

The Obdurate Eye #61

April 2026

A Garth Spencer fanzine

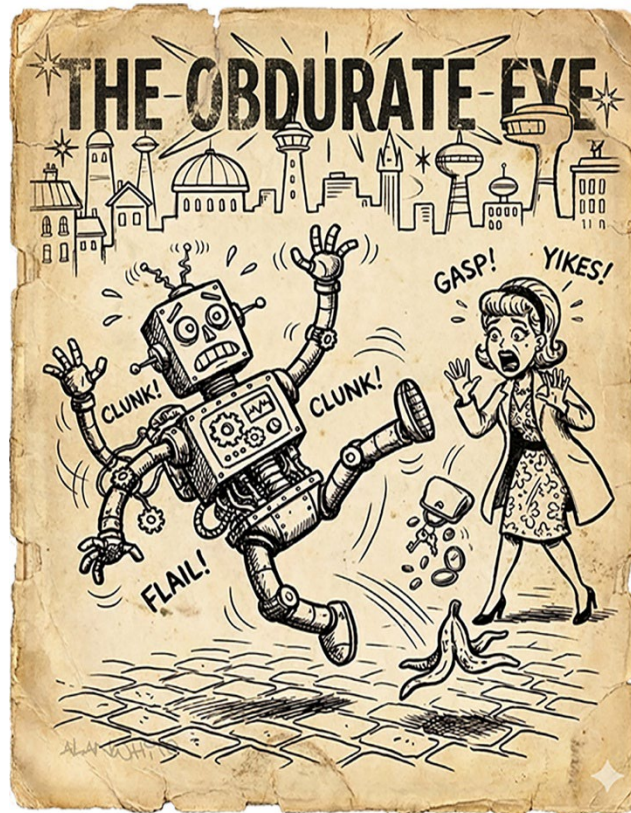
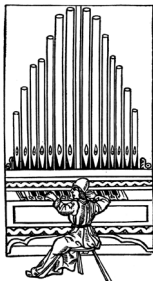


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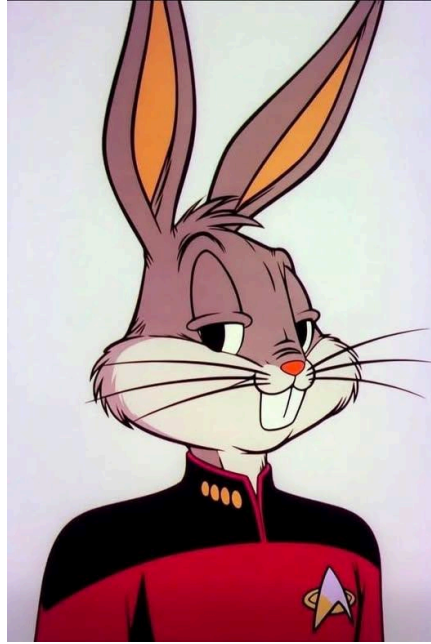
THE OBDURATE EYE #61, April 2026, a personal zine from Garth Spencer, 6960 Damon Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5S 3H7, Email garth.van.spencer@gmail.com or hrothgarweems@gmail.com. Garth acknowledges that he does this on the denounced territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, səliwətaɫ, and skwxwú7mesh peoples. This zine endorses the Port Alberti in 2030 bid. **(Was that bid for Worldcon or Westercon? I forget)**



The organ of no clique or party

Art Credits

“Classic Physical Comedy” (Alan White)	cover
Cmdr. Bugs Bunny (clipart).....	p. 1
“FrankenPresley” (Brad Foster)	p. 2
“Good evening and welcome ...” (Steve Fox).....	p. 4
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“The Future of Public Discourse” (Hugh Spencer).....	p. 12
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“Pub My Ish” (Alexis Gilliland)	p. 16



The Trouble With Belgium

I have discovered a new time sink: digital stories that appear on Facebook. Quite why these things started appearing on my Facebook wall/feed, I don't know. But I think I know why I spend hours reading these not-very-well-written stories, with their plot holes and their unnecessary repetitions and some critical inconsistencies. I know they're usually AI-written, and the accompanying illustrations are usually inconsistent with the stories. You can see similar AI-generated productions on YouTube.

Many of the stories I read are about familial abuse, starting with emotional and psychological abuse, or screwball attitudes and career expectations, managers unwilling or unable to say directly what they want from subordinates, or relatives gaslighting the narrators, and framing them as deficient in mind or character. The interesting thing is that many of the stories I am reading revolve around families favouring one sibling over another. I believe I was spared that. Many of the stories also revolve around the narrators being conned into treating their labour and bank accounts as family property, so that simply asserting some personal boundaries escalates into legal and financial conflicts.

Some SF fans had similar experience with unearned contempt, and I am one of them. At that I guess I was lucky; I could have endured a lot more than I did. Now, I know that I merely faced some screwball behaviour, and that some people just *do*, all the time, everywhere. Do you have similar experiences, in your family or town or culture?

Come to think of it, many people around the world show screwball behaviour, and could benefit from some kind of cognitive therapy. Maybe our whole planet should be sending distress calls into outer space, asking for help.

Do you think maybe our radio and television broadcasts are SOS signals?



LoCs

John D. Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St., No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057, USA, Feb. 3, 2026

I, too, like Penguin Classics.

I forget who wrote, "If you want to make sense, you should always have an 'if' before 'should'."

I don't believe in frettin' or grievin'. Why mess around with strife? I never was cut out to step and strut out. Give me the simple life.

Evelyn Leeper, evelynchimelisleeper@gmail.com, March 10, 2026

Re: *The Obdurate Eye* #60 | March 2026: "MT Void (Feb. 6, 20 & 27, 2026), from Evelyn Leeper (evelynchimelisleeper@gmail.com). In the Feb. 6th edition: Book, radio and film mini- reviews, and the editor's observations of AI and audiobooks failing simple factual and punctuation standards. In the Feb. 20th edition: quirky film reviews, letters of comment, and a part of a story. Interesting exercise in presenting a text-only fanzine in the body of an email."

That wasn't part of a story; that was the whole story of Kate's travels to a bookbinder.

I hadn't thought of the *MT Void* as an "interesting exercise in presenting a text-only fanzine in the body of an email"; it's been that for decades now. I suppose that makes it an interesting relic. It is possible for people to get a PDF version as an attachment, but fewer than 10% of the subscribers do.

((I sit corrected.))

Lloyd & Yvonne Penney , <penneys@bell.net>, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2, March 17, 2026

Working ahead a little bit, I have *The Obdurate Eye* #60, and some comments to match. Now to check my notes, see what I was saying...assuming I can read my own handwriting...

Life? Life is a stage play! We're all background characters fighting for top billing, and a few perks along the way. Die early? Some might call it reincarnation, but really, it's recasting. Fortunately, no one ever gets to read the full script. As *Calvin and Hobbes* would say... They say the world is a stage. But obviously, the play is unrehearsed, and everybody is ad-libbing his lines. Maybe that's why it's hard to tell if we're living in a tragedy or a farce. We need more special effects and dance numbers. (Thank you, Bill Watterson.)

My loc...as time goes on, even publishing changes its directions. The time-honoured format, the pocket paperback, is now gone. What we have left is the trade paperback, and the hardcover book. Doing something silly every day? It sure helps if you have someone of the same mindset to be silly with.

((Oh, I suppose some people will produce and distribute paperbacks, but they won't be as common and certainly not as inexpensive as they were.))

The 100th anniversary of the first issue of *Amazing Stories* is here! And now available is my third anthology, *Amazing Stories: Best of 2025*. It's a very big book of great tales, and is available through Amazon. The return of the magazine? Still in production, but I have high hopes that it will soon see the light of day.

I believe our Aurora nominations are in. We have a much better grasp of the Aurora deadlines than we used to have. We're hoping for the best.

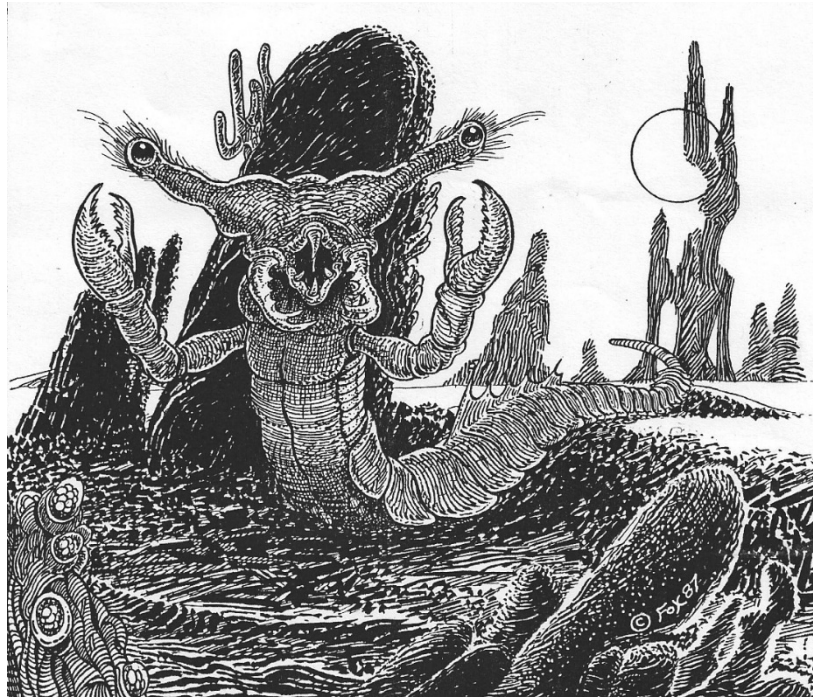
I should be [producing] the official *Amazing Stories* factsheet for submissions, and submit it to the SFFH Market News. We do get submissions from all over the world, and this might help get an even wider selection of submissions.

((Is that a regular trade journal, or website? I couldn't find it. As it is I am updating SF/F/H market lists for the "Across the Fandomension" website the hard way.

((A related thought that occurred to me was to find any fan presses that might exist. When I checked out NESFA Press, though, I found something that looks far more like a professional SF and fantasy bookseller with some fanthologies and fanhistories in their catalogue, much like Norstrilia Press. Langford Editions, meaning Dave Langford's catalogue of his fiction and nonfiction, and the various fanwritings and fanthologies on sale to support TAFF, are the only other possibilities I have tracked down.))

I'm going to wrap it here, and send it off with all alacrity. Many thanks, and I am sure issue 61 is just around the corner.

We Also Heard From: Hugh D. Spencer, Robert Runte, Steven Fox who is still in Philadelphia, and Alan White



“Good evening and welcome to our show! ...”

News

On Spec Will Now Be an Anthology – Kickstarter in Progress

“The *On Spec* 2026 anthology Kickstarter has been running for one week: as of this morning, it’s 73.6 percent funded. For the coming week, I want to highlight the anchor authors. Many of these authors have donated great backers’ rewards! Check out the campaign (link in first comment) for details and to back the project; check out the graphic below to learn more about Candas.”

From Edward Willett, ShadowPaw Press

(Robert Runte, Facebook, March 24, 2026)

Reminder: Nominations Now Open for the 2026 Aurora Awards

“CSFFA members* can now submit their nominations for works done in 2025. Members may submit up to five different works in each of our ten categories. We ask that you only nominate in categories if you are familiar with the eligible works. Our nomination form closes at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 4th.

Review eligible works via our eligibility lists. A basic list is open to the public from our main website page, <https://www.csffa.ca/awardsinformation/eligibility-lists/>. A more advanced one is available to members after you have logged into your account. ...

“NOTE: Members that submit the same work multiple times in a category will have ALL of those submissions voided.

“(*) Membership to CSFFA (Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association) is open to Canadian citizens or Permanent Residents.”

CSFFA newsletter, March 2, 2026

2026 CSFFA Registration is Open

“Registration is open to purchase your 2026 CSFFA membership. This will allow you nominate (March-April) and vote for this year’s awards on the final ballot. Memberships are open to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Registration is available both for returning members from 2023-25 and for new members directly on our home page at www.csffa.ca. Just click the box (Not a Member yet? / You are a Member?) that applies to you.”

CSFFA newsletter, March 2, 2026

Amazing Stories Best of 2025 Is Now Available

“About time I got around to doing this! My third anthology of stories from the Amazing Stories website is now available! Bright red, with artwork from science fiction's favourite gremlin, Frank Kelly Freas. Now available at Amazon.”

Lloyd Penney, March 11, 2026

The Ditmar Awards – Now Closed

Nominations for the 2026 Ditmar Awards were open until 30 March 2026 for work first published in the 2025 calendar year. Nominations were accepted from natural persons active in fandom, and from full or supporting members of Swancon 50//Natcon 2026.

The Chatter Box 2, March 2026

Aurora Book Club March Updates

“We are now in month 3 of the Aurora Awards Retrospective Book Club! This month's book is the second Aurora winner, *Songs from the Drowned Lands* by Eileen

Kernaghan, the follow-up to our February book *Journey to Aprilioth*. Published in 1983, *Drowned Lands* won the 1985 CSFFA Award” [originally named the Caspers, later the Aurora Awards - GS].

“March Book Club Meeting: This month's meeting is still TBA as we poll book club members to set a time that works for the majority of us. The poll is open for two more days: hop on Discord in the #general-book-club channel to submit your availability for consideration. We'll post a final date/time in Discord and on social media by Friday March 6th.”

CSFFA newsletter, March 2, 2026

The Future of Con Crud:

SARS-CoV-2 Is Less Deadly But More Summery

“Your Local Epidemiologist, in [a retrospective on the six-year anniversary of COVID-19 being declared a pandemic](#), points up two notable recent developments which may affect congoing decisions, one potentially worldwide and another in the US.

“The first is that COVID-19 infections are now roughly as severe as flu. It is still nothing to trifle with, seeing how flu kills hundreds of thousands of people worldwide every year, but it means that we have passed through the period in which COVID-19 is a truly extraordinary threat.

“Whether this can lead to a shift in mask policies for conventions that still have them will depend on the priorities of the individual conventions. The pandemic period also made many cons more sensitive to the risks run by their disabled members, and some fan communities have become much less dismissive of “con crud” of all sorts.

“The other piece of news is that the pattern of COVID-19 waves in the United States has stabilized for now into one wave in the summer and one in the winter, with the summer wave larger than the winter one. Although we are used to thinking of airborne respiratory diseases as primarily a winter phenomenon, the season of crowding indoors with air conditioning is turning into the bigger thread for COVID. If you’re planning to go to one of the big summer cons in the US, you might want to get your COVID booster in the spring rather than the fall.”

(SMOF News, March 25, 2026)

Brisbane in 28

The Brisbane in 28 WorldCon bidding committee has filed its papers with this year’s WorldCon to officially enter the ballot for the 2028 WorldCon. Here is their latest post: <https://www.brisbane28.org/the-brisbane-in-28-worldcon-bid-is-now-official>

The Chatter Box 2, March 2026

New Biography About CSFFA's 2025 Hall of Fame Inductee Charles R. Saunders

“Charles R. Saunders was the founder of the “sword and soul” literary genre with his Imaro novels, a Halifax journalist, and a Black Canadian literary icon. When he died

in obscurity in 2020, journalist Jon Tattrie joined fans worldwide to uncover where he was buried, commemorate his life, and bring him the prominence he deserved.

“For Black History Month, Rachel A. Rosen and David L. Clink of the *Wizards & Spaceships* podcast were joined by Jon to tell us about Charles’ remarkable career and his new biography, *To Leave a Warrior Behind: The Life and Stories of Charles R. Saunders, the Man Who Rewrote Fantasy*. You can find the episode of Wizards & Spaceships here.” [\(link\)](#)

CSFFA newsletter, March 2, 2026

All Things Come to an End

“I’m sad to report that the Great Effort to save [Gary Farber](#)’s fanzine collection and move it from [Moshe Feder](#)’s house is no longer a necessity. Storage conditions in Moshe’s garage had dire effects and many of the boxes will have to be junked. [Joe Siclari](#) took nine boxes with him that were salvageable.

“(Thanks to [Joe Haldeman](#) for amplifying the effort and all the people who made suggestions for donating, storing, and preserving. the collection.)”

Jerry Kaufman, Facebook, March 9, 2026

CSFFA Now on Discord

“We’re happy to announce that CSFFA is joining the great Discord bandwagon, and has created a community server where fans, readers, creators, and all Canadian SFF enthusiasts can gather online to discuss Canadian speculative fiction and the Aurora Awards. The Discord server is open to the public, and you can join us using this link.”

CSFFA newsletter, March 2, 2026

Conventions Happening in Canada and the Pacific Northwest

April 3-5: Anime Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

April 3-5: Norwescon 48: Illuminating the Way, SeaTac, Washington, USA

April 3-5: Sakura-Con 2026 (anime), Seattle, Washington, USA

April 10-12: Icon (gaming), Idaho Falls, Idaho, USA

April 10-12: Nadeshicon (anime), Québec City, Québec, Canada

April 17-19: Virtual Can*Con, online

April 17-19: FilKONtario (music), Markham, Ontario, Canada

April 17-19: Jeu au Boute (boardgames), Chertsey, Québec, Canada

April 17-19: TAGCON (boardgames), Pasco, Washington, USA

April 24-26: Spring CamasCon (gaming and Christian retreat), Peshastin, Washington, USA

April 24-26: Jeu au Boute (boardgames), Chertsey, Québec, Canada

April 24-26: Sci-Fi on the Rock (media), St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

SMOF News March 4 - 25, 2026

((Where are the gentle joys of fannish cons? ... GS))

Disability and the Modern Media Convention

(from SMOF News, March 11, 2026)

Inspired by the upcoming Toronto Comicon (Toronto, Ontario, March 20-22), CBC reporter Amanda Shekarchi has an article looking at some of the ways disabled fans experience a typical media convention.

A wheelchair notes a problem that is familiar to many fans of all abilities, and one that isn't:

Chaz Fisher is a convention volunteer and wheelchair user. He says that navigating Fan Expo Canada, which is held across two buildings and multiple levels at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, is time-consuming and challenging. ...

"It's a pain to get to, even as an able-bodied person, never mind somebody who is navigating a disability," he says. "For me, it is a struggle to get between both buildings because wheelchairs and carpets don't mix."

Carpets are an unavoidable feature in many venues, but one place they aren't is in the large event halls of most convention centers, such as the one Fisher is pictured in. Those halls often have a bare concrete floor, and putting carpet down for the duration of a convention is a choice.

But it's not just up to the convention. Shekerchi, who is blind, recalls a memorable actor booth:

Some people read Braille, and at [Michaela Jill] Murphy's booth at last year's Fan Expo Canada in Toronto, she had Braille prints of Toph available. Others benefited from more tactile handheld items. She is currently working on making more tactile merchandise that fans can hold, including knitted turtle ducks — a fictional creature from the *Avatar* world — or raised prints, using bubble markers to create a tactile autograph.

Fisher also calls for more disabled volunteers:

"If there's a child who is meeting the [star] of their favourite video game or cartoon, and their parents bring them up and they see somebody with a disability running that line, I think that sets a precedent for them," Fisher says. The advice for any disabled fan who wants to volunteer is the same for any other would-be volunteer: know your limits, and clearly communicate what you can and can't do."

From *SMOF News* March 11, 2026



Grow Potatoes

Den Valdron, Facebook, March 22, 2026

Potatoes are probably the easiest thing to grow, they grow in really crap soil, in yards, lawns, flowerpots and gardens, and they give more calories per acre than anything else around.

So my advice is grow potatoes this year. Screw your flowers, your annuals, your perennials, your herbs and tomatoes and vegetables. Grow potatoes.

On the other side of the world, an undersea boulder crashed into a chasm. The result is a shock wave.

It takes time for that shock wave to travel all the way around the world and for the Tsunami to wipe the shores clean on the far away continent.

That's us. The ships, the arrangements, the goods and services that all began started on or before February 28, they're all still in the pipeline, working their way through. The oil tankers are still en route, waiting to arrive at their harbours to unload the oil. All the bits and pieces in all the supply chains, it's all still there in process, has been in process before February 28. The shockwave is still out there, rippling along steadily, moving inexorably towards us. You don't see it now, our world is normal. But trust me. It will arrive. The ones who are able, and who are smart, should be heading to high ground as fast as they can.

The ones who are smart ,but not able to escape? Well, we're just watching. The ones who aren't smart? They're cheering.

I live in an apartment. But I have a balcony where I had flowers. I'm thinking potatoes. I also have a barbecue on it with a propane tank if the power goes out.

My ex-wife, who I'm on good terms with, has a yard and a back yard.

My advice to you is buy a five gallon bucket of rice. It's cheap (for now) it stores well without a requirement for refrigeration, and half a cup will keep you going. Best comes to best, I figure that in a year's time I can just donate it or something. Worst case, that might be all I get to eat for a couple of months. Rice is cheap enough that I wouldn't mind buying it to donate in a year's time.

Stock up on canned goods, again, cheap, stores well without refrigeration and in a pinch you can eat it without cooking.

Stock up on rechargeable batteries. Maybe a small solar panel for your window or balcony. I would also say if you've got any significant purchases coming up, particularly electronic devices, anything reliant on chips or extensive supply chains, make those purchases now. Same thing with clothes or durable goods. I'm not sophisticated enough to figure out what good trade goods are.

I know some of us are living paycheque to paycheque, in debt, relying on food banks. I'm so sorry. My advice is the same – if you can put enough money aside to buy five gallons of rice, this is the time to do it.

My guess is that we're not looking at a general full collapse. That's a scenario that's hard to escape from. And if it happens, the preppers will die right alongside the rest of us – I only hope there'll be enough survivors to pry assholes like Bezos and Zuckerberg out of their bunkers.

But no, civilization is not going to collapse. This is not the end.

This is just going to be a giant pain in the ass, misery, inconvenience and hopefully only occasional hardship.

I think on the whole, we'll see overall stability – police will police, libraries will library, hospitals will hospital.

Generally, electrical power delivery will be stable, but with local transient failures and brown outs – probably not for more than a few days or a week.

Water delivery is least likely to be impacted, that's the most basic and fundamental utility, so that's probably safe, barring very brief interruptions. But it's probably wise to have a couple of gallons of fresh water around. You don't want to be drinking out of a toilet tank.

Medicines might become an issue. Keep a first aid kit fully stocked, you should have one anyway. Stock up on Advil, aspirin, Tylenol, the basics – shouldn't be a problem there but you never know. Any prescriptions – get them filled now, and try and get filled for a couple of months. Mainly, don't get sick – if there are medication bottlenecks, it'll be with the prescription and hospital stuff.

What we are likely to see are specific, perhaps category shortages of certain products, either surprising/unpredicted, or short or long term arising from supply chain breakdowns and bottlenecks. I think we'll also see sudden erratic extreme price spikes

on specific commodities. Again, it's hard to predict which and where, because the effects are going to wind unpredictably through the global economy.

I think we'll see high inflation, but not runaway inflation, as the oil shocks and bottlenecks work through the economy. But I don't think we'll be so badly managed that we'll see hyperinflation. We will probably see extreme localized price shocks and spikes in specific commodities, some of which will go away over time, some won't.

Travel is going to suck. I have two trips to Toronto in April, and I'm not looking forward to the fuel surcharges I will probably be paying. I've been looking at trips to Ottawa, Halifax, Calgary and Australia... they may not be viable. Air Travel is going to get very expensive. I think Gas prices are going to spike like Crazy and a lot of long-commuters are not going to afford it, so back to working from home as in Covid. Rails and public transit may become important. If you don't have a bicycle, you should think of getting one – preferably one with saddlebags, or one of those tow accessories.

Jobs are generally going to be unstable – we were likely already about to go into a recession. This is going to be bad. Unemployment is going to be high, and social programs are going to be stretched.

Make friends, share, start co-ops, pool resources. The people that do worse in these things are the ones who are most socially isolated. Network, and make it real networking, get to know your friends, your neighbors.

What's happening is going to be very complicated. We're just blown a hole in a commodity that is fundamental to our industrial processes, our supply chains, every part of our society and economy, and the effects will trickle and permeate through, taking literally millions of pathways and producing surprise results. I can see the wave coming, but I can't predict every pathway.

This is not the end, I don't think. We are an incredibly wealthy civilization, and we can cushion ourselves and each other. This is only an impact on our key resource, not a termination.

This is just a lot of disruption, a lot of discomfort, and some of it is going to be sudden, sharp and unpredictable, some will just be miserable.

I think that times will be hard, but not lethal. and this will be all about just making sure we ride out crises as they show up.

Cheer up.

Maybe it'll inspire us to build something better and saner later on. A proper safety net, decent programs, a society that's built for livability rather than simply efficiency, one where psychopaths in business and politics are reined in and not celebrated.

There's a better world out there, waiting to be built. We just have to get through all this shit first.

So smile at each other, and grow potatoes.



Iran, Oil, Potatoes and You...

Someone was wondering how the price of oil and the closing of the Persian Gulf might affect things. If the supply is reduced by 10%, does that mean that prices go up 10%? What's the connection between impacts on supply and impacts on prices?

Let's explore this, using potatoes as an analogy.

Look at it this way. Let's say we have 100 people, and 100 bushels of potatoes being produced, each person needs, on average, a bushel of potatoes a year to live.

The trouble is, those potatoes are not distributed equally. There's different potato producers, different circumstances. So in Canada and the US we produce our own potatoes. Europe got potatoes from Russia and Ukraine. Everyone grows some of their own potatoes. But there's enough potatoes overall, from the surplus producers that even if you don't have your own supply of potatoes, or your own key providers, you'll be okay, because you can buy them on the potato spot market. About 25 or 30 bushels of those produced in the world are on the free open potato market.

Now suppose something happens – Russia and Ukraine fuck it up. Instead of 100 bushels of potatoes produced there are only 97 bushels. No problem for Canada and the US, no problems for a lot of people. Kind of a problem for Europe – they need 20 bushels, they're only getting 17. But they make arrangements, they spend a little extra, buy a little extra here, a little extra there. They make their nut, or say 19, it's inconvenient, but we all ride it through. The price of potatoes on the free potato market spikes a bit. But a lot of potatoes are already contracted and locked in, so disruption is minimal.

Now let's imagine that instead of 100 bushels being produced, only 80 go on the market. Canada and the US have their own supply and networks, other producers have their own contracts and connections. But the open free potato market, which normally accounts for 25 or 30 of the world's bushels of potatoes... They're missing 20 bushels. So they're down to 5 or 10. That means that there are a lot of hungry people, only of the thirty hungry people, only 5 may be getting to eat. How much does the price spike up when the alternative is starving? Not 10%, not 20%, it might go up by

200% or 300%, how much would you pay to not starve, when you're bidding against a guy who is also not wanting to starve, and only one of you wins?

As the price goes up and up and up, the prices in the locked in potato producers and markets start getting twitchy. Say Mexico is producing potatoes for the US, at the old regular, stable agreed on price. But the free market price is triple or quadruple that. Maybe they want to sell a few less to the US, and a few more elsewhere. Or maybe they'd like to be paid more by the US.

This is a really simplified illustration of the way things are shaping out. The Persian Gulf is producing 20% of the world's oil, but it's producing a much larger proportion of the 'open market' share. Maybe 60% or 80% of the open market?

Certain countries – China, Japan, Korea are highly dependent on Persian Gulf oil, much more disproportionately, much more than 20%. If 80% or 90% of your oil comes from the Gulf, you have a problem. And it's not an easy problem to solve.

Our economies and supply chains are tied to China, Japan and Korea. Their problems become our problems.

Even where say, the US may be in a good position, with its own resources, and Canada, Mexico and Venezuela supplying them... there are problems as the marketplace goes wonky, and everyone is desperately bidding for supply, or trying to pry-buy some of that locked in supply loose. Some of those locked in contracts are staked on the free market price, which is changing. So the worldwide price creeps up, even in stable situations, and things get complicated.

This is what we're going into. By way of illustration, the 1970s oil crisis only affected 5% of the world supply, and the Russian invasion only affected 2%. So... watch your potatoes.



Movies and TV I've Seen Lately

Duncan Shields, Facebook, March 20th, 2026

Project Hail Mary (2026) - A rock-solid adaptation of the Andy Weir book. Lord and Miller have done it again. Ryan Gosling goes to space on a desperate Earth-saving mission. I don't want to spoil too much of the plot but I didn't feel any of the 2hr36m

runtime which is amazing. It zipped by. Thumbs up. Lots of laughs and tears and heart. Check it out. - now in theaters

Hoppers (2026) - Wonderful. Pixar's back! A teen finds a way to put her brain into a robot beaver to infiltrate the local wildlife and hijinks ensue. Loved it. Well worth watching. Great pacing, emotion, voice talent, animation, and morals. I laughed SUPER hard at a few places. A delightful film for anyone. - now in theaters

Song Sung Blue (2025) - Pretty great stuff. Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson (in an Oscar nominated performance) star as Lightning and Thunder, a very popular real-life Neil Diamond cover band duo based in Milwaukee. It's a love letter to hard lives, the power of music, celebrity impersonators, and the solace of love. Everything you want in a movie, really. An emotional journey. Hugh and Kate act their faces off. Maybe a smiiiiidge schmaltzy once or twice but a beautiful film. - rented on Prime

Primal (animated series)(season 3)(2026) - The best animated series to come out in the last handful of years if you ask me. Animation superstar Genndy Tartakovsky (*Samurai Jack*, *Clone Wars*, *Dexter's Laboratory*, *Hotel Transylvania*) heads an animated series about a caveman and his dinosaur. Hardly any dialogue, lots of gore and violence, good emotional beats, and fantastic animation. I can't get enough. Like a heavy metal song brought to life. And this season 3 is the best one yet in my opinion. If you like a good amount of dinosaur violence and excellent animation, this is going to be your jam. - Streaming on Apple

undertone (2025) - VERY scary. A wonderful Canadian low-budget horror movie based on sound. Distributed by A24. A podcaster living by herself with a terminally-ill mother hosts a spooky show that goes into urban legends and scary stories. Her and her co-host get ten mp3s of scarier and scarier stuff. Reality starts to unravel as they go through them. This MUST be seen in a theater if you get the chance. I was SO uneasy and freaked out. Fantastic stuff. It'll suffer for sure in the transition to the small screen unless you've got surround-sound 5.1 Dolby whatever. Scared the beans out of me. - watched at The Park Theater on Cambie

Monster (2023)(Japan) - Quite beautiful. Told in an out-of-order narrative, a single mom thinks her tween son is being abused by a teacher but is given the administrative runaround by the school. The real story unfolds as the movie proceeds from three layered flashback POV chapters. Wonderfully shot. Also a bit of a queer love film. Reminded me just a bit of *The Florida Project* in a way. The world's a harsh place for kids. Very slow so it requires patience but I liked it. - streaming on Kanopy, bilibili.tv, and Mubi. Available for purchase/rent from AppleTV, GooglePlay, and YouTube

Creep 2 (2017) - One of those rare sequels that improves on the original. Very seldomly done. Mark Duplass comes back as the eponymous Creep but this time around, his videographer is a driven content-creator woman. It goes to very interesting places. Once again, a testament to a good script and performances making up for zero budget. Well worth a watch. If they do a third movie, I hope they call it Cr33p. - streaming on Netflix

Basket Case 3 (1991) - Hot damn. The misunderstood monster Belial becomes a dad to a mess of strange babies. *Basket Case 2* came out just the year before so I figure these sequels, with their amazing and elaborate makeup, were filmed back to back.

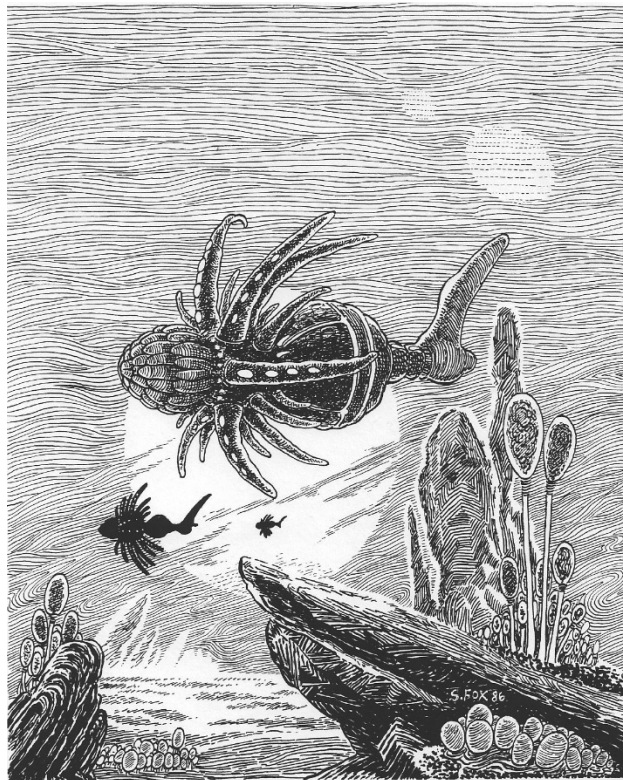
Directed again by Frank Hellenlotter. A fantastic return to this wackadoo franchise. Good times. Loved it. - streaming on Tubi, DailyMotion, and Fawesome.tv.

Xtro (1982) - Hell. Yes. Wow. What a sweet movie. I never saw this back in the day but last night, it had me feeling like SNL's Stefon saying "this place has everything." Body horror, alien invasion, creepy family dynamics, nice synths, sweet gore, nudity, children in peril, and a wild birth scene. Sometimes the Brits just hit different cinematically, especially when it comes to horror and sci-fi. And this is both! Highly recommended. - Streaming on YouTube

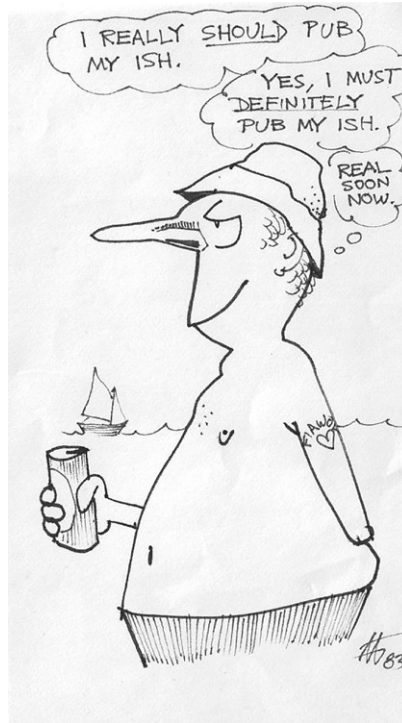
Q (1982) - I'm fairly sure I saw this back in the day and was disappointed because young me wanted more footage of terrifying pterodactyl dragons noshing on the populace. But I was like 12. Now, as an adult who knows better, I can fully appreciate this New York based crime caper with jazz interludes and character actors galore gracing the screen while cops David Carradine and Richard Roundtree pair with cowardly, lanky criminal Michael Moriarty to unravel the mystery of ritual sacrifice victims that are summoning an Aztec dragon to materialize in Midtown Manhattan. Bring it on. Loved it. Well worth an entertaining watch. - Streaming on Tubi and YouTube

Check out all my reviews on

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



Commuting before rush hour



Fanzines Received

Vanamonde 1664-66 & 1660-1663, John D. Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St., No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057, USA

CSFFA newsletter, March 2, 2026, from the Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy Association newsletter@csffa.ca.

The Visionary March 4, 11, 18 and 25, 2026, from the Universal Life Church newsletter@themonastery.org. "(March 4) as the Middle East plunges into conflict once again, *The Visionary* examines the religious movement that some believe is an underlying factor in U.S. involvement. ..." (March 11) From a father's controversial conviction, to a law that would allow unlicensed armed security in churches, some argue that responsibility for gun violence is not isolated to the shooter. ..." "(March 18) From eyebrow-raising religious messages about the conflict in Iran, to U.S. leaders who say some faiths aren't welcome here, what can be done to keep the peace? Plus, the ULC got a surprising influx of new members after decades-old rumors about the draft began recirculating."

SMOF News March 4, 11, 18 and 25, 2026, from Petréa Mitchell at smofnews@substack.com. As you can tell from the news in my fanzine, SMOF News is not only a list of upcoming conventions but a source of news about the issues occurring in and around conventions.

The N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono, Feb. 2026. Editor: George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609, phillies@4liberty.net. Published by the National Fantasy Fan Federation, PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049 and distributed for free to N3F Members and archival sites.

The Chatter Box 2, 3, 4 and 5 (March 2026), “The Fresh Fanac Fanzine: A genzine published for the elite of fandom (*you* know what I mean) by Leigh Edmonds (Past President, FWA) who can be contacted by email at leighedmonds01@gmail.com or by pactsarcd at 60 Park Street, Wendouree, Vic 3355, Australia.” World’s shortest genzine, with a Corflu 50 report, and neat fanzine reviews. Check out Leigh’s submission rules, in *Chatter Box* nos. 1 through 5.

The MT Void March 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2026. Editor: Evelyn Leeper, evelynchimelisleeper@gmail.com. Reviews and opinions about all kinds of media.

Impulse March / Mars 2026 (Vol. 29, No./No 3) , c/o 125 Rue Léonard, Châteauguay, Québec, Canada, J6K 1N9, Editor Keith Braithwaite (Keith1958@live.ca), newsletter of MonSFFA, c/o 29 Harold, Kirkland, Québec, Canada H9J 1R7, website www.MonSFFA.ca: courtesy Cathy Palmer-Lister.

Tonopah Elucidator & Literary Review #4, a personal zine from Kevin Trainor: “his doings (or lack thereof) in the Silver State and occasionally elsewhere.” PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049 or at wombat.soch@gmail.com. This time, mainly comments on Confinement VII in Arizona. Letters of comment solicited.

Tightbeam 378 – My release of Adobe Acrobat is having issues with some fanzines. Does anyone have some advice about this?

Eldritch Science March 2026, a fictionzine for N3F members, from Steve Condrey, 60 Garfield Lane, Glenwood, IA 51534, USA. Email: steve.condrey.tnfff@gmail.com.

Littlebrook #15 Feb/March 2026, the yearly fanzine from Suzanne Tompkins (aka Suzle) and Jerry Kaufman at PO Box 25075, Seattle, WA 98165 USA, or at littlebrooklocs@aol.com. (Each can also be reached at suzlet@aol.com or jakaufman@aol.com.) Jerry Kaufman describes how he and Donald Keller created Serconia Press (1984-1995), and proceeded to produce small-press editions of works by Brian Aldiss and John Clute, and distributing other SFnal works; Sandra Bond reveals her secret journeys following Pemmicon; how Andy Hooper became a fan; letters and letters and letters; and Suzle expounds on fanzine frequency, the joys of travel, the learning experience of shipping boxes, and fanzine lounges. Now this is a genzine.

The N3F Fan Gazette, March 2026, “News of Fen of Interest to All Fen,” mindyhunt@scifi4me.com or jphunt@scifi4me.com. This is where I learned about online versus onsite conventions.

The National Fantasy Fan March 2026, editors George Phillies phillies@4liberty.net and Jon Swartz judgeswartz@gmail.com. In this edition, Laureate Award nominations (including Lloyd Penney for Best Fan Writer! And *Obdurate Eye* for Best non-N3F Fan Publication!), letters of comment, short reports on a wide range of N3F activities, art, ads, and the N3F Short Story Contest.

This Here... 97, March 2026, 2657 Rungsted Street, Las Vegas NV 89142, or Email fareynic@gmail.com. Nic’s Corflu report! Nic’s TAFF report! Nic’s FAAn Awards report! Nic’s health report! Television reviews and film criticism and radio critiques! Letters and letters and letters!