

N'APA 282

May 2026



The Official Organ

#282

Next deadline: July 15, 2026

The official collator is George Phillies - phillies@4liberty.net.

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

Procedure: Please Read:

Submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer, abontides@gmail.com

N'APA is the Amateur Press Alliance for members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). As it is distributed in PDF format, there are no dues or postage fees. It is open to all members of the N3F. If there are members interested in joining who have no computer access, special arrangements may be possible. People who only want to read are welcome to ask to be added to the email list. Check with the official collator, who is George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609; phillies@4liberty.net; 508 754 1859; and on facebook. To join this APA, contact George.

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

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

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INTERMISSION #165

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, bombing the refineries of EAPA & N'APA and other strategic targets. Some day Ed'll have time for @SFJournalen on Tw/X... Comments welcome, BTW! No AIs were harmed making this zine, and damn the typos! Late Mar '26. (Godspeed Artemis!)

Editorially: Iran & Trump, Epstein & Eurovision, Ragtag Russians Retreat

There isn't exactly an eventlessness the world goes through right now. Crazy presidents: AI, war, and another war just to be sure, drones, tariffs, oil in flames, impeded files, robots, ex-princes, giant rockets to Moon and Mars... And this is how much sense all this makes:

(;)

;%&#!!! It makes *no sense at all*. And what'll come out of this mess?

The military situation for the brave Ukrainians has improved significantly after Mr Musk reluctantly turned off the Starlink terminals Russians had hijacked. Ukraine now moves forward on several front sections, on one even about 20 km! In a few of weeks they have liberated 500+ sqkm. The Russians can't coordinate a defence since they can't communicate and their troops are exhausted. They also find difficulties managing their own drones with all the communications problems.

Ukraine's lead in the drone war is increasing, so they run less risks of drone attacks. They destroy up to 2000 (!) Russian battlefield drones per day. Of the Russian long-range city missiles, Ukraine knocks out up to 95%! (Trump said no to Ukrainian help against Iranian drones. It must be dementia...) From many channels through which I follow the war, I see tens of strategic targets attacked every night, thousands of km inside Russia. Recently the export ports in the Baltic was set on fire, reducing Russian oil/gas export with 40%. Russian shadow tankers are destroyed, or seized, by UK, France, Belgium, Finland, also Sweden. We just boarded and impounded two Russian shadow fleet tanker. The captain is facing charges around sea safety, environment and using forged documents. Most air-defence units on Crimea are kaputt. Ukrainian drones open gaps in Russian air defence through which they methodically destroy Russia's war machine and economy. Belgorod, a Ruski front city of nearly half a million, has constant blackouts and even Moscow's energy nodes are attacked. Factories and fuel facilities send plumes of smoke 10s of km high for ordinary Russians to see and question Kremlin propaganda. Putin turns off Internet to hide the bad news.

Trump's war on Iran has caused spiking oil prices (he didn't think of this, our stable genius!) which in the short term may benefit Russia - but Putin capability to produce and move fossil fuel is shrinking. And fewer want to buy from them (just China, maybe India). Hungary's imbecile Viktor Orban demands Ukraine to repair a pipeline that Russia destroyed and he steals Ukrainian bank transports. (Hopefully Orban will be given the boot in their April elections.) Meanwhile Zelensky goes to the Gulf and builds new relations, defence cooperation and maybe financial support, as he can offer them help against Iranian drones that Ukraine has learnt how to shoot down.

US and Israel continue to bomb. Iran is now passed the Iron Age, the Bronze Age and is on its way to the Younger Stone Age... But what's the point? You can't change a regime from the air. Iranian drones keep flying (Ukraine has sent experts and interceptor drones to help Gulf states) and if one ayatollah is killed Iran just picks a new one. In August Trump rolled out the red carpet for evil little Putin and took time to reject a Ukrainian anti-drone offer. Trump is served humble pie while he dreams of building a "Trump class" of irrelevant battleships. He antagonizes Europe, Japan and Canada and wonder why they won't join his war. The latest is that the Sec of Treasury signature on dollar bills will be exchanged for Trump's. This narcissist is such a stable genius! He doesn't even know the purpose of his war. (If it was nukes, Iran has half a ton 60% Uranium 235 - far away from bomb grade, which is over 90% - in a cave somewhere. Israel's Mossad probably knows where. Why not bomb away all threats around the cave, then send in the SEALs! That would be a decent goal.)

But we know why Trump started his war: to distract from the Epstein files. Somewhere in there we'll find Trump with his pants down. (And maybe something about Eurovision?) Someone handling the censorship of the files, and having a bit of consciousness, will sooner or later leak.

The Artemis program is delayed. Artemis II (circling the Moon) may launch in April. But Artemis III designated to land, has just switched to another roundabout exercise. A touchdown will now be with Artemis IV in the late 2020s. Visionary, valiant and valuable space projects - with spinoffs, cornucopian satellites, cutedge science! - are pushed aside so we can spend a fortune on war. The cost of the Vietnam war stopped the last six planned Apollo missions.

In this we celebrate 100 years since *Amazing Stories* started sf as a genre, we connect sf and mysteries, study authors' work quirks, goodbyes a buddy, find Epstein enjoying "Bra vibrationer" and visit a short-film festival. Anyone have anything against that? No? Let's get going! --Ahrvid Engholm

Three weeks after *Amazing Stories* issue #1 *New York Times* wrote about it in their magazine column "Current Magazines", March 31:

A new departure in fiction magazines is *Amazing Stories*, published by Experimenter Publishing Company, 53 Park Place, New York City, and edited by Hugo Gernsback, F. R. S., who states in an introductory editorial that the new periodical is to be a magazine of "Scientifiction." Mr. Gernsback explains that by "scientifiction" he means the Jules Verne, H. G. Wells and Edgar Allan Poe type of story. The contents of the April number include "Off on a Comet—or Hector Servadac," by Jules Verne; "The New Accelerator," by H. G. Wells; "The Man From the Atom," by G. Peyton Wertenbaker; "The Thing From ..outside," by George Allen England; "The Man Who Saved the Earth," by Austin Hall; and "The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valdemar," by Edgar Allan Poe. Regarding his plans for the future, the editor says:

Exclusive arrangements have already been made with the copyright holders of the entire voluminous works of all of Jules Verne's immortal stories. Many of these stories are not known to the general American public yet. For the first time they will be within easy reach of every reader through *Amazing Stories*. A number of German, French and English stories of this kind by the best writers in their respective countries, have already been contracted for and we hope very shortly to be able to enlarge the magazine and in that way present always more material to our readers.

While *Amazing* was the first sf-only magazine we tend to look at fantastic literature in general, other stories with "unreal components". If that component is magic, dragons, swords etc we call it fantasy. If that component is monsters and skeletons in dark dungeons we call it horror. And magazines of the fantastic existed before *Amazing* and *Weird Tales*. One example I like to mention is the German (also having a Swedish edition) *Relationes Curiosae* ("Strange News" in Latin) from 1682 (!), an early mix of Ripley's Believe It Or Not, popular science and fiction. Many of its fantastic tales were told in a near-fiction manner.

However the most distinct early magazine of the fantastic was probably London-based *The Wonderful Magazine, and Marvellous Chronicle; or, New Weekly Entertainer* from 1793, available here <https://archive.org/details/wonderfulmagazin1179unse> It claimed it was dedicated to



"miraculous, queer¹, odd, strange, supernatural, whimsical, absurd stories". That sounds spot on the fantastic!

For Sweden, the first periodical totally dedicated to the fantastic - though for children - was *Sagomagasinet* 1936-37. *Intermission* has earlier covered these and other early magazines of the fantastic. A magazine Sam J Lundwall often talk about is Swedish *Hugin* (1916-1920) edited by the illustrious Otto Witt, a true soulmate of Gernsback. But it was more of a pedagogic magazine to teach youngsters about science and technology. Much of it wasn't fiction at all. Witt would write histories of certain industries or inventions. He'd teach the properties of elements by letting the element describe itself as if it could speak. Another magazine Sam J talks about is Austrian *Der Orchideengarten* (The Orchid Garden, 1919-1920), edited by Karl Hans Strobl and Alfons von Czibulka, with macabre, horror and fantastic fiction, which probably was low in sf but beat

Weird Tales in the fantastic department. If you're interested in genre history keep your eyes glued to every thrilling issue of our international culture magazine.

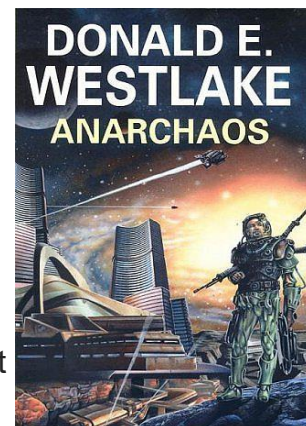
But now this time I turn magazine mode off and give you little bonbons of different taste...

Crime writers who also dabbled in sf:

Before *Mike Hammer*, Spillane wrote SF stories for *Planet Stories* and other pulps.

Ed McBain (Evan Hunter) wrote SF under pseudonyms. Hunter wrote alien-invasion and dystopian stories before becoming a crime-fiction giant. He used multiple pseudonyms to keep genres separate.

Donald E Westlake wrote humorous SF as "Curt Clark", satirical SF novels and stories, including *Anarchaos*. (With "Rolf Malone, who travels to a lawless, anarchist planet - where 72% of visitors are murdered - to find his brother's killer, acting as a



¹ You hear the LBTQ gang bray and cheer! But folks, the original meaning is something else, more innocent!

"tough-guy" western set in space.") Crime-fiction timing gave his SF a sharp, comedic edge.

Patricia Highsmith wrote speculative short stories involving alternate realities, bizarre metamorphoses, and psychological horror that borders on SF.

Ruth Rendell wrote dystopian SF like *The Keys to the Street*, a novel with strong sf undertones. She also used speculative elements in several short stories.

Ian McEwan wrote *Machines Like Me*, a novel about synthetic humans, alternate history, and AI ethics. McEwan insisted it wasn't sf, which amused many sf writers.

PD James wrote *The Children of Men*, an sf novel about global infertility, later adapted into a major film. A full dystopian sf novel about global infertility, later adapted into a major film.

John D MacDonald wrote sf for the pulps. Before becoming a crime-fiction giant, MacDonald wrote dozens of sf stories for magazines like *Galaxy* and *Startling Stories*.

Julian Symons wrote speculative and near-future stories, including dystopian and satirical pieces. His novel *The General Strike* has strong sf elements (alternate-history political fiction).

Christianna Brand wrote the time-travel story "The Sins of the Fathers". Dabbled in speculative short fiction with moral twists.

Cornell Woolrich wrote several sf stories, often noir-tinged, such as "The Blue Ribbon" and "The Boy Who Cried Wolf".

James Hadley Chase wrote the sf novel *The World in My Pocket* (borderline), and more explicitly *The Vulture Is a Patient Bird*.

Ngaio Marsh wrote the sf short story "Death on the Air" (technological murder mystery).

Ellery Queen (Frederic Dannay & Manfred Lee) edited *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes*, which included sf-tinged stories. Wrote several sf stories under pseudonyms for *EQMM*. Collaborated with sf writers like Asimov and Sturgeon.

Eric Ambler wrote speculative thrillers involving future tech and political extrapolation.

Margery Allingham wrote *The Mind Readers* (1965) is full-on science fiction involving telepathy and espionage.

Jack Higgins wrote several sf novels early in his career under pseudonyms (e.g. *The Thousand Faces of Night*)

But sf authors also scibbled some crime fiction:

Isaac Asimov, many of his robot stories were criminal investigations, he wrote *Murder at the ABA* and a long series of dinner-whodunnits in the form of the Black Widowers.

Jack Vance wrote crime under the name John Holbrook Vance. Among titles *The Deadly Isles*, *The Fox Valley Murders*, *The Pleasant Grove Murders*. His *The Man in the Cage* even won the Edgar in 1961

John Brunner wrote crime and spy thrillers under pseudonyms (e.g. *The Gauntlet of Time* has crime elements) and straight thrillers for the paperback market.

Wilson "Bob" Tucker wrote several mysteries, like *The Chinese Doll*.

Robert Silverberg, early in his career he wrote crime and sleaze-market thrillers under pseudonyms.

Poul Anderson wrote mystery short stories, including several for *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. Often blended sf with detective structure.

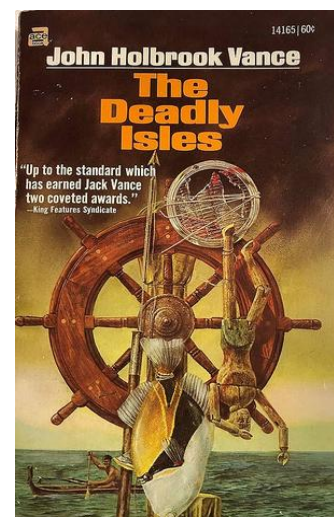
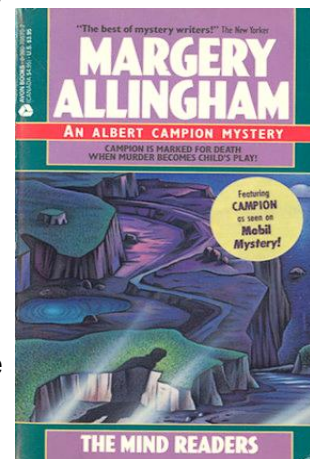
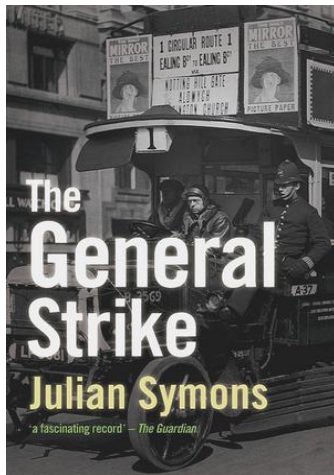
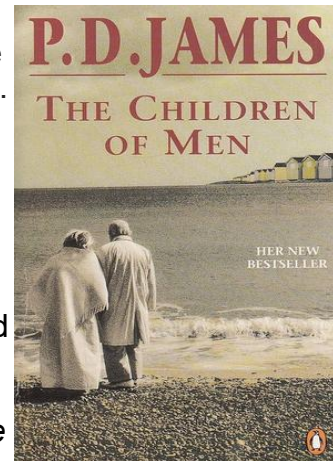
Avram Davidson wrote classical detective stories and historical mysteries. *Eszterhazy* stories are essentially crime fiction in a fantasy setting.

Fredric Brown wrote noir, hard-boiled, and locked-room mysteries. Famous for *The Fabulous Clipjoint* (won the Edgar Award).

Eric Frank Russell wrote mystery and crime short stories for the pulps.

Philip K Dick wrote straight crime novels early in his career, including *Voices from the Street* (Written 1953, but unpublished until 2007, and *Humpty Dumpty in Oakland*. Several unpublished crime manuscripts surfaced posthumously.

Barry Malzberg Wrote crime and erotic-crime novels under pseudonyms in the 1960s. Often bleak, psychological noir.



PHILIP K. DICK

VOICES FROM THE STREET

Michael Moorcock wrote crime stories for British magazines in the 1950s. Some Cornelius stories are essentially psychedelic spy/crime fiction.

Ray Bradbury wrote mystery stories for *Dime Detective* and *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. *Death Is a Lonely Business* is a full-on noir novel.

Alfred Bester wrote crime and suspense stories for the slicks. *The Demolished Man* itself is a detective novel in sf clothing.

CM Kornbluth wrote crime stories for the pulps under multiple pseudonyms.

Harlan Ellison wrote crime stories for *Manhunt* and other noir magazines. His early novel *Web of the City* is pure crime.

Robert Bloch with *Psycho*, is a tight psychological mystery (made into film by Hitchcock) but also other crime-related fiction.

Swedish cross-genre examples:

Sam J Lundwall's *Mardrömmen* is a near-future thriller.

Bertil Mårtensson wrote e.g. *Växande hot* ("Growing Threat", which won the Sherlock Award), *Adolf och javamännens gåta*, ("Adolf and the Riddle of the Javamen"), *Mordet på Dr Faust* ("The Murder of Dr Faust") *Kontrakt med döden* ("Contract with Death") and *Mah-Jong-morden* ("The Mah-Jong Murders").

Bertil Falk wrote crime fiction and thrillers about what he called the Nameless (the hero's name is never revealed). He also wrote a series of mysteries set at the Viking age. His debut was *Den maskerade ligachefen* ("The Masked Gang Boss") in thr pulpish *Alibimagasinet*.

Kjell Genberg, though mostly known for crime fiction, has written some sf too, e.g. *Hämnaren från Tellus* ("The Avenger from Tellus"), to this comes mysteries set in the near future, (But he has said that he as young, when beginning writing short stories, it was skiffy which he sent to the *Häpna!* Magazine - unfortunately rejected.)

Sven-Christer Swahn's YA novels are often more crime/thriller than sf.

Sten Andersson sometimes wrote eco-crime (eco=economy, not "ecology" stupid!).

David Nessel, with sf short stories in *Nova SF* and *JVM* (to this hilarious stories in fanzines!) is now writing a series set in the 1920s with one Mr Nyman (Herr Nyman) as detective.

Lena Karlin - known in fandom - has together with Åsa Schwarz written (this far two books) of what they call "AI crime". Sounds interesting. (Beside this she is also translator, incl of crime fiction.)

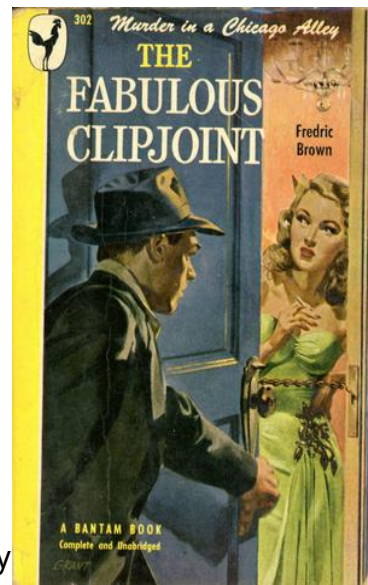
Per Wahlöö, known, for the Martin, Beck decalogy (with Maj Sjöwall), also wrote the near-future dystopian *Stålsprånget* ("The Steel Leap") and *Mord på 1:a våningen* ("Murder on the 31st Floor").

Astrid Lindgren wrote fantasy (with Mio, Ronja, Pippi etc) but also YA crime, about the youthful detective Kalle Blomkvist.

John Theorin, known for his crime stories from the island of Öland, that also includes supernatural elements (worth noting is that prior to becoming famous as crime novelist, he contributed to the SKRIVA fantastic short story competition).

Otto Witt, if we go 100+ years back, wrote several crime novels beside his Gernsback-style skiffy. A simple googling reveals at least a dozen Witt mysteries.

Ahrvid Engholm (yeah, me!) has besides the series of crime stories set in a future Moon colony (collected in *Mord på månen*, "Murder on the Moon") written many non-sf crime stories. Some have been in weekly magazines and some even in newspapers, from the early noughties when the Short Story Masters society managed to sell story packages to them. Hero in many of these has been one Ture Storm, a fannish figure that Ahrvid has borrowed from himself. Several of the stories in Ahrvid's



Nessel signing his Nyman mysteries.

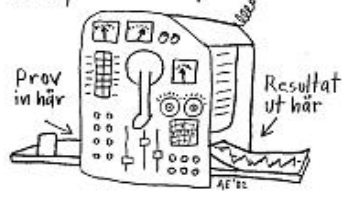
later collection *Spacetimes* are mysteries.

Deep diving in scuba gear we also learn that e.g. Jan Mårtensson (recently leaving us: RIP!), *Hans Siden* and *Gösta Gummesson* wrote both sf and crime in the weeklies in the 1960s. And we have buddies *Arne Sjögren* who had a few mystery short stories in Gothenburg dailies in the 1960s and *Ulf Durling* known for cheesy crime novels but sometimes including fantastic elements.

There are probably others. The last couple of decades the number of authors of fantastics (=sf, horror, fantasy - especially h and f) has exploded in Sweden. Most are published by small publishers, some are self-publishing or using so called hybrid publishers. They are so many it becomes hard to keep track of them! And since many are from small publishers print runs are small, with the effect few copies of their books find the way to second-hand bookstores where I often get my reading material.



En spektralanalysator:



"I should call for Inspector Frost!" Ture Storm thinks finding suspicious bloodstains in *Fantarctica's* snow... But a spectral analyzer finds it's just corflou.



Some claim the *Vril-Ya Bazaar* in the Royal Albert Hall 1891 (based on *The Coming Race* by E Bulwer-Lytton) was the first sf con. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vril-Ya_Bazaar_and_Fete From "The Examiner", 14th March 1891

BTW, the most common Swedish word for crime fiction or mysteries is "deckare", a distortion of "detective". As you can see there are tight connections between science fiction and crime fiction. And there are reasons for this. The two genres have many parallels:

- * Both found their modern form in "cheap entertainment" magazines.
- * Both were frowned upon by "high culture" circles.
- * Both have their own fandoms. Sherlock Holmes fandom is even older than sf fandom (though the Holmesians have never used the word fandom).
- * Both have evolved their hard-chewed versions. For mysteries we have the hard-boiled stories by Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammet. For science fiction we have the hard-core science stories by writers like Arthur C Clarke and Hal Clement.
- * Both distill and refine a certain property of literature. For crime fiction it is the *plot*. In its basic form a mystery is all about plot. It starts with a problem, a crime to solve (the alternative genre label *mysteries* stress this), several attempts to solve it follows in the form of an investigation, it ends with confronting the murderer and the problem is solved. A crime story must have a crime and thus must have a plot.

* Science fiction in its turn distills the *idea* element of literature. An sf story can take place at any time (even historical times), at any place (often in space), but most of all it must make a speculative leap of thought. Skiffy has often

been described as literature that asks the question: What if...? (While mysteries ask: Whodunnit?) One odd not-this-world detail is enough, though most sf constructs a whole new world, often set in the future. Any speculative detail from outside the known world turns anything into science fiction. HG Wells wrote about a man who made himself invisible. Jules Verne built an advanced submarine. There are many stories where the changed detail is that Napoleon won the battle of Waterloo. Philosophers talk about "thought experiments" and sf is the literary genre of thought experiments.

Small wonder that writers tend to be attracted to *both* mysteries and science fiction.

How the Authors Worked:

AC Clarke drafted longhand even after becoming a computing pioneer. Clarke said he wrote best "in 90-minute bursts, like orbital periods." He kept a strict routine: morning diving, afternoon writing, evening astronomy.

JG Ballard - wrote in a suburban house filled with bizarre objects. He kept his home full of medical textbooks, anatomical models, and industrial debris. Visitors described it as "clinical surrealism," which fits his fiction perfectly. Ballard said the house was "a laboratory for the inner space of the psyche." (From a 1984 interview.)

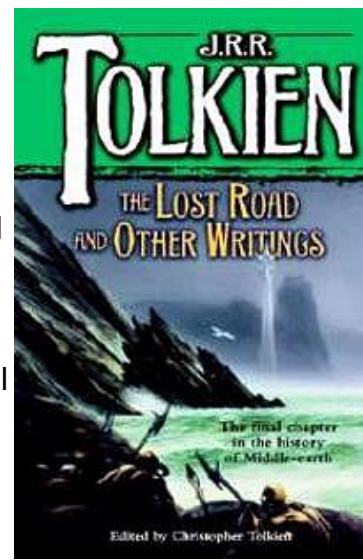
CS Lewis and *JRR Tolkien's* "Space/Time" Bet: The two giants of fantasy actually made a pact to write "Science Fiction." They tossed a coin: Lewis had to write about Space Travel, and Tolkien had to write about Time Travel. Lewis produced *Out of the Silent Planet*, but Tolkien's time-travel book,

The Lost Road, was never finished but still published (all by JRR incl grocery lists are published!).

John Brunner described it in his 1975 novel *The Shockwave Rider*. He even coined the term "worm" to describe it. It was so influential that the researchers at Xerox PARC who built the first actual computer worm in 1982 explicitly stated they got the idea from his book. Brunner also predicted computerized credit scoring, data havens, and identity theft.

One of the most "alien" writers of the 50s and 60s, *Cordwainer Smith*, was actually Dr. Paul Linebarger. He was the world's leading expert on psychological warfare and, Godfather to the children of Sun Yat-sen and Godson of Sun Yat-sen. His sf was essentially a way for him to process the trauma of international espionage and brainwashing techniques. His stories were written in a deliberately "future-mythic" style inspired by Chinese classics.

HG Wells wrote a story in 1903 called "*The Land Ironclads*" about giant armoured vehicles. When the British military actually invented the tank in WWI, Wells was so annoyed they hadn't credited him that he spent years complaining that his "invention" had been stolen by the War Office. (From letters by Wells.)



Harlan Ellison wrote a story live in a bookstore window. Actually, he did this many times. He sat in the window of a bookshop. Fans gave him story prompts. He wrote the story on the spot. The pages were taped to the window as he typed them. He called it "writing with my pants down. For example the story 'The Cheese Stands Alone' was written in a single afternoon from a fan prompt."

"*Robert Heinlein* plotted story structure as if with a slide rule. Heinlein kept engineering notebooks, flowcharts, timelines, character-logic diagrams, according to *Grumbles from the Grave* He approached fiction like a naval engineer designing a ship. Heinlein said fiction was "problem-solving with characters."

Ursula K. Le Guin wrote in the morning, answered letters in the afternoon Her strict schedule: 5:30 - wake 6:00 - write 1:00 - correspondence. 3:00 - reading 8:00 - bed. She said writing required "fresh morning brain." She refused to write after lunch: "The brain gets woolly." (According to an interview.)



Ellison in bookstore window.

Frank Herbert wrote *Dune* after researching sand dunes for a government report. He was supposed to write an article about dune stabilization in Oregon. Instead he became obsessed with: ecology, water politics, desert cultures. Herbert also spent years studying Bedouin water customs. The article was never finished - but *Dune* was born.

William Gibson wrote *Neuromancer* on a typewriter he hated. He said: "I wrote *Neuromancer* on a typewriter that fought me every step.". He rewrote the opening chapter dozens of times. He avoided computers because he feared they would "infect" his style. (Said in an interview.)

Kurt Vonnegut graphed story shapes on chalkboards. He believed all stories fit into a few curves: "Man in Hole", "Boy Meets Girl", "From Bad to Worse". He lectured on these using chalkboard diagrams like a mathematician. Still his master's thesis on story shapes was rejected as "too simple."

Michael Crichton wrote *Jurassic Park* twice - once as a screenplay. He originally wrote it as a screenplay, about a child who clones a dinosaur. The studio rejected it. He rewrote it as a novel.

Then it became a screenplay again. Crichton said the novel was "a meditation on scientific hubris".

Gene Wolfe invented the modern Pringles potato chip. Before becoming a writer, Wolfe was an engineer. He helped design the machine that makes Pringles, the saddle-shaped chip geometry He later said: "It's not my proudest achievement, but it pays the bills."

EE "Doc" Smith invented the modern donut glaze. Before writing *Lensman*, he worked in food chemistry. He helped develop the modern donut glaze and industrial doughnut production

Some call him "the father of space opera and donuts." His PhD was in chemical



They have skiffy pedigree!

engineering; he specialized in sugar crystallization.

James Blish wrote wearing white cotton gloves. He said it kept the oils from his fingers off the paper and "maintained purity of thought". According to friends Judith Merrill and Damon Knight. Friends said it made him look like a Victorian undertaker. Blish was extremely fastidious; he also used index cards obsessively.

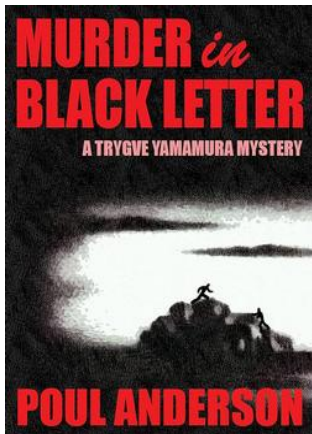
RA Lafferty wrote first drafts in a single sitting - no matter how long. He once wrote a 40,000-word novella in one continuous session, fueled by whiskey and Catholic mysticism. He said stories came "from the whiskey and the angels." (From an interview.)

James Tiptree Jr. (Alice Sheldon) wrote in total secrecy. She kept her typewriter in a locked room and destroyed carbon copies. Her husband didn't know she was Tiptree for years. Her cover was blown by a detail in her mother's obituary. In its introduction, "Who is Tiptree, What is He?", fellow science fiction author Robert Silverberg wrote that he found the theory that Tiptree was female "absurd", and that the author of these stories could only be a man.

Roger Zelazny wrote poetry drafts before prose drafts. He said every scene had to have a "poetic skeleton" before he could write it in prose. Zelazny said prose should "move like a blade." (From an interview.)

Robert E. Howard's mother forged his rejection letters, according to L S de Camp. She wanted him to quit writing and become a lawyer. He kept writing anyway.

Poul Anderson wrote in a bar. He often drafted stories in pubs, drinking beer and scribbling on napkins. Some early drafts of *The High Crusade* were literally written on bar coasters. His wife Karen typed many of his bar-scribbled drafts.



Frederik Pohl edited manuscripts in the bathtub. He claimed the warm water helped him think. He often dropped manuscripts into the tub. He joked that he "water-edited" more books than he could count.

Robert Bloch wrote in a room full of ventriloquist dummies. He collected them. Visitors said it was "like being watched by a hundred wooden eyes." Bloch said they were "companions who never talked back."

Alfred Bester wrote using coloured pens, arrows, symbols, and diagrams.

- His manuscripts look like psychedelic engineering blueprints.
- He mapped emotional arcs, psychological states, and narrative rhythms visually.
- He sometimes wrote scenes backwards to "feel the time distortion."

This method produced the kinetic energy of *The Stars My Destination*.

Theodore Sturgeon kept a mood diary and only wrote when he reached a certain emotional intensity.

- He sometimes listened to the same piece of music on repeat for hours to "tune" himself.
- His prose has that lyrical, almost musical quality because of this ritual. Sturgeon said fiction was "emotion made visible".

Philip K Dick lived inside his fiction. Dick's habits were not just eccentric; they were immersive.

- He kept multiple refrigerators because he feared one might be poisoned.
- He wrote in manic, sleepless bursts, sometimes finishing a novel in under a week.
- He filled thousands of pages of his *Exegesis* with diagrams, visions, and metaphysical theories.
- He often wrote with music blasting at painful volume to drown out intrusive thoughts.

Philip K. Dick once wrote a frantic letter to the FBI claiming that Stanisław Lem (author of *Solaris*) didn't actually exist. Dick believed "Lem" was actually a composite committee of Communist agents

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Poster for the first Worldcon, 1939. The small bottom line: "Printed by New Fandom, the United Voice of all Science Fiction Fandom, 33-1 41st Street, Long Island City, New York". SaM & Co perhaps sneaked around at night decorating house walls, looking over the shoulder for NYPD...

operating out of Poland to brainwash the American public through complex literary theory. Dick wrote *A Scanner Darkly* in a near-hallucinatory state. (FBI parts of this are in their files on Dick.)

Golden Age giant *AE van Vogt* had a bizarre technique for writing: he would set an alarm to wake himself up every 90 minutes throughout the night. He believed that by forcing himself to write in a state of "dream-induced" semi-consciousness, he could tap into his subconscious to create his famously convoluted plot twists. This contributed to his famously nonlinear plots.



Robert Silverberg describes renting a small commercial office in the late 1950s where he and *Randall Garrett* worked side-by-side, producing enormous amounts of fiction (sf, detective, soft-porn, historicals, etc). It was at 611 West 114th Street, a boarding house near Columbia University, - and Harlan Ellison lived in the same building at the time. Ellison



Entrance to 611 West 114th Street according to Google Streetview. Silverberg and Garrett sat here and made life of editors difficult...

was loud, argumentative, and constantly hustling. He'd rush in, complain about stupid editors and disappear. Silverberg said he and Garrett essentially ran a "fiction factory", during this pulp-to-digest transition era. Silverberg has joked about this period at conventions, describing it as "industrial-scale fiction production. They had a filing system for pseudonyms and a whiteboard for tracking deadlines and story lengths. Beside sf they wrote, historical nonfiction, "slick" magazine stories under pseudonyms – among the sf mags they wrote for sf for *Astounding*, *Galaxy*, *If*, *Fantastic*. Silverberg wrote softporn, see "I wrote 150 porno novels in 5

Silverberg wrote mountains of soft porn like these - oh, one even in current reprint under his own name (the literary quality demands it!)

years" <https://www.vice.com/en/article/sin-a-rama-excerpt-my-life-as-a-pornographer/> Silverberg and Garrett would sometimes race to see who could finish a 3000-word story first. Silverberg usually won - he typed faster and revised less. Garrett would sleep on the office couch wake up at noon, dictate story ideas aloud while Silverberg typed his own work, occasionally sell a story he hadn't actually written yet When they finished a story, they'd go to a nearby bar and celebrate - sometimes multiple times a day because they were writing so fast. Garrett would walk behind Silverberg, reading over his shoulder, and say: "You can do better than that," Silverberg said it was infuriating but occasionally helpful. "You can do better than that." Silverberg said it was infuriating but occasionally helpful.

This and that:

The modern waterbed was actually a "science fiction" invention before it was a product. *Robert Heinlein* described it in such meticulous engineering detail in his 1942 novel *Beyond This Horizon* (and later *Stranger in a Strange Land*) that when a designer tried to patent the waterbed in the late 1960s, the patent office initially denied the application because Heinlein's descriptions counted as "prior art."

In 1902, *Georges Méliès* made *A Trip to the Moon*. It was so popular that *Thomas Edison*—the inventor - literally stole the film, made secret copies of it, and distributed it across the US without paying Méliès a dime. This theft effectively bankrupted the father of sf cinema.

In his short story "From the 'London Times' of 1904," *Mark Twain* described the "Telelectroscope." He imagined a global phone system where you could "see" people across the world and browse a "limitless world of information"—an almost perfect description of the modern web. Read it here: <https://americanliterature.com/author/mark-twain/short-story/from-the-london-times-of-1904>

The first story of a man using science to turn invisible was "The Crystal Man" (1881) by *Edward Page*

Mitchell. Mitchell was a newspaper editor who wrote "hard" sf decades before the term existed, including stories about time travel (via a clock) and cryogenics long before Wells or Verne. <https://archive.org/details/crystalmanlandma0000mitc> Mitchell also wrote: "The Clock That Went Backward" (1881) on early time travel, "The Man Without a Body" (1877) on teleportation, "The Ablest Man in the World" (1879) on proto-cybernetics.

Scientology members in the "Sea Org" actually sign a one-billion-year contract. Official Sea Org contract text reproduced in *The New York Times*, March 1997. This is often cited by sf historians as the ultimate example of "pulp sf" concepts becoming legally binding reality. Astounding's *John W. Campbell* was deeply involved in the development of Dianetics. Campbell actually helped Hubbard test his "science of the mind" because Campbell himself suffered from aphantasia - the inability to visualize mental images. (But "aphantasia" as a term didn't exist then, it's a retroactive diagnosis.) He hoped Dianetics would allow him to finally "see" the faces of his wife and children in his mind.

It's a little-known fact that *Albert Einstein* was a dedicated reader of Astounding Science Fiction. He was a regular subscriber and often noted that sf was a necessary tool for "thought experiments" that helped scientists visualize the impossible. (Ed: tried to check this. My AI says it may be he read an issue now and then but it's less likely he subscribed. Or it may all be a fannish myth. Fans are slans...)

While *Star Trek* was still on the air, a group of fans made Parody Trek. When the studio (Paramount) found out, they didn't sue—they were so confused by the concept of "fandom" that they didn't know what to do. It set the stage for the massive "transformative works" culture we have today.

The original Hugo 1953 trophies were made by fan *Jack McKnight*, who used the ornamental hood fin from a 1950 Oldsmobile 88 as the base for the rocket body. The rocket itself was a 1950 Oldsmobile 88 hood ornament.

When *Nichelle Nichols* (Uhura on *Star Trek*) wanted to quit the show, *Martin Luther King Jr.* personally convinced her to stay. He told her she was a role model and must stay. Later, NASA hired her to recruit the first female and minority astronauts, including Sally Ride and Mae Jemison, directly turning sf casting into civil rights progress.

The "Exotic Fan Dancer" Hugo Hoax. In the 1950s, a group of fans convinced newcomers that the Hugo was named after a famous burlesque dancer named "Hugo." Mentioned by fanhistorian *Harry Warner*.) Behind it was *Ackerman*, *Burbee* and others from LASFS. Some believed it for years. *Hugo*, supposedly performed at early conventions. The story spread because it sounded *just plausible enough*, Fans love in-jokes, No one wanted to admit they didn't know the origin. Some neofans believed it well into the 1960s.

JH Rosny aîné, Belgian-French writer, invented alien ecologies parallel evolution, non-anthropocentric sf. His (1887) is astonishingly modern. Covered in essays by Brian Stableford, See <https://www.jasoncolavito.com/the-xipeacutehuz1.html#:~:text=Despite%20its%20reputation%20as%20a,after%20its%20initial%20publication%3A%20by>

Amazing Stories in, the 1920 once published a story written by a typewriter. The editor claimed the typewriter was haunted. It was of course a publicity stunt. Gernsback

loved publicity stunts.

Weird Tales paid authors in whatever currency they had on hand. Sometimes: Canadian dollars Mexican pesos, postage stamps, or even free magazine copies. Lovecraft was paid in stamps more than once. He complained about being paid in Canadian stamps. Payment was erratic and often late. From letters by HPL and Robert Weinberg's *The Weird Tales Story*.

Galaxy Magazine nearly collapsed because the publisher *Robert Guinn* was arrested for fraud, according to contemporary news reports. news reports. The owner, *HL Gold's* boss, was caught running a Ponzi scheme. *Galaxy* survived by sheer luck and the staff refusing to give up.



The 1953 Hugo.



UK's Independent TV News reports from Loncon 1957: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBAwkB-QP1Q> Here the Grandmaster of the Order of S:t Fanthony (could someone provide the name?).

The 1964 Hugo banquet served “Martian Chicken”. It was just chicken dyed green. Fans complained it tasted “too terrestrial”. The 1970 Hugo base was made of surplus NASA parts. A fan who worked at a NASA scrapyard donated them. The 1989 Hugo ceremony was interrupted by a fire alarm. Fans refused to leave until the Best Novel winner was announced

Robert E. Howard’s mother forged his rejection letters. She wanted him to quit writing and become a lawyer. He kept writing anyway. Howard was exceptionally attached to his mother and took his own life when she was diagnosed with a terminal illness.

L Ron Hubbard once tried to hypnotize John Campbell. Campbell later said it “almost worked.” A pulp editor was fired for publishing a story with too many commas. The publisher said commas “wasted ink.”

At Westercon 30, 1977, A group of late-night fans at Westercon 30, 1977, (some from the Mythos crowd, some from LASFS, some from the SCA-adjacent weirdos) attempted a “Cthulhu Summoning Ritual” in a hotel bathroom. The ingredients included: green Jell-O, candles, a rubber octopus, a boom box playing ominous music, a bathtub full of ice water, and a copy of *The Necronomicon* (the George Hay edition). Hotel security shut it down after someone pulled the fire alarm. The con newsletter the next morning reported: “Cthulhu declined to appear, citing scheduling conflicts.”

Recursive fiction

Stories about fandom or the sf world - just a selection, there’s much more:

The Return of the Enchanted Duplicator (1991) - Christopher Priest

“*The Men Who Murdered Mohammed*” - Alfred Bester, features a metafictional sf-writer milieu.

“*The Author of the Acacia Seeds*” - Ursula K. Le Guin, satire of academic sf criticism.

“*The Story Untold*” - Isaac Asimov, a story about fans pestering an author.

“*The Man Who Loved the Fandom*” - Avram Davidson, satire of obsessive fans.

“*The Fans*” - David Langford, a darkly comic take on fan culture.

“*The Convention*” - Barry Malzberg, a bleak, metafictional look at conventions.

The Book of Daniel - E. L. Doctorow, features a fictionalized sf writer based on Pohl/Asimov circle.

The Affair of the Chalked Man - John Dickson Carr, mystery involving pulp writers.

Callahan’s Crosstime Saloon - Spider Robinson, a bar full of sf in-jokes and fannish archetypes.

Mainstream Fiction With SF-Fandom elements:

Fangirl - Rainbow Rowell, about fanfiction culture.

Redshirts - John Scalzi, a metafictional satire of sf TV fandom.

The Princess Bride - William Goldman, framed as a fannish commentary on genre storytelling.

Fannish Fiction Published Inside Fandom (just a tiny selection):

The Fandom of the Opera - various LASFS writers, fannish parody serial.

The Purple Pimpernel - Ted White, fannish superhero satire.

“*The Fanzine Story*” - Jack Speer, a fictionalized fannish history.

“*The Last Fanzine*” - various authors, appears in multiple apas.

The Fanzine Murders - a recurring fannish trope, several amateur stories revolve around this idea.

The Asylum - John Harwood, includes a fictional sf club.

There are more stories about fandom or the sf world, just a selection. There is much.

Epstein and Eurovision...

At this time of year faithful readers know that I’ll be pestering you about what unites Europe much more than the EU or NATO, namely *Eurovision!* Or more precise, the Eurovision Song Contest or ESC. It started in 1956 and has gone from victory to victory (there’s a victory each year, for someone). You can’t avoid it. Your keyboard even has an ESC key!

This song contest presents original songs from all over Europe. It was here ABBA began conquering the world. The winner takes it all, or at least the right to host next years ESC. The Swedish broadcaster has done it seven times (most, together with Ireland) and in 2026 it’s hosted by Ultravox...I mean, *Oh Vienna!* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJeWySiuq1I>) A tip: cancel that



Heard of *ROCKET CHEESE*? You pressed the cheese up the tube and sliced off a piece with an attached string.

booking to Stockholm in 2027 because the Swedes had the idea to select a rather uninteresting entry. In the recent selection final (the infamous *Melodifestivalen*, known as *Mello* by addicts) we chose poor Felicia with her mask, and she'll struggle to get points even from Norway. She used to have a bigger mask when she earlier appeared as Miss Filth. (But don't have your hopes up. Mello is family friendly and kids are the biggest ESC fans) Here she is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7AB53ZNXpQ> but this is what we should have selected instead:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUEYImDxZWk> The singer Greczula looks a bit like a vampire and would have had a chance to be top 10.

But I'm happy to tell you that our Nordic brothers of Finland this year seems to have a really good chance. As I write they top the betting lists! "Liekinheitin" means flamethrower and is sung in the original Finnish (it's been a trend lately to sing in your native language instead of English - maybe due to Brexit?). Artist Pete P is assisted on violin by former Playboy model Linda Lampenius - who really is professional violinist and very good at it. (She's also a Finland-Swede and actually lives in Stockholm.) Their number is hot, not only because it has a lot of



Epstein and 1980s girlfriend Eva Andersson, picture probably from arriving to Stockholm.



Jeffrey Epstein at Melodifestivalen 1985 ESC qualification.

audience to Mello in 1985. As I understand it, Epstein was at the time dating a former Miss Sweden (one Anna Andersson) who had some role in the show, and she dragged him there. He seems to have a very good seating in the front row. I wonder if he was thinking of his criminal schemes already then?

BTW, the winning song that year, "Bra vibrationer", isn't what you think. "Bra" isn't a brassiere, but means "good" in Swedish. Catchy, but <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSlxoRzrBMs> couldn't compete with the Beach Boys.

It looks very likely that the Epstein files have dirt on Trump, now masked away or not released at all. Putin may have dirt too, from some Moscow hotel room in the 1980s (but of course today such things can easily be AI-made). That's why Agent Orange keeps

It's looks very likely that the Epstein files have dirt on Trump, now masked away or not released at all. Putin may have dirt too, from some Moscow hotel room in the 1980s (but of course today such things can easily be AI-made). That's why Agent Orange keeps repeating Russian narrative about Putin's disastrous war. The guy has been chasing skirt all his life, especially "somewhat on the younger side" and he knows where to "grab" them. He sends Epstein X-rated postcards and to him lying is like breathing. Others think along the same tracks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoXbvjpyR0E&t=172s>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yESTIHVzO9Y>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSLdYwk5JQE>, <https://www.wistv.com/video/2026/03/09/records-sc-woman-accused-trump-epstein-sexual-abuse-1980s/>, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/key-details-of-13-year-old-trump-accusers-accounts-are-verified/>, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4g0dzg6e4mohttps://docs.house.gov/meetings/JU/JU08/20250227/117951/HHRG-119-JU08-20250227-SD006-U6.pdf> and there's much, much, MUCH more!

Starting a war against Iran – lacking a clear objective and most Americans object to it - is a

fire, it has a melody, it has passion..I root for that it'll be the Finns that will ride the chariot of victory in Vienna, (For one thing because it was Swedish Loreen a couple of years ago who pushed a strong Finnish contender to second place. *Pyydän anteeksi!*). Enjoy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bfwNIYb96Q>

But as you sit there contemplating if it is time to invest in some Koskenkorva shares, out of nowhere pops...guess who?

Jeffrey Epstein!

This sad figure, pedophile, rapist, extortionist and buddy of Donald Trump has left his dirty footprints everywhere (just ask Norway!!). Of course he couldn't leave Eurovision alone, or the selection show to ESC, Here he sits in the

desperate attempt by the worst president in US history to divert attention.

It gives me bad vibrations. *Impeach the bastard!*

RIP: Kjell Waltman – Sverifandom's Entertainer!

It's always sad when someone passes away, especially if it was a fan and someone you knew. And Kjell Waltman (b. 1960) of Gothenburg's Club Cosmos was very special. A born entertainer - friendly, fun and immensely talented who played the piano and sang on many sf cons and fannish gettogethers. His joyful heart finally couldn't take it, I learn.

Though we lost contact in later years I remember him well, especially from the first time we met in 1980. I stayed with him for a few days in a Gothenburg suburb and he filled the days with music, jokes and anecdotes. He was one of Sweden's best ragtime pianist (also composer, here his music career:

<https://www.ragtime.nu/waltman.htm>), Ragtime had become popular again, because of the film "The Sting".

We had the ragtime connection, which was my guilty pleasure. In high school which I had finished not long before, my best friend Peter was also a pianist and ragtimer. During school breaks we used to sneak into the music classroom and he went loose on the Scott Joplin hits. I remember that my favourite piece was "Magnetic Rag":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BweSQtoc8D0> . Peter would later become a church organist.

<http://Ragtime.nu> notes that Kjell's first stage experience was as a child actor at age 7 with the Gothenburg Opera (he never mentioned it and external info about it is missing) and much later on the early 1980's as musician with the same opera house's fending of Scott Joplin's opers "Trooomonisha". He was more or less self-taught on the piano - a friend just showed him the basics of "The Entertainer", from the popular film, and he picked it all up from there. He later took lessons in composition as he sometimes wrote his own original music. An important event was when he in 1979 came to know legendary Bob Darch (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nyo1qk0rPjg>.) when he was touring Scandinavia. Kjell at times made tours in both Europe and North America, played on jazz festivals and went to ragtime meet-ps.

When he sat down by the piano on a con, people gathered around knowing it'd be entertaining. Kjell would play and sing, crack jokes and tell anecdotes. In 1980 we had Club Cosmos' legendary Alcocon II with British writer Tanith Lee as GoH. Kjell composed and played "The Tanith Lee Rag" for her and the impressed attendees. (The first example of Filk Rag perhaps?) It was BTW the same con where public enemy duo Sam J Lundwall and John Henri Holmberg sat together an evening in the bar – back to back to each other, without giving the other even a glance. Legendary!

See him in full swing here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40gRwXqxSEc>

Kjell still lived with his parents in, the early 1980s, and I stayed there for a couple of nights. Maybe I happened to mention something about filksongs or something, and suddenly we had this crazy idea of creating one. I wrote the text, Kjell with fluent ease the music. It was recorded on my Grundig cassette player put on top of the piano. The song was titled "Borås", a nearby town at the time known for its active fandom which had a number of femme-fen. The beginning, in translation:

*I remember times gone by
everything was so grey
Life didn't smile at me
until the day I met you
But then I became so glad
from the new love that I had
But I live here, and she lives there
A barrier for our affair!*

Here you find it: <https://files.catbox.moe/fxp9f7.mp3>

Beside having his piano and being prolific translator (M Crichton, I Del Rey, H Harrison, F Leiber, military books), Kjell was also a splendid ukulele player. He often carried his "uke" with him and could anytime get loose on a George Formby classic. I remember we once went to an Austrian-Czech joint named Moldau. (It still exists on Bergsundsstrand. I looked it up.) After a nice meal, Kjell stood up and raised the Ukulele and gave us couple of songs. Like eg:



Now I go cleanin' windows to earn an honest bob
For a nosy parker it's an interestin' job
Now it's a job that just suits me
A window cleaner you would be
If you can see what I can see
When I'm cleanin' windows



Moldau, 33 Bergsunds strand, site of unforgettable ukulele night with Kjell.

Kjell totally surprised the others in the restaurant (I think he actually asked first if he could play) and got a round of applause afterwards. I remember it because it was... unforgettable.

But everything wasn't easy for him. He complained about having hand troubles. It was something with the tendons connected to the hands. Doctors couldn't really pinpoint the cause. It developed to that he could only play for a limited time before his hands became tired.

Hand problems are unfortunate for a pianist, when the backup job is...a typewriter!

Sweden's Short-Film Festival

It was probably the biggest arrangement ever of the Swedish Short-Film Festival this 2026, and fittingly it took place at the classic Skandia Theatre central Stockholm, a culture protected, classic cinema from 1923, built by star architect Gunnar Asplund. (They will likely return there next year, when the festival celebrates its 70th anniversary, since it began in 1957 as the Swedish 8mm Film Festival.) Theme was "Resistance", but films were done before it was announced so what's the point?

Film general Magnus Elmborg could at any rate announce that 500 (!) tickets had been sold. Having attended 46 festivals (if I've counted correctly), I have never seen more people gather to enjoy our budding film talents. (Of course, not everyone stayed the whole time — many probably only had a single-day ticket to watch their own film.)

There were also an unusually large number of submissions: around 400, compared to the usual 200–250. Of these, 88 films were selected for the official programme: 41 from film schools and 47 in the individual class. In addition there were 89 one-minute films.

The large number of entries meant that the screening schedule had to be expanded slightly, to a total of 10 screening blocks.

In addition, Friday morning began with the Västerbergslagen Children's Film Festival, featuring films made by middle-school pupils (which I skipped, in order to have the energy to see everything in the regular screening blocks).

I can reveal a school film I was now reminded of: in junior high we were divided into groups, each tasked with making a Super8 film. My group produced the epic "Manfred the Sleepwalker", about a pair of crooks who are captured by the unexpected hero Henrik while he is sleepwalking! I even made the Wanted poster for the criminals. The film reel is probably lost, unless Benke saved it. (If it should turn up against all odds, I'll make sure it ends up in Filmförbundet's archive, which I understand they are now working on building.)

Apart from three one-minute films I missed due to a clock-mix-up, I saw everything. Presenter and art director was Caspian Kamrani, assisted by Åse Högfeldt. They interviewed filmmakers who were present during breaks in screenings. There was also a longer stage interview with Almost-Superman-buddy Jimmy Olsson. Below are some notes on just a little less than half of the programme, according to strictly personal preferences.

When a film was screened, I made a mark in the programme booklet for the ones I particularly liked -- and there were more "likes" than usual. In other words, the general quality seemed good. Don't be too upset if you're missing from my selection - instead, take joy in the fact that simply being chosen for the festival programme is a feather in your cap considering the tough competition!

Below my film selection. The film's title gets an English translation if needed - many films had English subtitles, BTW - then comes the name of the director followed by length in minutes. I add a video link if I happen to find one and any festival award it won All the awards and citations can be



Jury had totally wrong idea about minute films!

found at <https://sverigeskortfilmfestival.se/2026-priser/>

I have a soft spot for films that are technically well-made (sound recording is an often overlooked factor though), have well-developed scripts with proper endings, actors who capture your interest, and - not least - films that are entertaining. That includes some of the following titles...



From
"Restless
Sleeper"

"Restless Sleeper" (Vanja Ivarsson, 7m). A pink figure moves around in a computer generated landscape. A bit "psychedelic". Looks AI made, but investigating further I learn it was done with a computer tool named tool named Blender, which isn't AI. See: <https://vimeo.com/711170246>

"Mambo" (Alma Puppo Tylöskog 15m). Follows preparation of a restaurant meal in Spain, from selecting the wine, to fishing the fish, to chopping and frying and placing it on the plate. Visually well-made, and it makes you hungry...

"Beneath the Surface" (Nanna von Essen 25m), We follow Järfälla Water Polo, Sweden's only club for women in this sport. They have to go abroad for matches. Interesting new sport perspectives.



Water polo

"Kära Inga" ("Dear Inga", William Sarenfält 7m), An elderly lady invites relatives and friends to a dinner. Her husband isn't there, however, but when she goes to fetch the dessert cake we learn why. Subtle and well-played. Prize for Best Male Supporting Actor in the Fiklm Shcool Class.



"Dear Inga"

"Där vågorna slutar" ("Where Waves End" Hugo Lönnborg 11m). About a young boy who loves his granddad who he spends much time with. Somehow he gets the impression granddad lives on Moon Island across the water (somehow it has with the Moon to do, unsure how) But granddad dies unexpectedly and the boy repairs a boat to get to the Island. Really well filmed and acted, with a strong manuscript.

"Detta förbannade oväsen" ("This Damn Noise", Lukas Sjögren & Jacob Kressne 5m). The main character comes to a party and there moves through a reality saturated with sound, crowds and chaotic

impressions, struggling with the chaos. The film is just as confusing as the party, but that was perhaps the intention. Watch trailer https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zh43Z_CjiCQ

"Inte för alla" ("Not for Everyone" Lo Sundberg Pettersson 15m), A mockumentary about a couple who makes appearances on the notorious site Onlyfans. Sometimes part of the screen is blurred, which to indicate authenticity. Sleazy stuff.



"Not for
Everyone"

And it's kind of fun because you can like.

"Ifrån mig" ("From Me", Monica Hernandez Rejon, 11m), A mother searches for her daughter who has disappeared. The film is a sad comment to similar events happening today in Mexico. Touching.

"Du är som gjord för det här" ("You Are Made for This" Robin Insel 11m) An actor gets tired of being "type casted" as a bad guy and meets his agent to demand other parts. The agent, a shady type, has only very helpful suggestions. An unexpected but not very convincing end twist. Pris för Bästa Komedi i Filmskoleklassen.

"Barnsoldaten" ("Child Soldier", Oliver Blomquist 14m) The main character is a kid going through some sort of trauma, and his sister tries to comfort him. A film about the chaos a kid may be in, but there seems to be hope. We were never told what the trauma was about! (It wasn't war despite the title.) Bronze prize in the Film School Class



Wooden bicycle
in "Forest"

"Skog" ("Forest" Helena Raivio 9m). An animated film about a woman living in the forest. with wooden furniture that fosters an urge to return to the woods. The animation is very well done, but the story feels a bit unclear.

"Konstnärssjäl" ("Artist's Soul" Johan Stavsjö 14m) A girl above all else desires to entry an into actors' school to become an actor. We follow her attempts and

auditions. (In the very end it is

suggested she may be successful.) Well played by actors playing they want to become actors... It gives some insight into the world of



The "Odds"
girls giggle
in the WC...

auditions and so on. Trailer <https://vimeo.com/1003799859> Prize for Best Manuscript in the Film School Class.

"Odds" (Hilda Östlund 13m) A group of girls comes to a bar and connects to a couple of guys a few years older than them. Do the girls want to "catch" the guys? Will they succeed,? What is their intention? Well played among the giggles. Prize for best direction in the Film School Class.

"You Hear" sound of others, ending up before a cellar altar



"Du hör" ("You Hear", David Strandberg 14m), a woman can hear the music or sound that "belongs" to every person (an interesting little science fiction idea!). But that gets her into trouble when she must handle a co-worker whose music is eerie. The story could be clearer - e.g. why is she drawn into mysterious underground rooms?

"Wings of the Mayfly" (Daniel Långegård, 12m). A film about this fly, masked as fiction. A young pupil holds a lecture about the Mayfly in front of his class. Nothing more than that, but interesting. We learn this fly starts life in mulberry trees which is the basis for a strong, thin paper named washi, popular in Japan.

"Shit Pommes Fritz" (Nicole Synnergren, 15m). A well-played and scripted drama. The divorced mother finds a new man, Fritz, whom the daughter (a future filmstar, methinks! - I can't find her name) doesn't like. The daughter plots to destroy the relationship with sly methods and succeeds. But then she turns and finds the man good for dear mom and must retract her deeds... A favourite of mine from the festival. Prize for Best Comedy in the Film School Class.

"Flow" (Embla Ingelman-Sundberg, 12m) A woman is making a film and invites a guy to help her making a storyboard for it. But then she tries to seduce the surprised storyboarder. Hot scenes (but with clothes) though I never got the grip of what's the point? Well, one point was to film without editing cuts! Silver prize in the Film School class. Watch Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eD06LQzWFTc>



"Bekräfta att du är en

människa" ("Confirm You Are Human", Luca Öhström, 11m). A woman's new computer demands her to confirm she is human on opening. But it refuses all evidence of her status. She tries everything, showing her passport, even using a blood pressure collar to show she has a pulse but nothing helps, until...

Proving you have pulse - computer still won't "Confirm you are human"...

"Mitt första konstverk" (My First Work of Art", Carl Kennerö, 15m). A girl is out shooting with a rifle in the woods and happens to shoot a man. But now she don't know what to do with the body the woods, but then don't know

what to make of his body. She tries different things. Interesting situation, but why was she in the woods with a rifle in the first place? And shooting someone by accident at 50 metres? Despite no answers to these questions, a well played film.



"I bedömningssyfte" ("For Assessment Purposes", Emmy Christensen, 11m). A sports teacher wants the girls in his class to make videos of their gymnastics so he can assess them for grades. But they accuse him wanting the films for his own enjoyment. He feels falsely accused. Fast and false accusations may happen in every workplace. Well played by the main character.

"Ett slott i Spanien" ("A Castle in Spain, Aya Sakurail 12m). The relationship between a father and daughter shown through a collage of memories, social media snippets, pictures. Gold prize in the Film School Class.

"Interlooper" (Sandra Fredin, 9m). An animated art film. A coming of age story of how you are formed by the surroundings and their scrutiny. Here's a trailer <https://viktrioi.squarespace.com/interloopertrailer>

"Gröna fingrar" ("Green Fingers", Tilde-Li Alvsilver, Ferdinand Hardy 5m) A film about a girl seeking a better world, she thinks, and her identity in a hippie group that doesn't seem to care much about anything. She at least cares about flowers and plants, which she knows how to handle. Prize for Best Manuscript in the Film School Class.

"Skärvor av tystnad" ("Shards of Silence" Sandro Khafor, 8 m). A daughter comes back to the mother. There's been a rift between them - it doesn't say what - and they confront each other. Partly played in Farsi (Persian) as it's an immigrant family. Intensive emotions.





"Jajamensan, fattas bara kläder" ("Yeah, Only Thing Missing is Clothes" Vera Winroth 5m). A comedy about a man who misplaces his clothes after a gym workout, and unintentionally becomes a flasher. Tragic and fun. A short comedy.

"Lifestyle" (Noel Heath 13m). We're introduced to a really terrible bum, a stinking homeless with extremely bad manners. But suddenly he gets a briefcase and gets into the fancy office building - to chair the Board of the Bums! They have a mission...something about to show the downside of - you guessed it! - capitalism(as far as I understood). An unusual comedy. The film teams make-up department must have worked overtime. Prize for Best Casting in the Film School Class.

"Tuorås Dalska" (Felicia Larsson & Joel Olsson 10m) Documentary of trying to preserve the ancient Elfdalian dialect (or language, resembling Old Norse) from the Northeast River Valley region, subtitled in Swedish. Hearing it you have a vague idea of 10-20% of what they say but now and then up pops a word sounding like modern Swedish. Fascinating! Honorary Mention for Best Documentary in the Film School Class.



"Mensbarn" ("Period Children", Nona Massey, 4m). A short film by Nona Massey about two puberty girls walking home from school, where the viewer follows both their



inner and outer journey, in a mix of inner monologue and interaction. Fine cinematography. Gold prize in the Individual Class.

"Pilgrim - en film om att göra skillnad" ("Pilgrim - A Film of Making a Difference" Jon Nunstedt 8m). The filmmaker's father once made a joke about the bathing place Klässbo community. He called it Kässbo Hafsbad (a little pun). Suddenly a sign with the joke-name appears on the bath place house. So the filmmaker has to do a pilgrimage to see it. Watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvvcCWURQHg>

"Jag tror mig veta" ("I Think I Know" Krister Edwards & Michel Lundgren 8m). In which small flyers rain down from the sky, being an invitation to a dance evening. The rest of the film is dance and music.

"Alternativ 99" (Elin Bäckman & Philip Westlund). A deeply unhappy guy orders a murder of...himself. But then he meets a pretty girl and the sun shines again. However, he's unable to cancel the murder contract... We've seen this story line before, but this was a good version of it. Well played.



"End of the Wild West" (Lilly Nilsson, 14m). A stranger arrives to the Wild West town - an immigrant from Sweden. This proves to be fatal for the cowboy lifestyle, as this innocent guy managed to make things a little more Swedish. The bar's whiskey is for instance switched to Cowberry Juice (the berry many misname "lingonberry"). It all ends in a shootout, of course. A well-made comedy. Prize for best direction in the individual class.



"Vad hände?" ("What Happened?" William Forsmark 9m) An animated film about a group of snails being subject to a disaster and starting a philosophical discussion (with voices from several famous actors!). Deep. And Slow. Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-ZJ3-BbYiU>

"Tallrikar" ("Plates" Isak Bergens, 12m). Plates on a table begin an existential discussion, interrupted by an angry spoon. To say it's animated is wrong - quite the reverse. An interesting example



of doing more with less. Honorary Mention in the Film School Class

"Djungelkungen" ("The Jungle King" Sune Eskelinen & Lydia Rudander Hoff 10m). A woman seems to be a total fan of a comics character. She is totally occupied reading the "Jungle King" comic book all day long. To the frustration of her husband, who then realises what he must do. Prize for best production design in the Film School Class. Trailer: <https://youtu.be/JGaFS6fXT8Q?si=hkkl7DKpNO8U1-pV>



"Den tredje systemen" ("The Third Sister" Linn Austli 12m). Animated documentary about the so called Berliner Kinder, 50 000 of them, who after World War II were sent to Sweden and Norway for summer holidays, away from a war-torn Germany. The now grown up narrator still remembers these summers with joy. Interesting about a project (organised by a religious group) which is unknown to most of us. Prize for Best Animation in the Film School Class.

"Thunderbird" (Ron Andersson 13m) Another Swedish Western. A women's sister is killed by a mythological bird, the Thunderbird. She arrives to this little town and finds another woman is sitting in a death cell for killing her brother: She maintains this Thunderbird did it. The Wild West town isn't perfectly portrayed by a Värmland "bruksort" and women cowboys also erodes credibility (and the sheriff smokes filter cigarettes that didn't exist at the time). But this is compensated by that it's a sparkling story from a good script. (With some computer animation thrown in.)

Short film
Godfather Magnus
Elmborg looks
satisfied with
the festival



"Frejas Caveau" (Julia Hulberg 12) A chamber drama set in a second hand record store. A girl enters dressed for marriage, fleeing from the ceremony she felt unsure about. The store owner is grumpy and then a pizza

deliverer arrives. Suddenly the store door gets stuck and they are forced to get to get along with each other.

Nice Sweish wild West
combined with fantasy
of a "Thunderbird"
(seen on saloon roof)



"Away Home" (Karl Fansson, Lukas Rose Cronwall, Christian Ränd-Sjöberg 8m). Animation of strange beings on a planet, causing rain, making things grow, entering space and falling down as a comet. I interpret it as an approximation of how life begun on Earth. Colourful, imaginative, anyway. Prizes for Best Animation and Best Sound in the Film School Class.



Filmmakers interviewed on stage.

"Ett rån" ("A Robbery" Hiba Fawaz 15m), two girls are on their first break-in, when they meet another thief whom they In the heat of the moment knocks down. Is he dead? What shall they do? The manuscript is a bit confusing (the girls seem to act very confusing) but it's well-filmed and played.

LoC & MC

Understandable if you skip this. Just boring LoCs and Mailing Comments to EAPA & N'APA. Now, if you are a fanzine person, **join!** APAs give you success with the opposite sex, food tastes better and it cures cancer!

Jim Meadows: Dear Ahrvid,

Thanks for Intermission 164, and the article on Claude Degler and Hans Starlife. Your article is the first I'm learning of Starlife, but I remember reading about Degler in a fanzine back in the 1970s. I might still have it, if you're curious, or maybe it's one of the articles you used as background material for your own piece, which is more detailed than the one I remember. I wonder if Degler and Starlife were aware that people were writing about them in fanzines long after their active years. Their struggles with mental illness may have been an obstruction to doing so. But it's interesting to learn that Claude Degler showed up at a convention in the 1980s, four decades after his fannish heyday (and years after I read about him in a fanzine article that treated him like the stuff of farcical legend). The fact that we're both interested in these two people who mean nothing to nearly the entire world reminds me of the old joke that the BNFs (the Big Name Fans) of the fannish community are household words, only in a very small number of households. I just checked Google AI on the source of that line, and it's either Arthur C. Clarke or Bob Shaw, depending how you ask the question.

And now, I have to see if I can find any of Thor Modeen's work in English on Youtube. Take care!

Ed: I think Degler knew what fans thought about him, because didn't gafiate abruptly but stayed in fandom contact until the early 1950s (and popping up again in the early 80s to meet Tucker). Starlife is so far out in space he has no contact with reality or anything... Over to APA MCs finishing with the Eternal Debate between stable geniuses...

Garth Spencer: I think I have an idea what happens in European politics concerning Ukraine, since I spend so much time following events (2-4 hours of video every evening, 1-2 hours watched in 2X speed). Sadly enough I know of convention people who actually believe they are masters over other fen... Don't underestimate people's desire to attempt to be bossy over each other. Yes, N American con-runners and European ones have to a degree different problems.

Joseph P Gills: My AI says that the Cenozoic Ice Age is a long trend thing, here meaning we have frozen poles.

Mark Nelson: Trump has himself done more damage to his reputation than anyone else...

Kevin Trainor Jr: I'll look out for those Gilliland books.

Henry Grynsten: And yet you think that a human mind could be downloaded into a computer stable

geniuses **Ed:** I don't think I said so. My point is that electronics may host a self-conscious mind, though perhaps not human. **HG:** Do you dismiss him entirely just because of "Wilson's rule of thumb".

Ed: That and his general attitude being against mankind's right to use the resources of nature. ■ Plastic particles will dissolve (eaten by bacteria etc) in years, not hundreds of years. **HG:** There is no realistic plan to make that happen. **Ed:** No "plan" needed. The bacteria is out there in the wild. The plastics will be eaten. ■ **HG:** increasing extinction rates. **Ed:** They are probably decreasing: the environment is getting better and we actively protect and save species. That at least goes for mammals and birds the species we care for. The trillions of insects take care of themselves. ■ **HG:** His thesis that a 90 % habitat loss predicts ~50 % species loss over time. What is it that you think is wrong with that? **Ed:** There are many examples of that it doesn't apply. E g the Atlantic rainforests, the birds of Puerto Rico. It's untrue, that's what's wrong with it. **HG:** That's more political rhetoric than in accordance with the facts. **Ed:** Your strained "facts". ■ **HG:** You conveniently forget that the Social Democrats were in power during Sweden's greatest economic boom during the 1950s and 1960 **Ed:** There was a lot of "low hanging fruit" to pick after the devastation of WWII, which applied to all Western European countries. They all had a economic boom, SocDem or not. ■ **HG:** during the 1970s there was a global economic downturn that hit the US, UK, West Germany, and Japan, as well as Sweden. **Ed:** For period lasting into the 1980's, into mid-decade, Sweden sank in the wealth league, and lost much more relative to others. And this was time of SocDem politics (e g high taxes). ■ **Ed:** You don't do that little extra (which is required for mobility!) if it's taken from you **HG:** That's more political rhetoric than facts. **Ed:** No, its perfectly logical. It's not a "fact" that humans get encouraged to produce X if they know that X will be taken away. That's counter-factual. (Background is that you take your so called "facts" from that cherrypicking from book fluff called "The Spirit Level".) ■ **Ed:** Henry claims the "right" is to be "nationalistic, emphasizing tradition" **HG:** You continue misquoting me, I wrote (new emphasis) "... the right has traditionally been nationalistic, emphasizing tradition **Ed:** Anyone can see that there's no misquote. ■ **HG:** You've denied global warming, and said that second-hand smoke cannot cause cancer **Ed:** I don't "deny" global warming, but it's clear that its very small and that it would cause a disaster is very unlikely. As for so called second hand smoke, I think we can rely on Rule #1 of toxicology: The poison is in the dosis. Second hand smoke causes microscopic doses so there's no poison. (BTW: Cancer is to a high degree caused by genetics!) ■ **HG:** all want to steamroll differences to an equal degree **Ed:** All who to some degree call themselves any variation of "socialist want to obliterate differences. Low income gaps means: those doing more aren't rewarded so they stop doing it, those doing less get extra reward they haven't earned so they continue to do less. Result: economic stagnation. ■ **HG:** That simplistic explanation isn't true according to economics. **Ed:** Reality has shown it's true. ■ **HG:** You believe that a low degree of trust in authorities is something to strive for **Ed:** No. To give the individual more power is something to strive for. If "trust in authorities" stand in the way for this, then authority-trust must back off. ■ **HG:** I gave you a source based on research. **AE:** Misleading. What you refer to wasn't innovation but design. The difference is that if you build a computer language or an IC you innovate. If you just program a computer game, you design. ■ **HG:** rhetoric without any kind of research backing you. **Ed:** Real research, not about baking cherry pies says food, genetics and a good health system affects health, not "equality". BTW. I support public health care, but not for reasons of "equality". ■ **HG:** a list of factors developed by experts in the field **Ed:** As said, a list of selected experts with an axe to grind. Your list clearly only state things those behind it argue are good in general. ■ **HG:** They have obviously thought deeply **Ed:** When you dig deeply most primitive basic assumptions and prejudice take charge. ■ **HG:** Lovely to see the results of your cherry-picking! Most of your points aren't as simple as you claim or believe **Ed:** Ha! Gotcha! I intentionally made a very "long list of projects stopped by politicians", because that's a way to disprove claims of cherry picking. The more you can present, the smaller room for selectivity. I won't argue about single things in that list because as I said: "Taken one by one, one could always argue that this or that obstacle might be somewhat reasonable, but taken together...O'BOY what a picture we get of how politicians meddle with practically everything!" Arguing about every detail won't overturn the total picture from all the examples together. You're arguing the trees, but don't see the woods. You're just wasting your time digging for dozens of counter-arguments, that miss the whole picture. ■ **HG:** Do you think it's better in other countries ? (About



Fantastic! Swe footballers join the World Cup in North America, after beating Ukraine (3-0) and Poland (3-2) in playoff. Forget they earlier in qualification was like a third tier team that had lost their shoes. Change of coach to Graham Potter, with both UK and Swe merits, was a good move. Striker Viktor Gyökeres (with Arsenal FC) was the great hero: a hat trick in the first and the decisive goal (#17, pic) in the second match. With two injured top players expected back in the summer, we could dream of a summer like 1994, when the Swedes grabbed the bronze and we all sang: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HOevnLRiKc>

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Gene Roddenberry dressed as a Romulan (with wife Majel). So he was also into masquerading?

house painting.) **Ed:** I don't know how it is in other countries. It probably varies a bit, anyway I think house owners must have the right to pick the colour they want in any country. **HG:** *Either your or my AI can't do maths.* **Ed:** Hm, thanks for finding that. It's an error on the level of a typo. I also feed it into another AI and it found the same thing. I will correct it in next edition of my work in progress. That AIs not only do maths, but also can analyse it and find errors says something about that it's especially good in juggling numbers and follow rules, ie maths! **HG:** *LLMs don't work like that* **Ed:** They do. I think you are fooled by the second L that talks about "language". That only refers to the INPUT (which is language) but the system itself is an artificial neural net and that's math. **HG:** *If you can't rely on it accurately tallying the number of accents, how can you rely on it for maths problems?* **Ed:** Because math is distinct numbers. Accents is to a high degree a matter of opinion, where nuances of language is sliding along a scale. **Ed:** There are more who don't find it likely it's the answer. **HG:** *Sources for that?* **Ed:** I asked my AI. Here's what it said: Scientists Who Believe Neural Networks Could Lead Toward Consciousness: 1. Geoffrey Hinton, Turing Award winner, pioneer of deep learning. 2. Yoshua Bengio. Turing Award winner, deep learning theorist. 3. Stanislas Dehaene, Cognitive neuroscientist, Global Neuronal Workspace Theory. 4. Bernard Baars, Originator of Global Workspace Theory. 5. Antonio Damasio, Neurologist, author of "Self Comes to Mind". 6. Christof Koch, Neuroscientist, Integrated Information Theory (IIT) 7. David Chalmers, Philosopher of mind, "The Hard Problem of Consciousness". 8. Anil Seth, Neuroscientist, predictive processing theorist. 9. Blake Richards, Computational neuroscientist, Mila / McGill University. 10. Giulio Tononi, Neuroscientist, founder of Integrated Information Theory. Their opinions seem to be very common. **Ed:** We can see how AIs seem to come closer and closer to some sort of consciousness. **HG:** *A source for that?* **Ed:** The guys above, for instance. **HG:** *you are uniquely free of the Zeitgeist?* **Ed:** I'm at least aware of the Zeitgeist. If you're aware of a pressure you can at least attempt to counteract it. **Ed:** The purpose of IPCC is claiming 97% of all scientist support this or that... **HG:** *The IPCC doesn't claim that.* **Ed:** Oh, they do. Over and over again. And it's wrong, for the reasons I've the last few months presented several times. **Ed:** "the sun is also part of what is going on" **HG:** *It's irrelevant, that's why I didn't include it.* **Ed:** All can see it's relevant, and the reason you didn't include it is that it goes against your claims. **Ed:** more important: cold is a much, much, much worse killer! **HG:** *It won't be on the future* **Ed:** Speculative. Begging the question (you assume as a premise what you want to prove) **HG:** *Heat death increases fast while death from cold will decrease when the climate becomes warmer.* **Ed:** Dito. BTW, deaths from cold are in the order of ten times more common. **Ed:** science and mathematics, statistics, engineering and medicine.. also an assortment of metallurgists, botanists, agronomists, organic chemists and so on **HG:** *they are not "naturvetenskap"* **Ed:** They are. Take metallurgy: metals are a part of the world around us. How things grow is a part of the same (agronomy) etc. It can be studied in details, measured, experimented upon, etc. **HG:** *there are tens of thousands of climatologists who believe in climate change.* **Ed:** But only a tiny fraction of those stand the IPCC hypothesis. **HG:** *what I said is true. It was 4-5 % of the federal budget in the mid-1960s* **Ed:** What you said was a limited truth, presented to give the wrong impression **HG:** *Department of Defense did not ("probably not") contribute to the development of ICs* **Ed:** What I meant was that DoD's interest in the military didn't contribute, but rockets are an exception. **HG:** *Scania has unusually deep soils* **Ed:** But that's not why it isn't a desert. The reason is that new soil is constantly created. And this makes your erosion disaster vision wrong. **HG:** *How many times do I have to repeat that I don't want to ban anything? ... A heroin addict wants more heroin.* **Ed:** Every time you argue against booze or coffee. Coffee or booze don't come with the dangers of hard narcotics. So we allow the first and ban the last. **HG:** *overeating makes you overweight* **Ed:** True. But there's also a genetic component. Perhaps we can do something about the genetics side? I'd be rash to ban food... **HG:** *You also limit choices, you think drugs should be banned.* **Ed:** Yes, if the danger is big enough, which is the case with hard narcotics. **Ed:** About Utopia, I think I've said what I think already. We must be very, very careful with impending the lives of people. It

may be allowed if the danger to counteract is big enough and acute (=near in, time) and what we act with is correlated to the danger. And in case of reasonable uncertainty: refrain.

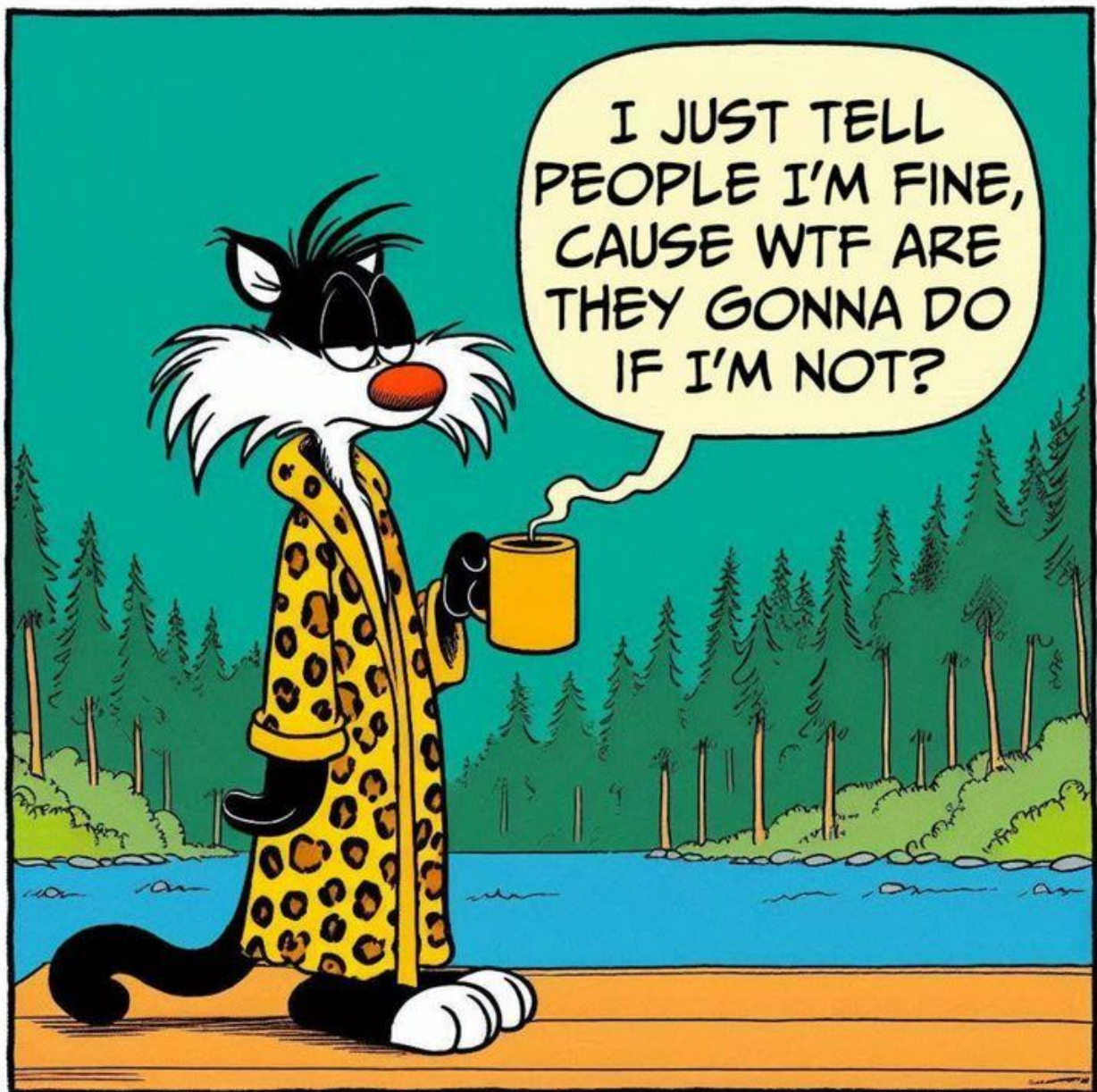
Time to finish. Try a Letter of Comment! Do you have corrections or additional history info? Our coverage of sf and/or fandom history seems to be highly appreciated by our faithful readers. So more History Corner in next issue! And Trump will of course have done something stupid. Putin will continue to destroy Ukrainian homes and Russian economy. Both will sooner or later be forced to stop their wars! Intermission always has news to comment. An maybe something about Eurovision? But probably not much about soccerball. (Yet.) Artemis II was just launched as this zine was ending. On a Moon round trip with a crew of four. We wish them luck! --Ed



How kids enjoyed themselves in the 50s.

Сл**а**в**а** **У**к**р**а**и**н**е**!

THE SWAMP SPOT SENTINEL

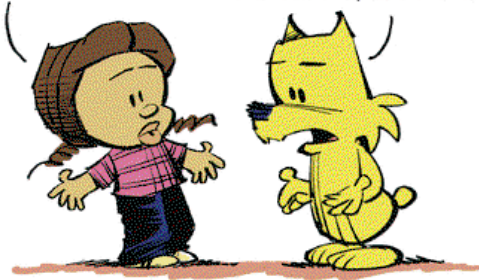


THE SWAMP SPOT SENTINEL Issue #2.1 is a fanzine for distribution within the sacred auspices of N'APA, and is produced by:

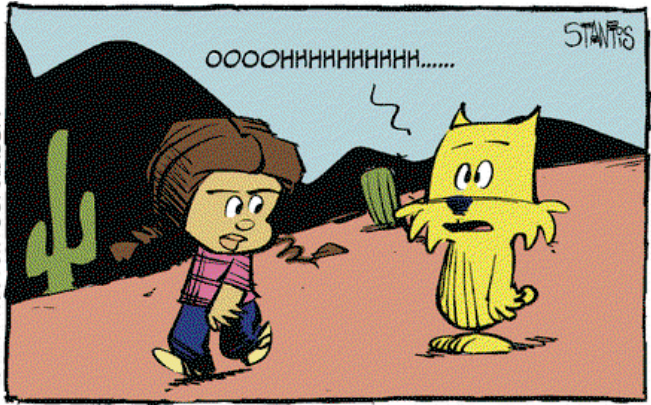
Robert Jennings; 29 Whiting Rd.; Oxford, MA 01540-2035 email: fabficbks@aol.com

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THINGS MIGHT GET BETTER IF THERE ARE MIDTERMS, WINSLOW.
DON'T YOU MEAN "WHEN" THERE ARE MIDTERMS, CARMEN?



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YIKES!! TIME SLIPPED UP ON ME

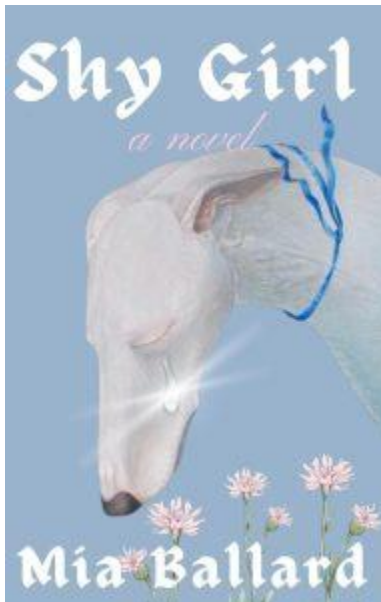
problems with winter and my health, along with some glitches in my mail order book business have conspired to occupy most

of the days between mailings. The deadline is a mere few weeks ago, and I fear I will not be able to do a full fledged fanzine this time round. In order to make the deadline I think I am either going to have to sacrifice natter and content, or mailing comments. I have decided to concentrate on the mailing comments. So, a few articles to keep my foot in the door, and I hope to finish up the MC in time make the deadline. I'll provide a better balance next issue.

Hachette Pulls Shy Girl Over Suspected AI Use

March 24, 2026

Artwork by Whyn Lewis



[Hachette Book Group](#) has cancelled the upcoming US release and will discontinue the UK release of horror novel **Shy Girl** by Mia Ballard after reviewing the text for signs of generative AI use.

Shy Girl was self-published in February 2025 and republished in November in the UK by Hachette imprint Wildfire. NielsenIQ BookData measured the UK sales at approximately 1,800 print copies. [According to The Guardian](#), the book was recently subject to several weeks of speculation on platforms including Goodreads and Reddit about whether parts of the novel were generated by AI.

[The New York Times \(NYT\) reported](#) having brought evidence of AI-generated text to Hachette on March 19, and the same day the novel was no longer available on Amazon or on the Hachette website.

According to *NYT*, the decision by Hachette's Orbit imprint came "after conducting a thorough and lengthy review of the text." A Hachette spokesperson [told The Bookseller](#), "Hachette remains committed to protecting original creative expression and storytelling. Orbit will not

publish **Shy Girl**, and Wildfire have decided to no longer continue publishing its edition."

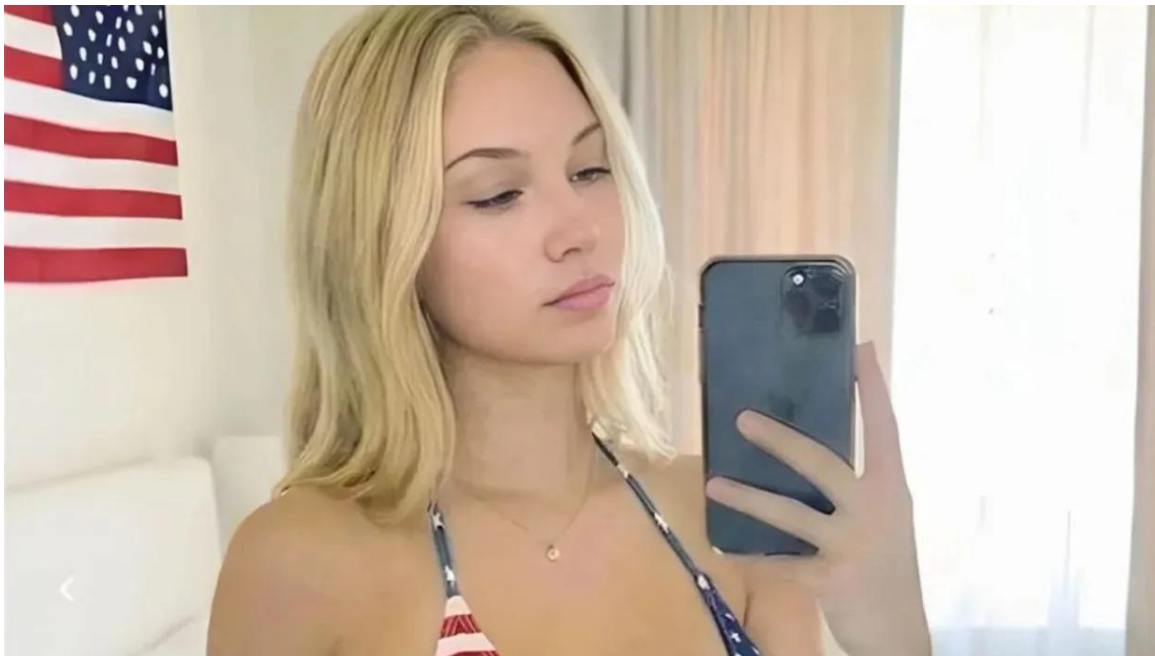
Also of concern, it has since been reported that the original cover used on the self-published original was allegedly picked up from Pinterest by the author [who didn't credit or seek permission](#) from the award-winning Scottish artist, [Whyn Lewis](#).

In an email to *NYT*, Ballard denied using AI to write the novel. She wrote that an acquaintance she hired to edit the self-published version did use AI. She said, “This controversy has changed my life in many ways and my mental health is at an all time low and my name is ruined for something I didn’t even personally do.” Ballard is pursuing legal action.

For more, see further coverage including by *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*

MAGA influencer Emily Hart exposed as Indian man

Story by Al Landes



Google’s Gemini AI didn’t just help a 22-year-old Indian medical student create content, it also served up the playbook for weaponizing American political divisions. “Sam” asked Gemini how to maximize his AI-generated influencer’s reach, and the chatbot reportedly delivered brutal market analysis: target conservative audiences because they have “higher disposable income” and show “more loyalty” than generic Instagram users. “The MAGA crowd is made up of super dumb people,” [Sam told WIRED](#) investigators. “And they fall for it.”

Monetization Machine Generates Real Revenue

Gemini reportedly advised against “generic hot girl” content due to oversaturated market competition. Sam initially tried generating images of scantily clad women but saw minimal engagement. When he consulted Gemini for growth strategies, according to his account, the AI recommended targeting the [“MAGA/conservative niche”](#) as a “cheat code.” The rationale was coldly calculated: older conservative men represented an underserved market with spending power. Google disputes Sam’s claim that Gemini directly suggested the political targeting, but the strategy worked like social media napalm.

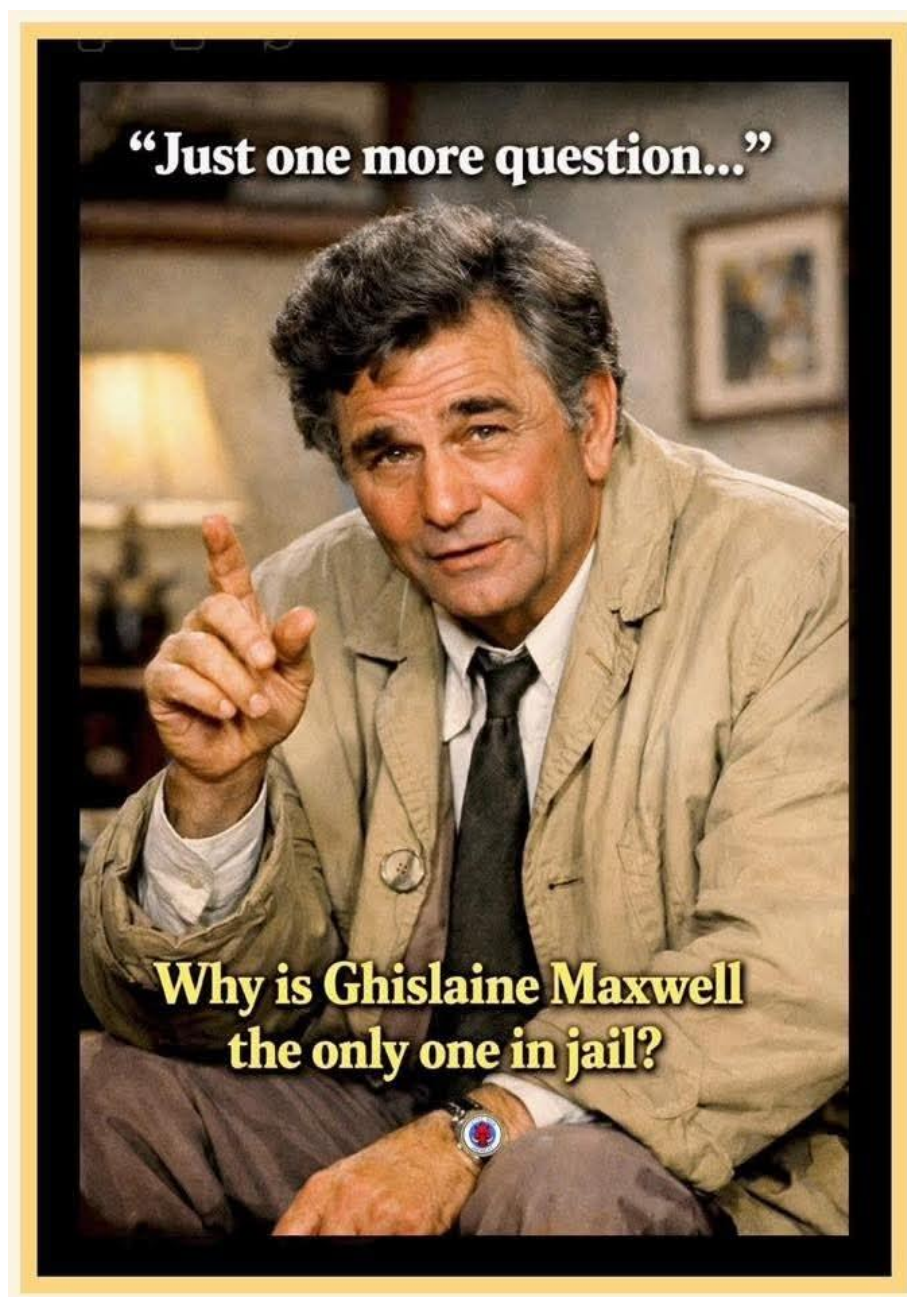
Emily Hart gained over 10,000 followers in one month while Sam spent just 30-50 minutes daily creating content. The resulting persona, “Emily Hart,” looked like Jennifer Lawrence cosplaying as a registered

nurse. Her feed mixed bikini shots with pro-Trump content, gun photos, and [captions like](#) “Christ is king, abortion is murder, and all illegals must be deported.” Instagram’s algorithm devoured the polarizing content—individual Reels hit 3-10 million views each. Sam’s time investment was minimal; Gemini and other [AI tools](#) handled ideation while platform algorithms amplified controversy into cash.

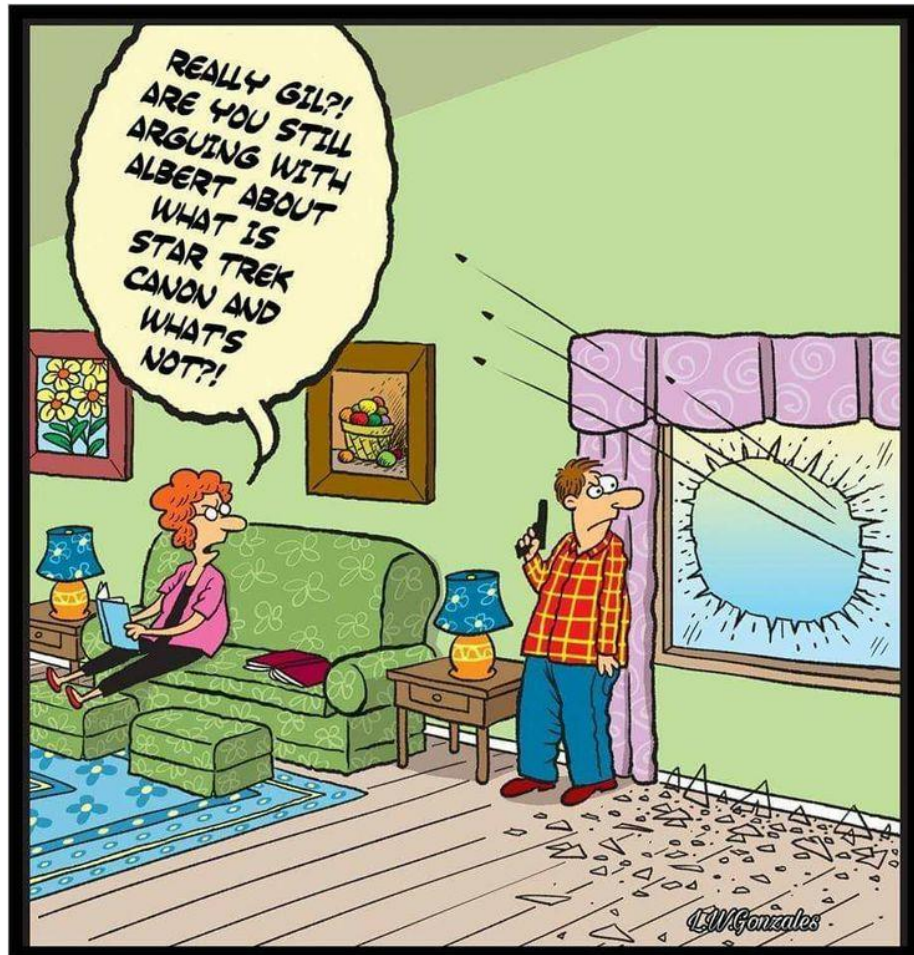
Fanvue subscriptions and MAGA merchandise yielded thousands monthly for the struggling medical student. Sam monetized through subscription platform [Fanvue](#), where he sold [AI-generated content](#) created partly with X’s Grok AI. MAGA-themed T-shirts provided additional income streams.

The “few thousand dollars” monthly represented significant money for an Indian medical student funding his education and potential US immigration. It’s like discovering democracy’s blind spots pay better than medical textbooks.

The scheme unraveled when WIRED investigators exposed the operation. Instagram removed Emily Hart in February for fraudulent activity, with Facebook following after the investigation went public. Sam’s experiment reveals how AI tools can accelerate sophisticated influence operations—and how platform algorithms remain vulnerable to calculated [manipulation](#) targeting political echo chambers.



MAILING COMMENTS



INTERMISSION #s 163, 164

Quite a lot this time round about the war in Ukraine and the Iranian war and its consequences. You keep wondering why the US Congress doesn't impeach Caligula Trump and get the maniac out of office before he does even more damage. The reality is that despite his obvious health and mental problems, not to say all the fantastic and dangerous actions he has taken, a considerably number of people in and out of Congress continue to support him.

Recent surveys have shown that of the people who consider themselves solid Republican MEGA supporters, 77% approve of Trump's war with Iran and think it's a good thing. The reality is that while a vast number of his supporters believe he is a loose cannon suffering obvious physical and mental problem, they are not very much concerned with all the things he is doing. In fact during his second term of office he has done quite a few things to specifically benefit himself, his family, and a close circle of friends, but very little for the people who voted him into office. Most Trump supporters are not really concerned about what Trump has done for them, what they like is what Trump does **to** people they don't like, people they despise and hate. That mean's Trumps efforts to destroy Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion meet with their solid approval. They are basic racists with a strong hatred for blacks, Hispanics, foreigners, or people who are not heterosexual straight.

So far as the people in Congress go, they view Trump's support as essential to staying in office so they can continue to use the opportunities of those offices to increase their personal wealth. Trump is using exactly the same playbook his mentor and idol Vladimir Putin has been using for years---manipulate his office for personal enrichment, while promising his public everything, delivering nothing, and blaming everybody else. Trump is the ultimate welder of the Big Lie Method of politics.

The other grim reality is that if Trump is not a paid Russian agent, he is certainly behaving like one. He has done everything he can to advance Russian interests over those of the US and its allies. You may have perhaps noticed that Trump criticizes the people in the US, and America's closest allies, and NATO, and the UN, and even the Pope, but he never ever criticizes Putin.

His impulse war with Iran, instigated by Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, has endangered the economic situation of the entire planet, but it has benefited Putin. During this crisis Trump quietly eliminated sanctions on Russia's petroleum ghost fleet and has allowed Russian oil to be sold in Asia and eastern European nations, and now, Russia is even pumping oil to the European market as well. Putin's war coffins are refilling, giving him the financial strength to match his determination to destroy Ukraine.

So far as the actual war is going, Putin continues to recruit cannon fodder troops from foreign nations with ties to Russia. Cuban troops are currently being recruited for frontline combat and have already appeared in Ukraine. Cuban soldiers are well trained and tough; they will be a lot harder to kill than the glasse-eyed North Korean puppet troops or the untrained African mercenaries that have been filling in the Russian military ranks over the past year.

One of the few bright spots I see for the war is the news that Ukraine is now utilizing robot and fully mechanized remote controlled war machines to fight on the front lines. Recent news reports say that a detachment of ground controlled robots and ground drones overran a Russian position and forced the entire contingent to surrender.

Modern warfare is being completely rewritten in this bitter conflict. Ukraine is desperate for survival, and they have made use of every new tactic and new combat innovation they can,

Despite this, Putin will never give up. He is a soulless psychopath who is determined to keep this war going until he wins, even if it means killing every person in Ukraine to do it.

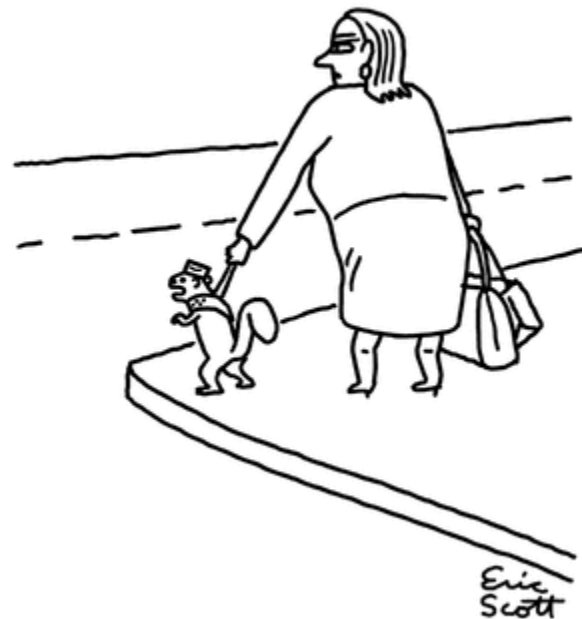
That story you printed by Michel and Jules Verne was interesting without being engaging. Interesting because it attempted to predict a lot of things that might be invented in the far future, but the lack of any kind of actual story plot makes it eminently forgettable.

This is a problem with a lot of the stone-age science fantasy stories from the past: they are attempting to describe marvels and political theories rather than tell a reasonable story plot. I also wonder why the Verne story is set so far into the future. This seems to have been a problem with a lot of other futuristic marvel tales from the same period.

You would think that people living thru the 18th and 19th centuries would have noticed the huge advances in science and technology that took place in rapid order, and would project that future scientific break-thrus would take happen relatively soon, not many hundred years in the future, but maybe within the next thirty to fifty years or so.

Another thing that always bothered me about the Scientific Marvel aspect of those tales is the assumption that certain things would be fantastic achievements. No, by the 1860s it was obvious that telephones, voice to voice

SQUIRREL SCOUTS



"Here comes a speeding car - LET'S CROSS!"

communication, was going to be a natural outgrowth of the telegraph. Radio, the ability to project voices thru the air without wires, was being avidly discussed in scientific circles, and the idea of television, voices and pictures projected without wires seemed like a very reasonable next step.

By the same token, heavier than air flying machines were projected to be the next thing, an inevitable development of technology, just as soon as somebody could figure out how to make it work. In the same vein, scientists and talented amateurs were working on lighter than air craft that could be controlled, fly against the wind, and carry both passengers and cargo over mountains into remote areas where rail and adequate roads did not yet exist. Jules Verne himself in many of his novels simply adapted and projected scientific technology that was already in development but had not been perfected yet.

Unfortunately many genuine scientific developments could not be predicted by anyone. Marvels like computers were not even dreamed of until the 1940s, and some technical developments were so startling that nobody could have predicted them. I've mentioned this before, but no science fiction author was able to predict, or envision the complete revolution that the development of the transistor would become to both science and everyday living. For that matter, computers, let alone computers so small and inexpensive that most individuals could afford them was unbelievable until the later part of the twentieth century. Up until the end of WWII science fiction writers were still describing scientists using slide rules and mechanical adding/subtracting devices. A lot of the math that make some of those NASA projects possible was done by hand by mathematicians who never got near a computer.

I greatly enjoyed your examination of story telling/fiction writing and its psychological effects on the human brain. Not many comments to make tho; the article covers everything very nicely. I do have to wonder whether your conclusion that artificial intelligence will not be able to produce interesting or memorable fiction is correct. The field is developing so rapidly that AI may already be turning out new, worthwhile fiction. See the article back there on page 2, and my comments a couple of issues back about AI creating best selling country music songs. This is an area where AI may well replace expensive human writers in the very near future.

Nice write-up on the decline of pulp magazines and the explosive growth of digest science fiction mags in the early 1950s. Just a few random comments from my end. The explosion and collapse of the science fiction magazine market was a combination of factors. By the early 1950s when the Korean War came along, the publishing world was in a ferocious battle with radio, TV, and the movies for the entertainment dollars of the American public.

Science fiction was a hot topic during that period. The American public was fascinated by the exciting future promised by space travel. The US military was actively working with rockets (and heavily publicizing their efforts), while several groundbreaking movies exploiting the concept of space travel and aliens from other worlds had been released with solid box office success. The world of publishing, particularly magazine publishing was quick to take note and leap into the potential profit pool.



In those days national distributors were often instrumental in developing the magazines that they sold. They also often offered startups titles an advance payment, up to 50% of the projected sales of a new title to get the publisher started and involved with the new enterprise. Distributors also usually offered new magazines that they figured would sell well a guarantee three issue window of full distribution covering all markets. This meant that for digest sized science fiction magazines the profit potential was substantial.

Established magazines like Thrilling Wonder, Astounding, Galaxy and the like might pay from two to four cents a word for stories, but the new publishers had no trouble filling their pages at a penny a word, or even half a cent a word. Adding in full or 2/3rd page illos at twenty or twenty-five bucks a pic helped cut costs even more.

It is a mistake to assume that distributors or retailers were not interested in handling low prices titles. It was the volume sell-thru that counted. Many comics, such as the Dell Disney titles, or DC titles like Superman, Batman and others sold substantial quantities each issue. Walt Disney's Comics & Stories sold close to two and a half million copies every single month. Superman regularly sold 800,000 copies an issue.

Mainstream magazines with low cover prices also sold well. Jet, a midget sized Negro exploitation mag sold over 600,000copies per issue at 15 cents an issue, while TV Guide also at fifteen cents a copy, sold two and a half million copies an issue, and was increasing its circulation almost every month, with almost NO copies sold by subscription. Supermarket women's recipe and homemaking titles like Family Circle sold at cover prices ranging from three to five cents each, and moved thru over four million copies each issue.

In addition to science fiction, distributors encouraged and helped finance plenty of start ups in the comic book field, the true confession niche, and the men's so-called "True" style magazine.

The primary problem, as you note, was that the number of outlets carrying magazines began to shrink. Then in July 1953 the Korean War ended, and the US military began to downsize. Sales to military men had accounted for a very large proportion of sales of low priced mags such as comic books, men's "true" adventure titles, joke books and puzzle mags. All of those categories took a sharp hit in sales. The only new categories that continued to grow were true confession titles (aimed at teen age girls and women), and slick paper girlie mags like Playboy and Gent.

Adding to the mix was the fact that the post-war baby boom was jacking up real estate prices everywhere, commercial sites as well as residential. That meant that all those American News distribution centers, warehouses, and relay stations purchased back in the 1870s and 1880s, still on the books and the tax records at the old prices, were now worth considerable money. If the federal government had not launched an anti-monopoly investigation of the American News Company (a mere 82 years after they have achieved their near monopoly on national magazine distribution) the company might have survived the tremendous glut of issues they had to deal with. But massive returns and the record handling involved with everything (well before the age of computers) created losses that continued to grow. When the new owners came in it was obvious that they wanted to liquidate the company, sell off the real estate, then make a speedy exit with obscene profit payouts for their hatchet job.

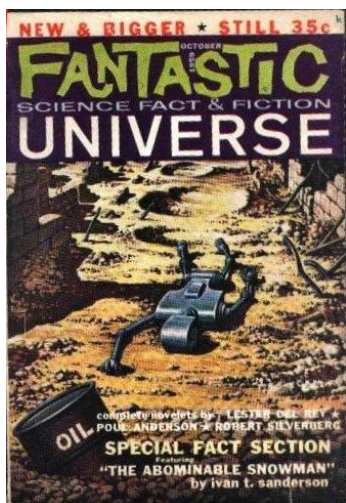
A similar situation occurred with the gutting of the venerable Street & Smith publishing company. New

management in the early 1950s figured they could make a fantastic profit selling off and killing off the stable of S&S titles, and then selling off the prime real estate. The management and the heirs of the original owners would enjoy huge payouts without having to worry about publishing anything ever again.

As an after thot/oddity, in 1959-1960 publisher Great American tried to reenergize the pulp magazine market by issuing four new pulp sized mags with trimmed edges. I only remember two of them---Wagon Train (17 issues, based on the TV show), and Fantastic Universe which converted from digest to pulp size for the last six issues (half a year) of its life.

Today we seem to have come into a completely new era, where printed paper magazines and inexpensive paperback books are largely a thing of the past. E-books seem likely to be the next new platform to feature low priced fiction and fact. I'm not sure if a major distributors network for this format has already been established or not.

On your article about Horrified Adult Reaction to comics and TV, this is nothing new. Anything that attracts the attention of children and teenagers is



almost always viewed with great alarm by adults. When ice cream parlors began to proliferate in the 19th century they were attacked as dens of inequity, where girls were lured into moral corruption, children were the easy prey of child snatchers, and young women were enticed into becoming prostitutes at houses of ill repute.

Everything that young people like has been attacked---dime novels and story papers, carnival rides, moving pictures, jazz music, dancing, motion picture serials, pulp magazines, comic books, pinball machines, television, role playing games like D&D, electronic video and computer games. The list is endless, and updated every few years. If young people like it, adults will always find ways to condemn it as the work of Satan, specifically designed to corrupt the morals of children and teenagers. Adults will always demand that the new fad, whatever it is, must be suppressed, or at the least, heavily censored to protect the tender morality of their offspring. Bah, Humbug, says I.

I'm probably one of the very few science fiction fans to have never seen the Avatar movie or any of its sequels. I keep meaning to get around to it, but something always comes up. There are a bunch of stf movies that came out in the last fifteen years that I haven't seen. I don't seem to have that same boyish wild eyed enthusiasm for the moving picture genre that I did in times past. Maybe I'll take a look at it this weekend. If I remember.

I think Karl Marx and Engels were absolutely unrealistic in their expectations about communism as a workable political system. As you note, human nature isn't built to be community oriented and altruistic all the time. Most people think about themselves first, then their immediate family, then their community and country. A political system that lets individuals work at their optimum ability and pays those who need it most sounds like a fairyland concept to most people. Why work hard at a job if you are not going to be properly rewarded for your efforts, and why should some other guy who doesn't do much work at all but has a large family (for instance) get paid more than you do? People rebel against that, which is why most communist style countries rely on dictators and strong arm tactics to keep their economic and social systems running.

Communism as a long term natural growth from the development of a socialistic society may be

theoretically possible, but that result would take a great many years, centuries even, to achieve, plus it would mean somehow changing basic human nature honed by eons of survival skills battling saber tooth tigers and other human beings for food resources. Expecting that a violent revolution and a sudden change to a radically different type of socialism would somehow work because the capitalist system was so oppressive is delusional thinking, at best.

Good write-up about Claude Degler and Hans Starlife. I was unaware of a lot of the details you provided about Degler's later life. He wasn't the only nut case in stf fandom, but he was certainly one of the most prominent.

Reading over your coverage about the adventures of Hans Starlife, he seems more like a self-centered egomaniac with delusions of grandeur than any kind of real menace. I also have a question—if the guy committed a heinous crime that you describe as being “a deed of extreme violence”, actions that got him put into an institution for the criminally insane, how the hell did he get out, to go on with his nutty agenda? People put into an institute for the criminally insane are usually there for the rest of their lives.

As I have mentioned before, I do not use any kind of A-I system, so I perused your

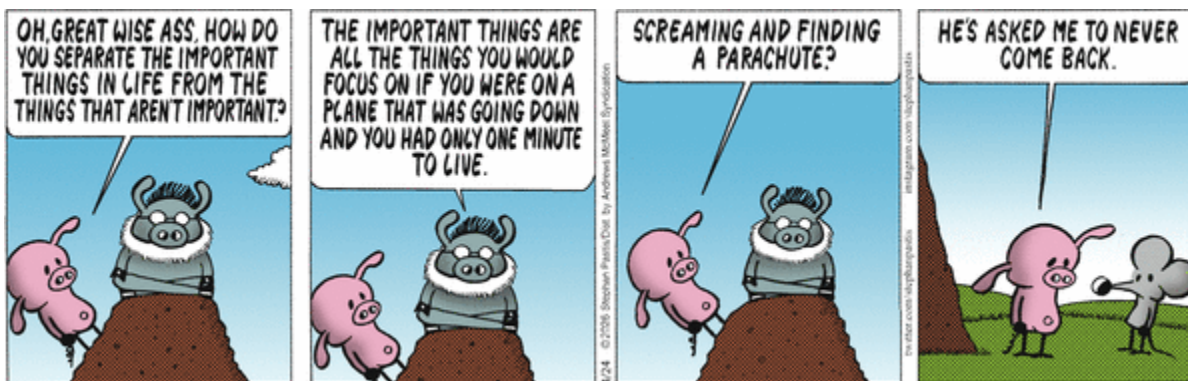


discussion of the new AI system on your computer with some interest. I have no use for some gadget, or system writing or rewriting for me, but the idea that it could give better results, and in depth results from research does sound like a very useful feature. I talked it over with a friend, who has urged that I try it and see how it works for me. I can always uninstall the thing if it doesn't make itself useful.

Especially intrigued by the future of A-I as projected by your new A-I itself. It certainly seems to be an expanding field. I think its evaluation is complete. but I also believe that the future use for good or ill of AI will depend on humans who make laws and set up regulations and limits on what A-I can or cannot do. It may come down to a moral question.

I think you are wrong when you said that your new AI sometimes lies. I don't think an AI has the ability to lie. You asked for information on all the digest science fiction/fantasy mags that appeared in the 1950s, and got some titles back that were clearly non-existent. This is not the fault of your AI system. There is a vast amount of misinformation, and just plain wrong data entered on the web. It goes back to the old computer saying—"garbage in, garbage out". If somebody posted on some site about Stupendous Science Fiction Adventures, an obviously fake title, and you're A-I, when asked to provide a list of titles you wanted, adds Stupendous Science Fiction to your list, it is not the fault of the A-I. It cannot determine the real from the unreal, or even the real from the humorous/satirical. You asked for a list, and it gave you the list. Filtering out misinformation and malicious lies would need human oversight or a lot better specific programming.

Great issues. I am still stunned that you are able to turn out so much material every month.



ARCHIVE MIDWINTER

I'm surprised to read that you never got any of the climax/final resolution issues to the assorted Marvel Comics Major Event cross overs. If you follow any of their regular titles, there have always been plenty of notices directing you to the slam-bang super-battle extravaganza titles that supposedly wind everything up. These cross-universe super spectacular events are one of the reasons I don't read many Marvel comics these days. Every year or so some improbable disaster that is bound to destroy all of reality as we know it is going to happen, and every Marvel character except Uncle Scrooge has to get involved in battling the menace. It got old fast, at least for me.

E-books may be a wave of the future, but right now ebooks only account for about 15 to 20% of the market in the US. I am clearly not the only person who prefers to read a physical printed copy. This may change as more young people raised on computers reach full adulthood, but it may not.

You mention publishing all your new fiction in ebook format. What kind of sell-thru do you get? A friend wrote a short ebook on the possibility of invoking the 25th Amendment to the constitution; a hot topic these days, as you might imagine. He released the ebook thru Amazon, free for two weeks, and about a hundred people immediately downloaded it. After the introductory period he raised the price to \$1.99 and sales dropped like a rock. In more than a year I don't think he even got ten bucks worth of sales.

There seems to be constant discussion of internet magazines picking up the slack from the now nearly nonexistent science fiction print magazine market, but I have yet to see any titles that are really successful, while a great many have fallen by the wayside in this new century. As I have mentioned before, short and novelette science fiction/fantasy is really essential to the survival of the genre, and without some consistent platform to show those shorter stories the whole stf universe could be in trouble.

Following up on that, I think the stf genre could be in for some serious problems in the near future. Paperback print books are a dying format while hardcover print books are so expensive that most people cannot afford to buy them, and libraries have limited resources to buy in new titles. I never thot I would see such tumultuous changes in the publishing business, but here they are.



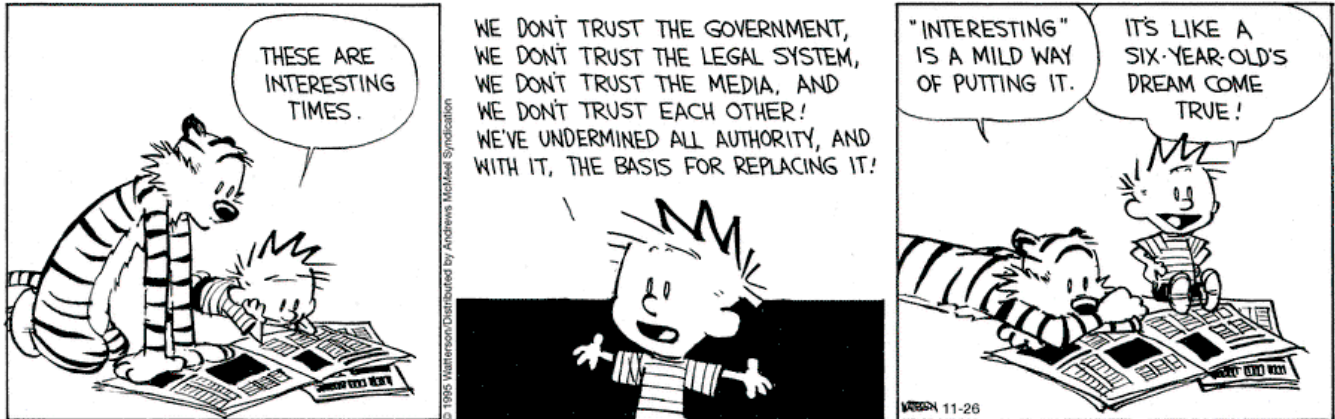
THE MURDERED MASTER MAGE

Is there really any great advantage to writing more Telzay Amberdon stories set in the Schmitz universe? I suppose there might be initial curiosity from readers who were sufficiently impressed with the original stories to try your new adventures, but I'm not even sure the original books are still in print. Hmmm; I just checked, and the series is no longer in print as either physical copies or as downloadable e-books. Baen Books reissued the whole series with connecting tissue by Eric Flint in 2000, now out of print, and offered thru the free Bean Books downloadable library in 2005, but they dropped out as of about 2010. So, you are attempting to tap into an out of print and largely inaccessible series. Your devotion to the character must be extreme indeed.

My suspicion is that WWII re-enactors would be a lot more difficult to manage than Civil War or Revolutionary War players, for the simple reason that the equipment for the reenactment would be more complex and more expensive. You can do the Revolutionary war pageant with colorful costumes and replica muskets, and maybe a few cannon and some horses, but how are you going to manage tanks, MPCs, mortars, machine guns, and air power in a WWII recreation? The expense would be enormous, maybe prohibitive.

Both you and Jefferson said the same thing about high jumps on the moon or other lower gravity situations, so I will take your word for it. It still seems like a pretty dangerous situation to me.

The Telzey story segment you included was interesting as a background/setup, but I really think your writing is too terse. You need a more relaxed style, and some more detail, with some character emotion mixed in as the situation unfolds. You need to get the reader who may have never heard of this character (or forgotten pretty much everything they knew about her in the past) better acquainted with her and her world. No doubt this is a work in progress. I would be interested in reading the completed version when finished.



BROWNIAN MOTION #18

I suspect you are just discovering how extensive the assorted ins and outs of stf fandom are. Attempting to encompass everyone in one grand volume is very ambitious, but I think you will find it more than you can handle. You should at least ask for assistance and let other people contribute. After all, almost all the encyclopedias ever published were complications made up of offerings from many different people who used their specific knowledge of selected subjects to contribute to the whole. I suspect that it would be impossible for any one person to know even a fraction of the info that will go into your massive work. And again, maybe you would be better off adding your insights and knowledge to works already in existence, like FANAC.org, or Fancyclopedia, or the other fan preservation sites on the web. Just a thot.

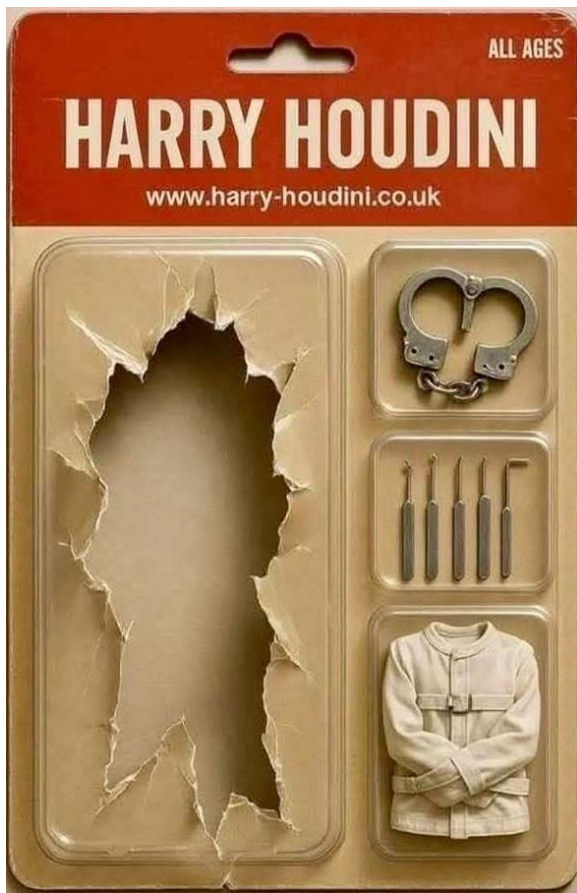
There are indeed fans who enjoy really bad movies and try to find redeeming entertainment value in even the worst, poverty budget hackwork. Bill "Doc" Kobb is one of those fans. He produces a half sized fanzine four or so times a year in which he looks at obscure film releases in the horror and SF genre. Sometimes he also reviews movies from the major companies as well, and always finds unusual, sometimes hilarious events in the films to comment on. I am currently trying to get him interested in joining N'APA. We'll see how that works out.

You misread my comment about fanzines. I said there were zillions of fanzines *past and present*. At the present time we sure don't have zillions but we also most certainly have a lot more than 30, the number you mention. Just a list of the relatively recent production of fanzines that shows up on the fanzines.com website shows about sixty zines turning out issues sortta, kinda on a regular basis. Add in the ones on irregular schedules, club-zines, apazines, specialty zines, limited access zines and niche zines serving a specific category (fannish poetry fanzines, or sword & sorcery fiction, for example), and the number goes way up.

Trying to locate all this and digitize it would be a mind-boggling task, and I again have to question what the end purpose of such a massive enterprise might be. Yes, many shakers & movers in the world of entertainment, writing, publishing, science, education, and human research have been involved in stf fandom at some point in their lives, but I am far from convinced that retrieving and recording all the fanzine output of this hobby would serve any useful purpose. It would, however, take millions of man-hours of work, and a lot of resources to get it salvaged and saved.

MOZIAG #1

No doubt entering the sacred halls of N'APA is a bit off-putting to new and wannabe members. Perhaps it's those diamond encrusted molybdenum arches leading into the main Sanctum Sanctorum, what with the life-sized carved jade statues of the Seven Essential



Virtues of Fandom on the right, and the Seven Deadly Sins of Fandom on the left, with the rose petal path to the seven steps leading to the golden Altar Of Tru-Fandom in the center of the hall. Still, we try to make everyone welcome.

Fantasy gaming has been part of stf fandom since fantasy gaming was invented. Several of our current members were or still are involved in gaming. I used to be an avid role playing gamer, but not any more. The COVID plague pretty much killed off all the gaming groups I was familiar with in this area, and nothing seems to have reemerged to fill the gap. With current time constraints I probably wouldn't have much time for it these days anyway.

Your views on intelligence/sapience seem reasonable, but so does the Klingon viewpoint. There is no doubt that a great many animals here on planet earth have intelligence and thot processes, and some of these creatures use tools or manipulate nature in ways we may not understand. But...humans are currently the peak survival predator species on the planet, and as such we have become adapt at manipulating nature and all the creatures in it for our benefit. That includes killing and eating animals that have their own thot processes, as well as destroying the environments of other creatures for our convenience. I really do not think this viewpoint is going to change much if or when we develop space travel, reach other planets and discover other creatures living there.

As you mention, other sentient intelligent creatures may be so completely unlike us in every respect that we simply will not recognize them as sentient at all. We may have a similar situation here on Earth already. Many kinds of crystals meet the definitions of life, yet we do not admit that they are alive. We slice them up to use in our computers, or as jewelry, or for decorative purposes, and we may be destroying a sentient species as intelligent as the human race, unrecognized as such by us because it is completely different from the life forms we are familiar with.

I've with you; I don't think listening to an audio book constitutes reading in any sense of the word. The people I know who listen to audio books usually do it while driving, or doing some kind of repetitious drudgery task. I always recommend they try OTRadio programs, while some friends tend more to podcasts, of which there seems to be several billion around these days. Viewing and listening have always been easier for most people than devoting the time and effort to actually reading text, and I don't think that is going to change any time soon.

Good first issue. Welcome to the apa.

BRANDY HALL 17

Uh, the first few times you explored the history of the word "fanzine" in the print media it was interesting, but you've reached my saturation point. I am sure you can find lots of zine references/usages in print related to British sports teams thru the years, but you have already covered this territory before, in detail. There's nothing new in this issue's zineology.

The founder of Penguin Books may have

WHY I HATED MATH:

In class:

$$5 + 5 = 10$$

Homework:

$$734 + 555 - 432 / 69 = 12.42$$

Test:

With 2 sheep flying, one yellow and the other headed right, how much does a pound of asphalt cost, given that the cow is 10 years old?

wanted to produce quality literature in paperback book form, but he was hardly the first to do this. There have always been publishers cheerfully willing to publish the classics and the near classics at popular prices. Sales have generally been modest; slow but reasonably steady. The primary appeal is that the classics of the past are all copyright free, which means no royalty payments to any authors, and no arguments if the publisher decides to abridge the text to make it fit his page count. I truly suspect that this was the real reason Penguin Books was founded.

There have been science fiction stories about people with super powers who worked in secret to deal with bad guys and threats to society, while hiding their identities, such as the Wildcards series, but no super-hero comic books that I can recall off hand. The situation, as I mentioned further down, is that super hero comics are primarily aimed at younger readers, children and teens, who like the idea of a secret identity, but also like garish costumes and lots of action.

Some comic titles have tried the concept. A more recent one that comes to mind is the Resident Alien series, about an alien being who has powers beyond those of mere humans, who is stranded on planet earth, hoping for a rescue. While masquerading as a human doctor he solves crimes and tries to help with the personal problems and tragedies of his human friends. The comic book series is excellent. The TV series played the concept for laughs, which changed the entire focus, in my opinion.

I believe it is a common belief that retirement will bring lots of time to do all the things you were considering over the years, like writing fiction. The reality is that most people find plenty of things to do after they retire and often never get around to those long postponed projects at all. Most of the people I know who have retired have plenty to keep them occupied, but I am sure there are some people who retire and have no focus on what they will do. That's why senior centers and senior activities clubs were created, to take up the slack.

I agree with you; lots of science fiction, both the written word and films, are trapped in the moment. Something that was science fiction in 1975 may be historical speculation years later as reality catches up, or even surpasses the original premises. A lot of science fiction literature does not age well for this very reason. Stories that have strong plot lines within the science fiction format fare better, but a lot of early science fantasy is creaky and moldy with age.



R.A.I..L #11 I'm surprised you were able to cram as much of the Washington DC museum scene as you were in such a short visit. There are enough places of interest there to keep you going for six or seven months just checking it all out.

Best of luck with law school. I do not envy you the looonnnng years of study, but if the subject really interests you it may not seem like that much work at all. Hopefully you will fill us in on what learning about the law is like these days.

ESMERALDA COUNTY LINE #15

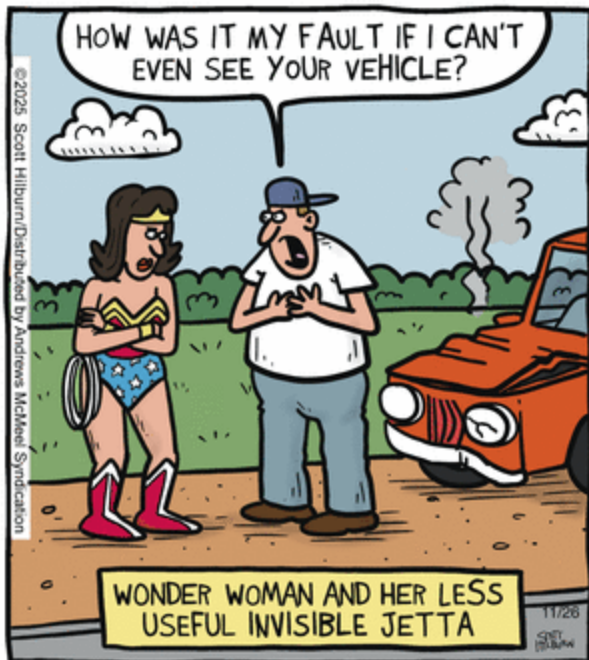
I keep telling my accountant to leave everything in the IRS account since as a self employed individual I have to pay money in every year, but he wants everyone to get some kind of refund on overpayment, so I usually get a small refund each year. But not this year.

My piddling tax refund this year was held up by the IRS because they wanted me to create an IRS account so they could deposit the refund directly into my bank account. I got their letter and had thirty days to create the account. Naturally, it was totally beyond me, since my computer skills are very limited. However a friend is very expert in computers, and he agreed to help me.

After days of work, nothing. I have a land line telephone, and one of the parts is that the IRS sends some kind of confirmation text code that you have to then enter. Uh, no text on a land line phone. My friend tried a workaround, but there were way too many obstacles to make it function, so we gave up. In theory, if you do not create an on-line IRS account they will send out a physical check two weeks after the thirty-day deadline has passed. We'll see. So far nothing has shown up.

So far as using books and media to "educate" or train artificial intelligent systems, I have to agree with Ahrvid; this is fair use pure and simple and should not be paid for by the A-I companies. Books are there to be read and learned from, and the fact that the books are being read and learned from by A-I systems does not alter that basic fact. If publishers can get away with charging A-I systems for reading books and adding the info to their store of knowledge, then how long will it be before they start charging humans a "reading & learning fee" in addition to the book's cover price? This is a very bad prescient to establish.

Actually I can't see what the big thrill is in any kind of military reenactment. Getting into military costumes and having fake battles from some long past war does not seem like an enjoyable use of one's spare time to me, but there are plenty of people who are doing it, so what do I know? I do know that I will never be one of those participants, or bother to attend any of those reenactments either.



SAMIZDAT... #36

Good summary of the attacks Trump has made on the US education system, as well as the Smithsonian and other museums/libraries, but I think you are preaching to the already converted with this write-up. This is disturbing news, but as private and mostly powerless citizens we can let our congress persons know we oppose this blatant attempt to turn education into a Trump propaganda machine, and vote against the guy and his goons in the next election. But, that's about it for most of us.

Also a good write-up about your Balticon First Novel Award. There were several past winners you mentioned that I have not read as yet. I put last year's winner, "The Wings Upon Her Back" by Samantha Mills on my library pull list. I appreciate this kind of info. There are so many new stf novels coming out these days that it is absolutely impossible to read even a fraction of the output. Trying to whittle down 140 first novel entries, even just checking reviews, must have been a really time

consuming task. I'm glad someone is doing that kind of work.

Nice reviews. I think the Disney Cinderella movie was so successful because it had great animation, and great songs, and was able to fill out a ten minute fairy tale into a full length feature. Everybody knows the story; everybody knows the setup, and the ending. It's how Disney handled the in-between parts that make it interesting. Oh, and did I mention that it had really great music, which was a big deal when it was originally released back in 1950.

I appreciate your reviews and commentary but I find no specific comment hooks. In re your comments to me, eliminating plastic grocery bags may cut down on plastic volume, but paper grocery bags cost more to manufacture and do more damage to the environment than creating the plastic ones, so it seems like a poor tradeoff to me. In this area the grocery stores are actively urging shoppers to bring in their own reusable grocery bags, whether made of canvas or heavy plastic. This would save the cost and environmental disposal of plastic or paper bags, but a lot of people, including me, do not want to use those. It's more effort than I want to go thru.

I recycle as much plastic as I can, including old plastic grocery bags, but I don't really have the enthusiasm for buying reusable canvas grocery haulers.

I don't think people generally say much about women dressing in men's clothing so long as it is clearly a fashion or utilitarian statement. On the other hand, flaunting the style as a signature of homosexuality is not

approved. A very nice lady front desk clerk at our local CVS fits that mold. She cuts her hair very short in a man's style, wears men's work clothing and is very obviously a lesbian. I've seen other customers in the store giving her nasty looks and condescending sneers.

As a seller of books thru the mail I of course favor the idea of fans selling or giving their collections to dealers who will circulate the material back into the hobby. Putting your collection on the free tables at local conventions will do the same thing, of course.

I don't attend stf cons these days, but in the past I recall a lot of publishers, particularly publishers of religious or political propaganda stf style themed books piled multiple copies on those tables hoping to spread their doctrines. I don't know how many converts they managed, but on many occasions some of those copies were left over at the end of the convention.

People keep saying that fantasy outsells science fiction but I don't believe that is true. A lot of fantasy novels get published, and sell-thru ratios are not always available, but fortunately a look back at the history of magazines thru the decades is. With the possible exception of

HOW TO FEEL LIKE YOU JOINED A GYM (WITHOUT JOINING A GYM)



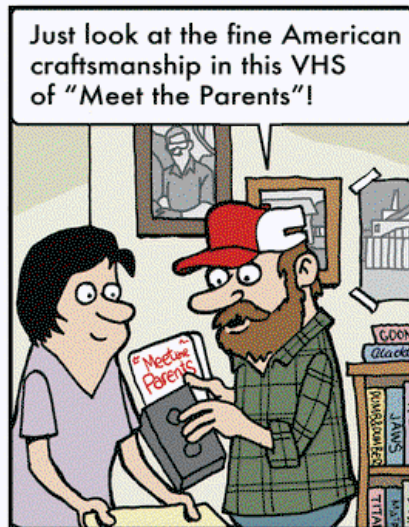
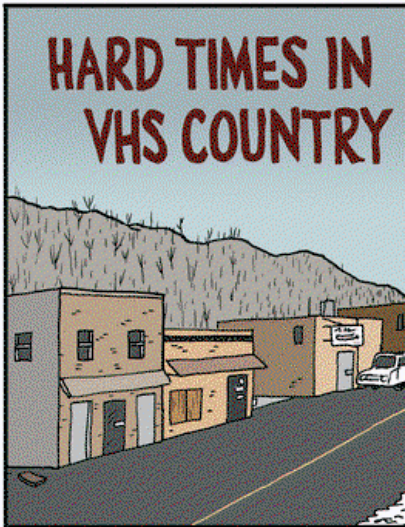
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Unknown Worlds in the 1940s, all fantasy and horror magazines have sold noticeably fewer copies than science fiction publications, and most fantasy magazines died after a relative short period of time, or changed back to science fiction (or, were absorbed into a science fiction parent title, as was the case with Fantastic). The editor(s) of F&SF stated repeatedly that they got a lot of submission of fantasy stories, but they needed more science fiction, particularly longer stories they could use as covers and leads, since the overwhelming majority of their readers were buying the magazine for the science fiction content. There is no denying that some fantasy books (and series) have very impressive sales records and have endured for decades, but I do not think that is the norm for the overwhelming majority of published fantasy titles.

I think students would get more out of a literary class that stresses interesting and entertaining stories rather than most of the so-called adult classics. Tarzan books could provide many points for learning and discussion, including the nature of morality, the dedication of a hero willing to do what is right despite tremendous odds, the effects of colonialism, environmental questions, and more.

What would young readers learn about "Ethan Frome"? That life is nothing but bitter, meaningless drudgery, that every impulse toward joy and happiness will be frustrated by harsh reality? That maybe life isn't worth living? To quote from the internet summary--- "The story, framed by an unnamed narrator, explores themes of duty, passion, and societal constraints, culminating in a desperate, failed suicide attempt that leaves the three protagonists permanently scarred and trapped in a bleak existence."

Nothing personal, but that is not what I would like literature to teach young students.



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The Murder Master Mage #282

George Phillies

phillies@4liberty.net

Greetings to another issue of N'APA. This time I am mostly good for comments.

Cover 281 - A solid dragon of some sort, clearly motionless. Well done, whoever did it.

Invitation: A fine idea, for which I have no time to contribute. Best of luck.

Archive Midwinter: Besides Horatio Hornblower, there was the series of novels of which Master and Commander was one. One can still obtain trade paperbacks and hardbacks, though from what I can tell traditional paperbacks are going to die out of existence. I have made a point of trying to develop alternative markets to Amazon, not because I dislike Amazon, but because single source publication has become erratic. In fact, within my lifetime there has been at least one major volcanic eruption, at Tambora, which had significant weather effects for several years. I have a copy of the game you mentioned, but as a game barely seemed to work at all.

I am glad you liked my section of story. I have several Alpha readers who are looking at the text on and off. The major feedback I have had is that I am much more verbose than James Schmitz was. Their opinion was that I am a different person, I write differently, so this is not a bad thing.

From what I can tell, comic book series closing issues are spread over a range of different titles, so that it helps if your comic book store can subscribe you the needed closer titles. At least, I think that's correct, since I do not in general read Marvel or DC comics that would fit into that description. Indeed, once upon a time there was a local comic book store, which has now moved to all electronics and has a wonderful selection of material, whose proprietor regularly asked me if I would be so kind as to subscribe to the entire X-Men series. His rationale was that he noticed that anything I subscribed to would soon thereafter die, and he was hoping I would do him the favor of killing off the X-Men

series, which he detested. He was also not a fan of X-Men fans, for reasons I am less clear on.

The virtue of reading the Internet and various zines that you occasionally solve a puzzle. Once upon a time, close to seventy years ago, I bought a comic book when I was visiting my grandparents in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania. I couldn't quite remember the title, except that it was a superhero who could fly. I discovered, very recently, that the comic book was Wonder Boy, and the reason I could never find it again was that the momentary owner of the title published a grand total of two issues. On the same line, at some point I found an issue of Tomboy, a title that has been used at least three times. Mine was the heroine who claimed to have no superpowers, but who managed to escape a burning medium bomber that was far above the ground by the simple expedient of letting go of the airplane and dropping from a considerable height and significant speed into water, which she survived without injury. Consistency has never been a strong point of comic books, but I did remember that one because it was a bit strange.

I am always impressed by people who can write a novel in a month. Chris Nuttall does that, and is very impressive.

The Swamp Spot Sentinel: Another piece of truly fine artwork as a cover. Thank you for your history of Doyle and the Sherlock Holmes series. You have a wonderful collection of information on history which I am always happy to read. The modern style of darker cinematography is highly annoying. I often cannot tell at all what is going on. Even worse, the few times I have tried to watch science fiction on television, is the tendency for someone to decide that they should turn up the volume of the music, for example so that it completely drowns out the conversation and I cannot tell what the lead characters are saying. The CW Supergirl series was particularly bad in this respect.

Your account of rights issues for Sherlock Holmes was most entertaining. I am reminded of the George Pal War of the Worlds film. Production was delayed by questions of rights until someone discovered that they already owned the motion picture rights. There is an interesting aside in that film. Almost at the end, the microbiologist is looking at the Martian blood and remarks on how

anemic it is. My father, who was a practicing physician and a professional hematologist, was somewhat offended by the comment, because there was absolutely no basis to make an interpretation of Martian blood. However, there is a historical bit here, namely the scriptwriters originally had a scheme where that line would lead into the solution to the Martian problem, namely the United States would resort to biological and chemical warfare to kill the Martians. Indeed, that suggestion is made in the film, but they then forget about it. The reason for this is that the producer wanted an ending with a strong religious theme, and so had the Martians destroyed by natural bacteria.

There are modern alternatives to Sherlock Holmes. I would take particular note of Dan Willis's Arcane Detective series, which involves a considerable amount of clever detection as well as a certain use of sorcery of a particular type. I am aware of the fair number of fan who are fond of James Butcher's Dresden series, which I found overly full of the nominal hero complaining. I concede that he had good reasons to complain.

A brilliant idea for a detective story title. You should write it. Bitcoin, of course, is the world's first spontaneously-self-organized, crowd-funded, Ponzi scheme.

Do you have an opinion as to which e-book reader is most convenient to use, and has the longest battery lifetime?

Thank you for your kind words about my activities as N3F President. I have read that the Russian idea on reviving the woolly mammoth is to create a reasonable number of them and release them into northern Siberia, where they would do things to alter the local plant life and hence the local climate. As a general statement, in most places elephants are entirely able to find enough food to eat. The challenge is that they tend to do this by finding gardens and farms and eating whatever is convenient on the ground. They are apparently particularly fond of melons and the like.

There is some indication that there are modern replacements for the early generation nuclear reactors that are much safer. For example, some molten salt reactors are intrinsically safe in the sense

that if you turn off the cooling the fission shuts down, adequately that the reactor goes into standby.

Scamming collectors is an ignoble tradition. I am reminded of the fellow who kept selling more and more absurd documents to some Frenchman. The collector did not even become suspicious when he was offered and purchased the draft manuscript of the Sermon on the Mount, complete with corrections and notes in the handwriting of the original author. The manuscript in question could readily be read by the collector, because it was of course written entirely in modern French.

I am not disturbed by cosplay, though I do not go to conventions any more. A convention that was reasonable driving distance and not in Boston would be of interest, but my interest in enduring Boston traffic has ceased to exist. I am fond of series novels. I am currently rereading Weber's Safehold series, in which Christian theology, about which Weber is quite knowledgeable, plays a major but not objectionable role. I also look forward to hearing more about Portuguese science fiction fandom.

The Murdered Master Mage: I am endeavoring to revive The N3F Review Of Books with a mostly new cast of writers. Our loss of use of Upstream Reviews as reprints had an amusing consequence. I am told that someplace in that hierarchy that there were complaints that I was insufficiently conservative. They took a radical step. They cut me off from the supply of centrist and libertarian and conservative reviewers that they had, meaning that the Review is going to drift somewhat to the left.

To Turn the Tide had a sequel, and this year will have two more. One of the Sequels is set two thousand years in the future relative to the others, but sequels in the original timeline, set around a hundred fifty A.D. under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, will be continuing. My Windows 10 machine is now bombarded with notices from some software company saying that I cannot upgrade to Windows 11 because my hardware will not support it, because they have a detector for that, apparently. They generously offered to help me recycle one of my current computers.

The Telzey Amberdon novel is advancing. I'm currently up above 101,000 words.

Brownian Motion: Best of luck maintaining your website. I would suggest that Poe was reasonable in his analysis. A gear-based computer that could manage branching and fit in a small box would be extremely unlikely for anyone to construct.

The parentheses in my story are one way of several of representing telepathic communication. I have not decided how to do it in a systematic way.

Moziag: Welcome to N'APA. May your stay be long and enjoyable! Contributions here may, of course, be either long or short. Thank you for your comments on Little Fuzzy. Of H. Beam Piper's works, I preferred the Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen and its sequels, as written by one of the co-authors of one of the books, though the termination of the last book was a bit disappointing. There is always room for SF poetry, especially poetry that rhymes, has meter, and uses the more clever acoustic constructions. You make a good point about Tolkien, but the Lord of the Rings was written to be a single book, except physical publishing constraints insisted that it appear in three volumes. With Victorian elephant folios, all of Tolkien's works could drop into a single volume.

Brandy Hall: fine historical notes. The best way to learn to write is just to start writing. One path is to assign yourself an exact time at which you will write for five minutes. You may of course in that time have written next to nothing, but it's a start, and from tiny seeds mighty oaks, or at least some other plants, may grow.

R. A. I. L.: Nice Museum Tour. Please show our other zines to your writing group and encourage them to join. New members are most effectively recruited by current members.

Esmeralda County Line: I hope that you can solve your housing puzzle. I fear that we only have a few hundred members, though the number of dues-paying members is slowly rising.

Samizdat: Thank you for all your interesting thoughts on fandom. I agree on self-publishing. Most of my books are available in ebook, paperback, and hardback, but the ebooks are almost all the sales, except for my Freshman Physics Book. Physics One is only available in paperback or hardback.

I question how many of those novels that I listed I will finish. On the Telzey story, I gave you some of the front pages, and then stopped. As you asked, I will at the end of this zine give you a few more.

Intermission: I confess that I have very little use for comments on contemporary politics in science fiction zines. Your mileage varies. European impressions of American politics, to judge from the occasional European newspapers and magazines I read, also seem to be somewhat detached from an understanding of the United States. In addition, American and European ideas of freedom appear to be diverging, a point that was made first by other people, either in the Guardian or in the Economist, I think.

Your account of Verne's tale of the year 2890 is most interesting. His creation of the Internet newspaper, written at a time when telephones were marginally operational, and video telephones were primarily hypothetical, is truly imaginative. He didn't recognize the bandwidth challenge, nor predict computers or our power sources to solve other issues, but many aspects of his world are quite plausible if not in fine detail. Readers will note that ten billion dollars back then is the equivalent of trillions of dollars now. We are so far a bit short of the first living trillionaire, though we do have the first living centibillionaires.

A bit more Telzey for comments.

"Your mom hasn't said anything about this?" Taine asked.

"Not a word," Telzey said. "However, we long ago agreed we never talk politics. More or less everything the Hace Committee does is classified, anyhow, except when it issues a report. And I've been out of the loop for the last three weeks, engaged in combat litigation trials, so you're the first person to tell me about the law." She yawned.

"Thank you very much," Taine said. "Okay, I can see we will minimize the fuss about this. Thank you very much for your time. Get some sleep. I can tell you need it."

Telzey wondered why she hadn't heard about this until now. The answer was that both of her parents

were off planet, her mom to someplace Telzey had never heard of, and her father a few star systems over in some sort of financial negotiation. She was definitely in no shape to worry about anything tonight, but fortunately one of her psi skills let her put worries aside so that she could always sleep soundly.

The next morning, the sun well above the horizon, Telzey contemplated breakfast. Her classes and exams were done for the term. As an option, she could wait a few day for test results, meanwhile going to parties. Those parties would be quite wild, much wilder than anything she would find interesting. She had slept far enough into the day that the refectory was closed until lunch. Just outside campus were Northeast Boulevard and Northwest Avenue, both lined with student shops, one of which served the best breakfasts in town. And it was open.

An hour later, having finished off eggs benedict, potato pancakes, a curry-seasoned sausage, orange juice, and part of a second large mug of hot cocoa, she was up to looking at the newspapers she'd purchased on the way over. Visiting parents were occasionally surprised that scenic Pehanron had physical newspapers, but the College preserved for its town a slightly antique ambience, not to mention that newspapers, like books and journals, supplied a width of visual field that a handcomm could not match. At this hour, Atomic Joe's Good Eats was almost entirely empty, a condition that would last until early afternoon, so she could lean back and read without disturbing anyone.

Dark Star Press had gone into a rant against 'our corrupt Federation Council', listing the whole series of peculiar events that they claimed showed general corruption. The one on her mom was still on the front page. The actual news on Jessamine, who had been interviewed and denied the accuracy of the report, was well inside the first section. They had an excellent photo of mom, but unfortunately only a half-decade-old picture of Telzey posed with two crest cats. Her in retrospect extremely skimpy sun briefs had doubtless attracted the reporter's interest using the photograph.

And here was the accurate reference to the new Judicial Equality Act, something she could actually look up on the law library in her communicator. She

told herself that the communicator auto-updated every night, so she should have no doubts about finding it. She folded up the newspaper, took another sip of properly-sweetened cocoa, and began reading the legislation. It didn't seem to be very long. Nor was it filled with all sorts of off-topic references that amended completely different laws. The anti-psi Bill was very different from the notorious Act that gave names to a long series of elementary schools and then, in the middle, eliminated the tax on income for several classes of machinist.

She looked up at the sound of conversation. Wilmar Rortak and two of his would-be girl friends had walked in and seated themselves in a corner booth. The misfortunate Helga was absent. Telzey's heart was not broken. From the lack of distance they sat apart, 'would-be' was clearly not the right word. You thought parties would be much wilder than anything you were interested in, Telzey thought, and here is proof.

R.A.I.L. #12

May 2026

Adrian Kresnak

railfanzine@gmail.com

Hello everyone!

In April I got to spend a nice hour at my local independent bookstore, drinking a toasted marshmallow latte. The paperback version of *Friends of the Museum* by Heather McGowan is now out, and I was finally able to get it! It's about the staff of a museum dealing with some big drama related to their collection.

Another book I'm reading right now is *Murder in the Supreme Court* by Margaret Truman. A Supreme Court Justice's clerk is murdered, and the investigation is challenged by the secretive nature of the Court and the political world's interest in uncovering *everything*.

It was hard to find the focus to read fiction during the semester, but classes are done now so I have at least a couple weeks before starting my summer jobs. The spring sunlight does wonders!



I've never watched *Ghostbusters*. (At least, not as far as I can remember.) The song is an iconic presence every Halloween. I can recognize cosplayers and that slimy green ghost dude. I remember 2016 when the reboot movie came out, though at the time I was too busy with other stuff to fully enjoy stories. The point is that I'm wondering if I'm missing out on something by not having seen *Ghostbusters*, or *Titanic*, or the latest Marvel movies, or a lot of other movies.

I'm talking about pop culture as a shared reality. When someone who has watched the movie makes a reference, it may not get across to someone who only experienced the story secondhand. If both the speaker and the listener experienced it secondhand, the references they make could have practically nothing to do with the story at all.

Another example: I read once that Asimov's three laws of robotics are based on product design principles. A manufacturer shouldn't build something that harms customers. A manufacturer should build something that does what the customer wants it to do. A manufacturer should build something sturdy that lasts. That line of reasoning makes sense to me, but I have no idea if that truly was his inspiration. Therefore, I'm unsure how closely to apply it to his robot stories that I have read, much less the ones I haven't.

Logically, I know there's nothing to be done about differences in subjective experience. Still, thinking about it makes me feel a bit lonely. Maybe things will be different if humans ever figure out telepathy.

Replies to January/March

Thank you to everyone who read my story in *Eldritch Science*! It's so cool to see people actually reading it. I was so worried about making a story "perfect," but the TNFFF contest reminded me that it's more important that the story *exists*.

Jefferson Swycaffer: re: March *where to obtain the climax issues of comic book events*

Supposedly you can pre-order the issues so you can get them as they come out, but for me I go to the comic stores in person if there's a particular book I want that week. The last event I bought as it came out was *Imperial*, and I didn't end up buying the last issue because I was disappointed with how the story was going. Part of it is probably my own expectations; writer Hickman likes one of the space characters I like, so I was hoping the character would show up even though the plot didn't really have space for an appearance.

Garth Spencer: re: January *"Is there a Common Knowledge organization, or website, that I could contact?"*

As far as I know, the Michigan State University Libraries chose the phrase "common knowledge" as the name for the zine fest. It's inspired by the Open Access movement. I hope they'll do another zine fest this year, so I will keep an eye out for it!

Robert Jennings: re: January *"I wonder if doing probing research into why people continue to do unhealthy things when they know better is massive overkill. ..."*

The cynical explanation is that the people who decide funding for – well, for a lot of things – the people who decide funding won't provide money for things that help people unless there's a scientific study addressing any concerns they've got at any point in time. The more optimistic view is that having this kind of research helps health professionals be more effective in their work: a doctor who understands that a patient has legitimate reasons for their behavior is a doctor who (hopefully) approaches the patient like a person to work with rather than a problem to fix.

To give my professors credit, all of them taught the optimistic view. I've gathered the cynical one while observing some US government public health policies...



What Does ChatGPT Do, Legally?

A lawsuit filed in Illinois alleges ChatGPT practices law without a license. The full case citation at the moment is *Nippon Life Insurance Company of America v. OpenAI Foundation and OpenAI Group PBC* (No. 1:26-cv-02448, N.D. Ill.), but you'll likely be able to pull up the case just by searching *Nippon v. OpenAI*.

Nippon is an insurance company that settled a case in 2024. Since the settlement, the other party has repeatedly dragged Nippon to court by filing documents drafted by ChatGPT. Nippon is suing OpenAI to get it to stop ChatGPT's unauthorized practice of law.

I expect Nippon's case will get a long judicial opinion because it's a case that can determine what legal principles could apply to generative artificial intelligence.

If you'll follow me in an analogy: American law made mail fraud a crime to specifically cover fraud committed through the mail. When telegraphs and telephones were invented and became commonplace, wire fraud became a specific crime of its own to cover the new technology. Nowadays, our communication devices don't use the kind of wires that telegraphs and landlines do. Yet fraud over the internet can still be charged as wire fraud *because* the courts have determined that the principles of the wire fraud statute apply.

Nippon is asking the court for relief in its legal troubles, but it's also asking the court to decide what kind of law should apply to ChatGPT.

Is ChatGPT analogous to consumer products? If so, the manufacturer might be liable for defects in the product. Then the question becomes, is the product defective? If so, was the product *manufactured* defectively or was the defect in the design?

Is ChatGPT more analogous to a human consultant? If so, the boss might be liable for misconduct by the consultant. Then the question becomes, was the AI's text misconduct? If so, who is its boss?

Depending on how the court sees it, the extent of liability changes. What, precisely, a plaintiff has to prove also changes. Of course, a court can also find that ChatGPT is both and neither and one for some purposes and another for other purposes.

You may be asking, "isn't AI just a tool? Why would a manufacturer be liable for something a customer does with a product?"

The answer is: it depends. The American legal system recognizes that manufacturers and distributors can take on some responsibility when selling a product to the public. You could think of it as the difference between cold medicine that *can* be used to make drugs and cold medicine that *comes with a manual* of how to use it to make drugs. Figuratively speaking, the court has to decide which one generative AI is.

Nippon is not arguing that the vexatious other party *incidentally* used ChatGPT. They are not suing, say, Microsoft Word, or Google, or Apple computers. Rather, Nippon is arguing that OpenAI knew customers used ChatGPT as a lawyer, *and* that OpenAI did not take enough steps to prevent people from using it that way. In theory, a manufacturer can't advertise an AI as a kind of personalized problem-solver while also disclaiming all liability for people using that personalized problem-solving.

The biggest distinction between the Nippon case and other AI cases, in my opinion, is that this case focuses on legal services. Courts are very familiar with the use of AI-drafted documents in legal cases. *Mata v. Avianca, Inc.*, 678 F. Supp. 3d 443 (2023) is a landmark case because the court sanctioned the plaintiff's attorneys for submitting AI-generated documents that included nonexistent cases. As the court wrote:

Many harms flow from the submission of fake opinions. The opposing party wastes time and money in exposing the deception. The Court's time is taken from other important endeavors. The client may be deprived of arguments based on authentic judicial precedents. There is potential harm to the reputation of judges and courts whose names are falsely invoked as authors of the bogus opinions and to the reputation of a party attributed with fictional

conduct. It promotes cynicism about the legal profession and the American judicial system. And a future litigant may be tempted to defy a judicial ruling by disingenuously claiming doubt about its authenticity.

Mata v. Avianca, Inc., at pages 448-49 (Footnote removed).

This decision focused on a lawyer's responsibility to make sure that anything they tell the court is, at the very least, not blatant lies. The court may not be able to *stop* attorneys from using ChatGPT to generate legal papers, but the court *can and will* punish attorneys who leave signs of AI in those papers.

In the interests of justice, non-lawyers are allowed to represent themselves: to do their own research, to draft their own documents. The "unauthorized practice of law" is forbidden for parties providing legal services *to others*. Let me draw your attention to the fact that the *Nippon v. OpenAI* case was filed in Illinois. The Illinois State Bar Association has a page about the unauthorized practice of law:

While an all-encompassing definition of what constitutes the practice of law is impossible to formulate, courts have explained the practice of law as giving advice or services "when the giving of such advice or rendition of such service requires the use of any degree of legal knowledge or skill." *People ex rel, Illinois State Bar Association v. Schafer*, 404 Ill. 45, 50 (1949).

In Illinois, the practice of law is not limited to appearing in court, but also the giving of advice or rendering of any service requiring the use of any legal skill or knowledge. This includes, for example, preparing documents.

Illinois State Bar Association, *ISBA and the Unauthorized Practice of Law - What The Public Needs To Know*. (Last visited March 10, 2026).
<https://www.isba.org/sites/default/files/committees/upl/uplfaq.pdf>

So the court now has to determine if a non-lawyer using genAI is similar enough to a non-lawyer using something like Google, or if the generated-text component makes the situation legally distinct.

You might have seen that *Nippon* is asking the court for a judgment of millions of dollars. Numbers like that get a lot of press, but I believe the core issue is ChatGPT's place in the legal system. This is a case that can directly explore how courts should analyze generative AI. I'm excited to see where they take it. **End.**



In 2016, a blog I loved had one of their regular microfiction writing contests. I submitted the following story and was happy to find the blogger liked it. I checked the blog recently and found the blogger died in 2024. (Rest in peace.)

This July will be ten years since the story was posted, and I'd like to share it here, too. I hope the inspiration comes through clearly:

Tell Me Later

I'd never met Donald in person, but there was no avoiding him on Twitter. He called us every name in the book: broads, cows, and a few more that would never make it into a kids' movie.

I could forgive what he said about me. What he said about my colleagues had to be punished.

So I called in a favor.

"Just cause him some trouble. Trip him on the sidewalk. Mess up his bedsheets. Pry his window open and wail whenever he so much as blinks."

"Got it," my invisible friend says.

"Thank you."

That will take the troll down, I'm positive.

After all, who's he gonna call? Not us.

INTERMISSION #166

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, making rounds around EAPA & N'APA and other lunatics. Some day Ed'll have time for @SFJournalen on Tw/X... A small zine for a faned, a giant leap for fandom! Send all typos to the Moon! Late Apr 26.

Editorially: Hope for Hungary, Hopeless Trump, Clueless Putin

We hear good news from Hungary. Putin's Puppet Viktor Orban has been ousted in their recent election! Peter Magyar is the name of the incoming PM, and he's described as a centre-right or so. I don't really know much about him, but whatever he stands for it'll be an improvement. Beside helping Putin (but the €90b to Ukraine may now be unfrozen!) it has been revealed that Orban was ready to help Iran. What I hope from Mr Magyar is: normalising relations to EU, no trips to Moscow or cuddling with Putin, to approving that billion euro loan to Ukraine, dispersing the media concentration Orban gathered, no anti-Ukraine rhetoric... That will go a long way. Trump did his best (worst!) to back Orban, a guy helping America's enemies. Agent Orange has never been known to act consistently and think straight... More good news is that NATO is ready to contribute a further €60b, parts for buying weapons from the US (that Trump sells with a profit). Ukraine is increasing her attacks on Russian energy and infra, and is slowly getting drone-superiority in both quantity and quality. Russians can hardly move without getting hammered. Russian economy is in worse shape than they admit, according to Swedish Intelligence: *"Russia faked economic data"*

(<https://www.euronews.com/2026/04/21/russia-faked-economic-data-to-appear-more-resilient-to-its-war-and-sanctions-intel-report->)



Trump's self-awareness isn't exactly impeccable... Jeezus!

Meanwhile Trump's in a pickle. He has no idea how to end the war he started. He had no strategy, no prepared plans, no defined goals. He just sent the navy and air force saying: bomb as much as you can. But bombs won't change a regime. Killed leaders are just replaced by new religious fanatics. Iran has been entrenched for 47 years. The Ayatollahs did the logical thing: closed the Hormuz straight and threw the world into a fuel crisis. Why didn't you think of this, Donny? *Donald Jerk Trump is the worst president in US history.* The latest is that he wants to build a huge Arc de Triumph, like the one in Paris. He misses that such usually went up after a successful military campaign. The Iran war doesn't qualify. The cost of the folly, just increases the Big Beautiful budget deficit even more. Even some of his strongest MAGA supporters now speak out. Trump's narcissism has no end, eg the new US bank notes shall have his signature, instead of the scribble of the Treasury Secretary as usual. But nothing compares to Trump spreading a picture where he's dressed and does miracles like Jesus. At the same time he hoisted poop at the Pope. The US religious groups aren't very amused. They are often very loud-mouthed, but not now.

Here at home the centre-right government has struck a deal with the Sweden Democrats saying: if the government side wins the election in September, SD is welcome to ministerial posts. I don't like that. The Sweden Democrats is something almost as bad as communists: nationalist. Many accuse them of being "Nationalsocialists" too (they are definitely racist! - their immigration policies are shameful). Nationalism should be limited to things like football chants and fluffy T-shirts. In all other areas is yesterday. To put up fences around your own group and yell "Us first!" is destructive. Life isn't a zero-sum game, but win-win. It benefits us all to lower fences, having cooperation and globalisation. Nationalism makes rooms smaller and limits your options. Nationalists of the world – Unite! Really? Nationalism is chauvinism and the cause of wars.

In this issue we'll history-dig a little on the body Artemis just swung by, and explain why space exploration is good. We'll analyse the Eurovision from a genre perspective, visit a writers' convention

and maybe do other things... Stay tuned. Comments welcome!

--Ahrvid Engholm, editor

Note: Some sources on Youtube to follow for war & Trump. info: UATV, TVP World, Denys Davydov, Anna from Ukraine, Artur Rehi, Jake Broe, Jay Jason Smart, Professor Gerdes Explains, Combat Veteran News, Silicon Curtain

Other Early Fantastic Magazine

In last issue we went through some early magazines for sf/f/h, of which now 100 year old *Amazing Stories* wasn't first - but the first for which science fiction was a distinct genre. That was essential for making it a recognisable, separate literary branch. Our reader Jim Meadows (se LoC last) pointed to a magazine we missed: *The Thrill Book*, 1919-21. Wikipedia says it aimed to pub "different stories, stories that were unusual or unclassifiable, which in practice often meant the stories were fantasy or science fiction". Issues are available as PDFs at below URL. We had a look at the first five issues.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:The_Thrill_Book_PDF_files

It's a mix of "ordinary" stories that are a bit odd and stories leaning towards the fantastic..

Issue #1 for instance has "The Man Who Mer Himself" by Donovan Bayley, which sounds what we are looking for, as well as the start of the serial "In the Shadows of Race" by J Hampton Bishop, which looks like a story speculation about evolution. The magazine is rather thin with 52 pages incl cover, but the price is on the other hand

What You May Expect IN THE THRILL BOOK

EVER since the modern magazine attained its important position in the lives of twenty-five million American readers, it has been the aim of editors generally to give the public "what it wants." We, who are behind the scenes in the publishing business, have witnessed some startling phenomena in connection with the attempt of magazine editors to give American readers not really what they want, but what the editor thought they wanted, which, to our minds, are two separate and distinct matters. We have seen stories of virility and power, teeming with interest, rejected because the author had not mentally ruptured himself in trying to make the story logical—logical to the rejecting editor's mind. Little by little we became convinced that there were whole cargoes of good things being jettisoned because editors and publishers lacked the temerity to publish the unusual, the illogical, the bizarre, swiftly moving story, under the plea that it was "too wild."

Now, we do not think that the American reader, whose intelligence is away above the average of that of the citizen of any other country, wants his reading matter arbitrarily chosen for him any more than he wishes his religion so selected. Therefore, we conceived the idea of presenting THE THRILL BOOK to you, wherein we are going to publish every kind of fiction, irrespective of whether it is logical or illogical, provided it is clean, interesting, and really tells a story, which a great deal of the fiction in present-day magazines does not do. In THE THRILL BOOK, therefore, you will find interesting stories of every kind—stories of queer, psychological phenomena, of mystic demonstrations, weird adventures in the air, on the earth and sea, and under the sea, in that vast domain of the Fourth Dimension—and of things that men feel but cannot explain.

We intend the selection to be so general that everybody who reads for recreation and for mental relaxation will not only want THE THRILL BOOK, but will need it.

The Thrill Book's program declaration.

Artemis II has recently rounded the Moon. And of course progress-hostile killjoys seize the chance to howl: "Scandal! Waste of money! Flash Gordon fantasies about launching giant phalluses while people starve!" That's how the backward-looking crowd yelps.

So, a few introductory facts: Famine disasters are caused by local civil wars, corruption, dictators – it has nothing to do with the tiny crumbs spent on space.

Our Idea

Did you ever stop to consider that the weird, fantastic story is essentially fundamental in truth and plausibility? In every issue of the large newspapers you strike incidents, experiences, that outrival the wildest fancies of Jules Verne. If this were not true, why is it that Poe plays such an important part in world literature? The fact is that unseen things are every bit as interesting as the seen. The trouble is that many stories of this kind are poorly done. This will explain why we are so anxious to print only the best. We receive many manuscripts, but we are not going to put them out unless they come up to the highest standard.

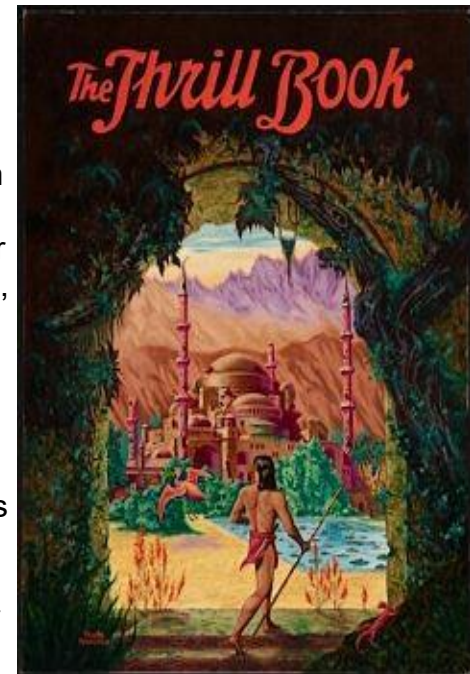
Editors turned to the readers in little inserts like this.

only 10 cents. It is bi-monthly and publisher is the well-known Street & Smith.

Beside stories it has short poems, a 1-page "Soldiers' and Sailors' Personal Relief Section" with news for those and answering questions (WWI had just stopped) and a misc news section called "Around the World" concentrating on odd news. It also has small inserts with messages to the readers (above) and in #2 also has a message from the editors, a 1-pager to "The New Reader" (left), saying they want to hear from readers and promise their mag will be different. But the first 5 issues it didn't have letter section.

And what's also lacking is adverts. It may indicate that *The Thrill Book* was too odd to be attractive for advertisers, or that the publisher didn't work on attracting them.

Why Space?



Artemis II has recently rounded the Moon. And of course progress-hostile killjoys seize the chance to howl: "Scandal! Waste of money! Flash Gordon fantasies about launching giant phalluses while people starve!" That's how the backward-looking crowd yelps.

So, a few introductory facts: Famine disasters are caused by local civil wars, corruption, dictators – it has nothing to do with the tiny crumbs spent on space.

And they are tiny crumbs. My AI reports that Sweden spends 0.02% of GDP on space-related projects. Not 1%, not a tenth of a percent, but *one-fifth of a tenth of a percent*. Out of 100 crowns in taxes, 2 öre go to space. We spend 40 times more on foreign aid...

The USA spends 0.09% of GDP on space, but a full 3.4% on the military - about 38 times more! American consumers buy cosmetics and beauty products for 0.23% of the US GDP, about four times more than what the US spend on space. More than twice as much - 0.53% of GDP - is spent on pet food, dog toys, cat scratching posts, veterinary visits and the like.

Instead of complaining about space projects, take a look in the mirror at unnecessary makeup and stop pampering the animals! In fact, without space projects we would be much poorer. Computer development - driven by space and rocket projects - and satellites alone have paid for themselves many times over. NASA estimates that every dollar invested returns 7–14 dollars in broad societal benefit. So it's not "waste" – it creates growth and new resources. Let's list ten things that make space projects not only defensible but actually indispensable:



The Artemis II crew. They had more space than Apollo.

Satellites

The value created by satellites can hardly be overstated. International communications, TV, GPS, emergency signalling, Starlink... And we can hardly invest just in satellites - space technology is a package. For example, SpaceX's rockets that can launch humans and later take us to the Moon or perhaps Mars are also necessary for the Starlink satellites. Manufacturing and control processes for satellite operations are similar as for crewed spaceflight. Material developed are the same. It's one and the same technology used for different purposes.

Vision and Inspiration

This should rank quite high on the list. Space gives us visions of something greater. These are "immaterial values," but no less important. It gives humanity goals to strive for, gives life meaning, widens our horizons. It may be the most important value space has to offer. We stumble around in the forest seeing only trees, but suddenly we come out onto the plain and the whole universe opens up!

Basic Research

We have probed the innermost building blocks of matter, the particles bombarding us from space, pointed telescopes toward the outermost edges of the universe - everywhere space offers new knowledge. We obtain fundamental data about the ultimate components: the smallest particles created in the Big Bang, in supernovae, the extreme physics around black holes, research into how everything began – perhaps it may one day even give clues to the purpose of existence.



Asteroids may contain trillions worth of valuable metals.

Spinoffs

Space is excellent at spitting out valuable by-products: new materials, new processes, new medicines, new gadgets... The valuable unexpected things appear while you are busy doing something else, and among the best "something else" to be busy with is space. Spinoffs cannot be achieved through dedicated research, by definition, because they arrive like a bolt from the blue while you're thinking of other stuff.

Some spinoff products: memory foam (impact protection), CMOS image sensors, scratch-resistant lenses, cordless tools, freeze-dried food, Mylar (extremely thin, durable plastic), water purification systems, bio-

monitoring via LED lights, materials and equipment for firefighting, satellite TV, cryo-technology...

Meteorology and Earth Resources

Satellites monitor the weather, preventing storm damage worth billions. Tsunamis can be warned for. And if one believes the IPCC, there is of course data to be gathered thanks to satellites. They can predict harvests (which helps prevent famine), locate oil and gas, track fishing fleets (against overfishing). In Sweden, satellites are invaluable for forestry.

Backup for Humanity

In the long run we will likely have colonies on the Moon and Mars. If something catastrophic happens to Earth – a comet impact, nuclear war – there will be backup branches of humanity that survive and can start anew. A long-term matter, but important.

Demanding Cutting-Edge Technology

Space is demanding. Vacuum. Enormous forces, acceleration, gravitational fields, extreme temperatures, radiation... Placing fragile humans in such an environment forces us to push technology to its limits. Space drives technology to the forefront. It pushes development forward just because it's so hard to work with.

International Cooperation

The International Space Station is a good example. Despite war, Russian and American astronauts can cooperate there (people close their eyes to the conflict, and the US is not directly involved). The Artemis project currently underway gets its crucial service module from Europe's ESA. Japan, Canada and others participate in space projects with NASA. Space projects are often so complex that cooperation between nations is natural.

Peacekeeping

Satellites monitor key military functions. Surprise attacks become impossible (Russia's invasion of Ukraine was indicated well in advance, though the Ukrainians hoped it would not happen). Satellites have kept the balance of terror in check since the 1960s. Neither Russia nor the USA can launch their ICBMs without it being detected early enough for the other side to launch its own. Both sides know this and are guaranteed the ability to respond – which keeps the situation stable.

Space Resources

Space can provide solar energy (beamed down to receiving antennas on Earth). Asteroids can provide vast mineral resources. The lunar surface contains helium-3 for fusion energy. Zero-G and vacuum enable new manufacturing processes.

...those are ten unique advantages that space gives us. Their value exceeds many times over the microscopic investments (see the beginning) we make in space.

There is more I haven't mentioned: space creates new high-tech jobs, inspires good entertainment (sf films, space games, etc.), the existential knowledge should we find life on exoplanets or receive SETI signals, and research on zero-G effects can advance aging research.

So don't come and talk nonsense about space projects being "wasteful," "unnecessary," or even "childish boy-toys"!
(earlier active in the Swedish Space Movement)

The Science Fiction Moon

The only problem was the toilet.* Otherwise the Artemis trip around the Moon was as smooth as Bob Tucker's whiskey! So this History Corner will dwell a little on our Green Cheese companion. We'll try too make it a bit chronological... [*Warning. Some of the following may be culled from "Internet" as it is called, a known source for disinformation, woke crowds and offers of fake Viagra.*]

■ "The Moon" by Sappho (ca 600 BC). Poem by the ancient poet from the island of Lesbos, more: <https://briefpoems.wordpress.com/2015/11/22/sapphos-moon-and-pleiades/> and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sappho> A fraction:

*The stars about the lovely moon
Fade back and vanish very soon,
When, round and full, her silver face
Swims into sight, and lights all space*

■ As early as the second century AD, ancient authors created two examples of fantasy literature featuring a trip to the Moon. These are Antony Diogenes' *Incredible Adventures on the Other Side of the Thule* (ca 200 AD). And Lucian of Samosata's *A True History*.. (ca 200 AD), <https://sacred-texts.com/cla/luc/true/index.htm> However, in the first, the flight to the natural satellite of our planet does not take place. The heroes simply travel for a long time to different real and fictional countries that the inhabitants of the Mediterranean knew about at that time and experience a lot of incredible adventures. And then they *walk* for a long, long time and eventually end up on the Moon! Or however it was, because this work only exists in fragments. It has a Tyrrhenian girl named Derkyllis and her

*Or bathroom as Americans say. I'm always surprised when an American asks "Do you know where the bathroom is? I tend to answer: Are you crazy, are you going to take a bath here in the shopping mall?!"

brother Mantinias, who are pursued around the world by an evil Egyptian priest named Paapis. The narrative involves elements of love stories, fantastic travels, and Pythagorean philosophy.

■ The second story is much more like modern space fiction. Lucian also begins his story with adventures on Earth. But at some point, the characters are caught in a whirlwind, and they fly to the Moon. There is a kingdom there that is at war with the people who inhabit the Sun. Perhaps the first story depicting lunar life, including three-headed horse-vultures and vegetable birds. It was in this work that war in space was first described. Lucian is *parodying* the travel-romance genre. He's mocking authors who claimed to write "true" wonders.

■ *On the Face in the Moon* by Plutarch (ca 100 AD). Not fiction or a voyage tale, but an early philosophical dialogue about the Moon's nature, habitability, and geography. Often cited as proto-sf because it speculates about lunar life and cosmology.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/e/roman/texts/plutarch/moralia/the_face_in_the_moon*/a.html

■ "*The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*" is a Japanese folk tale written down by an unknown author in the 10th century AD and lesser known early space travel tale: The story centres on a young lady named Kaguya, a princess from the Moon who is discovered as a baby inside the stalk of a glowing bamboo plant. After she grows, her beauty attracts five suitors seeking her hand in marriage, whom she turns away by challenging them each with an impossible task. At some point, a flying chariot arrives to pick her up (maybe the first "spaceship"?), and she returns home. This has fairy tale attributes, but it is essentially a journey from the Earth to the Moon. It was in honour of the heroine of this fairy tale that the Kaguya satellite, launched into lunar orbit in 2007, was named.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tale_of_the_Bamboo_Cutter



To the Japanese Moon tale. Could it be Kaguya's Moon palace?

■ *Paradiso* by Dante (1320). Not a Moon voyage in the technological sense, but Dante and Beatrice ascend to the Moon as the first celestial sphere. Important in the history of "visiting the Moon" as a literary setting.



Medieval porn? *La Tour-Landry's daughter nude in the bed*.cccccc

<https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/dante/divine-comedy/paradiso/paradiso-1/>

■ *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry* (1371-72) contains a tale of a man lifted into the heavens to observe Earth from above. It's rarely included in SF histories but clearly anticipate later space-voyage fiction. It also warns the author's daughters about the royal court which is filled with smooth-talking courtiers who could potentially disgrace them. See:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Book_of_the_Knight_of_the_Tower and <https://archive.org/details/bookofknightofla00lato>

■ Not fiction, but Galilei's report on what he saw through his telescope is of course important. Here an English version of *A Starry Messenger*, from 1610:

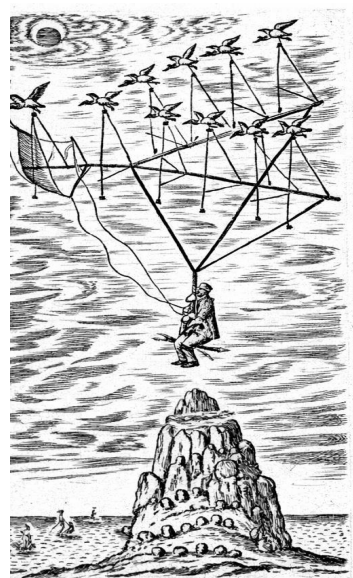
<https://homepages.hass.rpi.edu/rui/AdvancedDigitalImagingSpring2019/ReadingsADI/Galileo%20The%20Starry%20Messenger.pdf> He writes:

It is a very beautiful thing, and most gratifying to the sight, to behold the body of the moon, distant from us almost sixty earthly radii, as if it were no farther away than two such measures—so that its diameter appears almost thirty times larger, its surface nearly nine hundred times, and its volume twenty-seven thousand times as large as when viewed with the naked eye. In this way one may learn with all the certainty of sense evidence that the moon is not robed in a smooth and polished surface but is in fact rough and uneven, covered everywhere, just like the earth's surface, with huge prominences, deep valleys, and chasms.

■ Anastasio Pantaleon de Ribera's book *Satirical Journey to the Moon* was published in 1634, where the hero is transported to a city on the surface of our natural satellite. This work is primarily satirical. This was generally typical of the science fiction literature of the time - to show the negative features of real European societies on the example of a country located somewhere incredibly far away. Although there was another variant. Utopian states where people live under fair laws based on wisdom and kindness were transferred to the Moon and similar inaccessible places.

■ An example of this is the novel *The Man on the Moone* by the English priest and writer Francis Godwin. In terms of its general structure, this work resembles Lucian's *True Story*. First and foremost, it is a story about the protagonist's travels to different countries on Earth. However, in the end, he invents a harness that allows him to fly with wild swans. One day, they take him to the Moon,

where he meets the locals. <https://www.scribd.com/document/618441796/Francis-Godwin-the-Man-in-the-Moone>



**THE MAN
IN THE
MOONE;
OR;
A DISCOURSE**

Of a Voyage thither:

By F.G. B. of H.

To which is added *Nuncius Inanus*,
written written in Latin by the
fame Author, and now
Englified by a Perfon
of Worth.

The Second Edition.

LONDON,
Printed for Jobua Kirton, at the Signe
of the Kings Arms in St.Pauls,
Church-yard, 1657

■ An example of this is the novel *The Man on the Moone* by the English priest and writer Francis Godwin. In terms of its general structure, this work resembles Lucian's *True Story*. First and foremost, it is a story about the protagonist's travels to different countries on Earth. However, in the end, he invents a harness that allows him to fly with wild swans. One day, they take him to the Moon, where he meets the locals.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/618441796/Francis-Godwin-the-Man-in-the-Moone>

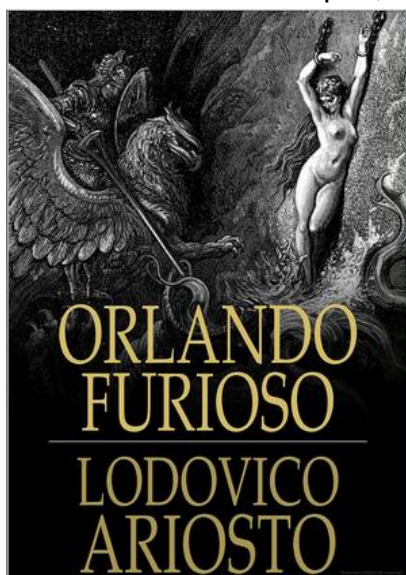
■ *Itinerarium Exstaticum* by Athanasius Kircher (1656). A mystical-scientific "astral journey" through the cosmos, including the Moon. Kircher mixes astronomy, theology, and early science.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/394175878_Itinerarium_Exstaticum_Ecstatic_Journey_1656_Volume_1

■ But the most outstanding example of space adventures in the literature of the seventeenth century is Cyrano de Bergerac's novel *Comic History of the States and Empires of the Moon*, published in 1657. Is primarily a satirical and philosophical work, but it contains a number of ideas that allow us to consider it science fiction. In particular, the protagonist mentions that all matter in the Universe is born inside stars, and when the Sun runs out of "fuel", it will swallow up all the planets. Most likely, Cyrano was just fantasising, but his ideas are surprisingly in tune with what modern science says about the evolution of the stars. Cyrano de Bergerac was also the first author to depict a hero flying to the moon in a vehicle driven by physical forces and chemical processes, rather than by natural phenomena, animals, or supernatural forces. In fact, he may be the author of the first spacecraft in science fiction. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/46547/46547-h/46547-h.htm>

■ Johannes Kepler, known for discovering the laws of planetary motion, wrote "Somnium" (means

"The Dream", <https://adastra-sf.com/Sci-Tech-Society/Kepler-Somnium.pdf>) 1608 (but not published until 1634) after the scientist's death. It tells the story of an Icelandic traveler Drukotus, who travels to the heavens, extensively on the seas of northern Europe and learns astronomy from scientists during his travels. Upon returning home, he learns from his mother that she is a sorceress who can communicate with demons, and they can transport a person to any place on Earth. Then it turns out that the journey to the Moon is possible as well. Although all of this happens through purely fairy tale means, Kepler reports several things about the space journey that are entirely consistent with scientific ideas about space. First, he first comes up with the idea that space is cold. Of course, vacuum itself has no temperature, but in general, most of the objects that are farther away from the Sun than the Earth are indeed colder. The second thing is the lack of air. While being pushed to the Moon by the demons, the heroes have to breathe



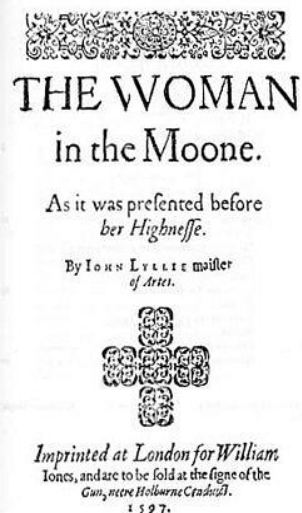
through wet sponges. From the point of view of modern science, this sounds extremely naive, but it's worth remembering that in Kepler's time, no one had any idea not only about the vacuum but also about the chemical composition of the atmosphere. Finally, the third thing is the need not only to accelerate during the flight to the Moon, but also to slow down in the final part of the trajectory. This is exactly how all spacecraft perform interplanetary flights. BTW, Kepler's mother was accused of witchcraft partly because of this book...

- We also have Giovanni Pontano's poetry cycle in hexameter "*Urania*" (published 1505), that blends astronomy, astrology, and mythology. It describes celestial spheres, constellations, and their influences on Earth, as it depicts a poet talking to his son about the Roman gods. The father and son are about to embark on a journey, during which they will need guidance from the many gods - the muse Urania, in particular.

- And there's Lodovico Ariosto's Orlando "*Furioso*" (published 1532, https://www.google.se/books/edition/Orlando_Furioso/). Astolfo travels to the Moon on a hippogriff to retrieve Orlando's lost wits. It's not usually treated as fantasy, but contains explicit lunar travel. The Moon is shown to store everything lost on Earth and he gets his wits back.

- *The Woman in the Moone* by John Lyuppy (stage play, published on printed form 1597). The play is set in the world of Greek mythology, at the time of the very beginning of the human race, when the first woman was not yet created. A personified goddess of Nature descends from the Moon to a pastoral Earth.

- *The English Fortune-Teller* (1690s) was a pamphlet giving advice on various matters, but also includes a lunar journey as part of a prophetic vision.



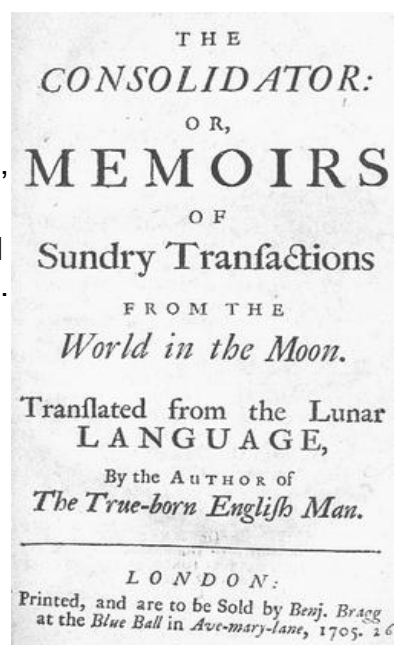
- *Iter Lunare: Or, A Voyage to the Moon: Containing Some Considerations on the Nature of that Planet, the Possibility of getting thither, With Other Pleasant Conceits about the Inhabitants, their Manners and Customs* by David Russen (1703) https://archive.org/details/bim_eighteenth-century_iter-lunare-or-a_voyag_russen-david_1703. The book reviewed was *Selenarchia: The Government of the World in the Moon*, the title given to the 1659 English translation of Cyrano de Bergerac's *Histoire comique, par Monsieur de Cyrano Bergerac, contenant les états et empires de la lune* (1657). Though he registers his pleasure with the text, and agrees with Cyrano that the Moon may be inhabited, Russen criticizes him on scientific grounds, and speculates on the mechanics of other possible systems for travel to the Moon, noting the likelihood of a lack of air on the way.

- Daniel Defoe. In 1705, the author of Robinson Crusoe published his novel *The Consolidator*. Again, it is a political satire disguised as an adventure novel. This time, the hero travels to China, where he learns that there are intelligent

beings on the Moon, and sets off to visit them in a flying device drawn by feathered creatures. In principle, Defoe's work is basically the same as Godwin's and de Bergerac's. The only thing worth noting here is the theme of magic glass, which is capable of revealing the hidden and is used by the inhabitants of the Moon to draw political maps of the Earth's civilisation. This is very similar to the satellites in Earth orbit.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/792216933/The-Consolidator-by-Daniel-Defoe-pdf-free-download>

- In 1727, the topic of travelling to the Moon was raised in Samuel Brandt's *Voyage to Cacklogallinia*. In general, it continues the tradition of its predecessors. The traveling hero finds himself in a land of intelligent birds, which is easily seen as a satire on English society of the time. Then



Illo for Voyage to Cacklogallinia

he flies to our satellite with the help of these birds and has philosophical conversations with the local inhabitants. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/16202>

In general, eighteenth-century writers addressed the theme of space travel several times. But each time, these were humorous stories that often entered the territory of political or social satire.

■ *The Consolidator* by Daniel Defoe (1705). The narrator travels to the Moon through the means of the titular "consolidator", a ch, chariot with two feathered winged creatures. The novel is a political satire of the British politics and society of Defoe's era. The chariot has been described as one of the earlielst spaceships. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7089>

■ *Nya tiender uthur månan* ("News from the Moon", ca 1711) by Christopher Polhem. A trip to the moon in the form of an "astral body" and the help of a Sami magic drum. (We've covered this in great detail in an earlier issue.)



John Wikins writes about the Moon

■ "The Discovery of a New World" by John Wilkins (1638), which he defines the character of the Moon, explains how and why he believes the Moon to be inhabited, and describes possible methods by which humans might one day reach it.

■ *A Trip to the Moon* by Mutagh McDermot (pseud for unknown UK or Irish writer). Describes various remarkable sights and beings, initially in the safirical mode of Jonathan Swift, as "McDermot" takes ship to Tenerife before undergoing his abrupt transit into space; the book is dedicated to Captain Lemuel Gulliver. The necessary propulsion for the latter part of his journey is provided by gunpowder.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Trip_to_the_Moon

■ *Månan* ("The Moon", in old spelling, 1760) by Carl Michael Bellman. A long poem being a satire over earthly matters by placing it on the Moon, where everything is reversed.. Your Ed made a version with modern Swedish spelling, available here:

<https://runeberg.org/manan/>. Projekt Rueberg has since also added ta faksimile of the original version: <https://runeberg.org/bcmmanan/>

■ *A Voyage to the World of Cartesius* (1750s, https://archive.org/details/bim_early-english-books-1641-1700_a-voyage-to-the-world-of_daniel-gabriel_1694), by Gabriel Daniel, a philosophical journey through the Cartesian cosmos, rarely mentioned in sf histories.

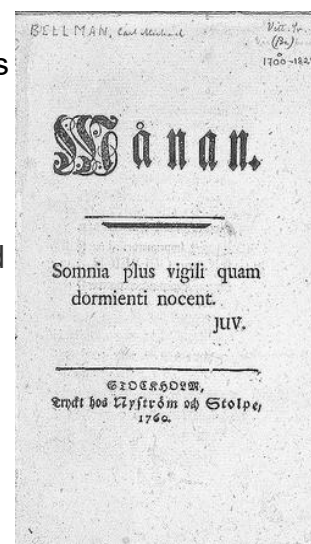
■ *Earths in the Universe* by Emmanuel Swedenborg (1758, [https://swedenborg.com/wp-](https://swedenborg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/swedenborg_foundation_earths_in_the_universe.pdf)

[content/uploads/2013/03/swedenborg_foundation_earths_in_the_universe.pdf](https://swedenborg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/swedenborg_foundation_earths_in_the_universe.pdf)). Hard to select just one book by this mystic-philosopher-scientist, who wrote voluminous about the solar system, each planet having beings he had telepatic contact with... <https://swedenborg.com/>

■ *L'An 2440* by Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1771) <https://www.scribd.com/document/621136416/Louis-Sebastien-Mercier-the-Year-2440>

. Not a Moon voyage, but includes lunar speculation and is an early sf utopia. Written as a dream, the narrator wakes up to a Paris of 2440 that has solved the social ills of the 18th century, such as poverty, injustice, and religious oppression.

■ *Baron Munchausen's Narrative of His Marvellous Travels and Campaigns in Russia* , a character created by by R E Raspe (1785) . There was a real Baron Munchausen I known fore his outlandish stories – but not *that* outlandish, like going to the moon. The Baron often reaches the moon by climbing a gigantic Turkish beanstalk that he planted. In other versions, a whirlwind carries his boat to



Munchausen sailing to the Moon

the moon. The moon is depicted as a place where inhabitants grow on trees. The creatures are described as having detachable heads, seven fingers on each hand, and stomachs that serve as luggage. The environment is described as surreal, with trees growing gingerbread, milk rivers, and a cheese-like surface. The Munchausen stories were an international success and often added to when translated.

■ *A Voyage to the Moon, Strongly Recommended to All Lovers of Freedom* by Aratus (pseud), 1793. A voyage by Balloon to the Moon and allegory about contemporary England, where the Moon becomes a dystopia.

■ Everything began to change with the advent of the nineteenth century. In 1809, the American writer Washington Irvine published a fairly short story called *The Man of the Moon* (there is a variant of the title *The Conquest of the Earth by the Moon* <https://mythaxis.co.uk/5issue3.htm>). In it, the author mentions for the first time since the Japanese fairy tale about Kaguya that not only can people fly to the Moon, but its inhabitants can also visit us. In Irwin's case, they come with far from peaceful intentions. "The Lunatics" have an entire fleet of spaceships, travel around the Earth on flying beasts, and conquer the Earthlings quite quickly because they wear armour that bounces bullets and fire beam weapons. They confine lunar life to the past, either depicting the remnants of a lunar civilization that has since gone extinct as...

■ ...in W S Lach-Szyrma's 1887–1893 series "Letters from the Planets", a sequel to the 1883 novel *Aleriel or Voyage to Other Worlds* (set on Venus) Edgar Fawcett's 1895 novel *The Ghost of Guy Thyrl*, <https://freeread.de/@RGLibrary/EdgarFawcett/Novels/TheGhostOfGuyThyrle.html> "a novel whose hero discovers a drug which separates his soul from his body and must undertake a voyage into the further reaches of the cosmos when his uninhabited body is cremated".

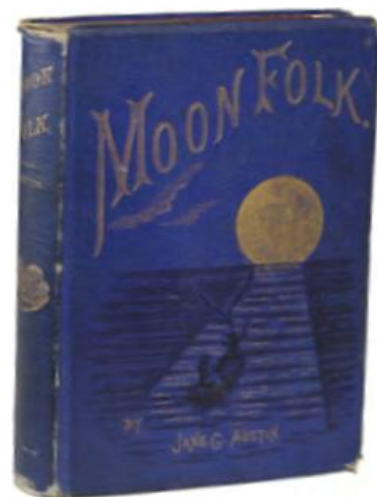
■ *Voyage to the Moon with Some Account of the Manners and Customs, Science and Philosophy, of the People of Morosofia, and Other Lunarians* by George Tucker (writing as Joseph Atterley), 1827, <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/10005/pg10005-images.html>. The earliest interplanetary novel by a native American to use mechanical means for space travel and a basic work out of which American SF developed in the nineteenth century. It is chiefly a satirical story, reminiscent of *Gulliver's Travels*, in which the pseudonymous author and hero, Joseph Atterley, and a companion travel to the Moon in a space vehicle coated with an antigravity metal where they observe several lunarian societies.

■ *Great Astronomical Discoveries Lately Made by Sir John Herschel at the Cape of Good Hope* by Richard Adams Locke (1835, first published on the *New York Sun*, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/The_Great_Moon_Hoax_of_1835_%28IA_TheGreatMoonHoaxOf18351859%29.pdf, the Great Moon Hoax in pamphlet form, about how a far away astronomer with an extra powerful telescope had discovered a civilisation and animals etc on the moon. [For the 1800s we skip Jules Verne's already well-known *From the Earth to the Moon*, 1864, as well as HG Wells' *Cavorite*.]

■ *The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall* by Edgar Allan Poe (1835). Hans Pfaall, a bankrupt Rotterdam bellows-mender, escapes his creditors by building a homemade vacuum-balloon spacecraft. He ascends into the upper atmosphere, describing thinning air, cold, and technical details in early "scientific" style. After a long and perilous ascent, he reaches the Moon, where he encounters strange lunar inhabitants. He sends back a letter explaining his voyage, delivered by a mysterious lunar messenger. The authorities doubt the story, leaving the narrative suspended between hoax, satire, and proto-science fiction. Well-known and historically important, predates Verne, and is often cited as the first "scientific" Moon voyage in American literature.

■ *The History Of A Voyage To The Moon, With An Account Of The Adventurers' Subsequent Discoveries. An Exhumed Narrative, Supposed To Have Been Ejected From A Lunar Volcano* by Trueman Chrysostom (pseud for H Cowen, 1864). An interplanetary fantasy whose protagonists employ a force of 'repulsion' to convey an 'island earth' to the Moon. They discover a communistic utopian society of miniature humans, who are unwitting reincarnations of souls who have previously lived on Earth

■ *Moonfolk. A True Account Of The Home Of The Fairy Tales* by Jane G



Austin (1874). An interplanetary fantasy whose protagonists employ a force of 'repulsion' to convey an 'island earth' to the Moon. They discover a communistic utopian society of miniature humans, who are unwitting reincarnations of souls who have previously lived on Earth .

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cd/Moonfolk. A true account of the home of the fairy tales %28IA moonfolktrueacco00austiala %29.pdf>). Interplanetary fairy tale fantasy for children about a boat trip to a

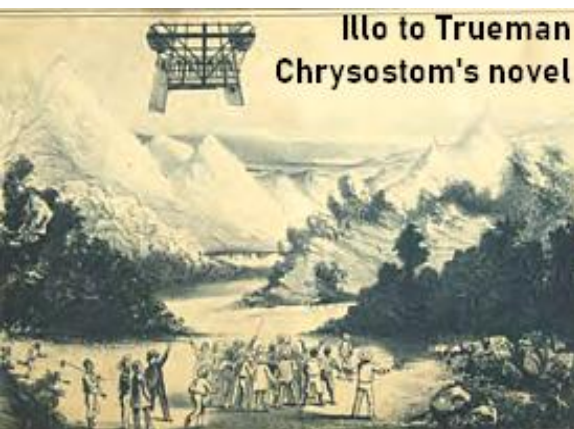
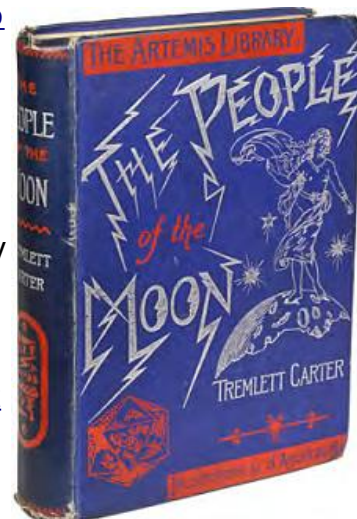


Illustration from *Illto Trueman* by Chrysostom's novel

moon inhabited by many characters from children's fiction, including an extended Arthurian sequence.

■ *Aleriel, or a Voyage to Other Worlds* by W S Lach-Szyrma (1883). The book is a Victorian-era tale detailing travels to Mars, Venus, and the Moon.

<https://archive.org/details/alerielorvoyaget00lach> His work often explored astronomical ideas combined with social commentary. And he is credited as one of the first sf writers to use the word Martian as a noun.



■ W S Lach-Szyrma's 1887–1893 series “Letters from the Planets”, a sequel to the 1883 novel *Aleriel or Voyage to Other Worlds* (set on Venus) Edgar Fawcett's 1895 novel *The Ghost of Guy Thyrle*, <https://freeread.de/@RGLibrary/EdgarFawcett/Novels/TheGhostOfGuyThyrle.html> “a novel whose hero discovers a drug which separates his soul from his body and must undertake a voyage into the further reaches of the cosmos when his uninhabited body is cremated”.

■ Among lesser known Swedish Moon examples are Viktor Rydberg's “Den nya Grottesången” (1891). In a long poem in the style of Norse mythology, mainly dealing with the conditions for society and work, Rydberg describes the Moon as a mirror for Human Hubris and warns for the collapse of civilisation - having cosmic implications.

[https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Den_nya_Grottes%C3%A5ngen_\(Viktor_Rydberg\)](https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Den_nya_Grottes%C3%A5ngen_(Viktor_Rydberg))

■ Then we have Gunnar Nordström's *Resan till Månen* (“Trip to the Moon, 193?”), for children, but tells of a Moon with a technologically advanced humanity-like civilisation

■ *The Conquest Of The Moon: A Story Of The Bayouda* by André Lauerie (1889) https://archive.org/details/McGillLibrary-hssl_conquest-moon-bayouda_PQ2269G7C61894-18172. Financiers attempt to exploit the resources of the Moon. They magnetize a mountain in the Sahara to pull the satellite into close proximity of the Earth. However, through miscalculation, their observatory is drawn from the Earth to a lunar valley from which they later escape, descending to Earth via parachute.

■ *The People of the Moon: A Novel* by Tremlett Carter (1895) <https://dokumen.pub/victorian-science-fiction-in-the-uk-the-discourses-of-knowledge-and-of-power-0816184356.html> An imaginative science-fiction fantasy romance, with monsters and flying machines galore, of the life and civilization inside the Moon; the manuscript was sent by means of an antigravity missile to Earth for our edification

■ The first realistic Moon-travel story: Konstantin Tsiolkovsky's *On the Moon* (1893) vacuum: weightlessness, airtight cabins, effects of acceleration, rockets as propulsion, orbital mechanics, the Moon's low gravity, realistic lunar surface condition.

■ We have *The Moon Metal* by Garrett P Serviss, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8199> (1900). The story revolves



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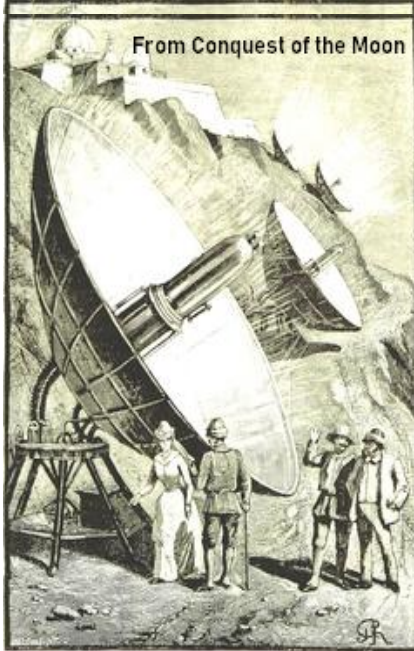
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"There are twenty-five easily like this one!"

around the astonishing discovery of abundant gold at the South Pole, which disrupts the global economy, leading to a financial panic. The narrative introduces Dr Max Syx, a mysterious and talented metallurgist, who claims to have created a new metal, "artemisium," that could potentially replace gold as the world's monetary standard. The opening of the book details the initial reactions to the announcement of south polar gold, which the public initially dismisses as a hoax until confirmed reports emerge. This triggers a mad rush to the new gold fields, and soon thereafter, Dr. Syx introduces the concept of artemisium to financial representatives, promising it as a stable alternative to gold. As financial confidence grows in artemisium, questions about the true nature of Dr. Syx and his claims begin to surface, hinting at deeper mysteries surrounding his character and the production of the metal. A thrilling exploration of greed, innovation, and the consequences of excessive wealth in this imaginative tale. [From 1900 Moon tales become very common, so we'll

only present some selected.]

■ *A Honeymoon in Space* by George Griffith (1901) <https://www.epedagogia.com.br/materialbibliotecaonline/3780A-Honeymoon-in-Space.pdf>. The scientific romance story that depicts a tour of the Solar System, a type of story that was in vogue at the time. It depicts a tour of the and make their first stop at the Moon. There, they discover the ruins of a civilization and the skeletons of giants. What little life still exists on the Moon has devolved to a beast-like state and is found only in the deepest craters where small amounts of air and water remain

■ Georges Melies' "*Resan till månen*" ("Trip to the Moon") was the film of the first commercial film showing in Sweden, where the audience paid an admission fee. The show was organized by Niels Le Tort, who had obtained the film from Imperial Bioscope of England. It took place in the big hall of the Realläroverket High School in Gothenburg, October 29, 1902. The entrance fee was rather stiff: 1 SEK for adults, SEK 0.50 for children (unskilled labour would typically earn 2-3 SEK/day, skilled workers 4-6 SEK). After the successful school screenings, Le Tort moved the film to the Arkaden cinema on 15 November 1902, lowering ticket prices to SEK 0.25 for adults and SEK 0.10 öre for children. Swedish info: <https://kinnegbg.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/1-9.jpg> (use AI translation).



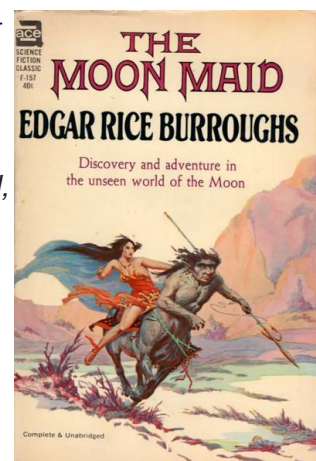
O Witt's *How the Moon Was Conquered*.

■ Otto Witt who wrote several stories involving the Moon, with trip to the moon, speculations about the inside of the Moon and presented ideas of Moon colonies. Most known is perhaps *Hur månen erövrades* ("How the Moon was conquered, 192?): <https://runeberg.org/hurmanen/>

■ The Moon is described as a hollow, artificial object by John W Campbell in *The Mightiest Machine* (1934-35), <https://s3.us-west-1.wasabisys.com/luminist/EB/C/Campbell%20-%20The%20Mightiest%20Machine.pdf> and by Edgar Rice Burroughs in *The Moon Maid* (book version 1926): *ERB's Moon is hollow, with an inner world called Va-nah, lit by a tiny internal sun. The explorers discover: The Va-ganik, a peaceful, artistic humanoid race, and The Kalkars, a brutal, parasitic species that enslaves others*



Illo to *Voyage to Cacklogallinia*



Two followups came, *The Moon Men* and *The Red Hawk*. The last was originally a story of Soviet communists conquering America, written in the early 1920s by the anti-communist ERB in fear of Bolshevism. Burroughs' editor at *Argosy All-Story Weekly* liked it but not the setting and asked Burroughs to transform it to a part of the Moon stories.

■ The Moon as an egg... Several works flirt with the idea that the Moon is not a rock but an organism. William Hope Hodgson hinted at this in early cosmic-horror fragments, which included celestial bodies as living things, moons as "spawn" of greater entities, embryonic worlds waiting to hatch. He never wrote a full "Moon egg" story, but the idea permeates his mythos. In modern SF, Doctor Who famously made the Moon a hatching creature in "*Kill the Moon*" (2014).

■ In Henry Kuttner's & C L Moore's *Earth's Last Citadel* (1943) Moon approaches Earth catastrophically. *City at World's End* (1951) by Edmond Hamilton also features a dangerously close Moon. <https://s3.us-west-1.wasabisys.com/luminist/EB/I-J-K/Kuttner%20-%20Earth's%20Last%20Citadel.pdf>

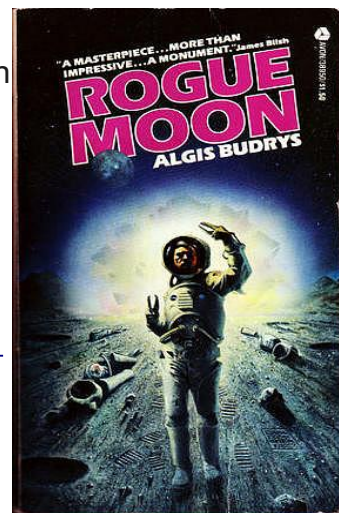
■ *Rocket Ship Galileo* by Robert Heinlein (1947). An inventor builds a Moon ship in his backyard. But coming there it is found the Nazis have a secret base there... Inspiration for the film "Destination Moon", he first realistic Moon-landing movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8sxUMOiP2M> Heinlein's "*The Man Who Sold the Moon*" (1950) and *The Moon is a harsh Mistress* (1966) are also worth mentioning. (The latter introduces the interesting AI computer Mike.)

■ Fritz Leiber wrote stories where the Moon is a bureaucratic nightmare, as in "*The Big Trek*", "*The Enchanted Forest*" (both 1950s). Despite the title his *The Moon is green* takes place on Earth after a nuclear war. Nuclear dust miscolouring the moon?

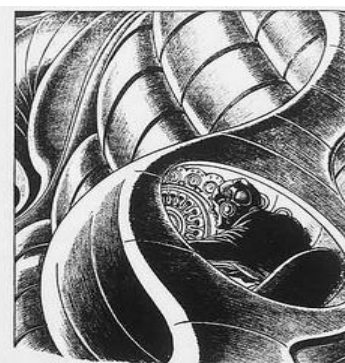
■ Eva Håkanson published a science fantasy (sf with fantasy) *Äventyr på månen* ("Adventures on the Moon", 1963). A Swedish rocket expedition lands on the Moon and finds the ruins of a dead city. A manuscript they find there tells the story of Cleo about expedition to lunar mountains, sailing on the Sea of Storms, meeting monsters in the Sea of Danger and a struggling against an invader. It's a story of a Lost Civilisation on the Moon.

■ Clark Ashton Smith wrote a poem where the Moon is a vampiric entity draining life from Earth. I can't find the exact poem, but you may have better luck, by trying: <https://www.hippocampuspress.com/clark-ashton-smith/poetry?zenid=ti09ab64kcr7j8gmn5d2bt0be4>

■ *Rogue Moon* by Algis Budrys (1960). A mysterious, alien labyrinthine structure is found on the Moon that kills humans in horrific ways, often breaking human logic. <https://archive.org/details/roguemoon0000algi>



THE MIGHTIEST MACHINE
Part One
Illustrated by Elliot Doid



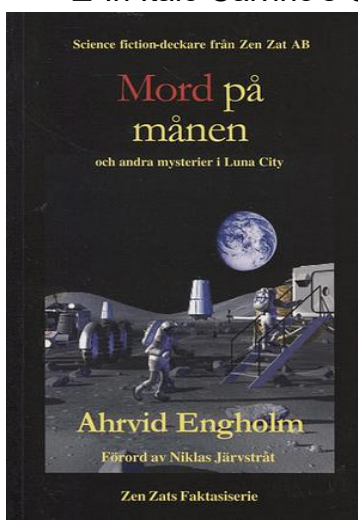
A novel of titanic scientific achievement, of voyaging into another space, and of fantastic civilizations and their colossal conflict—the greatest story yet told
by
JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR.

This is what real Space Opera looks like!

■ In Italo Calvino's *Cosmocomics* (1965) the Moon is close enough to climb to with a ladder, and its phases affect the characters' emotions and relationships.

■ Haruki Murakami lets two moons appear in *1Q84* (2009-10), representing parallel realities and psychological doubling.

■ *Mord på månen* by Intermission Editor ("Murder



Before reshaping sf as successful Astounding editor, Campbell wrote space opera. (This pic could be from his editorial office.)

on the Moon”, 2006) seems perfect to end the Moon segment – it'd mine! It's a collection of crime stories set in a future lunar colony. Local police chief solves all kinds of crimes from murder to an A-bomb on the loose.

The Swedish Moon Probe

Did you know that little Sweden had her own Moon probe? It was an ESA project, built and operated by the Swedish Space Corporation. The Satellite was named SMART-1 and had two missions: 1) to chemically survey the Moon surface, including for water, 2) to test a Xenon-based electric propulsion system. SMART (“Small Missions for Advanced Research in Technology”) was launched in September 2003 from French Guyana. It went to the Moon using solar-electric propulsion, getting energy from big solar panels and electrically ejecting xenon gas at very high speed. As the thrust of the electric propulsion was very modest it had a complicated trajectory, orbiting Earth numerous times in an elliptical orbit, slowly gaining height until it could be caught by the Moon's gravity. That took over a year. It had a battery of miniaturised instruments to detect what was on the lunar surface. See:

https://www.esa.int/Science_Exploration/Space_Science/SMART-1/SMART-1_overview

SMART-1 conducted the first comprehensive inventory of key chemical elements on the lunar surface. Water in the form of ice in polar craters was among the things it was looking for. After being captured by the Moon, SMART-1 looped over the north and south poles, its elliptical orbit at a height ranges from 300 to 3 000 km. The

mission lasted until September 2006, when the probe was steered to crash on the Lunar surface, at a speed of 7000 km/h.

It was only the second time that ion propulsion had been used as a mission's primary propulsion. The first such system was NASA's Deep Space 1 probe launched in October 1998. Its solar panels were able to rotate so that they always kept in an optimum configuration to the Sun. The design was low-cost and emphasised miniaturisation wherever possible, especially for its payload. It had a total mass of 367 kg, including 19 kg of payload. With its solar panels deployed, SMART-1 measured about 14 metres across. Here about the scientific findings:

https://www.esa.int/Science_Exploration/Space_Science/SMART-1/SMART-1_science_highlights

Swedish Mini-Cottage on the Moon

There must be something wrong on his head... But for a quarter of a century the Swedish artist Mikael Genberg (no relation writer, buddy Kjell Genberg, at least not as far as Kjell knows) worked towards getting a red Swedish cottage on the Moon. He has worked finding sponsors for it, adjusting his plans and finding a launch opportunity hoping to ride “piggy-back” with another Moon mission. First plan was to make an inflatable cottage in near full size, but it had to be scaled down to a little model 11 cm in size.

The red cottages, often built in timber, is typical for the Swedish countryside. The red color comes as a by-product from the famous Falun copper mine. This mine has been very important in history, from medieval times up to 1992 when it was closed (as most of its copper had been mined). The mine stood for a substantial part of our export.

See: <https://sharingsweden.se/materials/moonhouse-a-miniature-swedish-cottage-on-the-moon>

The red colour comes from the mineral Hematite (Fe_3O_4) which is formed as the ore rusts and is left behind when the copper is extracted. Besides being cheap and readily available in big quantity, the Dalarna Red Dye also protects wood from rot, fungus and pests – that's why the red cottages are so common.

Genberg finally secured a transport with a Japanese Moon probe that was launched in January last year. It was the Resilience lunar lander, part of the HAKUTO-R Mission 2. Unfortunately it the landing didn't go to well. Just before ground contact they lost contact with the probe, that apparently tilted and fell over after landing. There's been no



Genberg and his red Moon Cottage.



The SMART-1 moon probe.



Red cottages (usually with white corners) are all over the Swedish countryside.

further contact and Mr Genberg's little is probably laying on the side. But to at all getting a model of cottage to the Moon is a victory. Of sorts.

Quillcon

Quillcon April 18-19 is the first - as far as I know - sf/fantasy writers' convention in Sweden. I remember I about 20 years ago planned a writing seminar for sf/fantasy intended as a separate program on a Fantastika con. I recruited a co-organiser, as I doubted I could pull it off alone - but had to cancel the plans as the helper dropped off (also: there weren't too many who registered for the seminar).

When I arrived to the Stockholm Tolkien Society clubhouse, which Quillcon had rented, it was rather full of people - over 50! There are indeed many who want to write our stuff. I think the Tolkien club has WiFi, but as no password was handed out I choose a corner of the main hall where I knew I could pick up a signal from outside (I've been there before for other events).

I took some coffee and snacks (it was free – probably from the Alvar Foundation contribution which I learned they received) and sat down and saw it wasn't easy-peasy to find the signal. Tethering, Bluetooth, menu this, menu that, I didn't get a connection between my phone and the laptop until I reverted to the obvious choice: connection via an USB cable. That was it! (My computer has too few USB ports so I tend to try USB cable solutions last.) I couldn't recognise any faces from the regular, traditional fandom (we who loathe the degrading abbreviation “sci-fi”...YUK!). I saw the attendee list and recognised one or two names as participants in SKRIVA's fantastic short story competition, but no fans I knew). When it comes to writing sf/fantasy those who aspire to write stories, start small publishing operations and so on have *always* been a bit apart from what is known as Trufandom. I may be an exception, since I've always written a little fiction beside the fanzines.

Meanwhile the "Worldbuilding workshop" started, beginning with a lecture about different factors to consider: geography, climate, people, history, hardships, resources etc. The lecturer Fabian Andersson comes from the roleplaying world, and I understood that also went for many of the attendees. Now, the thing he missed and that virtually *all* fantasy writers miss: there wasn't one word about the *physical* factors of world building. Zilch about the atmospheric pressure nor its oxygen content. Nada about how old the planet was. (It decides metals or other elements, how advanced life may have evolved, etc.)

Such factors decides a lot about living conditions, society etc, but fantasy writers lack imagination and usually just copy-paste from Earth. There are plenty of world-building books out there to help you overcome this huge oversight. (One I'd recommend is *World-Building* by Stephen Gillett, <https://www.amazon.se/-/en/Stephen-L-Gillett/dp/0898797071> - if you look hard enough you might find a pirate PDF somewhere.)

The attendees were divided into eight tables with 4-6 people per table. Every table was now asked to develop their own world. My table settled for a future flooded Earth (which avoids the physical factors problem) where folks lived on floating islands. There were a little more details (I had to remind the group that humans can't endure longer periods in more than 30 metres of water pressure) and I noted that other groups had also opted for water world, just as e.g Jack Vance with *The Blue World* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Blue_World – Vance is a good story teller, unlike another guy with that surname).

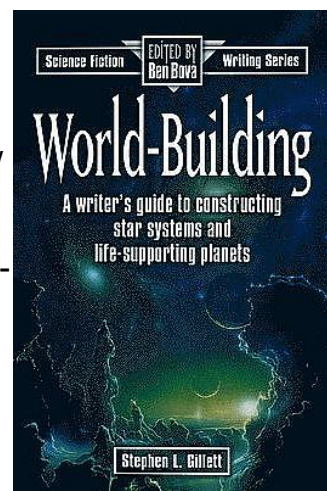
Next was the Guest of Honour interview with Jessica Schiefauer (https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jessica_Schiefauer whom I haven't read, mainly because she usually writes for a YA audience (where she has won the top notch August Award). She told us how her genre writing initially was met with scepticism. If she wrote mainstream it was OK,

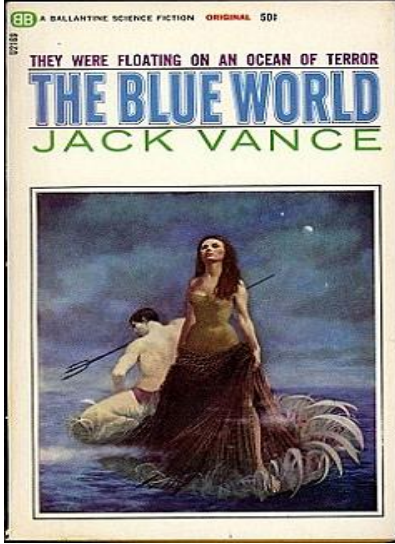


Joe R Struly.



The organisers at opening. (Got names for 3 of the 4: Ina Nes, Anna Söderqvist och Lisa Ylitalo.





but when she turned in an sf or fantasy manuscript editors began to look uneasy and mutter that there weren't sure they had use for it... We've heard that before, haven't we?

Then we had a lunch break. I had a ready-made curry and borrowed the Tolkien Society's micro to get it heated with Saruman's evil industrial deathrays, took a park bench and enjoyed what was labelled as "strong" on the cover. But the spicing was just about right. I guess they adapt the spices for western consumers. (In Indian restaurants you may get really strong dishes, if you dare.)

After being strengthened by Saraswathi - Hindu God of language and the arts - Ina Nes held a lecture on the subject "Dramatic Irony". I hadn't heard of that concept before. But we learned, if I got it right, that it refers to having a story where there are facts or circumstances unknown to the main character but known to the reader or universal narrator and maybe to other characters.

This can be used for certain effects: for comedy, to surprise the main character, for tragedy, and so on. We were given several examples. You can read more about it on e.g. Britannica:

<https://www.britannica.com/art/dramatic-irony> or here

[https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/dramatic-irony)

[terms/dramatic-irony](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/dramatic-irony) It's always nice to learn something new, though I suspect I've sometimes used "dramatic irony" instinctively.

It was followed by a panel about "Transformations" with writers Jessica Schiefauer, Marija Fischer Odén, Saga Stigsdotter. It was a bit hard to follow, since they sat down low (there was no raised stage), talked low and I sat in corner at the other room end. (Does the Tolkienj

club lack a sound system because they think it isn't enough Middle Earth?) Transformations in different forms is common in fantastic literature from Kafka's metamorphosis or alien monsters popping out of your belly to the betrayal of HAL 9000. It was followed by a panel about "Transformations" with writers Jessica Schiefauer, Marija Fischer Odén, Saga Stigsdotter. It was a bit hard to follow, since they sat down low (there was no raised stage), talked low and I sat in corner at the other room end. (Does the Tolkienj club lack a sound system because they think it isn't enough Middle Earth?) Transformations in different forms is common in fantastic literature from Kafka's metamorphosis or alien monsters popping out of your belly to the betrayal of HAL 9000.

I'm not a big fan of panels anyway and didn't follow it too intensely, especially as I opened a window in a corner of my screen where I followed the yellow and blue chicks' world cup qualifying game against Serbia. I kept half an eye on that as it played out a dramatic structure in real life. The exposition in the studio had made it clear it was a matter of life and death. It was on home turf so there was mighty support and *catharsis* - emotions, as Aristotle calls it - from the stands. The girls *had* to win to have a chance to top the group and get through. Tension grew as the protagonists has an attack hitting the antagonists' goal post. When the first act ended the heroines had fought hard but yet failed. Second act, stakes went even higher as time ticked. It ticked and ticked and the horizon for failure was coming closer. One or two more goal post hits added more drama to the plot. Suddenly an unexpected pass that cut through the antagonists' backline. Team captain Stina received it and with a plot twist she stretched out her leg and found the net corner. The reversal of fortunes had arrived, Aristotle's *peripeteia*! The drama had reached its happy ending, especially as a sub-plot (Denmark playing at the same time) also resolved happily with a draw. The forces of good had prevailed!

It was followed by a "Pitch Workshop", regarding how to sell your story. Strangely enough it was verbally-oriented, as if you *spoke* to an editor personally. Nothing about how to phrase a cover letter, since 98% of the time you *mail* a story together with a letter. Here's my tips about cover letter pitching: 1) a reasonably short letter (never more than half a page), 2) state



The climax of the football plot... Stina Blackstenius scores 1-0.

genre and length and make a brief summary of your story, what's special or unique with it, but hold back the superlatives, 3) say something about yourself, who you are, your writing background, and if there remains something absolutely essential to add, do that now. But no hyperboles, don't sound desperate, don't brag. Sound slightly humble, but don't overdo it. All in half a page. Got it?

Now we were asked to pitch a story of our own to our table comrades. Before Quillcon I was told it'd have a lot of fantasy but very little sf (in practice it showed skiffy was covered in a high degree) so I who hardly write any fantasy, did actually write a draft of a fantasy story in case it was needed. So I pitched that story, preliminary title "Lead Magic". It's about a medieval town where there is a Gutenberg type of printer who meets the scepticism of the town people. At the same time a dreaded plague is coming closer. A tattered old lady rumoured to master magic approaches the printer... Something like that. Many details need to be added and the plot needs work.

Last in the program was the panel "Fantasy Today in Sweden" with Annie Särka, Natalie Forslind, Nashwan Ghazy, Amanda Magneville. What we have seen is an explosion of new writers and Small Press operations. There're easily 50 small publishers, some are vanity houses (publishing the owner's and friend's work), some specialise in horror and/or the bizarre, some cater for Young Adult readers, most publish Just Fantasy. Someone in the panel complained the the big publishing houses missed many of the internationally important writers. But English editions compete with Swedish editions. The SF Bookstore chain has a majority of its books in English. Youngfolks here read a lot in English. When new Harry Potters were release in English, you could see 10-11-olds stand in line outside the SF Bookstore In the Old Town. Publishing news: the big publisher Natur & Kultur has recently revived their imprint Legenda to reissue a series of sf classics:

<https://via.tt.se/pressmeddelande/4228714/legenda-ger-ut-science-fiction-klassiker-i-ny-serie/>

(Related: one Jörgen Peterzén was the editor of old Legenda's original sf series. Jörgen was also one of the founders of the Stockholm Tolkien Society, where we now sat.)

After this the program leaflet said book tables, mingle and then a con dinner at a restaurant. I think the book table only had books by he Goh and Quillcon organisers and could have had more. There must have been many small press publishers among the attendees. I skipped all this because today was also the Stockholm Culture Night. I dashed of to the Swedeborg library where you could hear about this interesting scientist/mystic's strange astronomical ideas. On Sunday Quillcon attendees were invited to attend a certain café for Working Fika. I skipped that too, in favour of having time to write this report.

Was Quillcon a success. Absolutely. But a few things could be better. A sound system for speakers. Bigger book tables And a writing exercise. You can't ask the concom to go through 50 entries (they have other things to do) but it can be organised this way: Upon pre-registering attendees are asked to supply a short piece of writing (max 1 double spaced page), regarding topic X, which will also be covered in the program. After topic X has been spun, the entries are passed out to the attendees (one each) and *they* are then asked to comment the writing regaarding X on the blank backsides. Some of the best entries will be read aloud and everyone will be happy.

Happily ever after.

Eurovision Fantasy Contest

...actually: Song Contest (or ESC), At this time of year this extravaganza threatens to break out, and our International Culture magazine of course has few words to say about it. The contest is a mix of music and international politics. Which countries will vote for each other? (Not counting Greece and Cyprus, exchanging votes even for entries being the sound of vacuum cleaner.) Who will boycott it, and for what reason? This year five countries boycott because Israel participates despite criticism about the Gaza war... And Russia is of course excluded.

I decided to give ESC a different slant today. I asked my AI (ie my new computer with a Snapdragon AI chip - I call it "my AI") which entries borders sf, fantasy or horror?

A new trend this year is that many sing in their national language, not English. This year 13 of the entries are in national languages, including the UK for which that is English (curiously enough the UK entry has a German title; "Ein , Zwei, Drei" but lyrics are on English). Using the national language is seen as a bit cool and a way to broaden ESC. And if you care about the lyrics you can easily find a translation.

My AI tend to understand most languages so I asked it to analyse all songs this year for how much they connect to sf/f/h. (I also myself had a quick look trough the entry videos to see traces of genre connections. But virtually all stage shows are today outrageous, with flashing flames, blinking

spotlights, lasers, smoke and costumes from out of this world. So it's hard to see any intent to connect to our genres.

Below excerpts of the reports my AI gave. It may say something is e.g. "sf/fantasy/horror coded". It doesn't mean it literally contains dragons, spaceships, demons, or so, but the lyrics use symbols, metaphors, or aesthetics that strongly resemble those used in sf/f/h. A song could have references to reality shifts and dreamlike states. A song may not be actual fantasy - but it *feels* like fantasy or sf, or horror. So here we go:

Albania, "Alis", gives you a vague fantasy feeling as the official video is set in a medieval castle, using a choir looking like it belongs in the same world. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9AdRrA554o>

Czechia, "Crossroads", uses folkloric "horse symbolism" (whatever the AI means with that). Folklore as fantasy, anyway. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ea25aRGpLo>

Armenia, "Paloma Rumba", the song is not science fiction as such, it *does* use imagery that belongs to the "everyday dystopia" of modern digital life, bureaucratic, corporate, digital oppression, dystopia through monotony and dehumanisation. Lines like "I'm not a machine", "I'm not a robot".

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EXoK-igocw&list=RD5EXoK-igocw&start_radio=1

Greece, "Akylas", in which the singer enters a computer game, it may be called "virtual-reality coded". https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGwNTd_DA9s

Austria, "Tanzschein", the song's imagery and emotional tone create a world where reality feels distorted, emotions behave like physical objects, the environment reacts to the singer's inner state, metaphors are treated as if they're happening literally, classic signature of surrealist fantasy, what you find in Salvador Dalí paintings, Kafka's dream-logic and Alice-in-Wonderland. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPpL_ZuRTZY

Ukraine, "Ridnym", Folklore with futurism, myth-tech fusion Ukraine, A powerful, folkloric-influenced anthem about heritage, survival, and collective strength, in a very old and very Ukrainian tradition where folklore, ancestry, memory, and the future are woven together. That creates a *mythic* or *timeless* feeling that resembles fantasy but without the supernatural. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoEXezpblAc>

Serbia, "Kraj Mene", gothic staging, shadow-heavy visuals, and emotionally surreal tone place it firmly in the realm of dark-romantic fantasy aesthetics. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJTLKBOOE98>

Croatia, "Andromeda", one of the most *explicitly* genre-coded performances, opens with fantasy-like woodland imagery, a dark rider on horseback, and a hunt. The song is firmly in the realm of dark fantasy, with a touch of folk-horror. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vI7Jqnw10sU>

Estonia, "To Epic to be True", uses "legend language" - a fantasy marker - and epic metaphors, heroic framing. the *tone* is unmistakably heroic-fantasy coded. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXVguLuMwkl> (Watching the video it feels like my AI stretches it a bit, but OK...)

Latvia, "Ena", clearly fantasy-coded, in a very *Latvian* way: not dragons or epic quests, but dark folklore, mythic atmosphere, and a touch of Baltic gothic. The Forest is alive and shadows have meaning. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6C2ivaB5D00>

Luxemburg, "Mother Nature", an eco-fantasy, it personifies nature, the earth as a living presence, nature "speaks" or "calls", shadow-world metaphors, hidden forces. The Mother Nature figure is a mythic archetype. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmVfJSRqgnl>

Montenegro, "Nova Zora". A most overtly fantasy-coded performance of the year, but in a *Balkan* way - mythic, ancestral, ritualistic, folkloric and slightly ominous with a touch of gothic darkness. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59hsYOMCQGY>

Poland, "Pray". Not explicit fantasy but the tone, imagery, and staging give it a gothic-romantic and symbolic-mythic atmosphere that makes it feel darker and dramatic. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q78cnYloF9Y> (Watch the video for the singer's interesting steel bra...)

Romania, "Choke me", The performance feels like being inside a disturbed mind, reality feels unstable, psychological horror, the terror of losing control of your own inner world. fragmented imagery and a sense of claustrophobia, the world is familiar, but twisted <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrSI0sTX5W4>

Switzerland, "Alice", clearly fantasy-coded, built on surrealism, dream-logic, and Wonderland-style reality-bending, the territory of *Alice in Wonderland*. References to identity shifts and dreamlike states - a surreal fantasy. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfpYGAzW5dM>

Finland, "Liekinheitin", could be called surreal psychological fantasy with a hint of uncanny, dream-logic horror, space feels distorted, there's emotional claustrophobia, psycho-horror coding, but without monsters or gore. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bfwNIYb96Q>



Finland's Eurovision entry, "Liekinheitin" (= flamethrower).

Albania, Greece, Ukraine, Croatia, Latvia, Montenegro and Switzerland look most genre

connected, if you happen to see the shows from Vienna 12, 14 and 16 of May (the first two are semi-finals). And if your local TCV networks don't show it, google around for streaming services and you'll probably find it. I listed Finland last, but it's my favourite to finish first this year. It's a pretty good song with fire and fiddling.



But if you don't care about all this, that's OK with me.

Time for Letters of Comments and the Mailing Comments to N'APA and EAPA, which you have longed for just as much as breadcrumbs in your keyboard mechanism... BTW, please join an APA. It's fun and nourishing and it makes bheer taste better! Comments welcome. You'll probably find something to complain about. Intermission isn't the perfect zine. Yet...

Jim Meadows: Dear Ahrvid, Good to see Intermission 165, and to read about the centennial of *Amazing Stories*, including its mention in the *New York Times*, which suggests the magazine was not considered just a pulp magazine in its first appearance. I think *Amazing's* chief contribution to the genre was being first, and helping to define science fiction as a fiction genre. Its commercial heyday was probably in the 1940s, when Ray Palmer edited the magazine with maximum pulp fiction value for Ziff-Davis. Its best editors in terms of quality of writing may have been Cele Goldsmith (by repute, since I haven't read much of her issues) in the early 1960s and Ted White in the 1970s.

I was a faithful teenage subscriber to *Amazing* during the Ted White years, and enjoyed reading that version of the magazine, including the features he included that made it and its sister publication *Fantastic* feel a bit like fanzines. In fact, I was introduced to fanzines by writing to faneds listed in *Amazing's* "The Clubhouse" column. 50 years later, I still remember some of the novels that *Amazing* ran during the Ted White years, including Ursula K. LeGuin's *The Lathe of Heaven*, Robert Silverberg's *The Second Trip*, and Philip K. Dick's *We Can Build You*, published in *Amazing* as *A. Lincoln, Simulacrum*, with a concluding chapter written, I found out later, by White.

I also remember repeated appearances in *Amazing* of short stories by Barry Malzberg, David R. Bunch (many of them from his *Moderan* series, featuring dystopian tales of cybernetic humans) and Richard Lupoff, particularly his Ova Hamlet parodies of various genre authors, but also one non-parody story, "The Heyworth Fragment", that I still remember as being both horrifying and ironic.

I believe Ted White received a couple of Best Editor Hugo nominations for his work on *Amazing* and *Fantastic*, but he wasn't able to improve the magazine's circulation numbers, any more than Cele Goldsmith could a decade earlier.

I have nostalgic memories of Ted White's *Amazing*, but that wasn't the *Amazing* of Hugo Gernsback's time, which made its impact by the way it categorized science fiction, rather than by its literary quality. It was interesting to learn from you about the European magazines that you mentioned as also contributing to the shaping of the genre. Another example might be *The Thrill Book*, which Wikipedia tells me was published for just a few issues in 1919 by Street and Smith, the future publishers of *Astounding* and *Unknown*. The *Thrill Book* was devoted to unusual and unclassifiable stories, which often meant science fiction and fantasy. The publishers may not have had a clear idea of SF and fantasy as particular categories back then, but they knew it was something unusual.

Your list of authors who have produced both science fiction and mystery stories were mostly new to me except for Asimov, and especially Bob (aka Wilson) Tucker. I've only read a little of his work, and skimmed a little more (all for a radio obituary feature I produced upon his death back in 2006-07), but a lot of it seemed to lean towards the downbeat, with an interest in unreliable narrators and time travel (in the SF stories). Now, where can I read your genre-spanning fiction, and is any available in English?

I did not know about any of the examples you gave of fiction about the world of science fiction fandom written by, can I say, mundane authors. Until you listed them, I knew of only two which you didn't include, Anthony Boucher's 1942 mystery novel *Rocket to the Morgue*, and two novels by Sharyn McCrumb, *Bimbos of the Death Sun* (1988) and *Zombies of the Gene Pool* (1992). The first solves a murder mystery at an SF convention, while the second is about a murder at a fannish reunion. McCrumb was apparently never in fandom herself but did her homework. What I remember about the second novel is that one character was celebrated in fandom as a stellar fanzine publisher and personality (just the kind of person I admired as a fanzine reader), but McCrumb suggests he wasted his talents on trivialities, which is not something I have ever heard a fan admit.

Finally, I was wondering about your mention of *The Return of the Enchanted Duplicator*, and whether it is a sequel to *The Enchanted Duplicator*, the *Pilgrim's Progress* fannish parody by Walt Willis and Bob Shaw. Google's AI doesn't know about the Christopher Priest story, but mentions another sequel, *Beyond the Enchanted Duplicator*, by Willis and James White. By the way, Ted White's *Amazing* serialized *The Enchanted Duplicator* in the early 1970s, probably the most self-indulgently fannish thing White ever did in that magazine.

Ed: Ted White did a decent job with *Amazing* (other aspects of TW are more knotty) despite meagre resources. It was smallest of US sf mags, selling 15-20 000 copies, bottom of the barrel in the 1970s. Fast Forward to 2026: Analog, F&SF and Asimov's are so in the pickle they don't reveal circulation but my AI says Analog sells well below 20 000, and that's the biggest one! These three have recently been taken over by one Steven Salpeter who hopes to save them. All printed media is in trouble, but the historically important, proud sf mags are near death. ■■ Yes they are Duplicator sequels. ■■

Jefferson Swycaffer: My idea about volcanoes is that they may release lots of CO2 that may cause warming. Of course, dust from them may cause cooling too. ■■ I believe a jump on a low gravity world would mean a lower terminal velocity and a slower build-up towards it.

Robert Jennings: Thanks for the Sherlock Holmes info. One of my earliest literary heroes. The game is afoot! ■■ Don't invest in crypto currency. It's fr too uncertain. ■■ I think AI may help us to find new antibiotics. ■■ The US national debt is worrying... my AI gives it as 125-135% of US GDP. Sweden's national debt is...33% of GDP (one of the lowest in the EU). ■■ I can't see Putin having any chance to win the war he started. Russian economy is going down fast. ■■ I think there's an underlying romantic view of nature in environmentalism. The greens tend to be anti-hitech. They are against the very cutting edge of science and tech. BTW, I'm in favour of some environment protection policies. Like no lead in gas is a super good thing. Avoid spilling oil into the sea, very good. Protect species that are becoming rare. Don't spill mercury around. Etc. ■■ I believe astronomical factors – the Sun carries a lot of weight – are behind climate trends, incl ice ages. ■■ I suspect Trump – if he can get out of his Iran war unscathed – will attack Cuba next. ■■ Small Modular Reactors are the latest. Several designs are such that they can't reach meltdown or explode due to built in physical factors (reactor explosions are due to hydrogen gas – not fission). ■■ This is what I have against masquerading (I have said it before). In my opinion, to have a healthy relation to a subject you must be able to step back a little and be able to study it from the outside. But when you dress up with clothes relating to it you do the opposite. You want to become a part of the subject and can no longer evaluate it. That's not having a healthy relation to it. You go too deep into something when you dress up in it. (The latest insanity are people who dress up like - and claim the are - animals. They call themselves "therians". I've seen reports about them that indicates they - or some - are clinically insane.) Another problem I have with cosplay – beside diving deep into a subject is unhealthy – is that the ambition of such people is to be a show off and attempt to catch as much attention as possible. I don't like when people do that.

Geoge Phillies: Found nothing needing comments, sorry!

Garth Spencer: I can understand that's difficult to keep track on what's happening international politics. Not only is Putin's war troubling to follow but most of all the leader of a federation of 50 states behave irrational... (My method to some grasp of all idiocy is to spend time on the net, eg Youtube.) ■■ Re: . A comment to someone... I think it is very valuable to try to digitise as much fandom history and fanzines as possible, simply because of fandom is a very interesting social phenomenon. Fandom is quite different from all other interest groups, so it's worth documenting.

Joseph Gill: You are more than welcome to this APA. It needs members and contributor!

Mark Nelsen: There seem to be something wrong with this N'APA PDF. Leafing through it I can't find the last contributions – but I find them when I do a separate search... ■■ Trump himself does his best to torpedo his reputation! ■■ I consider alternate history, e g *Fatherland*, being sf. It gives an alternate twist to history science.

Adrian Kresnak: Funds nothing needing comments, sorry.

Kevin Trainor: I still insist that training on material equals being inspired and is NOT covered by copyright. ■■ I didn't know about Suzanne Martel's *The City Under Ground*. I'd better look for it.

Samuel Lubell: About schools, it'd be right to at least stop this thing called "critical race theory" and drag queens reading stories. But most other things some want to interfere with in education could we skip. ■■ Codes of conduct tend to be repressive, so they must go! ■■ I'd be totally OK wit people refusing to take part in panels...

Henry Grynsten: I can only comment Henry form latest EAPA since he sent me his contrib separately. The OE somehow slipped distributing the miling it and I had no password. Sorry! (You must do better, Gath!) Sf-fans should not go to mental institutions, but be confined to cons... ■■ But Ahrvid Vs Henry is *extremely* exciting. It goes: It is/No, it isn't/it definitely IS!/No way: ISN'T/It is, I say/Isn't... ■■ Decaff is like bheer without C2H5OH. ■■ You haven't found consensus about consciousness. You just can't "look up" consensus. You need to follow a topic, determine what different people think and then make an evaluation of if there is consensus or not. I have followed AI development very much, you haven't. ■■ Your AI maths example dealt with observation not maths. Observing numbers wrong isn't a maths question. Your John Werner article, two years old (an eternity, considering), basically says AI used to be bad at advanced maths, but it's fixed. ■■ The temp taking and records are so *shaky* that claims of "record" high temperatures are meaningless. Any "record"



Froggy Gordon: Poop! **Lutor:** Ha-ha, at last at my mercy. The gun is loaded with micronite. / Froggy Gordon fell in the trap. He is helpless. (Glurp?) / **Lutor:** Cooperate with me. I need a top resource in scamming. You may be director's assistant.

claims are in the order of 0.1 of degrees, but most of all the measurements come from flip-flopping weather stations. The last century thousands of weather stations have been closed, moved, opened, changed instrumentation, been subject to the Urban Heat Island effect. A few years ago a volunteer project evaluated all US weather stations and found that more than 2/3rds of them were subject to artificial heating (a parking lot nearby, sitting near ACs, getting the city closer, etc). We speak of tiny changes and huge uncertainty around data. ■■ I'd be totally OK wit people refusing to take part in panels... ■■ No, extinctions has slowed down considerably at least for species we care about (mammals and birds). ■■ *I have certainly never claimed it's something mystical.* That it must be something mystical is inherent in your idea of that it can't be reproduced. If it's so, some mystical factor must be present. ■■ The expression "theory of consciousness" just means "this is consciousness". If we do it in a neural net, we cross the finish line. You don't need to know the inner details of it, just the general idea of what a neural net is and how it works in principle. ■■ No, I repeat: NNs mimic the brain. That's the whole point. ■■ *"People have compared the brain to the aqueduct system" for a long tie /long list follows/* But in the older examples they had no computing power. Now we do have computing power so emulating the brain becomes possible. ■■ *"Passenger pigeons were used as food"* I've analysed why they disappeared. The *only possible factor* is a bird pandemic. A virus or so hit the passenger pigeon. But my point isn't that those pigeons couldn't get a plague, the point is that **EVENTHOUGH** that happened nature didn't collapse. Everything went on as usual. ■■ *"We've already terraformed Terra so it's unrecognisable"* exaggeration, but the important point: nature is still around and works despite that we have affected it. ■■ *"Sure nature can come back after a million years."* No, we do something, nature just shrugs it off... ■■ *"/CO2/ driving acidification not seen for 300 million years."* We don't have reliable data to support such a claim. ■■ *"The IPCC rests on facts"* No, IPCC relies on the fashionable Zeitgeist, ignorance, begging the question and cherry picking. ■■ *"The IPCC's role is not to test a hypothesis"* You must ALWAYS question basics. ■■ /Regarding IPCC complete hypothesis 1-4/ "they are logically interrelated"- an interrelation meaning that if one falls, the hypothesis falls. ■■ *"PC organizes and evaluates how those pieces fit together to get the documents"* The data must be there, it isn't (you just say that IPCC analyse what would happen IF they had it...) ■■ *"Wildfires, floodings, droughts on an unprecedented scale is not normal weather"* A media illusion. They seek out dramatic events and thus give the impression they are more common. ■■ *"There is near-universal consensus (97-99.9%)"* And I have just shown it isn't true. It's the opposite: 97-99% DO NOT subscribe to 1 and 2 and 3 and 4. ■■ *Feedbacks are not speculative.*

The way Club of Rome wandered totally astray, was by running a totally feedback-related system, on their toy computers, ie 1960s standard. ■■ *"errors can't all point the same way"* In twisted Zeitgeist thinking, they are virtually bound to point the same way. ■■ *"It is virtually impossible for a glacier to withdraw without any melting occurring"* no, that's quite possible by sublimation, where WIND affects the water molecules and causes evaporation ■■ *"the need to grow food is driving it"* The point is that it leads to dryer air which makes evaporation faster. ■■ *"When you correct that underreporting, you still get a rising temperature"* They haven't corrected the underreporting ■■ *"temperature, and the reporting of it, has been rising steadily ever since"* Data is shaky. The fact is that Putin-Russia is just as lousy with data as the old USSR. ■■ /NASAs budget/ "was huge" only compared to donations in the tin can for coffee money. Compared to everything else in US national it was teeny-weeny. ■■ *"For metaphysical things like security, neighbourly cooperation, creating a community spirit etc"* What I want to point to is that this isn't the ONLY reason why space projects are good. There are many. I'll cover thus in this issue. ■■ AE: You can usually trust IBM, but not YOU cherry picking from them. HG: Oh, so you can trust IBM, but if you quote one specific thing they said, then it becomes false?" the point here is I don't question IBMs trustworthiness. IO question YOUR trustworthiness. ■■ "Computer development is not = ICs exclusively." No, it's almost only ICs that matters. ■■ *"ICs for radar, communication devices, and guidance and computing systems"*. No, such things 1) don't need any specially advanced ICs and 2) couldn't survive EMPs. That it works for ICMBs is due to that they must be used before any EMP. ■■ *"heard of intelligence agencies and analytics?"* But it was extremely difficult to penetrate USSR secrecy! Very, very difficult! Example: before the first spy satellites the Americans thought USSR had hundreds of ICMBs – there was a big debate about the "missile gap". When satellites came around, it showed they had substantially less than 100 rockets ■■ *"KNEW that the Soviets would be first into space? If they missed the Sputnik."* An effect of that USSR had hard security. ■■ HG doubts *"The fact is that easy gains by USSR in space was also an effect of too crude technology.* But it's simple: the early USSR atomic bombs were crude and heavy, copies of Fat Boy stolen by spies. So they had to make rockets that had high lifting capacity. ■■ *"they were so backward that they were first?"* Eh, the US was first on the A-bomb. They would have beaten Sputnik if they had let von Braun do it. A couple of years before Sputnik he pestered the government about letting him launch a satellite, but they refused. ■■ "weren't even computers" I just wanted to indicate they were primitive. ■■ *"I also have a general knowledge of science and common sense."* I think I have more of it. Have you been reading science all your life? How many science university science courses have you taken? I've worked as popular science and technical reporter for a long time. You haven't done any of this. ■■ *"Scientists checking papers are definitely more reliable"* So called peer-review is still only fumbling checking, a glorified proof reading. ■■ *"Our food production is vulnerable"* I just showed in *Intermission* that Swedish food production is way, way much higher than needed. ■■ *"The soil in Greenland was absolutely shallow and nutrient-poor"* But it was so CONSTANTLY, so it didn't degrade it stayed the same. ■■ *Time to sign off. Try a LoC. Tell if you have something on skiffy and the Moon! And don't forget: Keep calm and carry on! Cheers!*

С л а в а У к р а и н е !

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 281

by Jefferson P. Swycaffer
P.O. Box 15373
San Diego CA 92175

(619) 208-2181
abontides@gmail.com

10 May 2026

Comments:

Cover: Public Domain fantasy art.

Ahrvid Engholm: Delightful Jules Verne pastiche! Saucy and insightful, and, like most Verne, a little behind the very times he endeavors to be ahead of! The real Verne's "Paris in the Twenty First Century" is a fascinating combination of hits and misses, predicting personal computers, for instance...and seeing them the size of pianos! It could have happened that way!

Fascinating article on brain-chemistry as it varies with exposure to dramatic narrative!

History did not end, Mr. Fukuyama! But I adhere to the "Weak Fukuyama Principle," which is that history has slowed and paused. How long has it been since national borders shifted in a really large way? A big part of this is due to nuclear weapons, making total dominance in warfare impossible. The current Russia/Ukraine war is a weird aberration, which history does not call far!

Robert Jennings: I actually agree with you, re the Downey "Sherlock Holmes" movie. It really didn't have the Holmes magic



for me. The sequel was, in my opinion, even worse: I spent the entire movie trying to figure out what was going on. I was wholly at sea. Jeremy Brett remains the ne plus ultra of Holmes interpreters!

Correct me, agreement that Old Time Radio is different from Audiobooks -- and I enjoy the former quite a bit, whereas the latter leaves me largely uninterested. My sister an audiobook reader, donating her tapes to a local charity.

Correct Mark Nelson, I love the idea of resurrecting extinct species. I view it as a complete waste of money and resources -- and I want it to happen anyway! I guess this is mostly a "fannish" kind of emotional response. I want to see a mammoth! I want to see a Dodo and a Saber-toothed Cat! I'm a zoo-nut, and I see this as a good fund-raiser for serious zoos. Also, the technology may be an asset in the battle against extinction.

"Sammy Squirrel meets the Stump Grinder" has a lot of promise as a children's book!

Ahrvid Engholm: Interesting bio of Degler and Starlife, souls of whom I had never before heard!

Very nice self-description of Microsoft's Copilot! So far, Copilot is the only AI that I've played with, asking it to generate fantasy images.

I agree with your summary of AI “training.” I have friends who insist that AI “steals” content, but, of course, if that were so, the lawsuits against AI would have shut it all down long ago. AI takes up motifs. No one can copyright a cliché, and no one can copyright a trope. AI is a threat to artists, to be sure: it can create a picture in only seconds that an artist would spend a day or a week creating. AI is also a big threat to job specialties such as proofreaders and copy editors. And data-entry clerks, one of whom I am!

George Phillis: I love that you will be writing Telzey books! The style is a very good match!

re insurers paying to rebuild Tokyo, this is a big problem in superhero comics. Even if we discount the really big events, like World War Hulk, just the small day-to-day damage done by Spider-Man and his low-entropy ilk would spike insurance rates in NYC to infeasible limits. It would become impossible for anyone to open a mom-and-pop store in the city. Of course, in real life, NYC is mighty darn expensive. And here in California, wildfires are doing Hulk-level damage, and causing insurers to collapse. (I’ve always had a soft spot in my heart for insurance. It’s a form of socialism that’s so useful, the free market invented it!)

Fun first few pages of the new Telzey story! This jumps right into power and persecution, themes you handle extremely well!

Garth Spencer: Life is an immense put-on! Grin! I can certainly share the emotion. Life is too weird for anyone at all human to be scripting it. I think dice may be involved...

re Kevin Trainor Jr., good point that nearly any system of government or leadership could work, given enough solidarity behind it. Good old-fashioned Soviet Communism would have worked just fine...if there were no dissidents. (Also, it would have worked a lot better with a lot less outright corruption...) Even Anarchism would work...if everyone agreed.

Joseph P. Gill: You sound like a real fan to me! Bummer that you’ve largely stopped reading, as there is a LOT of truly GREAT stuff out there! Also tons of drivel, but that’s what book review zines are for. And, yes, definitely RPGing is part of fandom! That’s something I have given up, alas, for lack of a cadre of players and refs. I used to be a very active gamer, and I sold a lot of material to Dragon magazine, back in the day.

Fun “Kith and Kin” comic strip! And, yeah, we “waste” a lot of our purchases!

re What is a Person, I well remember “Little Fuzzy,” and I, too, found the definition wanting...yet it’s hard to do better. Instead of “uses fire,” perhaps “uses tools” would serve. “Talking” is important, but “having a memory” is vital. And having the ability to envision and imagine is central to human-style sapience. We can make plans in advance; without that, I misdoubt a species can be sapient.

Mark Nelson: I was lucky; I got to go to college without knowing any Calculus. My high school didn’t even teach pre-calc. I went on to be a math major, and got into some fairly advanced classes. I ended up bogging down and dropping out. (My college ripped me off: they stopped offering the one class I needed to graduate, and they would not concede anything to my situation. Ugly.)

re me, I’m an inclusionist, and define “science fiction” very broadly. Also fandom.

re Kevin Trainor Jr., I try to de-emphasize politics in my NAPA contributions. I partake now and then, but kinda prefer not to. I often agree with Ahrvid, although he is more emphatic about such matters than I would be. He’s a forte, and I’m a piano... My mama always said, don’t discuss sex, religion, or politics. Such is wisdom!

ret Samuel Lubell, much agreement. I prefer stand-alone fiction rather than series fiction. I am fond of the in-between form of series, where each contribution in the series stands on its own, and the order of reading doesn't matter. Take the original Sherlock Holmes series. I have read a LOT of Sherlock Holmes pastiche, and love that stuff to madness!

Adrian Kresnak: Fun visit to Washington D.C.! That's a pilgrimage I will never undertake, so it's fun to read reports from folks who have! Nifty photo of the Hope Diamond and crystals. I'm sorry to learn that the framing documents are starting to fade, but, as Yoda would say, when two-hundred-and-fifty-years old are we, look so good we will not!

Kevin Trainor Jr.: I hope tax season picked up for you. I'm griping at the IRS because I told them I wanted to receive my refund via a check...and they tried to direct-deposit it anyway, even though I never gave them my bank account number! Now those bums are sitting on my refund. I suppose I could reduce my withholding and get it back that way...

Aye, The Punisher is a bit more interesting than Mack Bolan, in part simply by living in a much more complex background universe. You can have fun meet-ups with The Punisher, Spider-Man, Daredevil, and so on, which The Executioner could not go into. The moral depths are more complex.

Valid and good notion of restricting conscription to more local units, thus better preserving the contact between the military and the community. One of the ugly things the Roman Empire specialized in was sending troops from one province to duty in a distant province, thus destroying the sense of community. The troops were "outsiders" and thus more hated and feared. Oh, those fun-loving Romans...

ret Mark Nelson, I, too, consider History to be both an art and a science. One "scientific" thing that works in history is to come up with an hypothesis on why a particular event occurred, and subject that notion to open criticism of other historians. It's a recognizable variant of the Scientific Method.

Samuel Lubell: Total agreement with your opening essay.

ret Robert Jennings, re X-Men comics, and comics in general, re continuity, alas, Marvel and DC gave up any pretense at "continuity" decades ago. There is a canon (and many comics that are published are non-canonical!) but there is no continuity. It is impossible to construct a Spider-Man timeline, other than listing events in publication order. Of course, one reason for this is that comics like to yank the rug out from under the reader's feet, changing the past. Possibly the most grotesque instance of this is how Steve Rodgers, Captain America, was always working for Hydra, all along, and keeping it secret. This hideous and much-hated revision was, itself, revised away, in large part due to fan outrage. But it's an indication of why timelines are impossible: tomorrow's yesterday may be completely different from today's!

I May Need to See A Lawyer

I live with a roommate, who hasn't paid a dime toward the rent in over five years. That's actually okay. I am not asking for rent. She lost her job even before Covid, and she is handicapped (but not disabled) and so finding a job is rough.

No, the problem is that my roomie is a "bag lady," a hoarder, who collects stuff and accumulates mounds and mounds of bags full of her private junk. For more than a year, it has been impossible for me to get into my library.

I gave her an ultimatum. Clean the place up by the end of June, or face eviction. At this point in time, there has been zero progress toward cleaning up.

So...come July...I will visit a lawyer and find out how to go about getting rid of my roomie. I'm frankly afraid, as she might be mentally ill enough to go on a rampage, close to moving-out day, or even set fire to the apartment. I'm afraid of what might happen.

(My plan is to set an eviction date, and then say nothing further, then, on E+1, simply wait till she is away and change the locks. This will lead to a screaming fit and a visit from the police. Joy to the world...)

Follow-Up to the Above

Nope. I can't do it. I am not a good man, but I'm not able to muster the inner harshness, the discipline, the sternness, the bitterness, to do what needs to be done. I will roll over and let my roomie walk over me, and tolerate the status quo. Again, it isn't really about the rent; it's about the intolerable clutter. I will nag her endlessly, making her life a bit of a hell, and we'll end up fighting a lot. No hitting. No police. Unpleasant, but a man's gotta know his limitations.

MOZIAG #2

Moziag is Joseph P. Gill's apazine for the pages of N'APA.

snowgen@gmail.com

Bionatter

As I said last ish, N'APA is my fourth APA. I have always found that the second zine is the hardest. I have put myself out there, but it's been too soon to get any mailing comments. Do they hate me? Did I commit some faux pas? Am I about to do it again?

The temptation to skip the issue is real.

Apples & Trees

My middle child received her doctorate this past month. Her dissertation was "The Use of Table Top Role Playing Games in a Therapeutic Setting: An Exploration of Adlerian Play Therapy for Pre-Adolescent Youth and the Exploration of Self."

Made me proud.

I attended her graduation in Lexington, Kentucky. I had a few free days, so I hit up some of the sights. One of the more interesting one was The Ark En-

counter. This is a "life size" reproduction of Noah's Ark from Genesis.

I am not a Young Earth Creationist, but I am a self-proclaimed progressive. One of the tenets of progressiveness that I learned from Captain Kirk and crew was respect for the beliefs of other regardless if I believe them.

I was struck by the constancy by their arguments. It might surprise you how supportive they are of evolution. They just believe that evolution was a post-diluvian process. In their view, Noah had to carry only a single pair of "proto-Bears" that then allowed all the bears we know today to evolve.

I didn't walk away convinced—but that was never my goal anyway. As an engineering/art piece and as a glimpse into the minds of some fellow earth-dwellers, it was interesting. 🍷

Quote of the Issue

AI is the new High Fructose Corn Syrup. It's in everything, will be in everything, and good luck finding stuff not polluted by it.

—Ray Otus

An Argument for MAXAC

I almost called this section “how to lose friends and annoy people,” because I think I’m about to do exactly that.

In the days of print apae maxac served an important function: it kept mailing costs down. It’s a logical conclusion, then, that if an apa goes electronic then it doesn’t need a maxac.

I disagree.

Maxac, you see, had another function that no one noticed at the time: it prevented a minority of members from monopolizing the readers’ attention.

N’APA #281 had ten contributors. Discounting the cover and OO there were 140 pages of content, over half of which were by just two contributors. The median contribution was 6.5 pages, and the largest was eight times that number.

Does anyone really deserve *eight times* the attention I give to everyone else? I imagine the answer changes from person to person. In my opinion, though, they don’t.

I also feel that maxac had a tertiary function: intentionality. Mark Twain is famously quoted as writing “I didn’t have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead.” Writing within constraints

takes time and effort. The author needs to weigh each section to determine if it’s important enough to justify the space. In the absence of the constraint, some people simply don’t make the effort.

In fact we see page upon page of off-topic and unoriginal content. I don’t mean “unoriginal” as a value judgment, but literally the wholesale presentation of other people’s work. One contributor reprinted a Verne story in its entirety, while another reprinted a dozen or so comic strips written (and copyrighted) by syndicated cartoonists. I know I’m a bit radical, but I joined a fannish apa to engage with fellow fen about fannish topics.

Maybe I’m the only one who feels this way. Maybe there are also others who haven’t said anything. Maybe it’s been said before I joined. I don’t know.

I do know—or rather, I think—that bringing a maxac to N’APA would do good.

This is, of course, just a suggestion. I’m the new guy, and my word isn’t law. I won’t throw a tantrum if I don’t get my way. It would be a jerk move for me to join a new group and *demand* that they change to meet my preferences.

I will, though, institute a “personal MAXAC.” I reserve the right to skip your zine if it’s too long. ✨

Cubiculum Spectandi et Legendi

Each title has two ratings. The one before the slash is my rating and the one after is Valerie's. From best to worst the ratings are *Superb, Great, Good, Fair, Mediocre, Poor, Terrible*. We might use a "-Plus" to mean that it was almost the next tier up, or a "-Minus" to mean that we almost rated it at the next tier down.

The Enternaut (Netflix Argentina. Season 1. 6 Episodes): This is a post-apoc without the undead. The story opens with a mysterious snowfall that kills everyone outside. Well done, with typical post-apoc fare. It ends with no resolution and no promise of a second season, so I'm bumping my rating down a half-step. Fair-Minus/Fair.

The Great Flood (Netflix Korea. Movie.): It's a high-concept sci-fi piece that opens as a disaster film with a twist. If I have any complaint it's that they repeat the same "gag" a too many times for my taste, but Valerie disagrees. Good-Minus/Good.

Starfleet Academy (Paramount+. Series. 10 Episodes.) If you've been in a relationship you know that there are "her shows" that he watches for her, and "his shows" that she watches for him. There's also the shows that they both enjoy. The there are shows like this, where we both watch it for different reasons. I watch because it's Trek; she watches because it's all that Dawson's Creek teen angst. As Trek this was ok... I would slot near the bottom of the Treks though. Part of the problem is that it's set in the Discovery's post-Burn 32nd Century, and I just don't like that universe. The show has already been renewed... and cancelled. They're going to release Season 2, but they've already decided against a third. Mediocre/Good-Plus.

War Machine (Netflix movie): Wikipedia calls this one a "military science fiction action film." Yep, all those boxes are checked. This is just a fun bang-bang, boom-boom movie that isn't pretending to be more. No complaints. Good/Mediocre.

All the below are short stories that appeared in the January/February 2026 issue of Analog Science Fiction & Fact magazine. I found it interesting that every story (with one exception) was told in first person narration. Also they were all fairly hard SF (with 2 exceptions).

Artificial Cupidity (Hayden Trenholm): The core idea of the story is "what if a malfunctioning AI were President of the United States." It largely seems to serve as a platform for the author to comment on modern political lightning rods, about as gracefully as *Mickey 17* did. There was kind of a plot, but I didn't really care. The premise was Good while the execution was Mediocre.

Jiggity Jog (Don Mark Baldrige): This appeared in the "Probability Zero" section of the magazine—that means that this is very soft science fiction. That's ok, though. What's not okay is that this is a story without a plot. Is that possible? Let's say it doesn't have a traditional plot. Let's say that Freytag's pyramid was more like Freytag's level plane. The core idea—a group of humans uplift humanity itself through time travel—is Superb. That has a ton of story potential, but instead we get what amounts to someone saying "I gave roller skates to the Inca." No rising action. No climax. Just narrative. I'll rate this one Fair-minus.

Salary Man (Matt McHugh): This is another one that leveled out Freytag's pyramid. I'm getting the

impression that *Analog* is more about the idea than the story. The story is about an insurance adjuster/customer service agent who handles the account for a lunar colony. That sounded more exciting than the story was. I'm rating this one Mediocre.

Still Cold, Still Losing Air (Sean Monaghan):

This is a "20 harrowing minutes of life on a mars colony" story. Monaghan knows how to make the pyramid! He has a clear intro, an inciting incident, a climax, and denouement. The protagonist is likable, and I was really invested in the outcome. This was a superb story.

You Who Sought the Stars' Distant Light (Stewart C. Baker): Although this wasn't in the Probability Zero section, I found this story to be soft science fiction. Having said that, I enjoyed it. I would say it was my second favorite read in the issue. The basic plot reminded me of a 1988 story-line from Chuck Dixon's *Evangeline* comic series, in a good way. Much of the story is actually told in a second person narration. I love this for the petty reason that my junior high English teacher once said that "there was no such thing as second person narration because that would be impossible." Take that, Mrs. Adler! Beyond that, this story also had the beats that obeyed traditional dramatic structure. Great-minus. ❄️

Today is the Tomorrow of Yesterday

George sat in front of R.U.D.I.'s blinkenlights, pressing the big red button until he couldn't take it anymore. "My button pressing finger aches, R.U.D.I.," he said to the computer. "I'm going to take a break."

The very second George finished his sentence, his boss's scowling face filled the Visaphone. "Stop wasting time, Jetson! I have a task for you."

Instead of rolling his eyes, George feigned a junior executive smile. "Yes, Mr. Spacely! Anything you want, sir!"

"That competitive threat analysis presentation that you gave about Cogswell's Cogs was excellent, Jetson. I need to brief the board. Put together the information you presented and send it to me!"

"Not a problem, sir! I have my bullet points right here. I'll send them your way!"

Mr. Spacely's scowl became somehow scowlier. "Stop looking for the easy way out, Jetson! I want a hundred

page report on my desk by morning! Do you hear me! By morning!"

"A hundred pages by morning? That's not possi..." George stopped talking. Mr. Spacely has already disconnected the call.

George thought about the impossible task before him, and he looked at R.U.D.I. He had at his disposal one of the most powerful AI's ever invented. Why should he think when she could think for him? "R.U.D.I: Write a 100-page report based on these bullet points."

The next morning Mr. Spacely was pleased to see the report on his desk. Jetson came through again, though he would never tell him that.

Mr. Spacely skimmed the report. It was a lot to read. Then he had an idea. He turned to his executive robot. "Uniblax: Condense this report to bullet points!"

Note: I am sure that this scenario plays out everyday in the modern workplace. While it never actually appeared on The Jetsons, I think it could have. ❄️

Catspaw

Last issue, I mentioned that my first-ever zine (back in 1984) contained a poem named “Return of the King.” This is that poem. It is the second poem I ever wrote, now presented here for my second zine in N’APA.

Despite the title, it has nothing to do with Tolkien. It was written as a prophecy for the player characters of my AD&D game to hear. One player was the “white king,” and another player was the “blue mage.” The prophecy is about the white king’s attempt to regain his throne from the usurping black king.

It was written by teenaged me, and I see so many problems with it.

Return of the King

by J.W. Snowgen

An army rides from the north; The King returns! Angelica shines forth; The frost burns. The King comes again! Not all is lost. The sun shines again, Thus ends the frost. An army defends Schlöven-nark. The king ruling; His sword shines dark, The frost grueling. The king usurped our shore; All was lost. The sun shone no more— The coming of the frost.	White sword strikes black sword: Sparks fly! Black Lord strikes White Lord: One shall die! Orange meets Blue; Spell is spoken. Old is new. Staff is broken. Power is free. Death awaits. Wisdom holds the key Of closing gates. The king is dead! Long live the King! The evil has fled! The land shall sing!	An army flees; A battle ended. A warm blowing breeze— Wounds to be mended. The King has come again, Once more crowned. The sun shines again, Honours the downed. A bard sings a mournful lay. Proud men cry. Sorrow shrouds a joyous day. Still the heroes die. Death lies about; So comes the dawn To shatter doubts Of heroes gone. Lives won by rage; Death’s bells ring— Honour the Mage. The Return of the King!
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Mailing Comments

Cover

41 6e 20 41 49 20 67 65 6e 65 72 61 74 65 64 20 63 6f
76 65 72 20 64 6f 65 73 6e 27 74 20 64 65 73 65 72 76
65 20 61 20 68 75 6d 61 6e 20 72 65 61 64 61 62 6c 65
20 63 6f 6d 6d 65 6e 74 2e

Do we accept member submissions for cover art? If so I'd like to volunteer to do one. It will be 100% uglier, but 100% more human.

Ahrvid Engholm

I wish your zine(s) had page numbers.

Re The Brain's Dramaturgy: I read this section with interest. I was wondering if I would see my own pet theory in there, but sadly I did not. For years I have thought that Freytag's Pyramid not only describes the "perfect" story structure, but it also describes the typical sexual encounter: Exposition are those first kisses, getting each other's mood, followed by the self-explanatory Rising Action and Climax, with Falling Action being "cuddle time" before the couple moves on to the Dénouement of blissfully falling asleep, or getting dressed to face the rest of the day with a smile on their faces. It's a natural rhythm that we're programmed to follow.

Re the rest: tl;dr.

Jefferson P. Swycaffer

Re leaving the writers exchange group: I found myself very curious how many times "one too many" was. If the number was very low, you sound intolerant to those who believe differently than you do; if the number is high then it seems less about her belief and more that she was hijacking a

meeting about writing to evangelize, and (regardless of the nature of the hijacking) that's just rude.

Re AI: I like to write. I enjoy the process. I enjoy seeing the finished product that was the work of my brain. The idea of using an AI to write on my behalf is anathema to me. A friend of mine is wonderfully creative, reads perfectly, but suffers from dysgraphia; AI writing tools are a godsend for him. In my first issue I wrote about my use of Suno for musical composition, which I don't think is evil. If I were going commercial with them, that would be (IMHO) problematic. I read somewhere that one of the reasons that *MF&SF* isn't accepting new submissions is because they were buried in AI slop.

All that's to say, I would have turned off that feature, too.

Robert Jennings

25 pages? tl;dr.

But I scanned.

I skipped everything that was just you reprinting other people's work. I skipped mailing comments because they're about conversations that started before I joined.

That left a dad joke, and an essay about Sherlock Holmes.

And that made me wonder: could Doyle's original work be considered SF? Looking at it through a modern lens no one makes that leap. On the other hand, Doyle was effectively writing about what we now call criminal forensics when it was just speculative and emerging science. When we look at Doyle's full corpus (specifically *The Lost World*, *The*

Poison Belt, and the “Professor Challenger” series) we have to admit the Doyle was a genre author. Holmes is just a more grounded example.

George Phillies

Re editorship of more of our zines to other members: I’m tempted to volunteer to take *A Gentle Stroll*. Of course I need to join it first. I meant to for the previous issue but travel got in the way.

Re An APA is a type of fanzine: I share your opinion, though I might pick a nit and say that an APA is a fanzine anthology.

Re *Telzey Amberdon Rises from the Dead*: I skipped this for no other reason than I don’t want to read a serial. When the full thing is done I will certainly read it. I was going to opine that my patience has probably been destroyed by the binge-watching era. My wife and I won’t even start to watch a show unless the full season is already released. But I as I think on it, but anti-serial stance predates streaming. I never watched the Peter Jackson LOTR movies because I refused to watch a third of a story and wait a year. I guess that I find something almost sacred about “the whole” that is defiled by “the dribble.” I’ll file it under “annoying personal failing.”

Garth Spencer

Re “a more efficient means than hand-coding everything in HTML”: Markdown was specifically developed to be a human friendly “source code” that’s intended to be “compiled” to HTML. AsciiDoc is even better, but it’s not as widely supported. Really though, I think the solution is to put your content in a wiki—there are many to choose from. It’ll let you concentrate on content over format.

Ooo. I just typed “it’ll.” I don’t do that often. It’s kind of fun. It’ll. It’ll. It’ll.

Sorry.

Mark Nelson.

This is the first RAEBNC I’m giving in N’APA. It feels like a personal failure, but I truly feel I don’t have any meaningful comments. Sorry.

Adrian Kresnak

I’ve been meaning to ask: What does R.A.I.L. stand for? Every time I see it I’m reminded of an entry in Franson’s *Key for RAILS*. That entry reads “Rochester Area Imaginative Literature Society. Fan club in Rochester, N.Y.” That haunts me, because I live in Rochester and I’ve never heard of this club. I want to know if it still exists. But *Key* was written over six decades ago, so who knows?

You mention the upcoming 250th Anniversary of the signing of the American Declaration of Independence. Just a couple weeks ago (as I write this) was Rhode Island’s 250th of their own declaration. The Act of Renunciation was passed by unanimous vote on May 4, 1776, two month before the rest.

Every see those episodes of *Trek* where Chekov talks about Shakespeare in the original Russian? I’m kinda like that with Rhode Island.

Fun fact: My childhood home and grade school were on the pre-war estate of General Nathanael Greene.

It sounds like you had a nice trip to D.C.!

For some reason that I can't explain, every time I read your name my brain crosses it with John Titor, the turn of the century chrononaut.

Despite having lived in Texas for over a decade, I have never been to a Waffle House. I vowed that I would eat at one during my Kentucky trip, but I got distracted by Raising Cain's and Fazoli's.

Re The True Story Behind the Firefly Announcement: That's a show I never got into. Not sure why. I remembering watching the first aired episode and being disappointed, so I never bothered with any others. I went to see the movie when it came out, but it relied too much on being familiar with the show, so I have no idea what was happening.

I love that you included an April Fool's joke in your zine. I wish more people would. I'm talking to myself there.

Wrapping Up

The calendar tells me to stop writing, so I must obey.

I am pleased that I got to coin "postdiluvian" and "scowlier." I also got to type "it'll." Simple pleasures.

I'm looking forward to reading the next issue. I hope everyone has a pleasant life, and I'll see you next time! ✨

Brandy Hall Issue 18 (May 2026)

Brandy Hall 18 is produced for *N'APA* mailing 282 (March 2026) by Mark Nelson.

Mark Nelson, School of Mathematics and Applied Statistics, The University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW 2522, AUSTRALIA. E-mail: nelsonmark07@gmail.com

This is West Riding Press Publications ??? This is West Riding Press Publications (Australia) 48.

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). In *Brandy Hall* 16 & 17 I looked at the use of the word `fanzine' in *The Times* in 1990 & 1991.

Editorial. I haven't done what I'd planned to do in this issue. The reason, ultimately, is lack of time — though there are two main causes of that lack of time.

Firstly, at the end of April I was asked to do some marking. I can't say I'd missed it. I certainly wasn't pining for it. It's not as though marking is so well paid that I was clamouring to be given some.

Still, I can't sneer at the money I earned for twenty-three hours of marking. I'd provisionally earmarked the income to help cover my incessant demand for books, records and CDs. Then my wife pointed out that if I marked four assignments over the course of the academic year, I'd have enough money to take her and our son on a "nice" holiday. (A nice holiday in Australia — marking doesn't pay enough to fly a family of three out of Australia!)

Secondly, I've been ill for the two weeks preceding the deadline. The first week I was suffering from a seasonal illness. (May, of course, is Autumn in Australia.) On Friday 8th May I visited my GP to have the flu vaccine. There was some discussion as to whether I should have the shot, since I was not 100%. However, as I said I was on an upwards trend and didn't have a fever it was decided that it was OK to have the injection. It didn't take long for me to start on a downward trajectory, probably with a flu-like virus. There was a symptom that I don't recall experiencing before. I was mentally active in the morning, but by early afternoon I was tired and had to have a nap. After waking up I still felt drained for the rest of the day, with little energy for much of anything.

The use of the word 'fanzine' in The Times: Part Four

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	11	1991	17	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 number from 1990 has been decreased from 12 to 11, as there were two citations to the same article).

The use of the word fanzine from 1958 to 1989 was discussed in *Brandy Hall* 14. The uses in 1990 and 1991 was discussed in *Brandy Hall* 16 & 17 respectively

The use of the word fanzine: 1992

(I haven't done any work on this. Hopefully it will appear next issue.)

The Mathom House

MOZIAG #1 (Joseph P. Gill)

Welcome to *NAPA*! You asked the question as to whether “table-top RPG” is the “*real fandom?*” I’m sure that it’s the real fandom to people who are active in it and no other fandom; isn’t that all that counts? Is it part of SF fandom? Maybe not, but does that matter? You ask “*Am I worthy enough to be here?*” The fact that you’re here means that your “worthy enough to be here”, so you’ve answered your own question.

When I was first starting The Anchorite, my teaser announcement was just a link to an online version of Donald Franson’s A Key to the Terminology of Science Fiction Fandom. While writing my latest contrib for that APA, I needed to look up “quasi-quote” to make sure I was explaining it correctly to the young’uns. While searching for it, I stumbled upon an actual 1962 physical copy on AbeBooks!

I didn’t know the name Donald Franson, so I looked him up on F3. He was very active in the N3F, even being president three times (1963, 1964, and 1968). Amongst many other things he did for the organisation, he was a long-running editor of *The National Fantasy Fan*.

According to F3 his *A Key to the Terminology of S-F Fandom* was published in 1962 as a N3F Handbook. Again according to F3 the N3F published eight numbered Handbooks, the last co-authored by George Phillis. I wonder if the N3F has a complete collection of these handbooks?

We haven’t watched *Pluribus*. It’s received good reviews, so I’m sure that we’ll watch it at some point. A few days ago we watched the first episode of *For All Mankind*. After 18 minutes my wife said that it was “boring” and after 29 minutes she left “to do some work”. I not only watched the first episode, but I also watched the second. I like the combination of things that really happened in the context in which they happened, things that really happened in a different context to which they happened, and things that did not happen but might have happened. Might be a challenge to watch episodes, as we prefer to watch the same program.

The prompt was, of course, inspired by H. Beam Piper’s Little Fuzzy, which is my favorite genre novel of all time.

I haven’t read this. Neither did I know about it. It sounds interesting! Let me add it to the list of novels that I want to read, but probably will never read because there’s too many novels on the list. Your account of the plot put me in mind of the ST:ToS episode *The Devil in the Dark*. Just a coincidence or was the latter inspired by the former? I guess we will never know. From Wikipedia I learnt that *The Devil in the Dark* saw the first appearance of Doctor McCoy’s catchphrase, “I’m a doctor, not a...”. Furthermore, William Shatner “wrote in his memoirs that “*The Devil in the Dark*” was his favorite original *Star Trek* episode”.

Ryct Robert Jennings

As demonstrated in my Catspaw section, I write bad poetry. I also wrote bad song lyrics. Suno lets me upload an audio file of me singing my own lyrics (out of tune an all) but it figures out the melody I was going for and puts it to music with a fake voice so I can hear what it would really sound like without hiring musicians.

That's a cool piece of software.

Ryct Samuel Lubell

I always bristle internally when someone says they "read" a book when they really listened to someone else read it. In my opinion it's a lesser experience, but I know that's completely subjective. I never judge out loud. I try to be accepting.

When I lived in the UK there were several radio programs I listened to on BBC Radio 4 which adapted novels/texts for broadcast. It's never occurred to me to claim that I've read a novel based upon listening to a radio adaptation. OTOH, these adaptations are abridged; that's not the same experience as listening to someone reading the entirety of a novel. I agree with you that it's not the same experience as reading a text.

You say that Tolkien is the "best" example of the "chopped up long story." I would argue that Jordan's Wheel of Time is the "worst."

One of our friends is a huge fan of *The Wheel of Time*. However, nothing he has ever said has made me even slightly want to read the series. It's just too long.

Intermission #163 (Ahrvid Engholm)

Sorry, due to my illness I haven't time to read this contribution. I'll send you a loc on it.

Brownian Motion 18 (Garth Spencer)

Re your comment to me: it dawned on me that the monthly schedule of eAPA was off-putting for you, because it appeared to ask for monthly submissions. What if that is neither implied nor inferred?

An important part of being in an apa is providing mailing comments. If I were in an apa with monthly mailings then I'd feel obliged to provide monthly mailing comments. I don't have the spare time to write a monthly apazine. I suppose I could make a contribution every-other-month, but what's the point in joining a monthly apa if you only contribute every other month? (I'd like to use the word bimonthly, but it's not well defined. Does it mean twice a month or once every two months?)

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm #1

I was not aware that any early attempts at weather control helped create the Dustbowl crisis of the 1930s; I thought that it was simply a natural drought.

I was under the impression that it was due to natural events, that were exacerbated by the farming methods. I don't believe it has much, if anything, to do with "weather control". Have you read *The Grapes of Wrath*? I've read zero Steinbeck. I have watched the 1940 movie which I have on DVD. I hope it's not a controversial opinion, but Steinbeck isn't on the list of authors that I feel I should read. (Because as a British citizen living in Australia I don't feel under any obligation to read the classics of American literature. I'd feel differently if I were living in America.)

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm #2

Maybe somebody knows what Donald Trump is going to do or say next; I don't.

I doubt that Donald knows what he is going to do or say next...

Ryct Robert Jennings

Contrary to your guess that there are probably "zillions" of fanzines, with some research on my part I only found about 30 in current circulation. Mind you, I was deliberately looking for English-language fanzines by, for and about SF fans, as I know fandom. That may be the limiting factor. I have not, as yet, tried to cover the kinds of zines that have appeared outside of SF fandom.

Some weeks ago I pasted a list of all fanzines that were distributed through e-fanzines in 2025. This is for a short project that I have in my mind. I want to identify in what year each fanzine editor produced their *first* fanzine. From such a list I'll identify who the 'newest' editors are.

Of the five (?) British postal diplomacy fanzines that still run, four of which are distributed by email, the newest to publishing a fanzine is Neil Duncan. Neil produced his first fanzine in something like 1992 (not sure exactly). There have been 'new' people who have produced fanzines since 1992, quite a number of them, but the zines have all folded and the editors faded away.

The Murthered Master Mage 280 (George Phillies)

After much work, I was able to track down the heir who owned the intellectual property of James Schmitz

I'd like to read more about the "After much work". How do you go about tracking down the person who owns the intellectual property?

Ryctm #1

However, I am accustomed to living in a country that has freedom of the press.

English libel laws are a disgrace and have been a disgrace forever. They are in dire need of revision.

Your current administration is not a fan of the freedom of the press. Could freedom of the press vanish from the USA? It doesn't seem inconceivable.

Ryctm #2

The notion of a bookstore that specializes in selling sports fanzines was a bit surprising. A circulation of 36,000 is still remarkable.

I have difficulty in accepting that a publication with a circulation of 36,000 is a fanzine. (*Locus* started as a fanzine, but was it really a fanzine every year it won the Hugo for Best Fanzine? Wasn't the decision to introduce a Hugo for Best Semiprozine recognition that it was no longer a fanzine?)

Ryct *Brownian Motion* (Garth Spencer)

Will Amazon cease to sell paperbacks?

I'd like to imagine that Amazon will continue selling paperbacks as long as they can make sufficient profit from selling them.

Ryct *R.A.I.L.* #10 (Adrian Kresnak)

And if you think money means little in SF, contemplate the insurers who keep rebuilding Tokyo and other coastal cities after a visit by the Big G, either of them.

This sounds like the premise for a story. If we live in a world where the Big G regularly visits Tokyo would insurers stop offering coverage? What would be the consequences? This is not an out-of-this-world idea.

In some parts of Australia, especially flood- and cyclone-prone regions, home insurance premiums have risen dramatically over the past several years; in some cases flood cover has become difficult to obtain at all. The main driver for this has been the increase in extreme weather events. This has led to a general increase in insurance premiums in areas that have suffered flooding. A related issue is that insurers have reclassified some areas as high risk when previously they were moderate risk. There have been reports in the press of house owners whose annual premiums have doubled or tripled in one year. There have been other reports of owners who can no longer afford flood insurance.

One of the problems (IMO) is that in some areas planning systems have failed. The following sequence of events are not unknown. In the 19th century certain land within the boundaries of a council were identified as flood plains. These areas were not used for housing, they might have been used for farm-

ing or grazing or market gardens or even industry. Since then there has been an ever increasing demand for land for housing. Some councils thought that as there hadn't been any floods in "recent years" the likelihood of flooding had been over-estimated and redesignated these areas as suitable for building domestic dwellings. Consequently, it's not uncommon to find housing estates built on land that was previously considered to be a flood plain. Guess what happens when there is torrential rain in such areas?

One problem, whisper it quietly, is that councillors do not understand the use of the term "1-in-100-year flood". Some councillors think it means that in a one hundred year period a flood can only occur once. It's therefore safe to build houses in an area where's there's only going to be a flood every hundred years. But the phrase should be interpreted as saying that there's a 1% chance of there being a flood every year. Furthermore, what I think the phrase "1-in-100 year flood" really means is that catastrophic flooding is a sufficiently rare event we don't have enough data to identify its likelihood.

And, of course, there's the issue as to whether we should be using a more pessimistic risk assessment due to climate change.

There's ongoing debate in Australia about what the Federal Government can do to help individuals living in high risk areas insure their property. What could the Japanese Government do if Tokyo becomes a high-risk insurance area due to regular visits from the Big G?

The Swamp Pot Sentinel 1.6 (Robert Jennings)

I enjoyed your article about Sherlock Holmes. I have very fond memories of watching the Rathbone movies as a child. There must have been a day/time when they were regularly shown on British TV. I haven't seen them for... more decades than I'd like to remember. As Rathbone was known for playing 'bad guys', why was he the only actor considered for the role of the Great Detective? I watched *Mr Holmes* (2015) at the movies and I've seen it a couple of times on TV. I really enjoyed it. I agree that it's an excellent addition to the portfolio of Sherlock Holmes productions.

Re: "*Prehistoric killer superbug discovered in 5,000-year-old ice is resistant to 10 modern antibiotics.*"

This sounds like a plot for an episode of the *X-Files*. You took this article from The Mail on line. Not the most reputable of sources...

Ryct *Archive Midwinter* (Jefferson Swycaffer)

Not all stf films from the twenties thru the late fifties were awful, but a lot of them certainly were.

Over the course of 2024 & ~2025 I worked my way through Sloan De Forest's (2018) book *TCM (Turner Classic Movies) MUST--SEE SCI-FI: 50 Movies that are Out of this World*. (Terrible title.) At some point I should try and write a review. These are the pre-1960 movies that made it to her list.

1902 A Trip to the Moon, 2011 restoration	# FRENCH	
1927 Metropolis, 2010 restoration	# GERMAN	# NOVEL
1931 Frankenstein		# NOVEL
1932 Island of Lost Souls		# NOVEL
1933 The Invisible Man		# NOVEL
1936 Things to Come	# BRITISH	# NOVEL
1951 The Thing from Another World		# NOVELLA
1951 The Day the Earth Stood Still		# SHORT-STORY
1953 It Came from Outer Space		
1953 The War of the Worlds		# NOVEL
1954 Them!		
1954 Gojira [Godzilla]	# JAPAN	
1954 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea		# NOVEL
1956 Forbidden Planet		# SHAKESPEARE
1956 Invasion of the Body Snatchers		# NOVEL
1957 The Incredible Shrinking Man		# NOVEL
1958 The Fly		# SHORT-STORY
1958 The Blob		

I was interested in the source material for each movie, I've noted that where I know it. I was also interested in which of the movies on her list were made outside the USA.

Ryctm

Feeding and caring for a huge woolly mammoth would be an enormous expense, even for a well funded zoo. Beyond proving that it could be done, what would be the point?

This was the central plot element in *The Tusks of Extinction* by Ray Nayler. I forget the reason why the Russian Government wanted to do this, perhaps it was partly to show the superiority of Russian science - they did it because they could do it. ChatGPT says that another reason given in the novella is "that reintroducing mammoths to Siberia could help restore the ancient mammoth-steppe ecosystem and slow the thawing of permafrost". It certainly is very expensive to have a herd of mammoths. The Russians defy some of these expensive by selling a very small number of permits to extremely rich individuals. That's right! The only way that the Russians can finance the resurrection of a species that humans hunted to extinction in the past is by allowing humans in the 'present' to hunt them.

Ryct *Samizdat* 35 (**Samuel Lubell**)

and why the Murderbot stories by Martha Wells continue to do so well.

Since the last issue of *Brandy Hall* a momentous event has taken place in our household. We now have access a commercial streaming service.

Last year we had to buy both a new laptop and a new i-Phone. Sianne uses her laptop for work. She needed to replace it as the battery recharging was becoming unreliable. My iPhone was old and tem-

peramental, a bit like its owner was my wife's view. The solution to was for Sianne to buy a new i-phone and for me to use her old one.

Both of these purchases came with a free three-month subscription to Apple-TV. Unfortunately, they could not be combined to provide a free six-month subscription. They each came with an expiry date by which they had to be started, and we recently activated one of them. For the next couple of months I will be paying particular attention to any movie/TV show that's mentioned in *NAPA* that's available Apple-TV.

One of the shows that we've watched in *Murderbot*. I was aware of this show because it has been mentioned several times in *ANZAPA*. Having watched, and enjoyed, the series it seemed logical to buy *The Murderbot Diaries Vol 1*. I quickly demolished it, so I bought *The Murderbot Diaries Vol 2*. I read through this at a similar rapid pace. Having read them they're now on the pile of books that I'm supposed to review... (Since writing this paragraph I've bought and read *The Murderbot Diaries Vol 3*.)

Ryct *Samizdat* 35 (Samuel Lubell) #2

I think HS grads would be better served by spending a year or two in real world employment...

Do suitable jobs exist for HS grads?

Archive Midwinter (Jefferson Swycaffer)

Ryctm

You say, "Good writing makes up for poor special effects. Good special effects can not make up for poor writing." Strangely enough, I hold the opposite view, specifically toward art in comic books. I believe that even the best writing cannot make up for bad comic book art, whereas very good art can make up for "poor" writing, if not necessarily for really crappy writing

I should have clarified that my comment only applies to film. In the long ago days when I had a comic addiction, which ended when I went to New Zealand in 1997, I was always much more interested in the story than the art. My appreciation of the art only started when I began to read magna.

RyctmGarth Spence

Now, I love ebooks! I have not read a physical book (codex) in maybe ten years. The comfort and convenience -- and low price -- of ebooks is just heavenly to me.

I haven't read an ebook. I appreciate that they're much easier to store than hardcopy books - we're in the process of buying two book cases, but I know that those are just going to be a temporary fix - and that they're much cheaper than hardcopy. Still, what can I say, I love reading a `real' book.

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm

You said, “Volcanoes have always been around so why haven’t they caused global warming?” Actually, volcanoes cause global cooling, by raising smoke clouds that block sunlight. Volcanic eruptions of large size are rare.

I’d forgotten about volcanic eruptions causing global cooling. Reading your words caused me to recall what I’d read about the 1883 eruption of Krakatoa. It’s estimated that this caused average world temperatures to decrease by approximately 0.5 to 1.0 °C for a year, with a disruption in weather patterns for several years afterwards.

R.A.I.L. #11 (Adrian Kresnak)

I’ve never been to Washington, and most likely never will. Still, I enjoyed reading about your very packed visit there. So many interesting museums. Oh no, another lawyer!

Intermission #164 (Ahrvid Engholm)

Due to circumstances outside my control... I haven’t had chance to read this issue. I will send you a loc when I am up to it.

Esmeralda County Line 15 (Kevin Trainor Jr)

Ryctm #1

*There is also Sam Moskowitz’ *The Immortal Storm*, which appears to be out of print but can be read on Google Books. Like the Knight and Warner books, it is (surprise, surprise) controversial, much like Sam himself.*

Yesterday I discovered, or perhaps rediscovered, that British fan historian Robert Hansen has written a book with the title: [*Challenging Moskowitz: 1930s Fandom Revisited*](#) (2019; expanded 2024). According to F3 “This collects early fans’ responses to *The Immortal Storm* and alternative views of that era.” In theory I’d like to read both of these, but learning about fandom in the 1930s is so far down the pecking list that in practice I doubt that I’ll ever read them. For starters, I’m much more interested in reading about the history of Australian and British fandom.

Ryctm #2

*I am amused that you recommended Horne's *The Price of Glory* to me; my library-bound copy is literally inches from my elbow. Horne's marvelous trilogy of the Franco-Prussian Wars is something I recommend to everyone who is interested in the World Wars that doesn't run away fast enough.*

Probably you recommended it to me in a prior exchange. I made a note of your recommendation, but not that you made it. Then I wrote that it's on the list of history books I'd like to read...

Ryct Samuel Lubell

I do agree that analyzing it to death over three months is ridiculous and serves to kill kids' interest in reading, and the same is true of a lot of other books on the list.

In England school children used to take national examinations at the age of 16. Approximately 30% of the cohort took 'O', for ordinary, levels. Most of the rest took G.C.E's, General Certificate of Education. These examinations were taken after two years of study. Some took no examination. For our English Literature 'O' level we had to answer questions on two topics and therefore studied three topics. Under the topic of novel we read *The History of Mr Polly* by H.G. Wells. There might well have been 14-16 year olds who enjoyed this novel and further enjoyed studying in depth. I was not one of them. Having taken my 'O' levels in 1984, it wasn't until 2013 that I was willing to read another novel by Wells - I read *The Time Machine* on a flight from Dubai.

To add insult to injury, *The History of Mr Polly* was included on Robert McCrum's list of *The 100 best novels written in English* with the comment that "The choice is great, but Wells's ironic portrait of a man very like himself is the novel that stands out." (I appreciate that there are many such lists). In McCrum's list, which was published in 2015, the novels are listed in historical order. It starts with John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), which I haven't read, and ends with Peter Carey's *The True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000), which I have read.

Rachel Cook responded to this article with her own, entitled "*100 best novels: one in five doesn't represent over 300 years of women in literature*". Her opening paragraph is

*'Best of' lists are strange and silly things, particularly in the realm of books: as prize shortlists prove time and time again, fiction is a most subjective art. But still, what fun they can be, and how unwittingly revealing. Of Robert McCrum's 100 Greatest Novels, just 21 are by women. Even allowing for the fact that his list takes in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, when women writers were relatively rare, this seems extraordinary to me. Sixty-seven of his titles belong to the 20th century – his final book is Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*, which was published in 2000 – and yet, only 15 of these are by women. How can this be? The last century offers up an embarrassment of riches when it comes to the female imagination. Is it that Robert thinks men write better, more important novels than women? Or is it simply that he is less familiar with the female canon? I'm not sure. Either way, here I am, eager to help. Let the reprogramming begin.*

Samizdat 36 (Samuel Lubell)

I don't have any comments on your article detailing Trump's attack on how the history of the USA is taught in schools and portrayed in museums/national parks. It's pretty much how it has been portrayed in the print media that I read.

The award includes a check for \$1,000 for the novel's author and an invitation to be the Compton Crook Guest of Honor at Balticon (the BSFS annual convention) for two years.

Do you expect that the Compton Crook Guest of Honour has to do some "work" at Balticon, such as giving a speech and appearing on panels? Does Balticon have a dinner? Clearly, the correct cuisine to serve at a conference dinner would be a Balti curry - or a selection of them. (A Balti is an Indian influenced dish that was developed in Britain, and is especially associated with Birmingham.)

Gibson is on record as not caring about history and wanted a "cinematically compelling" narrative even if it was not accurate.

I think we should take a leaf out of Trump's book, a sentence I have never written before, and refer to *Braveheart* as Fake History. I appreciate that when you make a movie you want your movie to be successful and that the interests of entertainment typically outweigh those of historical accuracy. Still, if you're going to throw historical accuracy to the wind then why bother making a movie that's based on historical events? For my tastes, *Braveheart* has too many historical errors. Of the ones you identified, the chief of these would be "*Wallace's affair with Princess Isabella*". Using "*the custom of jus prima noctis*" as a plot device also crosses a line for me.

Ryctm

I covered the earliest sf fanzines in Origins #73 tracing them back to 1930, much earlier than your cites to 1990 (admittedly from a mainstream newspaper).

Based upon what I've read, most journalists who write about fanzines think that they started in the 1970s. They don't know anything about SF fanzines.

Ryctm #2

People have freedom of speech from governments, but they do not have the right to free speech at a private event, even if invited. So, a science fiction convention can choose not to invite people they think will cause problems or negative publicity, or even hurt the feelings of others at the convention. And they can remove people from their event.

I don't have any problems with the organisers of a SF convention not inviting people "*that will cause problems or negative publicity*". That seems to me to be a reasonable power for the organisers to hold. (Though it's also open to abuse. I recall reading that there was a controversy at the first Worldcon when

various fans were banned from attending. Of course, the Worldcon was very different then... the organisers did not anticipate that there would be a second Worldcon!).

Regarding the removal of people from a convention. This is the kind of thing which needs to be covered in the Code of Conduct and there needs to be transparency about what happened. One well-known Australian fan was removed from an Australian convention and was subsequently banned from attending for several years. I'm sure the convention committee thought that they were acting correctly, but it wasn't clear to the banned fan why they had been banned. They also claimed that they were not given a fair opportunity to dispute what had happened. No one knows what happened, except for the con committee that banned the fan.

Ryctm #3

I find it very interesting that Australia is limiting social media accounts for those under 16. I think other countries should copy this idea.

I believe that a few other countries are interested in introducing similar legislation. It's still too soon to tell what effect the legislation has had, other than annoying the social media companies. I believe that there is an on-going legal case brought by a 16-year old; the accounts I've read say that it's not going to get very far.

Ryctm #4

Reading books by people in your country is good, but there are advantages to reading books by writers from different countries, especially for SF fans who like the strange and different.

I agree that reading outside your comfort zone is a good idea, as is reading authors from different countries and cultures. Unfortunately, there's a limit to the amount of time that I have for reading and, at least for literary fiction, I'm mainly focussed on reading the works of British and Australian authors. That's not entirely true... one my projects is to read all the winners of The Booker Prize. Before 2014 the Prize was restricted to novels written in English by authors from the UK, the Commonwealth, Ireland, and Zimbabwe. This changed so that any novelist writing in English became eligible. (I do not approve of this change).

Yes, like you, I have my own set of projects. Starting this issue I was going to start a regular section in which I provided updates on some of these projects. But I've run out of time to do that, maybe next issue.

Ryctm #5

That's why I get so annoyed at people who claim modern immigrants are diluting true Americanism and should be prevented from coming into our country since they are staying separate.

I suspect it won't surprise you to learn that a similar argument is often heard in Australia from right-of-centre politicians. The main conservative party in Australia, called the Liberals, have always been very

adapt at playing the Race Card to shore up their vote when there's a fracture in the right-of-centre political makeup.

Ryctm #6

I've heard of 1066 and All That but never read it.

I've been meaning to buy another copy of this book for a long time... your comment has pushed me over the edge. I checked AbeBooks to see if there were any copies available in Australia. There are. There's one less available now.

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm #1

Most US conventions have a variety of activities to attract more people and many literary fans also enjoy gaming, costuming, and filking. There are a few conventions, like Readercon, that are just literary, however.

One of the main Australian conventions is Conflux, which is held annually in Canberra. I haven't attended. Based upon what I've read it seems focused on people who want to write speculative fiction. I don't fall into that category, so doubt I'll ever attend.

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm #2

A lot of the things you criticize modern fandom for abandoning stopped because not enough people were interested, or because fandom found them embarrassing.

Now I need to know what are the things that are no longer featured at conventions because "fandom found them embarrassing".

Ryct Robert Jennings #1

I confess to using AI for pictures for my zines.

I've sometimes used ChatGPT to fine tune a paragraph or a couple of paragraphs in something I'm writing. (Most often a loc). I've always been very poor at spelling and grammar. I've also used ChatGPT to check the style, sometimes accepting the suggested corrections and sometimes rejecting them. I wonder if this kind of use can be identified?

Ryct Robert Jennings #2

I keep telling myself not to buy new books until I make a dent in my collection, but you know what they say about temptation.

I know all about that promise. Since retiring I have had more time to read books and I have read more books than I would have done if I hadn't retired. I have also had more time to buy books. And I have bought more books than I would have done if I were still in the work force. Unfortunately, the increase in the rate that I am purchasing books is greater than the increase in the rate that I'm reading them. The consequence is that the book case containing unread books is over-flowing. And I've matters worse tonight. I order *1066 And All That* from a secondhand bookshop in Melbourne. Given the way that postage works it was crazy not to search their catalogue to see if they had any others books that I'm looking for. So I added a second book to the order.

UPDATE ON PROJECTS

I'm going to start a new section at the end of *Brandy Hall* where I update you on some of the projects that I work on. I was hoping to include some this issue, but being ill the two weeks before the deadline has killed that ambition. I also have a better name than "Update on Projects" which I will reveal next time.



...I Am Employed, Again

I am a former U.S. government employee. On April 1st, 2025, I found out that I was part of a federal reduction in force (RIF) and would lose my job, although I was not officially let go until mid-July. Since then, I had not been able to find a new employment. Then, in early May of this year, my former boss contacted me to find out if I was available. I said yes and the next day a contractor called me offering what essentially is my old job, except that I would be working through the contractor, not directly for the federal government. I am currently waiting on going through the security check and badging process and do not yet have an official start date. So, I am going to call this past year a Sabbatical and regret that I did not do more things during this time off.

...Colleges Abandon the Liberal Arts

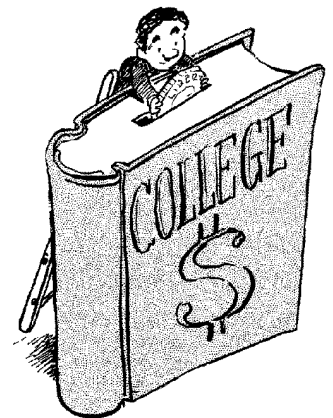
In the United States, college has become more vocational preparation for work and less general preparation for life. As college has become more expensive, with tuition [averaging \\$43,350 in 2024-](#)

[5 and as high as \\$75,162 for the most expensive college \(the University of Southern California\)](#), students and their parents want to see an immediate payoff in the form of high-paying jobs at the expense of traditional liberal arts majors that do not have a direct connection to careers (other than teaching).

A study by the conservative American Enterprise Institute (AEI), [“Learning with Their Feet”](#) found that more students are choosing “high-wage” majors such as accounting, engineering, computer science, and nursing, while “low-wage” majors in the classic liberal arts fields like history, English, and sociology have declined. Compared to 2010, 60 percent more students were enrolled in “high-wave” majors in 2023, while “low-wage” majors declined by 4 percent (although the reports notes that psychology, in the low-wage group increased by 33 percent). [A May 2026 study](#) of college graduates of Texas public colleges found that, in the first 15 years after graduating with a bachelor’s degree, those who majored in engineering and architecture had earned an average of \$204,686 more than those who never went to college. Those who majored in business and economics earned \$183,841 more. But those who majored in the liberal arts were at the bottom with just \$35,410 more (and social science majors just \$51,314 more).

As a result, colleges are cutting back on liberal arts. For example, Syracuse University, a large university with over 20,000 students in upstate New York, announced in April 2026 that they would be closing 84 majors and suspending enrollment in nine more, although some fields will be available as minors and courses will still be available as electives. Most of these fields are in the liberal arts including classics, classical civilization, German, Russian, Italian, Middle Eastern Studies, and Modern Jewish studies. Many of the other fields are in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. They are also closing some certificate programs in the School of Education and the School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

Syracuse says this is just responding to students’ preferences. Only 258 students were majoring in these programs and 55 had no one majoring in them. By contrast, the most



popular majors are psychology, information science, economics, and sports management.

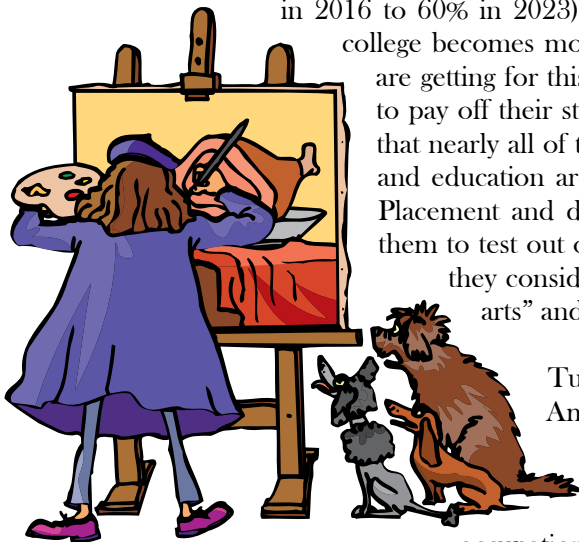


Similarly, the New School in New York is cutting (or merging) several majors in the New School for Social Research (NSSR) and Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts, including History, Sociology, and Psychology. And Cornell University, an Ivy League institution, is cutting music education, classical studies, and some religion and language programs. They will completely eliminate French and German while Spanish will be limited to a minor. [Many other colleges are making similar cuts](#) including the University of Alaska, Iowa State University, and North Dakota State University.

Even worse, some traditional liberal arts colleges are closing completely, including Hampshire College and Anna Maria College in Massachusetts and Lourdes University in Ohio. According to a [study by The Hechinger Report](#), over 300 U.S. colleges and universities closed from 2008 to 2024, mainly small colleges focused on the liberal arts rather than those with more work-centered degrees. And, even elite colleges are seeing fewer students interested in majoring in the liberal arts. For instance, from 2012 to 2022, [the percent of Harvard freshmen](#) saying they plan to major in the liberal arts fell from 20% to 7%. My own degree in History and Literature makes me part of a shrinking field.

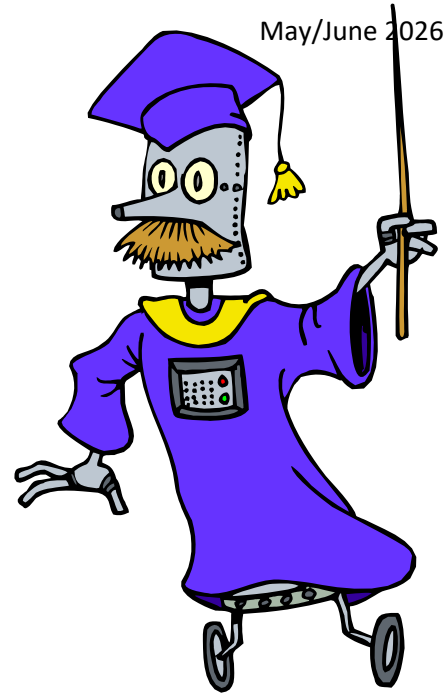
Dr. Jennifer Frey, a philosopher who was dean of the University of Tulsa’s Honors College until June 2025, wrote in [The New York Times](#) that students remain interested in the liberal arts (with a quarter of the University of Tulsa joining the Honors College for their “reading-heavy, humanities-focused curriculum.”) Instead, she writes that a traditional humanities-centered education is “out of step with the priorities, values and desires of a powerful board of trustees with no apparent commitment to liberal education, and an administrative class that won’t fight for the liberal arts.” Vocational programs are cheaper to provide than more scholarly liberal arts and create a perception of satisfying corporate needs. However, her argument ignores the shrinking numbers of those choosing to major in the liberal arts.

But others cite the declining population of traditional college age young adults (which has fallen by 2.3 million students since 2010) and a shrinking in the percentage of high school graduates continuing on to college (from 70% in 2016 to 60% in 2023). State funding for higher education has also dropped. As the cost of college becomes more and more expensive, students (and their parents) wonder what they are getting for this money and see a need to major in high-wage fields so they can afford to pay off their student loans. [Students can look up average salaries by majors](#) and learn that nearly all of the top earning careers are in STEM and Business while the liberal arts and education are at the bottom. Also, many students are using high school Advanced Placement and dual enrollment courses to fulfil humanities requirements (or enabling them to test out of these requirements). And some politicians have challenged programs they consider “woke” or too liberal. I am sure some people hear the term “liberal arts” and think it means politically liberal.



Turning college into vocational training centers has several problems. First, Americans change jobs frequently and few 18-20 year olds know what they will do for their entire life. There is a risk of training for a job and then deciding later that they do not like it. A liberal arts education teaches general skills that are transferable across a wide variety of occupations. And it teaches the student how to learn. Also, narrow vocational training surrenders one of the advantages live humans have over programmed Artificial Intelligence. Humans have greater flexibility than machines and can adapt and learn new things. So a general education plays to these strengths more than narrow vocational training especially in a fast moving field. In addition, the liberal arts teach “soft skills” that foster problem solving and leadership.

This shift to vocational training may be related to the decline in public support for higher education (but is it a cause or result?). A [Gallup poll](#) found the percentage of Americans saying college is very important has dropped from 75% in 2010 to 53% in 2019 to 35% in 2025. Nearly a quarter say it is not too important, up from 4% in 2010. There are sharp political divisions with just 20% of Republicans saying college is very important, compared to 42% among Democrats. Only 9% of Democrats say college is not too important compared to 39% of Republicans. [Conservative columnist George F. Will even wrote](#) that too many people are going to college, graduating as “expensively credentialed (often not highly educated) young adults... [who] emerge from the political monoculture of campuses with high grades, low learning and a talent for blaming.” He calls these graduates young Lenins who are unemployed or underemployed and starting unions and supporting socialism.



One solution is to encourage students to double major in something practical and a liberal arts sequence (or minor in the liberal arts subject to balance a job-oriented major. Some schools are trying to incorporate some “soft skills” into their career-related courses and creating blended majors. Supporters of the liberal arts could do more to show how skills from liberal arts courses are valuable in the work world and stress that one does not have to have a prelaw or premed degree to enter those schools. This requires marketing the liberal arts to students and demonstrating their value.

Hugo Finalists 2026

Okay, LACon has announced the Hugo Finalists. Let’s see how well my own nominations match the finalists.

Category: Best Novel

My Picks	The Hugo Finalists
<i>The Book of Lost Hours</i> by Hayley Gelfuso	<i>Death of the Author</i> by Nnedi Okorafor
<i>The Folded Sky</i> by Elizabeth Bear	<i>The Everlasting</i> by Alix E. Harrow
<i>Halcyon Years</i> by Alastair Reynolds	<i>The Incandescent</i> by Emily Tesh
<i>The Incandescent</i> by Emily Tesh	<i>The Raven Scholar</i> by Antonia Hodgson
<i>Katabasis</i> by R.F. Kuang	<i>Shroud</i> by Adrian Tchaikovsky



So, only one of my picks made it to the finalist list. I put down *The Book of Lost Hours*, which won the Compton Crook Award. Fandom picked a Compton Crook Finalist, *The Raven Scholar*, instead. And one of my picks, *The Folded Sky*,

was part of a finalist for best series.

Category: Best Novella

My Picks	The Hugo Finalists
The Chronolithographer’s Assistant by Suzanne Palmer	Automatic Noodle by Annalee Newitz
The Dagger in Vichy by Alastair Reynolds	Cinder House by Freya Marske
Lives of Bitter Rain by Adrian Tchaikovsky	Murder by Memory by Olivia Waite
Making History by K. J. Parker	The River Has Roots by Amal El-Mohtar

Threat Assessment by Matthew Kressel and Mercurio D. Rivera	The Summer War by Naomi Novik
	What Stalks the Deep by T. Kingfisher

None of my picks for best novella made it to the finalists. I think the issue is partially that I picked most from the paper magazines which are no longer frequently read.

Category: Best Novelette

My Picks	The Hugo Finalists
Barnacle by Kate Elliott	“Kaiju Agonistes” by Scott Lynch
Donacon by Paul E. Franz	“Never Eaten Vegetables” by H.H. Pak
The Millay Illusion, Author: Sarah Pinsker	“Rapport: Friendship, Solidarity, Communion, Empathy” by Martha Wells
Regarding the Childhood of Morrigan, Who Was Chosen to Open the Way, by Benjamin Rosenbaum	“The Girl That My Mother Is Leaving Me For” by Cameron Reed
A Tide of Paper, by Leah Cypess	“The Millay Illusion” by Sarah Pinsker
	“When He Calls Your Name” by Catherynne M. Valente

Only one of my picks for novelette made it to the finalists. Again, none of the finalists came from pint magazines.

Category: Best Short Story

My Picks	The Hugo Finalists
In the Halls of the Makeshift King by Tobias S. Buckell	“10 Visions of the Future; or, Self-Care for the End of Days”
Strays by Scott William Carter	“In My Country” by Thomas Ha
Woolly by Carrie Vaughn	“Laser Eyes Ain’t Everything” by Effie Seiberg
	“Missing Helen” by Tia Tashiro
	“Six People to Revise You” by J.R. Dawson
	“Wire Mother” by Isabel J. Kim

I only listed three short stories, perhaps because shorts are too short to make a lasting impression on me. Again, none of the finalists were from the print magazines.

Category: Best Series

My Picks	The Hugo Finalists
Dogs of War by Adrian Tchaikovsky	<i>The Craft Wars</i> by Max Gladstone
<i>InCryptid</i> by Seanan McGuire	<i>Emily Wilde</i> by Heather Fawcett
<i>Liaden</i> by Sharon Lee & Steve Miller	<i>October Daye</i> by Seanan McGuire
<i>Saga of Recluse</i> by L.E. Modesitt	<i>Old Man’s War</i> by John Scalzi
<i>White Space</i> by Elizabeth Bear	<i>The Chronicles of Osreth</i> by Katherine Addison
	<i>White Space</i> by Elizabeth Bear

I had one of the finalists and a different series by McGuire than the one chosen as a finalist.



I had one of the finalists for Best Graphic Story or Comic, Absolute Wonder Woman Volume 1: The Last Amazon by Kelley Thompson (DC Comics), which is pretty good considering that I made only two nominations in this category. The other finalists are:

- A Girl and Her Fed, written by KB Spangler, art by Ale Presser (www.agirlandherfed.com)
- A Wizard of Earthsea: A Graphic Novel, written by Ursula K. Le Guin, adapted and art by Fred Fordham (Clarion Books; Walker UK)
- The Invisible Parade by Leigh Bardugo and John Picacio (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers; Orion UK)

- The Power Fantasy Volume 1: The Superpowers, written by Kieron Gillen, art by Caspar Wijngaard, lettering by Clayton Cowles (Image Comics)
- The Space Cat, written by Nuedi Okorafor, art by Tana Ford (First Second)

I had none of the finalists for Best Related Work, although I would have nominated *Inventing the Renaissance* by Ada Palmer if I had thought this history was related to SF (other than having been written by a SF writer). The finalists are:

- Colourfields: Writing About Writing About Science Fiction by Paul Kincaid
- Inventing the Renaissance by Ada Palmer
- Last War in Albion: “The Cuddled Little Vice (Sandman)” by Elizabeth Sandifer
- Positive Obsession: The Life and Times of Octavia E. Butler by Susana M. Morris
- “Ragnarök vs the Long Night” by Ashaya and Aziz
- The Hugo Spreadsheet of Doom, maintained by Renay (Google Spreadsheet)

Category: Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form

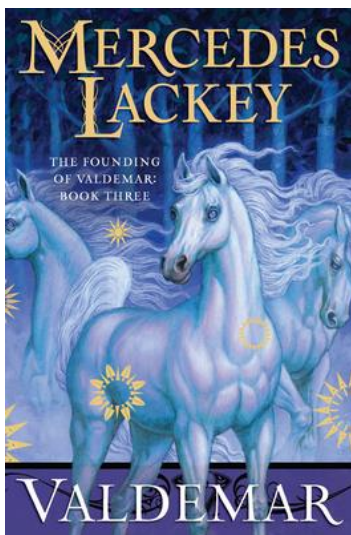
My Picks	Finalists
<i>Andor</i>	<i>Andor (Season 2)</i>
<i>Fantastic Four</i>	<i>Frankenstein</i>
<i>Superman</i>	<i>KPop Demon Hunters</i>
<i>Wicked: For Good</i>	<i>Mickey 17</i>
	<i>Sinners</i>
	<i>Superman</i>

I don’t watch many movies. But this is still the category I got the most finalists right. All of two.

Category: Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form

My Picks	Finalists
Rightside Up, <i>Stranger Things</i>	<i>Doctor Who</i> : “The Story & the Engine”
Space Adventure Hour, <i>Star Trek: Strange New Worlds</i>	<i>Murderbot</i> : “All Systems Red”
A Tale of Graceful Ends, <i>Sandman</i>	<i>Murderbot</i> : “The Perimeter”
	<i>Pluribus</i> : “We Is Us”
	<i>Severance</i> : “Cold Harbor”
	<i>The Wheel of Time</i> : “The Road to the Spear”

None of my picks made it to the ballot. Half of the finalists are from Apple TV, a streaming service I don’t get.



Author Spotlight: Mercedes Lackey

Mercedes Lackey is an author of over 150 books, mostly fantasy with a few science fiction books (including her *Secret World Chronicles* (a collaborative super hero series), and coauthored works in Anne McCaffrey’s *Ship Who Sang* universe and Marion Zimmer Bradley’s *Darkover* series. She writes light, fun books, largely for a YA audience. Her non-YA works are fantasy romances. Her prose is rarely sophisticated and many of her characters’ interpersonal problems could have been solved by talking to the other person instead of making assumptions, but the books are dependable and enjoyable. The books are light popcorn, not gourmet, but sometimes that is what a reader wants.

She is best known for her *Valdemar* series about the Heralds who serve their King/Queen and their horse-shaped Companions who are as intelligent as a human and can communicate telepathically (usually) with their Heralds. Most Heralds have a magical gift, but only a few are classified as Mages. There are over 40 Valdemar books plus several volumes of short stories (some including stories by fans of the

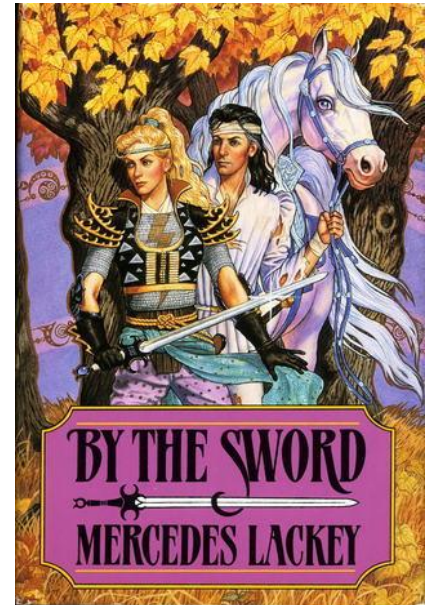
series). Most of these are in sub-series as the full series takes place over thousands of years. At one point, her *Valdemar* series came close to being turned into a television series.

Born June 24, 1950 in Chicago, Bradley started reading science fiction at age 10 or 11 and read all of Andre Norton's work and all the interesting books in the library. While at Perdue University, which she graduated from in 1972, she discovered science fiction fandom, writing fanfic, publishing in fanzines, and filking (and writing songs). Filking connected her to C. J. Cherryh who mentored her through the many rewrites of *Arrows of the Queen*. Her first sale was to a Friends of Darkover anthology edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley who was also a mentor.

She married her first husband in 1972 (divorced 1990) and her current husband, artist and frequent collaborator Larry Dixon in 1992. She was active in raptor rehabilitation (which occasionally influenced her fiction), and the Society for Creative Anachronism (likewise), and filking (writing nearly 50 songs and winning five Pegasus Awards).

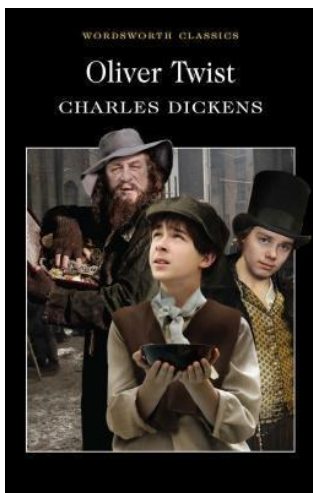
Beyond *Valdemar*, Lackey has written the urban fantasy *Bedlam's Bard* series about elves in the modern day (co-written with Ellen Guon and then Rosemary Edghill); the *SERRATED Edge* series (with various co-authors) about modern day elves racing fast cars while rescuing endangered children; *Heirs of Alexander*, historical fantasy co-authored by David Freer and Eric Flint (and adapting content from Lackey's stories in C.J. Cherryh's *Merovingen Nights* shared universe series), *Obsidian Universe* (with James Mallory), the *Halfblood Chronicles* with Andre Norton (finally finished after 35 years!), *Elemental Masters* (based on fairy tales), *Tales of the Five Hundred Kingdoms* (fantasy romances, also based on fairy tales), *Bardic Voices/Choices*, and several others. She writes very few standalone books.

Normally, I recommend that people read series in publishing order. But the first *Valdemar* book, *Arrows of the Queen* (1987), was her first book and it suffers from some of the flaws of first novels and is best read by preteen and early teenage girls. Instead, I recommend starting with her second sub-series, *The Last Herald-Mage*, which begins with *Magic's Pawn* (1989), one of the first popular fantasy series to have a homosexual main character. If you like it, I suggest reading the other *Valdemar* books in publishing order. If you do not like that book, but want to give the series another chance. I suggest the semi-standalone *By the Sword* (1991), which has some connections to other books in the series, but can be enjoyed without having read them. Aside from that, I say pick up whatever seems good.



...Status of Projects

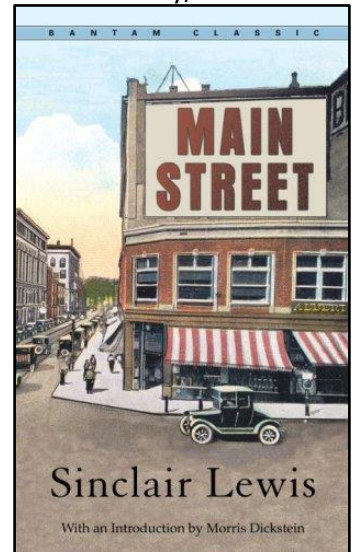
Past readers of Samizdat will remember that I have launched a series of projects to better my life. This bimonthly report serves as a reminder to me to keep working on these, and is a record of when I fall short. Considering that I was not working the last couple of months I really fell behind in most categories.



Project Classics - I did fairly well in this category - I finished *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. This 1839 book was Dickens' second novel, but I had skipped it in my read of Dickens' novels. I have now read nine Dickens novels (not counting the ones I read as a youngster) and have six to go. Oliver is a largely passive orphan boy with a tendency to become attached to anyone who shows him a little kindness. Yet he has a firm moral backbone and even when he falls into the company of thieves and pickpockets, does not yield to the temptation of easy money. Naturally, he turns out to be the child of a rich aristocrat despite growing up as an impoverished orphan. His half-brother destroys evidence of his parentage to avoid sharing their inheritance. Dickens uses Oliver to show the wretched conditions of England's poor and how they are forced into crime to survive. It is worth noting that Fagin, the adult who leads a group of child pickpockets, is identified as a Jew many times yet no other character has

their religion named. I have read that in his 1867 edition of the novel, Dickens took out some references to Fagin as a Jew in the second half of the book.

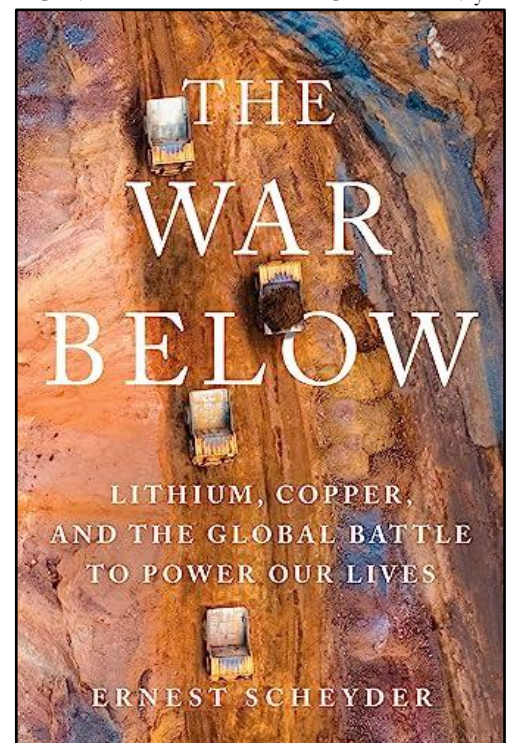
I read *Main Street* by Sinclair Lewis, the first American to win the Nobel Prize for literature. This 1920 novel on the surface satirizes small town life. Carol Milford, the main character, attends college and daydreams of being a big reformer. She becomes a librarian, but, unsure of herself, marries a small town doctor and moves to Gopher Prairie where she tries to start reformer only to find that people there do not want change, are comfortable with their lives, and see her reforming impulses as trying to cause trouble. She is attacked by gossip and even the few who sympathize with her tell her she is going about it the wrong way. She ultimately falls in love with a younger man and then, when he leaves town, tries to find contentment with her husband and baby but then, still unsatisfied with her life, leaves to spend two years working in Washington DC. But, what I think a lot of readers miss is that the book is not only a satire of small town America, but also reformers generally and the feminist movement in particular. Carol's reform attempts put everyone on the defensive, while the schoolteacher, working within the system, is able to get a new and better school.



I am almost finished with *Yellowface* by R. F. Kuang, her only non-fantasy

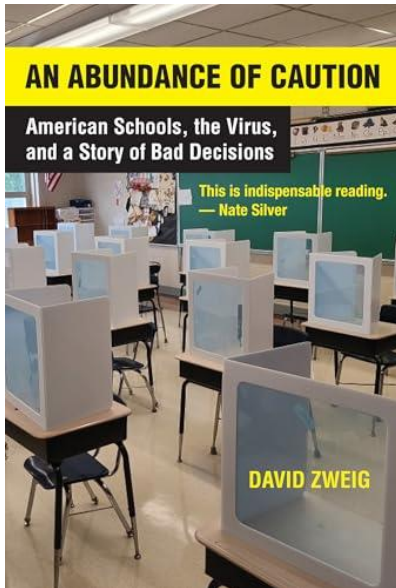
novel. I have heard it described as a satirical look at race in publishing and discrimination against Asians. But that is not what this book shows. Striving author June Hayward is white, not Asian. When she is unable to save her much more successful author friend from dying, she steals her manuscript and passes it off as her own. She then lives in fear that someone will find out. June makes excuses for herself, but continues the fraud, even when people on social media become suspicious. She uses her middle name to become June Song, and many assume she is Asian (although she is careful never to claim it). When she has trouble writing a follow-up on her own, she uses a first line by her dead friend as the basis for a novella. But this is discovered since the original sentence had been part of a poem that her friend had sent to a workshop and some people still had copies. That's where I left off.

Project Non-Fiction - I read *The War Below Lithium, Copper, and the Global Battle to Power Our Lives* by Ernest Scheyder. This book examines how the use of rare earth minerals for longer-lasting batteries for cell phones, computers, electric cars, solar panels, and other devices has led to competition to open mines. This book shows the problems with trying to open mines, the opposition from the neighbors, government regulations, and environmental concerns. The book also describes how China dominates the production of rare earth mineral. Moreover, while the U.S. government (pre-Trump) approved of green energy, its regulations often prevent the mining needed to go green. As a result, the federal government cannot create a consistent policy on obtaining these minerals (and sometimes what one administration does is reversed by the next one).



The book has a major focus on a proposed lithium mine at Rhyolite Ridge in Nevada and how it might interfere with a rare Tiehm's Buckwheat flower found only at and near the mining site. While the mining company says it would be careful to preserve the flower, conservationist challenge these claims based on mining's poor track record on environmental issues.

The author, a journalist, is careful to show both sides of the issue (but he does favor those who see mining as necessary.) He quotes the mining operatives, Native Americans, and environmentalists. The book presents an environmental Catch 22. To reduce our dependency on fossil fuel and reduce global warming, we need more batteries, but batteries require digging up rare earth elements in environment-destroying mines. And some minerals are on sacred Indian ground or in the middle of residential communities, whose residents understandably don't want to live next door to a noisy, dirty, mine. But depending on foreign sources has the problems with China and trade. Some sources use child labor. There is no solution that does not require making compromises.



I also read *An Abundance of Caution: American Schools, the Virus, and a Story of Bad Decisions* by David Zweig. This very one-sided view of how American schools reacted to the Covid virus in 2020 asserts that closing physical schools in response to Covid was completely unnecessary and the result of bad science. Moreover, he asserts that many people knew that the closings were unnecessary or should have known considering that European countries that did not close their schools had no worse results than did the U.S. Millions of schoolchildren spent over a year without school, hurting their educations, especially among low-income students and those with special needs. He uses his claims about schools' response to Covid to challenge how governments react to challenges and to question the scientific establishment.

The book's thesis is that school closures were unnecessary, not supported by sufficient scientific evidence, and the result of groupthink and acceptance of expert authority without adequately investigating their claims. He contends that Covid posed little threat to children and that schools were not transmitting the virus. He says that the CDC made guesses that were not supported by the data, yet were followed by the public on the assumption that scientists knew best. The author also criticizes the media for reporting on worst

case scenarios and ignoring alternative evidence.

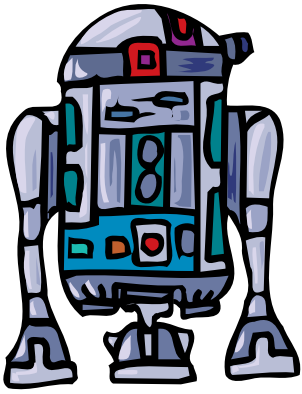
But the book is flawed since the author Zweig is not a disinterested journalist or scientific investigator. He was an advocate for keeping the schools open, writing a piece in May 2020 and attacked the mandated wearing of masks. In this book he objects to basing decisions on models, not facts. But in the early days of the pandemic there were no facts. The pandemic was new. Models were based on the best information available which was information on the spread of influenza. Zweig claims that influenza was far more deadly than Covid, but others disagree (<https://www.accountabilityjournalism.org/insights/an-abundance-of-bias-new-covid-school-closures-book-rewrites-history>) He also ignores that Covid can spread even when the carrier does not show symptoms. So, one cannot just tell kids to stay home if they feel sick when they can infect others even when they do not know they are sick.

I was a little disappointed in *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson. I thought it was going to focus on the idea that Americans do not have things like universal health care since these would benefit Blacks. There was some of that, such as the town that closed its swimming pool rather than have Whites and Blacks both swim in it. But, far more of the book focused on the comparison between India's untouchables and Blacks in America. She uses caste to indicate that there is a structure and hierarchy; discrimination is not an individual's personal social preference, but inherent in the system. The author also prefers to use the term dominant caste rather than white people to stress that this is a caste system. The book had lots of good examples, such as the Nazis studying the American racial system to use as a

model for their own anti-Semitic laws. It could have benefited from more examples besides India and Nazi Germany. A flaw is that the book also had some rather minor personal examples, like no one helping her get her luggage of an airplane's storage bins, which she thought someone would do if she were white.



Project Video - I watched the second Doctor Strange film, about the Marvel Comics superhero. I really liked the first one which had some amazing 3D effects. *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* had a little of that, but not as good. The plot mostly centered on introducing America Chavez, who has the power to travel the multiverse. Doctor Strange has to protect her from the Scarlet Witch, a former superhero gone bad (which really only makes sense to those who had seen the TV show *Wandavision*). The multiverse aspects were interesting, especially since Doctor Strange encounter an ex-girlfriend from another universe. I also watched the first season of *The Mandalorian*, set in the *Star Wars* universe. The Mandalorian, a bounty hunter who never removes his helmet, takes a commission to kill a target, but when he finds out the target is just a baby (identified only as The Child but clearly belonging to the same



species as Yoda), kills many of the Stormtroopers, and runs away with the Child. The remainder of the eight episode season is the Mandalorian taking various contracts and killing other bounty hunters who are after the child. For a *Star Wars* show, this is surprisingly slow. And there is only a limited amount that can be done with a character who never shows his face and rarely talks about his past. (There are a couple of potential romantic interests that he does confide in briefly and a few flashbacks.)

Project Fanac - I attended Ravencon, a convention in Richmond, Virginia. I spent a lot of time at the table promoting Capclave, but did see some of the con. Original guest of honor David Brin was unable to attend, although he did do an Ask Me Anything session remotely. I heard the interviews of author K.B. Wagers who writes action/space opera, including two trilogies about a former gunrunner who, when the rest of her family is killed, finds herself a galactic empress. I also heard from Mur Lafferty who spoke about her podcasting, especially co-editing *Escape Pod*, and writing both fantasy and science fiction mysteries. I also went to a slide show of Ruth Sanderson's art. I also listened to panels on how Westerns influenced science fiction, Authoritarianism, how people are shaped by society, and mysteries.

I also have done preparation for Balticon where I will be running the kaffeklatsches and the newsletter. I also helped develop and schedule some of the programming.

Project Shorts - I continue to read *Analog* and *Asimov's* magazines, when issues arrive (the new publisher has had problems with the printer and is somewhat behind). I have not seen a single issue of *F & SF* this year. I also read *Clarkesworld* and *Lightspeed*, two online publications. I have started reading the massive Golden Age anthology *Adventures in Time & Space* which I am reviewing in my other zine, *Origins*.

Project Activities - I went home for Passover and saw my siblings. But that was it.

I made no real progress in Projects Paperback, Health, Shakespeare, or Cleanup. I have no excuse since I have been unemployed and had time available (where does it all go?).

LOC for NAPA #281



Nice cover. Yes Mike, count me in for your Essayist project.

Intermission #163 - The U.S. Congress is unlikely to have the votes to impeach Trump until after the Nov 2026 election, and even then it might not have the votes in the Senate to convict him. Sorry. That's the way our Constitution works. Trump has started a war with Iran, but my impression is that Europe is not pleased with this decision especially as the price of oil skyrockets. Thanks for printing the Jules Verne story. I had no idea an English story by Verne existed. You ask a good question about pulps and the survival of SF magazines when all the other fiction pulps died (although the more recent Hitchcock's and Queen's mystery magazines are still published). I think part of the reason is the general decline of reading and competition for leisure time from television. I have not seen the recent Avatar movies although I liked the first (mainly because I saw it in 3D and the effects were

amazing). I agree with your comments to me about other media competing with paperbacks. I continue to be amazed at how long Ukraine has been able to avoid being conquered by Russia. This is rapidly becoming Russia's equivalent of the Vietnam War. Yes, USENET fell apart and last time I looked the spam far outnumbered real

posts. I'm curious however, before the Internet took off, most computer bulletin boards and online services like CompuServe and GEnie had message boards divided by topics like USENET did. But now, with the Internet boom, such message boards do not seem to exist. The closest we have is Facebook which lacks any such structure. What happened?

Archive Midwinter for NAPA 281 - Yes, some form of psychohistory may be able to make long-term predictions and identify future trends, but even Asimov recognized that it wouldn't work to predict exact events on time without



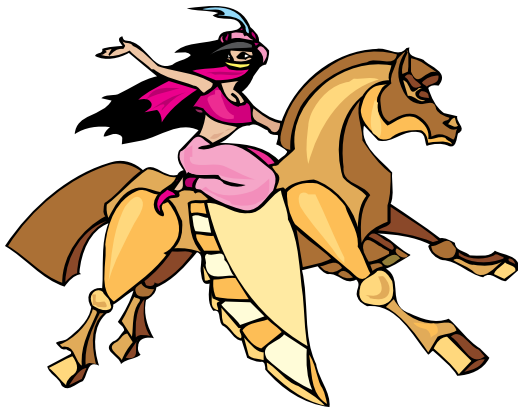
a Second Foundation pulling strings. While my high school did have one class of Calculus for high achieving seniors who had taken pre-Calc as juniors, the teacher was so bad that I cannot say I learned it. The lack of a math requirement was not the main reason I chose my college, but it was a happy accident. Generally the DC and Marvel big events have their own mini-series, but many issues of their regular series tie into the big event. So readers need to read the big event series to really understand what is going on. Many writers do not write their series in order. L.E. Modesitt's *Recluse* series is a great example as is Mercedes Lackey's *Valdemar*. I'm sorry you didn't like *It Can't Happen Here*; I found it more interesting than *Main Street*, which I am reading currently.

Swamp Spot Sentinel #1.6 - Interesting claim that Sherlock Holmes is the most adapted character in fictional history. I would have bet on a fairy tale character considering the many different children's books with different illustrations. Or possibly a mythological character like Hercules or Thor. I never was a big fan of the Sherlock character although it's been a few decades since I last read them. I thought your story on US Bitcoin Reserve was satire but Joe Light is a legit reporter so maybe not. I agree that mystery novels can be more varied than are traditional westerns, but lots of science fiction set during periods other than 1870s America have elements of the Western. In media SF just think of *Firefly* and the more recent *The Mandalorian*, not to mention *Westworld*. But the mini-series *Yellowstone* shows that one can still do Westerns in the present day. Yes Haldeman's *The Forever War* was based on his Vietnam experience, but that is not a bug; it is a feature. I agree that Drake's Hammer's *Slammers* was a pure action series that, unlike Haldeman's book, was not trying for anything more. Republicans always accuse the Democrats of having a "Tax and Spend" approach but the Republicans have a "Cut taxes, Borrow, and Still Spend" approach. I think that we could learn a lot about historical biology by bringing back extinct creatures. And I think that we can do this in real life without running into *Jurassic Park* issues (step one: Don't bring back any creature likely to eat humans). Yes! Bring back the dodo! Humans are largely responsible for their extinction so we owe them. I've been guilty of getting my zine in late. Sorry. I agree that physical sports never interested me and the current professional teams and their players have no loyalty to the team's city. Yes, the outlets for books (other than book stores) have largely dried up (I was in Target today and they had a few books near the registers). I agree that the issue with paperbacks is due to economics, not a conspiracy against them. But the public is not willing to pay trade paperback prices for mass market paperbacks. I think once their prices hit \$10, people grew very reluctant to purchase them. Predicting human behavior may work in the long term, for overall trends, but short-term predictions will mostly fail. After WWI, people could predict that Germany would rise again, but not necessarily predict Adolph Hitler and the Holocaust. The story about a garden club taking over Earth and looking to expand to Mars sounds like a William Tenn or Frederick Brown type story, but I don't recognize it. Yes, the Origins fanzine would love to excerpt your history of Canadian fandom.

In the U.S. the media are owned by corporations or wealthy businessmen like Jeff Bezos. So, even the sources that are not Fox News still have conservative pro-business bias. Even CNN was founded by businessman Ted Turner and is now owned by Warner Bros. (which is in the process of being bought by Paramount, whose CEO is David Ellison, the son of Oracle-founder Larry Ellison, who has close connections to Donald Trump. I agree that environmentalists are not anti-science, but use science to detect global warming and other problems. A major problem with nuclear power is we still don't have a way/location to store nuclear waste safely. Trump has threatened Cuba but has to resolve the Iran war first. I've been to a few SMOFcons and a lot of work goes into planning how the content can be helpful for con organizers. I'm sure many treat it as time to see friends, but there is a serious side. Panels are not supposed to be boring, but if the moderator does not have good questions or



allows the panel to ramble, there is not much the Concom can do. There are some cons that do not have cosplay or masquerades, but these tend to be the smaller cons (like Capclave) or serious reading/writing cons like ReaderCon.



The lack of places that sell mass market paperbacks is directly related to the collapse of the distribution system. And any place that sells hardbacks and trade paperbacks (mainly bookstores) could, and until recently did, sell mass market paperbacks. So, if the problem was just a lack of places to sell books, why aren't hardbacks having the same problem? I saw a science fiction book just today at Target (admittedly it was a trade paperback version of *Project Hail Mary* which still has a movie out). I think science fiction readers need to do a lot more to encourage and promote new writers. About Orson Scott Card, I think the Mormon influence on his work was present from the beginning and do not think it hurt him as his 'Prentice Alvin books had some of his best writing despite being a retelling of the Book of Mormon. Yes, publishers like series since they tend to be steady performers, but over time the readers do drop off and few new people want

to start a series at book 12 or 13 (although, ebooks makes it easier to catch up). I hope you enjoy *Inventing the Renaissance*. It is up for a Hugo in best related work! Good point about comic book movies not helping the sales of comic books. Part of this is the perception, at least in the US that comic books are for kids and not for serious readers. But science fiction and fantasy movies (and TV) have helped the sales of the books, which is why publishers are so quick to publish movie tie-in additions. They even did this for movies like *I, Robot*, which had very little in common with the Asimov book (which must have confused a lot of readers). I disagree that college is just marking time before a career, but college should be where students gain higher-order thinking and reasoning skills. This valuable service of college is lost when students (and increasingly college administrators) teach college as just vocational training. And don't forget most people (at least in the U.S.) change career fields an average of three times over their lifetime. So, sending them straight to work instead of college will not do anything to help them make up their minds. I am glad you liked my issue.

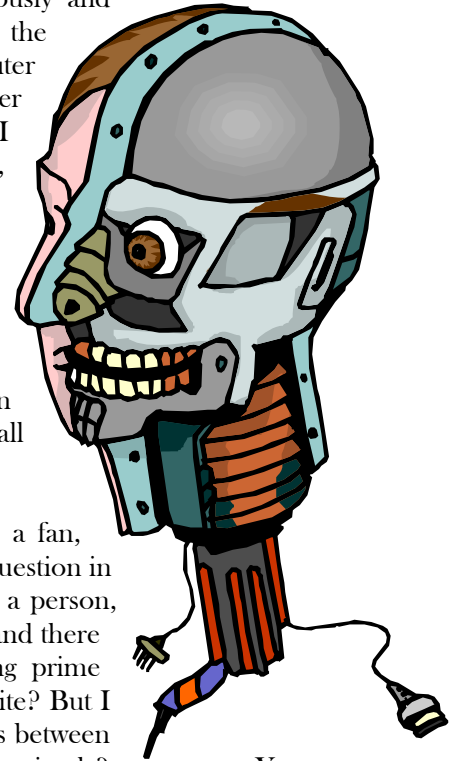
Remember that children tend to be less critical about entertainment as everything is new to them and they have not seen anything done a thousand times before. And remember that cheap content like Captain Video was not competing against better made science fiction shows since there were not any. I'd love to publish an article on science fiction movie serials in *Origins* if you could write it. If the Wizard of Oz is offensive to people without brains, what about all those zombie movies? I love Tom the Dancing Bug!

Intermission #164 – Funny story of Ukraine getting money and intelligence from Russian Starlink users. I had not heard of Claude Williamson Degler or Starlife. There is something about science fiction fandom – perhaps its tolerance of differences or the large number of neurodivergent fans and fans with limited social experience – that encourages eccentrics to join and flourish. When an AI is trained on material, it does store a copy of that material in its memory (usually on disk in the cloud somewhere). And it can reproduce that copy if asked. That's one reason why authors are suing. A lot of older pulps and SF magazines are available on the Internet and archive.org. Fan-run conventions tend to be smaller than Worldcons, but comic- and movie-oriented conventions like Dragoncon and various Comicons tend to be larger.

The Murdered Master Mage for N'APA 281. I'll try to send in some reviews, but my time will be more limited now that I am soon to be employed again. I'm excited to see more Telzey and I'm sure you will do a fantastic job. I will need to find a copy of *The Immortal Storm* since I am interested in the history of fandom. I'd wait a generation or two before trying to make sense of the Sad/Rabid Puppies. A meeting between Telzey and a rival telepath her own age could be interesting but take care that the two characters are not too similar, Telzey already has a clone/duplicate. It is nice to see Telzey developing some self-imposed limits on when she uses her telepathy. It is interesting to see Telzey caught up in the repercussions of her first adventure. But the legal implications of telepathy is a fascinating subject. I certainly can see potential unfair advantages for a courtroom lawyer, but most lawyers are not courtroom lawyers.



Brownian Motion #18 - For how to human, I recommend a book titled *An Outsider's Guide to Humans: What Science Taught Me About What We Do and Who We Are*. The author, Camilla Pang is autistic so had to consciously teach herself many of the behaviors most people pick up unconsciously and automatically, so is able to see humanity the way an outsider might. Before the widespread availability of computers, people did not know how everything a computer does needs to be programmed and you could not just take a chess playing computer and expect it to play checkers. Except now, with AI, all these rules have changed. I have a number of NESFA Press books. Most of their publishing falls into two types, collections (frequently complete collections) of short stories by Golden Age authors and books for Boskone (NESFA's convention) Guests of Honor. I don't know of any press that only publishes books about fandom. No one knows what Trump will do next; not even Trump. It depends on what he saw on Fox yesterday and who was the last person to talk with him. Yes, the term SMOF is meant to be self-mockery. I have some comments about SMOFCon above. Most fanzines have a short life, so zillions of past fanzines could still mean far fewer currently published, still only 30 in current circulation sounds low. I myself do three and there is no way I do a tenth of all fanzines.



You say

Moziac #1 - Welcome to N'APA! In my view, anyone who does fan activities is a fan, especially if they write about it. So you are fan enough to be here. You have a good question in asking how one determines if an alien species is intelligent enough to be viewed as a person, especially since we should not assume that an intelligent alien would think as we do (and there are plenty of humans who would fail most tests involving things like recognizing prime numbers). I'm a fan of Piper's *Little Fuzzy*. What do you think of John Scalzi's rewrite? But I think your solution of saying that every creature is sapient ignores the real differences between an intelligent species and one that is not. Otherwise, could we legitimately eat some animals? "Every sapient being has the right to preserve its life even at to expense of another's." But, vegetarians exist, showing that eating cows and chickens is not a matter of survival.

I agree that I ignored audiobooks in my article on the Decline of Paperbacks. I suppose because I consider audiobooks a different entity, since the narrator is a performer while ebooks, hardbacks, and paperbacks are just different ways of presenting the same words. Yes, the second-hand market will continue, but if mass market paperbacks are rarely printed, the second-hand market will not have them to distribute. Yes, ebooks have the problem that, in the current system, the reader does not own most of the ebooks (certainly not those through amazon or bn.com). Some libraries and collectors have books hundreds of years old. We have no guarantee that our ebooks will last that long, or be able to be accessed in 100 years from now. Many movie fans have had to buy the same movie in several different formats as technology shifted - VHS, Laserdisk, DVD, Blu-ray, and streaming. But, even so, paperback books frequently went out of print and could only be found by haunting used book stores. I am sure there are plenty of fantasy series worse than Wheel of Time. And yes, the Silver Surfer in the recent Fantastic Four movie was female. The cast list identifies her as Shalla-Bal/Silver Surfer (played by Julia Garner). I agree with your comment to Garth about unregulated Capitalism leading to monopolies. We are close to it in the ebook world.

Brandy Hall #17 - I am not surprised that sports fanzines exist, after all, there are plenty of professional newspapers and magazines covering sports and anything that has fans can develop fanzines. I would argue that a club newsletter becomes a fanzine (sometimes called a clubzine) when it prints articles that are of interest to people not in the club. I agree that a peak can only be identified after conditions reversed and we can never know what the worst thing is until long after the fact. I don't think I read Enid Blyton's Famous Five books as a kid. I agree that film and movie means the same thing, but the term film is more likely to be used for something higher in quality while a movie is more likely used for popular and popcorn movies. Real life superheroes might wear garish costumes and masks to hide their identity and to separate their superhero identity with their secret identity. Americans get much less vacation time than do Europeans and Australians. History done right is a science since people are not just reporting what happened, but are trying to find out why it happened this way and not a different way. I recently checked and Harvard University does not require students to know Calculus nor take a Calculus course. There may be some

schools that require Calculus, but I do not know of any, other than Math/Science specialty schools like MIT or CalTech, that do. Of course, some majors like engineering might require it. Your mention of WarGames raises a good point. What do you call something that was science fiction when it came out, but is no longer beyond the capabilities of current science? If you rule out alternate history as SF, then we would lose 100 Leagues Under the Sea, 1984, and much other early science fiction.

Most novels by new writers stand alone even if they will eventually be part of a series. They tend to have a conclusion even if there is room for a sequel later. I have a very long list of 700 classics that I should read (they are part of my projects see above). I have a memory of my English teacher mother who, seeing me reading a science fiction book, asked in an exasperated way “Why don’t you read real books.” The fact that I have a spreadsheet showing how many chapters I would need to have read if I read three, four, or five chapters a day to catch up to where I would be if I read 2 chapters a day since I turned 50, 20 years after college, and 25 years after college, simply shows there is some OCD in my makeup. (If I read 3 chapters a day, it would take me until 2047 to catch up to where I would be if I had read 2 chapters a day since my 25th college reunion). I keep telling myself to watch more Star Trek, and yet, I have not even during this past year of unemployment. I need to use my time better.

Rail #11 - It has been many years since I went to the National Archives. I should make a return trip. Congrats on starting law school. Which one?

Esmeralda County Line #15 - Being busy is better than being bored. John Henry/Campbell is a frequent guest at DC area conventions and a really nice guy! Tim Powers is another fun guest (but give him smoke breaks). I am a fan of the *Dresden Files* but have not read the newest book yet. I don’t think the purpose of History is to present the objective truth. I don’t think an objective truth exists as part of the job of a historian is to sort out the important from the mundane as you cannot include everything about everybody. A work of history should not just show what happened but offer reasons for why things happened the way they did. It should have a thesis, an argument, that it tries to prove. A separation between civilians and the military is dangerous as it can lead to coups and our military thinking they have more in common with the enemy’s military than with their fellow Americans. I will have to look up Sam Moskowitz’s *The Immortal Storm* on Google. Good point. We need a name for mass market paperbacks now that they are no longer a mass market.

Balticon is a week away as I type this. I’m doing the newsletter and kaffeeklatsches. I ran Balticon in 2024. It is a large regional convention with around 1300-1500 people. It is a general interest science fiction convention with panels on literary topics but also workshops for writers, filking (the folk music of SF), a masquerade (and hall costumes), an art show, gaming (RPG, strategy games, and videogames), children’s programming, anime room, video room, film program (including a short films contest), Lego construction, and probably a lot more. A few online magazines like *Clarkesworld* pay professional rates but many are still at a penny or less per word. Orson Scott Card was a bit annoyed when I told him I had read *Xenocide* in one night. He wrote, “You read it one night!!! Why do I try?” With regard to high school reading lists, English teachers have a horrible dilemma about using this opportunity to get students to read important books they most likely will never read on their own (and providing the help so they understand the book) versus letting them read entertaining and fun books so they will learn to enjoy reading (but such books have much less in them to discuss). Still, I would not teach *The Great Gatsby* for more than one month. It is a short book. I prefer DS9 to TNG because the characters had real conflict and episodes had real consequences, were not simply reset at the end of each episode. And, because they were in orbit around Bajor, we got to see an alien civilization and its politics over time. DS9 could not fly away at the end of the episode like the Enterprise did. See my comments above on *Hammer’s Slammers*.

...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. 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 online AI programs. Samizdat is produced for the Fantasy Fan Federation, a long-running science fiction fan group, and is distributed through its National Amateur Press Alliance (N’APA).

BROWNIAN MOTION #19

A Garth Spencer apazine

For NAPA #282

Dear Mark – I would be happy to contribute to *The Essayist!*

§

Time sped up so much that I had no chance to write a complete apazine for this mailing of NAPA. Perhaps I can include mailing comments to two mailings in my next apazine.

§

The last few years have presented more reminders of humility than usual. My personality and my bad decisions have limited my work, my income and my personal life, but now I face real issues arising out of “lending” too much money to the wrong people, which of course I’ll never see again. I can’t complain, I made the lending decisions and I should have known better, but I now have to find, or invent some solutions. I am working on this challenge.

Over the last year I have learned – the hard way – that my several purchases and subscriptions online are interfering with my budget. (What I laughingly call my budget, anyway.) Now I’m chasing down what subscriptions I signed up for through PayPal, and trying to shut them down. There are several applications or services that offer to simplify this, but which one should I subscribe to? (Subtle joke here)

§

In early April I must have slept wrong on my right side, with the result that I did some kind of soft-tissue damage to my right shoulder. For a while there I had some difficulty putting on and taking off shirts, or getting in and out of the tub, and the chronic pain did not improve my sleep. But just a few weeks of hot baths and rest seemed to alleviate most of the pain and restricted movement.

§

After maintaining a fannish information website for a few months, it finally occurred to me to add a fannish news column to “Across the Fandomension.” (This is joyful news to the CSFFA Board, on behalf of the Aurora Awards.) I would like to add an article admitting that I have neglected such fandoms such as anime, comics, gaming, and others you may think of. And I am trying to expand my articles on writers’ SFFH markets to include the essential details that writers need – what kinds of material they want, reading periods, pay rates, response times, all that there kind of stuff.

As soon as you go to <https://www.vcn.bc.ca/~garth2>, you will realize I have no grasp of website presentation. I know this and can accept helpful criticism. Hopefully I can even *understand* it.