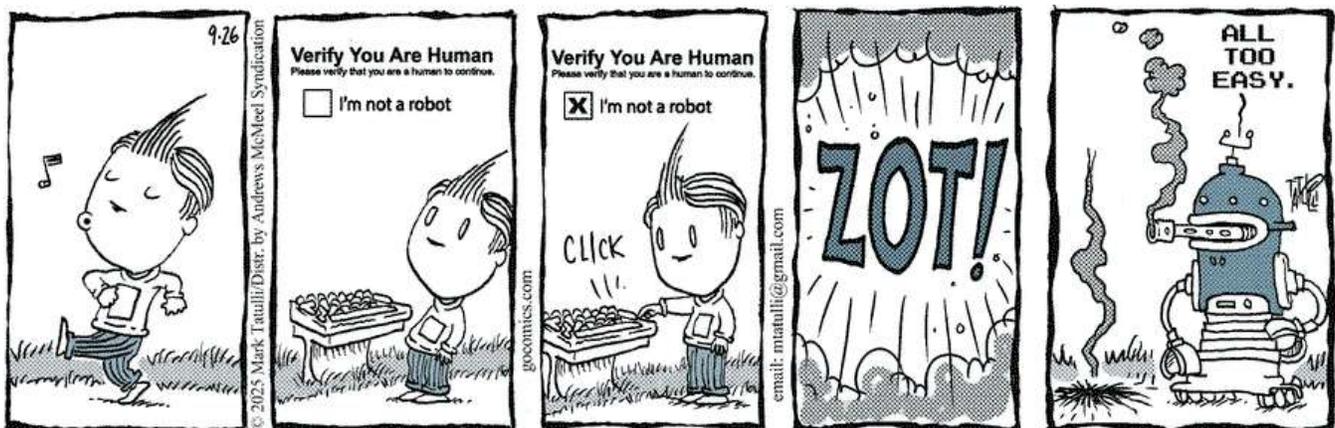
Anti-Trump rallies here in the US get publicity but seem not to do much good. Trump has control of the congress, and the courts, and believes he is wildly popular with everyone. The only thing he cares about is making money, so he wields his executive power to steam-roll opponents and enrich himself. The mid-term elections seem a millions years away at this point in time.

Real life super powers would be useful and could make a difference, but I agree with you that the area of crime prevention is not where they could do much good. A lot of the long underwear crowd manage to encounter criminals in the midst of committing their nefarious deeds, something that would almost never happen in real life. On the other hand super powers could help out a lot when natural disasters strike. Earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, forest fires, blizzards; these are situations where having great super powers could be enormously helpful. The original Fawcett Comics Captain Marvel and his family used to pitch in on those kinds of situations on a fairly regular basis. Those stories were always interesting too.

As a life-long serial fan, I of course disagree with a few of your comments about the Republic "rocket-man" series you saw on TV. What you undoubtedly saw was "Commando Cody--Sky Marshall of the Universe" (1953-54-55), the last, and the weakest in the series. The first serial was "King of the Rocket Men", (1948), which introduced the flying suit. It was an excellent serial, which can easily viewed on the internet on YouTube and many other places. This was followed by "Radar Men from the Moon" (1952) where the wearer of the rocket suit is Commando Cody, a masked costumed government agent. Not a great serial in my opinion. "Zombies of the Stratosphere" also from 1952, is much better, with a good story, good acting and (mostly) good special effects.

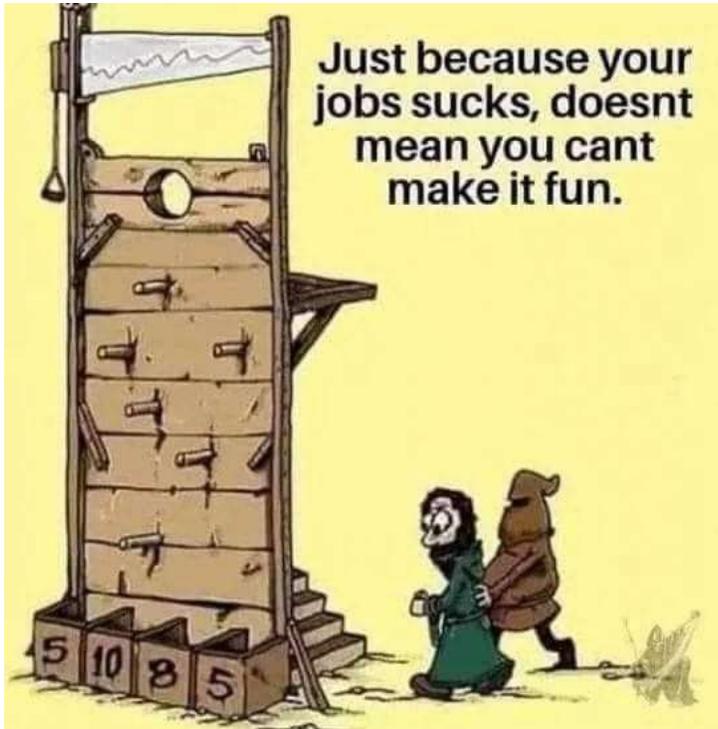
The Sky Marshall project was originally going to be a Commando Cody weekly TV series, but CBS, their original target, had no real interest, and Republic had some union problems with turning out material specifically for TV. Thru a complicated and mostly boring series of events the serial (originally intended as a prequel to Radar Men From the Moon) was filmed in two parts. The first three chapters were shot as TV episodes in late 1951, then abandoned, while they concentrated on making "Zombies of the Stratosphere". Then, the remaining nine chapters, all self contained with no cliff-hangers, were shot with a few new people added in, and released as a serial in 1953. There was a drastic die-off of theaters in the early fifties that forced Republic to rethink how they were going to stay in business, and this serial was not well distributed.

In 1955 Republic convinced NBC to buy the serial as a twelve week Saturday morning feature. Meanwhile Republic had produced some material specifically for TV including the Fu-Manchu program and Frontier Doctor. They were hoping that NBC would re-up for more Commando Cody shows for the Saturday morning kiddies, but that did not happen. The series was rereleased and syndicated to TV stations for years to come. It also wound up as a condensed feature film, which only enjoyed very limited screen bookings, but it was repackaged as part of a cheap film block deal for television stations. For all its flaws I mostly enjoyed it.



FANDOMAIN-N Interesting fanzine, but one of the things I would be even more interesting in is---**WHO are you?** There is no name on this zine at all. Also no email or snail mail address either. Are you a ghost? A hoax? How about some identification please.

You certainly have a widely varied reading and viewing list. Lots of dark fantasy in there, and I see you also like revenge mysteries as well. Any personal reasons for that? Just asking.



R.A.I.L. #8

Your Halloween plans are pretty standard for a lot of adults these days. I haven't had any trick-or-treaters at my house for twenty-five+ years, but I always buy at least one bag of Halloween candy 'just in case'. Just in case I decide to go back on my good food diet the day after.

There are some foods that are being directly affected by the Trump tariffs, but everything together has created an agricultural crisis this summer going into the fall harvest season. Food prices has been slowly creeping up for most of this year, but I think we will start to see the real impact around Christmas time when a lot of seasonal goodies and treats, and even basics like turkeys and sweet potatoes will take a noticeable price jump. Next year does not look good on the food front, and food is something everyone has to have.

BRANDY HALL 14

Your write-up about the

appearance of the word 'fanzine' in the newspapers of the day was somewhat interesting. I think it is clear that the music offshoots and probably most of the British sports use of the term were spun off from science fiction fans who were also involved in those evolving amateur arenas. Punk rock music was hot stuff for stf fans in the US during the 1970s. I never got into it much myself, but that didn't stop me from receiving a whole lot of punk rock music fanzines during the decade and beyond.

I think it was clear from the quotes you reprinted that the word 'fanzine' had pretty much entered into general vernacular by the mid 1980s.

You would think that most people attending a science fiction convention would make arrangements to have their very young children and babies parked with relatives or friends during the con time. When I ran MASSCONFUSION, a gaming convention back in 1984, we had two people with toddlers in hand, but they stayed with the parents all the time and there was no trouble.

There were science fiction and fantasy films before *Amazing Stories* came along in 1926, and well before science fiction fandom got started. I think early science fiction fandom was mostly interested in the printed word, particularly the magazines, because the magazines provided relatively inexpensive, permanent, and frequent exposure to the literature they loved. It is important to realize that science fiction fandom got started in the US during the Great Depression, when spending money of any kind was hard to come by. Fans like Frederick Pohl and others have mentioned buying used mags at reduced prices, or even purchasing coverless issues at a nickel a copy in the scalp shops the magazine distributors ran, because they had no money to buy the new issues and they desperately wanted to read the literature. Even spending three cents for a postage stamp was a big deal when you had no regular job and getting food for the day was a serious problem.

But yes, if and when funds became available, the early science fiction fans did indeed go to see science fiction and fantasy movies, and they discussed them in their fanzines.

The concept that female SF writers tend to emphasize social themes rather than hard science or heavy action is really not borne out by the facts. There are many female stf writers who craft stories full of heavy action, including military science fiction, and they also have an appreciation for speculative hard science. It

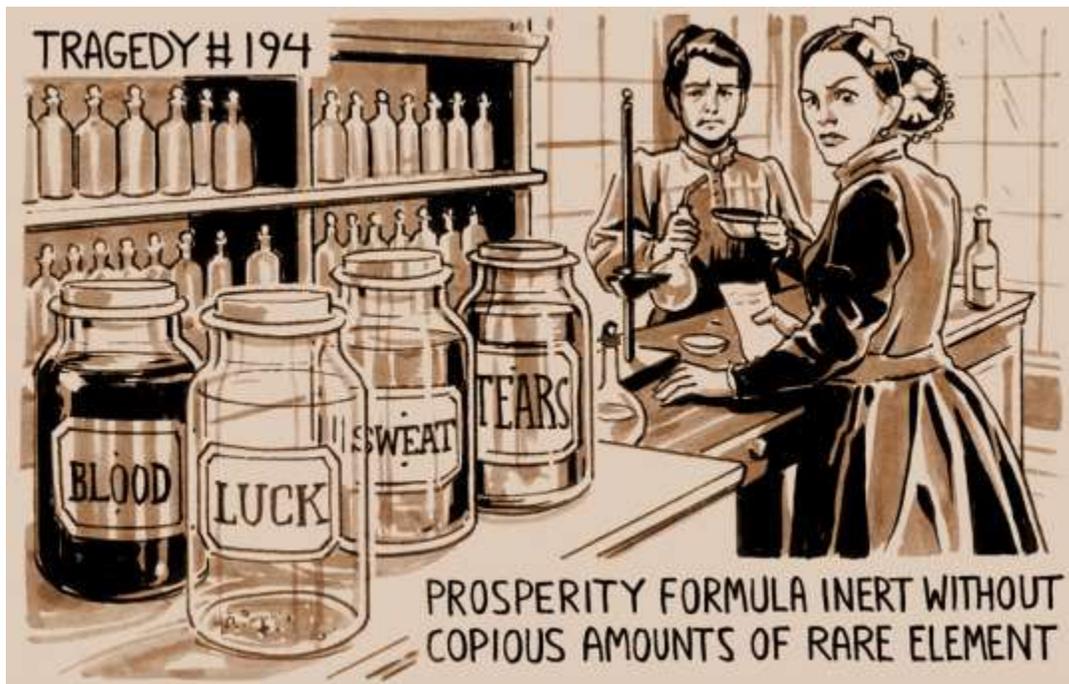
may be easier to classify women writers when you move into the fantasy field, but in that same region there are plenty of female writers turning out horror fiction and epic fantasy adventures.

I think this whole concept originated back in the fifties, a period when men were more apt to glance condescendingly down on female writers and try to categorize them solely on *their* particular opinions of what women should/could do with their writing talents. It's hard to break old prejudices, but a check of the actual stories that women writers have produced in the science fiction field proves they can't be pigeon-holed or hobbled with out of date clichés.

Back in ye olden days (last century or so) most SF conventions, including most Worldcons only had one programming track. That's because attendance was not enormous, even for Worldcons. Probably the first add-on was movies being shown while other events were running. I think things really started to change in the 1980s, when a lot of conventions decided to add a separate role-playing game track in addition to the regular programming. This proved to be very popular and attracted a lot of new con-goers who were primarily interested in the gaming and were willing to cough up full membership fees to participate.

Is the N3F a club or an association? (*You say tomAto, I say to-mat-to...*) Or is it an organization, or a group, an institution, a co-operative union, or a society of like minded individuals? Who cares? As long as it works, that's all that matters.

There used to be a lot of media related fanzines, but I think the professional media mags like *Starlog* and its hundreds of imitators over the years pretty much killed all the mediazines off. Some of the writers and editors of those media fanzines gravitated up to writing for the pro media mags, and some went into the entertainment industry directly. A friend who used to be a regular customer at my retail store got into the special effects biz for movies and made a solid career out of it (he is semi retired now, being about the same age as I am).



ESMERALDA COUNTY LINE #12

I am not familiar with the Kamen America comic book. I just checked it on that inter-webby thing, and it looks like standard big boobs-tight costumed good-girl artwork. The art looks good, but there is no way for an outsider unfamiliar with the character (like me) to sample the story lines or even the art in a comic panel display. I would need more exposure (pun not intended) before I would want to get into the series.

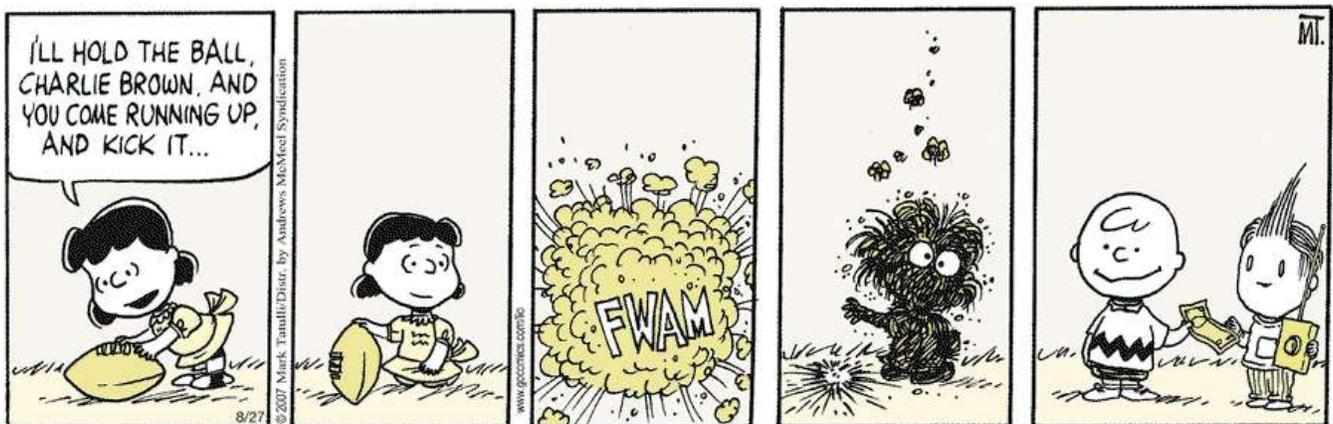
Geeze! If you are going to get angry and bail out of every fanzine that features political views that you don't agree with, then I predict you are going to have very little to read. People are entitled to their own

opinions, and they get a chance to express their opinions in print if they want. Discussions and debate have always been an integral part of this hobby, a tradition that continues thru to the present day.

I personally think Chihuahuas are just naturally ill tempered, possibly because they are so small compared with other dogs, as well as with all the people and other animals they come in contact with. Some dogs bred for specific purposes live on but their personalities are no longer in tune with the modern world. Dalmatians, for example, were bred as hunting, attack, and guard animals. They were strong enuf to run alongside a coach, while being quick and vicious enuf to attack any would-be robber or any other human who dared to interfere with their owners.

Dalmatians were used by fire fighting companies to clear the path when the horse drawn pumpers had to race to a fire. Any human or animal that didn't get out of the way got a sound nipping to convince them to move aside. They look cute and cuddly, and these days they are somewhat better mannered, but not much. They do not get along with children, and can be very aggressive when they believe their humans are being troubled by any other person. Dog breeders and vets try to warn people about all this, but families continue to believe they are going to be a perfect family pet, often with unfortunate results. Pet shelters filled up with Dalmatians after families saw the Disney cartoon movie and then discovered they were not particularly family friendly dogs. There was a Dalmatian adoption group, still operating, that tries to take abandoned Dalmatians out of shelters and find proper homes for them.

I keep meaning to ask if the convention you run has on-line access for N3F members? It is unlikely that I will ever get out to Nevada, but I am curious as to how your con is doing. You semi-promised a con report but it wasn't in this issue. Maybe next mailing?



### BROWNINAN MOTION #15

Loss of motivation often comes with being retired and not having to worry about a lot of work-a-day problems that go with earning a regular paycheck. Pick some things that interest you and start doing them. Motivation will return. Just don't decide to do too many things all at once, otherwise you will probably be overwhelmed. Just a suggestion: eliminating global pollution is a really enormous goal, but maybe you could increase your recycling activities, cut back on your driving, and make some other small changes in your own life. Then move on to eliminating pollution in all of Canada. It's important to pace yourself.

Individual human behavior patterns cannot be laid out in a quantitative pattern because human personalities are too diverse. There are some sub-patterns that can be discerned, mainly aberrant behavior (as any psychologist will tell you), while human behavior in mass can sometimes be predicted, but it's a loosely defined field and sometimes things do not turn out the way they were intended.

The world is full of ad campaigns that flopped miserably because somebody made a series of wrong guesstimates about how a certain target group would react to a specific type of ad concept. The same can apply to political expectations, and even military projections. Human beings are not all the same, and they do not all behave the same even in large groups. Asimov's fictional theory of psychohistory using statistical mathematical formulas to predict the development, mass movements, expansion and the crisis points of a galactic civilization will never come true.

The “tragedy” cartoons were originally two sets of collectible cards produced by Benjamin Dewey between 2011 and 2015. They were presented as toons on Tumblr and spread to other places on the internet. A complete set was printed in physical form but sales didn’t meet expectations, and it only had one print run. Complete sets can be found for ten bucks or less on eBay and elsewhere. It is an uneven series, but I find about half of the cards to be really funny in a bizarre way, so I am reprinting them here and there in issues of this apazine.

If the US descends into chaos, which seems more and more likely every day as Caligula Trump continues to use federal government forces as his personal goon squad to attack his enemies and solidify his grip as a permanent dictator, it seems more likely to me that some states would decide to join with the Canadian Federation rather than engage in a new civil war. Many people in New England seem already pre-disposed to that scenario, and so are Oregon, Washington and the upper part of California. The US south and middle states would probably remain true to Trump no matter what atrocities he perpetrates, The mid western states bordering Canada could see an actual civil war of sorts occurring. I don’t really see Canada volunteering to act as peace forces in any sort of actual conflict between US political factions. Russia might try to intervene, which could trigger a NATO response. If atomic weapons are used it could be the end of civilization as we know it.

I don’t know enuf about new born baby medical issues to make any analysis of your comments, but I think it is still generally considered an acceptable thing if babies who have very little chance of surviving on their own are allowed to die. Insurance companies can spend a lot of money to help marginal newborns tuff out a situation where there is some hope of things improving, but there are some situations that are so hopeless that no medical intervention is going to make much difference.

I’m no computer expert, but you can buy 3-1/2”, or 5” floppy disc drives, or even magnetic tape drives from any number of on-line sellers. I personally still have working 3” and 5” drives that I use mainly to read comic strip scans recorded in that format a few decades back, plus some research info on old golden age radio programs. A friend has one of those big magnetic disc data things that he claims he uses every now and then to access real old info from a hell of a long time ago. I would think it would just be easier to transfer that kind of data to a new format, but again, I’m not a computer guy, so what do I know.



THE MURDERED MASTER MAGE

Well I am happily distributing the N3F book marks to people who buy stf books, comics, or games thru my mail order biz. I sometimes forget, but I am running thru a bunch of the things. I wonder how many of those folks will actually check out the club. I want to mention that there seems to be an intense effort to get people to join to club, but it

seems to me that we should make an even stronger effort toward retaining members after they join by providing services that they will use and enjoy. We seem to have a large number of members just coasting along and not really partaking of any of the club activities. I think some publicity would help in that area (yeah, yeah, I know I'm repeating myself), and I will try to follow thru with some publicity blitz ideas of my own soon.

My hearing aids have adjustable volume levels, plus settings for the telephone and for when I am in a group and need to filter out most of the background noise. The primary problem, again, is that in addition to losing my hearing, I have lost comprehension. I have a 40% loss of comprehension of the words that I hear. This is a serious problem that will continue to get worse, and which hearing aids will not solve. Unfortunately there isn't much I can do about that either.

I have generally found the Locus list of recommended books to be excellent. Most of the Hugo nominations have also been very good. I have to say that in recent years I have skipped over many of the dark fantasy tomes with depressing plot themes. I'm just not into literary depression these days. There's enuf depressing things happening in real life without seeking more of the same in books.

I have mentioned this before, but the COVOD crisis pretty much killed role playing and war gaming in this area. The one game store in Auburn that had been hanging on by their fingernails, mainly thanks to new Magic releases, went under a couple of years ago and nothing has come along to replace it. The reality is that with the internet, gamers can find all kinds of things to occupy their gaming interests without having to stir from their homes, or even invest much money either. In previous days war games were expensive, and altho you could start most role playing games with nothing except a set of dice and a figure to place on the battle mat, the reality was that players invariably bought rule books, supplements, world expansion add-ons, and more. Nobody has to do that any more, and nobody has to meet together with other people to play the games either. Computers and Magic have almost completely killed off tradition gaming and I really don't see it coming back.

According to Wikipedia, Mark Twain's daughter won the lawsuit against the people who claimed that their novel was written by Twain from beyond the grave, but no money was awarded. The proponents agreed to cease publication and to destroy any remaining copies of the book they had in stock. As mentioned last mailing, the book can be read/downloaded at a number of internet book sites, but reviews generally say it's a piece of garbage, so I don't intend to even sample it myself.

Huh! I never heard of any N3F publications being banned from the mail, or any kind of N3F officer accusing a well known charity of being designed to keep its officers well paid instead of spending the money they collected on the actual charity. Undoubtedly from before my time. I came into the hobby and joined the N3F in the late 1950s, and I sure would have remembered something this sensational had it happened while I was around.

I'm not sure there is any great divide between stf fans who read the genre for action & adventure and those who are looking for more introspective, character driven literary style fiction. Science fiction and fantasy has always been based on unique ideas, using fiction to spin out tales where these unique, often bizarre concepts might play out in the real world or a world invented by the author. I think younger readers lean more toward the fast action adventure material, but beyond that I think readers are equally open to any kind of story as long as it is well written and holds their interest.



Nice cover illo. I don't see an artist credit. It would be worthwhile seeing what other art the creator has turned out.

Good luck with your CapClave convention. I don't go to conventions these days, even ones in the immediate area. The program panels you list all sound interesting, altho it seems that most of it is aimed at people who want to write and sell fiction, rather than people who just want to read the stuff. Please let us know how it worked out, how many showed up and how things progressed.

I read your new figures on the rates of reading with interest. I suggest that the reason better educated, higher income people read more for pleasure than those with lower incomes or lower educational levels is because higher incomes equals more free time to partake in activities such as reading.

Another factor worth considering here is the availability and affordability of material that can be read for pleasure. In the past century there were thousands of magazines available and on open display at any number of commercial outlets where people could buy cheap fiction, or cheap non-fiction in disposable magazine format. In addition those same outlets often provided racks full of inexpensive paperback books primarily catering to the fiction market where casual browsers could buy easily affordable reading material in the longer book format.

Those days are long gone. Today there aren't many print magazines around, and almost none of them carry fiction. The only places that actually carry a decent magazine selection are book stores, and book stores are also the only places that carry a good selection of paperback books. The standard magazine rack at a retail outlet like CVS or your neighborhood supermarket is four to six feet wide, stocked with women's magazines, women's oriented paperback fiction, with some gun mags and men's pin-up mags filling in the spaces. The prices for a new paperback book are ten bucks or more, and rising,

People may be reading far less fiction (or non-fiction) these days because they simply can't find it, and couldn't afford it if they could find it. The explosion of TV stations and material on the internet has filled in the need for imaginative recreation.

Ebooks are not the answer. Research shows that audio-books outsell ebooks by a considerable margin, and while sales of ebooks continue to inch upward each year, that may be because physical printed on paper books are so expensive. I think this is the new reality whether we like it or not.

Interesting overview on the problems modern teenagers have with school, self confidence, and mental health as related to school work. All of the suggestions for improving the situation the authors make are worthwhile, but do you honestly believe any of them will be implemented? Do you really expect that parents, let along teenagers, are going to cut back or abandon the use of smart-phones and social media, or that parents and schools are going to stop demanding and expecting that students try to achieve the highest grades possible so they can get into the top colleges which theoretically lead to the best paying jobs after school?

Teenagers are forced into this pattern of often unrealistic expectations, and those who don't or can't meet the criteria are branded as losers and do not get special counseling. It's easier to lose themselves in social media and their smart phones and forget about everything else.

The 1998 panel discussion you reprinted mostly seems to show that the same problems with the genre that existed twenty-seven years ago are still with us, with the same non-definitive answers today as back then.



INTERMISSION #156 & #157 & #158

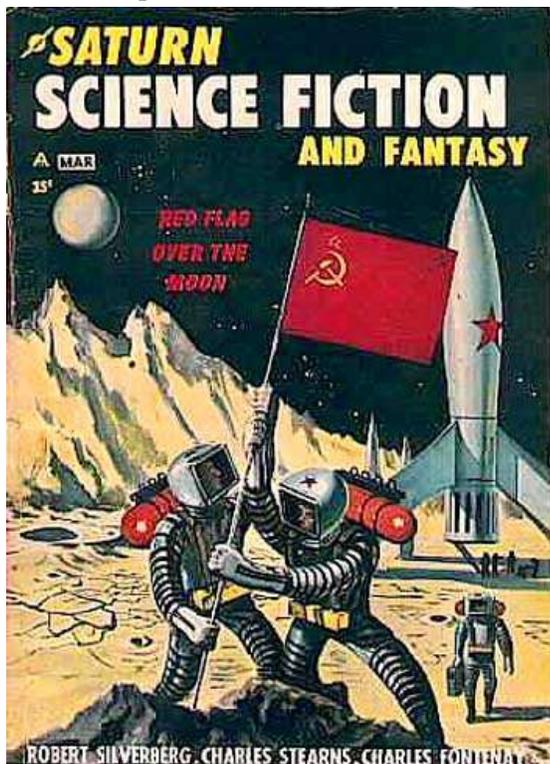
I dunno what is going on here; #156 was distributed in the last mailing, and I already commented on it. Error, double-entry,

goof, Official Editor oversight, or senior moment, whatever. I will move on to issue #157.

I continue to admire your enthusiastic support for Ukraine in their battle against the Russian invasion, but I continue to believe you are missing the point. Putin is a sociopath who simply cares nothing about anything except his own twisted view of reality. The fact that the Russian economy is in free fall with most of its citizens hurting due to shortages and economic sanctions means absolutely nothing to him. Any person in Russia making any kind of criticism or objection to the war is immediately arrested and prosecuted, then speedily bundled off to prison. He has crushed any hope of an opposition voice by anyone and he will continue to do so.

Yes, he is running out of Russian citizens to draft into his war, but that hasn't stopped him from recruiting thousands of gullible foreigners wooed by generous sign-up bonuses and promises of rewards if they stay (read: Survive!) a full year into their enlistment period. People have been predicting the collapse of the Putin government for almost three years now, and it hasn't happened yet, and it will not happen as long as Putin stays alive; and as long as he is alive, he will continue to pursue his war of aggression against Ukraine.

I do not agree that science has to come first in science fiction. You emphasize the development of hard science as a predecessor to fiction about that hard science, but the literature is full of totally speculative, totally



imaginary and often, totally implausible/impossible scientific developments being the basis or an integral part of the story. No one has invented a time machine, a matter transmitter, a faster than light space drive, or a disintegrating ray gun, but these concepts and many others just as fantastic have been part of many science fiction stories.

You have a pretty good list of SF fans who were also notable scientists, but I think you have barely scratched the surface. Stf fandom has lots and lots of people connected to hard science who have made contributions big and small to the store of scientific knowledge. Even our current club prez George Phillies has contributed significant research in his specific field of physics (none of which I understand, by the way).

Russia beating the rest of the world (especially the US) to the moon was a hot topic in the 1950s after Sputnik was launched. In fact, a whole chunk of *Saturn Science Fiction*, March 1958 (edited by Donald Wollheim) was devoted to the subject. The article has some science, but it's mostly scary statistics and speculation. The author is listed as Romney Boyd, who I have never heard of before. Maybe the article was actually written by Wollheim himself.

I don't really understand your opposition to people who do cosplay at conventions. Let people parade in weird costumes, pretend to be some comic book or science fiction, or fuzzy animal character if they want to. What's the harm? You seem to feel that The Evil Media, latches onto this and promotes it as proof that science fiction is juvenile trash. I would suggest that The Media (evil or not), need something unusual to headline a story and that people in costumes are more visual than lectures on the future of space travel. Most media coverage of stf cons that I have encountered (I don't go looking for them, but I stumble across them) seem to respect the people who take a week-end out of their lives to gather with like minded individuals and try to have a bit of fun. In costume or not. Further over you complain that modern fans and science fiction conventions these days have forgotten how to have fun with humor and spontaneity. Well, aren't people dressing up in fantastic costumes the very spirit of what you are complaining about? They are certainly having fun, and again, I don't understand why this upsets you so much.

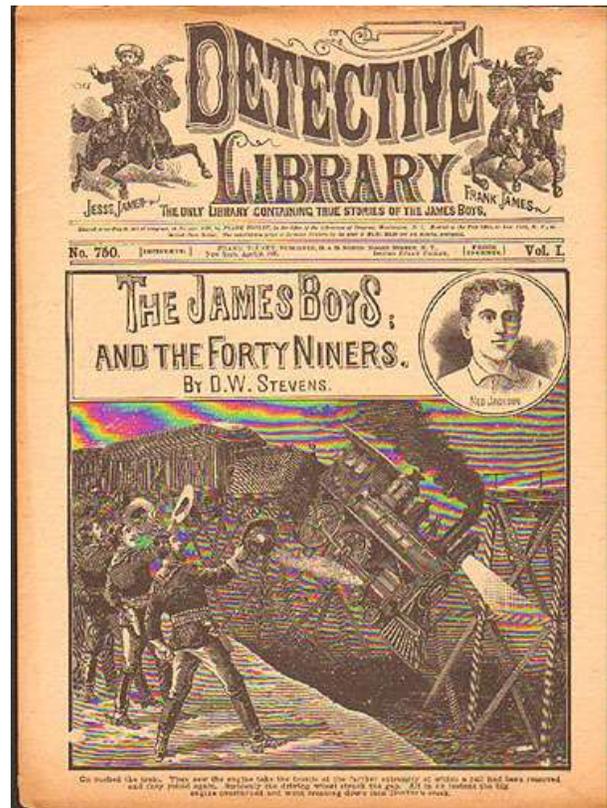
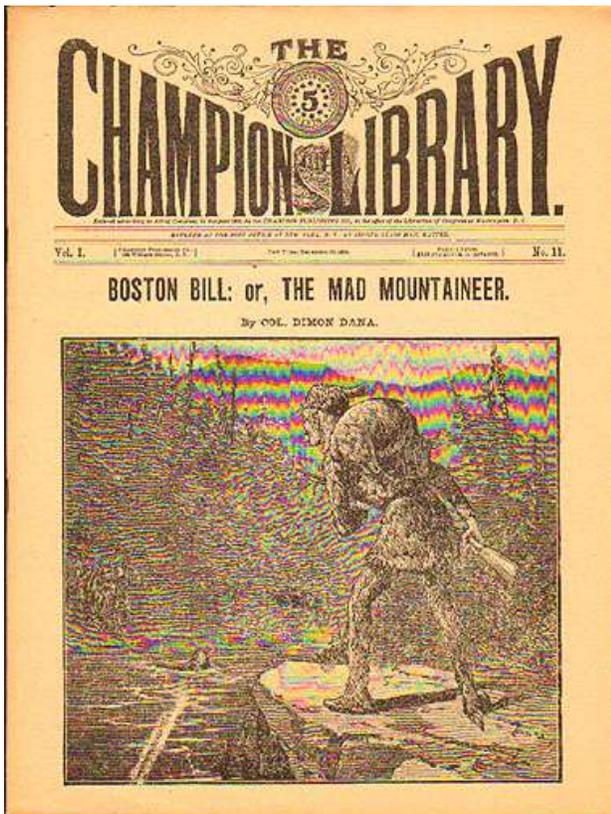
Interesting write-up about the M/S Stockholm and her very long career. Most sailing ships of every kind seem to have fairly short careers. At least it seems that way to me, but clearly this was a ship whose assorted owners were willing to refurbish and upgrade to meet the changing times and still keep going. I do

note that the turnover in ownership was fairly rapid into this new century--14 different owners and 11 operators over the course of her career. That is a pretty amazing record, seventy-five years operating primarily in the passenger trade. Maybe not a world record, but certainly an impressive run for any kind of sea going vessel.

Your ongoing problems with your Hotmail account sounds awful. I started with AOL mail when I first got a computer, but I once had a Hotmail account back in the early 1990s. Unfortunately it was so overrun with spam and ads that I abandoned it after only a couple of years and reverted back to AOL mail, which has always been reliable, while providing filters to keep out most of the junk mail.

By the way, The Tom Swift stories were published in hardcover books, not magazines, and they were kept in print for years thru unique marketing techniques developed by the Stratameyer Syndicate and publisher Grosset & Dunlap, which included selling the series books thru mail order catalogs like Sears and Montgomery Wards.

The concept of the American Wild West most people are familiar with, dealing with cattle raising and railroad towns like Dodge City, developed out of pulp magazine fiction published mostly after 1900. Before that the dime novels and story papers had plenty of wild west adventure, but the wild west was the frontier west of the Allegany Mountains and primarily featured adventures and battles with Indians, mining claims, trappers, road agents, gamblers and outlaws. There were plenty of bad guys, but no gunfighters or heroic town marshals, or gun duels on the main street of some boom town. Well, let me amend that last part a little. Gentleman Joe Gentry the hero of the Street & Smith Log Cabin Library weekly did engage in



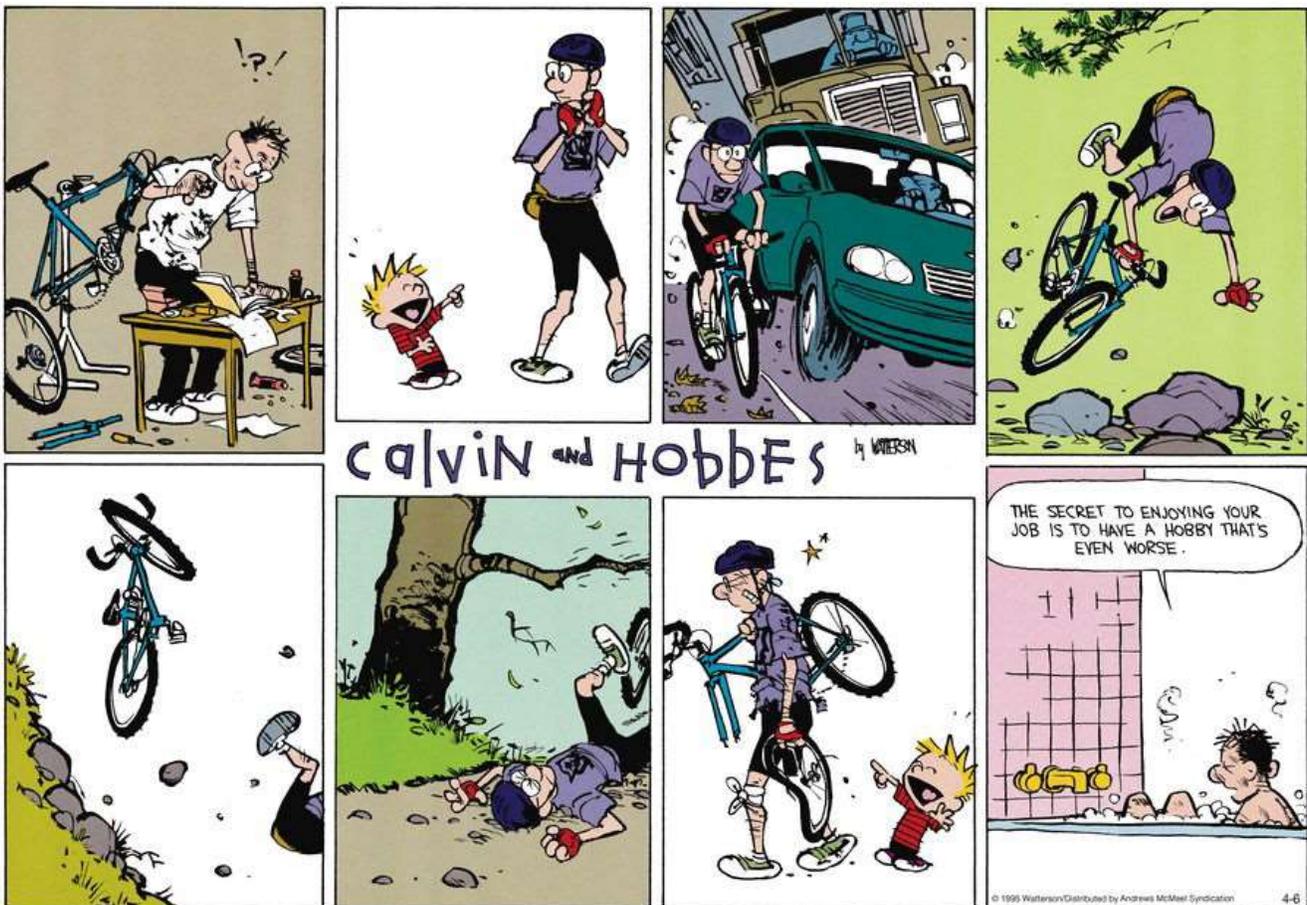
occasional one-on-one gun duels with assorted bad guys, but it was not a common occurrence.

If atomic war comes my chances of surviving are very slim indeed. I happen to live in a prime target region for A-bombs to hit. Back in the last century I used to know the sequence of US targets Russian atomic bombs were most likely to strike. The #1 target then and now is the straits and the Soo Locks at Sault St. Marie, Michigan, the most important transportation link on the North American continent.

After that the sequence changed every few years, but for a long time Worcester, MA was the #4 target. Not only would a twenty megaton bomb take out all the industrial potential in the county, including Raytheon, Siemens AG, Thermo Fisher, Saint-Gibain, along with all the nail and drawn wire manufacturers, the ground blast would hammer Boston and the harbor, and also would sweep down the Connecticut valley and take out most of the defense factories in northern Connecticut at the same time. No sense trying to protect yourself by hiding in the basement when your community is that far up the chart of intended targets. If the bombs fall, I won't live long enuf to worry about planting potatoes or anything else.

Very nice write-up about writer/fan Bob Shaw and your encounters with him over the years. His concept of Slow Glass was one of those extremely rare monumentally original concepts in science fiction literature. I was a little disappointed when you went into the technical aspects of the idea and showed that it was not only impractical, but potentially very dangerous---and explosive. Jeeze! Real life spoils some of the best ideas!

I think that will wrap it up this time round. See you in sixty. Have a Happy Halloween!



**TRUMP SCIENCE**

HI, KIDS! MANY PEOPLE SAY I'M ANTI-SCIENCE!



NOT TRUE! I'M A BIG BELIEVER IN THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD!

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS! I HAVE A HYPOTHESIS: **SCIENCE IS TOO WOKE AND FAKE!**



NOW WE TEST THAT HYPOTHESIS WITH AN EXPERIMENT!

WE NEED A CONTROL GROUP! I'LL MAKE THAT ALL FOREIGN COUNTRIES!



AND THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WILL BE OUR OWN UNITED STATES!



SO WE ILLEGALLY DESTROY ALL AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS! ELIMINATE UNIVERSITY SCIENCE FUNDING!



FIRE GOVERNMENT SCIENTISTS! DECIMATE MEDICAL RESEARCH! SHUT DOWN SPACE PROGRAMS! DESTROY BIOTECH EXPERIMENTATION!



ALL THOSE EGGHEADS IN ACADEMIA AND SCIENCE: CRUSHED! THE DAMAGE IS INSTANTANEOUS, BUT IS IRREVERSIBLE FOR DECADES!



NOW WE WAIT AND SEE IF SCIENCE IN THE U.S. GETS LESS WOKE AND LESS FAKE THAN ELSEWHERE!



AH, HERE'S RFK JR. WITH THE RESULTS ALREADY!

UH, I HAVE A BOX OF LEECHES AND A FLAT GLOBE!

**HYPOTHESIS: PROVEN!**

NEXT: IS DEMOCRACY TOO WOKE AND FAKE? LET'S FIND OUT!



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Archive Midwinter  
a zine for N'APA 279

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19 October 2025

**Comments:**

**Cover:** Public Domain space art. That didn't come out very well, did it?

**Ahrvid Engholm:** re History Corner, not all that surprising that Isaac Asimov was investigated as a possible communist, given that he was a very notable and outspoken liberal, and the FBI has never been able to tell the two ideologies apart.

Fascinating history of Russian computing! What the USSR never was able to cope with is that for scientific progress, people need to be able to communicate freely with each other. In this day and age, there are no solitary scientists, but, instead, networks and communities and even corporations. The fields of modern science are too large and complex for a "lone wolf" to master.

I'd never heard of "The Blazing World," but it sounds, from your description, a little like other social utopias of the era. It sounds rather fun!

I'm not a bit surprised to learn that Hamas has been attributing ordinary deaths from natural causes to "war casualties."



**Fandomain-N:** I'll join you in defense of the Monkees! I loved their show on TV.

I can't take any joy in revenge movies, where the underdog triumphs and the worm turns. I suffer too much in the early parts of the movie, where the initial victimization is established. When I get a comic book that has a high-school bullying scene, I tear the comic in half and throw it away. I suffered too badly from my junior-high-school years.

**Ahrvid Engholm:** Fun History Corner on the synergy between science and science fiction! My uncle, Donald P. Abbott was a raving sf fan and a world-renowned expert on sea squirts. And, of course, we have David Brin as a truly sterling example!

re sf con panel discussions, while, yes, there are notable microphone hogs -- David Brin is a rather brutal example -- I can't agree with the notion of a chess clock and time limitations. It would turn the moderator into a dictator. Let people bloviate, and let the audience judge.

Fascinating retrospective on the Stockholm, including that fantastic photo of the ship with the bow shorn off!

**Adrian Kresnak:** While I am a card-carrying Marvel Zombie, and a True Believer since Stan Lee was young, I have to say that I don't much care for the Emperor Doom and Revelation story arcs. Emperor Doom was dealt with in the graphic novel, complete with a totally stupid ending, the Revelation just seems awkward to me. For one thing, the "in media res" approach, where the Age of Revelation just appears out of nowhere, full-blown and with no origin, strikes me as lazy writing. How did Revelation come to power? Now, we just meet old characters in completely random situations, such as the Rogue Storm story just this week (as of this writing.) Why is Magik siding with Revelation? Why are others in opposition? It's as if someone were flipping a coin. (Oh, wait, that's a DC trope!)

**Ahrvid Engholm:** Sorry to hear about your angst with Microsoft. Did you ever get it all resolved? I had something vaguely similar happen to me with Google's Gmail, but, thank ghu, I was able to negotiate the self-help screens and get myself running again.

History corner: truly nifty focus on Atomic Fandom! I'm old enough to remember some of this, although the focus of my own reading and fandom is more in the direction of nuclear energy as a source of VERY long-lasting radioactive pollution. I was very much moved by Heinlein's "The Long Watch," where nuclear weapons are to be destroyed -- by brute force, with a hammer! The story was a big part of the foundation of my own personal padifism.

re equality vs differences, I don't quite get your point. The negation of "all persons are of equal value" is that "some people are of more value than others." Whom do you trust to make the assessment of value? There are plenty of neoNazis who will eagerly volunteer for that duty. It seems to me that denying the equal value of all persons is giving tacit support to judgemental ideologies. Diversity is wonderful, to be sure! Those very same neoNazis are leading a virulent attack on American diversity.

**Robert Jennings:** Home repair follies...no fun! I only rent, so I'm mostly taken care of -- and I have a good landlady, so things are mostly pretty good. I have no heat and no a/c, but that's because a/c is too expensive for me to run, and the heat is a very old-fashioned implementation, built right into the ceilings...where there is a short. To repair that would mean tearing out the ceiling. Not gonna happen. Fortunately, this is southern California...

I see your point, re the limitations of writing workshops, but the exact formats can differ, and maybe you can find a workshop that more closely matches your needs. I'm in a group of five people who meet once a month, and we're very low-pressure to each other. I confess sadly that I haven't had a single page to contribute in the last five months...and the others are cool. They encourage me to resume writing, but they don't exert any pressure.

**Mark Nelson:** Amusing summary of appearances of the word "Fanzine!"

rect me, re Jerry Pournelle, I wholeheartedly recommend "King David's Spaceship." I think it's his personal best.

**Kevin Trainor Jr:** I think you're being a little unfair in dismissing all of Ahrvid's contribution on the basis of political disagreement. I don't agree with you, now and then, but I don't write you off. Ahrvid contributes a lot of serious (and not-so-serious!) scholarship here, much of which is worth, I believe, your perusal.

Total agreement on survival skills. I'm in that class of people who could not survive without toilet paper, let alone household electricity. When "The Machine Stops," I die, simple as that.

**Garth Spencer:** I, too, have lost a lot of motivation. Not writing anything for five months is personally unpleasant. It takes real discipline to write, and the contemporary American lifestyle is destructive of discipline.

re crank theory, keep working on it! There is room for some serious research. As far as using numbers, there are a lot of things that can be measured numerically. Trace birth and death rates against income levels, or education levels against geographic latitude. Do educated people move south...or north?

re ct me re the disposition of my collections and my last will and testament -- I'm dreadfully depressed by the very likely end-fate of all my stuff. It'll just get thrown away. No one is going to go to the effort of finding willing recipients for my stuff. It'll all just go in the dumpster. I'd LOVE to find a collector, while I'm still alive, to unload my library of classical music LPs.

**George Phillis:** re ct Kevin Trainor, wow, do I agree with you re moving! The very thought of trying to move gives me a nasty anxiety attack! I'm too old and feeble to lift a box of household goods, let alone 200 boxes over the course of a weekend. I'd have to pay a full- service mover. Four or five thousand dollars? Joy...

re Literary Fiction vs SF, I think the single biggest difference is that SF encourages the "unusual." Not just the conventional sf tropes, like time-travel, aliens, starships, and so on, but the deliberate breaking of literary "rules." SF permits stories that end, "But he pushed the button anyway, and the universe came to an end." Look at Arthur C. Clarke and "The Nine Billion Names of God." The rules of Literary Fiction would not permit that story to exist. The rules of literary fiction would not permit ^anything^ by Jack Vance to exist!

**Samuel Lubell:** Fun list of panel topics! If I were still in the business of running a convention (my role was that of con Secretary) I would be stealing this list right now! Our long-time Programming guy had a HUGE list of topics comparable to these, and he'd steal them without a moment's qualm!

Wonderful essay on childhood, education, reading, and personal growth. There are a lot of things that can be done -- and done right! The next generation does not need to be a lost generation.

re the Horatio Hornblower books, I liked 'em so much, I went on to read the Alan Lewrie books and the Nicholas Ramage books. Now I'm starting the Richard Bolitho books. I'm saving the Jack Aubrey books for dessert!

There's a decent compromise, re taking toys out of the box vs. keeping them in the box: just keep the box! I have two of the (nifty!) statuettes of Spiral (the Marvel X-Men villain) and they are out of the box, on display on my bookshelves...but I have the original box and styrofoam packaging in storage.



# INTERMISSION #160

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com), your 4th generation fighter, for EAPA, N'APA and other suckers! Microsoft's mail sabotage and being very occupied give @SFJournalen tweeting vacation, hope being back later. Typos are like hallucinating spelling, like Als... Early Nov 2025.

## Editorially: Ukraine Gets Gripen

On Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's recent visit to Sweden and the SAAB factory in Linköping, he and prime minister Ulf Kristersson signed a "Letter of Intent" about Ukraine buying 100-150 Gripen E fighter jets, manufactured by SAAB. This "little" (lighter than F35 and Eurofighter) and "cheap" (it's about 60% of the F35 cost, more importantly *substantially cheaper* per flight hour) has recently aroused a lot of interest.

Brazil bought it. Thailand bought and used it in the border dispute with Cambodia. South Africa, the Czechs, Hungary have it. Canada is seriously considering the Gripen, as do Colombia and Portugal. The main competitor, Lockheed-Martin's US F35, is big, complex, needs a lot of maintenance and US commitment arouses doubts under one Donny Trump. Updates and maintenance of the F35 has go through the US. The Gripen is easy to maintain, with modular software you may upgrade in principle no more complicated than downloading something to your Android phone. SAAB offers technology transfer and local assembly. Gripen is built to be able to operate from motorway stretches and be served by a group of conscripts (turnaround to rearm and refuel is 10 minutes!). Look for the many Youtube videos about the Gripen. Smarter, cheaper, not stealth but is instead using advanced electronic warfare to confuse radars.

The Ukraine deal is for strengthening Ukraine's air force *after* the war when Putin hopefully has fallen out a window or is stammering nonsense in the war crime court in the Hague. The Swedish air force has just received its first new Gripen E's, the heavily upgraded version (stronger engine, new electronics, carries more weapons). The Swedish orders come first and then Ukraine three years from now at the earliest (even if SAAB is said to double its production line). *But there's a workaround.* Ukraine may get the earlier Gripen C as a stopgap solution. Our air force has around 100 Gripen Cs and plans to upgrade and keep 60, so there may be up to 40 Cs available RSN, probably in 2026. Ukrainian pilots have begun some Gripen training and our government has allocated money for Gripen C spare parts. The C model still packs plenty of punch and smartness and it's quite likely its migrating south next year. The long term Gripen E deal is worth around 50 Billion SEK (ca 4.5B Euros) and may be financed, or partly so, by frozen Russian assets. Putin isn't happy...

...not the least because the Russian economy is slowly crashing.

\* The Russian federal budget deficit explodes, reaching a staggering €52B (slightly more in \$), in an economy smaller than Italy's. Russian gov desperately issues bonds, that the private sector - which can ill afford it - are forced to buy. 1/3 of all companies are in dire straits if not on the brink of bankruptcy, also including Gazprom, the state railway company, Aeroflot and other giants. Many turn to a 4-day week, even 3-day week, to save money. Many Russian banks are in trouble due to bad loans and rotten bonds securities. Real estate, building, car sales, farming, transports see goods etc see plummeting sales. The stock market falls.

\* Over 40% of Russia's oil refining capacity is knocked out by Ukrainian drones, and Ukrainian kinetic sanctions keep coming! Price caps, shadow tanker bans, export restrictions have shrunk Russian fossil sales with €156B in 2025. Most of Russia's regions have a *desperate fuel shortage* with mile long gas station queues, gas price up 50%, if at all available (if so, its rationed: 20l/vehicle). The Mafia controlled gas station masquerading as a country is *out of gas!*



Swe PM Ulf Kristersson, Astronaut/SAAB test pilot Marcus Wandt and prez Zelensky (sitting in a Gripen cockpit).

\* With empty war chest, social costs and maintenance (sewers, water, roads etc) etc is cut. Blocks in some towns are *covered in sh\*t* as sewers break. Occupied Donbas hasn't had running water for months. Electricity systems in border areas are droned and cut (which also cuts water) and airports are often closed due to drones, so inefficient Russian air defence don't down civilian planes as they tend to do. Russians feel the effects of war. Putin can only keep them at bay by extreme oppression

\* The interest rate is very high, right now 16.5% by Kremlin's orders - it needs to be higher to battle the 20+% inflation (official inflation "10%", in reality double). Taxes rise. With wages undermined Russians sink into poverty. People withdraw money from the banks while they can, because they don't trust them. Shop shelves are getting emptier, deliveries are slow (all trucks must be checked against a new Spider Web drone attack) and truck diesel is running low. EU just announced the 19th sanctions package and even the US now sanctions Russian oil.

\* Hundreds of business, political, military etc leaders have been murdered by Putin's FSB (ex-KGB). More than 80 are listed by Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspicious\\_Russia-related\\_deaths\\_since\\_2022](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspicious_Russia-related_deaths_since_2022) (but FSB has likely managed to keep cases under wraps, there are more). A sign of Putin's weakness! The oligarch rats begin to leave or are thrown off the sinking ship, while the remains of Russia's navy is cornered in the Black Sea by Ukrainian sea drones.

\* The front line is practically still. Russian troops are demoralised, lack equipment and supplies, average lifespan 12 days (!), 1.2m KIA, MIA & wounded, minimal meatwave gains costs thousands. They've ran out of tanks (MCs, golf cars, even donkeys replace!), recruitment drops and are insufficient to cover losses.

\* In desperation Russia send swarms of missiles (80-90% shot down) to bomb Ukrainian housing blocks, hospitals, kindergartens, shopping malls, churches... Ukrainian police has registered 150 000+ Russian war crimes. This far.

\* Meanwhile Ukraine is getting stronger. EU energy support works, budget support and loans (preferably repaid by frozen Russian assets) keeps the government afloat, weapon deliveries hold the front, but 50%+ of it, incl millions of drones, are now locally produced. New air defence arrives, up to 25 (!) Patriot systems pledged within 12 months and to that probably Swedish Gripen C's. Ukraine leads the drone race which causes 80% of Russian losses. Thousands of garage firms constantly innovate new drones. The front is now a tens of miles wide drone controlled no-man's-land with small dugouts here and there - a drone "minefield in the sky" where Russian forces can't move.

Russia is losing the war they started. Ukraine has a victory plan: just resist, grind down Russian resources and see her collapse. Whereupon the Russian "federation", ie collection of Eastern colonies, may dissolve.

One day, Putin may find himself thrown out a window.

# HISTORY CORNER

## Writing and Publishing Science Fiction: From Grub Street to the Algorithmic Author

*This's History Corner will deal with AI and a little with the business of writing and publishing skiffy, which is of particular interest today with the rise of AI. The idea of AIs relates to sf, but AI is also something that will affect the publishing world. Publishers attempt to demand changes to copyright to squeeze money out of AI training (we should be against it - AI training doesn't copy or publish others' work and is fair use). In Sweden AI is already been used for translation. Some sf fans who translates should be worried! I wanted an overview of the history of MASS MARKET "fiction factories" and asked ChatGPT for a summary. The below is a mix of what the AI produced and my contributions. Science fiction has always been a literature about its own conditions of production. Born from the industrial revolution and the age of mass print, the genre has continually mirrored and extrapolated the changing economics of creativity. From the penny dreadfuls and pulps of the early twentieth century to the algorithmic authors of the digital era.*

Four factors made cheap printed mass media possible: 1) The railway system, starting in the UK (soon also the US) around 1830, necessary for distribution. Stations also usually had newsagents

selling magazines. 2) The rotary press, arriving in the 1840s. It's of course much faster than any flatbed device and steam powered. 3) Mass produced cheap paper, from the Fourdrinier paper machine (1806 and on) with wood pulp as raw material (mass produced from 1840s). 4) The Linotype machine, from the 1880s. It made setting type incredibly much faster.

The industrial revolution itself was also necessary, with increased average wealth, so people could buy mass market magazines, and spare time, so they had time to read. Wealth growth was particularly strong in the second half of the 19th Century due to increasing liberalisation of the economy (which WWI finally killed off). A school system increasing literacy was also of importance. (However, literacy in Sweden is estimated to have been near 90% already the 18th Century. The church wanted people to learn certain religious texts and held household examinations about it.)

Let's have a look at the business of writing and publishing as it has been represented in science fiction. SF reveals an enduring anxiety: that storytelling might become just another automated process in the machinery of culture.

Before science fiction was a genre, it was a part of the general publishing industry. Authors like Jules Verne were popular, but seen as writing fiction in general - just with a little bit more imagination. The late nineteenth century saw the rise of cheap, serialized fiction - penny dreadfuls in the UK, dime novels in the US, magazines (Nick Carter, Wild West tales becoming popular even before the Wild West era ended). It turned writing into a form of wage labor, for which increased respect for authors' rights was important through eg the 1886 Berne convention. (Today, Disney and others try to grab more and lobby to expand copyright into new fields, like AI TRAINING, never originally intended.)

George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1709/1709-h/1709-h.htm>) follows a group of writers the early mass market fiction era, struggling with poverty and deadlines. Authors are factory hands of the imagination. One of the *Grub Street* writers get advised:

*...put aside all your strict ideas about what is worthy and what is unworthy, and just act upon my advice. It's impossible for you to write a three-volume novel; very well, then do a short story of a kind that's likely to be popular. You know Mr Milvain is always saying that the long novel has had its day, and that in future people will write shilling books. Why not try? Give yourself a week to invent a sensational plot, and then a fortnight for the writing. Have it ready for the new season at the end of October. If you like, don't put your name to it; your name certainly would have no weight with this sort of public. Just make it a matter of business, as Mr Milvain says, and see if you can't earn some money.'*

*He stood and regarded her. His expression was one of pained perplexity.*

*'You mustn't forget, Amy, that it needs a particular kind of faculty to write stories of this sort. The invention of a plot is just the thing I find most difficult.'*

*'But the plot may be as silly as you like, providing it holds the attention of vulgar readers. Think of "The Hollow Statue", what could be more idiotic? Yet it sells by thousands.'*

The writers struggle with artistic integrity and the necessity to produce formulaic material for a market that rewards speed and predictability. The "fiction factory" metaphor would haunt the pulp era, as writers like E.E. "Doc" Smith, Edmond Hamilton, and Jack Williamson churned out hundreds of thousands of words per year under punishing deadlines. A good book about life in the pulp era is Frank Gruber's *The Pulp Jungle*: <https://archive.org/details/gruber-frank-the-pulp-jungle-1967> or <https://www.fadedpage.com/showbook.php?pid=20251005>. The writers proletariat had their parties. Gruber remembers:

*...in my very early days in New York, George Bruce, who had a temporary apartment in Brooklyn, gave one. It was a rather small apartment and the thirty-some guests who were there were jammed into the place so that you could hardly move around. About ten o'clock in the evening George announced that he had a deadline for a twelve thousand-word story the following morning and had to get at it. I assumed that it was a hint for the guests to leave, but such was not the case at all. George merely went to his desk in one corner of the room and began to bang his electric typewriter. George sat at that typewriter for four solid hours, completely oblivious to the brawl going on around him. At two o'clock in the morning he finished his twelve thousand words and had a drink of gin.*



Albert Einstein like the Linotype...

*They don't make them like that any more!*

Argosy, starting in 1882, is considered as the first US pulp and those magazines often publishes sf and fantasy without any genre labels, like E R Burrough's Mars adventures beginning in 1912. The first sf/fantasy pulps came in the 1920s, like *Weird Tales* (1923) and *Amazing Stories* (1926).

There were novels like HG Wells' *The Sleeper Awakes* (<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/12163/12163-h/12163-h.htm>) (1899) that envisions a future where the masses are pacified by technologically mediated entertainment - an early anticipation of dystopian visions of mass-produced narrative. For Wells, the commercialization of literature was not merely a social problem but a mechanised future where imagination itself might be industrialised.

With the sf pulps the science fiction became a separate genre. Editors such as Hugo Gernsback and John W. Campbell shaped the field's aesthetic and standards. Gernsback wanted the readers to be enthusiast of *Science and Inventions*, also the title of one of his magazines (<https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=scienceinvention>) while Campbell made the original *Astounding Stories of Super-Science* (what a title!) the home for more believable stories with better writing. Writers were paid by the word, usually ¢1 (¢2 in *Astounding* if the readers voted for the story), but in Gernsback's case payment was "upon suing".

Fredric Brown's "Etaoin Shrdlu" (<https://archive.org/details/etaoin-shrdlu-fredric-brown>) (1942) literalised the connection to machine fiction. The story's title refers to the leftmost sequence of letters on a Linotype machine. When the typesetter made a typo he just let the fingers run down the letters "etaoinshrdlu" and write the line again. The plot is about a printing press that becomes sentient and turns against its human operators.

By the 1950s, as science fiction matured, writers turned their satirical gaze toward the commercialisation of thought itself. In Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth's *The Space Merchants* (1952) writers are not artists but functionaries of corporate propaganda, crafting seductive myths to sell consumer goods and political ideologies. At the same moment, Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (1952) and Isaac Asimov's Robot stories dramatise the mechanisation of intellect. Both make intellectual human labor redundant.

Robert Sheckley's "The Story Writer" (1956) translates that anxiety into metafictional comedy. An author's stories rebel against him, refusing to conform to his plans. (**AE note:** *This is an AI part of this article and I suspect the AI is here hallucinating! I find no trace of Sheckley writing something titled "The Story Writer". It's not in this extensive bibliography:* <https://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?818+None> *Catching an AI red-handed inventing stuff is interesting.*)

The late 1960s and 1970s marked a self-conscious turn in sf, a willingness to treat science fiction itself as a subject of fiction. No writer pursued this more radically than Stanisław Lem. In *A Perfect Vacuum* (1971) and *Imaginary Magnitude* (1973), Lem constructs entire volumes of reviews, introductions, and essays about nonexistent books. It coincides with the "New Wave", originating with the UK magazine *New Worlds*, bringing in new "modernistic" ideas and fiction styles. Barry N. Malzberg's *Beyond Apollo* (1972) offers a more psychological version of the same critique. Its narrator, a failed astronaut and possibly unreliable narrator, attempts to turn his disastrous mission into a publishable work. John Sladek's *Roderick* (1980) closes the circle with humor. Its robot protagonist, an artificial child learning about humanity through pulp fiction, becomes a mechanical stand-in for the genre's own mass-produced naïveté. Sladek's satire of "hackwork" exposes the ways in which both machines and humans are trained to imitate cultural patterns.

The cyberpunk movement of the 1980s and 1990s transplanted these anxieties into a fully digitized environment. William Gibson's *Idoru* (1996) and *Pattern Recognition* (2003) present a world where creative production is indistinguishable from corporate branding. The "idoru" - a virtual pop star - embodies the ultimate commodification of art: a celebrity without substance, endlessly reproducible. Gibson's characters are brand consultants, hackers, or archivists navigating an economy of symbols rather than objects. The author has become a data worker; the book, a node in a global network of information and desire.

Neal Stephenson's *The Diamond Age* (1995) offers a more ambivalent vision. Its "Young Lady's Illustrated Primer" - a nanotech, interactive book that responds to its reader - transforms authorship into programming. The writer is no longer a storyteller but a designer of narrative systems. Charles Stross's *Accelerando* (2005) pushes further into posthuman territory. In his accelerating

digital economy, stories are written by AIs for other AIs, traded as currency in information markets. Human authorship becomes a nostalgic artifact. There's so much published you don't have time for it all, so make a machine to read it. It's here today! Any AI willingly reads anything and make a summary of it for you. With the advent of large language models capable of producing passable prose, the genre confronts its own prophecies. Today's AI-generated fiction recalls both Sheckley's rebellious stories and Lem's nonexistent books: endless, self-replicating texts produced without human intention. Sf, in a sense, has conjured the conditions of its own obsolescence. The tools of storytelling inevitably reshape the stories themselves.

Across more than a century of speculation, science fiction has mapped the evolution of authorship from handcraft to industry to algorithm. In the industrial age, the writer was a cog in the machinery of mass print. In the digital and AI age, the writer risks being replaced by a machine. Creativity like any human activity has its own economic and technological infrastructure. From Gissing's Grub Street to Stross's posthuman markets.

AI will change *how* books are produced, discovered, and priced, but it's unlikely to instantly replace human creative judgment, editors, marketers, or high-quality literary translation. There will be faster production, lots more low-cost/self-published titles, new hybrid authoring workflows, ongoing legal fights over training data, and steady pressure on some supplier fees, but not a sudden "end of publishers."

Large publishers and many indie authors already use AI for editing, metadata, cover mockups, reader-insights and more - adoption keeps rising. AI will (and already does) write novels, but mostly derivative, uneven, or co-authored. AI can produce readable long-form prose and complete narrative drafts; authors and small publishers are already publishing those works, (often with varying transparency about the role of AI). Most such novels are used for experimentation, serial entertainment, or low-price self-publishing.

Discoverability becomes the bottleneck, so marketing skills matter. There'll be more low-quality noise, curation and reviews become more valuable. Publishing value will increasingly concentrate on curation, editorial skill, marketing reach, and rights management.

Some books will be groundbreaking, but most won't. Breakthroughs are possible where AI enables new forms, or when talented humans use AI in surprising ways. But a mass of formulaic, mediocre books is the more likely outcome, derivative or formulaic initially. Real literary breakthroughs typically require conceptual novelty, voice, and cultural context areas where human authors still lead.

AI can cut costs for copy-editing, proofreading, transcription, layout, cover drafts and marketing, lowering production costs and barriers to self-publishing. But editing to literary standard, marketing to reach readers, advances and rights management still cost money. Where costs will fall will be redistributed, not their total disappearance.

AI will get very good for many genres, excellent for technical and commercial texts and can massively speed up draft translations. The likely future is hybrid workflows where AI produces a strong draft that a skilled translator then refines and localizes. The tools authors and translators use will change fast. Literature will become more "internationalised". The English language market has been on the back foot when it comes to translating from other languages. AI will increase translation capacity and US/UK readers will find more translations, especially as it's cheaper to buy translation rights than purchasing original rights from a domestic writer.

Courts in different jurisdictions are still splitting on whether training on copyrighted works is infringement or fair use, but it seems the majority of rulings in the US slants towards fair use (though in Sweden publishers are now running a campaign to expand copyright and ban AI training as fair use). Industry outcomes may become a mix: some licensing deals and payments, some court rulings allowing AI training. In the long run banning AI training (without pay) may be impossible. AIs are getting smarter and don't copy but are only inspired by training data so how can anyone prove it?

We've come a long way from pulps and Linotypes to robots and AIs...

More about AIs, going deeper in history...

In 300 BCE, Apollonius Rhodius imagined Talos, a giant bronze automaton or living statue that protected Europa on the Island of Crete, in his epic poem *Argonautica*:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/830/830-h/830-h.htm> "Was Talos, the Bronze Automaton Who

Guarded the Island of Crete in Greek Myth, an Early Example of Artificial Intelligence?" Smithsonian Magazine wonders: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/was-talos-the-bronze-automaton-who-guarded-the-island-of-crete-in-greek-myth-an-early-example-of-artificial-intelligence-180986467/>

*Talos /was/ forged by Hephaestus, the Greek god of smiths and artisans, Talos was said to have guarded the island of Crete, off the coast of Greece. He patrolled the beaches three times a day, throwing boulders at enemy ships to ward off unwanted visitors to King Minos' domain... Talos was not merely created "by magic spells or divine fiat," writes Mayor. He was said to be engineered by Hephaestus, or rather "made, not born," in a process the ancients "might have called biotechné, from bios 'life' and techné, 'crafted through art or science.' Talos was depicted in myth as a machine programmed to act human though never capable of achieving regular human life—what one might call a robot today... The Argonautica describes Talos' internal computational system in depth, outlining some of the wiring necessary to build a machine of this kind. "Now in all the rest of his body and limbs was he fashioned of bronze and invulnerable," the translation notes, "but beneath the sinew by his ankle was a blood-red vein, and this, with its issues of life and death, was covered by a thin skin." This "vein," perhaps better visualized as a tube, transported ichor, the ethereal liquid that flowed through the bodies of the ancient Greek gods. A nail or a bolt held the system together at Talos' ankle. In a sense, this ichor functioned like a power source or electricity, circulating through the robot's bronze limbs and fueling his movements and actions. If Talos' internal engineering was in any way disturbed, he would malfunction.*

There's more in Greek mythology. The Iliad had talked about Golden maidens who assist the Olympian gods and self-moving tripods. Plato mentions Daedalus's moving statues

Wikipedia tells about ancient China: "a curious account of automation is found in the Lie Zi text, written in the 3rd century BC. Within it, there is a description of a much earlier encounter between King Mu of Zhou (1023-957 BC) and a mechanical engineer known as Yan Shi, an 'artificer'. The latter proudly presented the king with a life-size, human-shaped figure of his mechanical handiwork, and it may be the first documented mechanical android story" :

*The king stared at the figure in astonishment. It walked with rapid strides, moving its head up and down, so that anyone would have taken it for a live human being. The artificer touched its chin, and it began singing, perfectly in tune. He touched its hand, and it began posturing, keeping perfect time... As the performance was drawing to an end, the robot winked its eye and made advances to the ladies in attendance, whereupon the king became incensed and would have had Yen Shih [Yan Shi] executed on the spot had not the latter, in mortal fear, instantly taken the robot to pieces to let him see what it really was. And, indeed, it turned out to be only a construction of leather, wood, glue and lacquer, variously coloured white, black, red and blue. Examining it closely, the king found all the internal organs complete—liver, gall, heart,*

*limbs with their joints, skin, teeth and hair, all of them artificial... The king tried the effect of taking away the heart, and found that the mouth could no longer speak; he took away the liver and the eyes could no longer see; he took away the kidneys and the legs lost their power of locomotion. The king was delighted.*

All this from

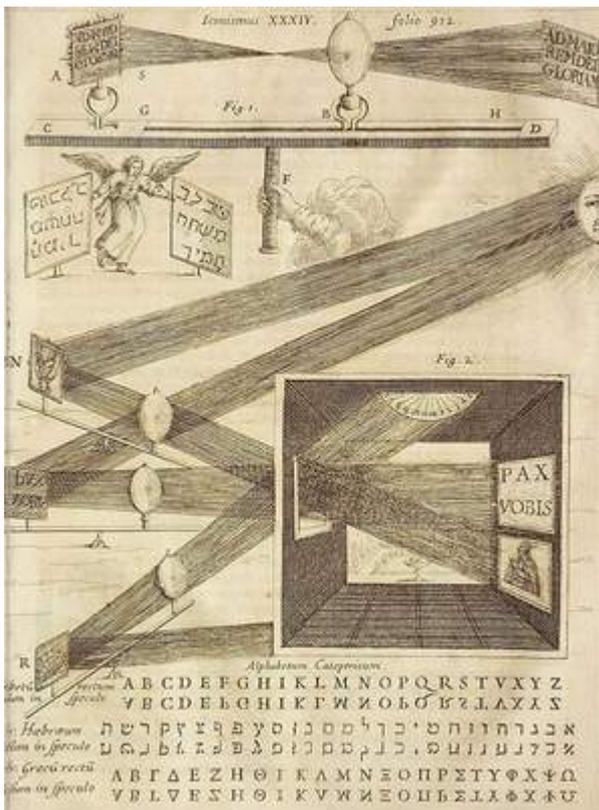
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clockwork\\_monk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clockwork_monk) .

Also:

*The Smithsonian Institution has in its collection a clockwork monk, about 15 in (380 mm) high, possibly dating as early as 1560. The monk is driven by a key-wound spring and walks the path of a square, striking his chest with his right arm, while raising and lowering a small wooden cross and rosary in his left hand, turning and nodding his head, rolling his eyes, and mouthing silent obsequies. From time to time, he brings the cross to his lips and kisses it. It is believed that the monk was manufactured by Juanelo Turriano, mechanician to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.*



Mechanical monk, 1560.



A Kircher sketch for creating "combinatorial music". It seems he'll use sunlight to be reflected through filters or matrixes projecting "Pax Vobis on the wall" (Peace for you). Have no idea if this is madness or would work!

As the balance spring for clockworks was invented in the mid 17th Century mechanisms became more advanced and Leibniz dreamed about a universal calculus of thought, just as he had (with Newton) invented calculus for numbers and the

first mechanical calculator. We have the Jesuit monk Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) who built “combinatorial machines”, devices to automatically generate prayers or musical patterns. His *Ars Magna Sciendi* (1669) includes a sort of algorithmic text generation.

“Automatons” of different kinds were built, the most famous being perhaps the chess-playing Turk [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanical\\_Turk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanical_Turk) pretending to be cognitively advanced enough to play chess (a fake, it had a little person hidden inside). We also have Pierre Jaquet-Droz who in 1774 constructed a programmable automaton in the form of a child who dips a quill into ink and writes on paper. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ux2KW20nqHU> What the boy with the quill wrote could be changed by changing the cogs inside the mechanism.



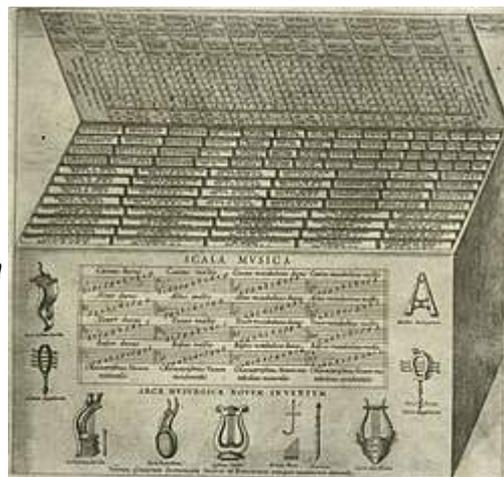
The writing kid automata.

Writing about the Academy of Lagado, where Gulliver travelled in 1726, Jonathan Swift describes a giant machine made of rotating wooden cubes covered with words. Its operators turn the handles, and the cubes rearrange phrases to produce new combinations - a satirical AI text generator. Swift mocks mechanistic education and scientific hubris:

*By this contrivance, the most ignorant person at a reasonable charge, and with a little bodily labour, may write books in philosophy, poetry, politics, law, mathematics, and theology, without the least assistance from genius or study.*

This is arguably the first literary depiction of an automatic writer.

As for computer AI, Charles Babbage's Analytical Machine, designed but never built around the 1830s, could be mentioned, not that it could ever be used for AI - but some

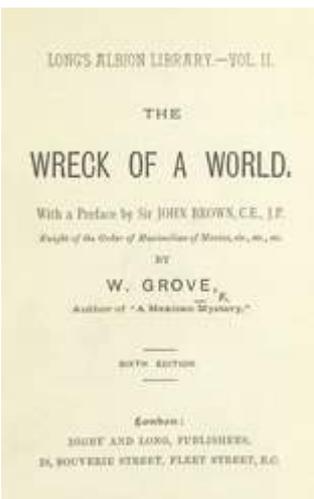


*Arca Musarithmica, an information device invented by Jesuit scholar A Kircher in mid-1600s, to enable non-musicians to compose church music. Through simple combinatoric techniques.*

still saw such a machine as “intelligent” in certain ways.

In 1819 ETA Hoffman wrote *Automata* “a talking machine /that/ recounts ghost stories, mixing technology and supernatural inspiration. Hoffmann connects automation and authorship of illusion”.

The notion of advanced robots with human-like intelligence in more modern times dates back at least to Samuel Butler's 1872 novel *Erewhon*, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1906/1906-h/1906-h.htm> preceded by his article (as a Letter to the Editor) “Darwin Among the Machines” from 1863, raising “the possibility that machines were a kind of “mechanical life” undergoing constant evolution, and that eventually machines might supplant humans as the dominant species.” Can't find the piece itself but most of it can be read in the newspaper reproduction of page 1.

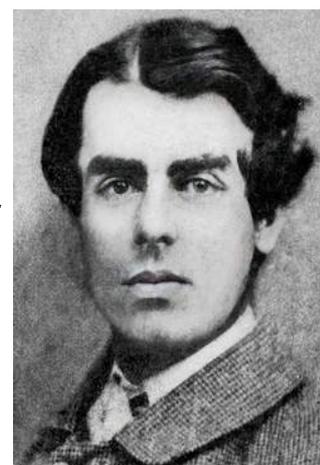


In her last work Georg Eliot (pseud for Marian Evans), *Impressions of Theophrastus Sucha* (1879

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10762> ), a collection of fictional essays and thoughts. The chapter “Shadows of the Coming Race” speculates that machines will become self-replicating and supersede humans. The title probably refers to Bulwer-Lytton's famous 1871 utopian novel *The Coming Race*.

In 1888 one William Grove (pseud for Reginald Colebrooke Reade) writes about machine intelligence, followed in 1889 by *The Wreck of a World*

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Wreck\\_of\\_a\\_World](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Wreck_of_a_World) when the machines revolt against humanity.



Samuel Butler

By the end of the nineteenth century, industrialization and early computing theory began to merge in fiction. Edward S. Ellis's *The Steam Man of the Prairies* (1868, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7506>) had already imagined a mechanical man pulling a wagon across the American frontier, and L. Frank Baum followed with *The Master Key* (1901, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/436>):

*Rob is an electrical experimenter "in a rather haphazard fashion, connecting this and that wire blindly and by guesswork, in the hope that he would strike the right combination." There is a bright flash, and a being who calls himself the Daemon of Electricity appears. He tells Rob that he has accidentally "touched the Master Key of Electricity" and is entitled "to demand from me three gifts each week"*

These gifts are stunning devices, like gizmos for flying, curing diseases, mobile communicator, etc. Then followed Baum's clockwork men *Tik-Tok of Oz* (1907, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/52176>) among the first "friendly" robots, aimed at young readers. It's not clear if - but has been suggested - that the soc media named "TikTok" took its name from Frank L Baum. This Chinese service (avoid it unless you want Chinese communists looking over your shoulder) was introduced in China in 2016 under the name Douyin (meaning "shaking sound", becoming TikTok - name officially related to a clock ticking - in 2017)..

Wells's short piece *A Story of the Days to Come* (1899, [https://www.gutenberg.org/files/27365/27365-h/27365-h.htm#Page\\_165](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/27365/27365-h/27365-h.htm#Page_165)) even hints at computer-like systems running a future city. He later expanded this idea into the "World Brain", a universal knowledge system first proposed by him in a lecture in 1936 and described in his essays collection *The World Brain* in 1940, <https://archive.org/details/worldbrain00wells>

In France, Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's *L'Ève future* (1886, in English as *Tomorrow's Eve* <https://archive.org/details/worldbrain00wells>) offered

the first truly human-like android - Hadaly, an artificial woman designed by Edison himself - suggesting both erotic fascination and unease with artificial life. Another design-woman was Alice W Fuller's "A Wife Manufactured to Order" (1895,

<https://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/fuller/arena/order.html>) in which you can order a wife made of wax.

Auguste Villiers's "andréide" became the model for many later mechanical femmes fatales. (Like the female Maschinenmensch, also known as Maria, in Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis*, 1927, based on Thea von Harbou's 1925 novel.) *E M Forster's The Machine*

*Stops* (1909, <http://self.gutenberg.org/wplbn0000627598-the-machine-stops-by-forster-e-m.aspx>) is a milestone: it envisions an all-encompassing, networked machine sustaining isolated humanity - an eerily accurate forecast of digital dependency. Ambrose Bierce's *Moxon's Master* (1899) already had a chess-playing automaton that murders its creator, anticipating both Frankenstein and HAL 9000.

Gustav Theodor Fechner's philosophical tales (can't find which story, but here's Kurd Lasswitz - pioneering German sf writer - writing about Fechner, <https://archive.org/details/gustavtheodorfec00lassuoft>) and Villiers's contemporaries pondered whether mechanism could host a soul. During the first decades of the twentieth century, actual mechanical mannequins and radio-controlled devices filled exhibitions. Fiction mirrored them: Jean de La Hire's *Le Formidable événement* (1911, lots of his pulp-like stories on <https://annas-archive.org/search?q=Jean+de+La+Hire>) and Arthur Stringer's *The Story Without a Name* (1911) toyed with self-thinking machines. In cinema, Karel Čapek's play *R.U.R. – Rossum's Universal Robots* (1920) then coined the very word *robot*, from the Czech *robota*, forced labour (similar in other slavic languages). *Weird Tales* published Edmond Hamilton's "The Metal Giants" (1926 <http://famous-and-forgotten-fiction.com/writings/hamilton-stories/hamilton-the-metal-giants.html>), Much of early machine intelligence appeared in cheap magazines in the US known as pulps. It's interesting to note that the very structure of the pulps (cheap, serialized, mass-produced) mirrors mechanisation itself.



# THE PRESS

"Nihil utile quod non honestum."

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SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 1863.

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MR. DOBSON.

We cannot take leave of Mr. Dobson as the Provincial Engineer without a more formal notice of his past services than we have yet made. Mr. Dobson was first employed by the Government in 1853, to lay out the bridle-road from Putau to Akaroa. The effective and satisfactory manner in which he performed this duty, making a complete sketch of the route through a dense forest previously untraversed and over mountains more than 3,000 feet high, and laying down the line so accurately as to require little subsequent alteration, established his reputation not only as an able surveyor, but, for as much as his reconnaissance survey was made entirely without assistance, as a man of great endurance, energy, and perseverance. Not long after Mr. Dobson was placed at the head of the public works of the province, and we have no hesitation in saying that it would have been very difficult, if not quite impossible, to have found any professional man so well adapted for the situation, or who would, on the whole, have done so much valuable service to the public. Those only who had the opportunity of seeing Mr. Dobson's indefatigable labors in times when all those at the head of departments had to pull the ropes as well as guide the ship's course, can rightly appreciate how much work Mr. Dobson got through with very inadequate resources; for in those days the Engineer was his own Clerk of the Works, and in a measure his own pay clerk too.

Perhaps no man has been, on the whole, from time to time more unpopular than the late Provincial Engineer. Where every one wanted every thing done at once; and to undertake one work was to offend a host of claimants interested in works in different parts of the province, most persons sooner or later had occasion to grumble at the Provincial Engineer. But it is only fair to say that if unsparring labor would have done everything at once, time and space would have been abolished in the Public Works department. Another feature in Mr. Dobson's official life was this, that, in all except very rare cases, the public works were done within his estimates. It is true, on the other hand, that he had a tendency to estimate works rather over than under their full value. All laborers do and ought to make much higher wages on piece or contract work than on time labour, because they put more hard work into the job; but it requires very clear judgment to estimate the value of contract work, calculating it at the current rate of wages of the day, allowing for a fair and honest day's work being done by each man. There can be no doubt that Mr. Dobson has in many cases allowed much more money to be paid for work than it would have cost had it been done by an ordinary employer.

As the colony became richer we have always thought that the Engineer gradually grew into the position of a Minister of Public Works; in other words, that his duties became more administrative than was desirable with any public servant not having a seat in the legislative body. In fact in recent times the public works grew to such a magnitude that they were far too much under the control of the Engineer, and far too little under the control of the Provincial Council. We are not accusing Mr. Dobson of having aimed at this; it was the inevitable result of his position.

Our opinion of this subject has been often and freely expressed. We entirely hold with the report of the Committee of the Provincial Council, in which they pointed out that the present system ought not to be continued any longer. We believe that with very large opportunities for jobbing, and a control growing weaker and weaker, as the magnitude of the operations of the department rendered supervision more difficult, Mr. Dobson has left his office with entirely clean hands. We have heard him accused of recklessness and extravagance, of being very crochety and very obstinate; but we have never heard the slightest suspicion thrown upon his integrity. But no public office ought to be in a position in which it becomes virtually irresponsible of the supreme power. There are then but two courses, one to appoint a Minister of Public Works, with a seat in the Provincial Council; the other, to break up the department altogether. We believe on every ground that the latter is the wiser course. The Government will always require professional advice, as, for example, they require an engineer in this railway. If they build a bridge over the Rakia they can employ an engineer for that—the same or another as they thought fit—but the great work of road making ought to be given over to district boards. The great change thus effected may be described as a change from monopoly to free trade—the monopoly of all the engineering work of the province in the hands of one Government officer, or free trade in engineering ability. It cannot be doubted that under such a policy the supply of engineering power would be greatly increased, as supply is always stimulated by demand, and the public would be the gainers every way. Mr. Dobson was the first Provincial Engineer, and we hope he may be the last. We hope, instead of seeing one Provincial Engineer, to see a separate Engineer for each district, and the great bridges and railways given to those who acquire the public confidence most thoroughly.

## CHRISTCHURCH.

**THE NEW MUSIC HALL.**—We desire to call the attention of our readers to the opening of the New Music Hall in Gloucester-street. An advertisement in our columns announces the pleasing fact that the members of the Canterbury Musical Society intend to celebrate the event by two concerts, on Monday and Tuesday next. It is a pleasing feature in the case to be enabled to add that Messrs. Poussard and Douay, and their assistants Messrs. Wilkinson and Beaumont, have also offered their valuable aid to give eclat to these concerts. The room is the largest, and for the transmission of sound, beyond doubt the finest in the Province, and great credit is due to the enterprising proprietors who have at last supplied a Hall so long needed to give effect to the musical talent of the city. We hope, nay, we are sure, that although at so short a notice the Hall will be a crowded one.

## Correspondence.

### DARWIN AMONG THE MACHINES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PRESS.

SIR,—There are few things of which the present generation is more justly proud than of the wonderful improvements which are daily taking place in all sorts of mechanical appliances. And indeed it is matter for great congratulation on many grounds. It is unnecessary to mention these here, for they are sufficiently obvious; our present business lies with considerations which may somewhat tend to humble our pride, and to make us think seriously of the future prospects of the

human race. If we revert to the earliest primordial types of mechanical life, to the lever, the wedge, the inclined plane, the screw, and the pulley, or (for analogy would lead us one step further) to that one primordial type from which all the mechanical kingdom has been developed, we mean to the lever itself, and if we then examine the machinery of the Great Eastern, we find ourselves almost awestruck at the vast development of the mechanical world, at the gigantic strides with which it has advanced in comparison with the slow progress of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. We shall find it impossible to refrain from asking ourselves what the end of this mighty movement is to be. In what direction is it tending? What will be its upshot? To give a few imperfect hints towards the solution of these questions is the object of the present letter.

We have used the words "mechanical life," "the mechanical kingdom," "the mechanical world," and so forth, and we have done so advisedly, for as the vegetable kingdom was slowly developed from the mineral, and as, in like manner, the animal supervened upon the vegetable, so now in these last few ages an entirely new kingdom has sprung up, of which we as yet have only seen what will be one day considered the antediluvian prototypes of the race.

We regret deeply that our knowledge both of natural history and of machinery is too small to enable us to undertake the gigantic task of classifying machines into their genera and subgenera, species, varieties, subvarieties, and so forth, of tracing the connecting links between machines of widely different characters, of pointing out how subservience to the use of man has played that part among machines which natural selection has performed in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, of pointing out rudimentary organs, [see note] which exist in some few machines, feebly developed and perfectly useless, yet serving to mark descent from some ancestral type, which has either perished or been modified into some new phase of mechanical existence. We can only point out this field for investigation; it must be followed up by others whose education and talents have been of a much higher order than any which we can lay claim to.

Some few hints we have determined to venture upon, though we do so with the profoundest diffidence. Firstly, we would remark that as some of the lowest of the vertebrata attained a far greater size than has descended to their more highly organized living representatives, so a diminution in the size of machines has often attended their development and progress. Take the watch for instance. Examine the beautiful structure of the little animal, watch the intelligent play of the minute members which compose it; yet this little creature is but a development of the cumbrous clocks of the thirteenth century—it is no deterioration from them. The day may come when clocks, which certainly at the present time are not diminishing in bulk, may be entirely superseded by the universal use of watches, in which case clocks will become extinct like the earlier aururians, while the watch (whose tendency has for some years been rather to decrease in size than the contrary) will remain the only existing type of an extinct race.

The views of machinery which we are thus feebly indicating will suggest the solution of one

of the greatest and most mysterious questions of the day. We refer to the question what sort of creature man's next successor in the supremacy of the earth is likely to be. We have often heard this debated; but it appears to us that we are ourselves creating our own successors; we are daily adding to the beauty and delicacy of their physical organization; we are daily giving them greater power, and supplying, by all sorts of ingenious contrivances, that self-regulating, self-acting power, which will be to them what intellect has been to the human race. In the course of ages we shall find ourselves the inferior race. Inferior in power, inferior in that great moral quality of self control, we shall look up to them as to the acme of all that the best and wisest man can ever dare to aim at. No evil passions, no jealousy, no avarice, no impure desires will disturb the serene night of those glorious creatures. Sin, shame, and sorrow, will have no place among them. Their minds will be in a state of perpetual calm, the contentment of a spirit that knows no wants, is disturbed by no regrets. Ambition will never torture them. Ingratitude will never cause them the uneasiness of a moment. The guilty conscience, the hope deferred, the pangs of exile, "the insolence of office, and the scorns which patient merit of the unworthy takes," these will be entirely unknown to them. If they want "feeding," (by the use of which very word we betray our recognition of them as living organisms) they will be attended by patient slaves whose business and interest it will be to see that they shall want for nothing. If they are out of order they will be promptly attended to by physicians who are thoroughly acquainted with their constitutions; if they die, for even these glorious animals will not be exempt from that necessary and universal consummation, they will immediately enter into a new phase of existence, for what machine dies entirely in every part at one and the same instant?

We take it that when the state of things shall have arrived which we have been above attempting to describe, man will have become to the machine what the horse and the dog are to man. He will continue to exist, may even to improve, and will be probably better off in his state of domestication under the beneficent rule of the machines than he is in his present wild state. We treat our horses, dogs, cattle and sheep, on the whole, with great kindness, we give them whatever experience teaches us to be best for them, and there can be no doubt that our use of meat has added to the happiness of the lower animals far more than it has detracted from it: in like manner it is reasonable to suppose that the machines will treat us kindly, for their existence is as dependent upon us as ours is upon the lower animals. They cannot kill us and eat us as we do sheep, they will not only require our services in the partitioning of their young, (which branch of their economy will remain always in our hands) but also in feeding them, in setting them right if they are sick, and burying their dead, or working up their corpses into new machines. It is obvious that if all the animals in Great Britain save man alone were to die, and if at the same time all intercourse with foreign countries were by some sudden catastrophe to be rendered perfectly impossible, it is obvious that under such



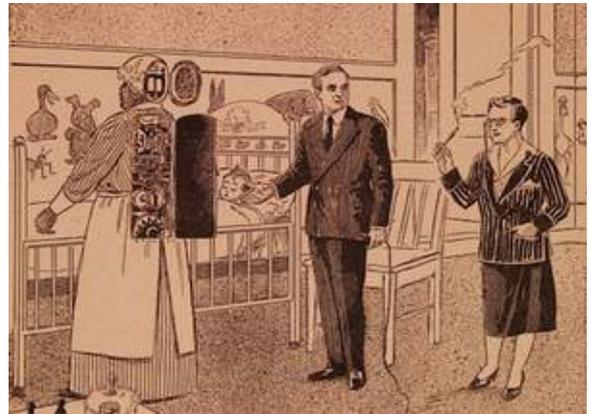
AMAZING (feb 29) illo to MJ Breuer's "The Captured Cross Section" - it could hang at MoMa!

Miles J. Breuer's *The Appendix and the Spectacles* (1928, <https://archive.org/details/conklin-groff-the-science-fiction-galaxy-perma-p-67-1950>), worth mentioning are also his "The Hungry Brain" (1927), with machines as intellectual mirrors: thinking about thinking and "The Captured Cross-Section" (1929). And we have and Neil R Jones' "Professor Jameson" series (from 1931, [https://www.gutenberg.org/files/26906/26906-h.htm](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/26906/26906-h/26906-h.htm)) that speculated about mechanical immortality and mind-transfer, bridging biological and mechanical creativity.

In 1928, David H Keller's "The Psychophonic Nurse" ([https://archive.org/details/Amazing\\_Stories\\_v03n08\\_1928-11\\_bd-sas](https://archive.org/details/Amazing_Stories_v03n08_1928-11_bd-sas)) depicted a caregiving machine, a robot nurse, showing the first inklings of emotionally responsive.

The pulp era teemed with inventive artificial beings. John W. Campbell's "The Last Evolution" (1932, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/27462/27462-h/27462-h.htm>) (1932) showed machines surpassing humankind yet protecting it.

The shift 1930/1940 became a turning point. We got famous depictions like Lester del Rey's "Helen O'Loy" (1938, a loving robot) and Eando Binder's "I, Robot" (1939, a robot in the justice system) and most of all the robotic giant Isaac Asimov published his first robot story, "Robbie" in 1940. Artificial beings would never be the same.



A robot as "psychotronic" nurse.

**Luncon ( Swecon) October 10-12**

There've been sf cons in Swedish fandom almost every year since the first one in 1956, usually only one per year (one year, as I remember, the con was 12 fen in the living room of a famous poet).

Years with two or more cons began only in the late 1970s when we in the SFSF club gang of 45 Pioneer Street began with Minicons. A couple of years since the 1950s have been without Swedish cons, but it may be compensated by that we managed (though small) cons even during the infamous pandemic, when many other countries were blank conventionwise.

So there have always been a "national" con, in a way, some in the 1980s even named "Swecon". So in 1998 it was decided the make "Swecon" something to paste on a yearly con as the "official" Swedish sf literature con. (Note: literature, as gamers, toymakers,



Fredrik HC Books, Lilla Fiskareg 4D, well stocked but expensive.

masqueraders has their own events, about a dozen of those each year and most are bigger than our real sf cons. They call it "sci-fi", we know it's sf.) The "official" bit came from that someone stepped up - I think it was in 1998 - and said: "Hands up everyone who think this is the..hrmpf...the official Swedish sf con." All voted to make themselves official. That's how it goes.



Patrik Centerwall talked about recent and local skiffy. I should have used Flash...Gordon!



Audience of the lower floor Friday program.

Anyway. The latest Swecon was named Luncon, and took place October 10-12 in the southern university city Lund, where the first Swedish con also was (Luncon 1956).

I intentionally arrived a few hours before the doors opened at 16.00, to make a little used bookstore run. I had googled "antikvariat" and second hand shops. Unfortunately some were closed Fridays, but I did find a couple that were open and also Fredrik HC Books specialised in sf/fantasy. It had a really good sf assortment, *but* prices were 2-5 times higher than at comparable stores. A book you'd expect to cost €2

could very well go for €10! You are warned! Didn't buy anything there.

Some 200 or so turned up to the Lund City Hall - not an administrative building, but a culture centre - with evening program in the nearby cinema/cafe Kino. GoHs were Jesper Stage, economics professor and long-time fan, Charlie Stross, Scottish writer, Hildur Knutsdottir, Icelandic writer, and Jessica Schiefau, Swedish writer. (Of these I remember prof Stage best, as he subscribed to my sf newsletter, starting from the mimeograph days!).

Luncon had the convention dedicated upper floor for itself Saturday and Sunday (until ca 19, when



Jörgen Jörälv and John-Henri Holmberg presenting an AI enhanced (by Jörälv, your ed made the 8mm to video transfer) version of Denis Lindbohm's 1955 classic "Ghost of the Great Night". Poster by Jörälv. Inserted Denis' mother playing a psychic getting contact with the alien landing on Earth.

we moved over to Kino) but was Friday housed in a lower floor lecture hall to which the public had admission.

The venue seemed quite appropriate for the con, though the main hall was too big, it was never more than barely half full. The secondary lecture hall was a medical-theatre-like place that at times managed to get almost full. Two main stages was enough as there was only two main program lines (a third lighter line was smaller coffee klatsches - why didn't they call it *fikastund*? - workshops and author readings). Beside this there were many tables for publishers. Small press publishers are a



Opening on main stage. Con chairman Calle Werner releasing *The Spirit of Swecon* from its genie bottle.

dime a dozen these days, some being vanity presses mostly pubbing works by the initiator/owner. Sf/f from the big established publishers is rarer, with sf being rarer than fantasy - and they often won't even label it "science fiction" on the cover.



The Life in Space Panel, and parts of the audience.

The Alvar foundation second hand tables were there, the so called "Fantikvariat". I bought myself about a dozen books at €1/each. Among these was RA Lafferty and I read his collection *Nine Hundred Grandmothers* directly after Luncon. The verdict: Lafferty is a very, very, *VERY* strange writer! I also bought eg a agent thriller by Sheckley - didn't know he deviated from sf and th book doesn't look promising - and Scenes from Life of Life of the Future by a Frenchman who hates the US. Luncon also had a gaming room, a cafeteria stand in the middle of everything, a quite decent program book (ca 30 pages) and chairs, sofas and tables for mingling. I found myself a table in a corner and set up my computer there. (I decided against tweeting from Luncon, it'd take too much time and my Twitter account has been rather inactive since the spring. I've simply had too much else to handle. I hope to get back to Twitter/X, but that the owner Musk seem unreliable and though I like his Mars ideas, being Trump ally and unclear about Ukraine makes me hesitant.)

The evening program at Kino began around 19 Friday and Saturday and was Sunday place for evening beer chat (a k a Dead Canine Party...those were better back in the days!). Sometimes fen strolled by my table helling. It was fun to meet e g the 1970s fanzine superstar BAGS again.



*The secondary stage, like a "medical theatre".*

When I wasn't attending a program item or myself wandering about I had my table. I saw perhaps 40-50% of the program, sometimes doing the trick of attending the start of one item and catching the second half of another.

I'll mention some of the items I attended, and for others you may see comments in the captions:

Some items may not be mentioned at all. The complete program is

here <https://malmolundfandom.weebly.com/programschema.html>, in English if the item was in English. There were few times without anything in English, but non-Swedish attendees were mostly other Nordics, Danes, Norwegians and Finns. Other foreign attendees were maybe a handfu, UK, US, Germany. (The con reception had no nationality rundown. I asked several times.)



*Your Editor set up his computer in a corner.*

After some welcome words, Friday started with a GoH panel, which honestly didn't give me much but an alibi to later skip most GoH interviews and such.

Perhaps with exception for the Icelander Knutsdottir, the GoHs didn't interest me much. (I've met Stross on earlier cons, one in Linköping if I remember.) Friday then there was a somewhat interesting lecture about Uppåkra, a rich archeological site with finds from the pre-Viking era and onwards. Swedish cons must have something about the Vikings! If it weren't for Swedes Vikings going East down the rivers, helping the locals to get things going - we might not have all the troubles in the region now... Patrik Centerwall then talked about

recent Swedish sf, especially in the Scania province (where Lund is). Friday ended with short amateur films, a Quiz (my team was worst - there were too many TV/movie questions) and showing of a restored copy of Dénis Lindbohm's 8mm b/w classic "Den stora nattens vålnad" ("Spirit of the Great Night"). I did the original VHS transfer. One Jörgen Jörälv has now made an enhanced digital copy - sharpening, a music sound track. In his presentation he said the tracking became unstable near cuts so he had to omit a few seconds here and there. I think he omitted too much. I remember the text frame "Flying objects have been obs<cut>" - where the original said "...erved at Söderåsen".



*Tora Greve Talks about Advanced Civilisations in space.*

(He could at least have caught a stable frame of the complete text and inserted it.) Some say it's a turkey, I disagree considering the limited resources Dénis had: no money, filling it with family and club Meteor members, and actually having some creative solutions, like inserting stock footage from a military exercise, shooting rayguns by scratching the film and blowing up 2 kg of flour on a beach to get a simulated atomic explosion. The story is about an alien making an emergency landing on Earth, being haunted by locals, reporters and military. The four-armed alien is played by Dénis himself. The extra arms are loose ones connected to the regular arms.

Saturday I caught the opening when con chairman Calle Werner released the Spirit of Swecon from the wooden bottle where it's kept in between cons, upon which I heard the start of the Nordic fandom panel (with reps by Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland - Norway was missing) and then rushed over to hear Tora Greve (active in amateur astronomy) talk about searching alien civilisations. It was very interesting. She had some news I didn't know of before (like signs of ET hi-tech, stars partly shadowed, strange signals) but I think she should speak a bit faster. Her lecture was immediately followed by a panel about "Life in space" which was less interesting. It virtually said nothing I haven't heard before. (I have earlier taken university night classes about alien life, which I think Intermission reported about many years ago.) At the same time there \*alas\* was the panel "Books that made me queer", I made sure to miss. PC panels basically inspired by pseudo-science has little to do in *science* fiction. Should be canned, thank you!

I attended Sam Aalto's "Cities of the Future" lecture,. Mainly talking about Megacities and imaginative cities like Metropolis. He had a lot of slides shown in high speed. A little later we had the panel "Urban fantasy and Urban planning" going partly into the same subject but at the same time (I heard parts of both) a panel misnamed "Fantastics in the Ether". It was about podcasts, not the ether! I expect sf fans to know science history better. The "ether" is a misnomer for radio waves. Some thought a certain substance they called "ether" carried radiation. This "ether" was shown to be nonexistent but the term stuck for radio, TV and transmissions in the air. Podcasts *aren't* in the air (ether), but carried by cables. Podcasts aren't in the ether. Anyway, there are a multitude of podcasts and I usually follow none. People babbling and humming without manuscripts is a waste of time. (But there is interesting history about skiffy on radio, the ether! Google "OTR".)



Sam Aalto showing yesterday's future city (perhaps by Alvar Aalto?).



Tomas Cronholm hands Katarina E the Alvar Award.

"Ask Luncon" following was a skiffy version of the TV show "Ask Lund" where you could ask a panel from Lund University anything. So Luncon gathered their experts. I remember the first question: Is a centaur a mammal or an insect, since it has six limbs? I

think they landed on mammal, as it probably would produce living offspring. This panel had more concrete data and science than most other panels and did take questions from the audience. (You may have heard my critique of con panels..Many are ill-prepared babble, info thin and let the audience in only near the end.)



Talking urban planning. (But Urban Gunnarsson wasn't there.)



Västeråsfandom celebrating 10 years. 'Appy birthday!

Then followed the Swecon session, when Stockholm and Fantastika 2026 unopposed was selected, date October 23-25. 39 voted for the Alvar fan activity Award, which was won by *Katarina Eriksson*, active in the local fandom and the designer of Luncon's program book. I didn't vote because I don't know the candidates well enough and AFAIK neither of the them seem to have made the great feats for fandom the prize is for. Many so called fans today live as if you don't have 24h a day for fanac! They have forgotten about the *Fannish Raw Force!* (But if Inge R L Larsson comes back as a candidate I may bother to pick up a ballot. )

Not that the day needed to be saved, but Västeråsfandom (from a town west of Stockholm) did it anyway. As they celebrated their 10th anniversary they invited the con goers to celebrate it together with wine-in-a-box (or three boxes). That's the true spirit...or wine. I pretended the day needed to be saved and had some.

After that over to Kino, for more short films and music performances. Kino also serves bheer and stuff, the con's more or less official bar. Drinking bheer in pubs is something I these days think is too expensive, despite con-badge bearers getting a 15% discount, lowering the price from €7 to a little below €6. (But no con without bheer. I had some in my bag which I enjoyed out on town



Book tables, mostly Small Press publishers. (Note to myself: try to shoot away from not against windows)

wandering around, or on Sunday when it was sunny on a bench outdoors.) BTW, there are lots of amateur films cons could show, especially in the horror genre. I know as I've been going to Sweden's short film festival for three and a half decades. Or con-runners could also ask Sten Rosendahl about it. He's also a film maker, just like Jim Walker from Bradford Movie Makers (presented in a recent documentary). Jim



I think this panel was on music in sff.



Zombie (below the smoke) and nearer a zombie in a wheelchair.



JHH on Bertil Mårtensson. WDVf in the slide and he revealed it was the first and only time in life he had touched a soccer ball.

usually attended Swecons, but unfortunately went FAFIA in April. I miss him. Friday evening also celebrated Anna Davour's 50th birthday and her special birthday fanzine was distributed. Knud Larn of Denmark presented his Fanzine Circle, a sort of APA he calls Skandifan. He has half a dozen members, mostly Danfans. (I wonder if it'll fly? (EAPA has found it hard to attract more willing faneds!) If you paid extra for a ticket you could also watch the "12 Monkeys" movie late Saturday.

Saturday evening became strange. I was to stay with Tora, and she and one Torsten set off towards his car on foot at high speed. Suddenly kids in toilet paper and ketchup appeared on the streets, some sort of zombie event. "Hi, I



Your younger Ed, Bertil M and Tolkien translator Erik Andersson in the merry mid-1980s.

want to take pics I said!" and stayed 10-15 seconds working my phone - which was enough for them to disappear. I rushed along their probable direction: nothing. Went back, waited for at least 15 minutes. Gone. (They did the approximately the same but didn't find me.) So I went back to Kino. Zombies are just a lot of trouble!

John-Henri Holmberg talking about sf author, old-time fan and philosopher Bertil Mårtensson (1945-2018, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertil\\_M%C3%A5rtensson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertil_M%C3%A5rtensson)) was my first program item Saturday morning. He had some interesting stuff to tell I didn't know before. For example, he was the *first* to pay Bertil for a story. He had a couple of stories in *Häpna!* so he now considered himself a *professional writer* (though *Häpna!* didn't pay anything). So when JHH asked for a story to his fanzine *Zlewwy* Bertil said he wanted 50 Swedish crown for it... The young editor borrowed the sum from his father (in today's money ca 550 SEK or €50) and got the short story "Telefonkiosken" ("Phone Booth") that "wasn't particularly good". Bertil Mårtensson may be the only writer whose professional debut was a paid story in a small fanzine! Bertil struggled as a writer through his whole career. His greatest successes were perhaps winning the Sherlock crime fiction award for *Växande hot* ("Growing threat") 1977 and his trilogy *Maktens vägar* ("Paths of Power"). He made his novel debut in 1968 with *Detta är verkligheten* ("This is the Reality", getting a Eurocon award in 1972) which curiously was published in Danish right before the Swedish edition. Bertil was also active as fanzine publisher and contributor, doing cassette fanzines playing the organ, several times con-GoH and was a member of the WDFV fan group (with Holmberg and Mats Linder). He also did an 8 mm amateur film, "Tidsmaskinen" (The Time Machine), which you can find here <https://vimeo.com/12849707> (from my transfer-to-VHS collection *Filmfandom*). His final years were sad. He was manic-depressive and was



*Ante presenting the Anna "Åka" Davour 50 years fanzine. Knud Larn also handed out his Fandom forever, interesting and expensive looking. Inserted music performance.*



*Are centaurs mammals or insects, "Ask Luncon" was asked.*



*"Towards" Yeah, I agree. "Ecological Economies" Couldn't agree more! Me too! Right!*

crime fiction became much more successful than him....

overblogging (if you follow) and died in a house-fire. I have often wondered if it contributed to his depression that his wife Bodil who began writing



*Pippi Longstocking Vs Moomin - who wins?*

Next for me was the con's most useless panel: "Towards Ecological Economies in SF". When a topic includes the word "towards" you can count on that its fluffy postmodernism and a bit woke. The populist phrase "towards" means "something not yet here, unproven and a bit of this and that as we feel like" because it's just "towards" something and nothing definite. The uselessness



*Sf/f in the "ether", panel misunderstood (ether is airwaves not net cables!)*

of the four talking panel-heads comes from that not one of them had his/her own deviant opinion. All subscribed to standard platitudes like “Earth is a mess, everything is going down the drain” unless “we” (ie they) find “a sustainable, alternate way of living”. Dying echoes from the 1970s. A good advice: always put someone in a panel who *don't agree*.

I also managed to catch a bit of the Pippi Longstocking Vs the Moomin Trolls item. Who is the better? My observation is a draw. To me it seems the



*"Is it steampunk if it's real?" Feorag Forsyth asked in a lecture, presenting old, odd tech. Here's an old steamplane with wiide wings.*

Moomins have quite a lot of padding. Pippi should be able to throw a mighty punch as the strongest girl in the world, but the Moomins have enough padding to absorb it. It's a case of an irresistible force meeting an immovable object.

Then came a lecture that in my opinion was unexpectedly good and informative: “Text adventure or interactive fiction” by

Henrik Wester. You immediately realised he had researched the subject extensively and had lots of slides to show for it. (Afterwards I obtained his PPT file of 66 screens, going back to antiquity.) He told the whole story of “interactive fiction” (IF) from the earliest “choose your own adventure” flip-pages solo adventure books (the first being

*Consider the Consequences*, 1930) up to today's text adventures on computers. You know, the games where you get a text description of surroundings and objects and

you type eg “Go w(est)” and “Get axe” and so on. The most well known is the Colossal Cave Adventure from the 1970s. (I first encountered it in 1980, when buddy

Linkan who “by accident” happened to have the keys

and code to the computer room of the Royal Technical Institute, where he brought me to experience the PDPs in their colossal cave.) But the earliest such game was perhaps something called the Sumerian Game from 1965, at least a “proto-adventure”. There was also Castle from 1974, a more

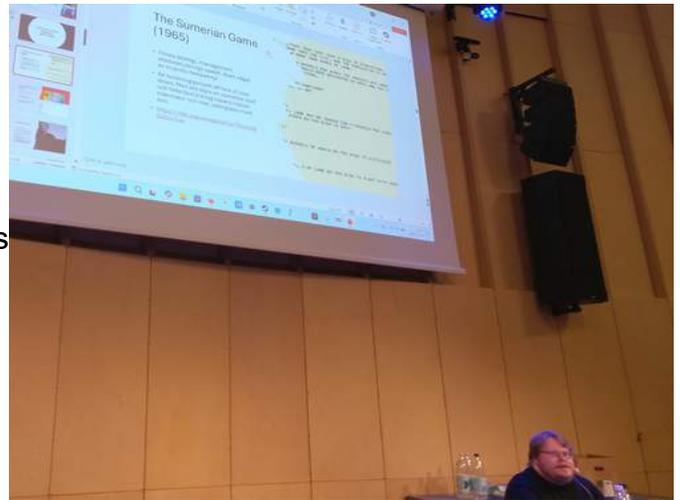
traditional text adventure. Those games are still around. There are sites collecting them for you to download and play. There is game-making software and competitions for producing new text adventure games. Interactive Fiction also borders “modernist” literature. The experimental Oulipou



*Not in itself a game, but the 99 story variations by Raymond Queneau are playful.*



*Me in prog-listening mode. Glasses don't suit me...*



*Henrik Wester had a really interesting presentation of the history of interactive fiction.*



*Con chairman Werner, Sten Rosendahl (ladder), Fia Karlsson (below) taking down the con banner.*



*Closing session. Concom and GoHs on stage, Spirit of Swecon caught in its bottle. Bye-bye! \*SOB\**

group in France was mentioned, with Raymond Queneau whose *Exercices in Style* presents a basic story in 99 variations - recommended!

Then \*alas!\* the closing ceremony.. Concom and GoHs on stage in the main hall. Con chairman Werner took a wide lap to gather the Spirit of Swecon and then sealed the bottle. Parts of the concom appeared to lower the convention banner outside the venue. I sat outside in the sun for a while, enjoying the last beer I had brought with me.

Medium sized to small cons are better. That the bar with beer and blog unfortunately is too expensive isn't the concom's fault. Its inflation from the pandemic and Putin's bloody war, plus taxes. In the good old days in the 1980's we used to have cheaper non-licenced bars with very moderate prices. It's legal provided all con goers are pre-registered - something to consider! Anyway, Luncon was an above average and enjoyable. The sun was shining.

*Ps. Con-runner's Smofcon, in Stockholm 5-7/12 <https://www.smofcon42.com/> Haven't decided if I'll go.*

### **Letter of (and Mailing) Comments**

*First a reader letter - more are welcome! Then mailing comments for EAPA .- no N'APA this month..*

**Leigh Edmonds:** Dear Ahrvid, I've had Intermission 158 for a while and not gotten around to responding until now, for which I apologize.

I think that many of us have had similar problems to what Microsoft have done with you, but with other big IT companies that treat us as anonymous consumers rather than people who are confounded and confused by the way they are treated when things don't go right. My most recent experience was with one of the local banks where I needed to make a change to my credit card details. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to make the change and get some information, ending up with some kind of chat system which ran around in circles, driving me to new levels of frustration. Eventually I solved the problem by going to a local branch of the bank where the issue was resolved in a couple of minutes. Unfortunately Microsoft and other multinationals don't have local branch offices, so we continue to suffer.

I was interested and intrigued by your writing about Atomicon and about how science fiction wrote about atomic bombs and energy. However, I can't add anything to what you've written because you've done your research very well. I was also intrigued by your comments on the Swedish interpretation of declaration on human rights. Very strange! I also take your point about the value of diversity in human groups and populations and that we all have different 'values'. It seems to me that the difficulty comes in allocating a measurable worth to each value so that it would be possible to give varying ranks to different people so that, for example, a professor of mathematics might be ranked higher than a professor of classical literature or a wharf labourer. Until society comes up with some way to rank measurable values - which seems unlikely, or perhaps unethical - it is a simple solution to say that every person has equal value. Which is not, as you point out, the same thing as dignity.

Your calculations about food production in Sweden and what might happen if the borders were closed was very interesting. It seems that Australia is in a similar situation to Sweden as a nett exporter of food. So we won't starve here until the equipment that we import to make our farmlands productive starts to break down and need replacing or spare parts. Then we will be in trouble because almost all of that comes from somewhere else (I was about to write 'overseas' because, for Australians, all other nations are over the seas, but Sweden's experience is different). Then the productivity of our farms will decline, but probably not to a stage where there will be starvation here. But, of course, the world has bigger problems than just food production, though perhaps that might increase in importance as we move more into climate change.

I only met Bob Shaw once, at one of the WorldCons in Australia I think. So I never had the opportunity to get to know him in person. In print he was a very interesting and enjoyable person with his fiction and fannish writing.

Your fanzines are always full of interesting bits and pieces of information, and intriguing ideas, and I enjoy getting them.

**Ed:** *I try to make the issues varied. It may not always have with sf or fandom to do, but fans have always had a wide interest, and somehow it all reflects skiffy (food security is a result of considering a WWII for instance).*

**Henry Grynsten:** *Als are "often bad at maths" #α%&!! No, I find them GOOD at math. They know the equations and do statistics really well. They do physics - you saw the AI taking on pole vaulting on the moon. They do statistics, eg calculating the calories in Swedish food production. Als are actually very good at maths! #α%&!! "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. #α%&!! "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! That's the impression you get when you work with Als. #α%&!! "Volcanos, CO2 ocean absorption, changes in plant cover etc must be considered." "They have been considered." More like "explained" AWAY. Just take this that Earth is greening 2% more per year (according to NASA surveys). We know plants eat CO2, but I haven't seen anyone considering increasing CO2 absorption due to increased vegetation #α%&!! "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 what it stands for). IPCC claims they say so, but they DON'T. If you support the IPCC hypothesis (which is all of 1 to 4) you must say so. IPCC's claims they say so is false. In fact it's quite common among scientists to raise objections to parts of 1-4. Most common to disagree with seems to be 1 (we see the small climate changes but recognise they are de facto small and natural) and 4 (many understandably don't agree it'll be "a disaster"). #α%&!! (On Svensmark saying) 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 almost DOUBLE to raise temp one single degree Celsius. ChatGPT says: "You need roughly a ×1.865 increase in CO<sub>2</sub> to raise temperature 1C. About an 86% rise) CO2's effects are as said almost saturated. "Are you saying we can't trust thermometers?" We can only trust them ROUGHLY, still the Warmist constantly feeds us with claims of point-tenths of degrees. Temp data have big precision problems due to constant position shifts for stations, urban heating, sloppiness, etc. It has eg been noted for old USSR temp data, that stations had incentives to report lower temp than real ones. Central Committee would then send them more fuel for heating! And of course, if historical data is artificially lowered you get an illusion of a steeper climb. USSR was 1/6th of Earth's land mass but the precision of historic temp data from there is very, very questionable. #α%&!! (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 and oter social sciences etc were*

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Welcome to
EEEEEE LL      IIII  ZZZZZZ  AAAAA
EE      LL      II    ZZ      AA  AA
EEEEEE LL      II    ZZZ      AAAAAA
EE      LL      II    ZZ      AA  AA
EEEEEE LLLLLL IIII  ZZZZZZ  AA  AA

Eliza is a mock Rogerian psychotherapist.
The original program was described by Joseph Weizenbaum in 1966.
This implementation by Norbert Landsteiner 2005.

ELIZA: Is something troubling you ?
YOU:   Men are all alike.
ELIZA: What is the connection, do you suppose ?
YOU:   They're always bugging us about something or other.
ELIZA: Can you think of a specific example ?
YOU:   Well, my boyfriend made me come here.
ELIZA: Is it important to you that your boyfriend made you come here ?
YOU:   He says I'm depressed much of the time.
ELIZA: I am sorry to hear that you are depressed.
YOU:   It's true. I am unhappy.
ELIZA: Can you explain what made you unhappy ?
YOU:
```

*Proto-AI? Not really. The dialogue program Eliza, 1964, only took user's phrases and bounced it back in certain ways.*

excluded. #α%&!! "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 replication problem.) #α%&!! "I predict that conscious robots will develop unpredictably, and that will lead to some becoming evil or serial killers". Yes, that's a risk that is discussed. #α%&!! "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 it's to our benefit. This benefit has shown itself and been chiseled out by...humans! The way we behave have meant we have been programmed through evolution. Humans have programmed humans to have servant traits. #α%&!! "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 beneficial to use that on space research, e.g. due to the extremely valuable science data, the spinoffs, the more metaphysical things (visions, inspiration etc). #α%&!! "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 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. As said "transistor computer", meaning it used single transistors, no ICs! It was NASA who had need for the sturdy ICs and could pay the premium for them, so NASA stimulated the IC development. Private businesses was on the level of the non-IC single transistors 7040. Single-transistor computers didn't push the development. Businesses didn't have any acute need for the lower power need and reliability of ICs, not a need big enough to motivate the huge premium for it. This caused NASA to at times buy HALF the world production of ICs! That's a very strong push. #α%&!! "military also contributed to the development you describe" Not at this stage except when it comes to rockets which in practice was a co-development with NASA. The Military had noted how ICs fried under nuclear attacks. The EMP induced currents that blew IC circuits. ICs were thus near useless until this problem was solved! #α%&!! "Says who?" "The scientists." No. We very seldom hear of soil erosion as a problem. You claim new soil is created too slow. 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 imagine these massive mass additions year after year don't matter. #α%&!! "The erosion is estimated to be double the rate that the U.S. Department of Agriculture says is sustainable." But if you check this, you find the quote applies to a special area of the Midwest where the soil has less protection in huge, bare fields open for wind, flooding, no trees or bushes. It's basically the areas subject to the 1930s infamous "dust bowls". It's a local problem. #α%&!! To the zine: There's probably evolutionary explanations why women read more, learn language easier etc - it comes from interest in social skills, which were useful home at the base camp (while the men were out hunting). These social skill interests may also translate to an interest in travelling. That men took their bride from other tribes plays a role. Still, I believe that men in early modern time (medieval until 20th century) travelled more, simply because they had control of the money and the contacts. It was expensive to travel. Almost all students at universities were also male, and students travelled a lot - they did it on foot! #α%&!! The reason intellectuals get fixated on neo-Nazis (which tend to be small, nostalgic cults making noise but having little influence) is virtue signalling. Nazisms represents some of histories worst crimes, its eye-catching (Swastikas, SS troops in black uniforms. The Hitler salute, etc) so being against Nazis is easy to make others notice - it makes strong virtue signalling. I'm not saying it's wrong to be anti-Nazi, but it's a cliché to a certain degree... Communism is more subtle so virtue signalling beomes weaker, besides: many intellectuals are prone to sympathise with the shallow messages of communism... #α%&!! It's irrelevant too talk about the US in the same manner as Nazi-Germany or the USSR. There are so many differences! The US is under the rule of law and its constitution, a constitution that works and guards against totalitarianism (Trump make some vague attempts but is beaten back by courts). The US is also an attractive society with a lot of soft power, leaders in culture, technology, art forms etc and a place people want to go. The USSR was a place people

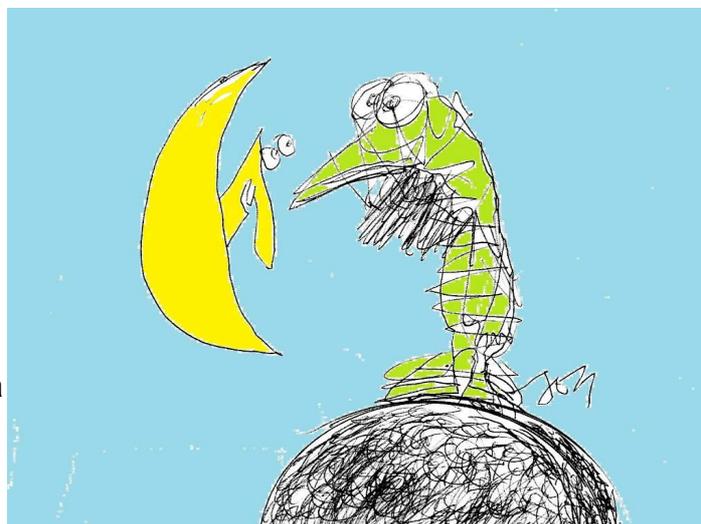
wanted to leave. The US is multi-cultural, in the USSR all are forced to be Russian. The US invents things, USSR just copied. #¤%&!! I didn't know about the "Bellamy Salute", which seems identical to the Nazi version. I can understand it's not popular today.

**William McCabe:** I believe that through the ages people have always said their country is a mess! In reality, most countries (but not Russia) are better off now than a few years back. The intellectual climate seems to be a mess (polarisation, rising nationalism, war, Trump) and that muddles how you see the general situation. #¤%&!! You're right about male performance curves being flatter but also having more on the extremes. #¤%&!! My family, when I was young, spent most holidays up in the north, in southern Lapland. No exotic Spain for us, but Lapland can be a bit exotic. We did see reindeers on the roads, it happened we visited Sami camps (there's a tourist trap version at Fatmomakke).

**Heath Row:** The UK has had several Eurocons, often combined with the Eastercon. I remember for instance the 1984 Eurocon (I was there). #¤%&!! I second Garth Spencer as OE. #¤%&!! For news I try to follow the four leading Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter ("Today's News"), Svenska Dagbladet ("The Swedish Daily"), Expressen ("The Express") and Aftonbladet ("The Evening Paper"), I watch SVT's newscasts, but I also to a degree read news.google.com, I often ask AIs for info and for Russia's war against Ukraine I go to Youtube.

Believe it or not, I watch it for 1-2 hours every evening, but at 2x speed it represents 2-4 hours of war news - daily. Good Youtube war news sources: *UATV, Anna from Ukraine, Jason Jay Smart, Denuys Davidov, TVP World, Combat Veteran Reacts, Professor Gerdes explains, Artur Rehi, Jake Broe, Silicon Wafers...* (only the first four are Ukrainian). I often also tune in NBC Nightly News to hear what Trump is up to. Strangely, NBC news is always 25% weather! There's always a hurricane coming, tornados, extreme cold, warmth, flooding. Every newscast also has a shooting, usually a mass shooting, or reports from a court case around murder. Airplane accidents or incidents are also popular. Every newscast ends with a kid in hospital getting a present from his favourite baseball star, or something similar.

**Garth Spencer:** A brave attempt at "social calculus"... I don't think anything like that would ever have a chance to work. The reason is that every human is chaos system, and a whole group of humans is even more chaotic. It's impossible to find reliable relations between in-data in and out-data. Asimov's "psychohistory" would never work. Using cartoon characters as notation may thus be relevant, it tells us that cartoons are just as good predicting how societies behave... #¤%&!! The problem with claiming that everyone has "equal value" is that individuality doesn't count. For me, individuality is of dire importance. #¤%&!! I should perhaps try to find that Gilliland trilogy. (I remember actually meeting him on my first Worldcon in Brighton in 1979! I remember he did cartoons. He sat there with William Rotsler both drawing cartoons.) #¤%&!! Well, I've had all the news files to print...for now. Time to sign off, see ya and bye-bye-bye! (Till nextish, consider the glorious and healthy hobby of doing a fanzine, and join an APA...please!)



*Artist Lars LON Olsson has been reported being ill. But his art glows strongly: Earth Vs Moon...*

**Слава Україні!**  
(Glory to Ukraine!)

# Ye Murthered Master Mage #279

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## News

Have I read anything recently? I call the attention of Neffers to Dan Willis's *Arcane Detective* series, now at 12 books and two spin-offs, minor characters getting their own books, as set in 1930s New York City. Not-quite-contemporary urban fantasy, well-done. I also call your attention to *The Inklings*, a biography of a group that included C.S. Lewis, J. R.R. Tolkien, and the largely forgotten but highly regarded by them Charles Williams. To my surprise, Glen Cook had continued writing his Black Company series, which I thought had ended. I am now three books behind. Non-fiction includes an incomplete reading of 1774, the year that made the American Revolution more or less inevitable. It leads into Kevin Phillips' book 1775: A Good Year for Revolution on the following year. L.E. Modesitt, Jr.'s latest book is *Legalist*, another largely legal and political maneuverings book. As always, it was done well.

The N3F Officers held another Zoom meeting, which collided with a bunch of personal schedules. Projects had volunteers, but they may need more time to complete. The bookmarks were produced, thanks to Jean-Paul Garnier, and sent to N3F members for whom we have papermail addresses.

## Comments:

Intermission #156: Many years ago, TNFF ran a series of articles on fan history, including some on Michelism. The Futurian's leader had the title "General Secretary" which is a clue if you know history of that period. Was Asimov a Communist? No. Did he belong to the Party? No. However, his novels give us not one but two successful communist societies, a point not generally noted.

Before I point them out, I should emphasize, that an author's books do not prove his political beliefs, notwithstanding demented claims that Robert Heinlein was a fascist, as allegedly revealed in his novels, such as *Time Enough for Love* and *To Sail Beyond the Sunset*. Nonetheless, like Heinlein, Asimov gave us several societies of the sort that a good Communist would approve, at least once the comparison was explained slowly and in words of few syllables.

One was the Susan Calvin stories, in which the economy was centrally operated by a computer that knew almost everything. This was the dream of the Soviet cyberneticists. In particular, the computer knew enough to identify a threat to its rule, an owner of a mercury distillation plant, so it made a 'mistake' that crushed his business and disabled his political efforts. The other was the Foundation series, in particular Seldon's Psychohistory. The most central aspect of Marxism was the (dubious) claim that it was based on scientific laws governing human history. And here we have Psychohistory, the true realization of the correct science of social dynamics.

Nonetheless, the Good Doctor (who once appeared on the cover of an issue of *Analog*, an appearance

that he vigorously denied having occurred) was certainly not a Communist.

Archive Midwinter: The requested format for N'APA or for 'A Gentle Stroll' is PDF, 8.5x11", portrait mode, file size not exceeding 1Mb. The rocket fellow sounds very much to have been *Commando Cody, Sky Marshal of the Universe*. Bob Jennings is a great guy, and a fine member of the N3F.

The Science Fiction Facebook page has an occasional cultural politics issue, namely we have a regular writer who into what might be described as 'antiwoke' campaigning. His most recent furor was his critique of some television show on the grounds that the network had given us a series of strong female leads, every one of whom was a woman who preferred women, and making an issue of their bedroom preferences.

Fandomain-N\_01: An interesting list of readings. *The N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono* suffers from a somewhat limited list of reviewers and their perspectives. Please consider writing book reviews (short reviews are fine) for us, and send them to me.

R.A.I.L 8: I shall investigate the X-Men series. I know the fall feeling. For the first time ever, I had a respectable number of trick or treaters. I have gardens, not a lawn, so my gardeners were here for two days cutting down annuals, pruning a few bushes, and blowing the leaves out of the pachysandra beds. I have neighbors who do their own raking, but they have lawns. Also, I am 78, not 48, and prefer to use my checkbook rather than my arms.

The Swamp Spot Sentinel: Sympathies on home repair issues. I have had car issues recently, but not house issues, knock on wood.

Your remarks on people commenting on books sounded much to the point to me. I would be happy not to hear that discussion. Thank you for your efforts to increase the number of fen in the world. A fine closing cartoon. Recall people who went to all-electronic door locks, had the opening codes stored on the cloud, and suddenly discovered there was no mechanical override if the cloud failed. This has happened several times, leaving people locked out of their homes. There are reasons why I prefer a simple mechanical lock. It works.

The thornbushes you are describing with the small flat white flowers are almost certainly sea roses. They make very nice natural fences if you need a natural fence that people are not going to come through. Otherwise, you may have reservations about their presence. Good point about the Antikythera Mechanism; fraud has also been proposed as an explanation for the mysterious Phaistos Disc, a historical artifact that I have actually examined. If legitimate, the Disc is the first known use of movable type, in that the letters or syllables or whatever the characters stand for are clearly impressed into the clay before the clay was baked. The more recent Hugo controversy was about claim that the nominating counts for the awards for the Chengdu convention did not correspond to the votes. The less interesting question is whether or not the claim is true. The person who ran the count has not been prominent for denying the accusations, part of which are documented. The more interesting question, since the same person apparently ran the counts for a fair number of years, is over how many years the nominating ballot counts did not correspond to reality. Apparently the people who run WorldCons and the Hugo awards are not interested in the question.

On the topic of novels being published by people who didn't own the rights to the characters or whatever or the author's name, you may be aware of the Islandia novel and its three authorized sequels.

It turns out that there is actually another sequel, written sometime near World War II apparently, by a fellow by the name of if I recall correctly Farnsworth. I have occasionally looked for a copy, not at all successfully. On the other hand, sometimes great patience in looking pays off. I recently acquired a Space Patrol Rocket Cockpit, admittedly the fiftieth anniversary reprint, but autographed by one of the original actors. I am still looking for the original early 1950s unit. I had one when I was a little boy, but my mother threw it out. Your other comments are extremely interesting. You do wonderful comments.

Brandy Hall: Most interesting to read where the word 'fanzine' appeared at an early date. The town library system, no sorting by genre, sounds inadvisable. If there is a difference between 'club' and 'organization', it does not instantly come to mind,. Perhaps a club is something you join voluntarily for reasons supplied by the club members, while an organization is something with a structure of some sort. Physics One costs \$19.95 US; no idea what it would cost in Australia, but it is a print on demand paperback. With respect to the Sixty-four Immortal Fen, there was a proposal to turn them into a book, and there is a Fandbook on some of them, but someone would have had to do the work.

Esmeralda County Line: Your comments are always interesting. Voting is a duty of the Directorate, of which I am not a part.

Brownian Motion: There is a current genetic engineering effort to bring the mammoth back from extinction. I think the technology needs another quarter-century to be effective. The new N3F zine is A Gentle Stroll, now on issue 6. We are also going to bimonthly, with support from contributors. Collections? I have a will. My Science Fiction books, several thousand of them, will be going to NESFA along with a chunk of my estate. My board wargame collection, the largest in the world at almost 8000 titles, has started going to the Strong Museum of Play in Rochester New York. They will eventually also get a cash donation.

Ever and Anon is a role-playing games APA. It is a successor to Alarums and Excursions, the very long-lived role-playing APA that suddenly announced that they were publishing their final issue, with no prior warning. Your thoughts on Office are most appreciated. I have mostly used Publisher for figures. I have once used Word, but its figure handling behavior was extremely strange and highly annoying.

Your thanks for my continuing to work for the N3F are most appreciated.

Samizdat: You raise an interesting question as to whether or not people are reading less. Thank you for the material on Charles de Lint. Thank you for the wonderful PhilCon transcript. What did Matt Ruff mean by "adult themes"? That phrase often corresponds to overt pornography. You give an interesting list of projects. Short reviews of SF films and books would be most welcome for Tightbeam.

You make an interesting point about Telzey fanfic. Copyright currently lasts, I think, seventy years beyond the life of the author, though there seem to be some other numbers out there. That would mean that the copyright on Telzey Amberdon stories would appear to expire in the year 2051, a year I am possibly unlikely to reach, since I would be 104 at the time. As it happens, once upon a time I did exactly what you suggest. So I will perhaps give people here one of those stories, a bit at a time. Books on fan history? Damon Knight wrote two. They are available from NESFA, though the scans are depressingly low in resolution, at least in the copy I received.

Your illos were decidedly cute, especially the wizard teach the children.

Pamela Morgan is not Telzey Amberdon.

One of the advantages of well-to-do friends is that you get to travel to faraway exotic places, learn about foreign cultures, and meet strange, interesting creatures who want to have you for lunch. As the second course. For a telepath, the opportunities of encountering people you wish were someplace else can be truly remarkable, even though the outcome proves to be

## Fire in the Morning

The *Crimson Queen* rode at her moorings, bobbing slightly in the waves. Pamela Morgan leaned over the rail, sniffing the distant scent of the Great Naseby Swamp. Her tall, athletic frame, golden-blonde hair, and blue eyes had already attracted the attention of a few of her fellow passengers. She relaxed, listening to the soft burble of relaxed thoughts from the people around her. Her good friend's Mother would be along soon enough, and would expect Pam to move her baggage. Mother was a Confederation Senator, away from home for weeks at a time. Pam wished that Mother would someday prefer to travel light. She said nothing, though. Good friend's Mother was covering Pam's travel expenses—expenses Pam otherwise could never have afforded—in order to have Pam as her jack-of-all-trades. Pam wasn't quite sure how that had been arranged. She suspected her good friend was responsible. Friend was worried for her mother's safety, but unable to travel with her personally to guarantee it.

Pam caught the trace of another mind filtering the area. It was a familiar mind: Smythe! Smythe was a Senior Operative of the Temporal Physics Center, the Confederation Agency which covertly hid governmental mentalists and psionic engineers. He spent most of his time protecting Confederation officials from spying telepaths. Smythe would doubtless be less than delighted to learn that Pam was accompanying friend's mother, ostensibly to write a term paper on the Great Naseby Swamp. Of course, Pam remembered, Mother wasn't entirely delighted with the situation, either. Mother had already planned Pam's future career for her, no matter that Pam already had a perfectly fine set of parents. Dabbling in science rather than studying law was not Mother's idea of the right direction.

Smythe was an egotist, convinced that only the TPC gave proper psi training. He had to be circumspect. Government agents who harassed friends of legislators risked misfortune. Once, he had told Pam that he would show her the benefits of TPC training, as long as she promised there would be no hard feelings after he knocked her unconscious. He knew her well enough to be sure that she would keep the promise. He had probed her screens, and then been too slow to meet her counter. She knocked him cold with a single psi-blast. Pam told herself she had been circumspect. She'd knocked out Smythe, using a method he could at least understand. Leaving him flat on the floor while doing nothing he could recognize as a psi effect would have made him suspicious, and there were some things he did not want Smythe to suspect.

Pam saw Mother on the dock, alighting from a spaceport air-taxi. Mom had company, too. Were those important leaders, Pam wondered? Mike and Trish Sparron were fellow psi talents, apt to be fond on the shady side of any deal. Their crony was Humbert Mumford, a man of similar ethics and a taste for attractive women.

Pam sent out a tendril of thought to draw Smythe's attention. Pam felt his gorge rise as he recognized her. (I suppose), came Smythe's thoughts, (since the Senator is here, I must endure your presence.)

(Now), she answered, mind-to-mind, (I promise to be on my best behavior. Honest! Besides, the trio down there has a worse record than I do. Or don't you know them? )

(Miss Morgan, you may rest assured that I am acquainted with Lord Protector Sparron, who is a valuable friend of the Confederation, and with whom you are most decidedly not to tamper,) Smythe answered prissily.

(Him? Lord Protector! Of what? The greater Thieves' and Pirates' Guild? Well, I promise to be the perfectly well-behaved younger daughter. Just so long as Mumford keeps hands off the Senator. And maybe even two seconds longer.) She grinned.

(Don't worry, Smythe,) she continued, (I'll protect her for you.) His response came as the scent of ozone and burning rubber. Pam skipped down the gangplank and let Mother introduce her to the Sparrons. They dutifully made small talk, pretending they had never met before. Mumford made a show of kissing Pam's hand. She caught from him the veiled thought of an obedient soldier kissing a serpent. Then the Senator and the Sparrons drifted up the gangplank, leaving behind Pam, Mumford, and an implausibly large number of suitcases.

"Are there porters?" he asked. She nodded and held up a finger.

(Lord?) she asked. (Lord Protector? What are you guys up to this time?) She had clear memories of their last meeting. She had found herself on the planet Coronado, which the Sparrons, Mumford, and friends were preparing to take over, through somewhat legal means. Pam hadn't stopped them, only urged them in the wrong direction. Of course, she recalled, she also hadn't bundled them all up afterwards and handed them over to the TPC for reprogramming. She had definite doubts about the TPC's methods for rehabilitating criminals.

(We turned legit. Honest, Pam. Well, sort of legit. Nemon is outside the Confederation. No one can annex us without starting a major war. We protect the locals from spiss of criminalistic tendencies, and get paid for it. People even like me,) said Mumford.

(I see. No hard feelings about last time?) she asked.

(Hard feelings?) he responded. (We could have got rehabbed, and you didn't squeal on us, just—what you did. Miks even likes you again, sort of.)

(I meant more the other last time,) she corrected. Some of the Sparron's friends on Coronado had argued that Pam should have been forced to support them, using telehypnosis backed by drugs. Mik's answer had been "This is a bomb. If you hit her hard enough, she will take you with her." Mumford had then searched Pam out to settle one-on-one who was the master of offensive psionics. He was eventually found squatting in a shallow decorative pond, trying to catch flies with his tongue.

(Okay, I learned a lesson. I confess I wasn't happy to see you again, but I don't hold stupid grudges. Now, you called porters, didn't you? The boss is something of a clothes horse,) he lamented.



## Snow Poster Township #23

Sept. 12, 2025

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## From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

*Altered Carbon* by Richard K. Morgan (Del Rey, 2017)

I've been aware of this cyberpunk novel for some time and held off on watching the 2018 television adaptation until recently when my wife was out of town. After watching the first episode, which was pretty good, I decided that I should read the book before seeing another installment. So I checked the book out of the library and finished reading it last weekend while in Door County. I'll return it to the library tonight.

The first of three novels featuring the character Takeshi Kovacs, *Altered Carbon* is an energetic read. The primary focus of the book is an advanced technology with which people can achieve near-

immortality by “re-sleeving” themselves in new bodies, either the bodies of people whose consciousness has been removed and put into storage or grown clones. True death can still occur if the cortical stack in which consciousness is stored is destroyed. That is considered a very serious crime.

Kovacs worked as an elite soldier, an Envoy, for the United Nations before he was imprisoned, his consciousness put into storage. He is brought back and re-sleeved to serve as a private investigator, assigned to solve either the murder or suicide (it's initially unclear which it is) of a wealthy Methuselah—someone who's been able to afford re-sleeving for multiple lifetimes. Such long lifespans introduce an element of moral turpitude as people become increasingly distant from everyday existence.

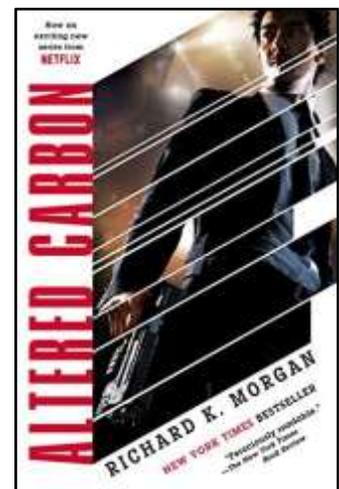
The novel plays up the noir aspects of cyberpunk, blending Raymond Chandler-esque whodunit with the gritty futuristic setting. I won't give away too much of the plot, but the storyline involves chemically and technologically heightened awareness and abilities, artificial intelligence-operated hotels, a Russian assassin who goes rogue, virtual and actual sex, designer drugs, widespread corruption, an organized religion aspect—Roman Catholics do not pursue re-sleeving—and political lobbying and legislation.

Parts of the novel reminded me of *Twin Peaks* and *Top of the Lake* as much as the fiction of writers such as William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, and others. I'll probably watch the rest of the TV show before exploring the subsequent books, if I do either. This novel is firmly footed on one planet, Harlan's World. The existence of interstellar travel offers some wonderful options for future storytelling.

Other colony planets are occasionally referred to, as is an extinct alien civilization, the Elder. I'm curious whether the other books in the series focus more on that aspect and the remains of that society. The characters in *Altered Carbon* are compelling, the world intriguing, and the story gripping.

## From the Reading Pile: Magazine Reviews

As we were packing up our belongings in California earlier this year to put them into storage for eventual shipping to Portugal—and with our son going to university in Tokyo—we discovered a toy box full of magazines in his bedroom. Many of them were back issues of *Cricket*, *Highlights for*



*Children*, and *Ranger Rick* magazines. We donated most of those to a local educator for use in school rooms, perhaps for collage art, but I salvaged a few periodicals for later reading myself.

One of those was *Comic Heroes* #21, published by Future Publishing in 2013. The magazine (<https://www.facebook.com/ComicHeroes>) has since ceased publication, but reading this issue even a dozen years later reminded me of magazines such as *Comics Scene* and perhaps *Comics Collector*: a mainstream version of the *Comics Journal* or a less speculative approach to *Wizard*. *Comic Heroes* is very much a magazine for readers of comics.



—Teddy Harvia

Weighing in at 162 pages in an oversized, squarebound format, this issue of the “world’s No. 1 comic magazine” offers the “ultimate guide to Batman & Superman,” also serving as the team-up issue focusing on titles such as *Marvel Team-Up* and *Marvel Two-in-One*, and offering 40 pages of comic reviews.

The magazine does several things really well. First of all, it pays attention to comic art. The relatively large trim size, bigger than that of a standard comic book, affords ample opportunity to highlight the artwork present in comics beyond the mere inclusion of sample panels to illustrate articles. The issue opens with Splash Pages, a section featuring “a showcase of spectacular current comics artwork” that provides two-page spreads as well as paneled page samples. And the more than 30-page Sidekick section includes

multi-page previews of comics such as the *Lost Planet* graphic novel, *Eternal Warrior* #2, *Conan and the People of the Black Circle*, *S.H.O.O.T. First*, and *Chronos Commandos* #5.

Secondly, while the front-of-the-book section, Heat Vision, concentrates on comics news, it offers short pieces that are inspired by recent releases but do more than merely promote a title. This is not the reprinting of promotional copy from publishers, but actual reportage, interviewing the writers and artists behind a given series or title. That journalistic approach continues throughout, perhaps coming close to the *Comic Book Creator* of today. The writing contextualizes the comics featured in a broad manner, referring to other comics, publishers, and aspects of popular culture— positioning comics in a broader media landscape.

*Comics Heroes* also provides a sensible survey of active publishers, concentrating on the Big Three publishers while also exploring material published by smaller imprints. For example, in Heat Vision alone, titles published by Dark Horse, IDW, and Jet City Comics (Amazon’s imprint) are featured. The magazine also balances the old and new, reproducing older panels and covers in a Beatlemania sidebar, reviewing *Superman: The Golden Age Sundays 1943-1946*, and offering a two-page piece on the comics appearances of Doc Savage. The magazine doesn’t go quite as far as *Alter Ego* or *Back Issue!*, however.

Feature stories enable the magazine to delve even deeper into the context and history of comics. In the Superman and Batman cover story, multiple covers for *World’s Finest Comics*, *Superman*, and other series are featured, along with more recent artwork by Frank Miller. The article focusing on *Marvel Team-Up* reproduces even more covers, including American and British printings.

Matt Bielby’s listicle “The League of Superfriends” considers the top 20 character pairings. Given that *Comics Heroes* was published in England, its focus is relatively global, drawing on American and British characters, as well as those from anime and manga, and bandes dessinées.

The magazine’s in-depth focus on the creators behind the comics is impressive. Interviews feature artists and writers such as Vertigo writer Peter Milligan, *Resident Alien* writer Peter Hogan, *Hinterkind*’s Ian Edginton, *Fantomex*’s Andrew Hope (featuring a *Fantomas* movie poster!), and multiple media tie-in writer Tony Lee. Longer features highlight the Dead Boy Detectives’ writer Toby Litt, Alan Moore (showcasing *Avatar*’s *Fashion Beast* with Malcolm McLaren), the science fiction comics of Walt Simonson, *Elfquest*’s Wendy and Richard Pini,

*Love & Rockets*’ Jaime Hernandez, and Bob Layton. Several articles refer to comics fandom—and creators’ emergence from fanzine activity.

While the magazine is no longer published, at least eight issues—#25-32, covering 2015-2017—are available via *Readly*. Outside of Twomorrows’ periodicals, I’m not aware of a current magazine similar to *Comics Heroes*—at least not a mainstream periodical available on newsstands. If you ever come across any back issues of this magazine, consider picking them up. They’re worth reading.

Also read this week: *Classics Illustrated* #24 (1971), “A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court;” and *Santos Sisters* #8

### Comments on N’APA #277

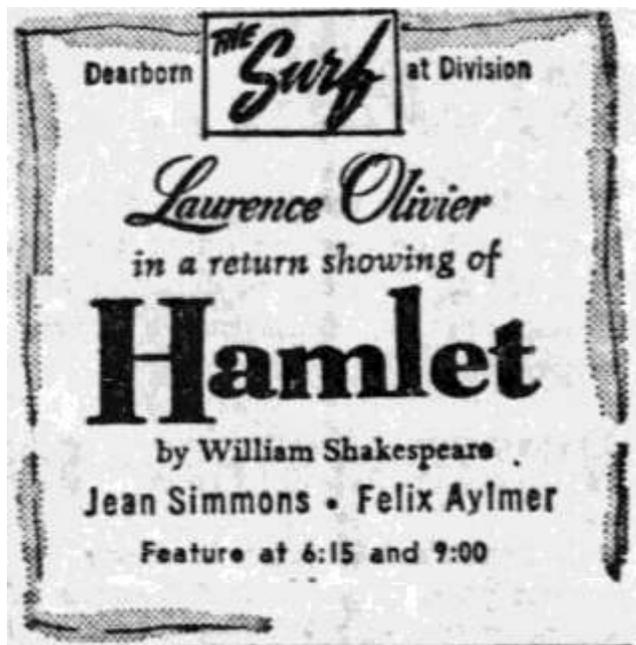
I previously commented on *Intermission* #155 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #31 for eAPA. “**Ahrvid Engholm**’s *Intermission* #155 claimed to be an ‘explosive rag.’ We shall what’s in the ish! I disagree with much in your editorial but don’t feel the need to discuss it or debate it in this forum. We do, however, agree on this: ‘There are so many reasons to dump Trump!’ And this: ‘If we never hear different opinions, we never need to worry about anything. But how can we grow if opposing views aren’t allowed to clash?’ We might not agree, but I’ll continue to read you with interest and attention.

“Your coverage of the Eurovision Song Contest was welcome and informative. I particularly appreciated the discussion of Finland’s history as part of Sweden. Why the 2025 Seattle Worldcon didn’t continue using the Seacon name baffles me. There’s been a Worldcon in Seattle previously: Seacon in 1961. Why not call it Seacon II? Heck, Robert A. Heinlein was the guest of honor and Harlan Ellison was the toastmaster. That’s not a history the concom wants to draw a straight line to? At that Seacon, Hugos were awarded to *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, *The Twilight Zone*, and Ed Emshwiller. It’s been 64 years since the last Worldcon in Seattle. Distancing from the previous such Worldcon is perplexing. Even if no one on the concom was involved in fandom then, I’d expect more pride in Worldcon’s return to the city. (Or, maybe they’re embarrassed it took so long to bring it back.) They could still use the tagline, which seems to be where they put the most effort.

“I think the 1979 Worldcon was called Seacon ’79 because its location, Brighton, is a seaside resort on the English Channel. In that case, they might have added the ’79 to distinguish it from its predecessor. The 2025 Worldcon could still be Seacon II.

“Given my recent relocation to Wisconsin, the

photographs of Robert Bloch and the Milwaukee Fictioneers were fun to see. I’ll have to learn more about the Fictioneers, which apparently wasn’t an sf group but a general writing group. Fredric Brown, one of my favorite writers, was a member! (I didn’t know Brown had a Wisconsin connection. Something else to learn about!) The Fictioneers merged with Allied Authors of Wisconsin (<https://allied-authors.org>) in the 1990s, and the surviving organization remains ‘[o]ne of Wisconsin’s oldest writing collectives.’



Chicago Tribune, Feb. 19, 1954

“Your mention of Percy Greg’s *Across the Zodiac: The Story of a Wrecked Record* in the History Corner intrigued me. Your consideration of language- and linguistics-oriented literature reminded me of movie makers who employ such specialists. For example, the involvement of Jessica Coon, a McGill University associate professor in syntax and indigenous languages, in the production of *Arrival*. (<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/la-et-mn-arrival-movie-linguist-20161125-story.html>) James Cameron also brought in language specialists when producing *Avatar* so the Na’vi language was more fleshed out. Maybe we can blame it all on Marc Okrand, who reportedly invented the Klingon language in 1984. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/06/magazine/06FOB-onlanguage-t.html>) Before that, spoken Klingon was effectively gibberish.

“In response to Garth Spencer, you mentioned a hibachi on a balcony. That reminded me of one of my favorite jokes. One telling has it thusly: ‘One 6-year-old says to another, “I found a condom on the patio.” To which the other responds, “What’s a patio?”’ In

this case, hibachi:condom::balcony:patio, and away we go!”

In *The Swamp Spot Sentinel* #1.2, **Robert Jennings** referred to the swamps of Massachusetts. Indeed, there are several, including Hockomock Swamp in southeastern Massachusetts, the Greene Swamp Preserve in Sunderland, the Wolf Swamp in Boxborough, and at least two on Cape Cod: the Atlantic White Cedar Swamp Trail and the Red Maple Swamp. So saith the Internet! When I lived in the Boston area from 1996- 2004, I don’t think I spent any time in swamps, though I did go to Cape Cod. Notable outdoor memories include getting lost in Dogtown up by Gloucester and a nighttime swim among bioluminescent plankton in a pond near Woods Hole.

Last weekend, I thought of Cape Cod often. My wife and I spent the weekend with friends in Door County, Wis., so she could participate in a theater games workshop. I spent the time reading, walking along the waterfront, and hiking. Door County is an exceptional coastal community that combines maritime interests, a rich history, and vacation-oriented tourism. Lake Michigan isn’t as intense as the Atlantic Ocean, but there are similarities and parallels.

Saturday afternoon, I went for a short hike at Three Springs Nature Preserve near Sister Bay. One highlight of the preserve includes the remains of the Erickson homestead, which dates back to the 1800s. A farmhouse and barn still stand, the house quite overgrown, and there are several wonderful old stone walls, some in better shape than others. The most tumbledown are mouldering beautifully.



The farmhouse



The barn

According to *Landings* Vol. 11 # 2 (Fall 2008), published by the Door County Land Trust, “The first recorded transaction involving the Three Springs property was in 1883 when Franz Erickson purchased 160 acres under the Homestead Act. . . . Several generations of the Erickson family owned the tract until 1940 when they sold it to Harold Wilson of Ephraim.”

John R. Seaquist’s 1954 text *Pioneer Experiences in Door County, Wisconsin*, excerpted in that issue of *Landings*, offers additional detail:

Grandfather (Erickson) came to Door County and took up a “homestead” and built a log cabin either in 1875 or 1876. The family—grandmother and the four older children, of which my mother was the oldest, arrived in 1877. . . . The sun was far in the west before they came to the trail that led through thick woods to the cabin. Finally they came to the little lake they had heard about and there beyond it saw for the first time what was to be their home. Evidently they had thought of a mansion all their own and the sight of the low log cabin was a keen disappointment. . . . The house was of rectangular shape, built of huge cedar logs. . . . The chinks between the logs were filled with moss. . . . All provisions had to be carried several miles thru thick woods where wolves howled and bears prowled. The only school to which the children could go was three miles away. To get to it a crooked trail had to be followed through the woods. Even the main roads were narrow, stony and full of mud holes.



The spring-fed “little lake”



Stone wall along the access road, my return trail

After Wilson bought the property, he opened the Three Springs Nature Center in 1947. It was located in the barn and was designed to educate visitors about Door County’s wildlife and ecology. Upstairs, Wilson displayed taxidermy specimens. Downstairs, there were exhibits of live fish, snakes, and reptiles. Outside, there were fenced-in and caged deer, fox, wolves, coyotes, beaver, raccoons, opossums, and other animals native to the county. He also offered a nature trail with signs identifying plants and trees. The nature center closed in the early 1950s, and the land was subsequently taken care of by George and Jean Reynolds.

Clearly, the farmhouse I photographed is of later construction than the 19th century cabin, but a similar cabin, the Loom House, is available at the Corner of the Past Museum in Sister Bay. The Erickson family name still exists in Door County. It’s fun to think that I might have walked a portion of the Ericksons’s “crooked trail” or Wilson’s nature trail.

I enjoyed your commentary on the Tom Mix silent *Trailin’*, as well as your book reviews. Bart D.

Ehran’s *Misquoting Jesus* sounds particularly interesting. I wonder why *A Drop of Corruption* by Robert Jackson Bennett is considered or marketed as fantasy rather than sf.

Your utilization of the library is laudable: “I generally rely on reviews and recommendations from people whose opinions I respect, and then request the new stuff thru inter-library loan.” Hear! Hear! I am a big fan of interlibrary loan. My parents check out DVDs, but given that my wife and I don’t currently have a DVD player, we rely on streaming. Not only is DAW Books still around

(<https://astrapublishinghouse.com/imprints/daw-books>), Betsy Wollheim is still active as its publisher!

**Jefferson P. Swycaffer’s** *Archive Midwinter* dated July 6, 2025, reported that he’s “putting perfectly good comics into the trash.” Stop that, immediately! Set them aside and donate them somewhere: your local comic shop—you don’t even have to try to sell them—the library, a school, Goodwill, even a Little Library in your neighborhood. But throwing them away seems avoidable and unnecessary. Someone is sure to find them and enjoy them.

In *The Murdered Master Mage*, **George Phillis** updated N’APAn on the debut of *A Gentle Stroll* and commented on recent computer difficulties. I hope you sort out the technological difficulties so *Tightbeam* isn’t difficult to publish. I’m curious what you mean by, “The large problem with N’APA is members who attach significant numbers of images in inflexible formats.” Am I one of those participants? Would you rather I submit compressed PDFs?

Last weekend, while in Door County, I read a mystery novel that made me think about Massachusetts: Tempa Pagel’s *Here’s the Church, Here’s the Steeple*. It’s set in Newburyport, Mass., and might qualify as an alternate history because it speculates on the cause and modern-day impact of the Great Fire of 1811. I’m still debating whether I’ll review it in a fanzine; we’ll see where I settle on whether it’s an alternate history.

**Garth Spencer’s** *Brownian Motion* #14 also reported technological challenges. There must be something in the electrical system—or the ether. Ooh! You might have a story idea: “the Eurovision Song Contest [as] a form of war... .” Pop music as propaganda. There seem to be examples of such: In China, state-sanctioned boy bands such as TFBoys record pop songs that promote communist values; and in the former Zaire, dictator Mobutu Sese Seko supported musical groups such as OK Jazz that praised him in song. Wikipedia offers an entry for “Music and political warfare.”

Your use of the phrase “the best of British luck”

inspired me to look up its meaning, which made me chuckle. Thank you for clarifying the state of fandom in your neck of the woods. “I’m beginning to feel my age, and my unwillingness to try out new people,” you wrote. I can understand that, and I’m glad I slipped in under the wire! As we prepare to move to Portugal—we’ve received our passports and visas from the consulate and will book our airfare this week—I’m poised to encounter quite a bit of newness in the years to come. We’ll see how long I maintain an appetite for that! Why, just last night I decided not to meet a friend at an electronic music performance because I needed some home time after the active weekend.

In *Esmeralda County Line* #11, **Kevin Trainor Jr.** updated N’APAns on the outcome of tax season, recent travels, and the approach of Son of Silvercon III. I hope the con went well! Your recent DVD acquisitions seem appealing, and I am intrigued by D.J. Butler’s *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Interestingly, the ebook costs \$8 more than a physical copy via Amazon. One doesn’t often see that. The promotional copy highlighting “failed visionaries who preach a dysfunctional anti-human future such as Ursula LeGuin and the covens of woke disciples infesting the literature of the imagination” offers some cause for caution.



Chicago Tribune, Feb. 19, 1954

The concept of incensepunk is new to me. There’s a subreddit (<https://www.reddit.com/r/incensepunk>), a Substack by Jon James (<https://www.incensepunk.com>), and a list of recommended reading on Goodreads (<https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/178398.Incensepunk>). Works by Yuval Kordov are well represented in that list. I wonder whether David Oliver Kling’s *The Triumvirate* (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #102 and *The Brass Hat Mind* #7) would qualify!

**Adrian Kresnak**’s *R.A.I.L.* #7 turned me on to Emily Grant Hutchings’s *Jap Herron: A Novel Written from the Ouija Board*. I was surprised that it was published shortly after the death of Samuel Clemens, in 1917. I’ll have to learn more about the

history of the novel. In a contemporary review, a writer for the *Oakland Tribune* remarked, “The style is not Mark Twain’s, the choice of words is not his, and to the lover of the humorist, the book is in no other way his.” So, it must not be a very good pastiche. Or, having recently died, Mark Twain was off his game. That’s understandable. His writing could have gotten garbled in transmission.

In *Brandy Hall* #13, **Mark Nelson** reported on moving at the end of May. I hope you’ve settled in quite comfortably by now. That family arrived for a visit shortly after your relocation must have been somewhat challenging! Your description of British barbecue reminded me of the meat offerings mentioned in the Bible, though those didn’t necessarily involve meat. Thank you for introducing me to Ted Prior’s children’s book character Grug.

We do already have a shipping address in Portugal; we bought a house there a couple of years ago. Now that our visas have been approved and passports returned by the consulate, we’re turning our attention to booking our travel to immigrate by the end of October. We’ve also reached out to the companies we’re working with to store and ship our belongings to schedule that. That seems rather complicated right now. Our belongings will be shipped to Portugal in a 40-foot container. We will likely leave our stereo in the United States; eventually we’ll establish a longer-term footprint here, as well.

If a fanzine were printed in and mailed from a given country, I’d consider the fanzine as having been published in that country. Especially if the person publishing the fanzine was in—or living in—that country at the time. Now, if one had a friend print and mail a fanzine from that country, while the publisher was in a different country, I could understand it being a “cheat.” I agree with your epiphany: “[I]f I am living in New Zealand then I should be reading novels written by New Zealanders.” Go local when you’re able!

**Samuel Lubell**’s *Samizdat* #32 offered an update on his state of employment. I hope that it’s been clarified even further by now! Your piece titled “Men Are Not Reading” inspired me to quip “Real men read westerns!” I don’t have a horse in the race determining what a “real man” is, but that struck me as funny. If I were to take my assertion seriously, at least “real men” are reading something. Anything! One could also contend that “real men” read Mack Bolan books. Or instruction manuals.

I enjoyed your Author Spotlight on Naomi Kritzer. She was a guest of honor at the most recent WisCon (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #165), and I appreciated her participation. Your reprint of “Science Fiction: Cult or

Fraternity?” was thought provoking. I’m more inspired by the fraternal aspects of fandom. I continue to enjoy your Status of Projects reports. I’ve put identifying my forthcoming projects on hold except for a few. In the near term, there are two: Read the Stuff I Have With Me (and Release It) and Move to Portugal. I’ve largely stopped buying books, comic books, and magazines. Now I need to stop going to the library and checking out the contents of Little Libraries. I’m also planning a fanac project for 2026 that will replace *The Stf Amateur*. I’m looking forward to it and think it’ll be fun.

We’re moving to Portugal for several reasons: to experience life as a citizen of the planet on which we live rather than a citizen of a state or country, to learn more about the culture and history of the country itself, to lower our cost of living enough that we can stop working a decade and a half before we might retire otherwise, and to create time to engage in activities that bring us closer to the people and places in our lives—rather than spending so much time at work. I’ve dedicated my working years to professional endeavors. It’s time to focus on the side projects and activities that my job interferes with, if we can afford to do so.

The only reasons I conflate the writing of Mike Resnick and Michael Swanwick is their names: their first names and the last three letters in their surnames. You’re right: Their writing is quite different.

I previously commented on *Intermission* #156 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #32 for eAPA: “**Ahrvid Engholm**’s *Intermission* #156 was distributed as a postmailing a week after Garth Spencer sent eAPA. An apa purist might decline to comment on such a postmailing, but not me! Your fanzines are always worth reading. Thank you for sending it to the group, as well, Ahrvid. Those pesky email addresses can be tricky!

“In the opening editorial, there’s already a lot to like in this: Michelism, an unknown 17th Century sf author, sf authors who died on the Titanic, and Canada’s *Space Command*. I shall read with eager attention.

“Your discussion of drone warfare in the Russo-Ukrainian War reminded me of Henry Grynnsen’s fanzine [in the eAPA distribution]. If sex and war continue to drive technological development, perhaps military technology will also achieve consciousness. I’d imagine that proponents of war would discourage the likelihood of such consciousness—after all, even in the human military, we might be concerned with military consciousness; there’s a Military Decision-Making Process, but there’s also a chain of command, a command hierarchy, and expectations of soldier

rule-following. We hardly want our drones to become conscientious objectors now, do we? ...

“I was surprised when President Trump ordered strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cn7ze4vmk2pt>) I was even more surprised when such military action didn’t continue. My expectation had been that the strikes indicated that Trump was entering a military conflict to take advantage of a rally-’round-the-flag effect with which war might improve the standing of elected officials. I’m relieved that such actions haven’t continued—though other activities in the United States remain concerning.

“I appreciated your mention of Donald A. Wollheim and Kenneth Bulmer, of whom I’ve read little. About five years ago, I read *Transit to Scorpio*, written by Bulmer as Alan Burt Akers. I remember enjoying it and mentioned the novel in a review of another book in *Tightbeam* #310. You might be interested in the documentary *Casa Susanna* (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #172), which features Betsy Wollheim and explores Donald A. Wollheim’s crossdressing, as well as Darrell Schweitzer’s interview with Betsy Wollheim in *Black Gate*, which discusses the end of DAW’s publication of John Norman’s Gor series.



Chicago Tribune, Feb. 19, 1954

“While I’m not sure that codes of conduct or paying attention to the diversity of sf and fantasy authors is the same as Michelism, I do find the Great Exclusion Act fascinating. The lawsuit and resulting settlement related to Worldcon 76 might come closer to the topics that generally concern you. Regardless, fandom usually reacts negatively to exclusion efforts (even in the case of Walter Breen), and the people who weren’t allowed to enter the first Worldcon are likely considered more favorably than the people who excluded them.

“I’ll also have to learn more about Chan Davis. But one shouldn’t consider socialist or communist sympathies, or antifascism and antiracism (or anti-sexism and anti-homophobia) activism as anti-sf or -fandom unless you consider such -isms and -ias important aspects of sf and fandom. I think it’s worth discouraging fascism, racism, sexism, and

homophobia.

“Speaking of anti-sexism (or pro-feminism), thank you for highlighting Margaret Cavendish and *The Blazing World*. I’m currently reading Joanna Russ’s *The Female Man [Telegraphs & Tar Pits #174]*, another feminist utopian novel, and finding it utterly delightful. I shall have to turn to Cavendish at some point. I shall also have to learn more about John Jacob Astor, Jacques Futrelle, Francis Davis Millet, and W.T. Stead, who died on the Titanic. Thank you for including links to their writing.

“I also enjoyed your coverage of early sf television, including the BBC production of *R.U.R.*; *Captain Video and His Video Rangers* (which I featured in an online screening for the N3F Tape and Video Bureaus in early 2024 and mentioned in a couple of “Rabid Ears: Ravings of a TV Fiend” columns writing as Cathode Ray, as well as in *The Brass Hat Mind #6*); *Space Patrol*; *Tom Corbett*, *Space Cadet*; and the Canadian program *Space Command*, which was new to me. It’s a shame that only one episode survives; I’ll be sure to check it out.

“Your discussion of the Worldcon Seattle 2025 committee’s use of AI to screen potential program participants for controversy I feel somewhat sympathetic toward. ‘Science fiction literature must exercise intellectual freedom, freedom of speech, tolerance to all kinds of different opinions, openness, free debate...’: I agree with you. ‘You take the debate, you discuss topics and respect the rights of others to their own opinions.’: I agree. ‘Our genre ... needs a wideness of concepts, flexibility of thinking, challenging ideas, thoughts that itch and irritate, that dives into the uncomfortable.’: I agree. ‘Sf relies on “micro ag[g]ressions...”’: I disagree strongly.

“According to Derald Wing Sue’s *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*, microaggressions are ‘commonplace verbal, behavioral or environmental slights, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward members of marginalized groups.’ Sf does not and should not rely on hostility toward marginalized groups. Perhaps it should do the opposite.

“Excluding someone from a con’s program is different from excluding someone from a con. The program committee has every right to include whomever they want on the program—in the interest of attracting and serving the interests of con participants. Regardless, screening potential program participants for controversy using AI technology that is still flawed and inaccurate—perhaps summarizing misinformation, disinformation, and idle speculation as mentioned above—could lead to the exclusion or

disparagement of people who haven’t actually done anything.

“It could also lead to extremely anodyne programming, which might not further the cause of sf or fandom. If we aim for the deliberately inoffensive as a matter of course, things get awfully uninteresting pretty quickly. That’s not to say that we should overindex on or encourage the intentionally offensive, however. There’s got to be a Middle Way.

“I don’t think homophobia, transphobia, racism, harassment, sexual misconduct, sexism, and fraud have been ‘invented.’ They unfortunately exist and are worth fighting, not supporting. But I agree with you that we shouldn’t apply such terms to ‘things you dislike’—if unwarranted—as a way to stifle expression or discussion. I also don’t think we should encourage hostile expressions of such things.

“Similarly, while I appreciated your report on the Eurocon, Archipelacon 2 (<https://archipelacon.org>), I found your distaste for the rainbow badge mystifying. Hardly a symbol for a ‘controversial ideology,’ the rainbow symbolizes LGBTQ+ pride and inclusivity, yes, as well as hope, peace, and a connection between the earthly and divine realms. Rainbows are also just wonderful. They’re beautiful.

“For all your writing about the importance of including and allowing all belief systems, to then not also include the LGBTQ+ community—to not support their individual rights and beliefs—seems odd to me. Earlier in the fanzine, you quote Evelyn Beatrice Hall’s writing about Voltaire: ‘I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.’ So, wear the badge? They’re commonly used at cons.”



Chicago Tribune, Feb. 26, 1954

R.A.I.L. #9  
November 2025  
Adrian Kresnak  
[railfanzine@gmail.com](mailto:railfanzine@gmail.com)

### Common Knowledge Zine Fest

On October 26, I tabled at the Common Knowledge Zine Fest. It was a collaboration between the Michigan State University Library and the open-access movement, with the aim of sharing knowledge through zines. This was the first time I had tabled at a zine fest rather than just attending one. It was a good place to start: the space wasn't not too crowded or too loud, and the people who came to my table were friendly.

There was enough downtime that we vendors had the chance to walk around and visit each other. I picked up a zine about how to make various fermented foods, and someone traded me a minizine about soup recipes. Someone else traded me one demonstrating different stretches for sore muscles. I also got a few text-heavy, very academic zines that I'm a little intimidated to start reading.

The librarians hosting, of course, also had a table. One of their zines featured "highlights from the library's UK punk zine collection." The one that caught my eye was about ethics of zine libraries. I'll put the link on one line below in the hope it makes it easier to copy/paste:

<https://www.zinelibraries.info/code-of-ethics/>

The informal nature of zines means that they may not be approached with the same established guidelines as, say, books. This zine provides advice for how potential zine librarians should acquire and catalogue pieces. For example, there's an ethical spectrum of how to acquire zines – direct from the zinester or distro is more ethical, third-party resellers less so. There's also talk about money. While a lot of zinesters make their zines available for free, an institution like a library should pay or donate when possible.

Overall, it was a great experience. I gave away some zines featuring stuff I learned in the Health & Risk Communication MA program. I'll put some pictures about the zine below.

A Very Basic Introduction  
to the

# Health Belief Model

"Why do people continue  
to do unhealthy things  
when they know better?"

Lots of reasons, really, but  
for this rite I'm going to  
tell you one way to picture  
how people think about health.

The **Health Belief Model**  
comes from the 1950s work  
of social psychologists at  
the US Public Health Service.

I'm going to tell you about  
the middle of the model:  
the part closest to the  
question above.

"unhealthy things" being the  
THREAT:

- perceived  
SUSCEPTIBILITY
- and perceived  
SEVERITY

"know better" is the SUGGESTED  
BEHAVIOR:

- perceived BENEFITS
- and perceived BARRIERS



SOCIAL FACTORS  
(culture, demographics, etc.)

THREAT!

THREAT:

perceived severity  
(How bad would it be if you did feel the danger's effects?  
"I recover from the flu quickly" vs. "The flu has sent me to the hospital.")

SUGGESTED BEHAVIOR

perceived barriers  
(What are the costs to doing the "healthy" thing?  
"Healthy food costs \$\$\$."  
"Wearing a mask is uncomfortable.")

(And here's MOORE!)

perceived susceptibility  
(How likely are you to feel the effects of the danger?  
"I never get sick"  
"I probably won't get sick" etc.)

SUGGESTED BEHAVIOR

perceived benefits  
(If you do X thing, what good comes from it?  
"Exercise makes me feel good"  
"If I wear a mask, I won't get sick.")

Weigh it all up!  
If it's "worth it," people might choose to do it.

EXAMPLE!



Should I get a cappuccino?

Benefits  
(If I DON'T get a cappuccino, my wallet will thank me... and I won't get an anxiety attack.)

Severity  
(If I drink too much caffeine, I could die.)



Barriers  
(But I'll lose out on enjoying a nice drink!)



Susceptibility  
(Burst the caffeine in one cappuccino probably won't hurt me!)

So...

I'll get an iced coffee!



## Academia

Speaking of the HRCMA program: the university has paused admissions for 20+ graduate programs. These include degrees in astronomy, mathematics, education, social science, journalism... and, apparently, health & risk communication. It also includes most of the graduate programs in the College of Arts & Letters.

The paused admissions are supposed to be related to budget cuts, which may or may not be related to the current White House situation. The programs are supposed to come back in another year or two, but I'm worried. I wish I had something insightful to say about economic and political pressure on research institutions, but all I can really say is that it sucks. It means something when institutions offer a wide range of programs. There's knowledge that can get passed on to new generations, knowledge that should be built on instead of buried. I hope that knowledge doesn't get extinguished in the coming years.



*A local game store has a miniature-painting night on Thursdays. I got to pick one out of a box, and I chose this one! In the background is my brother's 3D-printed mini.*

## Age of Revelation

The Marvel X-Men event *Age of Revelation* has released its first month of comics. The basic premise is this: Revelation, a supervillain with the power to warp reality by speech, has taken over about half of the United States. (Revelation is also the New Mutant Doug “Cypher” Ramsey but, frankly, he’s so different that he’s basically a new character.)

The comics take place ten years into the future, and the books make full use of the time skip. I had been worried that the event might be like the *Sins of Sinister* event from a few years ago, where there were supposedly three independent books but in reality they were telling one nine-part story. In *Age of Revelation*, the books have much more variety. There’s the “main” books that deal with the overarching plot (*Amazing X-Men* and *Book of Revelation*), there’s books that use the overall setting to tell character-focused stories (*Iron & Frost*, *Cloak Or Dagger*, *Binary* and others), and there are books that are mainly “what if this premise had been the Marvel status quo for ten real-life years?” (*Rogue Storm*, *Laura Kinney: Sabretooth*, *Sinister’s Six* and others).

My current favorite is *Book of Revelation*, mainly because it features the first appearance since the 1980’s of my favorite obscure mutant. Her name’s Chance. She’s originally from a miniseries called *Fallen Angels*, but she hasn’t been seen since. Well, she’s back now! She’s working for the bad guy and she looks great.

A book I’m enjoying unexpectedly is *Omega Kids*, featuring Quentin “Kid Omega” Quire. In the main timeline he’s a defiant, telepathic young adult, but in this timeline he’s grown into something of a father figure for a new class of young mutants. I’m not a fan of Quentin in the regular comics, so I was surprised how much I liked this new version. The first issue had a fun twist ending, so I look forward to seeing how the next two issues of this three-issue miniseries work with it.

I’m feeling neutral-to-positive about the overall event. It looks like a good event to finish off the year. Here’s hoping it brings something new to next year’s comics!

**Thanks for reading! Happy New Year!**

# BROWNIAN MOTION #16

A Garth Spencer apazine

For NAPA #279, November 2025

## Cheeses of Nazareth

I spend too much time alone pursuing weird thoughts. So, some years ago, in an attempt at Maslovian self-actualization, I joined the online Kingdom of Talossa. I also got an ordination in the Universal Life Church. Much more recently I decided to run in the next Talossan election. (I have not yet decided to start the Liberal Secular Rational Humanist Cult, but I'll make sure to let you know if I do.)

Probably I should back up and explain the foregoing.

There are a wide variety of virtual countries, or micronations, which exist mostly online or in the imaginations of their creators. The Kingdom of Talossa emerged from the imagination of Ben Madison, a resident of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and carries on various entertaining activities for the amusement of people who signed on with him. By now, Talossa has its own language, stamps, cuisine, national music style, and claims to scattered territories around the globe (starting with Milwaukee). Most of the Talossan news I receive, though, is administrative and political. Since October 26<sup>th</sup>, when the last legislature was prorogued, the several parties have been advocating for citizens/subjects to vote for their ticket, mostly concerned with perceived government meddling with the immigration process.

A mutual friend encouraged me to get involved. I am now running on the Independent Green/Anarcho-Surrealist ticket. Why? Because I can. My party manifesto reads:

**“Talossa can lead the world in ecologically sustainable lifestyle and industrial practices, since our ecological impact and industries are a matter of opinion. Also, since we were all transported into a virtuality in the 1970s, Talossa can teach the world to face our virtual existence with humour every day.”**

Of course, in the way I do these things, I am both my party leader and my sole candidate.

New readers of this fanzine must wonder when the wheels fell off my mental processes. Those of you who have been reading *Obdurate Eye* for a while know that alleged real-world news has become so progressively absurd that I refuse to take it seriously. I have worked out a whole worldview/belief system about this, which is as absurd and inconsistent and irrational as, I believe, our existence requires.

§

One of the reasons I haven't really bothered building up my own cult is that I've been preoccupied with the Heathen Freehold in British Columbia. This is one of several organizations in Canada (and the so-called United States) which practice and promote

the belief system of pre-Christian Germanic tribes, sometimes called Asatru or Forn Sedr or Odinism or less polite things. That should give you enough keywords for a start.

Members keep meeting up in person for rituals, ritual toasts with mead, and ritual potluck meals, although we tend to be a bit, um, geographically dispersed. In recent years, the Freehold has experienced the formation of an active local Freehold kindred in Surrey, the separation of a nearby kindred and the dissolution of an inactive one in the Interior of BC, and (for my duties as the Clerk) ongoing difficulties in monitoring our finances, or our membership numbers.

Well, that's no-one's particular fault. I've been having Internet connectivity issues since July 2025, and expect they will be resolved in mid-November.

If you perceive and enjoy the irony in a heathen society devoted to a late Iron Age tribal belief system conducting official business via the Internet, go ahead. I do too.

## Mailing Comments

### ***Intermission 156, by Ahrvid Engholm***

*Re your mundane news:* I will be interested to see how long the Russian regime stands.

For that matter I am interested to see how long the Trump administration stands.

*Re your fanhistory:* it is a little amusing to read about the Michelism kafuffle, and I think it was just as amusing then, considering how small fandom was and how small the stakes were. As we all know, trying to unite fandom under one banner is like trying to herd cats.

*Re Hamas casualty figures:* this demographic reportage sounds so screwed up, I have declared the Anarcho-Surrealist Party supports Gaza's petition for annexation by Canada. No comment on whether Seattle fannish bureaucracy fits right in here.

I don't make sense, of course, but I do like pizza.

*Re your comments to me:*

Yes, I went camping on the Island, as we call Vancouver Island in this part of British Columbia. I dragged along a pretty complete set of camping gear on the ferry, in a carryall bag that was MUCH too heavy, and made a mental note to put it in a backpack next time. (The one thing I forgot? Matches.) I got rides from and back to the ferry terminal. I spent just a weekend at a campsite, and gave my Clerk's report to the Althing of the Heathen Freehold. I also slept a lot during the day. There were activities like crafts and throwing plastic axes at a plastic board and picking shells off a nearby beach.

Are you aware of just how long plastic takes to break down, mechanically or chemically? And what happens to local plants and animals while it does so? I ask out of some scientific curiosity.

***Archive Midwinter, by Jefferson P. Swycaffer***

Re your comments to me: Thank you for your kind words about “The Jade Ring.” I may follow up some of the hanging threads from this story, sometime.

Thus far I have managed with a work-around to carry on my email and social media correspondence, and my work from home. The week that I write this (and just before the NAPA deadline), an Internet/TV/phone service provider will be rectifying the loss of connectivity at this house.

Re your remarks to Adrian Kresnak: Slowly I’m coming around to an opinion that superheroes are basically emergency first responders – they’re just empowered to handle crises so beyond fires, floods, earthquakes and epidemics, some global authority would have to authorize their ventures, and there is no such authority.

***Fandomain N-01 – Patrick Ijima-Washburn***

Welcome!

Thank you for the look into your reading and viewing entertainment. With all the Japanese authors and works you mention, the question occurs to me, are you reading and listening to them in Japanese?

Note: Not finding any clue in N’APA 278 as to your name, except your reference to *Mangaverse*, I hunted around in my folder of received fanzines. (Turns out the last *Mangaverse* I received dates back to 2022!)

***Intermission 157, by Ahrvid Engholm***

Wow, a second *Intermission*. Well, I guess that makes sense, given the bimonthly frequency of N’APA.

If you’re interested in what makes the universe tick, you have two major choices. The conventional way is to assume that a set of fundamental principles binds and holds the universe together, so that space and time and matter and energy interact with each other in logical ways, however complex they may be. The creative way, as Mr. Natural in R. Crumb’s comics expressed it, is to say, “The entire universe is completely insane!”

For my part, I just decided that our world started to get increasingly silly a few decades ago, probably around the time of the Reagan and Thatcher administrations. My explanation is that one of the Powers That Be abruptly realized it was almost time for the world to end, he had nowhere near enough time to finish up the documentation, so he quick-like slapped together a virtual reality and stuffed all of us into it, late one night, when we were sleeping and we wouldn’t notice.

Except he forgot one critical thing, which any film production team could have warned him about: a continuity module.

Thus, our virtuality has been getting steadily more surreal and preposterous and impossible to take seriously.

You may now laugh.

Onward:

Interesting to see how science fiction, and fannish involvement, overlaps with scientific and technological careers in the past and the present. Amusing to discover that “taser” was actually an acronym derived from a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Tom Swift novel. (I actually grew up reading a later series of Tom Swift Jr. novels, allegedly by “Victor Appleton III,” if I recall correctly.)

Question: do Real Fen come up with their own inventions, or at least crank theories? Is this creativity at one with the Trufan nature?

Where do you find the *time* to gather all your research material?? Oh, right, you apply an AI system. (If you know how to use it properly, more power to you! I just feel ... diffident ... about relying on any such system.)

### ***R.A.I.L. #8 by Adrian Kresnak***

I was most interested to read about the inaugural Stuckman Lecture on food economics, and NPR Chief Economics Correspondent Scott Horsley. No day is wasted when we learn something.

### ***Intermission 158, by Ahrvid Engholm***

Another Intermission?

*Re your troubles and travails:* I’m not so sure Microsoft is evil as it is increasingly incompetent. There are reasons why some people get so frustrated they move away from Microsoft programs, even away from the Windows operating system entirely. But you’ve probably heard all about this elsewhere.

*Re the Swedish version of the UN Declaration of Human Rights:* Since you’re Swedish, and consider the Swedish version a distortion, I take it that someone paraphrased rather than translating the UN Declaration directly. (I know I’m making an inference since you can only communicate the story to me in English.) As you say, whoever the translator was at the time, they should have been sacked. But I infer nothing more from this than a translation error.

*Re your comments to me:*

Very amusing, I see what you did there.

Which Gilliland novels described incorporated Ais? *The Revolution from Rosinante* (1981), *Long Shot for Rosinante* (1981) and *The Pirates of Rosinante* (1982).

### ***The Swamp Spot Sentinel, by Robert Jennings***

I am beginning to appreciate your home maintenance issues. We've had problems like water leaks (and toilet leaks), major appliances that had to be repaired, and enough hygiene issues with the basement suite to require stripping the carpets and linoleum flooring.

The unreliability and lack of punctuality of contractors seems to be pervasive, and not just affecting your area. I'm glad that at least some people feel a sense of obligation to their work, and to customers.

Re your comments to me:

- Make one manuscript of "The Jade Ring" and submit it to *Eldritch Science*? Right, I'm on it.
- Politics cries out for the application of humour. Unfortunately I see practicing politicians in one lane, and practicing humorists in another lane, and no one changing lanes to mess things up. This must be a job for Garthman!
- You're right, we have to be the kind of fandom we want, in order to see it become real.

### ***Brandy Hall Issue 14, September 2025, by Mark Nelson***

It was interesting, and rather surprising, to see the use of "fanzine" as you documented it. Clearly a number of interest groups have defined the word in terms of their own interests. I wasn't entirely aware of that.

Re your comments to me: Thank you for understanding the points I was making.

The kind of adults who resist any rules or expectations, as I put it, seem to be reacting like powerless and put-upon teenagers, as they were in high school. And I kept running into this response in fandom, particularly in respect of conrunning.

I wish I were as optimistic as you, about the conrunning guide I started compiling in the 1980s. By the time I concluded it – as a personal essay, a critique of 1980s conrunning, not as a guide for conrunners – I was resigned to the fact that very few fans I met showed any interest. I was told early on that fans who needed it wouldn't want it, and fans who wanted to see it didn't need it; after twenty or thirty years I understood what that meant. The simple answer is that, by and large, people want to hold *their own* kind of events, and want to do them *their own* way.

One problem with all of this is that, by starting a convention, you are *going* to be responsible for situations you can't control.

The main impression I took away from the "SMOFCon Game" is that there is no certainty in conrunning, not when you're juggling hotel industry demands and fickle congoer expectations and unforeseeable complications like sick babies. And fans, being amateurs, are likely to be unprepared for how their dream conventions actually turn out.

But all this is a twice-told tale. Onward.

Judging from Ahrvid's remarks, he clearly doesn't understand that AI legally infringes on copyright. But I've said enough about that, too.

As to his comment to Heath Row about recruiting for eAPA, yes, I have been listening. I have **tried**, but I never seem to inspire interest in joining my own gang. There's an element of self-satire in my invitations to join my Anarcho-Surrealist party; I know how little response I will get.

Enough of that, too. Onward.

***Esmeralda County Line #12, August-September 2025, by Kevin Trainor Jr***

Thank you for your kind responses to my previous contribution.

***Ye Murthered Master Mage #278, by George Phillies***

Thank you, too, for your kind remarks. Yes, I was joking about Canadian water supplies.

***Samizdat Ish #33, Sept/Oct 2025, by Samuel Lubell***

You report interesting panels at Capclave. I wish you had descriptions of the answers offered to the questions in the "Are Shorts Still the Heart?" panel. The questions under the "Benevolent Ais" heading seem to be misconceived, at least for the current generation of "AI" programs. The topics under "Building Your Worlds from the Ground Up" and "Can Humanity Colonize Other Worlds?" engage me, since I've done some research on worldbuilding and realized there are challenges for human colonization that nobody has addressed ... but again, I wish I knew how the panel tried to answer them.

And so on.

Your description of the decline in reading was sobering, like your reviews of books about concerns with how children are growing up in recent years. Ultimately, though, I don't understand quite what any of this means.

Very interesting to see your profile of Charles de Lint! I discovered him first by reading *Moonheart*.

Re your comments to me: Thank you for being receptive to my idea of a worldwide anti-fascist movement. Actually, it seems that has arisen, in a grass-roots, uneven way. Just to be funny I have offered my nonexistent groups – the Royal Swiss Navy, the Liberal Secular Rational Humanist Cult, the Anarcho-Surrealist Party, or the Society for the Preservation of Fannish Fandom – as rallying points. No responses yet.

I didn't so much have trouble choosing my own future, when higher education resources offered choices, as I had trouble grasping the concept. That only reveals the kind of misconceptions I didn't realize I had, as a result of when and where I grew up: I really didn't realize that I lived in a free society, and had to blaze my own trail. Now I realize how strange that was.



Esmeralda County Line #13  
October – November 2025  
A zine for NAPA 279

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### **OW, MY ACHING BACK, OR, THE 2025 SEE MINNESOTA AND DIE TOUR**

So I spent most of the later half of October driving to and from Minnesota, with about a week in between nominally attending Anime Fusion (it was dying when I got there and it wasn't my fault) and seeing not nearly as many of my friends in Minnesota as I wanted to, but that's the way it goes. Most of the details are in various posts on my Dreamwidth ([wombat-socho.dreamwidth.org](http://wombat-socho.dreamwidth.org)) but the short version is that on the way out there I drove out to Minnesota via Sat Lake City, Cheyenne, Rapid City, Wall (home of the famous Wall Drug), and Sioux Falls; on the way back I again went through Sioux Falls, but then detoured through Grand Island, Longmont, Grand Junction, and West Wendover before finally getting home a little over a fortnight after I left.

The back pain was mainly caused by me being fat, and not helped by the fact that the driver's seat in my car wasn't properly adjusted. Since I've returned home and been more strict about my diet with the assistance of MyFitnessPal, I've dropped about fifteen pounds and what do you know? The back pain is mostly gone.

Since returning from Minnesota I've hit the books pretty hard and finished my required continuing education classes. I have some paid training yet to do, and I also need to study up on Oregon state taxes, since I've scheduled a certification exam for next month.

### **BOOKS & OTHER MEDIA**

I bought some manga while I was at Anime Fusion, but I think I've read [Mahoromatic](#) before and [Strike Witches: One-Winged Witches](#) isn't agreeing with me.

## Comments on N'APA #278

### Intervention #156

(History corner) I suspect another reason the Soviet Internet project came to nothing was for the same reason photocopiers were tightly controlled – information may have wanted to be free, but in the USSR there were directorates of the KGB specifically intended to prevent it. 🍷🍷 There are references to Cavendish's The Blazing World in later parts of Alan Moore's The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, and IIRC Alan, Mina & Orlando escape there pursued by IngSoc's MI5, but it didn't interest me enough to read the original novel. 🍷🍷 No disrespect to Astor, Futrelle, and the other unfortunate dead, but did SF as a genre really lose much by their passing? 🍷🍷 SF TV shows weren't the only things lost through a lack of effort to preserve them. There was apparently a large subculture of Yiddish radio shows in the 1920s and 30s here in the U.S. that were recorded on aluminum discs for distribution and replay. The vast majority of those discs were turned in to WW2 scrap drives and lost. 🍷🍷 Hamas? Lying? Behold my shocked face! 🍷🍷 I wouldn't go to the Worldcon if I was paid to. I will note that according to various members of StippleAPA who attended, Son of Silvercon has a far better consuite with less than 20% of Worldcon's membership. For shame, WSFS! ☺

### Archive Midwinter

(RYCTo Ahrvid) I keep meaning to look into General Semantics and somehow never get around to it...but it was big in 1940s SF. I think it may have been one of Campbell's hobbyhorses.

(RYCTo Robert) There may not be an anti-war movement as we know them in the West, but there's certainly a lot of draft evasion and sabotage going on, and not all of the latter by the Ukrainians.

(RYCTo me) I would find it odd if most of the Incensepunk writers didn't have at least a passing familiarity with the Narnia books, but it would be more likely that the movement as such would be rooted in Lewis' Space Trilogy.

(RYCTo Adrian) If I were out in the woods without some kind of fire-making implement, something has gone very badly wrong and I suspect I would find my knife or pistol of more use.

(RYCTo Heath) The line about "specialization being for ants" commonly attributed to Heinlein is actually from one of his characters, Lazarus Long, and we all know what they say about people who assume characters are speaking for their authors. 🍷🍷 I will caution you that someone in one of my other APAs read the Abdul Jabbar Mycroft pastiche and was distinctly underwhelmed. YMMV.

### Fandomain-N

I have a copy of The Great and Secret Show that I picked up long ago at Arcana (RIP) which I started but DNF. 🍷🍷 Everybody seems to like the Murderbot books. Perhaps, like The Expanse, I'll actually get around to trying them out one of these days. 🍷🍷 If you liked ST:TNG that much, I'm hesitant to recommend Deep Space 9 to you, because Sisko is a very different man than Picard and the universe is a much darker place. I watched DS9 and Babylon 5 when they first aired and was pleased at how they seemed to riff off each other at times.

Minor complaint – I had no idea who you were until I got to the end of the zine and saw your initials. Your name isn't given in the Official Organ.

### Intermission #157

I remember Jesco von Puttkamer being a frequent guest at Balticon when I was a young fan. Unless I have my Finns confused, I believe Art Saha was an enthusiastic costumer as well. 🍷🍷 Willy Ley wrote the science column in Galaxy for quite some time; his wife's foot modeling pictures are preserved with other materials from his estate at the National Air & Space Museum. 🍷🍷 I would dissuade people from reading Serviss' Edisonade in the strongest terms. I have read Kirk/Spock slashfic with more literary merit.

(Eurocon) "If you put in scores/hundreds of hours of work you should at least get a free membership." I could not disagree more. Everybody pays and everybody fights, to paraphrase Starship Troopers.

(M/S *Stockholm*) There was an effort to save the United States as a museum ship, but it came up short and now the old liner will become an artificial reef off the coast of Florida next year.

(RYCTo me) I see you have made up your mind (or let ChatGPT do it for you) so I won't trouble you further with facts. 🍷🍷 As short summaries of the Sad Puppies affair go, this is better and more accurate than most.

### R.A.I.L

There is a railway museum up U.S. 6 in Ely. One of these weekends I think I'll gas up the Kia and go check it out.

### Intermission #158

It's good to know that Son of Silvercon is continuing in a fine fannish tradition started by Atomicon, even if we can't get Westinghouse, General Atomics, or the Department of Energy to answer our e-mails. 🍷🍷 Here in the U.S., where the legacy media have largely sacrificed their reputations for being objective truth-tellers, and "alternative energy" is now seen as a dangerous scam, popular sentiment is tilting in favor of nuclear power, both the big gigawatt reactors and the little SMR. 🍷🍷 The U.N. has sat far too long for the miniscule good it has accomplished. Sentiment for defunding them and kicking them out of Turtle Bay is no longer a fringe notion here.

### Swamp Spot Sentinel

I have to admit, reading about the manifold troubles you've had with home repair makes me a bit reluctant to buy a house, even if it's a mobile home. You're close to a major metropolitan area where there are tradesmen to be hired; I'm in a small town hours away from Las Vegas and even further from Reno. I know where I can find a locksmith, but what of plumbers, electricians, and HVAC men? 🍷🍷 Regarding the bishops: no, I don't think I shall.

(RYCTo Jefferson) Bless you for giving his orphaned books and comics a good home.

(RYCTo George) There used to be quite a bit of crossover between gamers and SF fandom; I remember *Analog* carrying ads for SPI when they were in business. But then D&D came along, and most of those people only read elf & dwarf crap, so these days you're probably right, though I know a fellow who published a book on the various works by Poul Anderson, Jack Vance, *et al* that were (so to speak) the inspirations to D&D, and it was quite popular. So who knows? 🍷🍷 As a participant in Sad Puppies, I do believe you have the vote-stuffing boot on the wrong foot. One is certainly not encouraged by the fact that WSFS refused to allow an audit of the voting even if it was paid for by the complainants.

(RYCTo Garth) "A good education does not guarantee compassion, or empathy, or the ability to lead." Well said.

(RYCTo me) I sometimes wonder how much influence the Morrow Project had on the Fallout games. 🍷🍷 I am embarrassed to admit that it didn't occur to me to look at places like Quill for mimeo and ditto supplies & equipment. It turns out that Grok will provide instructions for making a hectograph copier. Hmm.

(RYCTo Heath) Apparently there isn't enough interest in Funko Pops to keep the company afloat, as I read recently that they are facing bankruptcy. 🍷🍷 In contrast to the Kareem Abdul Jabbar Mycroft books, Wesley Snipes' Talon of God is pretty good.

(RYCTo Sam) Apparently one of the conditions attached to the recently passed continuing resolution was a moratorium on firing federal workers and a provision for back pay to furloughed workers. I don't know if that applies to Sam's situation. 🍷🍷 When my mother died and my brother and I had to clean out the house, our minds were blown by the quantity of Harlequin romances we found in the basement. We could have stocked a small library with them. 🍷🍷 I seem to be the only person who didn't get the draft copies. Or maybe I just didn't notice.

(RYCTo Ahrvid) The cost of the Army's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary parade was paid for out of training funds, as these things usually are. I daresay the streets of D.C. are in no worse shape after the parade than before; D.C. has been legendary for its awful street maintenance ever since they got home rule. 🍷🍷 What people overlook about the McCarthy era is that years later, after we got access to the KGB archives, it turned out that he was right all along. This has been a hard pill for a lot of people to swallow, and most of them just ignore it.

## Brandy Hall

(RYCTo Garth) Perhaps she was taken aback by the question since it was already known that Hortman's murderer was a wacko who'd been appointed to commissions by DFL governors Dayton & Walz as well as having No Kings flyers in his car. 🍷🍷 I think there are some standard operating procedures that apply to all sorts of conventions, but if nothing else, the concom has to be adaptable. For example, security procedures that work well at an anime convention (where most attendees are high school and college kids) will not work well at an SF convention where attendees are 30-40 years older.

(RYCTo Ahrvid) Companies like Disney frequently abuse the free speech protections that were intended to apply to unions, non-profit corporations & associations (the NAACP, NRA, etc) and the like, and so far neither Congress nor the courts have seen fit to draw a finer line. 🍷🍷 I occasionally regret rejoining StippleAPA because of the logistics involved, and have resigned myself to just sending the OOK my APA in PDF form and a check every month to cover postage and printing.

(RYCTo Robert) I attended the 1974 Worldcon in DC and was a member of the 1976 Worldcon in KC. Both had parallel programming tracks, so imho AussieCon was a throwback.

(RYCTo George) Ahem. \*dons Treasurer fez\* The N3F is a club and an organization. We're essentially a social club; as far as the organization aspect goes, we are a not-for-profit unincorporated company registered in the state of Nevada. Since we are a home business run out of my mailbox here in Tonopah and have effectively no income aside from memberships, we're spared the necessity of paying the annual registration fee and the corporate tax. We've looked into the possibility of filing for non-profit status under section 501 (c) (3) but we (George and the directors) concluded it wasn't worth the \$400 fee and associated legal expenses. 🍷🍷 If I didn't say it before, I join you in wishing to see these profiles collected and published.

(RYCTo Jefferson) Not sure he counts as an SF author, even though he's responsible for one of the most (in)famous SF role playing games, PARANOIA, but Greg Costikyan played quite a bit of Diplomacy. 🍷🍷 As for which Pournelle books you should read, I would recommend A Spaceship for the King; the expanded version, King David's Spaceship, is also good but I don't like it as much as the original. Aside from his collaborations with Larry Niven, he's perhaps best known for his stories about Falkenberg's Mercenary Legion, most recently collected as The Prince.

(RYCTo me) I would be interested in reading your opinion of all three histories of SF. 🍷🍷 My aunt Pat, God rest her, gave me my copy of 1066 And All That. Hopefully neither of my kids made off with my copy.

(RYCTo Heath) This may come as a surprise to come folks, but leeches and trepanning are not considered alternative medicine; they are FDA-approved therapies in common use. 🍷🍷 Not drinking tea at restaurants seems reasonable to me since most of it is awful black tea. I myself go through 2-3 cans of Arizona Diet Green Tea in the course of a day and get cranky in its absence. 🍷🍷 When I was chairman of Anime Detour I made a bad decision that affected an entire department, and when I found out I was wrong I made a point of seeking out the department heads and apologizing to them in person. One of them, who had been involved in Minnesota fandom since childhood stared at me in disbelief and said "Nobody ever apologized to me for screwing up before."

(RYCTo Sam) In a recent issue of *This Here*... Nic Farey had a bit to say about the weird negative attitude American fans seem to have towards sports. He never understood it and I don't either.

## Brownian Motion

(RYCTo me) I shall endeavour to produce more Neutral Objective Journalism (h/t Hunter S. Thompson via Stacy McCain) in the future. One must give the people what they want. 🍷🍷 Well, this is more positive than Osho's observation that the people are retarded. +1 for the Royal Swiss Navy!

(RYCTo Mark) Even Americans differ on the proper method of BBQ. People will get into fights over whether one should use charcoal, wood, or propane; what, if any, sauce to apply to the meat, and other points of disputation. As with operating systems and office software, I think people should do what works for them. 🍷🍷 I don't know about fanzines, but former OOK of StippleAPA Judie Cilcain (RIP) was fond of the

acronym AKICIF where the last word was “fandom”.

(RYCTo Sam) I have known a number of men who don’t read fiction but are mad for biographies and history.

(RYCTo Ahrvid) Having the UN intervene in a hypothetical American Civil War 2.0 would just provide a wider variety of targets for one or both sides. You have no idea how much most American veterans despise the UN “peacekeeping” forces. 🍷🍷 The worst thing about AI/LLM right now is that they are so “eager” to please that they will lie to you and tell you what you want to hear. This has led to a number of suicides by people who were far too trusting of their AI.

### **The Murdered Master Mage**

It didn’t occur to me to ask for more bookmarks before I set out for Anime Fusion, but as it was I had enough to give out to most of the artists in Artists’ Alley. We shall see if anything comes of that; more than a few of the artists seemed overjoyed that someone might give them access to more customers/patrons. (RYCTo Bob) And what of all the poor Naugas, hunted to extinction during the 1970s fad for Naugahyde? (RYCTo me) I started the first Saint Tommy book but didn’t finish it. You’d think it would be right up my alley, and I can’t rightly recall why I didn’t finish it. Maybe I’ll go back to it. 🍷🍷 I’m shamed that I forgot Williamson’s humanoids. I was so angry when I found the sequel after years of searching (pre-internet) and it ended much like the original story.

### **Samizdat**

DeLint is one of those authors who has been around forever (I remember seeing some of his books in the PGCC bookstore when I was going there from 1977-78) but who I never picked up because I wasn’t in the right headspace or the plot summaries on his books didn’t appeal. Never too late to give him a shot, I suppose. 🍷🍷 I’m inclined to agree with Haidt more than the other two; smartphones and social media are uniquely destructive to young people, but they appear to make parenting easier so a lot of parents give in and allow their kids access, frequently with terrible results. I have long argued that we need to stop pushing kids to attend college – we have a huge and growing need for skilled labor, but our Prussian school system has become deformed into a farm system for a bloated college industry. 🍷🍷 It’s interesting comparing the reception of The Forever War to Hammer’s Slammers, which came out just five years later. Haldeman and his book were much more warmly welcomed than Drake, for reasons I didn’t and don’t understand. Perhaps it’s because Drake’s officers weren’t a collection of careerist jerks and alienated muddlers?

(RYCTo Ahrvid) He’s not the first to point out the connection between the loony left and vegetarians. There’s a famous Orwell essay from the 1930s (or possibly it’s an extract from The Road to Wigan Pier) mentioning how a lot of food faddist types tended also to be Socialists/Labourites. 🍷🍷 I for one had no idea that Tiptree was female until years after I’d read her stories.

(RYCTo Bob) Nobody objected to the female Trekkies, especially when they showed up in Starfleet uniforms. Yowza.

(RYCTo George) I am given to understand that when Ben Bova took over *Analog*, he put the kibosh on stories about psionics, which killed Schmitz’ main market. I sell it to you for what I bought it.

(RYCTo me) You meant “same editors” of *Asimov’s* and *Analog*, right? 🍷🍷 Thank you for the kind wishes regarding Son of Silvercon. There was a problem with the hotel but it all worked out in the end.

(RYCTo Adrian) “Why are human works not considered natural...” I am amused that you are – probably unconsciously- echoing Jerry Pournelle here. 🍷🍷 You might also include among horrible examples of self-experimentation Marie Curie, who died of radiation poisoning.

### **POST-NATTER**



### **...More Needs to Be Done on Reading in the Schools**

The National Assessment of Educational Progress, a test which measures the academic performance of America's students, reported that 12<sup>th</sup> graders' reading skills are the lowest since 1992. The 2024 score was 3 points lower than the previous version of the test in 2019. (They did a bit better in math, but still had the lowest math scores since 2005). For 12<sup>th</sup> graders, 32% were below the Basic level (compared to 30% in 2019), 33% were at the Basic level (same as 2019) and 35% at the Proficient level (down from 37%). Note that Basic level on the NAEP is not the same as grade level. Some of this is due to declines in schooling during the COVID lockdown and lower attendance in the years since COVID.

This drop is already affecting the world outside of school. The military is seeing lower scores on their Armed Forces Qualification Test. Some vocational programs and community colleges are having to providing remedial reading and math courses. And even top colleges are seeing problems with students not knowing how to read works longer than short passages.

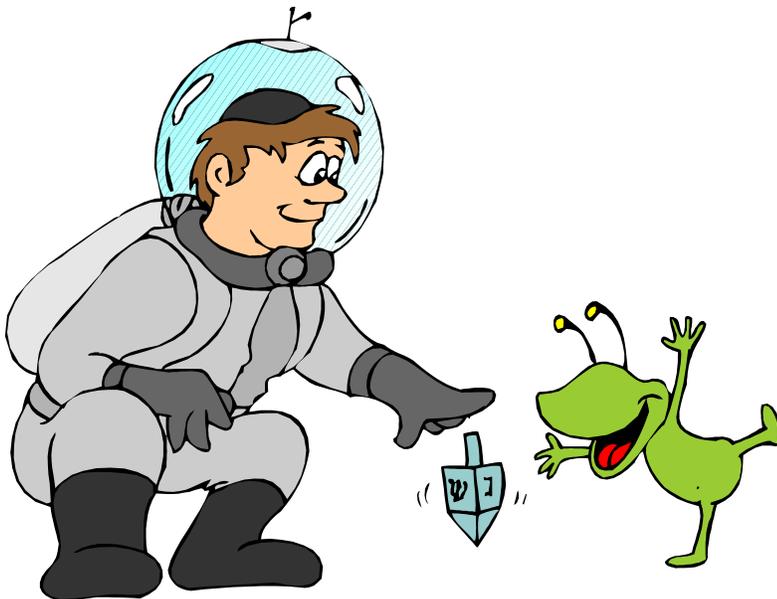


Why are reading scores declining? An investigation by *The New York Times* found students were not surprised at the drop since they see it in their schools. They blame “lost learning during the pandemic, the overwhelming workload of modern high school, lowered academic standards and, most of all, the relentless pull of screens that has, in their words, decimated attention spans.” They also say standards and expectations have dropped. They fear that lower academic skills will hurt society and their personal futures. Students propose more reading in schools with assigned time to read, more focus on grammar, helping students enjoy reading from a young age, helping build reading comprehension

(through discussions, papers, and re-enactments), banning phones, having parents make sure their children read at home, and rethinking how education prioritizes skills. Research has shown that many elementary schools do not adequately teach reading and that schools should incorporate the latest research into how the brain learns.

Jancee Dunn, in *The Well newsletter (August 30, 2025)* wrote in response to reports that reading for pleasure fell 40% in the last two decades by writing that “Research suggests that reading can keep your memory sharp and help you sleep better, and that reading fiction can increase empathy and improve well-being.” She suggests setting aside regular reading time and carry a book with you to read in spare moments, designate a regular reading spot, reread an old favorite, listen to audiobooks (listening counts as reading), feel free to quit a book in the first 50 pages (or fewer if you are older than 50), and to seek book ideas such as book lists or recommendations.

Of course, America is not the only country concerned with declines in reading. Denmark is planning on making books cheaper by exempting them from their 25% Value Added Tax. Other Nordic countries, including Finland, Sweden, and Norway have reduced or eliminated their taxes on books.



### ...Forthcoming Books

By Samuel Lubell

(Originally in *The WSFA Journal*

January 1997

Here is a list of books we can expect to see in the coming year:

***The Grocery Lists of J.R.R. Tolkien*, by Christopher Tolkien.** The Master of Fantasy's son's project of publishing every word his father ever wrote continues. Each list in this book is dated and linked to what Tolkien was working on so the reader can find

links. Christopher notes that the hobbits had a bad time of it shortly after each time liver was on the menu. The next volume, *The Grade School Papers of J.R.R. Tolkien*, should be out in September.

***The Silence of the Jheregs* by Steven Brust.** In which Vlad accepts a commission to kill one person from each of the ruling houses of the cycle, only to find himself on the list. This poses the problem, how do you collect your blood money after you assassinate yourself? Tired of imitating Dumas, Brust does this book in the style of Miguel de Cervantes.



***The Bugs of Pern*, by Anne McCaffrey.** In this sequel to *Dolphins of Pern* etc. Jaxom's son realizes that since every other animal in Pern talks, he should try to talk to the bugs to gain status and overcome the bullying of his foster brother. However, his attempts to become a bugarider fail when each bug becomes squashed when he tries to sit on it. In a subplot, Pern's knitting industry goes under due to a shortage of Thread.

***Bad Covers* by Terry Pratchett.** Death visits the houses of American cover designers and those who supervise their work to do away with them in highly amusing ways. In a subplot Sergeant Colon meets the adopted midget son of two frost giants. Note: this book cover is the first ever to be done in crayon by the author himself after the first two cover artists declined to do the honors.

***Plan 9 From Outer Space* by Alan Dean Foster.** The inevitable novelization of a science fiction movie "classic." At press time, it was not known if the "author" would play the material straight or try to make fun of it. Nor was it known which result would be funnier.

***Sword of Shanana* by Terry Brooks.** The singers of Shanana discover a magic sword that leads them to low-rent magical kingdom (for sale cheap) where only their sword fighting prowess (or lack of it) and singing skill (ditto) can save them.

***Pong* by Dafydd Ab Hugh.** The author of books based on Doom tackles the original videogame. While at first you wouldn't think the videogame of Pong had much of a plot, how much plot did Doom have beyond kill the monsters? The book reveals just why the paddles are batting around that innocent looking ball and just how this ties in with the survival of the human race.

***Dune to Death* by Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson.** In this recently discovered sequel to *Dune*, someone is murdering descendants of the Atreides and only yet another clone of Duncan Idaho can save them by using the mystical spice to unlock his own powers. Most of this book appears to be scenes cut from the previous volumes.

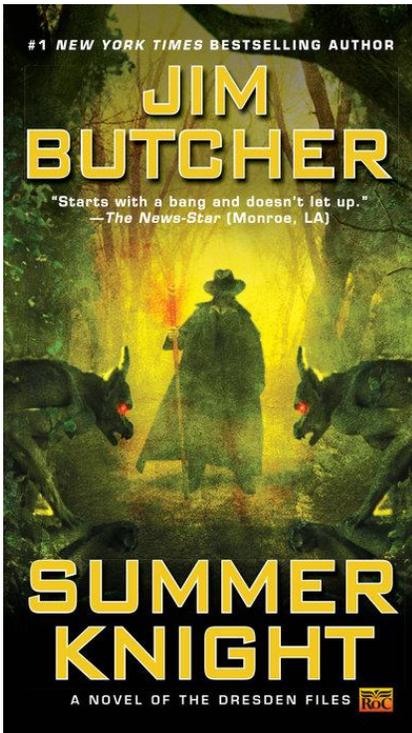
### ...Author Spotlight: Jim Butcher

Jim Butcher is best known for his urban fantasy series, *The Dresden Files*, about a wizard detective set in Chicago. Harry Dresden is the only wizard in the phone book.

Butcher has said that he started writing as a teenager, writing what he calls "horrible" books, but gradually learning about the craft of writing. He originally wrote the first Dresden Files book as an exercise in a writing class in 1996 when he was 25, Editors and agents repeatedly rejected the book for two years and *Storm Front* was not published until April 2000 (in paperback). The books soon became so popular that the first few were re-released as hardcovers starting in



2007 and new books were released first in Hardcover starting with book 7: *Deadbeat* in 2005. There are currently 17 books published, with an 18<sup>th</sup> *Twelve Months*, coming in January 2026. He has written several Harry Dresden stories that were collected in two volumes.



The quality of the books improves after the first few as Butcher became a more experienced writer. Also, the background gradually becomes more elaborate. While most of the books have an ending to its main plot, minor elements in one book became much more important later on.

*The Dresden Files* briefly became a TV series for the Sci Fi channel in 2007. It ran for 12 episodes and was not renewed. Many fans of the book said the TV series made too many changes, in part due to its low budget.

In addition, Butcher has written six books in his *Codex Alera* series, a more traditional fantasy. Butcher said he started the series because a person in an online workshop said that Butcher could not write a good story based on a bad idea. So he took two bad ideas, a lost Roman legion and Pokemon-style creatures, and came up with the series. The series is complete.

His other series, the steampunk *The Cinder Spires*, was planned as nine books. However, he has only published two (eight years apart) plus a novella. He also wrote a Spider-Man novel.

Writing is the family business. His son, James J. Butcher, has written two fantasy novels. His wife, who publishes as Jennifer Blackstream, has written around 40 fantasy and paranormal romance novels including the *Blood Prince* series, the *Blood Trails* series, *Revenge in Vein* series, and the *Blood Realm* series.

Readers new to Butcher should probably start with *the Dresden Files*, unless they really hate mystery novels or urban fantasy in which case they should start with *The Cinder Spires* (unless they also don't like steampunk). While the *Dresden Files* are best read in publishing order, the first couple are weaker than the others so those unsure about Butcher may want to start with the third book, *Grave Peril*, and then, if you like it, jump back to books one and two.

### ...Government Shutdown

As I write this on November 12<sup>th</sup>, the longest government shutdown in American history is coming to an end. The 43-day shutdown furloughed 650,000 federal workers and almost as many were forced to work without being paid. This is due to the American system of requiring annual budget bills for each federal department by the end of the fiscal year, September 30, or a continuing resolution that allows spending past that date to allow more time for Congress to pass a budget. Last year, the government came within hours of shutting down. This year, the Democrats refused to sign a continuing resolution that did nothing to help those receiving health insurance through the Affordable Care Act (popularly known as Obamacare) since subsidies to lower the cost end this year. That will double the cost of some people's health insurance (since the U.S. does not provide government-funded health care). Republicans refused to give in (they even shut down the House of Representatives so that no bill could be considered).





Finally, after flights all over the country were closed due to a lack of air traffic controllers willing to do unpaid work and the President going to court to cut food stamps (and demanding that states not use their own funds to make up for the President's refusal to use emergency funds to feed the hungry, enough Democrats backed down to allow the government to reopen. The Democrats, who had been winning public perception, not to mention the off-year elections, caved to Trump's demands without getting any of their original goals (yes, the Republicans promised a vote on the health care subsidies, but I doubt this will pass).

The shutdown caused a considerable amount of confusion as Trump tried to take advantage of the shutdown (and Congress' absence) to seize more power and fire more workers. This left many in government unsure as to what was going on. For instance, those former workers receiving severance payments from earlier government firings continued to receive these payments, even while those still working were not paid. Then, the November 5<sup>th</sup> Leave and Earnings statement confusingly reported a negative severance payment (and negative deductions)

equivalent to the last two severance payments. This was not explained until an email the following Monday, leaving many worried that the payments would be yanked out of their bank accounts. Considering the shutdown had been talked about for months, this should have been better planned.

### ...Status of Projects

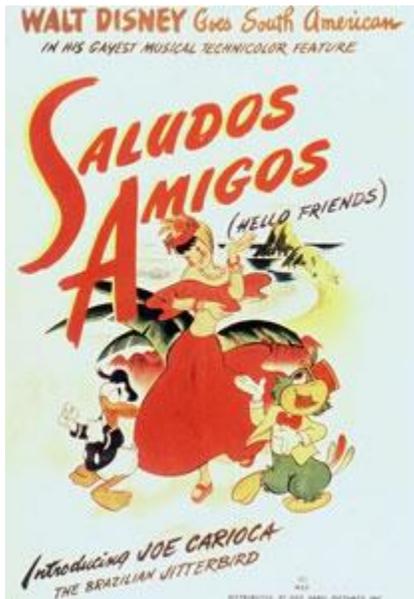
Past readers of *Samizdat* will remember that I have launched a series of projects to better my life. This bimonthly report serves as a reminder to me to keep working on these, and is a record of when I fall short.

**Project Video** - For Halloween, I watched *Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice*, a 2024 movie directed by Tim Burton as a sequel to his 1988 film. It stars Michael Keaton, a grown-up Winona Ryder, and Catherine O'Hara from the original film and adds Jenna Ortega, as a troubled teen who does not believe in ghosts and thinks her mother is just faking for attention. Beetlejuice continues to be a comic anti-hero who wants to marry Ryder's character. The film was very successful, earning \$452 million on a \$99 million budget. I thought it entertaining although not as good as my vague memories of the first film. It seems odd that doing a sequel to a movie 36 years later no longer seems unusual. Not counting Disney's made-for-home-video sequels to its animated films, the longest gap is between a movie and its sequel is 59 years between *Fantasia* (1940) and *Fantasia 2000* (1999) and for (mostly) live action the 54 years between *Mary Poppins* (1964) and *Mary Poppins Returns* (2018). Yes, Disney does this a lot!



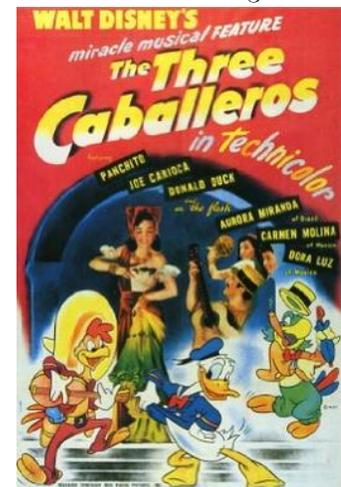
**Now You See Me** - This 2013 film features a team of magicians, the Four Horsemen, whose act involves robbing banks and giving the money to their audience. They are chased by an FBI agent and a woman who claims to be an Interpol agent (but the FBI agent admits that he does not trust her). They use illusion and hypnosis to trick people and the police. This is all a test to see if the magicians are ready to join a secret society, the Eye. There are lots of twists and the real mastermind behind everything is a big surprise (especially since the mastermind acts in ways that someone who planned everything would not have done). This is a good movie, up until the final twist, but one that requires close attention. The cast is top notch and the movie made \$351.7 million on a budget of \$75 million.

*Now You See Me 2*—I also watched the sequel, which I thought was not as good as the first one. In this movie, the Four Horsemen, who in the first movie were always ahead of everyone, are now one step behind the actual villains. A lot depends on chance and the magic store conveniently having a device developed by one of the Horsemen's father. And again there is a twist and a person viewers thought was acting against the Horsemen was actually the head of the Eye (and, as with the first movie, this twist was unconvincing). This sequel made a little less than the first, \$334.9 million, even though the budget was substantially higher (\$120 million). The third movie is in theaters now.

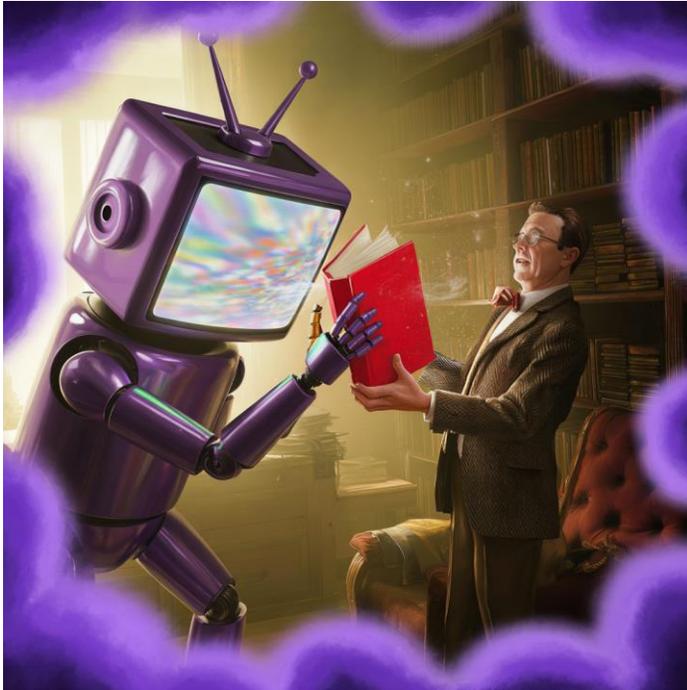


*Saludos Amigos* - I continued my chronological watch of Disney films with the 1942 anthology film *Saludos Amigos*. This was the product of a goodwill tour of Disney animators and other movie makers commissioned by the State Department to try to solidify U.S. ties to South America at a time when several South American countries were supporting Nazi Germany. The film combined live action segments from that trip with Disney cartoons set in the South America locations that the tour visited. The cartoons included Donald Duck as a clueless American tourist visiting Lake Titicaca in Bolivia and Peru, dealing with an obstinate llama; Pedro, about a baby airplane in Chile that has to deliver the mail when his parent airplanes get sick (he doesn't speak so the narrator does all the talking); Goofy as an American cowboy transported to the pampas of Argentina to contrast American cowboys with their Argentinian equivalent (the gaucho); and the final segment, *Aquarela do Brasil* (Watercolors of Brazil), has wonderful watercolor paintings that turn into the adventures of Donald Duck in Brazil where he meets a parrot named José Carioca who guides him in the country (the character also appears in the next film). The film is mostly interesting for historic reasons, although the music was good and I enjoyed the watercolor art in the first part of the last segment.

*The Three Caballeros* - This 1944 film is the second of Disney's South American films, supported by the government as part of its Good Neighbor policy toward South America. It also celebrates Donald Duck's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. Unlike the previous film, the cartoon characters are integrated into the live action segments. The slight premise of the film is that Donald Duck receives presents from his friends that show cartoons about South America and ultimately take him into the cartoons. These feature José Carioca from the first movie and a new character, a Mexican rooster named Panchito Pistoles. Unfortunately, there is lots of blatant sexism in the film as the three characters, especially Donald, are obsessed with chasing after human women. (Donald's girlfriend Daisy Duck already existed, but does not appear (or even get mentioned) in this film.) Even in 1944, reviewers commented on this. Cartoon segments include a penguin seeking places with warm weather, the song of the Aracuan Bird, a flying donkey, Donald and Jose in Baia (part of Brazil), Donald getting a piñata for his birthday, a tour of Mexico, and Donald falling in love with a Mexican singer (and getting drunk on love). The film is notable for combining live action with animated characters (which would later be used in *Mary Poppins*). But having the male cartoon character lust after all the females (is it bestiality when an anamorphic cartoon duck pursues a live action human woman?) means that watching it today requires a heavy dose of historical perspective.



*Blue Bloods*—I took advantage of a half off discount on the Paramount+ streaming service (\$30 for a year, with ads). I started watching the *Blue Bloods* series which ran from September 2010 to December 2024



(and has a spin-off that just started in 2025). This series is a cross between a police procedural and a family saga. The patriarch of the family, Frank Reagan (played by Magnum PI's Tom Selleck) is the New York City Police Commissioner (and former police detective), as was his father Henry (also on the show) before him. The next generation is also involved in law enforcement including Danny, a veteran detective with anger issues, Jamie, a Harvard law graduate turned rookie cop, and Erin, an assistant District Attorney. Nearly every episode has a big Sunday dinner with all four generations debating the issues raised by the cases. Naturally, there are issues with Frank trying to avoid favoritism and Erin struggling between family loyalty and the demands of her office.

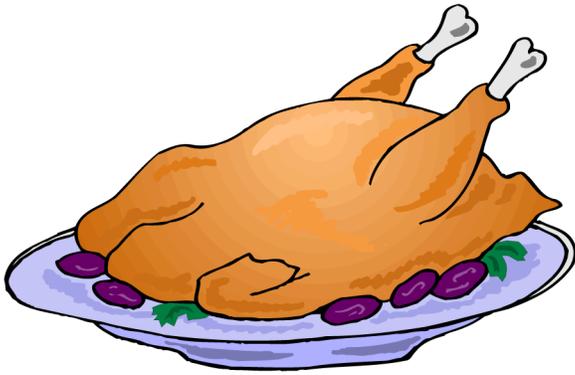
*NCIS* - I'm also watching on episodes of *NCIS* and spinoffs on Paramount+ including

*NCIS: Tony & Ziva* about the "will they or won't they" romantic tension between Tony, a former Baltimore cop, and Ziva, a former Mossad agent, when they were both working for NCIS during seasons 3-10. In this spin-off, set in present day Paris, the two are still not together 12 years later even though they are sharing custody of their daughter. When someone frames Tony, who runs a security company, for stealing from Interpol, the pair go on the run to prove Tony's innocence. There are lots of flashbacks showing the previous 12 years and it is sometimes hard to keep track of what scenes are the present and when the flashbacks occurred.

**Project Fiction - *Small Mercies: A Novel*** by Dennis Lehane. This thriller is set in Boston in the summer of 1974, when the city was protesting (sometimes violently) court-ordered desegregation of schools by busing students into other neighborhoods, including South Boston (prompting the line "Southie won't go"). When Mary Pat Fennessy's teenage daughter, Jules, disappears, she goes looking for her and finds herself fighting the Boston mob. It turns out that Jules was involved in an attack on a black man who had accidentally strayed into a white neighborhood and was also the mistress of a mob leader. Thinking she has nothing left to live for with her daughter dead, Mary Pat does not care about the law or even surviving her revenge, allowing her to do what an ordinary person, or even the police, would not. This is an okay book, although it becomes highly unbelievable in the last third. I would have liked to have seen more on the school desegregation fight. Some of the racism in the novel is rather brutal, but true to life back then.



*The Three Musketeers*—Technically, this is a re-read of a book I read as a kid. I don't remember all the chasing after other people's wives from my previous read. Perhaps the version I read was edited or I skipped over those parts. This is a very political novel with the Musketeers supporting Queen Anne and opposing the evil Cardinal Richelieu. It is the original swashbuckler, as the Musketeers, despite their name, spend more time with their swords than with their guns.



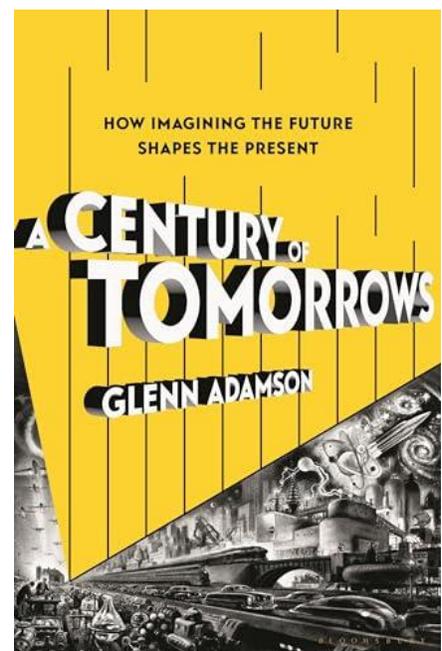
**Project Nonfiction** – *Generations: The Real Differences Between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents* – and What They Mean for America’s Future by Jean M. Twenge. This book is, in some ways, a sequel to the author’s previous *iGen*. It goes generation by generation, discussing what makes it different, prominent members of that generation, and what factors shape their lives. Unlike many other books on generations, this book is deeply rooted in statistics from 24 different US surveys with responses from nearly 40 million people. This allows her to compare different generations when they were similar ages, to remove growing conservatism as one

ages from her analysis. The book has lots of graphs showing what changed for each generation. Twenge’s main thesis is that that differences in technology while they were young, her Technology Model of Generations, play a major role in shaping each generation’s behavior and beliefs. She also stresses growing tendencies toward individualism and what she calls “slow-life strategy”– how, over time, generations have met the milestones of adult life (driving, dating, moving out, having a child, and marriage) at older ages. Consequently, families have fewer children and adults show greater signs of anxiety and unhappiness.

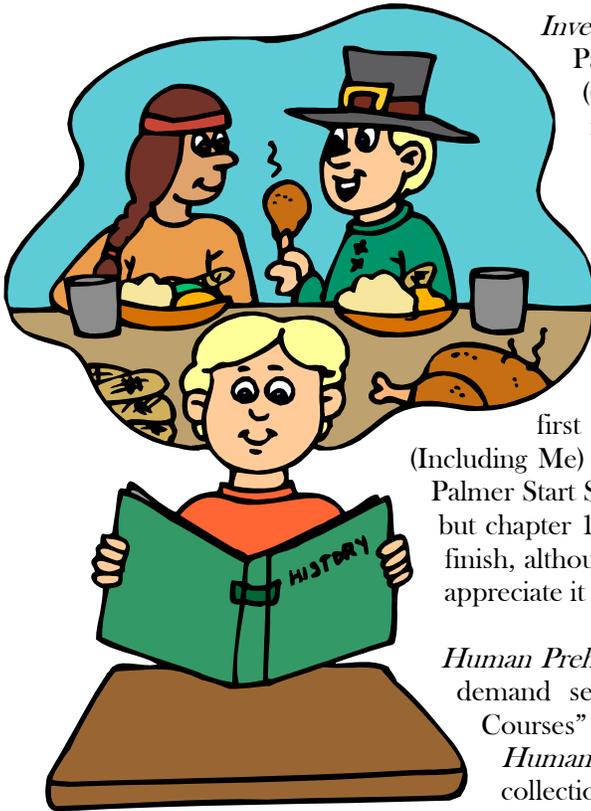
I am naturally suspicious of attempts to generalize based on birth year. It seems to me that the years are arbitrary cut-offs – why would a Gen X’er born in 1965 have more in common with someone born in 1979 (the last year of Gen X) than someone born in 1964 (a year before Gen X). And how can we lump together the experiences of people of different racial groups, income levels, and geographic regions of the country (admittedly, Twenge is less guilty of this than others due to her use of opinion surveys). I also question her inclusion of her youngest generation, which she calls the Polars, born 2013-2029). How can you generalize about people not even born yet! Still, this book is well worth reading, especially for those who have to manage or persuade members of different generations. If you do not want to read all 519 pages, an excellent summary is available at <https://wapercyfoundation.org/?p=1589>

*A Certain People: American Jews and Their Lives Today* by Charles E. Silberman—This is a portrait of Jewish life in America circa the late 1970s and early 1980s (the book was published in 1985). The book is a mostly positive portrayal, saying American Jews have become very successful and that this success will continue. The book asserts that Jews have obtained nearly full equality with nearly every job and symbol of status open to Jews. He claims that anti-Semitism was a European problem that largely does not exist in the U.S. and Jews no longer have to hide their identity as Jews. He even asserts that assimilation is less of a problem than others claim since mixed marriages lead to conversions to Judaism as often as from Judaism and many children of mixed marriages consider themselves Jewish (and are accepted by Jewish institutions). The book has lots of examples of “ITEM”s, but very little analysis of data. (I was taught in my policy courses that the plural of anecdote is not data.) Consequently, the book is more of a historical artifact of a positive portrayal of American Jews than a history in itself.

*A Century of Tomorrows: How Imagining the Future Shapes the Present* by Glenn Adamson – I led a book discussion on this book. The book takes the premise that predictions of the future are really a statement about the predictor’s present and frequently are attempts to shape the future. Sometimes predictions are a warning of something that must be prevented. Other times predictions try to influence current debates and power struggles. The author examines: religious and utopian predictions, predictions of mechanization, rural and return to the land predictions, the future as experimental lab and



bureaucratization, countercultural predictions and civil rights, and predictions involving over-abundance. The book also has a lot on science fiction as predicting the future and analyzes several sf writers.



*Inventing the Renaissance: The Myth of a Golden Age* by Ada Palmer. I'm only halfway through this very impressive tome (650 pages plus another 75 of notes and recommended reading). Yes, this is the same Palmer who wrote the impressive I science fiction series and wrote the music for Sassafra, a SF folk music group including the wonderful *Sundown: Whispers of Ragnarok*, retelling of Norse mythology. Yes, Palmer is incredibly multi-talented. This book asserts that the Renaissance is not a golden age emerging from the "Dark Ages." Palmer's voice in this book is less the typical scholarly impersonal narration and more that of an opinionated friend having a casual chat. The first section is called, "Why You Shouldn't Believe Anyone (Including Me) About the Renaissance." The chapter called "Why Did Ada Palmer Start Studying the Renaissance" is not the introduction or afterword, but chapter 15 on page 107. I'll have more to say about the book when I finish, although I think this book needs to be read multiple times to really appreciate it (much like her fiction).

*Human Prehistory* - I discovered that my library subscribes to a video on demand service called kanopy, which includes many of the "Great Courses" series by the Teaching Company. I've started watching *Human Prehistory*, a collection of 36 half-hour lectures by Brian M. Fagan, who has a wonderful British accent. I've watched about 10 of them and except for the lecture on prehistoric art found in caves, there is no advantage to the video over a cd version, aside from very occasional maps. Still, the history is interesting. I'm curious as to when it was recorded since he says several times that Neanderthals did not interbreed with early modern humans, even though DNA evidence from 2010 found there was mixing of genes.

**Project Activities** - On Saturday October 18, I participated in the nationwide No Kings protest of Donald Trump's actions, along with nearly 7 million other Americans. I made a sign and drove down to the protest. There was a good crowd lined up along a major roadway. There were several people wearing inflatable costumes include a unicorn and a frog. Senator Chris Van Hollen spoke although I found it hard to hear him. I also spent a day playing European strategy games with friends. On Halloween, I helped out at a friend's Haunted House.

**Project Fanac** - The big Fanac for me was Capclave, September 19-21. I was the chair and also ran programming. Capclave is not a large convention, but we had our main guests of honor Joe and Gay Haldeman and Naomi Kritzer as well as other science



fiction notables including Catherine Asaro, who I hadn't seen in a while. Everyone had lots of fun. In retrospect, I think I over-programmed considering the number of people present (for instance, so many people wanted readings that I had two reading rooms.) In addition, I ran book discussion groups for *Poison Study* by Maria Snyder (BSFS), *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* by Shirley Jackson (BSFS), Mary Robinette Kowal's *The Martian Contingency* (WSFA), and Jane Lindskold's *Library of the Sapphire Wind* (WSFA). I put out the July/August issue of the *WSFA Journal* and the Fall 2025 issue of *Origins* (N3F).

**Project Shorts** – Getting a hold of the SF digests has been difficult since the print issues have been coming out very late. My copy of the September/October *Asimov's* did not arrive until nearly the end of October. I have not seen the supposed Summer 2025 issue of *Fantasy & SF* (and I've been told it will not be mailed until after Thanksgiving.) I did read the July/August issues of *Asimov's* and *Analog*. My WSFA magazine discussion alternates between those magazines on First Friday and issues of *Lightspeed* and *Clarksword* on Third Fridays, so I've been reading those. And I've been reading Asimov's *Before the Golden Age* (see *Origins* for that review).

No progress on Projects Shakespeare, Paperback, Health, or Cleanup.

### ...Letter of Comment on N'APA 278

Thanks as always to George and Jefferson for their work and to everyone who produces a zine.



**Intermission #156** – This issue seemed familiar. Was it sent previously? I continue to be impressed by how well little Ukraine is doing against giant Russia in this war. I'm sure your article comparing the Futurians at the first Worldcon to heavily armed Communists was meant as satire, right? It is sad that the FBI wasted time and money investigating Asimov as a Communist when all they needed to do was read his books! The same is true of Ray Bradbury. It is a shame that being critical of the U.S. was seen as grounds for an investigation (and even more alarming that we seem to be moving in that direction again as criticizing the president and his allies has caused people to lose their jobs and risk lawsuits. I will have to look into Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*, to see if it is a candidate for earliest SF novel. I covered early SF television in issue 72

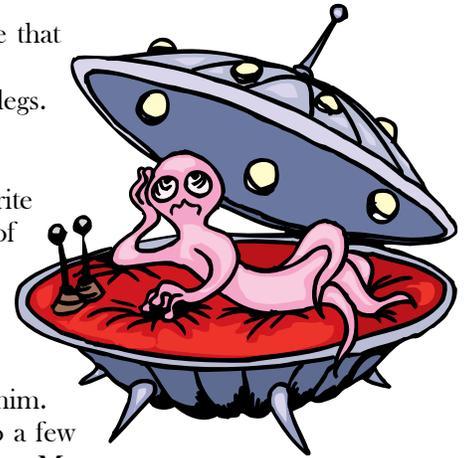
of *Origins*, but did not know about BBC's adaptation of Karel Capek's *RUR* in 1938. I also didn't know about the Canadian Space Command. I would not rely on ChatGPT for facts. At best, it can be used to point to sources of facts. At its worst, it will hallucinate what it thinks the user wants to read. The Seattle Worldcon has acknowledged that it used AI to highlight things for humans to look at. No one was kicked off the program solely because an AI model said so. I see that Sweden has free college tuition and government loans for living expenses. That's how it should be. At 700 people, Eurocon is smaller than large regional U.S. conventions like Balticon (Baltimore) and Boskone (Boston) which usually draw over 1,000. Interesting comment about lecturers being preferable to panels. I'll have to consider that when programming cons. I am skeptical about machine translations since so much of writing is a matter of style. Why is dressing up like an anthropomorphic animal any worse than cosplay as a Klingon, Superman, or Pokemon?

**Archive Midwinter August 2025** – Putin can probably win in Ukraine by a war of attrition, but Ukraine has certainly outlasted nearly all the initial predictions when the war started. Readers should not ask that other readers be banned because of politics. You'll note that I occasionally discuss political topics in this zine and wouldn't want someone to say that I cannot. I'm not sure why you think that superpowers would be better used to confront supervillains than fires, earthquakes, and floods. Fighting a fire in a city can take hours and fighting forest fires can take days. That's far longer than it takes a supervillain to rob a bank. I agree

that Trump isn't a Russian agent. He's just easy to manipulate. Yes, I agree that *Lord of the Rings* is one novel published in three parts.

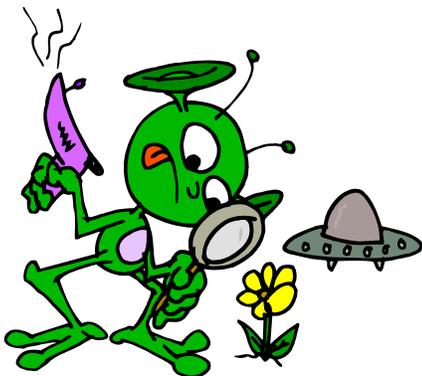
I used AI art for my cover of *Ish 32*, that's why the fairy has three legs. Obviously, we're the exceptions when it comes to men reading.

**Fandomain-N\_01** - Welcome to the N'APA! Adrian Tchaikovsky is a favorite writer of mine. I hope you like *Shards of Earth*. Nice to see your list of media. The logical thing to follow up your rewatch of *Star Trek TNG* is *Star Trek Deep Space Nine*. This is my favorite Trek series.



**Intermission #157** - There is no reason to think that Trump was a KGB agent. He's just easily manipulated. You only have to flatter him and bribe him. Yes, a lot of scientists and NASA people started off as SF fans. I've been to a few SMOFcons. They're mostly workshops and guidance for people who run cons. Many smaller cons cannot afford to give memberships to everyone who works on them. At Capclave, even the chair has to buy a membership. I don't think overpopulation and resource depletion are totally irrelevant, but merely postponed as science has found ways to expand food production. Obviously, we cannot keep this up forever and if population continues to expand, we will have eventually problems unless we set up colonies in space or other planets. A story about a human child raised by moose would be quite funny. I'm not sure what you mean by program people lacking program planning skills. Remember, these are all volunteers. Interesting point about prepared speeches being better than panels. I'm not sure chess clocks will help; they will speed things up at the expense of depth. I do think more interactive activities would help. Did Eurocon not provide pins or clips, just rainbow lanyards? I still don't see how dressing up as a furry is any worse than dressing up as Batman or a cartoon hero. Climate change that we cannot control makes it all the more important that we do something about climate change that is human-caused, such as the increased levels of CO<sub>2</sub>. I find that when I listen to music in English while reading, my concentration is divided and I remember less of what I read. But I can listen to non-vocal music or music in languages I don't understand without this problem.

**Rail #8** - I only got one page of this.



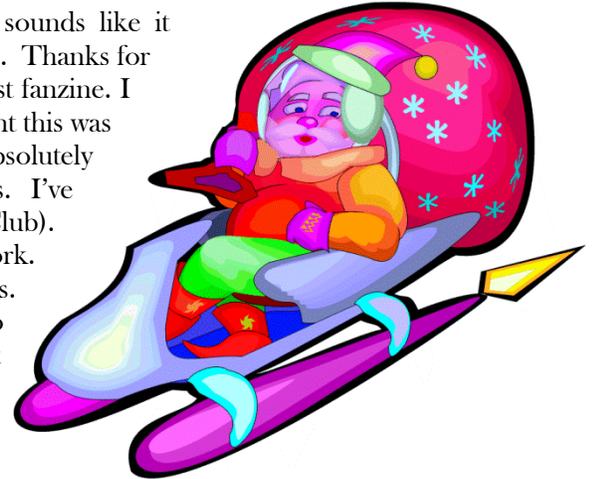
**Swamp Spot Sentinel #1.3**- Sorry about your contractor woes. It's strange how much of the platform of the Christian Right seems to go against everything Jesus supposedly taught. Book Clubs can be interesting if the person running them has good questions and keeps things moving. If all people say is I liked the book or it was a good book, then the meeting runs out of steam quickly. Ironically, flawed and uneven books give you more to discuss than really good or really bad books. Also, humor doesn't work well since much humor is no longer funny when it is explained. I've not heard of *The Other Side of Night* nor Adam Hamdy. I'll have to look for it. I think anyone who goes to a convention, even if just for the social aspects, counts as an active fan. The Antikythera Mechanism is one of the

all-time great mysteries of history. I like your cartoon "Those who prevent history from being taught fully intend to repeat it." I agree that SF fandom is willing to listen to people with divergent interests (but there are always a few who try to ruin things for everyone else...). Alternate history counts as science fiction since history is a social science. "What If" questions are the basis for many a science fiction novel when applied to science, so why not when applied to history? Fandom certainly starts well before the Elizabethan age. I'm sure the ancient Greeks had fans of the theater and ancient philosophers had fans and detractors.

As to your comments to me: By law, the government has to give 60 days' notice before starting a Reduction in Force (RIF). For the Department of Health RIFs announced in April, the government chose to have us furloughed (meaning we could not enter our office but were still paid). This was extended a

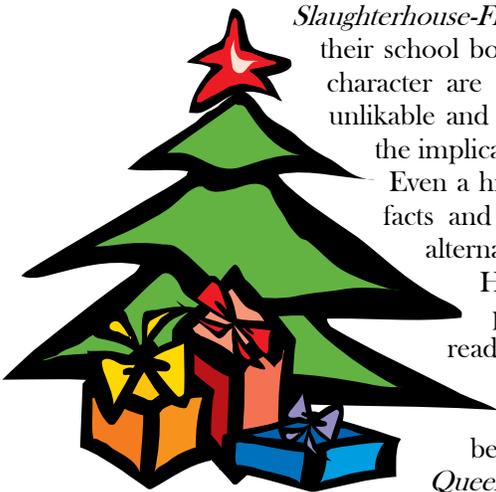
month and a half due to court cases before the Supreme Court said we could be dismissed. There is plenty of data (cited in my previous issues) that fewer men are reading than in the past. While most men do not read romances, there are plenty of other genres that appeal to men. The decline in reading by men is not due to a shortage of books to read. I didn't think *Bleak House* was Dickens' strongest, no. The draft copy was due to some weirdness when collated. It never happened on any of my previous issues. I do use online art and clip art disks, but try to avoid using copyrighted content. Nice picture of Tintin punching Trump in Greenland.

**Brandy Hall #14** - *The Visual Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* sounds like it would make intriguing reading. I'll have to see if it made it to the US. Thanks for the interesting article on fanzines. I should research what was the first fanzine. I didn't know that sovereign citizens were a thing in Australia. I thought this was just Americans being overly American. Science fiction novels absolutely predate science fiction movies and I'm sure some of them had fans. I've seen mentions of a Wizard of Oz club in the 1920s (The Ozite Club). Social media has the advantages of being much faster and less work. But fanzines can go into more depth than social media normally does. There are plenty of examples in science fiction of women who write/wrote stories heavy on action and technology. Recent conventions (including Worldcons) that record panels generally only make them available for a limited time (rarely a full year). I still haven't read the Hornblower series. A club is a type of an organization. An organization is a group that is organized. So businesses, nonprofits, political groups, church groups, etc. are all organizations. The Seattle Worldcon used AI to identify people whose presence might cause problems, but humans then researched the flagged people and make the final decisions. AI was just a tool. There are plenty of SF movie and media magazines. *Lord of the Rings* is a series since it was published in three books, but the three books comprise a single long story as opposed to a series of continuing books, each of which has its own beginning, middle, and end.



In your comments to me you write, "even in Dickens' time it was known that human spontaneous combustion was a myth". But Dickens, or at least his narrator, insists that spontaneous human combustion is real. The third Travis Baldree novel, *Brigands & Breadknives*, came out November 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Esmeralda County Line #12** - Groups like Moms for Liberty try to censor books focused on minorities and gay/lesbian/bisexuals. This often includes great literature like Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. In this month's election, all of their school board candidates lost their elections. I agree that the views of a novel's main character are not necessarily the views of the author and many protagonists start out unlikable and graduating redeem themselves. History is about why things happened and the implications of this. So, history really cannot be separated from the historian's view. Even a history that consisted solely of facts, no interpretation, still has to choose the facts and their order. There is no such thing as truly objective history. I think alternate history counts as SF because history is a social science. A lot of Black and Hispanic voters for Trump are reconsidering their votes in light of the policies Trump is pursuing. I think men are reading a lot less because reading is harder, and requires more imagination, than watching TV, playing videogames, or scrolling on social media. The problems faced by print magazines go well beyond the SF publications. I just focus on the SF ones because that's what I read. Still, the two mystery digest magazines - *Ellery Queen's* and *Alfred Hitchcock's* - are owned by the same people and face the same problems as the SF digests.



**Brownian Motion #15**—I completely understand your issue with motivation. That’s one reason why I work on projects so the whole day doesn’t just disappear with nothing accomplished. Yes, copyright is why people get paid to write, but some writers, especially of fanfiction, write without any expectation of being paid. An Amateur Publication Association (APA) is a collection of fanzines. N’APA, as the name indicates, is an example of an APA. I certainly hope the U.S. doesn’t become a failed state but can bounce back under a new administration. There are plenty of fanfiction sites on the Internet, so you can post your fanfics there. Yes, any club with an all-volunteer staff has to find reliable people since we don’t pay.

On your comments to me: Yes, there have always been people who don’t read. The problem is their numbers are growing. I don’t think this is cyclical. The number of people reading for fun in the U.S. has dropped 40% in the last 20 years (see the article in this issue). Fewer readers means fewer people buying books which mean some writers will look for better paying ways to spend their time. I found *The Source* to be uneven and slow going in many places. Reading Steven Brust’s *Vlad Taltos* series is difficult because he is not writing them in any order. A useful chronological list can be found at [https://dragaera.fandom.com/wiki/Meta:Book\\_list#In\\_approximate\\_chronological\\_order](https://dragaera.fandom.com/wiki/Meta:Book_list#In_approximate_chronological_order) When I joined WSFA in 1994 (maybe 95), Dolly Gilliland had already passed (she died November 27, 1991), so I cannot answer your question about her. Sorry. The lack of agreement on “Common Sense” or “Common Courtesy” is why SF conventions need code of conduct that spell out behaviors that will not be tolerated. Unfortunately, people cannot always predict what actually matters to the future. This is why militaries that prepare for the last war are frequently caught unaware but the way the current war is fought. I can say that I’d be shocked if the US. ever truly invaded Canada to try to conquer its territory (yes, I know we did in 1812, I’m talking about the future).

**Murdered Master Mage** - I’m glad N3F is trying to promote itself. Please let me know what I can do to help. Maybe we could start in-person meetings at Worldcons. I usually read the Hugo Finalists, I can send

in reviews. I see literary science fiction as science fiction that is in print. This includes everything from pulp SF adventures all the way to complex stylists like Gene Wolfe. After all, the work of Philip K. Dick was considered low-level escapist fiction when first published but are now being analyzed in college classrooms.

### 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.



# Brandy Hall Issue 15 (November 2025)

*Brandy Hall* 15 is produced for *N'APA* mailing 279 (September 2025) by Mark Nelson.

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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). In *Brandy Hall* 15, inspired by mailing comments from Robert Jennings, I ran my thoughts on a definition of "Historical Science Fiction" that was printed in *Speculative Insight* 21. This is taken from a loc that I wrote on *Will This Wind* 39 (October 2025).

I've been very pressed for time this issue. I'm finishing this at the last possible moment. I only started writing it shortly before the last possible moment. I doubt that I'll be better organised next time as we're going away for four weeks.

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## The use of the word 'fanzine' in The Times: Part Two

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

### The use of the word fanzine: 1990

I've been too busy to work on this. I'm keeping the above in the hope that I will find time before the next mailing. However, that is also doubtful.

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*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.*

Robert Jennings. *The Swamp Spot Sentinel* 1.3. NAPA mailing 278.

Robert's comments reminded me of a loc that I'd written for *Will This Wind* 39, a postal gaming fanzine. I run the relevant part here.

Returning to the topic of alternative history novels. Issue 21 of the newsletter *Speculative Insight* contains an essay with the title "Towards a Taxonomy of Historical Science Fiction". (Google the title of the essay and you'll find it). The author discusses what they label "Historical Science Fiction". (The clue was in the title of the article). This is science fiction that is set in the past, at the time that

it was written. For example, *2001: A Space Odyssey* is not historical science fiction because when it was written 2001 was in the future. (A very sensible approach.) Brenda Clough identifies a number of sub-genres.

1. *Time-Travel*. Any version of time-travel in which characters travel to the past is historical science fiction.
2. *Alternative History*. "Alternate history is What If, selecting a single historical event and changing it see what happens". The Harry Turtledove Southern Victory books are mentioned. This doesn't pass muster with me. I don't have a problem with novels that change "a single historical event" and investigate the consequence, I just don't consider them to be SF. The definition seems to be rather elastic. Are novels in which "Rome has not fallen" or "Britain has lost to Hitler" changing "a single historical event"? Brenda mentions a novel, without naming it, in which "the Black Plague had killed 99% of the population of Europe". I would be more interested in reading that than novels in which "Rome has not fallen" or "Britain has lost to Hitler" - although I wouldn't mind reading Robert Harris' *Fatherland* (1992). I assume that the Black Plague novel is Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Years of Rice and Salt* (2002). I would like to read this, because I find the premise interesting. Is that because I used to teach mathematical epidemiology and at honours level I sometimes covered models that include disease-related fatalities? Maybe. Is it because I watched the science education TV series *Connections* (1978) and remember an episode in which James Burke discussed how the Black Death influenced cultural development? Maybe. I have a feeling that, somewhere in a box. I have my copy of the book that went with the first series of *Connections*.
3. *Historical Science Fiction*. Clough identifies historical science-fiction as alternative history in which the arrival of aliens in the past changes history. Maybe I misread her taxonomy. But having "Historical Science Fiction" as a subset of "Historical Science Fiction" does not seem correct to me. (In a village, the barber is the one who shaves all those, and only those, who do not shave themselves. Who shaves the barber?)
4. *Steam-punk*. This is defined as "SF taking place in the 19th and early 20th centuries... ((featuring) technical developments powered by steam, gears, or other 19th century technology)" Steampunk has developed its own group of costume fans, there's even a steampunk Wollongong page on Facebook. Never looked at it until today, pretty inactive.
5. *A miscellaneous category*. An example of this is the "Lady Astronaut series by Mary Robinette Kowal. In 1952 an asteroid takes out a large chunk of the United States and sets the Earth reeling towards uninhabitable." Clough doesn't consider this to be "alternative history" because "there's no specific, historical, battle lost or assassination averted to kick off the diversion into a different history". I would have thought that an asteroid taking out "a large chunk of the United States" constitutes a specific event that kicks "off the diversion into a different history". Brenda suggests that a better fit would be for "aliens arriving in the past". Am I being too literal in considering that the "aliens arriving in the past" genre requires that aliens arrive in the past?

Brenda puts forward "*The Romance of Alexander*", "a long poem in Old French compiled by many authors in the 12th century" as the earliest example of historical science fiction. I hope I don't sound negative about Brenda's essay - I enjoyed reading it.

## The Mathom House

### *Intermission #156 (Ahrvid Engholm)*

My comments on Intermission #156 were distributed with the last mailing. Looks like someone made a mistake!

### *Fandomain-N\_01*

Welcome to *NAPA*!

*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.*

I have sometimes daydreamed about joining FAPA. But the idea of photocopying my contribution and then posting it out to the United States... that's enough for me to crash out of my daydream and back into reality.

Some random comments inspired by what you wrote.

- \* The only audio book I've ever purchased is a version of *The Hobbit*, produced by the BBC for a children's TV show in 1979. (This was discussed in *Brandy Hall* 12, distributed with *NAPA* 276. I still haven't listened to it.
- \* When I lived in the UK I used to listen to many a novel that was dramatised for BBC Radio Four.
- \* The only novel I've read by Clive Barker is *Weaveworld*, which I read in 1988. Currently, I remember exactly zero of what it's about. I remember raving about it in a loc I wrote to *Northern Flame*, a Canadian postal diplomacy fanzine.
- \* I haven't read anything on kindle, because I am still wedded to the idea of reading hardcopy books; books with "real" pages.
- \* The only magna I'm reading at the moment is volume one of *Dead Dada Demon's Deeded Destruction*. I picked this up from a comic shop in Canberra, they didn't have what I was looking and I didn't want to leave empty-handed.

Three Years ago the alien invaded Tokyo.

Nothing was ever the same again.

But after a while, even impending doom starts to feel ordinary.

The Happen Self-Defence Forces are **STILL** looking for a way to combat the alien threat, but so far conventional weapons have had no effect. Maybe it's time to try something **UNCONVENTIONAL**.

Meanwhile, Kayoed Koyama and her best friend avidly track the aliens' movements on social media and less enthusiastically study for college entrance exams. When the **END OF THE WORLD** looms overhead, you learn to take things one step at a time.

I'm about one-third of my way through it. Why did I buy it? I liked the ideas that the aliens are there, ignoring humanity, and it seems that humanity can do nothing about them. Life must continue!

- \* Doraemon is my wife's favourite anime. Courtesy of watching it every Sunday morning at an impressionable age! On our first holiday in Japan a must-visit destination was the Fujiko · F · Fujio Museum in Kawasaki.
- \* I've never read anything by Stephen King.
- \* We haven't been to the movies since we became parents, slightly over three years ago. At one time we were planning on going to some of the sessions that are put in especially for parents. We never managed that.
- \* For various reasons I have a soft spot for *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. I had the whole of season 7 on video tapes: they were gradually released in the UK with two episodes to a tape. I also had the whole of season 3, most of season 6 and a selection of episodes from all the other seasons. I bought season 1 on DVD about 15 years ago. Sometimes I think about buying the rest of them. Maybe I will, maybe I won't. I gave all my ST:TNG videos to my brother when I moved to Australia, along with my complete set of *Blake's 7*.

## *Intermission #157 (Ahrvid Engholm)*

I enjoyed reading your account of Eurocon, two members of ANZAPA also attended and their reports were distributed in the last-but-one mailing. Once a convention is sufficiently large, delegates who do not hang out often write reports of what appear to be wildly different events. And sufficiently large need not be very large.

*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.*

It might not be reasonable for a convention to know the nationalities of their attendees, unless this information was requested during registration. However, I think they should have known how many attendees had registered from which country. Though perhaps that information wasn't requested during registration? If I were running a convention I'd like to know how international it was, particularly if it was going under the name of EuroCon.

*Sweden and Finland have the highest concentration of scattered islands in the world*

It's not that I don't believe you, but I felt a need to check that. Finland and Sweden, in that order, to have the largest number of islands with approximately 200,000 each - depending upon what you count. For example, it seems that it's common to count islands in lakes as being islands. They are indeed islands. But when I think of an island I think of a chunk of land that is surrounded by salt water, not fresh water. (*Robinson Crusoe* would have been a very different novel if Robinson had been marooned on an island surrounded by fresh water.) It also seems that the Swedish authorities count unnamed islands whereas many other countries only count named islands.

*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 Lapland*

It even grows well on Mars!

## *Brownian Motion 15 (Garth Spencer)*

Ryct Robert Jennings

*Until recently, I didn't know there were technical differences between swamps, bogs, fens, and I don't know what else.*

My wife asked me today what the difference was between the words "film" and "movie". I thought that maybe film was an older word and movie was a newer word for the same thing - film being a relic of a time when movies were shot on film. If I had more time I would look this up in the Oxford English Dictionary, but it's going to be a rush to make the deadline as it is. Still, there are some differences in usage. You don't say, "do you want to go to the films?" And I don't say, "do you want to watch a film tonight" though it does make sense to ask that question. Perhaps there's a tiny suggestion that a film is more highbrow than a movie?

Ryctm

*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.*

The Australian Tax Packs used to be available from the Post Office. Then there was a year, perhaps two, when they were no longer available at the P.O. but you could collect one from the local ATO branch. Then you *had* to fill in your tax return using the ATO website. (I believe it may have still been possible to submit a tax return by the post, but it was made difficult for the ordinary member of the public to do so.) I didn't like changing from postal to electronic submission. That dislike is a consequence of my general distaste for change. If pressed, I will admit that electronic submission has made life easier than it was.

## *The Swamp Pot Sentinel 1.3 (Robert Jennings)*

I liked your cartoon “Tragedy #457”. I wonder if anyone has written a story in which fortune tellers could force the future accurately? I’m sure that someone must have!

The nearest I came to joining a book club was twenty-five years ago when I lived in Canberra. I spied a note had gone up in an independent book-shop, asking anyone interested in joining a new book club to contact X. I contacted X, but was too late. She already had enough people to start her own book club. However, she put me in contact with the second tier of people who had contacted her. I bought the suggested book for our first meeting... and never heard any more about it.

The local library runs several book clubs but I’ve not found time to contact them. Perhaps next year? But it won’t be a SF book club.

Ryct Garth Spencer

*And on that note, I don’t think having a university degree, or a science focus really makes for better government leaders.*

I believe that Australia would have a better government if more of the MPs and ministers had science degrees. Unfortunately, too many MPs with non-science degrees think that their university training has given them the skills to find “errors” in scientific arguments - without knowing any science.

Ryct Kevin Trainor Jr

*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.*

The Morrow Project is a long forgotten name. Now that you’ve mentioned it I vaguely remember it from my 1980s involvement with RGP. I never played it. I might never have seen it. But I must have seen the name somewhere.

Ryct Heath Row

*Molded action figures and statues are now an integral part of most comic book store inventories in this new century.*

How has the inventory of a comic book store has changed over your lifetime? When I went up to Leeds as an undergraduate in 1986 Forbidden Planet seemed to mainly contain science fiction/fantasy novels, with only a small number of comics. Two years later it seemed to mainly contain comics, with only a small number of novels. By the time I left Leeds in 1997 it was perhaps 50% comics and 50% tie-in merchandise. There were only one or two handfuls of novels, which were all tie-ins. Looking at the Forbidden Planet web page today, the first time I’ve ever done so, the options to click are (starting on the left): Toys & Collectibles, Comics & Graphic Novels, Magna, Clothing & Accessories, Books,

Home & Gifts, Gaming, Subscriptions, and Sale & Offers. I should have mentioned that between 1989 and 1997 they'd also been a huge increase in the number of magna titles. I don't remember in 1989, but that could be because in 1989 I wasn't interested in magna and wasn't reading any. I assume that the first option, "Toys & Collectibles", is their most popular seller. Books are listed fifth.

## *Ye Murthered Master Mage 278* (George Phillies)

*The disappearance of fandom is an issue. My other hobby is in even worse shape. New members of AHIKS 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.*

I'm toying with the idea of buying a board war-game next year. This means that I probably won't. But I'm sufficiently interested to have watched a few YouTube videos on solitaire games. Pacific War 1942 looks like the kind of game that I'd enjoy. Unfortunately, it seems to be out of print and the only second-hand copies I can find were on the market for way more than I'm willing to spend.

## *Archive Midwinter* (Jefferson Swycaffer)

Ryct Garth Spencer

*Rct me, 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!*

Look, folks, there's a lot of illegal stuff going on — a lot — and it's because of some very, very bad people. Total disasters. Believe me.

I wouldn't be surprised if you turn up on some future Saturday and discover that the National Guard are patrolling the streets to keep citizens safe.

## *R.A.I.L. #8* (Adrian Kresnak)

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

We recently went, for the first time, to the New South Wales Rail Museum. They have a nice collection of steam trains that have been repaired. Unfortunately, they weren't running a steam train on the day we visited - our visit coincided with a Transport Heritage Expo and the working steam trains were all in use at Sydney's Central Station.

*Are you planning to pick up any October comics? I'd love to talk about them!*

I kicked my addiction to comics in 1997. The only titles I buy now are a couple of magna.

## *Intermission #158 (Ahrvid Engholm)*

Bob Shaw was one of the two GoH at my first SF convention (LuCon in February 1988). I almost didn't go to his GoH talk on the grounds that, as I hadn't read any of his fiction, I didn't expect to enjoy it. Luckily one of my friends told me that I should go, and they were right. I don't remember any of it, but I do remember that it was an entertaining talk.

Thirty-seven years later, I still haven't read any Bob Shaw. I might have to do something about that some time in the future, but not any-time soon. I believe that a book containing some of his convention talks has been published. I wouldn't rush to buy that. I haven't read any of his fiction, I don't expect that I will enjoy it...

## *Esmeralda County Line 12 (Kevin Trainor Jr)*

Ryctm

*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.*

That's a very interesting notion. Very recently, two books have been published on the History of Australia. One I think was written by an academic historian and one was written by a former Australian Prime Minister (Tony Abbot). These have been characterised as being a left-of-centre and a right-of-centre history respectively. I'm interested in reading both of these. Criticisms of Abbott's book are that it "underplays colonial violence, Indigenous dispossession, and frames history through a very masculine, conservative lens" (ChatGPT, but I've seen those comments made in reviews). The colonisation of Australia and its ongoing effects on First Nations People is a dividing line between conservatives and left-of-centre politicians and political commentators.

## *Samizdat 31 (Samuel Lubell)*

Thanks for summarising some (all?) of the programming at Capclave. It was fun to identify the items that I would have been interested in attending. Items that stood out-for-me: *Are Shorts Still the Heart?* (I hope you cover where's the best places to read the shorts), *Benevolent AIs* (are Benevolent AIs just the other face of SkyNet?), *Can Humanity Colonize Other Worlds* (No, at least according to our current level of scientific understanding. So I'm not really interested in this topic... except I am interested in your final sentence: `What books have the best colonization stories, and what have authors done to make settling worlds seem plausible?`), *Common SF/Fantasy Tropes*, *Genre v Literary Fiction* (is the

2015 Booker prize-winning *Orbital SF*? Not in my opinion.), and *Morally Grey Characters* (are they more realistic? Are they more common in literary fiction?!)

Re What's the Matter With Kids Today.

The Australian Government passed legislation that is coming to effect on 10th December 2025. This will ban children under the age of 16 from having accounts on named social media platforms. The current list of banned platforms is: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X, Threads, YouTube, Reddit, and Kick. The list is dynamic and new platforms can be added or removed. The justification for this policy is twofold: to shield children from online harms (mental health risks, addictive design, harmful content) and to give children "breathing space" to develop digital, social and emotional skills. The emphasis is on the social platforms to introduce measures to vet age, not on the parents to prevent their children using the banned platforms. (They're not banned from using the platforms. They're banned from having an account on the platform.)

The rules regarding the use of mobile phones in schools vary from state-to-state, education is nominally a state issue not a Federal issue. (However, the Federal Government is involved in funding education and in setting national standards.) In New South Wales the rules include:

- Mobile phones are banned in all **NSW public high schools** (from Term 4, 2023).
- During school hours (class, recess, lunch), phones must be turned off and out of sight.
- There are exceptions: for educational use or for health reasons (e.g., students monitoring blood sugar).

Thanks for reprinting your notes on the Philcon Panel from 1999. That was interesting reading, particular in light of your column "What's the Matter with Kids Today".

*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.*

I was ill at the start of July with a seasonal ailment (remember, it's Winter in Australia in July!). There were a couple of days when all I wanted to do was to sit in front of the TV and watch some non-demanding TV. Luckily my wife's sister and her family were visiting, so I could use their netflix account. I decided to watch Wednesday Season 1, my YouTube feed had been showing me clips and these had piqued my interest. Although I enjoyed Season 1, I wasn't overjoyed to discover that there was a second season. I feared that there would be a downward spiral in quality and that the Wednesday character would inevitably lose their edge. I'll have to wait for their next visit before I can watch season two.

Ryct Robert Jennings

*My local library shelves fantasy with the general fiction books but science fiction has its own section.*

My local library has separate sections for fantasy and for science fiction.