

THE OBDURATE EYE #56

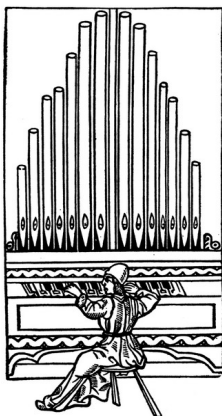
October 2025

Another fanzine from Garth Spencer



"I wanna ride too!"

THE OBDURATE EYE #56, October 2025, a personal zine from Garth Spencer, 6960 Damon Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5S 3H7, Email garth.van.spencer@gmail.com or hrothgarweems@gmail.com. Garth acknowledges that he does this on the denounced territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm, səlilwətał, and skwxwú7mesh peoples. This zine endorses the Sputum in 2027 and Port Alberti in 2030 bids.



The organ of no clique or party

Table of Contents

A Modest Proposal	1
Lox.....	2
A Crank Theory.....	9
And Now the News.....	13
Movie Reviews.....	13
What We Do on the Web.....	16

Art Credits

“I Wanna Ride Too!” (Alan White)	cover
Clip art.....	pp. 1, 2, 8, 9
Alan White.....	p. 16



A Modest Proposal

For the sake of my mental health, one of my strategies is not to pay much attention to the news.

When I do hear the news, though, it sounds very much as though everyone forgot ... or many people never heard ... about some ordinary manners and social constraints that my recent ancestors took for granted. The fact that the different political tribes in the English-speaking world seem to accuse each other of any and all sins is just one example.

We've been talking for generations about equal rights, and civil rights, and individual rights, and for many good reasons. Now, what about civil *duties*? Individual citizens' duties, to their families, their friends, their neighbours, their municipalities, their countries, and to complete strangers? You can hardly have rights without duties, now can you?

If you and I checked the daily newspapers and television news to see how general behaviour is reported, of course we would find many tales of crime and corruption and discrimination and co-workers treating each other rudely. Unfortunately, that just shows us *how news is defined*. Examples of good behaviour, integrity, and character don't seem to get quite the same press, unless you get a lot of inspirational (and sometimes suspiciously anodized) stories in Facebook or YouTube videos.

At this point you have to wonder how different people in different communities expect each other to behave. Do we even have roughly similar checklists of specific actions that added up to common courtesy ... or good citizenship ... or how to be a good relative, a good friend, and a good neighbour? In some families, ethnic groups, or religious communities, the social code is pretty explicit. It can also be confining and restrictive and simplistic, but it's *there*, something definite you can relate to. In other subcultures (and we all live in subcultures, it seems), if there is any social code, it's pretty vague and nebulous.

Of course there are occupational subcultures, such as construction trades versus day traders, entrepreneurs versus career management, technology developers compared to

home contractors, or research scientists versus televangelists. I am struck by the distinctions between all these civilians and, oh, let's see ... the military subculture, and their frequent reference to military discipline.

Is there, or can there be, a form of *civilian* self-discipline? What would it look like?

Since we seem to be caught in some sort of speculative fiction universe anyway, we might as well be creative and think about promoting a secular, nonpartisan philosophy of conduct. I think the principles would include practising mutual respect, even for people in opposing political parties; good manners, without discriminating against people in other ethnic groups; and rational consideration for everybody, including bullies, braggarts, one-uppers and manipulators. These practices can be based on self-respect, financial self-reliance, and a willingness to go to a bit of trouble for others ... including the disabled, the disadvantaged, the homeless, and convicts. The goal would be to make as many people as capable, as able to avail themselves of opportunities, as able to house and provide for themselves, and as able to rehabilitate themselves as possible.

Yes, I know, some people *can't* become independent. Some people *can't* be helped, either, or *can't* be rehabilitated. That is not a reason to stop trying.

I'm probably preaching to the choir, or challenging people who insist on feeling endangered – or on writing people off, if they're outside one's own subculture. But I will insist on pointing out what I consider to be common sense.

The current disintegration of civilized behaviour will not last forever.

So, how many people do we have to kill to make it so?



Lox

George Phillis phillies@4liberty.net, September 1, 2025

A few thoughts:

As always, a fine zine with many different topics.

((Thank you!))

What did you have in mind by: "You have a more all-inclusive definition of "fanzine" than I."?

((Rightly or wrongly, I tend to set A Pas and haziness apart from fanzines. For that matter I tend to set contemporary zines apart from fanzines. The question is which sets include other sets.))

I confess I read

"Let's just pause on that for a second. A sitting ML who is responsible for provincial finances is wishing a founding province had left Confederation. Because of taxes? That's not just a cheap political shot. That's a fundamental misunderstanding of how Canada works."

and had the impression that the author did not understand what had been said by Jason Stephan.

((I am less and less convinced that understanding is even a purpose for political speech and writing.))

On one hand, Canada has an equalization process. Money moves hither and thither. McClure talks about some details of money moving hither and thither. She skipped the SWIFT system and the internal Canadian system. Stephan was talking about a net result. Those two people are not in disagreement. McClure thinks Stephan does not understand the process. My impression is that Stephan does understand the process, but does not approve of its consequences.

I also read Hawks' comments, at least until the rant and rave level became boring. It would make a fine outline for a silly dystopia novel. Canadians will find the Texas law issue obscure, as will most Americans. Partisan gerrymanders are an old American custom, named after Governor Gerry of Massachusetts, Governor here from 1810 to 1812, so nothing new here.

I quote him:

"Five seats to hold the US. House hostage after a 2026 election that, by all current indicators, will be a biblical catastrophe for the Republican Party."

Hawks' catastrophe claim is not supported by key data. The most reliable indicator at this time is party registration (voters in 30 of the 50 states can register by party and vote in their primary to chose candidates), which relative to 2024 is trending heavily in the Republican direction, suggesting that they will not do badly. But we are in now, and our election is then.

((I don't always comment on people's opinions, especially if I don't know quite enough to evaluate them. So I present them without comment, for others to evaluate as they will.))

Leigh Edmond leighedmonds01@gmail.com, September 2, 2025

Thanks for *The Obdurate Eye* 55. It's an interesting issue with all that social and political stuff contained therein.

I don't know but maybe I've reached an age where I don't bother myself about what others think of me or I of them. We seem to get along okay without too much introspection. Normal people do what they like and I do what suits me.

((I was not concerned about what others think of me, but finding out what the social norms are – which is beginning to strike me as a wild goose chase. I used to get abuse from everyone for not knowing everything they failed to teach me, which is a thin excuse for pursuing this issue at my age. I also used to feel my life depended on learning the social norms, which turned out not to be true.))

Perhaps the other thing is not to believe what everyone tells me, so I take it all with a grain of salt and see what makes sense to me. The other skill is to keep my head down when there looks to be trouble about. I suppose the trick is to know when it's safe to stick your head up, which is where fandom and fanzines are very useful.

Do they still make and sell Mecca no? I had it when I was little and it helped me pass the time when I was stuck in bed for a few weeks in the mid-1950s. I don't know what happened to that stuff because my parents bought me an Air fix kit a little bit later, and it's been all downhill since then. I had to build an extension onto the garage here to accommodate it all. That's another advantage to getting on in years, I'm no longer that kid who plays with toy aero planes, I'm eccentric and we all know that is a lovable trait. People also seem to think it's good that a person of my age has a hobby. At least ordinary people think of making little aero planes is 'normal' so it's just as well they don't know that I also write letters to people I've never met in far off places like Canada. That would be weird!

((You know, I'm not sure myself whether Mecca no is still available. Must find out.))

Having missed your previous issue I'm not sure what Mark Nelson is responding to in his letter of comment. Many of them are things that it never occurred to me to want to do and some are things I'm not very good at. The only thing on that list I might be reasonable at is giving compliments, but that's only because people like getting them so there is no end of opportunities the practice that skill. I have no idea how fly a flag and I don't know that I have ever needed to. From my couple of visits to the United States I gather that it is taught in primary school because there are US flags flying everywhere as though it's a sign of patriotism or loyalty or something to do so. They're welcome to it. So far as I'm concerned, flying the Australian flag on anything but government buildings is Australian and trying too hard. And that is definitely Australian.

((Mark was responding to my several attempts to find out what “common sense” is. I cast a wide net: looking for any and all of the knowledge and skills people may assume are “everybody-knows” kinds of things, and printing lists of them in this fanzine. That’s what Mark Nelson was responding to.

((Of course, the next thing I discovered is that if there is a mythical “common sense,” or a store of common cultural knowledge, it seems that real people really bother to learn only bits and pieces, or come across random selections of things everyone might know ... plus a lot of urban legends and popular delusions.))

So Canada is a confederation. I had to look that up to see what it means. There doesn't seem to be much difference between that and a federation, which is what we have here in the Commonwealth of Australia. Given that both our countries began as British colonies and didn't get too annoyed with the Mother Country to throw a tantrum and set off on their own, I suppose it's not surprising that we have similar forms of government....

((Yeah, that's about the size of it. Which is why we have British-style parliaments in Australia and Canada and other former British possessions, rather than the unique republican system the United States invented.))

This letter was going to be longer but I decided to go and have a look at the Canadian constitutions, the old one and the new one. They make very interesting reading. In relation to your 'About Canada' about financial relations between the Provinces, I see that a section of the 1982 constitution is very strong on rights and that Part III is specifically about equalization and regional disparities. Obviously the Jason Stephan that Nancy McClure mentions is unaware of that provision in the constitution. Which would not be unusual if the standard of your politicians is anything like ours.

Then you followed on with a long piece about the state of the United States. It must be rather unnerving to be sitting on the same continent as that powder keg.

((It always has been.))

I was more than astounded to glance at the list of new releases for September. Just over 100 fantasy and sf books! And they say that reading is going out of fashion. How can anyone keep up with that lot?

((Walter Sinclair and his wife, the proprietors of White Dwarf Books in Vancouver [a.k.a. Dead Write Books], periodically send me their lists of upcoming book releases – evidently they do a lot of research, or get a lot of book release information from distributors or publishers.

((I don't know how they do it.))

David Malinowski, murdock@axion.net, September 3, 2025

Hey Garth, thank you for the insightful article about 'civil war' in this issue.

Have a look into America: The Farewell Tour, which came out in 2018.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeE5WnTUsF8>

I think the brutal reality staring us all in the face is part of the reason sci-fi fiction is having challenges to find readers or engagement; the real world is much more needing our engagement, fully.

The fictional worlds could be there as a vision, or inspiration; yet it is Machiavelli and Sun Tu that must be understood in order to survive into those inspirations.

Sad to say that Malinowski's poetry may be the only one to present a way ...

XXX XXX XXX

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsGTqVJLmD8>

Born like this
Into this
As the chalk faces smile
As Mrs. Death laughs
As the elevators break
As political landscapes dissolve
As the supermarket bag boy holds a college degree
As the oily fish spit out their oily prey
As the sun is masked
We are Born like this
Into this Into these carefully mad wars
Into the sight of broken factory windows of emptiness
Into bars where people no longer speak to each other Into fist fights that end as
shootings and knifing
Born into this Into hospitals which are so expensive that it's cheaper to die
Into lawyers who charge so much it's cheaper to plead guilty
Into a country where the jails are full and the madhouses closed Into a place
where the masses elevate fools into rich heroes
Born into this
Walking and living through this
Dying because of this
Muted because of this
Castrated
Debauched
Disinherited
Because of this
Fooled by this
Used by this
Pissed on by this
Made crazy and sick by this
Made violent
Made inhuman
By this
The heart is blackened
The fingers reach for the throat
The gun
The knife
The bomb
The fingers reach toward an unresponsive god
The fingers reach for the bottle
The pill
The powder
We are born into this sorrowful deadliness
We are born into a government 60 years in debt
That soon will be unable to even pay the interest on that debt

*And the banks will burn
Money will be useless
There will be open and unpunished murder in the streets
It will be guns and roving mobs
Land will be useless
Food will become a diminishing return
Nuclear power will be taken over by the many
Explosions will continually shake the earth
Radiated robot men will stalk each other
The rich and the chosen will watch from space platforms
Dante's Inferno will be made to look like a children's playground
The sun will not be seen and it will always be night
Trees will die
All vegetation will die
Radiated men will eat the flesh of radiated men
The sea will be poisoned
The lakes and rivers will vanish
Rain will be the new gold
The rotting bodies of men and animals will stink in the dark wind
The last few survivors will be overtaken by new and hideous diseases
And the space platforms will be destroyed by attrition
The petering out of supplies
The natural effect of general decay
And there will be the most beautiful silence never heard
Born out of that.
The sun still hidden there
Awaiting the next chapter.*

XXX XXX XXX

Many more poems of his speak to the general despair of the ordinary man.

Read more of Nam Chomsky, Chris Hedges, Howard Inn ... less fiction – since we will be needed to have clear heads to either survive or re-build with the worn tools left behind.

Maybe Kipling will be a good author to examine also.

Ultimately we each find beauty where we find it, beauty is the detection is spirit, may you find that which feeds your spirit Garth.

Lloyd & Yvonne Penney penneys@bell.net, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON, M9C 2B2, September 5, 2025

Many thanks for *The Obdurate Eye* #55. It's actually a little chilly outside, and it's been raising on and off...what better reason to stay inside and get caught up with fanzines?

Senior moments? I have them all the time, especially memory lapses. Sometimes, I think senility/Alzheimer's is creeping in, but it's just that I have a very full plate of

things to do right now. I'd need to clone myself a few times just to have the time to get it all done. I have to make some hard choices about what I continue to do, and what I need to give up in order to maintain some semblance of sanity.

((There are three things you need to do. 1) list your priorities in order of importance, together with what it takes to achieve them. 2) make a reasonably achievable schedule of things you have to do, whether they're priority matters or not. 3) ... what was I saying?))

Mark Nelson does give a good list of Life Skills, but some of them, any of us might need or not need to know. We all have our special circumstances. On July 1, I flew a string of Canadian flags from our balcony by Highway 427 in the west end of Toronto. No idea how many people saw them, but it was a fun time.

((He was actually responding to my suggested Life Skills list, which keeps evolving.))

My col...following the rules would be made easier if they were taught to us before we graduate high school. Courses I took before I graduated included typing and business practice. It may have been the only way I learned to type, keep a checkbook, and balance my bank accounts.

((“The Rules” on people’s minds may only be unspoken social norms ... unconsciously assumed, never articulated, and therefore wildly inconsistent. Then again, they may have outdated or foreign social expectations. One example is the idea that one older child effectively supports the whole family, while a younger child gets all the approval and attention. Another example is the idea that “in our family we get a degree, follow a profession, build up a financial estate, get married, buy a house, and produce an average 2.75 kids” – when we actually expect a shortage of skilled tradespeople in Canada, and a shortage of affordable homes, or a shortage of avenues to financial security. Still another is the idea “never complain, never explain,” which results in a lot of confusion about what The Rules even are.

((Everybody has rules, but not everyone knows what they are, or even knows what they themselves expect. I think this field of study is called sociology or social psychology or something vague like that.))

The Auroras ... I know almost none of the people here, but one event we did go to was the launch of the latest *Augur Magazine* collection of the “Best Of” in one book. There is a large group of *Augur Magazine* supporters, and they are truly a diverse group of people, re: age, gender, color and orientation. They have a tight community there, and the fact there are several *Augur* people on the ballot says a lot about their participation. We have a lot to learn from them.

Lots of movie reviews (movies I have not seen), lots of good commentary on Truman politics (trying hard not to lose my temper), and lots of books I will probably never read ... well, I can't really comment on those, so I guess I am done for the moment. Thank your this one, and I am sure another will be along at any moment. See you then!

((I'm trying to pivot the Royal Swiss Navy to function as Canadian infrastructure and support for the American anti-fascist resistance movement, if and when it is needed. No volunteers so far.))

We Also Heard From: Perry Middle miss, Alan White



A Crank Theory

Is it mannish to try and work up one's own original crank theory?

My own idea of a crank theory would be my version of psycho history, or a social calculus ... some kind of symbolic system like formal logic notation, adapted to describe social events.

Obviously people in many professions and social sciences (and criminal careers) use *some* kind of reasoning to observe, identify, and predict how individuals or groups behave. Equally obvious is that demographers, insurance agencies, advertisers, publicly-traded corporations, political parties and governments try to shape how large groups of people will behave.

It is not obvious, though, what a rigorous – or disciplined – social calculus would look like.

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Again and again, I had the feeling that the basic facts in such a field are not quantitative, as the basic facts of mechanical physics, chemistry, or electronics are quantitative. We can measure time, space, mass, identify elements, measure heat and light and other radiations, electrical current and magnetic fields, and calculate their interactions ... but how do we measure and predict human motivations, drives, perceptions, impulses and reactions?

Clearly I never got the hang of intuiting what was accepted and expected of me, what kinds of speech or gestures made people fly off the handle, how to interpret nonverbal language, or why human reactions are so inconsistent from one person to another. And the language in any studies of social behaviour was so vague and generic, so directionless, that I had to find my own way to pin it down to actual, specific actions that actual, specific people carry out in actual, specific times and places.

(Clearly I was never exposed to psychology, sociology or anthropology courses with any mathematical rigour; so in classic crank fashion, I am starting out by reinventing the wheel.)

So, several times I have started to work out an adaptation of symbolic logic, flavoured with things I learned about set theory and probability theory.

Because I got to learn more than an introduction to formal logic, I learned about predicate logic, which gets down to individual objects and events and people, and acknowledges that you can't use on individuals and only parts of groups the same all-or-nothing rules that you can use on statements about whole classes of things, or people. I was surprised by the number of people who really didn't know there was a brand of logic that actually applied to reality.

The way I learned formal logic notation, you could use the basic letters and symbols this way:

Lower-case letters **a** through **t** could signify actual specific things, or people, called "individuals";

Lower-case letters **u** through **w** could be used for hypothetical specific things;

Lower-case letters **x** through **z** could be used for anonymous members of some large class, or set;

Upper-class letters (**A** through **Z**) could be used to signify large classes, or sets ... or could be used to signify some designated characteristics ... or could be used to signify actions, or events, either carried out or experienced by individual things (or people). Interestingly, all these meanings amounted to much the same thing, in formal logic.

A simple clause such as

"Xa" (1)

or

"Xab" (2)

could mean something like

1. "Fred (**a**) saw a demonstration (**X**)," or
2. "the bank (**a**) denied a loan application (**X**) to Frank (**b**),"

depending on how the letter symbols are defined. (Such definitions would form a numbered list at the beginning of a formal logical argument. Each succeeding line would state a step in the logical reasoning.)

Operators such as "and" (**^**), "or" (**^**), "not" (**~**), "if ... then" (**⊃**), are used to relate such simple clauses, with results such as

(Xa ⊃ Yb) (3)

(Xa ⊃ ~Yc) (4)

(Xa ⊃ ~Yb) (5)

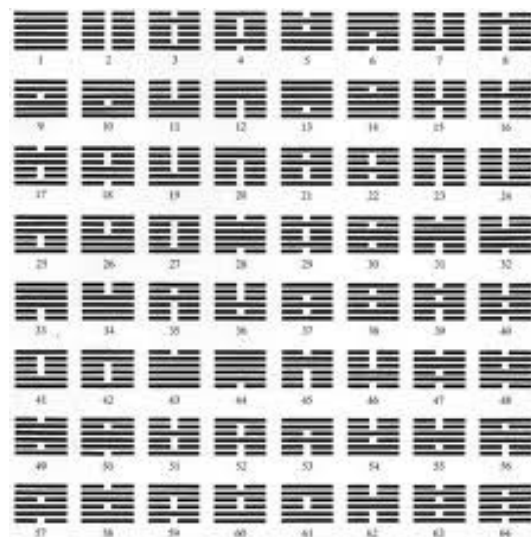
P(Xad ⊃ ~Ybd) = #% (6)

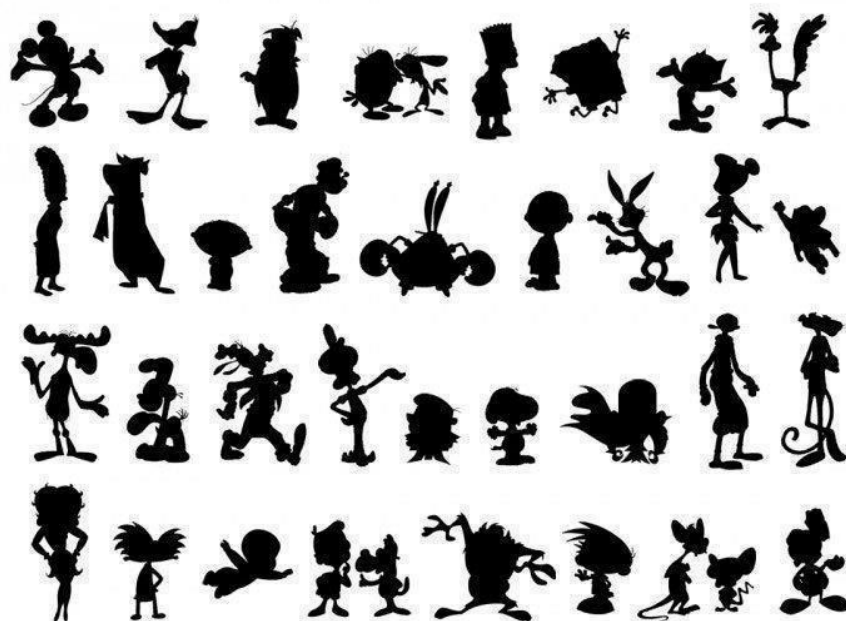
Which can be defined to convey

3. "People (**a**) under economic pressure (**X**) start looking for scapegoats / saviours (**Yb**)," or
4. "If a majority of people (**a**) are under economic pressure (**X**), those in the top 10% or 1% income percentiles (**c**) are not ($\sim Y$)," or
5. "If a majority of people (**a**) are experiencing economic pressure (**X**), the minority in decision-making circles (**b**) are not ($\sim Y$)," or
6. "If some factor or factors (**d**) are putting people under economic pressure (**X**), the likelihood (**P**) that decision-makers (**b**) will effectively address (**Y**) those factors is just (**#**) percent."

Of course I've skipped some additional steps, demonstrating when sets of people overlap, or how much solidarity or responsibility decision-makers or people in high income percentiles have for majority populations. And it also matters to define the time and place or area where these populations exist. These can be covered by applying notational conventions from set theory and probability theory.

Knowing that there are probably way more kinds of people and kinds of situations than alphabetic symbols can handle, I began to wonder how many personality types, situations and reactions there are to be symbolized. For a while I imagined that the 16 Myers-Briggs personality types could be adequately symbolized by the 16 characters in the Younger Futhark, and the range of situations we may confront can be symbolized by the 64 characters of the *I Ching*. Then I went through a phase when I thought we had to use more symbols, corresponding to all the cartoon characters that human personalities resembled.





Suggested symbols for sociological notation system

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I encountered technical problems, of course, but as time went on it emerged that I didn't have a lot of the basic factual information to inform this effort.

A lot of what I was trying to work out depended on observing people's tells – tones of voice, micro expressions, gestures and stance – all the nonverbal, connotative information that *escapes* diverseness observers. Like me.

This basically makes nonsense of my whole effort. Until there is a body of data, there is nothing to process. Anyway, a poker player or a con artist doesn't have to scribble symbols and formulas in order to watch the people he's playing. The effort is intuitive, not cerebral; implicit, not explicit.

It appears that this was a fool's errand.

#

After writing the first draft of the above (in NAPS #278, September 2025), it dawned upon me that the kind of symbolic system I was working up is only academically useful, the same way that the syntactical analysis system is useful. A mind like mine can use it to analyze a biography, a story's structure, historical events, or (perhaps) true crime stories.

After a great deal of effort I may learn to deduce what kind of emotional baggage causes some people to behave irrationally. I might even learn how to force them to admit their assumptions and neuroses, however irrational.

Or I could just give up trying to deal with other people's bullshit.

And Now the News

GUY LILLIAN PASSES ON

Guy H. Lillian III has passed on at the age of 76. Guy Lillian was known in fandom as the editor of the per zine *Spartacus*, the genuine *Challenger*, and the zine-review-zine *The Zine Dump*. Sadly, he suffered two strokes, and was contending with Parkinson's disease, before his demise. He will be missed.

Ni Frey writes, "A much longer, knowledgeable and heartfelt memorial by **Mike Slyer** is here: [HTTP://file770.com/guy-h-lillian-iii-1949-2025/](http://file770.com/guy-h-lillian-iii-1949-2025/)".

(*This Here ...* #90, Sept. 2025)

AI KERFUFFLE

SMOG News reports that vendors of AI art appeared at both Fan Expo Canada (Toronto, Ontario) and at Dragon Con, with varying degrees of opposition.

(*SMOG News* 5:1 [from *Bleeding Cool*], Sept. 2025)

Movie Reviews

Duncan Shields (Facebook, Sept 12th, 2025)

Puppet Master (1989) – A cult classic that spawned ten sequels, one crossover film, two spin offs and a reboot. Pretty slow but a neat story. A group of psychics are summoned to a hotel for an associate's funeral. He has reputedly discovered the secret of transferring his life force into inanimate objects. While they try to figure out what's happening, little puppets cause havoc, murdering folk. Some cool stop motion and practical effects. The puppet designs are iconic. It takes a loooong time to get going, though. The "so bad it's good" factor is high. Some good imagery, though. I'm glad I finally saw it but I hope that the sequels picked up the pace a little. Only for the patient 80s cheese aficionados. – streaming on Tubi and Internet Archive. Also check out Video Cat on Ambience Street. [*Vancouver*]

The Great McGinty (1940) – Preston Sturges writes and directs another interesting story here starring Brian Dunlevy and Preston's usual troupe of character actors. Light but tight. Down and out losers in some South American bar talk to each other about how they used to be a big deal. The film unfolds in flashback. Homeless tough guy McGinty works his way up through criminal ranks to become Governor of a state and shenanigans ensue. The full story of one man's meteoric rise and fall. Full, engaging story and a good drama with some comedic touches and snappy writing. High quality. – VPL DVD. [VPL = *Vancouver Public Library*] Streaming on Internet Archive. Also check out Video Cat on Cambie.

The Verdict (1982) – Fantastic, of course. I somehow never saw this. Nominated for five Academy awards and a big box office success. Paul Newman plays a down-and-out alcoholic lawyer given one last David-and-Goliath case to save his career and soul. Its well-trod cliché material for a movie but with Sidney Lumet directing a David Mamet script and a stacked cast (Newman, Charlotte Rampling, James Mason, Jack Warden, Milo O'Shea, Lindsay Krause), you get dynamite. A beautifully-paced film with great cinematography and a sparse score that lets the emotional beats resonate on their own. It has a sad, lived-in soul. Great final shot, too. A classic of the genre so its no surprise I liked it a lot. – VPL DVD. Available for rent/purchase from all the usual places. Also check out Video Cat on Cambie.

The Taking of Deborah Logan (2014) – Found-footage horror documenting the mental unraveling of Alzheimer's sufferer Deborah Logan. As they film, it becomes apparent that something supernatural might be going on. The lead actor, Jill Larson, is great as the eponymous Deborah Logan. I haven't had to care for a dementia patient but I feel like she nails how heartbreaking and deeply unsettling it must be for all involved. The horror movie aspect is almost secondary but it does go to cool, more traditional horror places in the home stretch. I liked it. But if 'shaky cam' makes you nauseous, this is NOT the film for you. – streaming on Tubi

Slithis (aka *The Spawn of the Slithis*)(1978) – Science gone awry produces an aquatic humanoid that feasts on neighborhood dogs at first before graduating to people. A local teacher investigates and things don't go well. The 'guy in a rubber suit' factor is high. I wouldn't call this a good movie by any means but it's got that late 70s guerilla film-making vibe. A so-so experience but I'm glad I checked it off the list. I remember the poster/VHS box art from way back. Only for cheese fans. – streaming on Tubi. Available for rent/purchase from AppleTV. Also check out Video Cat on Cambie.

X: The Man With the X-ray Eyes (1963) – Great stuff. A Roger Corman special. Starring Ray Milland (*Dial M for Murder*, *Love Story*, *The Lost Weekend*) with an appearance by Don Rickles in a dramatic role! A scientist (Milland) comes up with a way to jack up his eyes to allow him to see far beyond the normal visible spectrum of light, including x-rays, but uh-oh! Complications! Side effects! The movie was a big financial success and I get it. I really liked it. A well-written sci-fi/horror cautionary-tale downer that gets a person thinking. Our brains aren't designed for that much input. There's no wink, wink, nudge, nudge. The talented cast plays it deadly serious and it soars. Solid film. – streaming on Tubi and YouTube. Also check out Video Cat on Cambie.

Remember the Night (1940) – Great stuff. Another Preston Sturges picture. This time hotshot D.A. Fred MacMurray falls for the petty criminal he's prosecuting, Barbara Stanwyck. They end up stuck together over the Christmas holidays in a heartfelt but improbable series of events. Touching and lovely and a bit of a realistic downer in the home stretch which I always appreciate. That Sturges sure could pen a delightful script and story. It's a snapshot of a long-gone (and perhaps never-was) America, so it works on a couple of levels. Unfortunately, there's a "Yessuh. Nossuh." stuttering black butler idiot character that's super-criinge, but he's not a huge part of the film. With that caveat, it's well worth a watch. – VPL DVD. Streaming on Internet Archive. Also check out Video Cat on Cambie.

The Killing of a Chinese Bookie (1978 edit) – Another Cassavetes film. Ben Gazzarra stars as a frustrated strip club owner who gets in over his head with loan sharks. They offer to clear his debts if he kills a Chinese rival. Seymour Cassel and the fantastically odd Timothy Carey show up in supporting roles. A gritty and realistic low-budget film with tons of nudity, handheld shots and facial closeups. Sounds good on paper but not my bag. Rambly and beyond rough around the edges. I feel like only Cassavetes could make a violent tale of nudity and violence like this into a boring mess. Like an ambitious, edgy, student-film failure. And this was the tight 108-minute 1978 version with a half hour cut out of it! The original 1976 theatrical version was 135 minutes! No wonder it bombed. It has its fans so maybe it might work for you, but it's a no from me, dog. – VPL DVD. Streaming on Internet Archive, Mubi, and Criterion. For rent from AppleTV. Also check out Video Cat on Cambie.

The Slumber Party Massacre (1982) – Now you're talkin'! Starts with the title graphic. Boom. No "produced by, directed by" or whatever. Then it's first nudity is at the two-minute mark. This movie cuts to the chase. Is there an all-girl slumber party? You bet there is! Do they wear cute pajamas? You know it! Is there a massacre? No spoilers! A random maniac is on the loose murdering folks. A staple of the genre with that sweet 80s aesthetic and soundtrack and one of the best video covers/movie posters. Directed by Amy Jones and written by Rita Mae Brown. Originally written to parody slasher films but it ended up just being an enjoyable horror film. It spawned two sequels and a bunch of other sorority/cheerleader/etc. "massacre" horror films. Everything you want from this kind of movie. Good clean fun. – streaming on Tubi, Plex, Crave, and Prime. For rent/purchase from Google Play and AppleTV. Also check out Video Cat on Cambie.

Easy Living (1937) – Fantastic. Another Preston Sturges. Man, that guy could spin an interesting yarn. A Wall Street tycoon has an argument with his wife and throws her expensive mink coat off the roof. It lands on struggling, penniless Jean Arthur and that sets the pieces in motion for 1937 influencer culture, stock market crashes, romance, quality physical comedy, sensational misunderstandings and the highest jink level of hijinx. Loved it. Moves at a rapid pace and the jokes fly fast and furious. Highly recommended. – VPL DVD. Streaming on YouTube, Dailymotion, and Internet Archive.

Check out all my reviews on

<https://letterboxd.com/duncanshields/films/reviews/>



What We Do on the Web

This Here ... #90, 2657 Rungsted Street, Las Vegas NV 89142, USA, or Email fareynic@gmail.com – the world as Nic Farey sees it, Corflu doings, futba and British Rail fandom, new music and old, growing old ungracefully in Las Vegas, letters and fanzines received and all.

WCSFA newsletter, September 2025, Vancouver, BC. socialmedia@wcsfa.org. A newsletter about the social get-togethers and a small one-day SFnal event in November. Rather games- and media-oriented.

The Visionary for Sept 3, 9, 17, 2025, from Universal Life Church Ministries, 2720 1st Ave S, Seattle, WA 98134. The semi-weekly newsletter that asks questions like: “*Should the Ten Commandments be allowed in the classroom?*” (only in a Comparative Religions class, of course), and “*Can You Believe in Nothing?*” (many people do, obviously), interspersed with offers of online ordinations and wedding licenses, religious supplies and wedding packages, and a script for creating wedding services.

SMOF News 5:1 and 5:2 in Sept. 2025 from Petréa Mitchell, 548 Market Street PMB 72296, San Francisco, CA 94104, USA; Send tips, corrections, press releases, and letters of comment to: smofnews@gmx.com. News about SF-related conventions, and lists of upcoming conventions. Issue 5:2 has a worthwhile article on figuring out whether you can follow through on volunteering.

The MT Void Aug 29, Sept. 12 & 26, 2025, Evelyn Leeper ed., evelynchinelisleeper@gmail.com. A text-only club newsletter from an SF club, covering the Middletown (NJ) Science Fiction Discussion Group, Evelyn’s Picks for Turner Classic Movies in September, The Ballad of King Kong (lyrics by Mark R. Leeper), book reviews and comments, and letters of comment.

N3F Review of Books, August 2025, Incorporating Prose Bono is published by the National Fantasy Fan Federation, PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049 and is distributed for free to N3F Members and archival sites. Editor: George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill

Drive, Worcester MA 01609, phillies@4liberty.net. Just what it says, a massive review of SF and fantasy novels. Massive, I tell you.

Tightbeam 372, September 2025. Editors are: George Phillies phillies@4liberty.net 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester, MA 01609. Jon Swartz judgeswartz@gmail.com Just what it says, "We are the N3F literary fanzine, not the novel and anthology fanzine, but the fanzine that tries to cover all tastes in fandom, such as anime, comics, cosplay, films, novels, biographies, poetry, music, short stories, food, ..."

Pablo Lennis, September 2025, John Thiel ed., USA. A fictionzine. Consistently omits the mailing address within the zine.

At this point something happened so that I could no longer read PDF documents. I will be downloading another PDF reader program before the next *Obdurate Eye*.

In the meantime, I have received the following: *Impulse* Sept. 2025, newsletter of the Montreal SF Association; *Fanac Gazette* Sept. 2025; *La Chronica* Sept. 2025; *Eldritch Science* Sept. 2025; *Films Fantastic* Sept. 2025; *Captain Flashback* #82; *Ornithopter* Mark VI; and *The National Fantasy Fan* Sept. 2025.