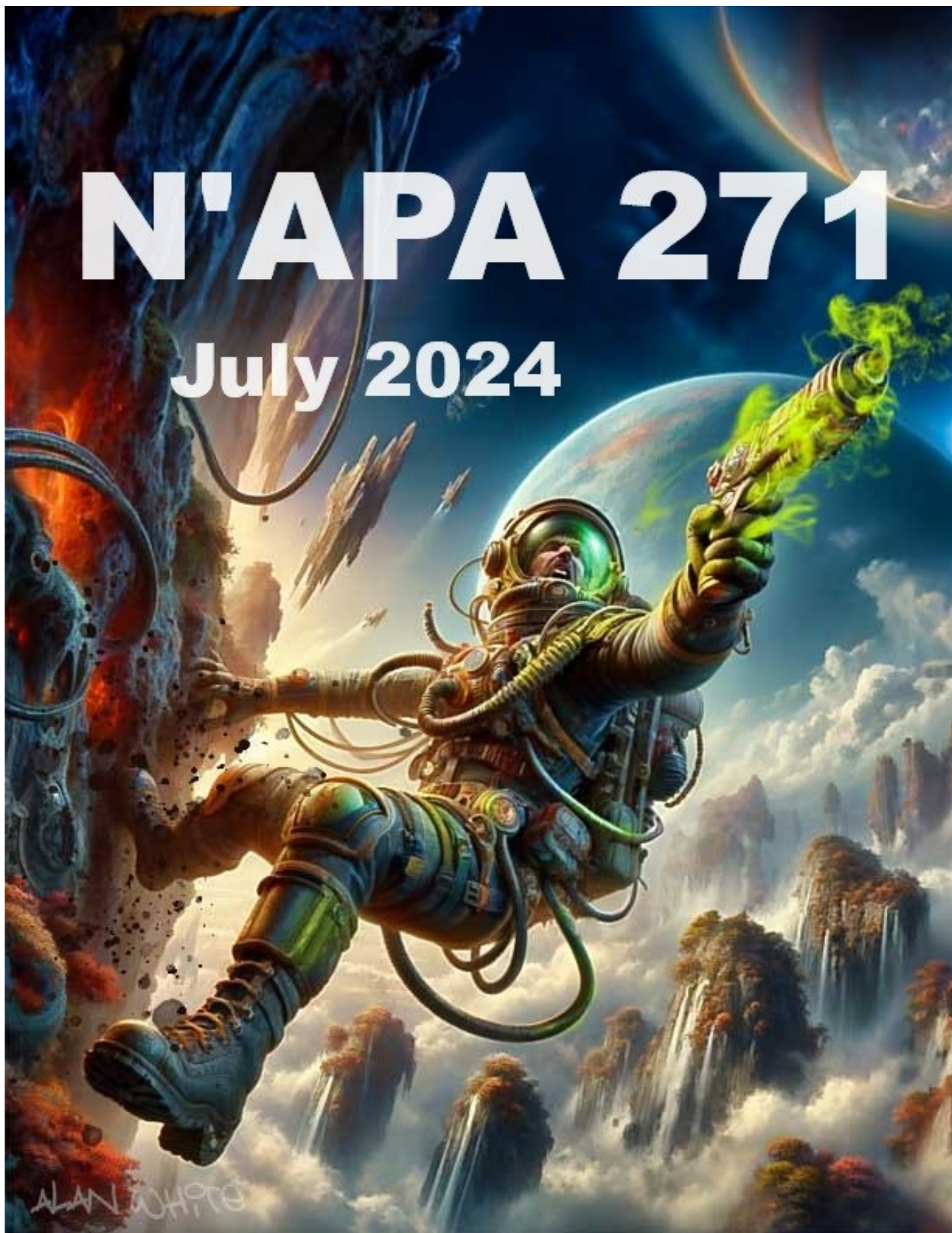


# N'APA 271

July 2024



# The Official Organ

## #271

**Next deadline: September 15, 2024**

The official collator is George Phillies - [phillies@4liberty.net](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net).

The official preparer is Jefferson P. Swycaffer - [abontides@gmail.com](mailto:abontides@gmail.com)

**Procedure: Please Read:**

Submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer, [abontides@gmail.com](mailto:abontides@gmail.com)

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

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

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

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## Mini Editorial:

Super huge bundles of thanks to Alan White, who donated the cover art for this issue! Thanks also to Jose Sanchez, who received it from Alan and who arranged our use. To artist and agent, many thanks!

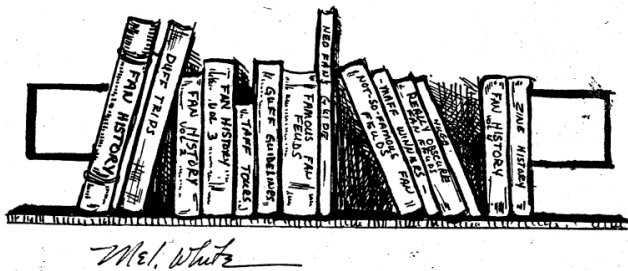
Oh, fudge! So, here I was, presumptuous enough to write a mini-editorial asking everyone to do their best to make N'APA the best APA it can possibly be -- and what do I do? I choke! I flub! I put my shoes on the wrong feet! I mess up! I left Heath Row's contribution, Snow Poster Township, out of issue 270. I accidentally filed it in the wrong Windows folder, and didn't realize my blunder until too late. Dumbth! All my most sincere apologies, to Heath and to all the membership. "Do Better" is more than a slogan; it is an ideal!



## Snow Poster Township #16

May 15, 2024

*Snow Poster Township* is an apazine published by Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. Banner artwork by Henry Chamberlain. *Snow Poster Township* is prepared for contributors to NAPA, members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and select others. A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.



### From the Reading Pile: Short Stories

Inspired by John Thiel's mention of the September/October issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* in *Synergy* #48 (see below), I read that edition this week. I am so glad I did.

I subscribe to *F&SF* in print and receive it in the mail but don't read it consistently. I don't know that I've ever submitted speculative poetry, but given my track record, if I did, they rejected it. (Researching that question led to my Poetry Record spreadsheet. It's been a while since I've published any poetry! Perhaps I'll document that in the future just for kicks.) Yet I support *F&SF*, receive it, stow it away, and occasionally seek it out. This issue in particular is impressive.

As the September/October issue, this could be a

Halloween special, but it isn't explicitly so, though it contains a fair amount of the horrific. Marianne Plumridge's painted cover, "Moon Patrol," features a slender rocketship and the moon—and could have graced any number of magazines in the 1950s and 1960s. Hardly a hallmark of horror.

Max Firehammer's novelet "Shining Shores" blends Stephen King- and H.P. Lovecraft-styled eldritch horror in a seaside story about a missing friend, sleepwalking, and the siren song of the mysteries of the deep. The editor's note preceding the piece indicates that it's inspired by the Orcadian folktale of the Nuckalavee. With Firehammer based in Saint Paul, Minn., the Minnesota Science Fiction Society should invite them to do a reading, if they haven't already. The story is quite dreadful, in the best possible sense.

"Sort Code," a short story by Chris Barnham, is a clever time travel tale that brings two ~~star~~time-crossed lovers together. The piece includes multiple literary references: Charles Dickens, William Wordsworth, and Jane Austen's *Persuasion*. Caught in a sort of purgatory, the two protagonists decide not to fight their random walk through time, but to embrace it and go with the flow. It's an interesting concept.

Phoebe Wood's short story "What We Found in the Forest" is a loving exploration of self-realization inspired by inhaling mold spores. The author strikes a strong chord in just three pages.

"Three Sisters Syzygy," a novelet by Christopher Mark Rose, is why we're here. One of relatively few sf stories in the issue—the above could qualify as biological sf—the piece is well worth reading. Combining an astronomical event, multiversal displacement, family ties, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*-like cinematic surrealism, the story is told from the points of view of several characters, siblings, the titular sisters. That's occasionally confusing, but section headers help the reader reorient. And the ending of the story is much like the beginning, suggesting that the events that unfold have occurred before, and will again. I encourage you to seek this issue out based on this story alone. It's wonderful.

While "syzygy" indeed means a "nearly straight-line configuration of three celestial bodies" (Merriam-Webster), it also means "a conjunction or opposition" and "a pair of connected or corresponding things," (Oxford), which resonates with Thiel's fanzine title *Synergy*, "the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects." (Oxford) Perhaps syzygy can lead to synergy. In this story, it certainly does.

Karter Mycroft's short story "Mixtapes from Neptune" uses a mixtape playlist as the framing device for a sad little story about the ending of a relationship and pursuing diverging paths. Mycroft also works as an ocean scientist, and the biological aspects of the story work quite well—the maritime theme resonating lightly with Firehammer's novelet above. You can check out the story's playlist at <https://tinyurl.com/Neptune-Mixtape>.

"To Pluck a Twisted String," a short story by Anne Leonard, concentrates on the power of music, glass, artwork (paintings as spells!), and the loss of a child. Continuing the theme of strings, A Humphrey Lanham's "My Embroidery Stitches Are Me" explores the motivations behind body modification, as well as its undoing. While the story could have been horrible—it did give me the shivers—it stops shy of body horror.

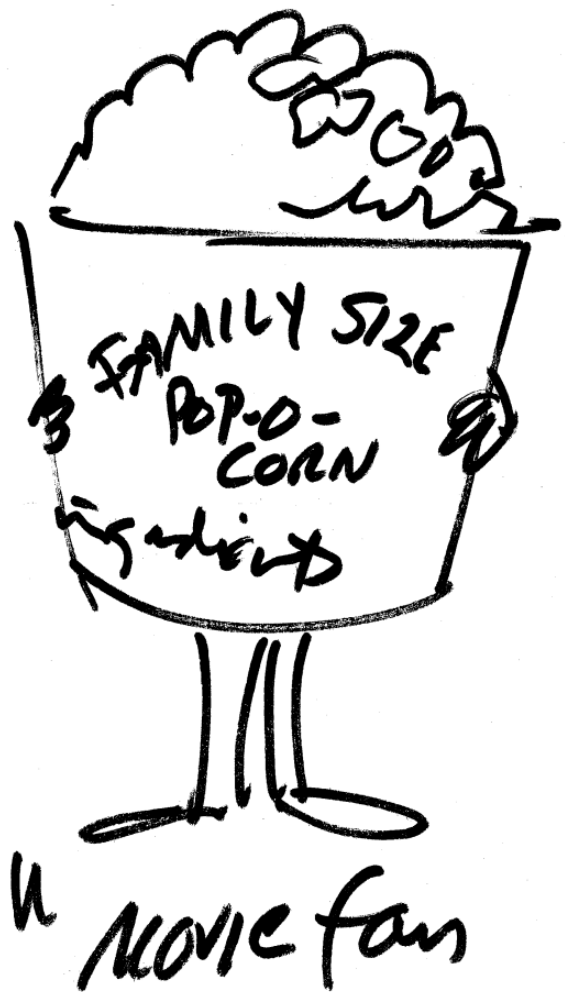
Getty Hesse's short story "Teatro Anatomico," however, embraces it. The piece explores the mentor-apprentice relationship, public performance, bodily autonomy, and rebellion. It takes seriously what *Andy Warhol's Frankenstein* approached glibly. (*The Brass Hat Mind* #5)

"Night Haul" by Andrew Crowley is another reason for reading this issue. So many aspects of the work of Stephen King arise in this short story, but it is far from a King pastiche. Like "Shining Shores" above, the ending suggests that the story is only just beginning. It is a delicious piece of horror writing.

Kel Coleman ("a Marylander at heart": attention, Samuel Lubell!) contributed "On the Matter of *Homo sapiens*," another rare sf piece in this issue. The story considers robots—sentimechs—who debate about the "resurrection of *Homo sapiens*" while trying to learn more about humanity while geocaching.

"Sugar Steak" is also worth seeking out. Written by Jenny Kiefer, proprietor of Butcher Cabin Books in Louisville, Ky. (<https://www.horrorbookstore.com>—buy some books!), the short story reminded me of splatterpunk, a more aggressive King (specifically *Thinner*), or perhaps Clive Barker or Poppy Z. Brite. The images captured by Kiefer are astonishingly visceral.

I haven't read all the stories yet—two novelets and two short stories remain—but I also read the poetry, Charles de Lint's book reviews, and Carol Cooper's Curiosities column. This is the first time in a long time I've read so much of an issue of F&SF, and if the recent run is even close to this edition, Sheree Renee Thomas's stint as editor is and will be glorious indeed. Scour the shelves for this ish—and read the thing.



—William Rotsler

## Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

### *Child's Play 3*

Having recently watched *Child's Play 2* earlier this year (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #101), a friend and I watched its 1991 sequel, *Child's Play 3*, mid-month on video cassette. While it's not as good as its immediate precursor, there are a couple of moments that make the flick worth watching.

For example, the beginning. *Child's Play 2* ended in the destroyed remnants of a Play Pals factory, in which Chucky—the franchise's possessed plaything—had been melted down into a mound of plastic slag. *Child's Play 3* starts here, the remains of the production facility heavily cobwebbed, and workers in protective suits preparing it for renewed operation. The puddled remains of Chucky are retrieved by remote control, and some of its blood (yes, the murderous doll still oozes bodily fluids) drips into a vat of plastic or rubber, enabling the continuation of the series.

I also enjoyed the boardroom scene during which

the company's CEO decides to resume production and distribution of Good Guys dolls despite the previous movies' "bad publicity," blaming it on the deranged ravings of one disturbed child. A staff member tries to discourage the decision, to no effect. Of course, that goes well for everyone over the course of the rest of the movie.

But the ending is the highlight, taking place at a carnival, as it does, shades of *The Funhouse* (*The Brass Hat Mind* #1). I love carnivals, and this cinematic carnival features one of the best haunted houses I've seen at such a venue. Rather than the usual plywood, glow-in-the-dark spray paint, and dusty Frankenstein mask most honest-to-gosh spook houses feature, this one is amazing. Not only do the creatures within remind me of the alien character design in *Killer Klowns from Outer Space*, it's quite large and expansive, almost a Space Mountain-like rollercoaster. That leads to an excellent chase scene and climax, echoing the ending of *Child's Play 2*.

Otherwise, it's a lame flick. None of the main cast is retained, except for the voice of Chucky (who is not Danny DeVito, but watch it with him in mind!). The boy protagonist has grown up to be a young man and has been sent to a military school. That leads to the expected student bullies, strict discipline, clandestine snogging, and drill sergeant stereotypes, as well as an annual war game that resonates with the campwide games of movies such as *Meatballs*.

Regardless, Andrew Robinson (*Hellraiser*'s Frank "Jesus Wept" Cotton) makes a strange comedic appearance as an aggressive military school barber, who makes sure that all of the students are "bald" (oddly, not bald), or at least very well trimmed.

The primary problem I had with this film was the overwhelming number of catchphrases intended as laugh lines. "You just can't keep a Good Guy down." "Don't fuck with the Chuck." "Chucky's gonna be a bro." I guess I can imagine them working in a crowded movie house in 1991, but they tend to fall flat and feel like gratuitous try-hardism.

In any event, watching the movie and APA-L #3068's Ignorable Theme on genre soundtracks led me to listen to Graeme Revell's score for the 1990 *Child's Play 2*. Composed for orchestra, the score was performed by a 90-piece ensemble conducted by Shirley Walker, who also provided the orchestration. Search for it on your streaming services of choice. The score is really quite good. A double-LP pressing by Waxwork Records sold out, and La-La Land Records offers a compact disc version of the score. Faneds might be particularly interested in the track titled "Photocopy Finish."



—Alan White

### Comments on N'APA #269

I previously commented on *Intermission* #141 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #17. Those remarks read as follows: "In *Intermission* #141, **Ahrvid Engholm** updated eAPAns [and N'APAns] on his viewing of *Oppenheimer*, winter and New Year's Eve, cross-country skiing, SpaceX launches, and the Russo-Ukrainian War. During our honeymoon, my wife and I visited Los Alamos, N.M. It's one of the most bizarre cities I've ever been in. Reportedly claiming more PhDs per capita than any other city in the United States, it's kind of a no place place. Very sterile seeming.

"Two notable locations we visited included the Black Hole, the Los Alamos Laboratory salvage yard, and the Los Alamos History Museum. The former was an astounding array of research lab castoffs and has been covered quite well by *Wired*. (<https://www.wired.com/1995/04/the-black-hole-of-los-alamos>) The latter offers a relatively solid look at the history of the area, including the Manhattan Project, but when we were there in 2008, somehow neglected the potential risks and impact of nuclear energy or weaponry. The only token nod they made to such concerns was a visitor participation exhibit in which you could write your thoughts on a three-by-five card to put into a shoe box. The museum was pretty well white washed of any anti-nuke awareness or sentiment. I appreciated your expansive commentary on *Oppenheimer*, as well as the connection between Los Alamos and *Astounding*.

"That you progressed to consider H.G. Wells's *The World Set Free* and its portrayal of atomic bombs was

very welcome. Your healthy excerpts suggest that the book is worth reading, as are most by Wells. Your recommended playlist of related songs also merits exploration. Thank you for the listening suggestions! The song by Johnny Bode was a definite delight, profanity aside.



—Alan White

“While you might have run out of material from the Stockholm Royal Library, your roundup of Atomic Age toys and other assorted media coverage made for delightful reading. Winston Churchill was also cited during the alternate history panel [at Gallifrey One earlier this year]. I might have to spend more time with his writing!

“I also read and enjoyed your discussion of Thor Modeen. World cinema—non-English cinema—has a lot to offer, and I’ll see what’s available of his work domestically.

“H.P. Lovecraft might have written 10 letters a day, but that doesn’t seem to be that many in the time before television and the Internet. Even with reading and radio to draw your attention and time, correspondence was much more common, and it’s a natural outgrowth of amateur press associations (or vice versa). Personally, I’m trying to write just 12 letters of comment to fanzines a month. It’ll ensure I read more fanzines, and it’s a fun form of fanac in addition to apahacking and pubbing. I was inspired by voting in the recent Faan Awards. And Corflu is occurring this weekend! I was so excited about the con that I actually dialed into its Zoom channel last weekend by mistake. Thank you for your thoughtful response to my comments about discrimination and

inclusion.”

I also commented on *Fainzine* #3 in that same issue of *ECU*: “*Fainzine* #3 again utilized generative AI to pub its ish. While I didn’t read it fully, I got a kick out of its resonance with *Intermission* #141’s topics and other fannish themes. **Ahrvid Engholm** still resides therein.”

**John Thiel**’s *Synergy* #48 mentioned Christopher Mark Rose’s novelette “Three Sisters Syzygy” in the September/October 2023 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. I was able to pull that ish from a nearby box and proceeded to read the story—and others (see above). When was synergy more au courant in fanzines? By the “research of Rhine,” do you mean parapsychology? I know that Dianetics made its way through the science fiction community, as did another psychological or philosophical trend that I forget (symbolic logic?); what other examples have waxed and waned over time? Edgar Dubourg, Valentin Thouzeau, and Nicolas Baumard’s February 2024 *Poetics* article “The psychological origins of science fiction” and Gavin Miller’s 2020 book *Science Fiction and Psychology* might prove interesting along those lines.

I’m not sure how *tranquil* sf as a literature might be, though it is escapist. Does science fiction bring readers—or viewers—comfort? (The traditional structure and tropes of epic fantasy might, even if other content proves troublesome.) If anything, I think the best sf is thought-provoking, perhaps even challenging. If dystopic or critical of the current state of the world, its discomfort might inspire other interests and perhaps activism. And if utopic—or if not, merely portraying the promise or potential of science and technology, a possible future—it might be inspiring in other ways, encouraging a look to the future rather than a complacent acceptance of current times.

Your use of the term suggests another possibility, however. If you mean tranquility along the lines of prayer- and meditation-like states, or the collective hypnosis of sorts brought on by Noh theater, can sf bring readers closer to the numinous? The closest we come, in my experience, is in stories and novels that truly consider the scale and scope of the universe, beings and artifacts almost as old as it is, waypoints left for others to find, and perhaps approach those who have come before. How do others experience this sensation, if you have? What kind of sf helps you experience the numinous? I’m sorry you lost recent N’APA mailings, John. I’d be happy to send them to you.

I previously commented on *Intermission* #142 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #18 and reprint

those remarks here: “In *Intermission* #142, **Ahrvid Engholm** concentrated on early robots in literature and film. Your perspective on robotics and automation might be rosier than mine. I find the dog-like robots produced by Boston Dynamics fearsome, and worrisome tools for police. On a recent night out, my wife and I encountered several delivery robots, perhaps those made by Starship, while out for dinner and a play. (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #108) Two of the three spent a lot of time hesitating at street corners or in more active pedestrian areas. I expressed concern that the food would not be delivered hot, but we also discussed ultralocal delivery opportunities. More widespread, smaller-radius deployment areas could mitigate delay concerns. And a colleague appreciates the autopilot mode of his Tesla while commuting along the coast.

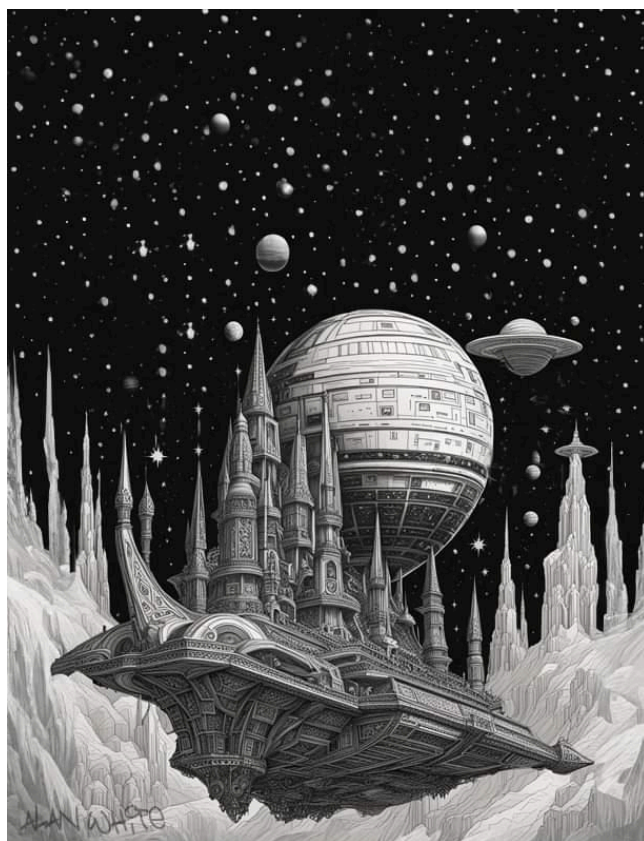
“Like Klaus Johansen, Bay Area fan and Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society member Tom Digby died March 27, perhaps because of complications related to Parkinson’s Disease. He’d recently entered hospice care, then hospice at home, and deteriorated quickly. Friends with him at the end had prepared a playlist, which you can explore at <https://tinyurl.com/Digby-playlist>. A collection of his fan writing is available online at <https://conchord.org/xeno/digby/digby.html>. While we never met or corresponded, we were both members of the Well, and additional resources are available at <https://people.well.com/user/bubbles>.

“I am conflicted about Walter Isaacson’s book about Elon Musk. While I recognize his presence on the world stage and his influence, I don’t think we’re told—or we forget—the real story about his accomplishments or abilities. I just don’t participate in the hero worship. (I don’t think you do, either. ‘I’m afraid his general style and other ideas may destroy [X],’ you write.) I think that X, SpaceX, Tesla, and his other endeavors have been successful— if they are such, which is debatable—because of other people around him, not because of him. I don’t think he’s actually ‘founded’ anything.

“But he does come from money. His family owned a stake in a South African emerald mine. He wasn’t a founder of PayPal; he was an investor. He wasn’t a founder of Tesla; again, he was an investor and legally arranged to be named as a founder. His acquisition of X has not improved free speech on the platform or in society. That doesn’t mean he’s not important, just that he’s no Henry Kissinger, Steve Jobs, Albert Einstein, Benjamin Franklin, or Leonardo da Vinci. Those are the leaders Isaacson has written about in the past. Your description of the book makes it seem more nuanced

than I expected—I haven’t yet read it—and his algorithm is interesting.

“Your History Corner concentrating on the Science Fiction League struck me close to home. I’ve experienced the same difficulty reconciling the first print mentions of the SFL with its supposed origin date. A fellow LASFS member and I have been trying to map meeting numbers back to the beginning of the club, using a variety of sources, and there are some gaps in which the LASFS might not have met weekly, perhaps before it became the LASFS, and perhaps afterward. There is a *Fancylopedia 3* entry (<https://fancylopedia.org/Science Fiction League>), and you’re right that the *Science Fiction Encyclopedia* entry is surprisingly scant (<https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/science-fiction-league>)



—Alan White

“Looking back at a January email thread with my compatriot, I see that the February 1934 issue of *Wonder Stories* indicates no major presence of the SFL, but the April issue’s table of contents includes an SFL editorial by Hugo Gernsback. I’m not sure what happened between February and April that year. The October–December 1934 and January 1935 issues all include Los Angeles in a list of proposed chapters. In fact, all of the chapters are listed as proposed in every



issue, so it's difficult to identify when such chapters became formally organized.

"The 1942 *LASFS in Explanation* ([https://www.fanac.org/fanzines/LASFS/lasfs\\_-\\_an\\_explanation\\_uncredited\\_c1942.pdf](https://www.fanac.org/fanzines/LASFS/lasfs_-_an_explanation_uncredited_c1942.pdf)) includes the following: 'After a year of preliminary preparations our Club was founded 6 February 1936 as the 4th chapter of the International Science Fiction League, sponsored by *Wonder Stories*, & as such has held nearly 200 meetings. [I've yet to check *Wonder Stories* that month to see if it progressed from a "proposed chapter."'] We subsequently received a charter as Chapter #1 of the Science Fictioneers, under the auspices of *Super Science Novels* & are affiliated with the *Weird Tales* Club. In addition to which a number of our members constituted the First Overseas Branch of the Science-Fiction Assn. IHQs in England).'



—Alan White

"The LASFS entry in *Fancylopedia 3* says 'When the parent Science Fiction League began to fall apart in the late 1930s, [Forrest J Ackerman] aided the club in staying alive by declaring its independence on March 27, 1940, as the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society.' The SFL entry there confirms the LASFS as the fourth chapter, first meeting as the Los Angeles SFL on Oct. 27, 1934. So there's little consistent agreement across sources. 1940 might be the date of the name change, but based on our meeting number calculations so far—presuming weekly meetings, which might not be the case—1936 might be a more accurate launch date (or beginning of the weekly cadence) than 1934. I hope my partner in crime writes about his efforts at some point."

In *Archive Midwinter* dated March 10, 2024, **Jefferson P. Swycaffer** expressed interest in helping Ahrvid Engholm remain a member of N'APA. I, too, would help support that. Congratulations, also, to Sweden on becoming a full member of NATO in early March. Somehow, the importance of that occurrence didn't impress itself upon me previously. My fandom, too, is in the age of the photocopier, though I remember carbon transfer paper and overhead projector transparencies in school.

*Mark's Very Large National Lampoon Site* indicates that Henry Beard and Christopher Cerf's article "Americans United to Beat the Dutch" was initially published in the April 1973 issue of *National Lampoon*, the Prejudice issue. It's been reprinted a couple of times, and there was a *National Lampoon Radio Hour* segment based on it that aired in 1974. I miss that magazine.

We don't need to worry about my departure from the N3F. I'm a member, with dues paid into the future still, I believe. Which Agatha Christie novel featured the narrator as the culprit? That is, indeed, sneaky.

**Mark Nelson's Brandy Hall #5** shared experiences attending sf conventions. Your first con occurred on my 15th birthday. That's kind of neat. While I recently learned about the state of Wisconsin fandom—mostly through the Turbo-Charged Party Animal APA, Milwaukee Amateur Press Association, the Madison Science Fiction Group on *Facebook*, and Madison, Wis.-based bookseller Hank Luttrell (all thanks to Andy Hooper)—I was entirely unaware of any local fandom while growing up in southern Wisconsin. I didn't even make it to GenCon as a *Dungeons & Dragons* player in the late 1980s. (I found the idea of playing with strangers too daunting; I thought it was competitive.)

The Leeds University Science Fiction Society has played an important role in your fandom! The now Leeds University Union Sci-Fi and Fantasy Society seems to still be active, and primarily focused on board games. I haven't been sending them the LASFS newsletter *De Profundis*, but just added them to the list. Your anecdote about feeling like you "didn't have an in-depth knowledge of written science-fiction" reminded me of a college student I know. He went to his university's anime club, asked them a few questions about what he considered to be important anime, was shocked when they hadn't seen what he'd seen—and hasn't gone back since because he didn't think they knew anything. I know that's not how you felt, but it might be the obverse experience: The Know-It-All. I'm sure you're not a Know-Nothing. You wouldn't be here if you were.

Your naming your mailing comments "The

Mathom House” reminded of Piers Anthony’s novel *Tatham Mound* (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #100). “One wonders how many recent SF fans parley their involvement in fandom into a pro career,” you wrote. My sense, as a relative latecomer is that it was once Much More Common. The LASFS, for example, still has guests show up now and again who are writers looking for other writers or writing groups, and the club doesn’t currently include many people along those lines. We have our Hoary Old Pros such as Larry Niven and John DeChancie, but not many active aspiring writers or younger writers. One recently joined APA-L and has been serializing his fiction in his fanzine, which I welcome.

Given the potential for online fandom—disorganized fandom—to help distinguish new writers via blogging, social media, podcasts, and the like, I don’t know what organized fandom has to offer such people. One can accomplish what one used to through fanzines online in any number of ways. I read recently—source and citation conveniently not remembered—that the *Analog* (I think) editors accept perhaps 1 percent of the stories submitted. I get the sense that editors are striving to diversify the authors and voice in the prozines.

Your mention of British Science Fiction Award winners and Australian Ditmar award winners makes a fair point. If we’re global citizens, perhaps we should consider All the Awards. What other awards exist? That’s a listicle waiting to happen, but I won’t undertake it now. Colin Steele’s comments in *The Canberra Times* are interesting. I wonder! I read an enjoyed your “Swedish Words in English 2.” The editors of the fanzine *Rune* might, too!

In *Brownian Motion* #7, **Garth Spencer** brings up another national award we should all pay attention to: Canada’s Aurora Award! R. Graeme Cameron’s breakdown of Canadian representation in the Faan Awards also reminds us to look beyond our own—my own—borders. The Venn diagram titled “An Organized Collection of Irrational Nonsense” offers rich fodder for exploration. What was its source?

When a faned doesn’t number their fanzine issues, I am grateful when they date them. Your paragraph following your remarks about a Chaos Department for the N3F read like an outline or back cover blurb for a paperback. You should write it! It reminded me of something like Craig Shaw Gardner’s *Slaves of the Volcano God* (*Faculae & Filigree* #30). Your reading list “rut” sounds like a good place to be, actually!

Your snorting at my use of the word “literary” in relation to sf and fantasy made me grin. I shall strive to be more aware of using the term, if not just to imagine you snorting when you read it.

**Samuel Lubell’s** *Samizdat* #24 mentioned Allen Steele’s revival of *Captain Future*. Where did I just encounter *Captain Future* otherwise? There’s the 1940-1944 pulp magazine, the 1978 anime, the now-public domain superhero dating back to the 1940s—who seems different from the pulp hero. None of them are ringing a bell. Was there also a British comic book? Norman Light produced a comic strip from 1953-1954 that might be what I’m remembering.



—Alan White

“Affirmative action isn’t discrimination to fight discrimination or giving minorities extra perks. It is recognizing that some people have unfair advantages and trying to compensate for them,” you wrote. Hear! Hear! Our son fell “victim” to this, in a way, when he applied to college, and I am frustrated by the impact the result is having on his college experience, but I can understand that neither he nor my family are disadvantaged. He’ll be more likely to overcome whatever setback occurred than someone in a different situation—even if it’s irritating. (Besides, he currently faces other challenges, which is the One Thing I’m Not Writing About in Fanzines given family events in mid-May. Perhaps some day.)

Your profile of Marion Zimmer Bradley resonated with me. I’ve enjoyed her fiction, but have also lightly researched the Breendoggle and read her daughter’s book *The Last Closet: The Dark Side of Avalon*. (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #4) “Should people read good books by bad authors?” you asked. (How do you know if they’re good if they go unread?) In a 2012 Opinion piece for the *New York Times*, Charles McGrath considers “Good Art, Bad People.” (<https://www>.

[nytimes.com/2012/06/22/opinion/global-agenda-magazine-good-art-bad-people.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/22/opinion/global-agenda-magazine-good-art-bad-people.html)) I think that bad people—or people who make mistakes, people who hurt others, or people who hold disagreeable beliefs—can still make good art, and it’s possible to appreciate it, even if it’s complicated by the context of the creator. I can also understand avoiding it if you find something particularly loathsome. I’m likely to read it or watch it, but I might consider whether I give someone New Money after bad actions come to light.



—Alan White

Thank you for sharing your Hugo nominations. The Baltimore Science Fiction Society’s Compton Crook Award for Best First Novel shall definitely go on the list of available awards when I get around to looking into those. Club awards offer an interesting addition even to national awards—though some awards might meet both criteria. Thanks, also, for serializing your 1989 undergraduate thesis. I think I’d missed that you “very carefully did not tell Harvard [it] was [on] 19th century science fiction.” Sneaky! Cheeky! Your comparison of Awesomecon, Balticon, and Capclave is telling. Wow.

And in *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #269, **George Phillies**—glad to see you in our pages!—offered N3F updates. Ooh! Someone has already paid Ahrvid Engholm’s N3F dues. Who went ahead and did it?

Kudos to you, good sir or madam. “I have been so busy that I have considered getting a real forty-hour-a-week job so that I would have more free time,” made me chuckle.

In 2022, *Wired* published an article titled “Was Voltaire the First Sci-Fi Author?” (<https://www.wired.com/2022/01/geeks-guide-ada-palmer>) It details that a 1752 short story by Voltaire titled “Micromégas” features first contact with aliens from Saturn and a star near Sirius. In 2016, the *Guardian* contended that Johann Valentin Andreae’s 1616 *The Chemical Wedding* is the first sf novel. (<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/may/23/work-from-1616-is-the-first-ever-science-fiction-novel>) *Discover Sci-Fi* offers additional contenders at <https://discoverscifi.com/the-pioneers-of-imagination-the-first-science-fiction-stories-ever-written>. But, surely, it’s 2024. Why haven’t we yet identified this yet? We should be able to do in terms of story, novel, and perhaps identify firsts by country. (Okeh, I now have two new pet projects: A roundup of sf and fantasy awards, and identifying the first ever sf story and novel. Join me in the endeavor!)

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What speculative fiction awards are you aware of? (Clip and send to ye olde faned any way you like!)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
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Russia is a gas station with a flag..running out of gas

# INTERMISSION #143.5

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com), for EAPA, N'APA and we-know-who-you-are. Follow newstweets from @SFJournalen (updates very slow now, alas, too much to fix, too little time). This is a special # to focus on major Swefandom history research! If you like typos, you've come to the right palce! Late May 2024.

## Editorially: Great Fanhistory News, Lousy Computer

I have bad news and good news. The good news are that I've got in touch with the publisher of Sweden's first fanzine 72 years ago! No one has done that before and I've done my best to try to extract from Åke Schwartz, now 89, how *Vår Rymd* (means "Our Space") came about. The History Corner will deal *exclusively* with it. It may be of most interest for Swedish readers, but hopefully others may also find at least something interesting in it. It is as if Ray Palmer and Walter Dennis popped up and talked about how they did *The Comet* back in 1930! [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Comet\\_\(fanzine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Comet_(fanzine)) 1952 is just a couple of decades later. They were actually a whole gang behind the fanzine, but Åke did the typing and appears frequently in the pages so he's a major force behind *Vår Rymd*.

But thish won't have much more. The reason is major computer troubles.

I'll make this a "half issue": #143.5. My laptop computer broke down before the not-far-from-finished #144 could be finished. It will come later, if/when the bloody computer problems are overcome. It was intended to come just before the *Eurovision Song Contest* in Malmö and had stuff about that...which now seems irrelevant, but I'll probably keep that material anyway. I write this on a spare laptop, which is a rather sorry machine, but most importantly doesn't have access to lots of files on the other computer needed for both *Intermission* and other things.

A day in late April my computer refused to start. Black screen and no LED light to indicate it even had power. I had guarantee left, so I turned it in to the shop. Nearly two weeks later I got it back and it seemed to work. For a few hours. I turned it in again, got it back three weeks later, and it seemed to work – this time for only five minutes! I turned it in for the rhird time, but the repair people now gave up. When testing it they encountered the same problem. It would sometimes work, but then suddenly stop. (They try to argue I have fiddled with it, but I will insist on either getting a similar replacement laptop or my money back...or I'll report them to the government's Consumer Agency.)

What I'll probably have to do is getting a similar machine replacing it, and take out the mass storage SSD device and simply move it to a the new machine. To make a backup of 500 GB of data and then copy it to a blank disk wouldn't be practical - the storage itself must be moved. (The machine is a Lenovo Thinkpad T480, in case you wonder. And yes, I have searched the 'Net for fixes. I've tried them. Unsuccessfully.)

Computers... You can't live with them, you can't live without them!

This *Intermission* will be thin. No event reports. Nothing about Putin's stupid Ukraine invasion - except bashing Russia above and "Glory to Ukraine" below. No mailing comments. I'm too frustrated and pressed for time. At the same time as shitty bytes have hit the computer fan, I've had the last weeks of a "Creating Worlds" writing course which has taken major bites out of available time. I've just finished our final assignment (and the computer problems have interfered with that too). And I'm late with starting this year's Fantastic Short Story Contest, now having it's 25th anniversary. I've been lagging behind with Twitter, SFJ and other stuff too. Shite!

I hope the summer will be good, because this spring has been lousy.

--Ahrvid Engholm



Artist Lars LON Olsson has also fought with computers.



*The Comet*, ed Ray Palmer & Walter Dennis, came in May 1930. It was first.

# History Corner: First Faned Speaks!

The editor of Sweden's first fanzine from 1952 has been found, still alive and kicking at age 89. They were a little club behind it, but *Åke Schwartz* was the one who typed the stencils and contributed much of the material - and it was printed on his father's job - so he was a major force behind *Vår Rymd*. With a fanzine we must refer to the ones steaming from science fiction – not just any amateur mag – as sf fandom began this form of cultural expression (*The Comet*, 1930, LR Chauvenet coining the word "fanzine", 1940). Other fanzines came later (comics, games, TV/film etc), usually directly inspired by the pioneering fanzines from sf fans.

Your intrepid fandom historian has been in touch with Åke who today lives in Degerfors, in the province of Värmland in the west (through E-mail, I distrust phones). All thanks to Clas Svan from the Archive for the Unexplained - covered in this eminent publication last spring – as he put me in touch with Åke. Clas is as you probably know involved in UFO Sweden - remember the film, covered in this superior publication too - of which Åke Schwarz has been and probably still is a member.

It is as if Ray Palmer and Walter Dennis popped up and told how they published *The Comet*. Though both were active in sf circles and probably talked about their fanzine at the time, Mr Schwarz has been silent, or shall we say: unknown to others.

I had for a long time heard rumours that some schoolboys did some sort of astronomy newsletter in the early 1950's at Östra Real high school. I think I first heard it from Sam J Lundwall, but apparently neither he nor anyone did anything to check it. And nobody had even seen the publication. Our local fan folks knew nothing. In the 1950's it would have been very easy to check things. Just go to the school and ask around...and you'd learn it was faulty info.

In 2017 I happened to do some digging in the Royal Library and was idly clicking around in their search system, when *Vår Rymd* suddenly popped up. Someone had donated stuff to the library in the 1970 in which it was included. *Intermission* wrote about it then and I did a PDF of the seven publications (formally nine issues but two were double issues - just ask me for the PDF). I remember I did some half-hearted search attempts on the names of people involved, getting nowhere. In the back of my head I thought most had passed away.

I'll soon turn over to Mr Schwartz. I've asked him questions and he replied, and I had follow-ups he replied to, etc. It went that way 5-6 times. I have then put it all in some sort of logical order. The Östra Real school isn't mentioned at all. Several of the teenage publishing kids were however from another school, the *Beskowska High School*<sup>\*</sup>, in the same Östermalm District.



Åke Schwartz

<sup>\*</sup>Named after the politician Gustaf Emanuel Beskow who founded the school in 1867, [https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beskowska\\_skolan](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beskowska_skolan). Not related to the famous children's fantasy author Elsa Beskow. BTW, I had Elsa's son Göran Beskow as physics teacher in the 1970s, in the Nya Elementar high school...

Now, below is what Åke Schwarz told me, slightly edited:

*It began with that we went to sf-films, which we all liked. A good movie was Forbidden Planet. It talks about the speed of light, other planets and had a fun robot. I saw it in 1951 in the cinema "Lyran" on Svea Street and was afraid as I biked home. It was also fun to go to the cinema Bostock where they let you in even if you were below 15 years /age limit for tougher films/ You heard the tram from the street outside. It was the werewolf, Frankenstein, Dracula and Lon Chaney and Boris Karloff. When you walked home you went the last stretch in the middle of the road and was scared when you opened the door.*

*And we began to talk about forming a club and publish a magazine. We came to call ourselves the Andromeda Club, and it consisted of those who did the magazine. The club wasn't registered or anything.*

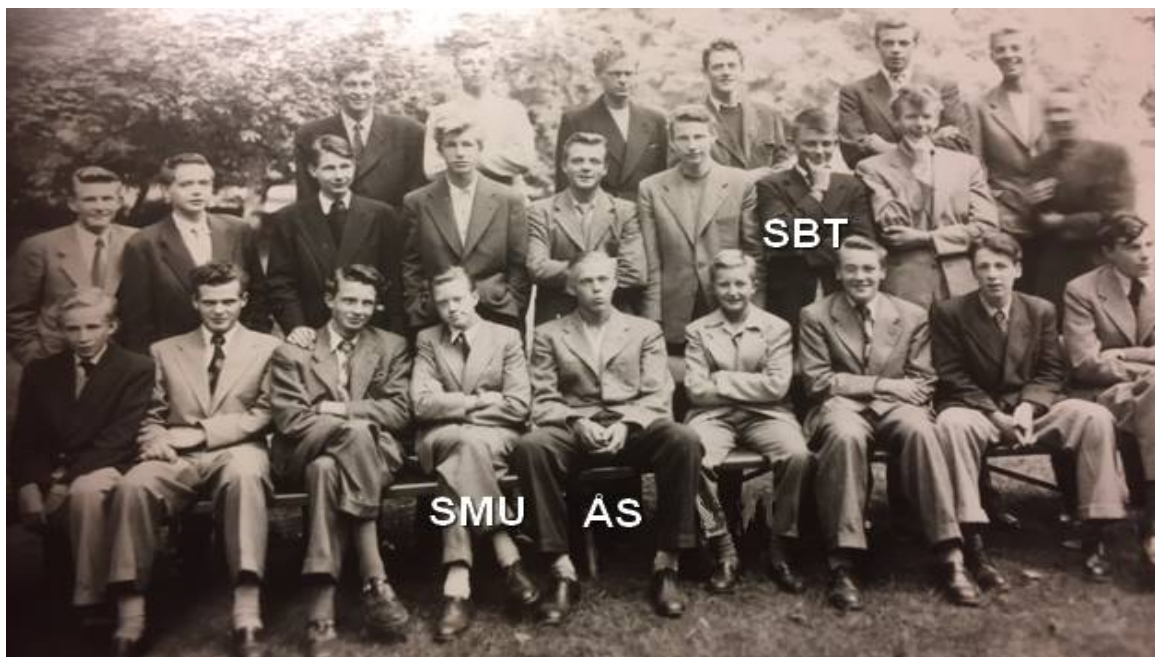


*Me, Sven Miller-Uri and Lennart Henriksson attended the Beskowska high school. Brother Åke Henriksson went to Norra Real high school, Karl Bjelke to Bromma high school. Johan Asplund joined for a short while. Since we were two Åke i received the nickname Svartas ("Blackish"). Of these I'm the only one left, 89 this autumn, and Lennart, but he suffers from a stroke and is 86.*

*We gathered after lunch in a big room at Åke Henriksson's on 13B Villa Street and produced it. It took a weekend. /For each issue./ I worked the typewriter. I put up the typewriter on a big dining table. It was a bit difficult to write on stencils. If there was a typo you had to smear some substance on it, wait and then type the correction. /Ed: I know... Corflu!/  
The Beskowska School, 9-11 Engelbrekts Street*

*We began with discussing what ideas each one had and if he had brought the material so it could be written. Then we decided the contents, Sven could draw what he wanted. He was a good artist. Then we began. A lot of milk and buns were consumed during the afternoon. We didn't drink beer at the time. The next day we took the stencils to dad's office at the company Gränges at Gustaf Adolf Square to print it.*

*There was no society, more like a little club. The fanzine was sold to relatives and friends. Everyone thought it was nice that we did a little magazine. Our teacher in Swedish mumbled and smiled but thought it was nice. But we had no*



*Beskowska class photo from around that time. ÅS=Åke Schwartz, SMU=Sven Miller-Uri, SBT=Sven Bertil Taube (but he didn't contribute to Vår Rymd)*

contacts with other sf interested. There probably weren't any around.

We subscribed to Håpna and Galaxy /Ed: Later - Håpna came in 1954, Galaxy in 1958/ and had a fine space art book by Chesley Bonestell. We read Bradbury and Heinlein and others. We went to all the sf films, very exciting at the time but are now probably considered ridiculous. Sven and I had a lecture in school for the class about space and that rockets will be launched and so on. We suffered laughter and irony, but then the Sputnik came in 1957. And then it all progressed fast. How times have changed! It was a time of harmony those days when we were young.

The magazine just ceased. We continued to socialize. Had some parties and masquerades on Villa Street since they had a big apartment. In the early 1960's some began dating and withing a few years all were married. After that we didn't meet so much, a few times per year perhaps to play cards and talk about old times. We all had families and children and jobs. But in later years we've met with wives on 75 and 80 years birthdays. Now its only me and Lennart left. He had a milder stroke.

The Russian Ambassador lived below Henrikssons. Every day he went to the Russian embassy on Villa Street 17. Once we put explosives in his key hole. It was a fairly innocent mix called "blast dough". It was Karl who studied chemistry who made it. When he put the key in it exploded. The ambassador just laughed...



#3 had their first illustrated cover, three spaceships going to Earth seen from the Moon. Drawing probably by Sven M-U, who was the staff artist.

It was a fairly innocent mix called "blast dough".



The Soviet Embassy at the time, Villa Street. The "blast dough" bombed entrance is probably on other side, not shown.

Gee! They "bombed" the Soviet embassy! It could have become an international incident... You little rascals!

Trivia: Sven Bertil Taube later very famous actor and troubadour - was in their class. He probably knew about Vår Rymd. What would have happened...if he became



#6 has a nice cover of a spaceman fighting a robot. But it's obvious they didn't have proper stencil drawing equipment.

more involved? Imagine filling some of his records with space-related songs.

Mr Schwarz would later become a member of UFO Sweden. Remember that film! - its BTW available through

<https://www.svtplay.se/video/ja473nB/ufo-sweden> (foreigners may try a VPN or something).

Gränges is a big mining company, but left their office house in central Stockholm in 1995, when it was sold.

I get the impression the background for *Vår Rymd* is extremely typical! A bunch of guys who loved science fiction ganged together to express themselves. Sitting for a weekend at 13B Villagatan is what we call a "fangathering". I know how it goes. I've been on such sessions. You chat, drink - they were probably too young for beer, but soft drinks, tea and milk perhaps - tell stories and jokes and laugh, while ideas and material to publish pop up. Those were the days!

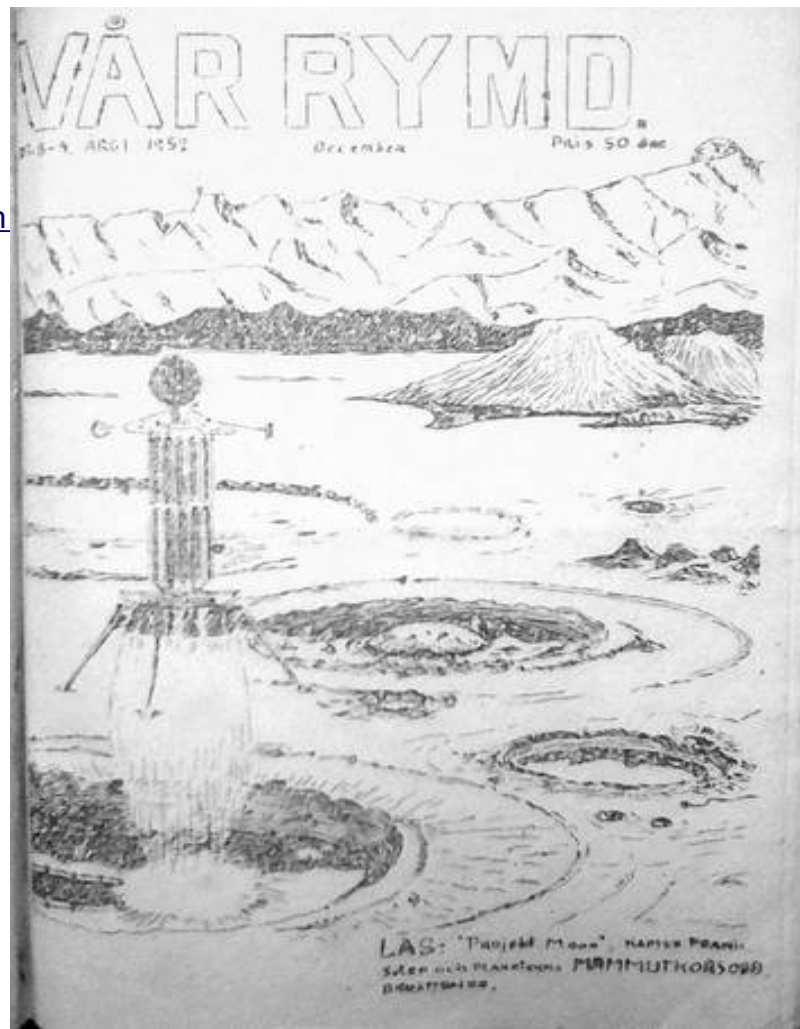
Here's a run-down of the issues, all from 1952 (some very minor things omitted):

**#1 March 3 pages:** *The Saturn Ring / Planets in Our Solar System / Crossword / "Mars Attacks Venus"* (short story by Åke Schwartz)

**#2 April, 5 pages:** *The Comets / Planets in Our Solar System / Crossword / Where the Planets Go and Shines in 1952 / Photo of Saturn from AKA's observatory (a photo glued in) / (Some jokes) / "The Adventures of Vic Torry"* short story by A Miller-Uri, to be continued in next issue / *A Visit to Stockholm's Observatory / "Captain Future as Saboteur on Mars"* short story by Åke Schwartz to be continued in next issue

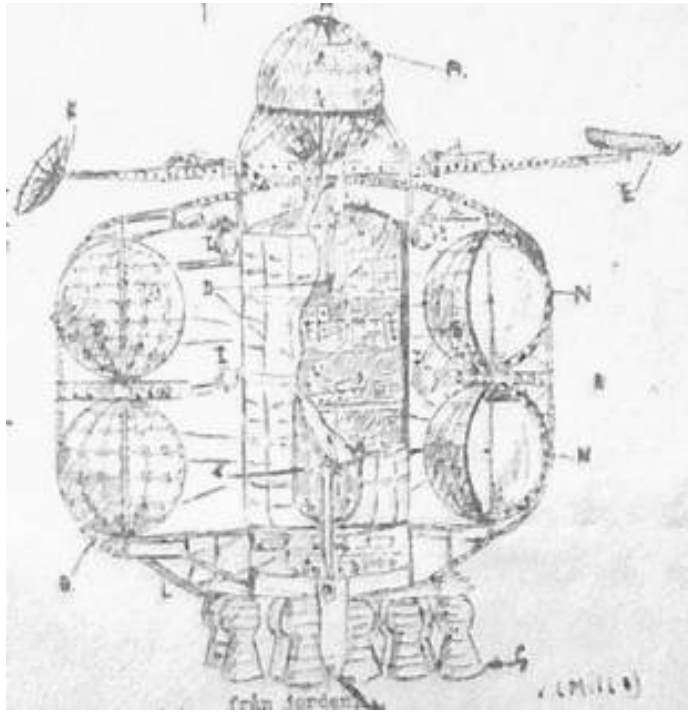
**#3 May 5 pages:** *Flying Saucers Fantasy or real? / "Saboteur on Mars"* continued / *The Moon / Some Known Observatories / Moon Picture from the AKA observatory (clued in photo) / Crossword*

**#4 June 12 pages** (it should be #4-5): *Cover illo of spaceship orbiting the Moon / The Vic Torry story continued / Future Space Station Moon No 2 / "hat do you know about Astronomy, 15 Questions / Did You Know... / Moon Facts / The Planets in Our Solar System 3. Mars / The Asteroids, Small Planets or Planetoids / Martians on a Flight Plate / Second installment of the Uranium War (where was the 1st?) / Cap 2 Death in the Crater / Cap 5 Inside Asteroid 539 / Second installment of Saboteur on Mars / Flying Saucer was photographed in Rio de Janeiro / Green on Mars / Beware of Earth / Shall I See If There Is Life On Mars / The Spiral Nebulas / The Editors / The Rocket and Its History*



Spaceship landing on the Moon in the last issue.





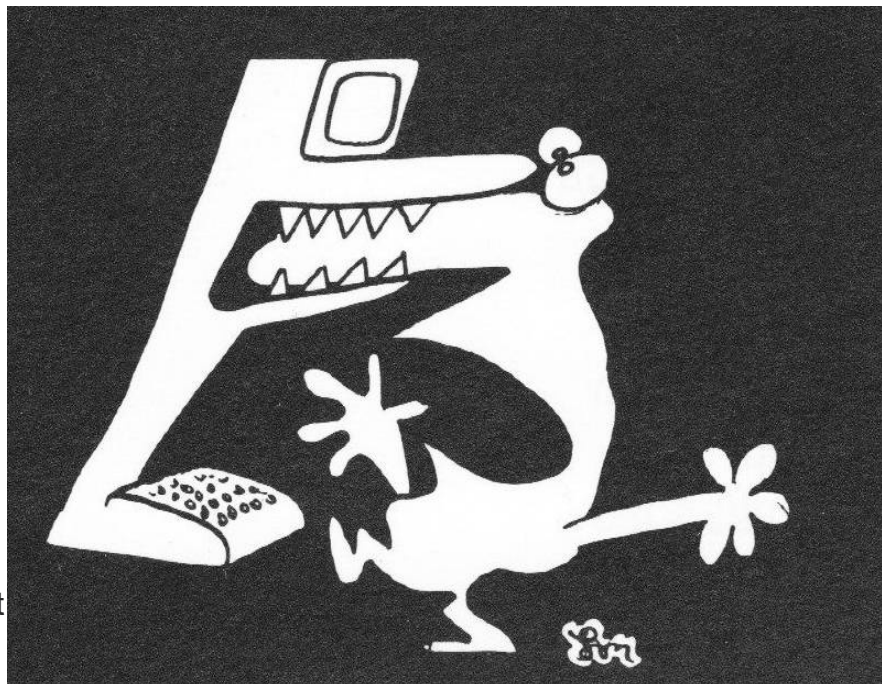
Drawing of a space station from the december issue.

#6 September (?) 6 pages: Cover with spaceman, spaceship and robot / The Planets in Our Solar System jupiter / The Sun Spots / The First Pictures of the Flying Saucers / An Unsolved Mystery / Here Some Who Have Seen teh Saucers What are the Flying Saucers? / Did You Know... / Agent to Sell Our Space Employed / Third Installment of "The Unranium War" / The Editors / "They Died on Mars" short story translated from English.

#7 (no month mentioned) 5 pages: Last Installment of "The Uranium Wars" / The Planets of Our Solar System Saturn / "The Deep Fried Giant Lizards" a Captain Future tale by Åke Schwartz / "Did you know that..."

# 8-9 December 13 pages: "Did you know that..." / Comparing the Solar System (and) the Comet of 1843 / Proturberances / The Telescope / Prize Contest / "2020" short story by Åke Schwartz / Doed the Moon Have an Iron Core? / The Planets and Their Satellites / Mammoth Crossword / Editorial Staff of Our Space / "The Downfall" short story by Enrique / The Planets of Our Solar System Uranus Neptune Pluto / About a Future Space Station / Does the Moon Have an Iron Core?

Editorial staff mentioned in #5: Åke and Lennart Henriksson, Åke Schwartz, Johan Asplund, Sven Miller-Uri (artist), Karl Bjelke (reporter). Publisher "Astronomical Club Andromeda", address c/o Å Henriksson, 13B Villa Street. Most of them used "signatures" for their material, also listed. It was a tradition in Swedish press at the time that articles were signed by a short, catchy "signature" name. The same editorial staff is listed in #6, #7 and #8-9.



Artist Lars LON Olsson has also had his encounters with computers.

I don't know how many copies were printed, but I doubt it could have been more than 50-100 copies. Some issues have glued in photographs (Saturn and other astronomy pictures) and it's complicated and expensive to do. The print run couldn't have been too big for this reason.

Earlier it has been assumed that a certain *Cosmos News* from Club Cosmos in Gothenburg was the firstv Swedish fanzine. But *Vår Rymd* was first, it had amateur short stories (incl with Capt Future), space stations, rockets and the editors were science fiction fans. It may not be the most advanced fanzine, some stuff in it looks silly, but it was first.

**Слава Україні!**

# The Murdered Master Mage

George Phillies  
48 Hancock Hill Drive  
Worcester MA 01609  
phillies@4liberty.net

Greetings to all and sundry! It has been many years since I have appeared here, but occasionally matters do change. Not quite five decades ago, I began publishing fiction in rolegaming APAs, including on occasion this one. One of the early tales, about four decades ago, was *Victoria and the Peri*. There were also a series of superhero tales.

The superhero tales eventually became my first novel *This Shining Sea*, whose title resolved into an epic poem.

## This Shining Sea



A Novel By

George Phillies

Third Millennium Publishing

Cooperative of Online Writers and Resources

<http://3mpub.com>

I returned to the novel some years later, with a fresh first novel, thinking the tale needed three novels to resolve. I was almost right. I in fact needed four novels and a spin-off. The four novels were *Eclipse* — *the Girl Who Saved the World*, *Airy Castles All Ablaze*, *Stand Against the Light*, and most recently *Of Breaking Waves*. The superheroine of the piece, seen above, is *Eclipse*. Among other things, she destroys an object that in D&D terms is a Ring of Unlimited Wishes, flies to the core of the Sun,

smashes to bits two mountain ranges, stops several alien invasions, and almost at the end of book 3 dies in combat against three Invincible Star Demons, whom she kills by blowing a hole in the universe. At the start of book four, she has brought herself back from, among other things, having died by vaporizing her body to component subatomic particles. She recommends not making a habit of dying, even if you are friends with the primal forces *Life's Ending* and *Duty*. Having cleared up various intervening challenges, she ends her tale:

*“I'll stay a moment to finish my wonderful cocoa,” Life's Ending answered, “and to scratch your very friendly cat behind the ears some more, but I must be on my way. If you insist on having a problem to solve, keep Trisha's company. She's fine, but she's outside her comfort zone.”*

*“Will do,” I answered. “Bluebell always likes having his ears scratched, if you'd ever care to visit again.”*

*She finished her cocoa. Bluebell purred very loudly. In a flash Life's Ending was gone, her quilt neatly folded, my spare recliner was where it belonged, the right size, and my widow's walk was back to its normal width. Bluebell dropped onto a now-vacant recliner, and peered in all directions, a miffed look on his face. His self-heating cushion had disappeared. He hopped back, not quite knocking over the cocoa carafe, to land on my stomach. My whoof! exhaling was him knocking air out of me. He's a large barn cat, cats here being larger and smarter than cats on Pickering's Earth. He's very grateful for self-heating sleeping perches, especially those that know where to scratch behind his ears.*

*It seemed that I was finally free, with nothing I was trapped into doing. I'd already planned to call Trisha, but the reassurance that I'd be welcome didn't hurt. I leaned back into my lounge chair, took another sip of the cocoa, and watched the clouds change shape, ever so slowly, as they drifted across the sky. Gradually they faded from pale gold to umber and pink, their bottoms finally turning gray. The cinnamon-raisin cookies, one tiny bite at a time, were really good. After all, I'd baked them myself. I had lots of things I could do, but sometimes you should stop and smell the roses.*

*\*\*\*The Very End\*\*\**

The four volumes each have a cover:



The gentleman on the cover is a noble of the IncoAztec Empire.

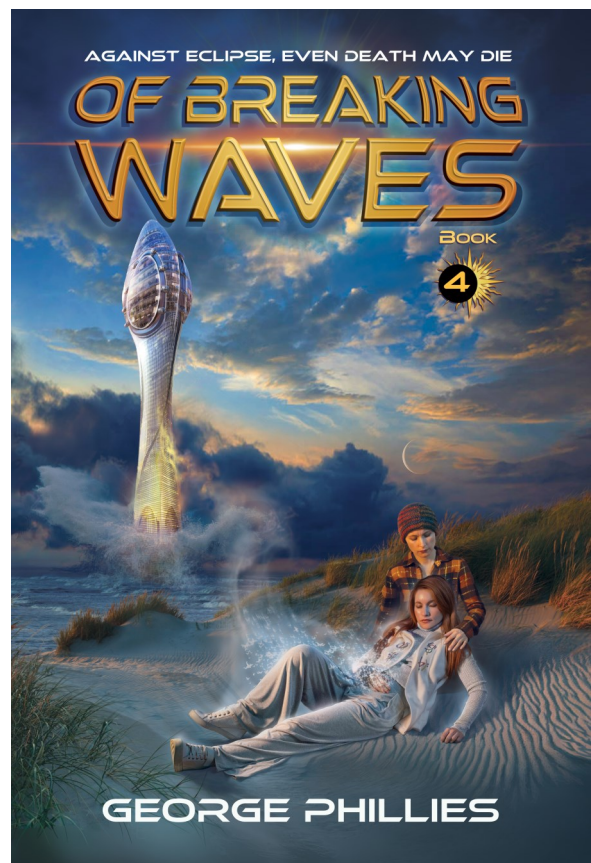
The other girl is Eclipse's friend Comet.



Here Eclipse (in brown) is easing SpinDrift (white) as she passes to the next plane of existence. Eclipse later uses time travel to save her.



The alien airships are doing poorly against Eclipse.



The characters:

Meet Eclipse.

She's twelve. She's hardworking, bright, self-reliant, good with tools, vigorously physically fit, tough as nails, still young enough to disguise herself as a boy. She's also a persona: She flies, reads minds, and is not afraid of necessary violence.

She had a bit of a problem with her mom. Her mom threw her out of the house. Then Mom blew up the house and disappeared.

Now she's procured the Holy Namestone, the Key to Paradise. And everyone in the world will be happy to kill her to get their hands on it.

Meet Trisha.

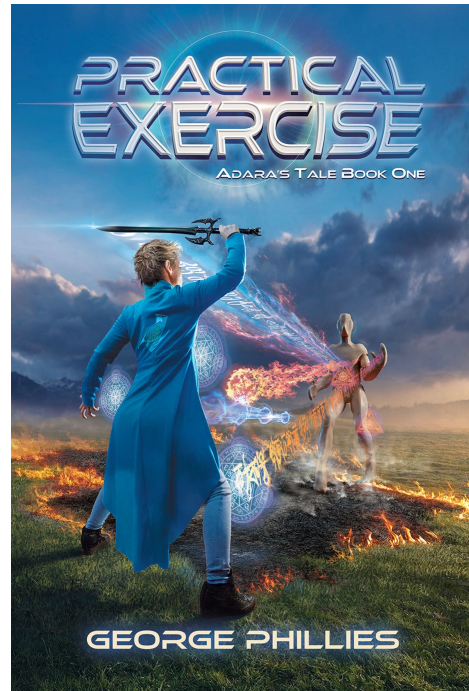
She's not quite a year older than Eclipse. She's friendly, considerate, really good in school, athletic, does more than her share around the house. She's also a persona. She has superspeed...an hour of housework in a minute. She flies, including from here to the next galaxy in an hour.

She also has a bit of a problem with her parents. They always treat her with complete contempt, totally grounded her, and won't say why.

Her brother and sister are personas, too. Year-younger sister Janie is a budding world chess and go champion. She also reads minds, sees distant events, and can kill with a glance. Her twin brother Brian is incredibly good with tools, builds fantastic models from scratch, has a nearly unbreakable force field, and summons plasma beams that cut battleships in half.

There's another character, one met only by Victoria Britomart Wilson. Adara is a refugee from far, far away. She's also a sorceress, an extremely good one, being pursued by people who want to kill her. For Adara I wrote a novel, the heroine going off to a magical school. No, this is not a Harry Potter reread. Dorrance Academy is a research university, somewhat like MIT, except the courses are in fields such as diagram magic. She survives a murder attempt, a kidnapping, ejection from a class, and a formal academic defense. In the end she solves a research puzzle of very long standing, establishes her credentials, and is granted the rank of

Academician, a tenured but unsalaried position. Worked into the tale are large numbers of hints on how to succeed at a school like Dorrance or MIT.



What else have I done over that half-century? Gained my first academic position, gained a second and earned tenure. Retired to Write, and did as planned. Wrote 170+ scientific papers, two dozen books (including eight novels, seven textbooks, and a research monograph by invitation from Cambridge University Press. Ran for President; on the ballot in New Hampshire. Ran for US Congress. Edited more hobby fanzines than I can count. [george-phillies.com/](http://george-phillies.com/) for some details. Currently President of The National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F.org; founded 1941 by the likes of E.E. Smith, Damon Knight, and Forey Ackerman).

President of AHIKS, ([AHIKS.com](http://AHIKS.com)) the world's largest (closing on 1000 members) international board wargaming club. Editor, Third Party Watch, covering third party political news of all sorts.

Currently working on a scientific review article (yet again, the standard polymeric fluid model is rejected by the data) and a new novel. Aliens invade in Tibet in 1880, their forces and logistics being a total disaster due to another war, and eventually clash with British India, China, and Russia. (Does anyone know here I can get detailed data on the Chinese militaries (plural deliberate) of 1880-1905?)

# INTERMISSION #144

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com), for EAPA, N'APA and other war mongers. Follow ed's newstweets from @SFJournalen (but updates slow lately due to Ukraine syndrome: being occupied). Join an APA, be a fan! This zine is for you if you ENJOY typos! Early July 2024

## Editorially: Eurovision, Talking Short Stories, Bloody Computers

Back again. I hope there're no more computer problems. My main laptop computer simply refused to start about two months ago. Indications were some sort of internal glitch, probably temperature related: some soldering giving in after a while, a bad connection, something like that. Metal expands with temperature and the fault typically appeared when the machine had been running for a while. I've had the laptop in for service (on the guarantee) several times. I won't go into all details, it could be a long story and I have lots of other things to get into this issue. I'm tired of stupid computers - and you're probably not interested anyway. I hope it'll all work OK now.

All this meant that I missed covering the Eurovision Song Contest beforehand. I wrote about it and intended it should reach you before the spectacle, but it was not to be. It was an interesting shinding, shall we say. One-eyed wannabe students (most weren't too rooted in academia) who pretended not having heard or Oct 7 demonstrated, seldom being far away from hate of Jews. Israel who had been attacked must be ousted! But it became the Dutch who were unfairly excluded. And ABBA celebrated 50 years after winning ESC with "Waterloo". The hostesses film star Malin and third time host lucky Petra sang "We love Eurovision too much"...see report.

I've been out lecturing (or stuttering) about short stories with the Short Story Masters so that's in the issue too. I earlier gave you my PDF on the topic as an *Intermission* replacement due to Stupid Computers. BTW, the short story contest of the SKRIVA writing list this year *celebrates it's 25 th anniversary!* Contributions accepted in Swedish only, alas. I have this spring also finished my second "World Writing" course, about how to "construct" literary worlds in sf&f. There's been a lot of things about fiction writing for me lately!

And the Bloody War continues. I try to follow it rather closely. I get the definite impression that Putin is doing much, much worse than media care to report. I don't see Swedish papers reporting that the Russians are virtually stuck, a big part of their Black Sea fleet is sunk, Russian economy is near a crash, Putin has in desperation made a big sweep in his "defence" department, by now 100+ countries have joined the Ukraine peace formula. Media is ignoring much of it. Maybe some are under the spell of Russian desinformation? We learn that some Russian lies and wild fantasies are even swallowed by some "MAGA" US congressmen (=Make America "Great" Again). And so does the foreign policy neophyte Trump. Useful idiots!

The Ruskis tried to open a front towards Kharkiv and it was a *disaster*. They came 5-10 km and was then stopped cold to the price of over a thousand lost every day. This motivated a West go ahead to target military objects on Russian territory. Russia is running out of even Stalin era armour and turn to *golf cars* for some meat wave pushes, that the blue-yellow as always shoot to pieces.

The fighting spirit among Russian troops is rock bottom, their commanders are corrupt, incompetent fools, their supply lines are often "himarsed", they are cornered in Black Sea and over 1/3 of Russia's oil refineries are burning from drone strikes, denying the military fuel and the economy funds. The Ruble has lost half it's value to the Dollar these last months. Russian stock market and banks aren't even trading in Dollars or Euros - the Ruble becomes rubble (pun intended!). Putin's Asian tour looks like an act of desperation. He can't even go elsewhere as the war criminal would be arrested. And as more Western help arrives - eg Sweden's 17th military aid package, biggest this far with two very useful AWACS radar planes! - Putin is getting deeper into shit. And our *fanzine blockade* against Kremlin goes on. Apparently to good effect...

When the Putin regime collapses - a definite possibility! - things may happen very fast. As they say: A tyrant always seem to sit safe on his blood-stained throne...until the very moment he isn't. *Slava Ukraini!*



*Smaller than the US variant, but the Swedish AWACS have efficiently guarded the Baltic Sea. Going to Ukraine they will now coordinate F16s to make best use of them.*

--Ahrvid Engholm

## To Our Swedish Readers...And Writers!

The 25th Fantastiknovelltävlingen ("Fantastic Short Story Competition") is on! I'll summarise the rules in case some foreigners want to have a go with AI translation, since only stories in the post-Viking lingo is accepted:

1. Send entries as straight text (called "ASCII", no attached files, eg Word documents) as E-mail by September 3rd to [fantastiknovell@proton.me](mailto:fantastiknovell@proton.me) AND [ahrvi@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvi@hotmail.com) (BOTH!). Use subject "tävlingsbidrag".
2. Stories shall relate to science fiction, fantasy or horror. (Genre can be interpreted somewhat generously. There must be some "fantastic" element.) Multiple entries are allowed. Max length 40 000 characters, incl periods and spaces. Language: Swedish.
3. The winners are chosen by a jury, which may also make honorable mentions. Stories on any prize spot may also be posted on the SKRIVA list and are offered to DAST Magasin for publication, <http://www.dast.nu/>
4. First prize 300 SEK + a share of SF-Bokhandeln Ltd + an E-book reader (used, but works and comes with a library of exciting books). Second prize 200 SEK + a share of SF-Bokhandeln Ltd. Third prize a share of SF-Bokhandeln Ltd. Those and any honorable mentions will also get a diploma and a PDF of the latest version the how-to-write book *Writing In Time and Space* (complete but still edited and worked on). Shares are from the recent share issued by the SF Bookstore and it's one each.

Yeah, yours truly has turned into a share shark and have bought a stack of stocks from of Stockholm SF Bookstore, issued earlier this spring. You can now also become a Bloody Capitalist, if you write a good story making it to the competition's podium. Don't miss the chance! (Each share is worth ca €35.) As for the top prize, the E-book reader is a used simple model but fully functional, and I'll select stuff for it from my own supply of E-books, mostly non-fiction: writing guides, science, technology, history, culture, fandom...could be interesting, hundreds of books, maybe a thousand! And my how-to-write-sf book isn't a bad prize either...

*Ge tangenterna vad de tål! Lycka till!*

## Sweden Hosting Controversial Eurovision Song Contest.

The first week in May saw the World's biggest music event and probably biggest TV-event - barring the Olympics - in the form of the famous or infamous Eurovision /K/i/t/s/c/h Song Contest! It was held in a hockey arena in Sweden's No 3 city Malmö in the south, across the water from Denmark. 37 countries participated including Australia as appointed Honorary European, basically because ESC is quite loved Down Under. The number of participants would however drop to 36 (more below).

New for this year was that the Rest of the World could televote. The winner is decided by points coming by 50% from juries in each country, and by 50% from televotes from the participating countries (the Rest of the World is here treated as one country).

The televotes are presented last and are usually decisive. And this time the winner was...

*Switzerland*, with the song "The Code" by the artist Nemo: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CO\\_qJf-nW0k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CO_qJf-nW0k) Sweden was represented by the Norwegian twins Marcus and Martinus and came 9th <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yekc8t0rJqA>. But that's OK. The Swedes have grabbed the ESC glass figurine (that Nemo managed to break on stage while repeating his winning song) seven times before, equal with the Irish.

ESC is done in two semi-finals during the week and a big final on Saturday, with the twenty best from the semis + the Big Five: the UK, Germany, France, Italy and Spain, who get extra favours because they contribute most money to the European Broadcast Union, who founded the ESC back in 1956. And it's been on every year since, growing from seven entries the first year. The audience dressed in silly clothes and waving flags - a bit like the Last Night of the Proms, if you know about that - had a majority of foreigners, from over 100 countries. The venue took about 20 000 each night.

Arrived were also some thousands of activists who seem to be in the hands of Hamas, the terrorist organisation that October 7th launched death squads to murder and kidnap about one and a half thousand civilian Israelis, many of them children as well as youngsters at a music festival.

The protesters never mention the murders. Yes, the Israelis hit back in response to the atrocities, which is their right. You must hunt down the murderers and have the right to do that until the threat is removed. (There will be collateral casualties as the terrorists cowardly hide behind civilians. But the figures Hamas spits out can't be trusted. The real numbers are substantially lower and more than half of it are Hamas combatants. Media never mention that most is Hamas military crouching behind children.) I have often wondered why the woke crowd is so one-eyed. One theory is that fawning for Palestinians is inherited from the Soviet Union, who was on that side during the cold war. Though the USSR dissolved many keep old allegiances, as phantom limbs.

Hamas aren't nice people. *Targeting* civilians for mass murder says it all. They want women to wear humiliating covers, they are not allowed to leave home without male "escort", are banned from driving cars, denied education... And death to homosexuals! There were pro-Israel demonstrations also around the ESC, but it was far less covered by biased media. Mainstream media often brag about how important their news gauging is, but I'm not so sure of that.

In my and the opinion of many, the Middle East situation can in the long run only be disarmed by a two-state solution, but Hamas won't accept that and sabotages any movement towards it through violence.\*

Over to happier things. It was 50 years ago...that ABBA won this thing, the Eurovision, with the song "Waterloo". It's one of few (Celine Dion is another) wins that became legendary. It was a stepping stone for the foursome to become the world's No 2 pop and rock band (after John, Paul, George and Ringo) selling by now nearly half a billion records. (But it's becoming increasingly difficult to measure



*There were pro-Israel demonstrations too, but media mostly ignored it.*

sales now when people "stream" songs Some millions of physical ABBA CDs and even vinyls are still sold every year.) Invited artists doing ABBA songs showed up at ESC and ABBA themselves in the form of their "ABBA-tars" appeared. That was interesting because the ABBA-tars clearly did it exclusively for the ESC. This means these electronic figures are flexible and can be "re-programmed" to do new things. Björn Ulvaeus has BTW bought a share in a company that has secured the rights to make an avatar show with the band KISS. They were never my favourites, but I guess it won't be long before we see the Beatles or Elvis on stage again... ABBA lead the way for this!

Now to some bad vibes from this spectacle...

### **Scandal at the Eurovision Song Contest!**

It had never happened before. One country was disqualified just before the final: not Israel - who did well in the contest - but *Netherlands*. Other countries like Russia and Belarus have been kicked out, but months, years earlier and we know why: war. With Netherlands it's seems a bit unclear.

According to the EBU (European Broadcasting Union) it's because there was a confrontation during a rehearsal between the Dutch artist Joost Klein and a photographer with some sort of melee. A complaint was filed with the Police and as Mr Klein is under investigation it would be "unappropriate",

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\*It's said Israel occupies "Palestinian land". Do they? Before WWI it was Turkish (the Ottomans), who then lost it to the British. At the time it was considered legitimate to conquer land in war. The British handed it over to the League of Nations, and they bounced it back to them to administer as a mandate. The League of Nations dissolved in 1946 but handed all their responsibilities and mandates over to the newly founded United Nations. So, the territory is UN's! There has never been a Palestine state. UN has jurisdiction. Israel is ready to work with the UN and make any reasonable deal, as long as threats of violence are disavowed. Hamas (and allies, like Iran) aren't. Their aim is to destroy Israel, beginning with indiscriminate murders of civilians.

the EBU decided, to have him performing. According to the Dutch delegation what happened was:

A TV camera operator had been asked not to film as Klein was finished and left the stage. Certain areas behind the stage were declared off limit for filming. But she kept shooting. Klein became angry and made "threatening moves, but never once touched her" (exact quote) There must have been a lot of cameras running near the stage - including the one with the alleged victim. So there should be a good chance to verify all details. The Netherlands delegation know this it would be fruitless for them to lie about the incident. I believe them and there's no contrary info from the "investigation" and no published statements from the camera woman.

Being kicked out of the contest due to "threatening moves", which BTW were provoked? Usually, the Swedish police would throw this into the wastebasket. Two people quarrel, no physical contact...the police has better things to attend to! (Like the outbreak of gang violence, where they haven't been very successful.) Even as I write, more than a month after the quarrel, there is very little from the "investigation". It seems to take a very long time for a simple matter. I guess they are in a quandary as the case has reached extreme attention - but it should be filed in the wastebasket.

The Dutch are mad, rightfully so if you ask me. The delegation spokesperson said disqualification was disproportional. The delegation had suggested several alternative actions, in vain. Joost Klein was also among the top favourites according to betting sites.

When it came to the jury voting, the Dutch jury group refused to give any points so the ESC Executive Supervisor stepped in and gave the points according to some algorithm based on odds and how they usually vote. (It has been used before when "unusal voting patterns" were found for some Eastern Europe countries at an earlier ESC.) The audience booted heavily when the Dutch jury protest thus was steamrolled. I hope the decision to oust Netherlands were taken on the international level by EBU and not the Swedish production team. Because it doesn't look good at all.

But the show must go on, and it did have some highlights.

My favourite was Semi Final 2, Thursday, when we had the musical number "We Love Eurovision Too Much" by hostess Petra Mede, with a Finnish Intermission of Moomins and Cha Cha Cha.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVAOiFZakPQ> Among Semi Finals honorary mentions to Good



Hostess Petra M and 1999 winner Charlotte P "love Eurovision too much".

(the report "Has ABBA winning in 1974 changed Brighton?" with the reply "Not really..." - end of report) and co-hostess Malin Åkerman interviewing her mother-in-law choreographing the 1981 skirt-tearing by Bucks Fizz, ending with Malin losing her skirt. We also got a new, softer version of last year's winner "Tattoo" with Loreen sitting in a very uncomfortable chair rising over the stage, all starting with Björn



Dutch arist Joost Klein was disqualified under unclear circumstances.

Old Johnny Logan making his version of the Loreen hit "Euphoria". Former winners leading a Eurovision Sing-Along, incl the Herreys Bros with their 1984 hit

"Diggiloo-Diggiley" - a little greyer, a few more belly kilograms, not perfect coordination...but still.

The Grand Final offered a few jokes



1984 winners, the Dancing Deodorants brothers Herrey. A little greyer, not 100% coordination. But a good song and nice to see them after 40 years!



Skifs doing his 1974 "Hooked on a feeling" Billboard #1, from the very days ABBA had not really changed anything in Brighton.

The ABBA celebration - 50 years from "Waterloo" - was lead from the Voyage stage in London by the famous Abbatars! We saw these electronic beings comment Eurovision and Waterloo and then lead a Sing-Along. It was obviously especially done for ESC which means Abbatars are rather flexible can be used for much more than prerecorded shows. AI in action?

The stage was dominated by a 340 sqm LCD display. The stage floor was all LCD and there were other LCD panels for a total of over 1000 sqm of LCD. Along with flames shooting out all the time and strange camera angles it was all visually spectacular. I think it topped all earlier ESCs in visual effects. Some of the effects to me *seemed* like being *in front* of the artists while the screens were behind them. I wonder if my eyes fooled me or if they did insert it in the TV signal?

I'd like to especially mention the United Kingdom entry by Olly Alexander that totally, unfairly failed in the voting (what else is new when it comes to UK and the ESC?) though it in my ears was totally OK and in my eyes had the most incredible stage show.

Do you remember the 1951 film "Royal Wedding" when Fred Astaire dances on the wall, on the ceiling and so on. Alexander and his dancers did the same now! And for my life I can't understand how this could be achieved by just LCD panel effects. Also, it would have been logistically impossible to roll in a rotating room on stage (which was what Astaire used in the film). So how did they do it? The UK was worth many more points, but Europe hates the British as usual... Brexit means ESCxit.

Another entry I liked was Finland with Windows95man and "No Rules". In an interview the artist states that Windows 95 was the best operating system, and I'm inclined to agree - that and the rather similar Windows 98. Later stuff Microsoft has forced down our throats are bloated beyond belief, cryptic and impossible to debug and fix faults in by other means than a clumsy "reinstall" (and on top of this misery Microsoft constantly try to force "upgrades" on us). Extra points from me to Finland.

The Swedish entry with the Norwegian twins Marcus & Martinus did OK on 9th place. I expected them to land between 5 and 10, but it was a disappointment that the Norwegian jury only gave them 3 points... Don't they like their own folks? A Norwegian paper calling them traitors didn't help. (I can't remember Swedish papers calling Elisabeth Andreasson - her name then - a quisling when she helped Norway to the ESC trophy in 1985.)

But there was instant Karma: Norway landed overall last... Perhaps it was because they choose the ethnic path, a folktune-inspired song about wolves, sung in New Norwegian. (Norway has two

official languages: Bookspeak - Bokmål - inspired by Danish, Norway was under Denmark for hundreds of years, and New Norwegian - Nynorsk - a "constucted" language based on original western Norwegian dialects cleansed of Danish.) Using your official national language was a bit of a trend. I counted to 10 countries using their national languages, acually 12 of you include Britain and Ireland. That's almost half the entries.

The Irish song was to my liking, one Bambie Thung singing "Doomsday Blue" about witches and



The ABBA members celebrating "Waterloo".



UK's Olly Alexander & crew defeating gravity.



Finland celebrating Windows 95!

other weird stuff. Quite well performed with a deep feeling of horror and darkness. It's reported she wasn't too popular among Irish catholic, conservative circles. That song was too "occult". (Hey, if something is occult it's the Catholic church! It has exorcisms, belief in demons, the devil and all that.)

Outside the ESC event arena some 10-15 000 demonstrators naively chanted their support for Hamas murderers and terrorists. They won't allow Israel, who was attacked, to defend herself and eliminate the threat that in October meant the cold-blooded murder and kidnapping of 1500 innocent civilians. They are a loud-mouthed



*Ireland gave us the creeps!*

minority and their actions resulted in a blowback: *Israel won the popular televote!* Among them the Swedes, televoting 12p to Israel. Despite that a big majority of Swedish media co-workers lean to the left (70% in general, 82% among the big national broadcaster, source: Gothenburg University survey). Obviously, there are millions of people around the world who don't agree with leftist activists.

Switzerland won, as said. Another favourite was Croatia, who came second. Ukraine came third, a perfectly good entry in my opinion, a bit "ethnic" sung in Ukranian. France was fourth, Israel fifth.

There was an extremely heavy police presence. Even Danish and Norwegian police was called up (the Scandinavian police forces have some sort of cooperation, a Norwegian police patrol chasing, say, a car thief is allowed to continue the pursuit into Sweden). The risks in todays world have increased, from wars and religious polarisation. For Sweden risks rise as some burn religious books. My take is that you should be allowed to disrespect religious dogmas, but burning books is so SS and Goebbles - find other ways!

It was a Eurovision Song Contest to remember.

### **ABBA Knighted!**

A certain group of four was called to the Royal Palace in Stockholm in late May. Over here we don't tap them on the shoulder with a sword, but the King will give a box with the regalia to those newly knighted. The members of ABBA

all became knights and commanders first class of the newly revived Order of Vasa.

In the mid 1970's the then Social Democrat government "froze" all royal orders. It was undemocratic that some people could do fine things and deserve recognition... But the present non-SocDem government (but with support by all except the far left) has decided to revive the Order of the Sword (given to



*King Carl XVI Gustaf, Queen Silvia, Björn, Frida, Agnetha and Benny.*

military people), the Order of the North Star (given to government officials) and the Order of Vasa (to anybody, and the general public may nominate!). The name "Vasa" is from the House of Vasa, with king Gustaf Vasa who dissolved the Kalmar Union in 1523, ridding the Swedes of those nasty Danes. ABBA was in the first batch to get knighted it was dusted off. It's a cheap way to give symbolic recognition to people doing something extra, in ABBA's case a "very substantial contributions to the music world, domestic and abroad" as the phrasing went. BTW, Volodymyr Zelensky was visting the king on a state visit the same day, but I don't know if the president met the band.

Over here we don't take knighthoods as seriously as, I guess, in Britain. You don't have to address someone as a "Sir Björn" or a "Dame Agnetha". We don't have sirs or dames. I did a little

etymological search and it seems that the old Swedish equivalent of "sir" is "herr" and "dame" equals "fru" - in early *mediaval* times, that is. Herr and fru, borrowed from German, "Herr" and "Frau", have since shifted in meaning to refer to *any* man or any woman, being like mister or missus.

But I wouldn't be too surprised if a British reporter addresses the great composer with a Sir Benny...\*

## Talking Short Stories

The illustrious little Short Story Masters society has been out preaching this spring. It began April 21st in the House of Literature in Uppsala, the city of last summer's Eurocon. 40 members of the public filled most seats in the lecture room and heard interviews and readings of our short stories. In a side room Joe R Struly talked about short story writing and the history of the sf genre, to a limited audience of...two. No huge success for me, but I did my best. I have earlier distributed the

### Noveller på längden och tvären väntar

LITTERATUR  
Novellen står i fokus i Litteraturrens hus på söndagseftermiddagen 21 april. Medlemmar i författargruppen Novellmästarna deltar i en novellfestival.  
På programmet står bland annat ett novellmaraton där författarna Helena Sigander, Lena Röner, Ådvald Engholm, Kjell E. Genberg, Ulf Durling, Ulf Genberg, och Richard Nedström läser sina noveller.  
Det blir också workshops och paneldiskussioner. Bland annat ska Helena Sigander intervjuas av kollegan Kjell E. Genberg, som kan vara Sveriges mest produktiva författare. Den nu 84-åriga Genberg debuterade redan 1966 och har skrivit över 250 böcker, bland annat "Men Hogar", serien med 55 titlar.  
Bakom arrangemanget står föreningen Novellmästarna, Litteraturrens hus och Uppsala kommun.  
Göran Stenroos  
Göran Stenroos



Powerpoint presentation used. Local

*Upsala Nya Tidning* covered the event (see above). May 17th we had a mixed program for around 45 members of the Deckarvännerna ("Friends of Crime Fiction") club. Short Story Masters entered the stage and told anecdotes out of a writing life, even if some of it was very obscure. Also book lottery. I used my time to mumble a short version of the talk from Uppsala. Farstq meet began with eating outside, which I was late too convinced a



Short Story audience in the House of Literature.

starting quiz would take much more time. Stupid me. The weather for both events was wonderful. The summer here has started well, while the spring was colder than usual. This meant that Midsummer which just has passed didn't see the traditional heavy rain...

Still, the little frogs were happy.



Audience and stage of Farsta Manor. Anecdotes, lottery, short story talk.

# HISTORY CORNER

Your favourite, the History Corner, will this time have a little of this, a little of that, and yes, that the European Championships of footy-soccer on now will be reflected. If you're fonda Fonda keep reading. I fount the death notification of Alvar, the pioneer fan who became an award, all a bit complicated and not always to the best. A 1954 columnist punches skiffy in the face and picks up a fine 1878 sf novel. Asanother columnist talks about Arthur C Clarke and space development, long before Sputnik as it was seen as obvious Mankind would go to space. Meet ther successful US soccer team, a Fänomobil, sport Pärk and private detectives of 1916. On one of the stations for paper recycling the Greenies have placed in almost every street corner I happened to stumble upon a bunch of newspapers from...1916. They were fragile, turning brown, wrinkled but I took care of what I could and have investigated some their Old News under the old slogan *Yesterday today again!*

\*BTW, Frida should perhaps get an extra bow, because she is a real princess. She is Princess Rauss from her marriage to Prince Heinrich Rauss von Pleuen (1992, in 1999 dead in cancer).

# Vad ska påven säga när JANE FONDA älskar sönder maskinen?



Det är fjädrar Jane Fonda rullar sig i. Och i hennes nya film Barbarella rullar hon sig mycket, bl a med en omätlighetsmaskin. Denna anordning ska ge villust. Till slut omkommer maskinen av villust.

Av ÅKE MALM

**ROM (ABD)** — Barbarella, det är den nya kvinnan. Full av kön — och fullständigt fri.

Frånför mig står Jane Fonda, gift med Roger Vadim, och huvudrollsinnehavare i det största science-fiction-spektakel som någonsin spelats in.

Först kom Bibeln ute i Dino de Laurentis jättefilmstad — populärt kallad Dinocittà. Den kostade sisådär en 40 miljoner kr, sedan kom ingenting, ingenting, och sen Barbarella, 20 miljoner kr.

Mycket av de här pengarna har man lagt ner på plastbröst — det kan inte råda något tvivel om den saken. Vart man vänder sig i Dinocittà står de mest skrämmande kvinnliga varelser — de flesta iförda dessa plastbröst.

Du skrämmande, okända värld! Monsieur Vadim, är detta verkligen framtiden?

— Vad vet jag? Barbarella handlar om 40 000. Hur skall man kunna forutse vad som händer då?

## Evig skam

— Men man kan med det årtal skrämmas litet för den framtid som ligger betydligt närmare oss. Ibland tror jag att den redan är här.

— Och plastbrösten?

— Ja, är dom inte hemska. Skulle ni själv vilja ha det så där?

En s k retorisk fråga. Barbarella är väl hittills ett tämligen okänt begrepp för

svensk publik. Men från Frankrike, där hon först såg dagens ljus, har hon spridits över till ett flertal kulturländer — USA t ex.

Olyckligtvis har hennes födelseplats dragit evig skam över sig. Boken med hennes samlade äventyr har dragits in och finns numera endast att få på loppmarknaden. Någon moraliskt sinnad ämbetsperson ansåg hennes uppförande skamlöst och ett hot mot Frankrikes själsliga liv.

Och sånt skojar man inte med i generalens land. Inte i påvens heller för den delen.

— Hur i Jesu namn tänker ni klara den italienska censuren? — Det gör vi inte. Inte med den internationella kopian. Vi snaskar ihop en speciellt för påvens domäner.

## På allvar

Vadim är tydligt skakad av den italienska rättvisans senaste ingrepp mot Antonionis Blow up. Varendo meter Blow up har lagts under beslag av utsända nitiska uppehållare av ordningen.

Barbarella är en rymdernas hjälte, som klarar sig ur det ensa äventyret efter det andra tack vare ett iskallt lugn och stor skönhet.

— Det viktigaste här är att ta det på allvar. Allt. Det har varit felet med alla tidigare seriefigurer som filmats, säger Jane lugnt, medan hon förstört knacker på sitt gröna plastbröst.

Hon kommer just från den sista inspelningsdagen. Utanför oss i deras lyxvilla vid Via Appia Antica plaskar det lätt i fontänen. En del av hennes menageri tar kvällsoppet.

Familjen består just nu av: Jane Fonda Roger Vadim (född Plemiannikov)

Hundar: Zarathustra Underdog Bonheur Mao Tse Tung Lillyput Colbie Maryjane 24-hour Floor Show Kattor: Diabolik Hercules Hascish Oedipus Katt I, Katt II, Katt III. Hela det här gänget flyger i morgon i specialchartrad kärna direkt till gården Vadim köpte Jane och som ligger strax utanför Paris.

## Mår illa

— Men vi skall bli fler, säger Jane. Jag kommer inte att röra en fens framför en kamera på två år. För nu skall här göras familj. Hjäromdagen blev hon illamående ute i ateljén och stack hem. Mången blinkade då meningsfullt till kringstående: Saken är klar.

För alla visste om Janes planer. — Men jag kan försäkra. Det illamåndet berodde helt på att jag hängt i ett par wirar hela dagen under min flykt med Pyggar.

Pyggar är ängel — en fallen sådan. Dessutom är han blind och har glömt att flyga — allt på grund av ett djupgående minder-värdeskomplex.

Men Jane, eller Barbarella, för för honom. Dom älskar så duntun ryker i hans ängslanista. Och vad händer sedan?

Ja, när Jane slår upp sina ljusbli, då ETERAT, singlar naturligtvis Pyggar omkring däruppe.

Mera love blir det i omätlighetsmaskinen, där Barbarella skall dö av lust. Men helt naturligt spränger Barbarella maskinen. Inte ens en maskin kan stå på hennes egen mänskliga betta. Det är symboler det.

Right an obituary for Alvar Appeltofft, Dagens Nyheter Jan 2 1978, whom the main fandom achievement award the Alvar Appeltofft Memorial Award is named after. He had been found dead - by his own tormented hand - earlier in the autumn:

*Alvar Appeltofft has passed away at the age of 34, He was born in Halmnstad, son of BA Hugo Appeltofft and his wife Ellen nee Linden, high school teacher. After high school graduation in Halmstad in 1961 he studied at Lund University. He was editorial board member of the sf-magazines Häpna! and Jules Verne Magasinet and early got the honorary title Mr SF. The Alvar Award handed out in the sf movement is named after him.*

Alvar (b 1941) is a bit of a sad story. The Foundation in his honour, set up mainly on the initiative of old-time fan and friend Dénis Lindbohm (1927-2005), is an operation out of bad conscience by his parents. They pushed their son to despair, when he became active in fandom, by taking all his fanzines and his entire collection of sf literature and burn it, demanding he must "concentrate on his a school work". They didn't realise that fandom in many ways gives an alternative advanced education: you learn English, how to write, you read a lot, you learn how to organise, learn to think even, perhaps learn to draw... Alvar never really recovered from this.

But The memorial foundation hasn't exactly always walked the line. In the 1980s it was used as a private bank by board member John-Henri Humbug - as we shall him - borrowing \$16 000 (exchange rate then, today worth four times more) as a whistleblower contacting me revealed. Ghod knows when and if it was paid back. And with any interest? However, the foundation had no business giving money to a board member in the first place. (Not the first time Mr Humbug was caught with fingers in the cookie jar. Remember the Scandinavian fan fund scandal in 1987 where he mass-produced fake votes to grab the rather substantial fund sum for an associate. Covered in *Intermission*

Land, har avlidit i en ålder av 34 år.  
Han var född i Halmnstad, son till BA Hugo Appeltofft och hans maka Ellen, f. Linden, högre folkskollära. Efter studentexamen i Halmstad 1961 studerade han vid Lunds universitet. Han har varit redaktionell medarbetare i sciencefictiontidningarna Häpna! och Jules Verne-magasinet och fick tidigt hedersstiftelsen "Mr Science Fiction". Utmärkelsen "Alvar", som delas ut inom sf-rörelsen, är uppkallad efter honom.

earlier with facsimiles of the fake votes.)

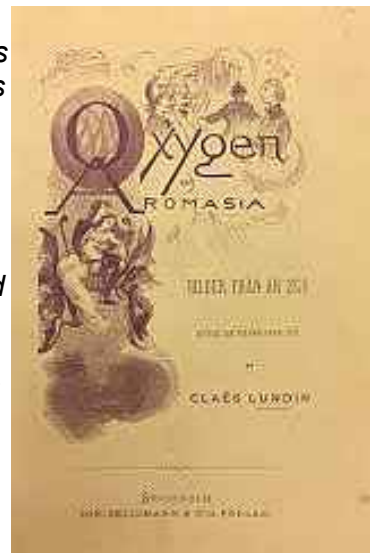
More details of all this are kept under wraps since the foundation, wanting to be for the benefit of fandom won't give fandom the benefit of seeing their minutes. So we for instance don't know details of how they gave away their fanzine collection, now buried deeply in the vaults of the Royal Library. Last we checked it hadn't been entered into their catalogue, so it's for all practical purposes dead. Scandals like this made father Hugo Appeltofft cut the foundation from his will (the mother had already passed away when the irregularities surfaced so her money couldn't be stopped).

From deeds hidden to someone who didn't hide much. "Barbarella" starring Jane Fonda had an opening sequence that makes "Star Wars" beg for mercy. The evening rag Aftonbladet reported from this cinematic sensation Nov 4, 1967 (prev page) and I'll translate the "juicy" bits, "What Will the Pope Say When JANE FONDA Loves the Machine to Pieces?":

*Barbarella is the new woman. Full of sex - and totally free. In front of me is Jane Fonda, married to Roger Vadim, and starring in the biggest sf-spectacle ever filmed...Much of this /budget of \$2m/ is spent on plastic breasts...M Vadim, is this the future? "How do I know. Barbarella is about the year 40 000, how can you anticipate what happens then?...Barbarella is yet a fairly unknown concept for a Swedish audience. But from France where she first appeared she has been spread to many cultural countries, eg USA. Unfortunately she has caused shame, the book about here adventures has been retracted and may now only be found on flea markets. Some morally minded official saw her behaviour as shameless and a threat to the spritual life of French. /Italian censors acted against the British film "Blow Up" and Vadim plans to save "Barbarella" for the Italian audience by making a special edit of the tilm./ Barbarella is a heroine of space who goes through one adventure after another with ice-cold calm and a huge beauty. /We meet Ms Fonda and get a list of her family, incl several dogs and cats... They have a mansion right outside Paris./ "We will multiply," Jane says. "I won't be in front of a camera the next two years. It's time to make a family." The other day she felt ill in the study and went home. Many then saw what it meant: naturally. But I can guarantee that this illness was only because I'd been hanging in a couple of wires all day due to escaping with Pygar." Thats an angel - a fallen one. Also being blind and forgetting how to fly - all because of a deep inferiority complex. But Jane, or Barbarella, seduces him. They make love so feathers fly in his angel's nest. And then what? Yes, when Jane opens her blue eyes, AFTERWARDS, Pygar of course flies around up there. And there's more love in the in the love machine, where Barbaella is supposed to die out of lust. But naturally Barbarella blows the machine to smithereens. Not even machines can match her human heat. It's symbolism.*

From a sex machine to other futurological speculations, signature Flips in his "Blinken" column in the same paper April 24 1954 punches skiffy in the face and find an old book with smelling music:

*Reality is more wonderful than fantasy, it is said, and that's fortunate because fantasy is pretty lame now, at least according to **science fiction**, an artform I have dealt with a lot lately...With sf as the knowledgeable reader knows we mean stories of life in 100 or 1000 years time. It seems they have pretty much trouble then too, nothinhg but troubles, At one time the Martians come to invade Earth and Earthlings must put on space suits and travel around space and punch Martians in the face. Or instead it may be the Venusians who come and behaves badly. And the poor Earthlings must put on space suits and travel in cosmos to punch the Venusians in the face. All this happens within 100 to 1000 years and the stories are really fantastic. That we in those times have found better arguments than punching each other in the face seems to be beyond the imagination of the authors. ...You can't lift yourself by the bootstraps and even with the most sparkling imagination we seem unable to come up with anything really improbable. Jules Verne who wrote sf long before anyone had found out it should be called sf, wrote about the flights of engineer Robour long before Bleriot had started with his first aircraft, but his endeavours are today reduced to yawning routine. Captain Nemo sailed around the world under the sea long before you could only dream of underwater traffic, but now they've built submarines powered by atomic energy and that was something Jules Verne could only dream of. Does anyone today consider it much of a feat to like Phileas Fogg travel round the world in 80 days? The other day I got hold of a book named Oxygen and Aromasia and it was a very entertaining book. It was written by a gentleman named Claes Lundin and printed by Isaac Mercus Printshop Ltd in 1878. It is also sf and the story is about happenings in Stockholm in 2378. This author has mustered all the imagination he had and therefore he lets the young hero Mr Oxygen be the chief of a company that makes weather. He sends rain here and high pressures there, and this thought was of course comical in 1878, but today they can make rain in America at will and there is also a question of law, who really owns the atmosphere. Aromasia is ther heroine in Cles Lundin's story and she's an artist.*



# Världens gång

## Växande värld

De som anar att vi blott står i yttersta början av människosläktets långa och mödosamma väg mot en tillvaro, vars fulla innebörd vi nu ej ens vågar drömma om, stärks säkert i sin framtidstro av Arthur C. Clarke, som är medlem av Brittiska Astronomiska Sällskapet och Interplanetariska Förbundet. Konsekvenserna av de nya rymdfärderna komma att bli revolutionerande för hela den vetenskapliga utvecklingen.

Redan Kopernikus eller Darwins utvecklingslära öppnade ju nya världar. Rymdfärderna och till och med blotta spekulerandet kring dessa kommer att vidga den andliga horisonten och samtidigt möjligheten att nå ett övermått av skapande. Behärskandet av världarna omkring är naturligtvis inte någon större dygd om denna makt ej paras med vishet. Vår trångbröstad nationalism tynar förmodligen bort när människorna upptäcker hela sin jord i det rätta perspektivet och ser den som en liten obetydlig boll i det stora kosmos. Även om man inte får hoppas för mycket av den mänskliga anden så bör väl den nya, påtagliga kontakten med världsrymden åtminstone vidga förståelsen för jorden som enhet.

Kanske möter vi andra varelser i nya planetvärldar högre stående och lägre stående. Vem kan hitta ett visst sandkorn vid en sandstrand? Kanske far de eventuellt högre stående varelserna därute i rymden redan fram och tillbaka i världsallett utan att ens ha upptäckt jorden bland miljoner andra planeter. Kanske har de upptäckt jorden, kanske noterat att den bebos av något krälände liv. Vem vet hur de reagerar inför oss. Möjligen riktar de några insektsprutor mot oss, Arthur C. Clarke varnar: I världsrymden skall vi inte vänta att våra ideal har någon universell giltighet och vi måste bjuda upp allt vad vi har av tolerans och vidsynthet för att fatta de andra världarnas liv och tankesformer. Vi måste erinra oss Platons ord om att vi är fångar i en källare och att vi bildar vårt intryck av yttervärlden av de skuggor som faller på murarna. Säkert kommer det att dröja närmare hundra år innan effektivt utforskande av de närmaste planeterna med hjälp av rymdfarkoster kommer igång, men långt dessförinnan skall säkerligen den vidgade världsbilden ha bidragit till att göra oss mognare, djärvare och visare.

Vi är ju bara i början, vägsvalet mot Columbus Santa Maria är inget mot detta — bruset kring märraketerna — som inleder åtminstone början till verkliga mänskliga möjligheter och ett liv som lyfter sig ur jordeggets begränsning för att sträcka på vingarna och flyga i det stora, riktiga, förutbestämda och enda värdiga, men tyvärr ännu ej tillgängliga livsrummet.

# I BLINKE

Verkligheten är underbarare än fantasin, sägs det och det får man nog anse som en stor lycka, för just nu tycks det vara rätt knalt med fantasien,

## KRÖNIKAN

Av åtminstone om man får döma av

Flins

science fiction, en konststart som jag har umgåtts rätt flitigt med på sista tiden. Man måste ju följa med vad som händer och sker även i dikens rike.

Med science fiction menas, som den bildade läsaren vet, berättelser som handlar om hur folk har det om 100 eller om 1.000 år. De har det av allt att döma rätt besvärligt då också. Det är ingenting annat än bekymmer. Än är det marsinvånarna som kommer och invaderar jorden och då måste jordianerna klä sig i rymddräkter, ge sig ut på irrfärder i kosmos och slå marsianerna på käften. Eller också är det folk från Venus som kommer och betar sig otillbörligt. Då måste de stackars jordmänniskorna klä sig i rymddräkt och bege sig ut i kosmos för att slå venusianerna på käften. Allt detta händer som sagt om 100 eller 1.000 år och berättelserna är mycket fantastiska. Att vi på den tiden skulle ha kommit så långt att vi kan hitta på andra argument än att slå varandra på käften tycks dock överskrida författarnas inbillningsförmåga. Det är tydligen alldeles för fantastiskt och det är rätt nedslående.

Människans fantasi har tydligen sina gränser. Eller som en av mina målände vänner sade härom dagen när han var som bitrast på de s. k. konkretisterna: — De arma griffarna tror, att de kan hitta på former som inte redan finns i naturen! sådant som medan han tankfullt betraktade det vilda arabeskmönstret i den portion spaghetti som låg framför honom.

Det går tydligen inte. Man kan inte lyfta sig själv i håret och även med den mest sprakande fantasi tycks vi inte kunna hitta på något riktigt osannolikt. Jules Verne, som skrev science fiction långt innan någon kommit på att det skulle heta så, skrev om ingenjör Roburs luftfärd långt innan Blériot hade lyft sin första flygmaskin men hans bragder är numera ner-solkade till den mest gäspande rutin. Kapten Nemo gjorde världsomseglingar under havet på en tid då man bara kunde drömma om undervattenstrafik, men nu har man byggt en u-båt som drivs med atomenergi och det hade inte ens Jules Verne drömt om. Är det någon nu som betraktar det som en sportbragd att som Phileas Fogg resa jorden runt på 80 dagar?

Härom dagen fick jag tag på en bok som heter "Oxygen and Aromasia" och det var en riktigt rolig bok. Den är skriven av en herre som hette Claes Lundin och den är tryckt på Isaac Marcus Boktryckeri-aktiebolag år 1878. Det är också science fiction och berättelsen handlar om vissa märkliga tilldragelser i Stockholm år 2378. Den författaren hade minnsann mobiliserat all den fantasi han var mäktigt och därför låter han den unge hjälten herr Oxygen vara chef för ett företag som förfärdigar väder. Han skickar regn hit och högrtryck dit och den tanken var naturligtvis övermåttan komisk år 1878, men nu kan man göra regn i Amerika när man vill och man har redan fått bekymmer med den juridiska frågan om vem som egentligen råår om atmosfären.

Aromasia är hjältinnan i Claes Lundins berättelse och hon är konstnärinna. På grund av att Wagner och hans efterföljare gjort hela den musiklyssnande mänskligheten lomhörd kan man år 2378 inte spela piano på vanligt sätt utan man har då uppfunnit ett "luktkläver" — ododion — på vilket man frambringa de sinnrikaste kompositioner. Aromasia har t. ex. gjort ett "odorat" som framställer "materialismens besegrande av kritikismen och Nicaragua-kanalens fullbordan".

När Claes Lundin hittade på detta log han säkert och tyckte att han hade hittat på något så otroligt befängt att hans fantasi aldrig skulle överträffas av verkligheten. Nu sitter hela Sovjetryska Tonsättarföreningen och skriver symfonier som förhårlig Stalingsgrads återuppbyggande och den skogsindustriella femårsplanens lyckliga genomförande.

Verkligheten är underbarare än dikten och det skall vi tydligen vara glada för.

Since Wagner and his heirs have made the music-listening humanity half-deaf you can't play the piano in the regular way 2378, instead they have invented the "scent organ" - ododion — on which you bring forth the most elaborate scents. Aromasia has for instance written an "odorat" that shows how "materialism defeated criticism and the completion om the Nicuaragua canal". When Claes Lundin made this up he must have smiled and thought he had found someting so hilarious that his imagination couldn't be beaten by reality. But now the Soviet composers guild sits and writes symphonies that glorify Stalingrad's reconstruction and the completion of the five year plan for the forest industry. We must be glad that reality is more wonderful than fantasy.

Oxygen and Aromasia is a fine novel, re-printed in the 1980s.

The magazine called "The Reformer", meets Arthur "Ego" Clarke in its issue Feb 21, 1954.

Those who think we are only in the very beginning av mankind's long and labourous way towards an existence with conditions we today not even dare to dream about, are probably strengthened in the belief in the future by Arthur C Clarke, member of the British Interplanetary Society and the Interplanetary Federation. The results of coming space voyages will be revolutionary for all scientific development. Already Copernicus or Darwin's evolution teachings opened up new worlds. Space travel and even the mere speculations will widen the metal horizon and at the same time be extremely creative. To master the worlds around us is of course no big virtue if it can't be combined with wisdom. Our narrow nationalism will probably wither away when man discovers the entire Earth in the proper perspective and sees it as an insignificant little ball in the big cosmos. Even if we can't put too much hope into the human spirit, the new and concrete contact with outer space should at least widen the understanding of Earth as a unit. Perhaps we meet other beings from other planetary worlds that are higher or lower in development than us. Who can sit on a grain of sand and see the whole beach. Perhaps the possibly higher developed beings out in space already travel back and forth in the universe without

discovering Earth among millions of other planets. Perhaps they have discovered Earth, perhaps noted it is inhabited by some crawling life. Who knows how they react to us? Perhaps they spray insecticides at us. Arthur C Clarke warns us: We musn't expect that our ideals are universally valid in space, and we must muster all we have of tolerance and a wide views to understand the life and thought patters of other worlds. We must remember the words of Plato that we are prisoners in a cave and form our impressions from the shadows falling on the walls. It will probably take 100 years until efficient explations of the closests planets can commence, but before this a wider world-view should have contributed to make us more mature, more daring and wiser. We are only in the beginning, the waves from Columbus' Santa Maria is nothing compared to this - the noise from the Moon rocket - starting at least the first human possibilities and a life that lifts us from the Earth egg's limitations, to stretch the wings and fly out into the big, real, decisive and only dignifying but unfortunately not yet available living space.

As been reported in *Intermission* earlier, natural force, author, sf historian, translator etc Bertil Falk left us last autumn. To the right my obituary in *Locus* earlier this year, #755 (Jan/Feb). I even got paid for it (\$35 if I remember).

I believe I told you about the NATO contest for speculating on the future, in view of the alliance's 75th anniversary soon, <https://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1872> I was one of ten winners whose text will be somehow used in a "graphic novel". The latest I heard is that the publication is a bit delayed and will come in July. I'll tell you more when I know and later perhaps dig into my contribution (and this gave me even more, €500 - getting filthy rich!)

As this is written, the Euro 2024 is going on, the European Soccer Championships (and the American ditto is on too, both North and South, US and Canada are in it).<sup>\*</sup> If North Americans think soccer is a strange new invention, in the heap of 1916 newspapers we read as *main headline on page 1*, about a guest tour by a selected all-star US team, *"Dagens Nyheter's football game a shining sports party, stadium filled to the last sea by enthusiastic spectators. The game, lively and exciting, ending in a draw with 1 goal to 1."*

The US team came after a special invitation, the travel paid for. And their game against an all-stars Stockholm team was major news dominating the page of *Dagens Nyheter* ("Daily News", the biggest newspaper) Aug 16, 1916. The game report was long and detailed, but instead of translating it I found this history article about the tour <https://www.ussoccerhistory.org/behind-the-footage-the-opening-game-of-the-usmnts-1916-scandinavian-tour/> that will tell you more. Soccer was a reasonably big sport in America 100+ years ago and the team was good. They won a later game against a Swedish national all-stars team with 3-2 and played a draw against a Norwegian team 1-1.

At the same time as US soccer visited us, the Swedes began taking up baseball! From *Dagens Nyheter* 3 jul, 1916, *"Baseball in Västerås"* (a city west of Stockholm, pronounced like "Westeros" which you might know about).

<sup>\*</sup>"Soccer" from "asSOciation football" is actually a British word, exported to North America. In Sweden NFL football is called "American football". If that's considered too cumbersome it may be called - in English spelling - simply "football" (Swedish spelling is "fotboll").

Swedish author and translator BERTIL FALK, 90, died October 14, 2023 after a long illness.

I have never known anyone with so much energy as author-publisher-reporter-translator-SF-expert-etc. Bertil Falk. Now this hurricane of a force is no longer with us. His Swedish translation of James Joyce's "untranslatable" *Finnegans Wake* came out last year, a work of love taking 60-plus years. We also saw his massive, three-volume history of science fiction in Swedish, *Faktasin*. Unlike earlier SF history works, it covered only what's been written in Swedish, making it a unique study. A little earlier his biography *Feroze: The Forgotten Gandhi* was published, about Indira Gandhi's husband, written in English and well-received in India, discovering a man who had been mostly forgotten.

But Falk did so much more! I first met Bertil on the SF-Kongressen 1977 and was later contacted to help out with a very nice *Spacecon* in 1980, where Bertil with companions Anders Palm and Lasse Junell launched a *Captain Future* pulp-sized novel. As a journalist he later met and interviewed *Captain Future's* author Edmond Hamilton. When he revived *Jules Verne-Magasinet* in the late 1960s, Bertil published "The Return of Captain Future". His interest in good old space adventures prompted me to found Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize. I hope there is enough interest to make it annual.

I got to know Bertil really well after I working on the popular tech/science magazine *Teknikmagasinet* in 1982. Bertil wrote lots of articles for us, and though he lived in the south, he often came up before deadlines to help out, beside his then-day job at the *Kvällsposten* evening paper. Though at times breaking even, the lack of astronomical success made our magazine slip to another publisher, but we co-workers kept in touch.

Bertil then crossed the North Sea working for the newly started TV3 satellite channel in 1987. Transmitting from London, it challenged and in effect tore down the Swedish government TV monopoly. He wrote non-fiction on many subjects, as well as hammering out short stories and novels. He was also translator and sometimes the publisher of the results through his publishing house *Zen Zat*.

He was especially interested in "reviving" popular fiction writers from yesteryear. His Swedish Wikipedia entry lists about 50 "selected writings" and 25 "selected translations," but he did more. He was especially proud of his Viking detective stories about Gardar Gätlösaren ("Gardar Riddlesolver").

In *Zen Zat's* planetary system of whirling massive objects, every December saw flashing falling stars in the form of Bertil's small print run - 100 copies, tops - Christmas specials. They would have virtually anything you could wish for, like a reprint of Bertil's short story debut from age 12, "A Trip in Space" (1946), or his debut in longer format, "The Masked Gangleader" (1954). My own first short story collection *Murder on the Moon* was no more than a tiny asteroid in Bertil's rich and vivid publishing space.

From the late 1990s and for several years afterward, he continued exploring popular literature history as editor of *DAST Magazine*. Bertil was namong our foremost experts on early magazine fiction and the history of the SF genre in general. Bertil was a main initiator of *Crime the Swedish Way*, probably the first anthology of Swedish crime fiction in English, and attended *Bouchercon* in 2008 to promote the anthology.

"Falk" means "falcon." Bertil flew high and wide, and his sharp falcon eyes gazed at the the broad horizons of literature.

-Ahrvid Engholm ■



A baseball game was today played here between Gothenburg's and Västerås' baseball clubs. The game consisting of 9 rounds was won by the Gothenburg team with 16 rounds to 13. Referee was engineer K Wersäll.

I don't know if "rounds" is a baseball term. I have very vague idea of the game. To me baseball seems like a very complicated version of the game rounders, which we played a lot in school. I



Pärk being played. A combination of NFL football and baseball?

I remember I also introduced rounders to fandom as "meteorball", with the usual rules except you shout "disintegrated" instead of "burnt" to take a player out.

Despite this early introduction of the game, baseball has never been popular here. But on the other hand Americans don't do much bandy, cross-country skiing,

orienteering or pärk. The last is a game from the island of Gotland which Wikipedia claims has a bit of both football and baseball! <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P%C3%A4rk> Americans would probably love pärk!

Between consuming books about rockets and robots, I'm outrageously unfaithful. It happens I dive into books about policemen hunting ritual killers or young pretty students becoming a She-rocket Holmes (pun intended) and other highly realistic crime stories. So it was interesting that there were private detectives in Stockholm in 1916, advertising in Dagens Nyheter (date lost, I keep the top ad about a firm offering stencil duplicating help):

**Renskrivningar  
Dupliceringar  
Översättningar**  
Continental Skrifbyrå,  
A. 67 40, 57 41, 234 72, R. Namnanrop  
"Continental skrivmaskin",  
Kungsgatan 54.

**Privat-Detektiva**  
uppdrag utföras billigt snabbt och diskret av  
ANTON BRODEN, Privat-Detektivbyrå  
Västerlånggatan 68, Stockholm. - Rikstel  
144 68 Allm. Tel. 201 68. Står i förbin  
delse med utländska byråer.  
Pohjanta suomen Puhuttua suomaa

**Privat-Detektiva**  
uppdrag utföras med största skyndsambhet  
under djupaste diskretion, billigt arvode.  
E. Ahlins Privatdetektivbyrå,  
A. T. 106 02. Rika 91 97.  
9 Hamngatan, 2 tr., Stockholm.

Private-Detective tasks conducted cheap, fast and discreetly. Anton Broden Private-Detective Bureau. /They speak Russian and Finnish it's added last in Russian and and Finnish. And: / Private-Detective tasks performed in the biggest speed under deepest discretion, cheap fee. E Ahlin's Private Detective Bureau.

Oldtime fan David Nettle is busy writing about a 1920's private detective, starting with Herr Nymans detektivbragd ("Mr Nyman's Detective Feat"). Now we have confirmation that such private detectives existed around that time!

Here's a strange piece in Dagens Nyheter Jul 13, 1916: "Fänomobile and tram colliding". What the heck is a "fänomobil"? Did some digging and it shows that it's what a three-wheeled car was called.

**Fänomobil och spårvagn i kollision.**  
Vid 5-tiden på onsdagsmorgonen inträffade en lösnande kollision på Vasagatan mitt för Mästerskapslegatan mellan en fänomobil från Istan Jansson's bageri, Storgatan 4, och en norrastråms kow-



A fänomobil





Detective from early 1900s. Mr Nessel's book now seems almost documentary... David Nessel of legendary Salafandom does nostalgic whodunnits, earlier did comics, y'know where strange figures go "Fghyj prtflik!" and other onomatopoeica

Those were rather popular at the time and but the term "fänomobile" was later lost. This reminds me how strange I thought it was, the first time I came to England (an EF language summer school, in my early teens), that three-wheeled cars seemed to be common there. The model was called *Reliant*, but to me they looked unreliable...

Finally, a full page of cinema adverts, Dagens Nyheter Oct 8, 1916. There're a couple of cabarets and lectures ads there, but most are cinematographic pictures, from just one day, in one city, 108 years ago. Even without sound, cinema was obviously very popular! A full, big page (the size is called "broadsheet") och movies. I thought my grandfather's travelling cinema (read about Svenska Biograf-Kompaniet in #139) struggled a bit but now it more looks like his visits should have been very welcome!



Poster from the "Swedish Cinema Company", offering the western "With Cocked Guns". Owned by one A Engholm it enlightened the Swedish countryside in the 1920s. See #139.

### Mailing Comments

Due to those simply lovely computers sometimes going on strike (is there a computer trade union?) last two signs of life from Joe R Struly weren't regular Intermissions. So for the apans who get this (BTW, join an APA, it's nutritious and educating, real fans are into fanzines - and we need you!) here some comments to the latest two mailings.

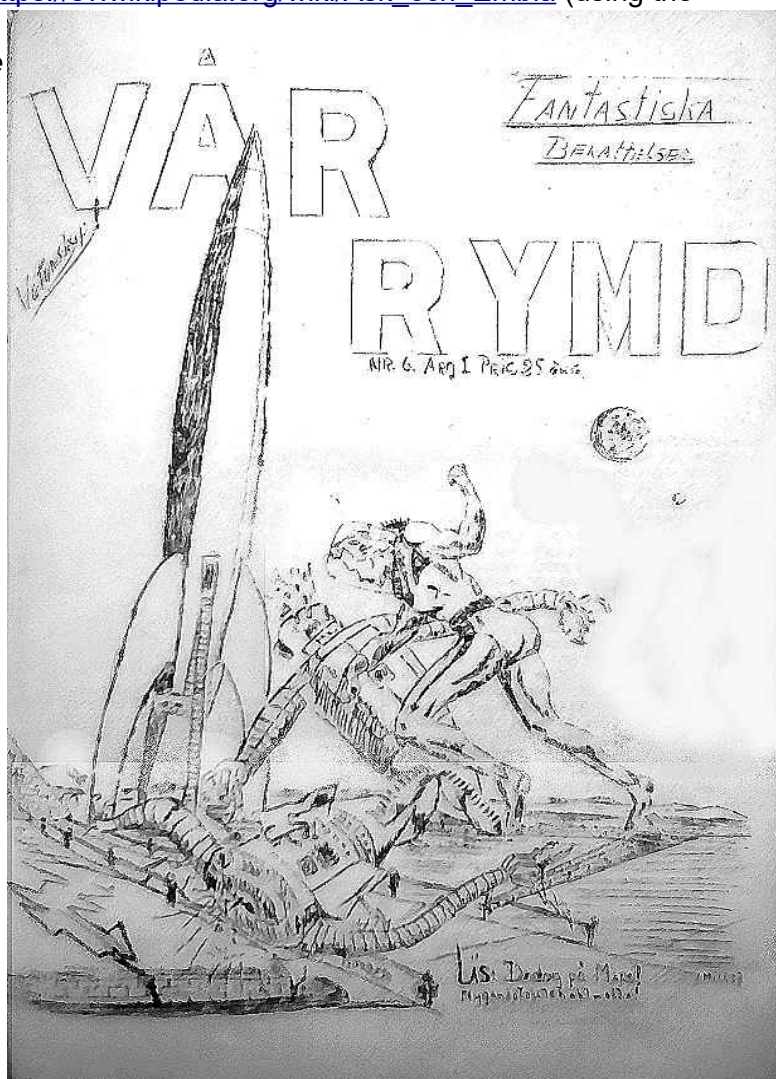
**William McCabe:** Marx Bros are the only legitimate form of marxism... ☐☐ People risking health and death for selfies deserve any Darwin Award waiting for them. ☐☐ As for early eamples of the words "science fiction" in print, I'd say a term doesn't get *coined* until a use gets a following. In that sense I believe it was Hugo Gernsback who coined it through...not *Amazing*, but *Wonder Stories*. In *Amazing* he used "scientifiction", but as he lost control of it and launched *Wonder Stories* he had to find a new term for the new magazine and science fiction it became. (He probaby though "scientifiction" belonged to *Amazing*.) If you expect grand visions of eternal space full of blazing stars and sizzling rockets it's a bit contradictory to have a word play disturbing the majestic panorama. ☐☐ These days I use my Open Office Writer for all layout. I have no use for a dedicated DTP program. 20 years ago I used Ventura Publisher for Desktop Publishing - noting wrong with it, but Writer does all I need and is faster. ☐☐ As for copyright, immaterial concessions holders always try to extend their rights claims as far as possible. I think the concessions (copyright is limited, granted rights, not "ownership") already goes tdo far. Eg 70 years should return to 50. Recently, they try to grab the right of decision over mere links and publishers try to stop others using external work as inspiration, eg what an AI or someone writing a parody does. ☐☐ As for "climate change", alarmists tend to be totally ignorant of that



climate is *driven by temperature differences*. It's thermodynamics 1A and meteorology 1B. Alarmists claim 1) the climate will become wilder with more extremes, 2) the poles warm up faster. 1A and 1B can't be true at the same time. If the poles warm fast, temperature differences between them and the equator decrease, the climate gets *less* energy and weather becomes calmer with less extremes. Whatever you think of Greta & Co, the Sun's magnetic field deciding Earth's albedo through cosmic particle flux doesn't care. ☐☐ GET WELL! (Referring to the half-page contribution to June EAPA where William sayshe's ill.)

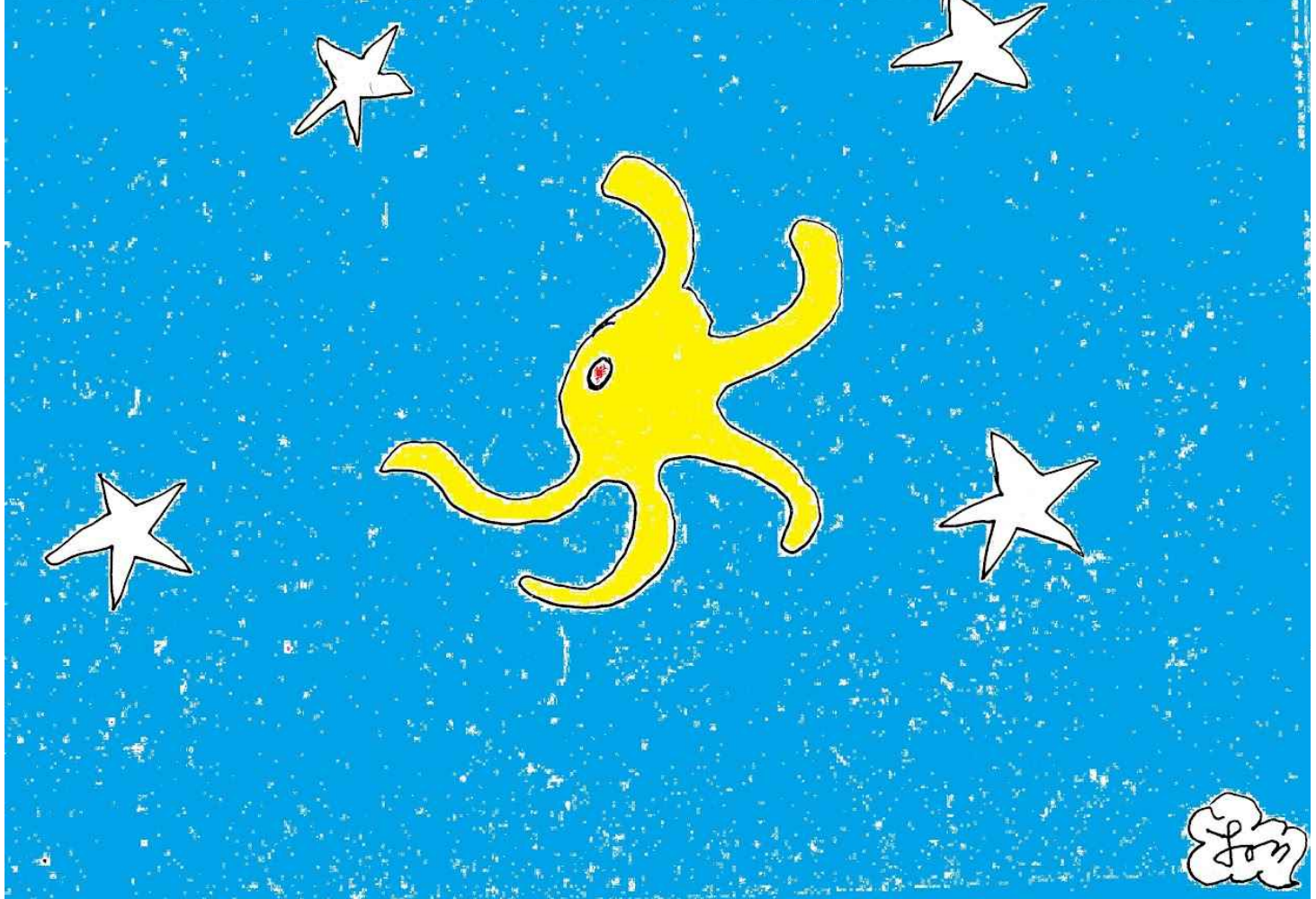
**Henry Grynsten:** No, horror fiction is the zombie genre...! I'm not afraid that skiffy won't develop, but what should worry us is that sf may go in the *wrong direction*. I want shorter, more concentrated stories instead of today's babbling 500 pages And more science and technology. ☐☐ No, Asimov's laws could be useful, if we could get them to work. That'll be difficult, since the different parts of the laws are hard to define. Also, the military won't allow robots being banned from killing enemies, and terrorists and crooks don't care. ☐☐ I think sf writers should have at least an active interest in and a deeper than average common sense for science. ☐☐ I think sports is a better opiate than religion. Sports isn't superstition at least. The only supersitition I know is the irrational belief by Norway's women skiers, that they would have even the *slightest* chance against the superior Swedish ladies in white on skis... ;-)

☐☐ Religion? Well at the same time it may fill an emotional need one must be blind not to realise how much death and suffering religion has caused. AIK & IFK supporters clashing is nothing compared to Al Qaida or Hamas! Being a fanatic supporter of your local team is equal to primitive tribalism, but the damage from it is limited. ☐☐ I think political campaigning have become shallower and more stupid the last decade. I'm gray-haired enough to have seen election debates on the telly with Thage Erander, Bertil Ohlin, Gunnar Sträng and those guys, though I was quite little. They usually spoke of concrete issues, with dignity and without mudslinging. ☐☐ You write. "The best sf to me are short stories, serious, based on plots and ideas, with credible characters and psychology while not being the focus of it." I agree, adding that "ideas" should sometimes have a little technology and science. ☐☐ I don't care much for the stories of Adam and Eve or any other sort of mythology. But it may be worth mentioning that Nordic mythology had its own story of Ask and Embla. I translate from [https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ask\\_och\\_Embla](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ask_och_Embla) (using the Swedish mythological names): *"In Nordic cosmology it is Oden who, together with Hönur and Lodur (or Vile and Ve, says Snorre), created the first human beings. They came walking to the ocean's beach and there they found two logs of wood: from ashtree and elm. Oden who is also known as the caster gave them life - the ashtree became the first man and elm became the first woman, Embla, the mother of Mankind. Höner then gave them wits and mobility and Lodur gave them feelings and senses. They came to live in Middle Earth. They are talked about in the poetry of Völuspá and Snorre's Edda."* ☐☐ You should write more short stories. 30 years or so back I remember you wrote excellent stories. And excellent humour pieces too. ☐☐ I agree that a lot in sf is scientifically impossible, but it shouldn't stop authors from trying to make it *sound* plausible. To your list I would like to add *conscious* robots...yeah, we have debated this, but extrapolating on today's AI, "artificial" consciousness seems absolutely within reach. Saying it must be impossible is like relying on magical mysticism, like "secret laws of nature says only biological cells can do this". ☐☐ We have also between us debated "superintelligence", which I believe is possible and you don't. You may be correct that it may not be obtained evolution-wise, but we should be able to *constuct* it intentionally without evolution. And it may be true that the brain of Homo Sapiens has become a bit smaller (it can be measured by the volume of old skulls, ie the volume left in the skull for the brain) but it's fractional and I'm not so sure we've become dumber. The workings of the neurons could have become more efficient. Up to



Did you miss it? Last Intermission covered Sweden's first fanzine, *Vår Rymd* from 1952, and talked with editor Åke Schwartz. Ask [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com) for it and read how the editors "bombed" the Russian Embassy... Hot stuff!

# Artist Lars LON Olsson lets a starfish meet the stars!



modern times people have often had very tough lives (why did 1,2 million Swedes emigrate to North America 100-150 years ago...life was rosy?) and had use for a good brain. I know that eg studies of conscripts points to a little decline in mental abilities, but that could be more because our schools are getting worse and parents more sloppy. (IQ and mental abilities will be part what you're born with, part what potentials parents and school have managed to release). Anyway, possible decline here will be very slow and society won't collapse because of it. I think that we in the future, quite a number of years away, we'll construct more intelligent Homo Sapiens by genetic engineering. We can try ot ban it, but it may be difficult in the long run. ☐☐ To consider "2001" as a weird musical with an LSD trip is interesting... ☐☐ I agree that interstellar travel seems unlikely, or at best extremely difficult, considering that nothing points to that Einstein was wrong with the speed of light being the top speed. Even reaching decent fraction of C will be very, very difficult. (But a lot of skiffy would become very boring if we didn't allow "hyper space" and "warp drives" and things like that.) ☐☐ More on your "impossible" list: I think planetary engineering is possible, but it'll take a very long time and need huge resources. Generation ships should be possible, but difficult. Interplanetary, not interstellar, war should be possible. Intelligent robots/AI/etc should be possible. Mind uploading an digital immortality may be possible, but very difficult. Superhumans may come some time in the future, alas. And also intelligent animals. Other types of societies and governments may come, hopefully more free and liberal, but far from perfect (as most "utopias" tend to be described as). ☐☐ BTW, "capitalism" or market economy - a term I prefer, because the market has a more important role than capital - had another golden age from the late 1800s up to WWI ☐☐ The fact that it's difficult to forget scientific/technical advances and "uninvent" them will make further progress inevitable. We must discard the silly idea of the Greenies that we are "destroying" Earth and only have "limited" resourses. Eatrth and our environment has the last decades been *improving*. We "care" more about animals and spieces. Lots of potentially dangerous substances are banned or severely limited (lead, mercury, PDB, DDT, CFCs, asbethos, etc). Nature is getting more room due to heavy urbanisation. NASA satellites has measured that Earth is greening with 2% per year. As for resources. 1) We use less resources as production processes are becoming more efficient. 2) And less also as an increasing amount of value growth is...informtion. 3) We recycle more. And finally: 4) in the future we'll have the resources in the solar system. ☐☐ UFOs as modern ghosts is an interesting thought.

**Heath Row:** I've never been to Portugal. The closest is France. ☐☐ You have an Academy of SF, Fantasy

and Horror films? Sounds interesting. We used to have a Turkey Movie Academy here, hosting the first and last Turkey Movie Festival. That Academy soon collapsed. They had a Turkey Movie award, claiming the year's worst movie was one directed by legendary Hans Alfredson. He's half the legendary duo of Hasse & Tage and was offended. The public loved Hasse more than turkey films... and the academy gave up and disappeared.

**Garth Spencer:** I assume NBC has paid owner of the registered name *Amazing Stories* for using it, and now they've stopped... Well, they should pay. ☐☐ Interesting lists, esp of all those universities and institutions collecting fanzines. In Sweden AFAIK only the Royal Library in Stockholm has fanzine collection. But it isn't too big. The contents have been taken down in an Excel file, which I have, covering ca 6000 items. But the zines aren't available as they have failed to catalogue them. 40 years ago, in the early 1980's, the number of Swedish fanzine issues was estimated to be around 20 000, so the Royal Library collection is very far from complete. (\*I\* did this calculation, not that fraud Mr Belly as some idiot claimed. Mr Belly can't even count fan fund votes correctly.) ☐☐ How many of the APAs are electronic?

**Jefferson Swycaffer:** I have tried AI art a little, but only from sites that are free. You may get the most different results. Some are absurd, some look OK but have odd details, and some are both OK and not odd. AI paysites may be better, but I haven't tried them. BTW, AIs have as far as I have seen - in FaiNZINE - no idea what a mimeograph looks like... ☐☐ I'm against quotas applying discrimination in the belief it would change discrimination back in history. You can't fight bad with bad. ☐☐ Fun story this "Stupid Equations"...

**Mark Nelson:** I stand by that ideologically activist books, incl the ideology of LGBTQ+extraletters, may be removed from school libraries on levels below high school. Children aren't intellectually ready to take part in a controversial debate in the grown-up world. ☐☐ Thanks for digging into the origin of the term robot. And the interesting robot articles too! ☐☐ "Tungsten" means "heavy stone", but the element tungsten is now actually called "wolfram" in Swedish. "Mandarin" is used in Swedish but my googling says its from Portuguese. Stairs is "trappa" in Swedish, but it is from the German "treppe". Säter sounds Swedish or rather Scandinavian. There seem to be a lot of minerals with Swedish roots. It may be because the Scandinavian peninsula has quite a varied mineralogy and in the 19th Century we had a number of good chemists. No less than four elements are named after just one spot, *Ytterby* in the northern Stockholm archipelago: *yttrium*, *ytterbium*, *terbium*, *erbium*.

**George Phillies:** Yes, the R3 reactor was to make plutonium for the Swedish Bomb. ☐☐ You spent 40 years on your book project? Jeezus. I have projects going 1-2 decades, but off and on, some may rest for years.

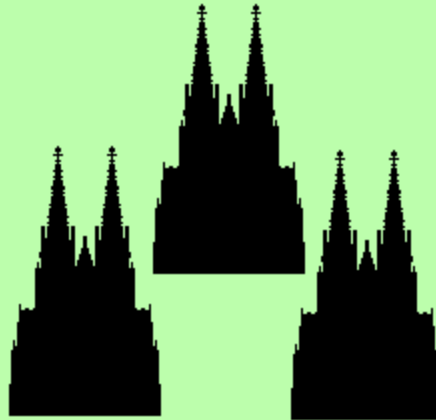
**Samuell Lubell:** "...nearly all movies, TV shows, and novels were renewed", ie about 1963 implying they have a valid copyright. But no, in many cases, AFAIK. Just check Youtube, where you find plenty of movies and TV shows up to 1963, free to watch. I suppose only the most famous literary works and movies got the renewal needed for post-1963 protection. In most cases it would just be a cost and a hassle for a rather small gain. ☐☐ I haven't heard more from Isaac Asimov so I guess there's interstellar disturbance or FaiNZINE has indeed indeed run its course. ☐☐ Those who want flying cars are probably similar to those who want a car instead of taking the train or standing in line for hugely delayed airline flights. Modern technology with sensors and computers should be able to separate flying cars in the sky. You don't drive a flying car! The flying car drives itself and avoids obstacles with sensors, navigation systems and advanced computers. ☐☐ I've read some books by Turtledove, but I think he should cut down his manuscripts *substantially*. He writes too wordy, with too many subplots. ☐☐ Interesting covering 19th century connections between science and literature. But where is Verne and Wells? (Maybe you'll cover them later?) ☐☐ While I agree that Mr Donny Trump is a babbling idiot, the truth is that many people like him and vote for him not because "the rich have convinced many that the government is to blame for their problems" but because the frequent and loud cries from the wokeists and the policies they fanatically advocate push them towards Trump. Fortunately, I think Trump *won't* win the election anyway. Biden is weakened because of his age, but Trump is just three years younger and stands out as *more mushy* in his head. His plans for Russia's war against Ukraine are unrealistic. Trump has problems with reality. If Joe B just gets a decent VP candidate, he has a good chance of winning. I don't believe Kamela Harris is the likely running mate. The voters want a person they like to stand in line if Biden can't finish the term. Many favour Michelle Obama, but the problem is she doesn't favour it herself. Swedish papers speculate that Biden may quit his re-election run. How will the Democrats then select the replacement candidate? Will it be decided directly on the convention without primaries?

Слава Україні!

Archive Midwinter  
a zine for N'APA 271

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8 July 2024

### Comments:

**Cover:** Public Domain Art.

**Ahrvid Engholm:** “Tump should be unelectable.” Alas, I fear very much that ain’t so. And I also fear, the moment he wins, he will totally yank the rug out from under Ukraine. He won’t actually withdraw from NATO, but he will substantially weaken the alliance. I foresee some rough times ahead.

Fun History of Early SF! Those were heady days, full of innovation and wonder. I do honestly far prefer today’s offerings to those of the classical past, but it is fun to read some of the oldies, now and then, to partake of the sheer verve of the era. It was a time when everything seemed possible. In part, this was because the genre permitted cliché-busting, and “the unexpected” was a big part of the attraction. Also, it was a time when a new writer had a much (MUCH!) better chance of making a sale than the case is today.

(Today, new writers are pretty much ruled off the turf, and have no path to publication. Also, today, genre classifications are iron-bound and clichés are the rule. Take a look, if you will, at “Cozy Mysteries.” You might as well buy a “paint by numbers” kit, or

simply allow Chat GPT to write it for you. The genre is hellishly hide-bound, following a very strict set of algorithmic guidelines.)

re Garth Spencer, re socialism, the U.S. actually approached “Socialism” in the very early 1980s, in that Labor Union Pension Funds had become very major shareholders in the stocks of very large corporations. In a sense, the workers were, in large part, owners of the “means of production,” one of the definitions of socialism. Alas, Ronald Reagan and his band of thugs perceived this as a threat and took urgent steps to reverse it, making war against labor unions and virtually destroying them as political actors. It hasn’t been until relatively recently that unions have begun to recover their strength.

**Mark Nelson:** Fun notes on Robots, etymologically and literarily and in actual engineering. The modern AI revolution, and such things as self-driving cars, are all steps forward in the great evolution of robots. I hope mankind does not make itself obsolete...but if we do, I hope our successors do a better job of managing the world’s resources!

“Many authors of classics could be considered “bad” authors by contemporary standards.” Total agreement (alas!) I put Ernest

Hemingway at just about the top of my personal list of examples. I consider his work to be perfectly unreadable, tripe of the most rotten variety. I'd rather read "Dick and Jane" than Hemingway! He was very influential and, of course, earned a big bucket of money from his writing, but, ow, reading him is, to me, like having red-hot vanadium spikes driven into my eyes. There aren't many writers I deeply and emotionally ^hate^, but Hemingway is one.

**Garth Spencer:** My own first convention was a mini-con, run by a university on-campus science fiction club. There were perhaps sixty people in total attendance, with twelve display tables, no sales table, and one track of discussion programming. I was blown away! Little provincial me, young and naive, had never dreamed of such a thing. I made a point of seeking out the Con Chairman and thanking him for an eye-opening experience. He was drunk at the time, and gave me a messy kiss (on the cheek.) He was ^not^ having a good day, alas...but I sure was!

Re lost data and computer failure, my very most heartfelt sympathy. Data loss is devastating. To paraphrase Cat Stevens, "Oh what if they should lose my card? All my data, soft and hard? Well...that'd be the end of me." I'm glad you had backups and were able to restore, at least in part, your archives. Le Sigh. Been there, done that!

Rct me, total agreement! The world is too complex for a single mind to comprehend. I am not capable of building the tools necessary to build the tools necessary to build the tools (continue for several generations) to build, say, a personal computer. I can grok computer science, but, for instance, while I can hack away happily in BASIC, I could never come close to writing a meaningful Operating System program. We all ^must^ take huge swaths of our world totally "on faith," and apply our reasoning to it within the limited purview of our ability.

**George Phillis:** I'm much distressed to learn of the N3F's membership decline. As I've said many a time, marketing and publicity are two of my own personal weakest fields, and I cannot even begin to think how I might help. At this point, at the halfway mark of the year, the N3F Short Story Contest has no entries. None. Not a single. This is rather dismaying, as, by this time last year, we had about a dozen.

Congratulations on the release of "On Breaking Waves" as a print-on-demand hardcover. Hooray! I hope for it -- and you -- to meet with well-deserved success.

Re FanFic 1, fun, although a bit bloodless. It consists of people talking about an alien invasion -- it really entirely consists of people talking -- but you do dialogue and interpersonal relationships very well, and your characters engage in dialogue that is readable, absorbing, and pleasant. It is easy reading. As always, your characters are paragons of decorum and etiquette, masters of gentility and diplomacy, and models upon which we, ourselves, in real life, could benefit from imitating. I think I would enjoy living in a world populated by characters after your style of writing. I do not recognize the world this fanfic is from: what is the original?

Re fan fic, some years ago, an anthology was announced, "The Further Adventures of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser," after those two most famous of Fritz Leiber's fantasy characters. I was not backward in writing a story to submit. Alas, the anthology flopped, and I never even received a rejection slip. But I have certainly engaged in "fan fic" in that vein!

**Samuel Lubell:** Congratulations on 25 issues of Samizdat! And congratulations on chairing Balticon!

I second the shout-out to "Light of Other Days" by Bob Shaw, first of the "Slow Glass" stories. A brilliant and haunting little tale, showcasing the genius of the man and the era.

Fun spotlight on Harry Turtledove! As well as being a very accomplished and skillful writer, Harry is one heck of a nice chap, and is very pleasant to jaw with at conventions. He once rescued me from an uncomfortable social situation at a convention, for which I will be forever grateful. (He could be a George Phillies character!) His masterpiece is probably "Guns of the South," which is readable and enjoyable and thoughtful and darned good. Also highly recommended is "The Two Georges," co-written with Richard Dreyfuss, set in (of course) an alternate world where George Washington had come to an honorable peace with King George III, and America remains a dominion of the British Empire. It is also thoughtful and completely enjoyable to read. (A side-note re this book: the authors must have been hungry, as there are several detailed descriptions of meals and dining!)

Fun and thought-provoking essay on 19th Century Science, the original Steam Age and Electric Era, and, yeah, also the era of mesmerism and phrenology. Science progresses by ever advancing into the darkness of ignorance, and, alas, it does not always arrive at the brilliant daylight of truth. Sometimes, it merely tunnels into dead-ends of error. Science, when allowed to govern itself, has the ability to tack up, "Warning: No Exit" signs at the branchings to these tunnels, but not everyone is wise enough to heed.

Re projects, good work withal, even if you've left some of the fields fallow. You still read a goodly amount, and I guess that's one thing all of us here agree on: reading is good! I just finished the first of a triad of books on the life of Theodore Roosevelt, by Edmund Morris. Alas, this book was for sale via BookBub for only \$1.99, whereas the 2nd and 3rd books are available as ebooks for \$14 each, which is a bit of a budget-buster for this minimum-wage fan!

### **Life Experiences**

Speaking of surviving on minimum wage -- I wouldn't be surviving at all if it weren't for Social Security. My job pretty much pays my rent...and no more. My old-age pension has to cover everything else. So imagine my joy when my car decided to drop its alternator right into the middle of the freeway -- with a bang and a scrape and a thump, and a dangerous obstacle on the road for anyone following. I was only barely able to limp, on the very last amp left in my car battery, into a dealership, where a new alternator, plus labor, cost me a month's salary. Ow. Fortunately, I had something squirreled away and was able to afford it.

### **Spiral**

Spiral is a Marvel Comics character, a villain often associated with the X-Men. She is notable for having six arms. The artist Arthur Adams created her -- the writer Ann Nocenti was also, of course, highly influential. Adams says he was inspired by multi-armed Hindu gods and goddesses.

Spiral is -- not nice. A villain. A mad villain. One of her best lines is, "Of course I'm not sane! Sanity is simply the denial of chaos!" She may have a point, although I prefer to think that sanity is the ^defiance^ of chaos, and the struggle to create order out of madness, light in the ignorance darkness of night.

Spiral is remarkable powerful, as Marvel super-characters go. She has defeated the X-Men. She has defeated the Avengers. She was so powerful that the powers of law and government hired her as a "hero" to join "Justice Force," to combat even worse enemies of the peace.

And Spiral is, absolutely bar none, my very most favorite character in comics! I love her so much, I created a six-armed heroine of my own, who was central in four of my fantasy novels. My character is named Lyra, and is a demon, not a superhero, with other differences sufficient to make me safe from any accusations of plagiarism.

Spiral wears a helmet and super-suit; Lyra is bareheaded and wears a sweater and jeans. (I even have a nice memo from Marvel Comics' justly famous Legal Department saying I'm okay to publish stories with Lyra.)

Next page: a nice illo of Spiral





**Ye Murdered  
Master Mage 271**

**George Phillis  
48 Hancock Hill Drive  
Worcester, MA 01609**

How is the N3F doing?

Jacqueline Lichtenberg, one of our very successful SF writers, pointed out to me that she got into SF writing by writing fan fiction, fiction about characters on television, the motion picture screen, or a series of novels. That's something we could support, right here, by making a place for members to try out their writing skills. I have contributed a piece in the next zine. Shepdon First is fan fiction, in the sense that you may be able to recognize the tale of which it is an echo.

Comments on N'APA 270

Front Cover: Jefferson, you find the most excellent artwork.

As you asked for fanfiction, Jefferson, I shall drop a bit in. I can't change my writing style that easily, but I can do the other thing that counts is fan fiction, namely writing in what is someone else's universe. Admittedly the someone else has been deceased for a while, and the folks who are running this as a television program currently are facing a challenge with 'how do we do anything new or different'. That is, they have a repeating plot which showed up in thebbok, the movies, the first year television show, and it has occurred to them, by report, that they ought to try something else. So I am writing the something else.

I am looking at less of something as well as more of something for the N3F. Mailing individual zines to members has been replaced with Frankinzine, a zip file containing a substantial number of different zines. I am also doing membership outreach, writing individual members. So far, I have found several creative suggestions, notably Jacqueline Lichtenberg's suggestion that we should do fan fiction, one member who was surprised to learn that her membership had expired and had not been renewed, and another member whose membership expired and was now too busy to do anything with fandom.

Intermission 143: I get quite enough politics through my newspaper ThirdPartyWatch.com of which I am editor and reporter. I gather that the Swedish artillery shell manufacturing facility has now gone to five shifts, so it is working 24/7.

There are significant questions as to whether the alleged Chinese interference in the Hugo awards was in fact due to the Chinese, or to Americans. In particular, since it seems clear that the count of the final ballots for an particular novel was anomalous, one might wonder if the nominating ballot counting was also anomalous, and one might wonder how long this has been going on.

The claim that there is no active defense against the German V2 rocket was not endorsed by the British, who immediately launched research on defenses against that German weapon. The first one they found, based on statistical analysis, was probably highly effective, except it had the incidental difficulty of doing more damage to the ground than the V2 would. By war's end, they had the front-end, needing more refinement, of a defense that would with some frequency actually shoot down V2 rockets.

Archive Midwinter: for a discussion of strategic airpower, read Phillips O'Brien How We Won the War. Rather before the end of the war, the Germans were substantially paralyzed militarily because they had no fuel for their tanks or aircraft. They had all these ingenious tanks and airplanes that couldn't do anything, because they couldn't roll in to battle and they couldn't take off.

Re: wargaming? I am President of AHIKS, seen at AHIKS.com. AHIKS membership is climbing; it is close to 1000 members. I am mildly curious with respect to your transport of Marion Zimmer Bradley but on due consideration I think that there are things that man was not meant to know, and this is one of them.

Your short story The Stupid Equations was extremely amusing. I am, however, reminded of a friend who was attached to one of our military services and got to review as the relevant officer the design for a what we would now call a reconnaissance drone. It was a marvel of efficiency. The groups in charge of each operation had done everything possible to optimize

performance and had carefully used all of the space within the craft. At this point, the friend pointed out that there was no group in charge of sending data back home and therefore there was no sending back home observations by the drone. As a result, it would not work.

Brandy Hall: mailing comments are good. Mailing comments are always welcome. The other perspective on the atomic bomb was that it did approximately the same thing that was also done by conventional bombing. In fact, the strategic bombing survey analyzed how many aircraft and what bomb load would've been needed to duplicate the effect of the two atomic bombs, by using conventional explosives and incendiaries. A thousand B-29 missions would do it. It was painfully obvious the atomic bomb was not cost-effective. On the other hand, there was also the recent suggestion that the Japanese had captured a fighter pilot who was involved in escorting the atomic bombers toward their target. They tried to pry out of him how many atomic bombs we had. He quoted a number which was about what you would expect for an escorting fighter wing, namely that there were another fifty atomic bombs waiting to be delivered. It is not clear if the Japanese believe the story or not.

Thank you for the research and etymology. The origin of *android* was particularly noteworthy. I would not care to fly on an airplane controlled by that automatic pilot, though under modern conditions if you are sure no one is jamming the GPS system -- not a good assumption in Europe these days-- I gather it works well.

Thank you for voting in the Faan awards. The Murdered Master Mage started in a rolegaming APA, where I wrote fiction for the most part, continued in two other APAe. and finally reached here. However, the number corresponds to the issue number of the current apa, and does not mean that I have done two hundred sixty-nine issues. I think that the actual number is probably considerably less, though one fiction piece actually ran thirty-two pages for that issue. I actually moderate several Facebook groups, though most of them are invisible. For example, there is a group for modelers building 12:1 scale models of Martian war machines, primarily those from George Pal's 1954 movie. In the last few years it has had almost no

activity. (For the curious, the scale model in question has a wingspan of 4 feet, though the war machines are actually ellipsoidal, not narrow from front to rear.)

Interesting point on the Nebula Award, which in the nominations that I have seen seem to be heavily weighted towards books from Tor and Orbit. However, that simply reflects the taste of the people who vote for the nominations, or so it appears to me.

More entomology: good.

Brownian Motion: interesting historical data on fandom in some of your earlier years. New zines are good. The N3F launched one, the FanActivity Gazette, the early reaction being that there was no point to it because there was little fannish news and was in any event covered by one blog or another. In my opinion it's developed into something quite attractive, mostly thanks to the new editors.

Only the evidence of our unaided senses can be trusted? So if you wear eyeglasses, you cannot trust your vision. This seems to be an unlikely position to take seriously.

The issue with an external drive is that under modern conditions you would need an external drive that read 5.25" disks and had a UBS output to feed into the computer. There are some substantial differences in data storage such that you would need a smart external disk drive to convert the output of the 5.25" disk into something you could feed into a UBS cable. Apparently no one has ever built such a thing, so far as I can determine. The technical difficulty you ask about is that the device does not exist.

What dimensions and format do you want for an ad? The N3F has the challenge that we have an Outreach Bureau but do not have anyone to serve as the Bureau head.

Samizdat: I hope that your convention went well. I have chaired several smaller conventions, not science fiction, and found they were a great deal of work.

Thank you for the biographical notes on Harry Turtledove. I have read a fair number of his books,

including one series that appeared to grind to a stop with one book to go, this being the alternative World War II with magic series, and have enjoyed them.

Your account of fictional attitudes toward scientists is most appreciated. It is high quality literary criticism. If you ever bundle them all up I would be very interested in running them as a single article of literary criticism in The N3F Review Of Books Incorporating Prose Bono.

Phrenology has a somewhat longer history than that, since one state had a Bureau of Phrenology up until roughly World War II. It was primarily a support mechanism for people having difficult times, and was based on pop psychology rather than studying bumps in the head. On the other hand, Serviss's novel Edison's War on Mars has the Martians gaining their intellectual superiority through Phrenology. They deformed the heads of infants to create war super warriors, super scientists, etc. You will only learn this if you can find the hardbound volume containing Serviss's novel, since the paperback reprint seem to edit out a great deal of it.

A nice piece of artwork at the very end.

# Brandy Hall Issue 7 (July 2024)

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*Brandy Hall* 7 is produced for N'APA mailing 271 (July 2024) by Mark Nelson.

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This is West Riding Press Publications ??? This is West Riding Press Publications (Australia) 24

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In my first issue I followed in the spirit, if not the flesh, of Garth Spencer (*BROWNIAN MOTION* 1, mailing 263), by discussing my involvement in non-SF fandoms. In my second issue I followed Garth more directly by discussing my interactions with SF fandom. In my third issue I discussed my involvement with APAs. In the fourth and final instalment, appearing in issue five, I recollected about my experiences 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> September 1935 with the title "Meet Mr. Robot. Not Forgetting His Master".

## The Top 10 Science-Fiction Movies of All Time

Recently YouTube decided that I needed to watch a short video with the title 'Top 10 Best Sci-fi Movies'. Back in the day, this was a perennial topic of discussion with my friends when we went out for a drink. An ideal topic. No right or wrong answers. Unlikely to change anyone's mind, or have your mind changed. Except someone might concede that they had overlooked a movie. Everyone had firm positions they were going to support, but no-one was going to be upset by the discussion --- never a debate.

Not anymore. There's no local to drink at and no SF, never Sci-fi, loving friends to go out with. And I'm no longer motivated by this topic. Perhaps that's because I've become less dogmatic as I've become older on the issue of the 'best' anything. Another reason might be the realisation that there's so much that I haven't seen. (Perhaps a contributing factor to becoming less dogmatic?)

Here's the list on the video, as ordered on the video:

*2001 A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Dune* (2024), *Nope* (2022), *Alien* (1979), *The Terminator* (1984), *Avatar* (2009), *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), *The Matrix* (1999), *Inception* (2010), and *Interstellar* (2014).

I have not seen *Nope*. I've only seen *Avatar*, *Blade Runner 2049* and *Dune* once each. That's insufficient viewing to determine if either *Blade Runner 2049* or *Dune* deserves a spot, though it is sufficient to say 'No. No. A thousand times no' to *Avatar*. It's also a firm No to *Interstellar*. Back in the day *Blade Runner* (1982) would have been on my top 10 list. I wonder if the choice of *Blade. I*

*Runner* or *Blade Runner 2049* is a generational preference? Back in the day, but when was the day? Most likely I am thinking about my undergraduate days when I was active in the Leeds University Science Fiction Society (1987-1989). Three of the top 10 movies on this list were made before that date, and I'm certain that I would have included all of them on my list. But would I include them on a list I made today?

*2001 A Space Odyssey* is an iconic SF movie. It has a strong claim for a place on any Top 10 list. It also has strong claim for Top 10 lists based on the themes of 'Historically Important SF movies' and 'Special Effects in SF movies'. But do you know what? I'm not sure that in 2024 I would include it in a Top 10 SF movies list. Yes, it has ground-breaking special effects. Yes, it has a great soundtrack. But do I really want to spend two hours and nineteen minutes of my life watching it again? And if you don't want to watch it, can you really include it in your Top 10 list? (Unless the list is top Ten SF movies that I don't want to watch again).

How about *The Terminator*? As I age I have become less dogmatic about many things. ("My salad days, when I was green in judgment, cold in blood.") However, I have become more dogmatic about my dislike for the trope of time travel. If I am going to include a time-travel movie in my top 10 I'd replace *The Terminator* with *12 Monkeys* (1995). I much prefer the story of *12 Monkeys* to that of *The Terminator*, although it's been several decades since I've watched the later. However, most film critics seem to prefer the later.

Finally, we come to *Alien*. I would still include this in my list of Top 10 SF movies.

There are two movies on the list yet to be discussed: *The Matrix* and *Inception*. Certainly, they are both excellent SF movies which need to be considered for inclusion on a top ten list. As I'm not constructing such a list I don't need to do so... Perhaps *The Matrix* can be criticised for, in some parts of the story, its heavy reliance on fight scenes - something which is more noticeable in the sequels. I do like *Inception*, which I find to be conceptually more interesting than *The Matrix*.

Based upon this discussion it seems that if I were going to construct a top ten list, and I have no intention to do so, then I would include: *Blade Runner*, *Alien*, *Inception* and *Twelve Monkeys* (even if it is time travel). I'm undecided about *Dune*. I probably wouldn't include, but reserve the right to change my mind: *2001 A Space Odyssey*, *The Terminator*, or *The Matrix*. I would definitely not include: *Blade Runner 2049* (I think you should only include one movie from a franchise on a top ten list), *Avatar* (I have a deep dislike for the story and have never watched it on the TV) and *Interstellar* (time-travel nonsense). Finally, I haven't seen *Nope*.

I no longer remember which movies made up my top ten list from approximately thirty-thirty years ago. Strong candidates for inclusion would have included *Metropolis* (1927), on days when I felt that a Top Ten list should include some historically important movies, *Forbidden Planet* (1956), if you rip off Shakespeare then you have a head start, and *Quatermass and the Pit* (1967). I would still include the last of these on a top ten list.

To end this short discussion on SF movies. One of the local channels recently showed a Swedish (?) SF movie. It's been broadcast a couple of times, but I've never managed to watch it from the start.

As far as I can make out the story... two children are alone on a space craft. At some point in the story they are joined by a friendly alien. Towards the end of the movie their space craft is boarded by two unfriendly aliens. These are ultimately disposed of. The two children and the friendly alien use the ship belonging to the unfriendly aliens to leave the children's ship. I can't remember the name of this movie.... After a bit of a search I found the movie title. In English it's called *Alone In Space* (2018). In Swedish it's *Ensamma i rymden*. I had to use ChatGPT to find the name, as any google search on Swedish SF movie always came up with *Aniara* (also 2018!), which I've not seen. I wonder what our resident Swedish SF expert has to say about these movies?

## The Mathom House

*The Official Organ* 270 (Jefferson P. Swycaffer)

Although I am very happy to welcome the inclusion of fan fiction in N'APA, it isn't something that I intend to provide mailing comments upon. Apologies in advance to anyone who submits fiction and feels aggrieved that I've not commented upon it.

*Intermission* 143 (Ahrvid Engholm)

Ryc about a science fiction club starting in Kyiv in 1962. I know very little about the history of SF in Eastern Europe, particularly under communism. OK, I have read about the film *Solaris* (1972) which I've never watched. (I've also never watched the 2002 movie of the same name.) And I have heard the name Stanislaw Lem, but I've never read any of his work. (To what extent is the 2002 movie inspired by the 1972 movie? Or is it a different approach to the same source material? Answers on a postcard please...)

Enjoyed reading about the Swedish Short Film Festival.

Ryct Garth Spence

*"One thing I've noted is that when a market have three or less major players those tend to find a common ground and more or less coordinate their prices - making it an oligopol. It' be good to get more players on markets. Today our local housing as well as grocery chain market both suffer from lack of competition."*

A reoccurring news item in Australia over the last year has been the cost of groceries and related goods. The two main supermarketing chains, Coles and Woolworths, have about a 70% share of the market. Since COVID their profit margins have significantly increased. Without going into all the details, it's essentially alledged that they keep their feet on the throat of their suppliers, particularly the farmers, to keep their supply costs down so that any increase in price is essentially an increase in profit. It's also been alledged that they've systematically bought up all the prime supermarket sites, even when they don't need them, to prevent other supermarket operators from entnering the market.

*Archive Midwinter* (Jefferson P. Swycaffer)

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm

*“In the same vein, there is some room for the theme that strategic air power in WWII was wasted, and the war (in Europe, anyway) might have been shortened if the allies focused on tactical air. Rather than bombing factories, bomb tanks and troops right behind the front lines. I first heard this idea from sf and tech writer Jerry Pournelle, and he made it sound quite convincing.”*

A biography that I read over twenty years ago is *Blackett* (2004) by Mary Jo Nye. Patrick Blackett (1873-1974) was a British experimental physicist who won the Nobel prize in Physics in 1948. He had a very interesting career, in addition to working on cloud chambers and cosmic rays he was a pioneer in the application of magnetic evidence for the theory of continental drift. He served as a British Royal Navy Officer in the First World War, whilst in the Second World War he made major contributions advising on military strategy – often using the new techniques of operational research, which he developed to answer military questions. As detailed in the biography, he provided advice on a number of major problems taxing the British Admiralty. With regard to the bombing campaign, Blackett came to the conclusion that “the civilian bombing policy was ineffective from the analysis of operational research”. He wrote that the bomber strategy was a “very ineffective offensive against enemy production and civilians” when compared against a bomber campaign that could be a “potentially decisive offensive against one of the enemy’s strongest fighting units, the U-boat fleet”. Unsurprisingly, his views were not as popular with the Air Ministry as they had been with the Admiralty. In September 1945, the official US Strategic Bombing Survey confirmed Blackett’s suggestions through analysis of data. However, for some reason, this report “seems to have had a rather small circulation”.

Ryctm

*“Bless you for your offer to pay for Ahrvid’s N3F membership, in case he is asked to leave N’APA! Add me to the list of people subscribing to this fund!”*

Although there is only one Ahrvid Engholm, there are a few people willing to fund his continuing membership of N’APA. To make fair fair, do you think we need to clone him? That way, everyone who wants to fund his membership can fund their own Ahrvid?

*Brownian Motion #8* (Garth Spencer)

I tremendously enjoyed your account of your early fannish days.

*“Consider the period ((1985–1987)). This was when postage and printing – first mimeography, and later photocopying – were the only way for fanzines to circulate, but they were still relatively cheap. Personal computers were just coming on the market; the Internet was barely a whisper on the horizon.”*

When I went up to the University of Leeds in September 1986, almost all undergraduates did not receive university email addresses. I believe that the only undergraduate students who had email addresses were computer science students. In fact, the first time I saw a fanzine editor provide an email address, sometime in 1986, I had to ask him what email was. I didn't have an email address until September 1989, at which point I had become a Master's student. When I returned to Leeds in September 1990 it was just before unix work stations were rolled out. To access your email most people had to head to a central university computing facility, where you could log onto the university mainframe, some kind of amdahl.

*“Also, the gap between fans who still thought of fandom in terms of fanzines and clubs and written SF, versus screen entertainment and media franchises and mainly commercial conventions, had not widened and become glaringly obvious”.*

Back in the mid 1980s there were only two diplomacy conventions a year in the UK. They were difficult to find out about if you were not involved in the postal diplomacy hobby. The second of these nominally hosted the universities diplomacy team tournament, but almost all (all?) of the teams were associated with postal diplomacy fanzines. In fact, there was little publicity of the tournament amongst universities.

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm

*“Equally I have trouble understanding how born and bred North Americans could be induced to spy for the Soviets, but they did.”*

If you're a political idealist and you're upset at inequalities in your own country, then communism might have been an appealing ideology; particularly if you did not know what life was really like in the Soviet Union. There was considerable support for the Soviet Union amongst British intellectuals in the 1930s, because no-one knew what life was really like. (The debate is whether they should have known better...). The final nail in the coffin for pro-communism's support on the left for was the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956.

Ryct Ahrvid #2

*“Re H.G. Wells, his novels and his socialism: more and more I get the impression that people are only intelligent and capable in one, or at most two directions. It would help explain why otherwise exceptional people can harbour very naive misconceptions.”*

That's a good way to put pro-Soviet support in the 1930s “harbouring very naive misconceptions”. Ignorance is bliss. (Another cliché coming up.) Still, it's easy to be wise with the benefit of hindsight.



Ryctm

*“Interesting to compare your experiences of conventions with mine. It never once occurred to me to feel required to know SF, or fandom, very deeply, or to expect that anyone else would necessarily be so informed;”*

I no longer remember why I felt this way. Perhaps I felt that it was `wrong' to admitt that your primary exposure to science fiction was through the television rather than the written word? SF on the television is not the proper stuff, don't you know? The proper stuff is the written word. If I ever attend another SF convention then I won't feel inadequate with regard to my reading of science fiction. Not because it's no longer inadequate, but because I no think it's embarrassing to be more familiar with SF on the small/large screen rather than the written word. sdfgh

*Ye Murthered Mage 270 (George Phillies)*

George, have all 270 issues of *Ye Murthered Mage* been distributed through N'APA?

Congratulations on publishing *Of Breaking Waves*.

*Samizdat 25 (Samuel Lubell)*

Congratulations on making it to your 25<sup>th</sup> issue.

*Ryct Archive Midwinter (269)*

*“Yes, some comic books are more fantasy oriented than science fiction (Dr. Fate, Dr. Strange, Swamp Thing, Constantine, etc.) but far more are aliens, robots, scientists, victims of strange science etc.”*

During my flirtation with comics, perhaps something for me to write about in the future, I read four of the titles you mentioned: *Swamp Thing* and *Hellblazer*. Despite reading *Hellblazer* for maybe seven or eight years (1990–1997, I'm not 100% sure when I started reading it) I only just realised that it's called *John Constantine Hellblazer*. I never got into traditional superhero comics. The first comic that I started to buy religiously was the British *2000AD*, which does have impeccable science fiction credentials. I'm not sure when I started reading *2000AD*, maybe about the age of 14. I'm equally unsure when I stopped reading it, but I was still reading it when I was 21. Maybe I stopped reading it at about the time my addiction to US comic titles started?

Ryctm

Thanks for the Bob Shaw recommendation. I have made a note of that.

*“I'm sorry you didn't enjoy your experiences with SF cons. Perhaps you'd find a gaming convention or a media convention more your cup of tea.”*

I did enjoy going to `ManorCon' which was an annual diplomacy/gaming convention. Traditionally it was run at Manor Hall, which is a block of student accomodation at the University of Birmingham. If I ever attend a SF convention in the future I'm sure that I'll enjoy it more than I did the conventions I attended in the past – I'm not going to be hung up on not having read as much SF

as I think everyone else has read. I didn't attend one ST convention. I don't have many memories of that.

*"I also read, and led a discussion on *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s*, and *the Triumph Beyond* by George Friedman. The book asserts that there is an institutional cycle which leads to a major political change every 80 years and a separate socioeconomic cycle that creates major cultural and workforce change every 50 years. And, due to the calendar, both these cycles will hit in the mid to late 2020s."*

In 1982 I made a new friend who introduced me to written science-fiction and, perhaps more importantly, role-playing games. The authors that Alex Holt used to bring me into the science-fiction fold were, in no particular order, Doc E. Smith, the Lensman series, Robert Heinlein, various novels, and Isaac Asimov. For Asimov I read various compilations of robot stories and The Foundation Trilogy. I just made it in time. For when I read the Foundation Trilogy it was indeed a trilogy. Foundation's Edge was published on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1982 in the US and perhaps there was a slight delay before it was published in the UK. I very much enjoyed the Foundation Trilogy at the time and didn't critically consider the idea of psychohistory. Nowadays I consider that to be complete tosh, though that doesn't suppress my desire to reread the *trilogy* at some future date. Shortly after reading the trilogy I discovered *Foundation's Edge*. I don't remember too much about it, except I didn't enjoy it as much as any of the first three books. I'm not positive if I read *Foundation and Earth* (1985), I suspect I did and I believe that I consider it to show a law of diminishing returns. I definitely have not read either *Prelude to Foundation* (1988) or *Forward to the Foundation* (1993).

This is a round-about way to preface my scepticism about the institutional and socioeconomic cycles identified in George Friedman's book.

Of the movies that you mention the only one I've seen is *Shazam!* This was playing in the hotel room when we went on a holiday with my wife's family. We had connecting rooms, one of the nephews must have picked it. I wasn't paying attention to the movie and I'm not sure we made it to the very end, but it seemed fun and not taking itself too seriously.

## SWEDISH WORDS IN ENGLISH 4

A section in *Brandy Hall* devoted to words that have entered the English language from Swedish. (I ignore words which are now historical, obsolete, or pseudo-archaic and words which are now only used in an historical context.) I provide the original meaning of the word, a shortened etymology of the word, the first recorded use of the word, and a more recent example of its use. This information comes from the Oxford English Dictionary. The words are listed in the order in which they entered the English language.

Swedish Words in English 1 (*Brandy Hall* 3, November 2023, NAPA mailing 267) covered five words entering the English language from 1295 (Osmund) to 1447 (bail). Swedish Words in English 2 (*Brandy Hall* 5, February 2024, NAPA mailing 269) cover twelve words entering the English language from 1593 (Lapland) to 1755 (Nickel). Swedish Words in England 3 (*Brandy Hall* 6, May

2024, NAPA mailing **270**) covered nine words entering the English language from 1770 (Tungsten) to 1817 (orthite).

# Fan Fic 2

George Phillies

I will do a bit more of this, primarily to see if I develop any interest from people who are not regular contributors in publishing their fan fiction in N'APA.

Shepdon First

"And, at worst, his Rector is exceedingly annoyed that he does not appear to be publishing research, though he says he is working on something complex, and will not publish until he is sure he is correct. His Rector would be happy if Mark vacated his Chair."

&&&&&

Mark looked out his kitchen window, down toward Shepdon Fields. He had arrived fairly late, spent the twilight hours unpacking and putting things in order, and asked himself what he wanted to do next. His bedroom and a smaller room with a view toward the village lurked above under the cottage's steeply peaked roof. Below were an adequate kitchen, a tiny living room, and a dining room that had been converted into his working office. The basement held gas furnace, hot water heater, and a pantry with empty shelves. The refrigerator held various unopened bottles, cans, and items for meals. His contract with M.I.5, signed so many years ago, allowed them to track his every purchase, so they knew more or less exactly what he would want. This morning he had made tea, toast with currant jelly, and finished a half-pint of orange juice.

The movers had been professional in the MI sense. They'd moved everything from his former den to the new one, and set it down in exactly the same places. If they had also made a search of the contents, at the end nothing was out of order. Of course, they'd had all day to work while he was visiting with Brian, but the job was still well-done.

The call of research work could be heard in the distance, but today was Saturday, a day he was more likely to meet some of the children out and about. His maps showed a winding path down toward Pakenham Square, around which the village's shops were clustered. The weather was fine; this would be a good day to walk.

His walking stick in fact doubled as an umbrella, though he suspected that would not be needed. The briefing assured him that every shop in town would accept his somewhat unusual credit card, so his patrons would continue to know exactly what he was buying. His slightly unconventional broad straw hat would surely still protect his eyes from the sun, which by noon time might be reasonably bright.

He began a leisurely stroll, many steps slightly downhill, keeping an eye on the local wildlife. Of course, this was not America, so he was not about to encounter a bear or a mountain lion or a crazed gun owner, but it still paid to have some idea of what was happening around you. Besides, he was supposed to be a spy, so he ought to try to affect the role, even though he had no idea what he was doing.

Part way down there was a large bush, its leaves still full. As he approached, a boy stepped out from behind the cover. The golden eyes were an immediate giveaway. He had encountered his first alien.

"Hello," Mark said "this is the path to Pakenham Square, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," the boy answered. A characteristic dull red haze filled the space near the boy's eyes. M. I. 5 had no staff telepaths, and had been unable to tell him whether he would be a member of that fraction of the human population that could see the aliens' telepathic talents in action.

"You know," Mark said, "instead of reading my mind, prying about into whatever, if you had a question you could simply ask it like a civilized human being. Not, of course, that I'm trying to stop you, but conversations are more interesting when there are two people in them."

"You saw me!" The boy said. "Okay, I apologize. There was no need for that. But you're the new spy, aren't you?"

Mark decided this was more excitement than he'd really needed this early in the morning.

"As it happens, that is one of my tasks here," he answered, "so half true. Probably the duller half. But I also have my interesting task, for which I expect to have great amounts of peace and quiet. I'm writing a book. Higher maths. Including trying to make sense of an eccentric Japanese mathematician. And you're John, aren't you? The photographs I was given weren't completely helpful."

"Got me," John said. "I'm the shortest and lightest of the lot, but you seeing I'm the shortest when none of the rest of us are here would be a neat trick. So what are you supposed to be spying on? Don't you know who we all are?"

"Well, yes," Mark said. "Supposedly I know who you all are. But — have you ever been interested in spying? I mean sometimes things are easy because you have a few tricks up your sleeve, but sometimes things require more cleverness. That means I know what I was told. I don't know if it's true. Some of it might be planted to make me behave a certain way or to mislead you about what my bosses think. No, I'm not directly interested in you personally, though you're clearly a fine young chap who is going far in the world assuming things don't go completely crazy. His Majesty's government is extremely emphatic that they do not want things to go crazy again, so, I am told, they have elected not to tell any of their allies about this fine village. That statement may be true or false."

"Margaret sent me to see what you wanted," John observed. "We had several of your lot here. They thought they could keep their secrets from us. Some of the secrets were truly nasty. Each of them plotted to kill us. They all died at their own hands, after confessing to things they had lied about."

"I was assigned this task," Mark said, "because long ago I had made a deal with his Majesty's government, so that they did fine things for me, and in return I might be called upon to do things. There were four of us who made that deal. We were all at

Cambridge, and extremely promising. The other three died. I don't know any details, except I think it was not here. And I have advanced into old age, carefully being prepared to carry out my side of the deal, but after all this time being convinced that I wouldn't be called upon to do anything. I was wrong."

"You couldn't have said no?" John asked.

"That would be dishonest," Mark said. "When people try to cheat His Majesty's government, sometimes very bad things happen to them, seemingly by accident. Besides, I find the task of meeting and listening to you all to be invigorating and challenging. I did make a promise to myself. When I talked with one of you, I would always be entirely truthful. If you want to ask me what my briefing paper said, I'll tell you. After all, you could scoop them out of my mind with telepathy anyhow. I'm not sure there was anything terribly important in their. I may have missed something. Mark gestured with his walking stick, proposing they both continue downhill. The boy nodded.

"So what is this maths thing you're working on?" John asked.

"This fellow had a long series of ideas," Mark explained, "which he says let him to unite for different branches of mathematics, branches like stacks and sheafs and differential geometry. When he did it, he invented large amounts of his own mathematical language, some of which is a little hard to align with what we usually say, so I'm carefully rewriting his work in normal language. It's slow. There are serious questions if several parts of his work is right. But that's hard to tell when it's in such strange language. I'd say, consider first stacks, but that's not a concept you are likely to have."

Mark realized the boy's eyes had started to glow again first read, then orange, then a sickly pale yellow. He could vaguely feel, rustling down the road of his mind like so many leaves on a fall day, the definition of the stack, the definition of each of the words in that definition, the definitions of those words and eventually he was sure he would get back to familiar common sense English. But it would take a while.

Suddenly John screamed loudly, turned away, and sprinted down the path towards the village, shrieking as he went. Mark followed him with woebegone gaze. What had just happened? Surely he hadn't done anything obvious. It occurred to him to listen very carefully. The lad had been walking in the verge, not on the path, and perhaps he had managed to step on a wasp's nest. That would certainly explain the sudden outburst of pain and the rapid flight. However, no wasps were in evidence. He heard nothing, saw nothing, and was not being attacked by any of these hypothetical wasps.

*Duty to protect*, Mark thought. There is a child in pain, not for any obvious reason, so I should attempt to follow him and see if I can render assistance. Hopefully I'm not about to enter the list of M.I.5 spies who mysteriously died in the course of duty, but the reports I read didn't seem to leave the impression that the children were peculiarly cruel or paranoidly suspicious.

He was much of the way down the path when he spotted a group of a dozen children playing some sort of game. There were two teams, a ball being passed and kicked back-and-forth, with goal posts quite far apart, almost as far apart as they'd be on a football field. Play stopped as the young man he'd met on the trail approached. They all huddled around him, except one girl who stood apart from the rest, facing him.

Down near the bottom of the trail the path branched in several directions, one leading off to the left towards the playing field, and another leading somewhat to the right toward Pakenham Square.

His steps inclined slightly rightward. *No*, he thought, *he had a responsibility as the only adult present toward John — what was his last name? Frazier? — Though the boy seemed to be no longer in pain. Nonetheless, he should at least walk over to the field and see that nothing was seriously wrong.* He found that his path was inclined still more to the right. *After all, that was where he wanted to go.*

He stopped in his tracks, affecting a benevolent smile and the relaxed pose that accompanied it. He turned toward the children. *I hypothesize*, he thought, *that one of you is reading my mind, and encouraging me to go on my way* He felt his head be inclined to nod gently. *But I have some*

*responsibility, duty to protect, because the young man to whom I was speaking might have been injured. Did he step in a wasp's nest? If you're sure you have matters in hand, for example some mind-reading issue, I'm happy to leave you in peace. Mindful that I can't tell what you're thinking, if all is reasonably well you could give me the thought of doing hop skip and jump as I go down the path, and I will hear your message and go on my way.*

For a few moments the urge to travel straight to Pakenham Square disappeared. He then felt a strong urge to advance, not at a sedate walk but as a young child might, hop, skip, and jump. *Message received*, he thought, *so mindful that I am nearly 70 you need not encourage me to break my neck.* The urge stopped. He waved at the children and headed for the town.

On the town outskirts *The Hart And Hibiscus* despite its name was in fact an elegant tea shop, one that later in the day would be crowded with customers. At least, that was what the M.I.5 tourist guide claimed. At this hour it was likely to be largely empty. In particular, as the wind was still slightly brisk, the outside tables were likely to be vacant.

He ordered and chose an outside table that gave him a beautiful view of the village mill pond and incidentally put the playing field behind him over his shoulder. His brilliantly-polished mirror-steel writing case came out of its leather carrying bag. He withdrew from it his current page of manuscript, now in need of proofreading, and perched the writing case on its edge. Small legs guaranteed that it would remain vertical, a great convenience in small working spaces, which admittedly this was not.

By-and-by one of the young ladies from inside came out, deposited on his table his pies, an extra-large pot of currant tea, two teacups, and six profiteroles, stuffed with vanilla custard and coated with a milk-chocolate glaze.

From where he sat he could scan a wide range of directions, taking great interest in any town residents that he happened to see. After a while he noticed that his field-of-view had contracted. He would look as far to the left as the mill pond but no further than that. He turned back to his reading,

occasionally rotating his carrying case so that would among other things keep the wind off his pies and the piece of paper he was reading from. A momentary glance confirmed that his intended audience was off to his left, somehow making him uninterested in looking in that direction. After a while, he noted, she was pretty nearly over his shoulder behind him. He paused to mark points where more footnotes were needed, reached his right hand over his left shoulder and waved at the person he could not see behind him. The young lady stopped, put her hands on her waist and glared in his direction. He pointed at her, pointed at the chair in front of him, and focused his gaze at the profiteroles and the thought that they really looked attractive as an addition to his meal.

He wished he could see the look on her face but that wasn't really necessary. She was now walking vigorously in his direction. His paper dropped back in its carrying case, which he now set flat on his table.

Her footsteps were quite soft, but walking noiselessly on the patio's ceramic surface looked to be close to impossible.

"Hello, Charlotte," he said, at first not looking up from his food. Then he slid back his chair and rose.

She grinned mischievously.

"And you're the mathematics professor," she said, "and the actually competent spy. Professor Thornberry-Thistlewaite, I believe?"

"Indeed. And you're Charlotte Huntress." He smiled in her direction. "Would you care to join me for a light snack? Admittedly for your age that is a very light snack, but we could always order something more substantial for you."

"Joining you was the idea," she answered. "More food is good. When you see the waitress, I'll try whatever those pasties you are eating are."

She waited politely while he poured currant tea for her and then let her sit before he returned to his chair.

"Of course," he said, "some parents would be extremely alarmed to discover their daughter was

sitting down to eat with a strange man. They might worry that she was in danger."

She smiled.

"At this table," she said, "I'm much the more dangerous. But not to you. You bear no ill will toward me. I'm still impressed that you caught me, twice, doing something with mentalics."

"Stage parlor tricks," he said. "Nothing of consequence. If you try to sneak up on the driver of a parked car, you probably want to make sure he can't see you through his rear-view mirror. Parental warning holds. "

"Clever. My parents," she said, "not like any of my friends' parents, understand that I'm actually not their daughter. And they don't blame me for being here. If dad or mom got their hands on," she paused, thinking carefully, "the people who made mom my mother, they'd be extremely angry."

"Good for them," he said, "though His Majesty's government would be obliged to differ. Though you actually gave away a third time that you were using mind reading on me. Or whatever you call it."

"I did?" Charlotte said.

To Be Continued. Perhaps.

Renovation  
And  
Innovation  
Letter



*Union Station, Chicago, Illinois*



Renovation And Innovation Letter  
By Adrian Kresnak for the July 2024 NAPA  
published also on Itch.io under my art zine label  
OleandrsStudio  
railfanzine@gmail.com

**Hello All,**

I'm a 25-year-old student from the city of Twitter in the midwestern state of Internet. It's nice there. I can read commentary written in Japanese or Brazilian Portuguese with the help of Google Translate. When NASA publishes a new photograph from a telescope, I can see it immediately. (I love space photography!)

Lately, though, internet-fandom has been a bit draining. It feels like every other week some entrepreneur is trying to get people to purchase a Torment Nexus.



Alex Blechman  
@AlexBlechman

Follow



Sci-Fi Author: In my book I invented the Torment Nexus as a cautionary tale

Tech Company: At long last, we have created the Torment Nexus from classic sci-fi novel Don't Create The Torment Nexus

5:49 PM · 11/8/21 From Earth

Online fannish activity sometimes feels like a full-time job. Listen to the music at certain times to get the musician to the #1 spot on the charts, or we'll lose to the other musicians' fanclubs. Tell your friends to pre-order the comic so the series gets to the #1 bestsellers list, or we'll get blamed when the series gets canceled. Watch TV episodes the minute they come out, because next week they'll be old news and nobody will be talking about them anymore. There's so little time to just enjoy things.

As Stephen Duncomb says in his book, *Notes from Underground: Zines & The Politics of Alternative Culture*:

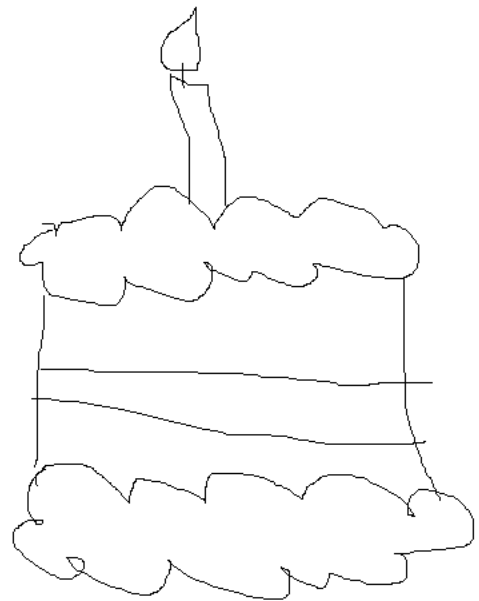
"Commercial culture is not popular culture. It may be popular, but its popularity is a means to an

end: that of being a profitable commodity. As a result, fans are continually betrayed in their quest to make the culture theirs, and the process of connection must be continually reinvented, ad infinitum."

This is why I love zines. They're a way to express oneself and connect with others at a different pace. They don't expect the instant response that social media does. Most of my prior zines are personal/art pieces. This is my first "classical fanzine" (meaning not devoted to one franchise in particular).

About a decade ago I used to be part of a writer's group at a community college. I had to move away, but I dearly missed the conversation and shared creativity in the group. I joined NFFF in the hopes of finding that kind of community again. I have been reading through past issues of your fanzines and have found them enjoyable.

Thank you for having me. I look forward, hopefully, to enjoying good times in the NFFF.



## Comments

**Ahrvid Engholm (Intermission #143)** - I enjoy reading your articles about the history of science fiction and fandom. It's good to know that readers had some of the same criticisms then as readers today have about different science fiction. It shows continuity of imagination, I think.

**Jefferson P. Swycaffer (Archive Midwinter)** - "The Stupid Equations" was a fun story. I had to double-check the copyright date you put because it made me think of the Titan submarine from the other year. It's fun to see the influence of purpose and aesthetics to a design.

**Mark Nelson (Brandy Hall Issue 6)** - I didn't know tungsten was from the Swedish language — cool! I remember reading one about spaceships being built with tungsten so they could survive on the surface of Venus. I don't remember if that was a real-life story or a fictional one, though.

**Garth Spencer (Brownian Motion #8)** - Hello again! I saw my LOC in *Obdurate Eye* 39. Your notes on shared worlds there and your experiences in the shared world of fandom made me think. Having the ground rules of a shared setting can be helpful for creativity.

**George Phillies (Ye Muthered Master Mage 270 and Fan-Fic #1)** - That story built up the suspense well! I spent the story wanting to like the "visitors" yet being afraid of them. I like the detail about using team games to test hivemindedness.

**Samuel Lubell (Samizdat Ish 25)** - I was intrigued reading about the use of trains to symbolize outside disruption in that section of your thesis! I've read about historical perspectives on trains, but the context you gave was enlightening. While rail transport is still common today, I don't know if trains fulfill the same symbolic role still. Of course, I'm biased. The fire-breathing steam engines are almost mythical now, another technology going from wizardry to science. If you have any more information on trains in science fiction, I would love to read it.

## A Favor To Ask

There's a short story I read some years ago that I can't remember the title or author of. I wonder if perhaps you may be able to help me find it?

In the story, some scientists send a robot to the future. The robot returns and claims that the future is a paradise, with peace and abundance for all. I remember one scientist asking the robot if all kinds of people still existed — that is, if the apparent peace was covering up racial oppression — and the robot responded that there was racial equality in the future. I believe the twist of the ending was that all the inhabitants of the utopian future were androids rather than humans.

Thank you for your help!

\*

## Currently Enjoying:

- *FaceOff*, the SyFy show about special effects makeup.
- *Zone: Survival Mission* on Hulu. The second season had an interesting take on zombie-viruses that I might write about later
- *Mariimo* by Tyrel Pinnegar, an ebook that I just started reading
- *Blood Hunt*, the Marvel comics event about vampires.

\*

See you all later!

- Adrian



Amtrak rails, Chicago, Illinois

*Samuel Lubell's Zine*



Art generated from Openart.ai

## ...LOC on NAPA 270

Nice cover. I'm a big fan of castles and plan on seeing a bunch in Scotland next month.

Intermission #143 - I continue to be impressed at the Ukraine's ability to hold their own against Russia. I agree, it is shameful that Republicans in the U.S. Congress block efforts to help Ukraine protect itself from an invasion by its much larger neighbor. I don't understand how so many people continue to support Trump after everything that happened last time he was president and am scared about what can happen if he returns. As far as Worldcons go, it isn't so simple just to require that Worldcons only take place in democratic countries. How do you define a democratic country? Does the U.S. count after George W Bush and Trump both become president despite having fewer votes than their opponent? I enjoy reading about the history of SF and fandom in Sweden, which is both like and unlike their development in the U.S. I'm a big fan of Mark Clifton. For a while he was very popular although his stories were better than his novels. His story "Star Bright" is one of my all-time favorites.

Archive Midwinter - It seems strange to call something midwinter considering how hot it is out there. I agree that the only alternative to dropping the atom bomb on Japan would have been an invasion of the islands that would have



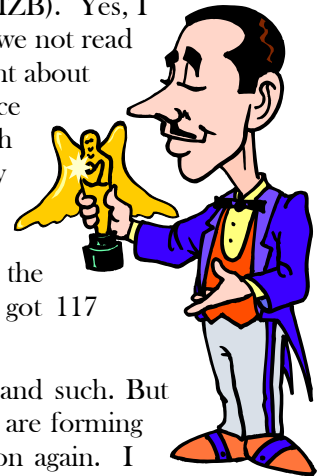
been slow, produce a high body count on both sides, allow the USSR to enter the Pacific war, and may have created lasting antagonism between the US and Japan. I hadn't thought of the golf handicap analogy for affirmative action. I'll have to borrow it. Like it or not, romance novels are more popular than sf/fantasy. And now there is a subgenre called romancy which is a blend of fantasy and romance.



Brandy Hall 6 - I still haven't seen the Oppenheimer film. I'm opposed to outside censorship even in school libraries. I think we should allow librarians, who of course are trained for this, to book the best books for kids. Too often when people claim to be protecting young people from explicit sex and material above their age, they really are taking out views from people with whom they disagree, removing books about two male penguins caring for an egg and Heather has Two Mommies that aren't explicit at all. You have an interesting article about robots from 1935.

Current wars like most past wars are fought over control of land. Russia wants to control Ukraine and the Palestinians in Gaza want to end Israeli control over what the Palestinians see as Palestine. The problem with admitting college students strictly by high school grades and test scores is that all students do not start off from an equal place and they are not provided with equal preparation. So a student with high grades from a private school may actually be not as bright as a student from a lower-income background but have higher grades and test scores. So colleges need to take this into consideration.

If you enjoyed *Mists of Avalon* then by all means read the sequels (at least those by MZB). Yes, I agree, judged by present standards, most people in the past were problematic. Should we not read Asimov because he was sexist? We'd be missing out on some good books. Good point about having only a few people do the work not being limited to SF clubs. It's just that I notice it more in SF clubs since I am a member of two clubs and not really any non-fannish groups (outside of work). Yes, the Hugo is a fan award and is based on the popularity of the writer, not the quality of the work (except that every once in a while a book or author gets picked despite being an unknown). However I question your claim that *Princess of Mars* almost won a Hugo. There was a 2009 direct to DVD movie and the 2012 John Carter movie. Neither was even on the list of finalists. John Carter got 117 nominations for the 2013 ballot while the lowest nominee had 141.



Brownian Motion #8 - Fandom does include media and fans of games and anime and such. But there is an overlap between these groups and readers. Also, increasingly these groups are forming their own conventions. Robert Sawyer looks busy. I hope to see him at a convention again. I think it shameful that big companies like NBC think they can ignore copyrights and trademarks belonging to smaller companies and regular people simply because they are bigger and can afford more lawyers. No one in the U.S. really blames Canada for anything, which is why the *South Park* song is funny. I tried to be fair in my profile of Marion Zimmer Bradley and the scandal involving her family. I knew Diana Paxson was a friend and collaborator of MZB, but didn't know of her recent troubles.

Ye Murdered Master Mage #270 - A number of fannish groups/conventions have had membership drops, probably due to Covid and its aftermath. Yes, I need to get back in the habit of submitting reviews. I'm not sure it counts as fanfiction if it is not clear what the original source is. Lots of stuff is actually published that is a homage to or using themes from other works.

### ...Balticon Report



I chaired this year's Balticon. We had over 1,000 people and everyone had a good time. There were a couple of things that I wish had gone better, but there were few real complaints at the end. I learned a lot about running an all-volunteer event.

There's always a delicate balance between micromanaging and being too hands-off. I think I may have been a little too trusting that people would come to me if they had problems instead of going out and trying to find problems on my own. I'll have to remember that the next time I chair a convention (Capclave 2025)

**...Author Spotlight: Joe Haldeman**

Joe Haldeman has had a varied career. He has written novels and stories, poems, tie-in novels, movie scripts, and even folk songs. He also taught writing at MIT from 1983 - 2014.

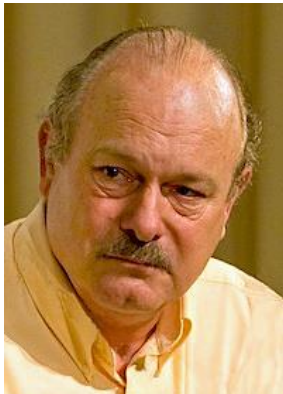


Photo from Wikipedia

Born in 1943, he had his first story, "Out of Phase," published in *Galaxy Magazine* in September 1969, two years after graduating college. His first book was non-genre based on his experiences in the Vietnam War. His first SF novel, *The Forever War* (1974), also influenced by the Vietnam War, won the Hugo, Nebula, and Locus Awards. He wrote a sequel *Forever Free* in 1999. His 1998 novel, *Forever Peace*, despite the name, is only thematically linked. It won the Hugo and Nebula. Other major works include the *Worlds* trilogy, the *Marsbound* trilogy, *The Hemingway Hoax* (which won best novella Hugo and Nebula before being turned into a novel), *Camouflage* (Nebula winner), and *The Accidental Time Machine*. He also wrote two Star Trek novels. Unlike many authors who are primarily novelists, he continued to write stories throughout his career.

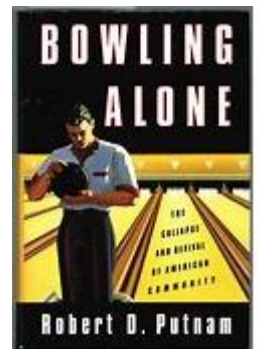
Arguably the first major SF writer of the Vietnam War generation, Joe Haldeman often dealt with themes of war and peace and the long-term effects of war on those who fight it. He was named a SFWA grandmaster in 2010 and inducted to the Science Fiction Hall of Fame in 2012. He also was president of SFWA. Perhaps least important, he was a trustee of the Washington Science Fiction Association (WSFA) for two years.

His family also was involved in science fiction. His wife Gayle Haldeman is a major science fiction fan, and Secretary of WSFA from 1966-71. His brother, Jack (Jay) C. Haldeman was a science fiction writer in his own right, with six novels and around 75 short stories. The brothers collaborated on a novel, *There is No Darkness*. Jay was president of WSFA from 1966 to 1974 and chaired the club's convention, Disclave, during those years.

Those who have not read Joe Haldeman should certainly read *The Forever War* and *The Best of Joe Haldeman* (2013 from Subterranean Press).

**...The Declining Fannish Organization**

Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam wrote in *Bowling Alone* that Americans are becoming less engaged with their communities. He cited declines in membership groups including religious and secular organizations. Although he wrote long before the Covid-19 pandemic, I think its effect accelerated these trends as many people huddled in their homes, not leaving except for grocery runs, working via the Internet and phone. A Gallup study found that in 2023 only about a third of Americans said they had gone to church/other religious institution in the last 7 days, compared to 44% in 2000 and 40% in 2012.



We see this in fandom as well. The conventions I have attended continue to be smaller than before the pandemic. Not counting Chengdu, whose claimed 18,895 attendance is suspicious and twice as large as the largest Worldcon, the post-pandemic Worldcons have not caught up to pre-pandemic ones in size.

Year	Location	Size of In-Person Con
2016	Kansas City, USA	4,719
2017	Helsinki, Finland	5,944
2018	San Jose	5,440
2019	Dublin, Ireland	6,525
2020	New Zealand	0
2021	Washington, DC	2,359
2022	Chicago, USA	3,574

It will be interesting to see the size of this year's Worldcon in Scotland. The previous Scotland Worldcons had 4,173 (1995) and 4,115 (2005). See next issue for an update.

As far as DC-area local groups go, the Washington Science Fiction Association continues to be semi-hybrid with only a handful of people meeting in-person and the vast majority of attendees doing so via Zoom. The Baltimore Science Fiction Society also has hybrid meetings with a majority of attendees doing so in person but a substantial number doing so via Zoom.

### ...From Wizard to Scientist: Changing Views towards the Scientist from Hawthorne to Twain (Part VII)

*Readers of Samizdat may remember that I've been serializing my 1989 undergraduate thesis on what I very carefully did not tell Harvard was 19th century science fiction. Incidentally, I just missed my 35<sup>th</sup> reunion last month. Here is more from the History section.*

The last half of the nineteenth century, between Hawthorne's 1840s and Twain's 1890s, was a period of transformation for science. As John Burnham notes, science changed from a "philosophical diversion to a specialized occupation, from probing into nature into a way of life itself.<sup>1</sup> The earlier generation's definition of science as all practical knowledge grew more specific to adapt to the changes in the field. In 1872, E.L. Youmans, as the editor of *Popular Science Monthly*, explained the change as:

The increasing interest in science, in its facts and principles, its practical applications and its bearings upon opinion is undeniable; and with this augmenting interest, there is growing up a new and enlarged meaning of the term which it is important for us to notice. By science is now meant the most accurate knowledge that can be obtained of the order of the universe by which man is surrounded and of which he is a part.<sup>2</sup>



Image by [HANSUAN FABREGAS](#) from [Pixabay](#)

A few years later the definition needed to also include the process of science as well. In 1880, the magazine *Science* defined its subject as "the knowledge of a whole system of facts, principles and laws pertaining to a phenomenon."<sup>3</sup> This view of science stressed organization and system instead of just isolated facts. Theory and method became intrinsic to science, as it transformed itself from a general category of all learning into a distinct branch of knowledge with its own procedures for investigation.

With this new definition of science came a new, more professional, definition of scientists. In the early nineteenth century, science was conducted mainly by amateurs, and even the scientific societies contained large numbers of interested non-scientists. Beginning in the 1840's, however, a professional scientific community formed, composed of full time practicing scientists. In a major change from the scientific community of earlier days, most members were professors or researchers, and only a few were physicians.<sup>4</sup> A new organization, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, stated in its charter that: "the fellowship of the association is limited, by its constitution, to such members as are professionally engaged in science,

<sup>1</sup> John Burnham, *Science in America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1971) p.66

<sup>2</sup> "Editor's Table", *Popular Science Monthly* Vol I, 1872. p. 113

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Fleming, "The Classification of Science," *Science: A Weekly Record of Scientific Progress Illustrated*. Dec 25, 1880 p.312

<sup>4</sup> "By the 1840's, an American scientific community had emerged, numbering between 3 and 6 hundred with an elite of half a hundred or so of the most productive workers. Three-fourths or more of the elite were professors of science of one kind or another." Burnham, p.72

or have by their labors aided in advancing science.”<sup>5</sup> Scientists began to work in groups, where they could specialize in a small area of science, and rely on others to fill in the rest. With the fragmentation of science, scientists, like ordinary citizens, depended on the popularizers to keep them informed on developments outside their own field. The new special societies and magazines in each field were only comprehensible to the people in it.

From the beginning of the century, American science emphasized utility. Both the general public and scientists themselves believed that “science was primarily applied science, technology and invention.”<sup>6</sup> But, while the early nineteenth century erroneously equated science and technology in order to show science as utilitarian, in the latter half of the century science became truly useful. Scientists began to examine technology, analyze the principles on which it functioned, and from that basis suggest improvements. All machines using electricity, including the telegraph, electric light (not invented until the 1880’s), and the phonograph resulted from the scientific inquiries into electrical phenomenon. These inventions fascinated Americans. “Telephone” concerts were given in 1876 whereby people in Boston, through a telephone, could hear instruments making music in Philadelphia. In the same year, the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia stressed mechanical marvels of technology. People took an interest in science to understand these inventions, but even as late as 1889, they considered the invention itself more important than the science behind it.<sup>7</sup>

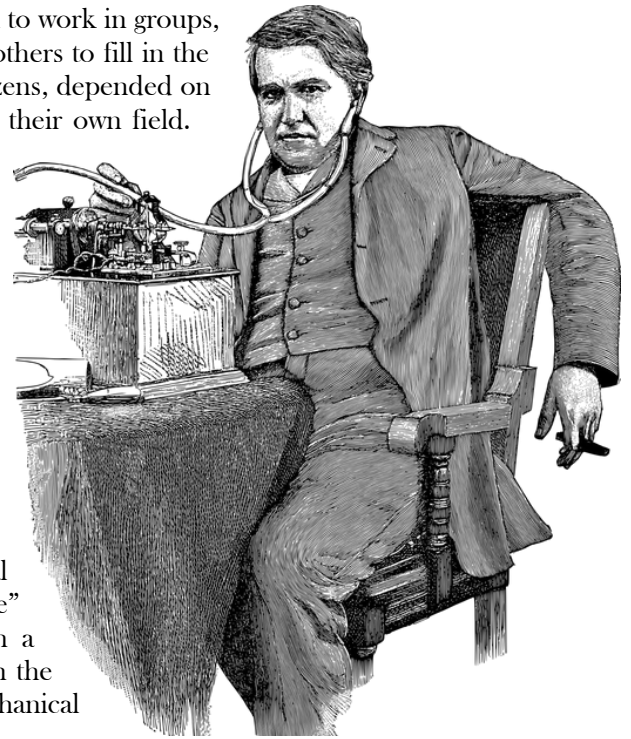


Image by [Gordon Johnson](#) from [Pixabay](#)

The increasing employment of science and technology produced a growing faith in progress. America led the world in its emphasis on utilitarian science<sup>8</sup> applying it to industries. Industry used the results of science and even set up laboratories of their own. Andrew Carnegie, the supreme man of business, best expressed the public’s belief in utility of science; he once said that he would rather lose his buildings and plants than the services of his scientists.<sup>9</sup> The machines were changing the world and science was the force behind the machines. This faith in progress, and confidence in science, created an expectation that it could solve all of the world’s problems:

To some thinkers the promise of science could be fulfilled by an endless accumulation of facts, the process by which ignorance and superstition is pushed back and science, in time, solves all problems. Earlier in the century, scientists had been preoccupied with aggregating facts but tended to lack the fanatical faith in the adequacy of science that later flourished.<sup>10</sup>

As science became more popular, more magazines were devoted to chronicling its activities. While in the early 1800’s there was no magazine devoting itself strictly towards science, by the end of the century even weekly science magazines were successful. Benjamin Silliman’s 1818 *American Journal of Science and Arts* consisted of both science and non-science; in the first issue, its editor defined its purpose to include: “Music, Sculpture, Engraving, Painting...”<sup>11</sup> When the general popular magazines published science, they often just printed listings of

<sup>5</sup> TC Mendenhall, “The Relations of Men of Science to the General Public,” *Science: A Weekly Record*, Oct 24, 1890. p.229

<sup>6</sup> Burnham p. 69

<sup>7</sup> Technology in fact was more popular than science; the social value of science lay in its utility in creating inventions. The British scientist T.H. Huxley, explained the popularity of the science of electricity as a result of its mechanical creations: “The great development of technical applications of electricity has stimulated the public interest in this science.” article “Twenty Years” in *Science: A Weekly Record*, Dec 13, 1889 p. 398

<sup>8</sup> “Mechanical ingenuity engages a greater number of minds in the United States than in any other nation in the world” Tyndall in *Popular Science* Vol 14, March 1879 p, 569, cited in Mott, *Vol III* p.115

<sup>9</sup> Daniels, *Science in American Society* p. 272

<sup>10</sup> Burnham, *Science in America* p. 68-9

<sup>11</sup> Mott, Frank *A History of American Magazines: Vol II 1850- 1865* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1938) p.303

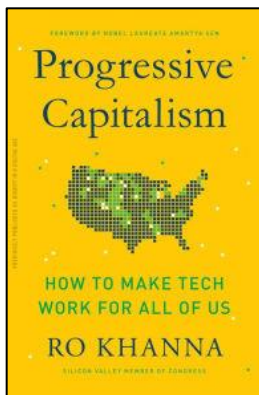
new inventions or discoveries. The title of *The Scientific American*, proclaimed its similar focus on “mechanical and other improvements.”<sup>12</sup> However, in the second half of the century, new magazines focused on science to meet the increased demand for scientific information. *Popular Science*, begun in 1872, wrote not just about new discoveries, but also about the purposes and philosophy of science<sup>13</sup>; and grew to a circulation of 12,000 in just two years.<sup>14</sup> By 1880, enough people were interested in science to support a weekly magazine, *Science: A Weekly Record of Scientific Progress Illustrated*, which defined its purpose as to allow scientists to quickly communicate with each other and the world.<sup>15</sup> The older magazines also responded to this new popularity of science. *The Scientific American*, in 1876, established a less mechanical weekly supplement and in 1880 *The Journal of Science* dropped the Arts from its old title.<sup>16</sup> The acceptance of science even penetrated the cultural establishment; *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper’s Monthly* both added science columns.



In the late nineteenth century, enthusiasm for science colored all aspects of society. Science ventured into the territory of religion; scientism taught that everything could be seen and solved through science.<sup>17</sup> Philosophy and art adopted the themes and basic outlook of science. Even literature, in its increasing emphasis on details and truth in fiction, paralleled the advancement of science. George Pound wrote in *Galaxy*:

“[The historian] of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century who shall study the literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> will note an epochal earmark. He will discover a universal drenching of *belles lettres* with science and sociology, while the ultimate dominant tinge in our era he will observe to be Darwinism. Not only does all physical research take color from the new theory; but the doctrine sends its pervasive lines through poetry, novels, and history.”<sup>18</sup>

Scientific movements, especially Darwinism, had a great effect on American culture. Even if Social Darwinism merely provided a justification for already entrenched business practices, the use of the language of science for the rationale demonstrates the field’s increasing power and influence. The general public started to conceive of life in scientific terms, rather than those of religion or philosophy; theories of science dominated the country’s view of civilization. Science was the harbinger of progress to the new age, both the Edison creating mechanical wonders and the Huxley proclaiming a new philosophy of life.



### ...Status of Projects

Past readers of *Samizdat* will remember that I have launched a series of projects to better my life. Due to chairing Balticon and then recovering from Balticon, I made less progress than usual. Here’s my latest report on my projects.

Project Nonfiction - *Progressive Capitalism: How to Make Tech Work for All of Us* by Ro Khanna. This book by a Congressman from Silicon Valley focuses on how technology (with appropriate government support) can reverse inequalities and provide more opportunities. It examines the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economy including ways to empower workers and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Citizenship including how to use the Internet for more rational deliberation and democracy.

<sup>12</sup> The subtitle of *The Scientific American* was: The Advocate of Industry and Journal of Mechanical and Other Improvements

<sup>13</sup> For example see: Kingdon Clifford, “Aims, etc. of Scientific Thought” *Popular Science*, November 1872 p. 95

<sup>14</sup> Mott, *Vol III*. p.897

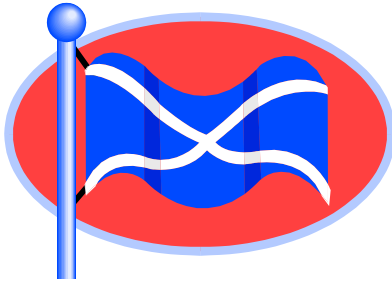
<sup>15</sup> Editors, *Science. A Weekly Record* Vol I, July 3, 1880 p.6

<sup>16</sup> Mott, *Vol II*. p. 321

<sup>17</sup> “Science was not merely loved or used, as understanding or as power; it was also believed in, and therefore it was also preached.” Knight, *The Age of Science* p. 127

<sup>18</sup> Mott, Frank. *A History of American Magazines: Vol III, 1865-1885*, p. 106.





*History of Scotland: A Captivating Guide to Scottish History, the Wars of Scottish Independence and William Wallace* by Captivating History. In preparation for my Scotland trip, I am reading up on Scotland. This is a short overview of Scottish History up to modern times with a deep dive into England's attempts to conquer Scotland and William Wallace's opposition. This is fairly short so really didn't do more than present a brief outline of the politics and wars (although it did touch on Scottish feminism and LGBT rights (and the Loch Ness Monster)).

*A Short History of Scotland* by Andrew Lang. This is an older political history of Scotland. It assumes the reader already has a good knowledge of British history and focuses too much on the battles without providing context.

I am also listening to an audiobook on *Mary, Queen of Scots* by John Guy which claims to use some sources previously neglected by modern historians.

Project Classics - I've started reading *Corrag* by Susan Fletcher. This is a historical fiction about a woman in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Highlands of Scotland who is accused of being a witch. So far, there hasn't been any actual magic, just a woman who refuses to abide by the conventional female roles of her time. But I'm only on page 175 of 573.

Project Conventions - I ran Balticon, see report in this issue.

Project Video - I watched several episodes of *Doctor Who* with the new 15<sup>th</sup> doctor. "Space Babies" was a cute episode with intelligent babies marooned on a space station threatened by a bogeyman. "The Devil's Chord" was a historical with the Beatles in an alternate 1963 in which a female Maestro only allows bad music. (Although if there had only been bad music since 1925, how would the Beatles have been in the same recording studio at the same time they were in our history? This is another episode that relied on chance and coincidence, not the actions of our heroes. "Boom" was much more interesting as the Doctor steps on a mine on another planet and spends most of the episode unable to move for fear of setting it off. "73 Yards" is a curiosity in that it is a Doctor Who episode with almost no Doctor in it. After the Doctor vanishes, Ruby carries nearly all the episode alone as she is followed, at a distance of exactly 73 yards by a mysterious woman who makes everyone who talks to her run off and want nothing to do with Ruby.



I watched *The Hunger Games*, this is the original teenagers have to fight to the death in a dystopia. Two teenagers from each district are chosen by lots to compete in the televised Hunger Games (although Katniss volunteers to save her younger sister from the competition). This is actually pretty watchable. It makes for a better movie than book.

*Ready Player One* is based on a book. Much of the movie is set in the virtual reality world whose dead creator left a challenge for players to find three hidden keys to reach the Easter Egg that would give the winner control over the virtual reality world. The movie is full of 1980s references. I thought the book was better.

*Lego Batman* was actually a better Batman movie than most of the live action Batman films. The main story involved Batman learning that he cannot do everything alone and needs to work with others. At one point the Joker frees a bunch of villains from the Phantom Zone including Voldemort from *Harry Potter*, King Kong, and Sauron from *Lord of the Rings*. I'm surprised they got permission to use all of them.

*2010: The Year We Make Contact.* This 1984 movie is of course a sequel to *2001: A Space Odyssey* based on the Arthur C. Clarke book. While *2001* is one of the great classics of the cinema, this is an okay cold war drama without any of the transcendent elements of *2001* (while maybe one at the end).

*Starman*, this is an SF drama that has an alien crash on Earth, assume the body shape of a woman's recently deceased husband, and then force her to take him to a pickup site. All the while, they are being chased by US government agents. It is an okay movie, but not as good as it should have been.

*Hamilton.* I watched this on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. This is a musical about American founding father Alexander Hamilton (who was George Washington's aide during the Revolution and later Treasury Secretary) with a mostly black cast (even playing some historical figures who were white). The music is excellent, but I have to wonder about playing Aaron Burr as a careful and cautious person who tells Hamilton to speak less and listen more.

Project Shorts - I read (and discussed) the Hugo finalists for short story, novella, and novelette.

Project Exercise - I've done some swimming, but not much else.

Project Activities - Social activities included the 4<sup>th</sup> of July barbeque and the Baltimore Science Fiction Society's picnic

Project Shakespeare - I am planning on reading *Macbeth* before going to Scotland.

### ...Author's Note

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# BROWNIAN MOTION #9

An apazine from Garth Spencer, [garth.van.spencer@gmail.com](mailto:garth.van.spencer@gmail.com)

For N'APA #271, July 2024



## Frances Skene (December 18, 1937 – June 17, 2024)

My friend Fran Skene died abruptly in the small hours of June 17, 2024. I am still trying to process this.

Fran was born in 1937 in Kelowna, BC. When I met Fran Skene, a fan in Vancouver, BC, she worked as a librarian at the Greater Vancouver Public Library. She graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor's in Library Science in 1970.

She was also one of the best-known fans in Vancouver, active in the local BC Science Fiction Association and the long-running general-interest VCON, and editor of her fanzine *Love Makes the World Go Awry* from 1979 to 1983.

Fran edited *BCSFazine* from 1975 to 1976. In 2016 she participated in VCON as a member of the Puppetry Renaissance Troupe. She also chaired [Rain Cinq](#) in 1983, [Westercon 30](#) in 1977, [V-Con VI](#) in 1978, [V-Con 9](#) in 1981, [Rain Finale](#) in 1984, and [VCON 14](#) in 1986. She was one of the leaders of the [Vancouver in '84 Worldcon bid](#) and was a founding member of [BCAPA](#) and VANAPA. She also edited two of the anthologies of the BCSFA writers' workshop, titled *Fictons*. In 1987 she was nominated for an Aurora Award for fan achievement.

Fran was a Guest of Honour at MileHiCon 10, held October 27-29, 1978 in [Denver, CO](#); Westercon 35, held July 2-5, 1982 at the Phoenix Hilton, in [Phoenix, AZ](#); and both Ad Astra 8 (Toronto) and Keycon 5 (Winnipeg) in 1988. Fran was also the 2019 Canadian Unity Fan Fund delegate, representing western Canada to the [Can\\*Con](#)/Convention in Ottawa (October 18-20, 2019).

In her retirement, Fran was active in writing circles. She was a member of the Brockton Writers Series (a bimonthly reading series based in Toronto), and contributed stories to the shared-world anthology *Windship* (2018), along with Lisa Smedman and Guy Immega. Up to 2024 she contributed poetry to *Polar Borealis* (R.

Graeme Cameron ed.), and was active in the online BCSFA writers' workshop and the online Shut Up and Write writers' circle.

Fran is survived by her three children, Sylvia, James, and Dana.

(*Fancylopedia 3*, *brocktonwritersseries.wordpress.com*, *LinkedIn*, *Science Fiction Awards Database*, *File770.com*, *Canada411*, *cdnsfzinearchive.org*, *goodreads.com*)



*British Columbia is this big*

## What You Know That Ain't So

I screwed up. Both Fran Skene and I have been involved with the annual Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards from time to time – the Aurora Awards, for short – and since I was asked last year, I became Secretary of the Canadian SF and Fantasy Association, which oversees the award. But I completely forgot to read this year's nominees and vote in time for this year's deadline!

§

I have questions, so many questions ...

The guest article in *The Obdurate Eye* #41 is from Steve Davidson, who makes a point about a stereotype sometimes applied to science fiction fandom as a whole. I question the stereotype.

So I ask myself: Just how many fans are neurodiverse, on the spectrum, more or less normally-functioning autistics? I think it's always been a minority, and the basis of the stereotype is a good deal smaller now than, oh, fifty years ago. But stereotypes persist a lot longer than fifty years.

Why should that be? Probably because anyone who wants to make generalizations about any group that they really don't know has to reach for the nearest visible characterization – which usually means a stereotype.

It's a process much like mansplaining. I am familiar with it, because I grew up with people who persistently indulged themselves at the dinner table by settling the affairs

of the world with broad mansplaining generalizations, citing no sources or evidence whatsoever. It was like growing up in Archie Bunker's house, if any of you remember the TV series *All in the Family*.

Do bureaucracies, both public and private, make policy decisions based on stereotypes and mansplaining, more often than anyone cares to admit? This is probably a baseless suspicion and I can do better, given the amount of demographic research that many ministries and corporations have to undertake, as a matter of due diligence. Nevertheless ...

§

No possums were involved in composing this fanzine.

§

I have not seen the Northern Lights in my latitude. Missed my chance.

§

I tend to read one book at a time, and reread my dog-eared fiction paperbacks rather than my nonfiction books. Until my last tablet died, I would usually reread fiction on that device, rather than my paperbacks. I have now replaced the tablet, but the replacement doesn't have ReadEra (and there's some problem with it getting online).

§

This spring and early summer in Vancouver have been rather colder than usual, contrasting with the fairly mild winter just past. But in mid-June, provincial temperatures started rising over 20°C. I have to wonder what this portends. (Besides this year's wildfires, that is.)

§

Trying to maintain the Canadian Unity Fan Fund is difficult. Most fan groups and conventions in Canada, so far as I can establish, are about anime or comics or costuming or gaming or some media franchise or other. There is still an outside chance that I can rebuild the fund, and that a convention will respond to my overtures and offer to receive a fan fund delegate.

I should be more concerned about paying off my credit card and my back taxes. More work should be coming in soon. I hope.

§

Fiction writing stalled while I got over my first experience of a critiquing workshop. Evidently I need to keep in mind that I want to write for my own fun, not so much for editors' or readers' expectations, and keep the locus of control within myself. This is not easy for me.

Learning to finish a story, envisioning a climax, doesn't come naturally. Completing the scene setting and the logical progression of scenes is the kind of rewriting I have to do.

§

Defining life as a series of tasks has a shortcoming: I can't always get to things or take care of them as soon as I expect. My social obligations and my website project both get postponed a lot. Probably I assigned myself too much to do, in an attempt to lend a

sense of richness and variety to my life. (Anybody here remember the Beatles' "Nowhere Man" song, and the peculiar character living in an unmarked white space, in the *Yellow Submarine* movie?)

§

Attempts to expand my social interaction by holding either fannish or heathen get-togethers has not worked. There's something less than effective about the way I go about this. It is as if I had negative charisma points. Shall I use this power for good, or for evil?

§

Occasionally I speculated about constructing an issue of *Obdurate Eye* entirely from locs to zines received – and then cutting the paragraphs apart, and pasting them into coherent articles about the several subjects that emerge in entirely different fanzines. It would be a lot of work, though.



## The Jade Ring (Part I)

by Garth Spencer

Once upon a time, in the sleepy seaside town of Spuzzum, British Columbia, on the banks of the great, green, greasy Fraser River (all hung about with cedar trees), some science fiction fans held meetings, and parties, and put out fanzines, and held a couple of minicons.

A couple of Star Wars fans attended at one of their Hallowe'en parties talking about the Worldcon they saw in Chicago: "Gee that was just great," they were overheard to say, "we ought to hold something like Worldcon here!"

#

Ring, ring.

“Hello!” Polly Johnson answered, “Polly here.”

“Hello Polly this is Cory I’ve booked two hotels and phoned some authors and it looks like I’ve set up the con for 1983 would you like to help?”

Polly was taken aback. She thought: --*What is this person talking about? How are the clubs going to take this?* She started chewing on her long black hair, and her oval face acquired a frown. By this point, in October 1981, her friends had barely begun talking about a third one-day convention, and had very few weekend dates open to them.

Cory Bupkis was still talking. “... I’ll need the clubs to help with fundraising and stuff so if you could spread the word to them I’d really appreciate it ...”

Polly talked to the Trek club executive later in the week. The executive officers checked with the Empire Hotel. It was not booked in their names, so they left the topic alone.

#

“When I moved out here from Saskatchewan,” Polly Johnson was saying to Hrothgar Weems as they walked to the November meeting on campus, “I found myself joining the Canadian Trek Federation here. I didn’t realize at first their entire membership was here in Spuzzum. I was going to all the club meetings and attending out-of-town conventions for a year and a half before I ever heard of the other clubs in town.”

Hrothgar raised his eyebrows. “That is so different,” he said. “Me, I thought the clubs were doing just about everything together – movie nights, mall displays, you name it.” He zipped his parka up to his chin; another cold front had just moved in. “I only saw the second one-day con,” he said. “Tell me about the first one.”

Polly shrugged. “We had a little programming, a dealers’ room, a fanzine table. Remy wanted to set up a film room, but he didn’t get it together in time. I think the advertising was inadequate, but we still got over 350 people. Why?”

Hrothgar exhaled heavily. “I just did some volunteering at the second one. I remember being surprised how many people heard of the con; I heard we drew over 450 people, but it didn’t look like half that many ... there was some problem later I heard about, something about trying to account for all the expenses and revenue. They made some money, and people had a lot of fun, but it was a lot of trouble to finish the financial statement.”

Polly introduced Hrothgar to Rudi Sterner when he arrived, an albino graduate student with coke-bottle glasses. Rudi, Hrothgar gathered, was a member of the gaming club on campus. Polly was a member of the Trekkers, as Hrothgar was a member of the Science Fiction Association of Spuzzum. After they got some fries and coffee, and a lobby table away from the cafeteria, Hrothgar asked, “Who is this Cory person, anyway?”

“We know her through her brother Mike,” Rudi said. “He’s one of our active members.” Rudi chuckled. “He brought her up here on a game night and she started jabbering about *Battlestar Galactica* and her fan club; we couldn’t get started until she took a hike. That’s all I know about her.”

Hrothgar looked at Polly. She had mentioned her boyfriend Ernie using the word “ditz” within fifteen minutes of meeting Cory, at the Hallowe’en party.

#

“Have you noticed these things?” Ernie asked Polly. They were wandering around downtown Spuzzum, checking out the most kitsch and touristy shops on Broad Street, for a laugh. He was pointing out the many carved jade objects among the T-shirts, jerseys, wool caps, little jugs of overpriced maple syrup, and other gewgaws emblazoned with maple leaves and Canadian flags and “Spuzzum BC” logos.

“Yes,” Polly commented, “Why jade particularly?”

A proprietor came over. “Jade is one of British Columbia’s trademark exports,” she said. “It’s a semiprecious stone, highly valued in China and other Asian countries. There are several varieties of jade, found not only in Asia but in New Zealand and here in BC ...” and she went on.

For a lark Ernie and Polly picked up some jade rings and wore them to meetings. Somehow it caught on and soon everybody in the SF community was wearing them.

Well, almost everyone.

Hrothgar was wearing a jade ring at a party when he encountered Mick Michelob, the SF Association President, at the punch bowl. Mick pulled a weird face at him. “Them things,” he said.

“What?” Hrothgar was used to feeling clued out, but this time he had the sinking feeling that something significant was wrong.

Mick pointed at the jade ring. “That. Bloody self-appointed elitist pretensions. Take it off.”

Hrothgar was puzzled. “Why? This was a present from Ernie and Polly.”

“Yeah, self-appointed trufans. Take it off, I said.”

“No!” Hrothgar usually complied with everybody. He didn’t know what Mick’s deal was, though, and he didn’t like it. “Tell me what’s going on here,” he said.

Mick sighed as if exasperated. “Ernie and Polly think they’re all that because they’re fanzine fans.”

“No, they don’t. It’s just a thing Spuzzum fans are doing. Fans like us,” Hrothgar said pointedly, gesturing at Mick and himself.

“Ya think?” Mick mumbled, and he moved away from the punch bowl.

Ernie laughed when Hrothgar asked for an explanation. “Good ol’ Mick. He’s all right, for someone who doesn’t read, but his interests don’t extent much beyond tabletop games.”

Hrothgar was confused again. “So isn’t he a science fiction fan?”

“Oh, yeah, sure, in the sense that he’ll go to conventions for gaming,” Ernie said judiciously.

“And ogling the teenage girls in costumes,” Polly muttered.



“And getting as drunk as possible, as cheaply as possible, in the Hospitality lounge,” Ernie returned.

Hrothgar was beginning to get the feeling he got when his parents criticized their co-workers at the family dinner table. “So what’s this attitude he has about fanzines?” he asked.

“It isn’t so much fanzines, as fanzine fans,” Ernie said.

“You mean fannish fandom,” Polly interjected. “Not quite the same thing.” She looked at Hrothgar. “There are different tastes or styles in fandom, and enough people they’re starting to stake out their own cliques. ‘Fannish’ fandom was a reaction to an earlier stage in fandom, I guess. The best way I can describe the tone of their fanzines is a line from *Scaramouche* – ‘He was born with the gift of laughter and the sense that the world is mad.’ Meaning that fannish fans didn’t take anything seriously,” she concluded, “not SF or fantasy or horror, not the world at large, and certainly not fandom.”

Having read a lot of 1970s fanzines from the club library, Hrothgar sort of understood what Polly meant.

“I still don’t see where Mick gets his attitude,” he said.

Ernie leaned forward. “Fannish fans, people who read for pleasure and enjoy the fanzine humour and get the fannish references, look like an inside group. Mick is outside and doesn’t understand what the group is about, that’s all. His first thought is to think it’s some elitist, exclusive group. It takes no more to divide people than that.” He was completely serious for once. “And that is the hell of it.”

#

A month later, at a Trek club meeting, one of the members rose to present “Combination Con.”

“Combination Con 83, or SpuzzumCon One, will be held the third weekend in February,” Sean Giorgiou burred away, “in the Empire and Harbour Spires hotels. We’re planning on an attendance of 1500 people with eight guests of honour, like Bjo Trimble and Sid Mead, and eight special guests like Kate Wilhelm and Damon Knight guess what they’re married, and several tracks of programming ...”

He didn’t notice the chill in the room as he went on. The last Trek meeting had argued for hours about finding a different date for the Spuzzum convention, but since all the fans and most of the attendees were students, and worked over the summer, the spring break – on the third weekend in February – was the only weekend they could schedule.

At a later meeting with the SF Association of Spuzzum, Corey Bupkis enthused, “Manpower will be no problem because registration is going to be handled by Rob Cuttendash with computers and organizing the con will be no problem because Bjo Trimble knows all about conventions ...”

After these performances, the executives of the Spuzzum clubs got together and issued a joint letter, politely disclaiming their involvement in Combination Con.

#

When he started looking at the things that came in the club's mail, Hrothgar was staggered at the number of "fanzines," and especially "conventions" in science fiction fandom.

"Keep in mind," Ernie told him once, "these are *not* 'conventions' as mortal men know conventions. When fans say 'convention,' they don't mean what hotel sales staff or Shriners are talking about."

"What do they mean?" Hrothgar asked, taking another cookie. He was visiting Ernie and his girlfriend Polly at their apartment, not long after they moved in together.

Ernie looked at Polly. Hrothgar looked at Polly.

"I went to a local convention, just over in Samsara," she said in a storytelling voice. "First off, I didn't have to register as a delegate or anything, just as an individual. I could have registered at the door, for that matter, but I saved money by registering in advance, for the writers' workshop. For another thing, it was a weekend event — started Friday afternoon or so, went on through Sunday. My aunt's conference with the BC Teachers' Union was held over a week. There were panels at the con during the day, and that part was like a conference. But there were also rooms set aside for an artshow, and a dealers' room ..."

"Dealers?" Hrothgar asked, raising his eyebrows. He was taking lessons in Sardonic from Ernie.

Polly put her tongue out at him. "No, silly. Booksellers. Costume makers. People who sell *Star Trek* earrings or calendars — things like that. Do you know there are *companies* turning out tapes of filksongs?"

"I heard of filksongs in the clubzine ..." Hrothgar said uncertainly.

"Well, now it's a business," Polly went on, "making up SF- or fantasy-inspired music, not just parodies of sea chanties and 'Waltzing Mathilda.' There were a couple of film show rooms, too, and a Hospitality suite, just a place to sit down and chat. My point is, the whole thing felt more like a carnival midway than a writers' conference, and at night people were holding all these parties in their rooms ..."

"Remember Toilet Bowl Night, in the dorms?" Ernie said, looking up at the ceiling and grinning. Wistfully. Paula smirked and swatted him lightly on the arm. Hrothgar shuddered; he had been assigned to cover the college hockey team's victory celebrations, and some of the ensuing litigation. Campus services were still repairing the damage in the dormitories.

"Now, Ernie, it wasn't like that; nobody got violent, or even threatening. Well, a couple of people were playing *Logan's Run* upstairs ..."

"Oh, yeah, and weren't you telling me Mick had to pull three guys off you in the elevator when you wore —?"

"*What?*" Hrothgar protested. Ernie guffawed. Polly threw a pillow at him.

"Ernie, stop pulling his leg! Hrothgar, it was fun. The point of the parties was, there were people up from Seattle and Portland, promoting their cons, and there were some visitors from Alberta."

"Now wait a minute," Hrothgar said. "I thought I read about Uricon in the clubzine. How come I did not hear about all this?"

"Because all these convention features are taken for granted," Ernie said, smiling. "And the average congoer never thinks to explain anything, until they have something to bitch about. Which, I sometimes think, is half the point of the game."

Hrothgar still felt he was missing something here.

#

As early as April 1982, a number of events made some members annoyed, or frightened, or very angry at the Combination Con. It got to the point where someone threw a paint bomb into a local comic fan's apartment. It got to the point where several non-members appeared in Combination Con's advance membership lists, published in their progress report: fans who had no intention of joining Combination Con, and even one dead fan. Apparently, their names and addresses from copied from the (notoriously outdated) *Fandom Directory*.

#

One day in December, Hrothgar Weems sat in the Student Union cafeteria with Dafydd Moncrieff, talking about mutual acquaintances. Hrothgar was saying, "I wish I understood what was going on in the Combinationoids' heads. I wish we could get through to them. Seems like they live in their own fantasy world ..." He repressed memories of his close encounters firmly. "... and not only can't we get through, but they have to twist everything we say into some plot against them."

"Yeah, well, I think the worst part of the affair is the effect on the clubs," Dafydd said.

"How's that?"

"Well ..." Dafydd said glumly. "I get the feeling that the ST club won't trust me anymore." This surprised Hrothgar; Dafydd was editor of the Trekkers' clubzine, and their *de facto* information officer. "I know why," Dafydd continued, "it's because Sean used to be my neighbour, and used to be engaged to Dolores Micawber. Now that he's gone over to the Combination committee, I'm suspected of being a fellow traveler. And Combinationoids keep bugging me for copies of the club minutes. They don't realize, even I don't get them now. And then there's the effect on our ConCept committee ..."

At that moment a gangly apparition came in, and walked over. "Have you bought your Combination Con memberships yet?" Mick Michelob asked brightly.

Hrothgar looked at Mick silently for a moment.

"Me?" he asked. "You're asking me? For money??" He was getting progressively louder. "You don't ask me for money!! Not me, not now!!!"

Abashed, Mick withdrew.

#

Ernest Wolfgang Friedrich Siegfried Gunther Klaus Inger Stroheim Hentzau Schleswig-Holstein Trishtrash-am-Wiesen von Ulm dreamed (unless his chilly feet warned him otherwise) that he stood in a vast marble hallway. His jade ring winked conspicuously on his hand in the dim light. Antediluvian sculptures (how did I know *that* word? He wondered) leered at him ominously. He never knew sculptures could do that.

Suddenly rough hands grabbed him and drew into a side passage. "They have eyes, they do," a voice hissed in his ear, just loud enough not to carry. "They see without being there, they hear you a mile off; you have to hide like me!"

Ernie looked blearily at a man wearing ... an iron helmet? "Who are you?" he asked. "Oh, I know, you're the Man in the Iron Mask."

"Non," the muffled voice replied, "he was the fugitive here before me; he left last month. I am the Phantom of the Opera, *moi*; I wear his mask because everything that obscures me seems to help."

Ernie suppressed an impulse to ask the Phantom why he hung around, then. "I've pulled a Hrothgar again, I think," he muttered to himself. Then he asked, "Tell me, what happened to your predecessor?"

The Phantom regarded him. "What is a Hrothgar?"

"First tell me where the Dauphin went!"

"He escaped to his proper place and time, *alors!*"

"And I've somehow left mine," Ernie muttered. "That's what Hrothgar keeps doing. Cause, or cure? I wonder ..." He stared at his ring

*How the Jade Ring members realize that Combination Con is not simply misconceived, it is a revenue generator for a sinister cause – the Evil Lukass Empire: Hrothgar now has conversations with Jophan*

#

The first Hrothgar knew that reality was not what it seemed was when he walked out of the Canada Unemployment Centre into the transporter chamber of the *Enterprise*.

A pause ensued while he and the duty officer gaped at each other.

The duty officer recovered first. "Step off the transporter platform, please", he asked politely. When in doubt, go by the book.

Hrothgar dithered off the platform, swinging off his knapsack on the way. --Okay, I'm hallucinating, he told himself. --I wonder if UI covers psychological counselling? First thing I'll do is stop watching TV ...

The doors dilated and couple of husky Security officers stepped in. Hrothgar recognized the sound of the door as he turned; the colour of the Security tunics; the shape of the phasers pointed at him as the officers assumed identical Weaver stances. --Oh, I guess I'm in this hallucination for a while, he thought glumly.

When Security dumped him in a holding cell, *sans* knapsack, parka and most of his clothing, Hrothgar had revised his assumptions about Federation MP procedure. Shakily he pulled up his Stanfields and started to examine his cell.

A change in the hum of the security entrance diverted him. Three executive officers stood outside, each covered by another Security linebacker. The prisoner was at home to visitors, but why did he rate Captain Kirk, Commander Spock, and Lieutenant Saavik?

"Mr. ... Weems, is it?" Kirk said as Spock and Saavik entered. "We have to ask a series of questions to confirm your identity, and the reason you boarded the *Enterprise* unannounced."

Hrothgar spread his hands as Saavik approached. "Look, I don't know what I'm doing here," he began. "In fact, I think this is all an hallucination. So, you want to tell me what this hallucination is about?"

Kirk did an impression of Spock saying "Fascinating". Spock and Saavik looked at each other. Spock nodded and Saavik turned to Hrothgar. Hrothgar wished he had showered since that morning.

"Lt. Saavik will examine your mind to corroborate your questioning," Spock said. "You should understand that having boarded a Starfleet vessel on assignment without announcement or permission, you are considered potentially hostile under Regulation--" he recited a string of numerals Hrothgar immediately forgot. "Your permission and consent are thus not required for a mind probe." Spock paused. "Unofficially, I will tell you that a mind probe is the quickest and most effective way to establish your *bona fides*. It is also far easier, and sooner finished, if you open your mind voluntarily. Logically, it is entirely in your interest to cooperate."

Outwardly, Hrothgar shrugged and said, "Very well, let's do it." Inwardly he thought, oh great, no privacy left. He was glumly philosophical about it.

The mind probe was a basic new experience, like the rectal examination. On the one hand, Hrothgar felt Saavik's cool, strong fingers probing his head for nerve clusters; on the other hand, he saw a myopic adolescent Terran face. On the one hand Saavik perceived an insecure ego trying repeatedly to assert its boundaries, while on the other he saw Saavik's face turn red, and then white.

Saavik jerked her hands back.

Spock said in Vulcan, "You have to overcome resistance. It can be instinctual."

"There was no resistance", Saavik said slowly, then repeated herself for the captain's benefit. "He knows far too much about the *Enterprise* and the Federation, about each of us, but ... he is not hostile." She looked at Spock and Kirk, and Spock thought her shockingly emotional. "He truly does know us as ... fictional characters."

The guest suite Hrothgar was next escorted to was bigger and much better furnished than the cell, and he was fully clothed again, but it was still a holding cell. Hrothgar could tell because two more Security defensemen were posted outside, and he could not get out once he got in.

--This hallucination is getting old, he thought.

Wandering around the suite, Hrothgar found a) a 23rd-century toilet, which he promptly used, b) a food replicator, c) a computer terminal. He succeeded in dialling himself a coffee and a Danish (the replicator had no data on Nanaimo bars) and seated himself at the terminal.

"Computer?" he said experimentally.

The terminal beeped but said nothing. The screen was blank.

"Computer, are you voice- or keyboard-operated?"

[This terminal is a stand-alone unit], said the screen. [Only e-mail communications are operative with other terminals on the *Enterprise*. Any attempt to operate programs at a distance will be immediately reported.]

"That's cool ... Look, computer, could I place a request with Security?"

[Working] the computer screen printed, ambiguously.

"Well, I just wanted to know when I could have my backpack back. Just an inquiry, you know, and at their convenience, that sort of thing."

[Verbatim request transmitted], the screen informed him.

"Oh sh-- ... Well, all right.

"Um, do you offer any entertainment? Library research functions? For God's sake, do you have any music?!"

[Entertainment: off-duty personnel and ship's guests may open channels 3-290; directory of current broadcasts scrolling on channel 2. Library: this terminal limited to truncated *Encyclopaedia Galactica* in local memory. Music: this terminal's music library includes Federation Anthology of Classics, complete as of last ship's docking and refitting. Theological reference does not compute, presumed phatic.]

Hrothgar stared at the screen.

"Um ... would you have any Rolling Stones?"

The computer began playing "You Can't Always Get What You Want."

*(to be continued)*



## Mailing Comments

### ***Mini-Editorial, by Jefferson P. Swycaffer***

I saw the invitation to submit fanfiction, and have enclosed a reasonable facsimile – a faanfiction piece (fiction by fans, about fans) I have been working on sporadically for some decades.

You mention fan feuds. When I was new to fandom I somehow gained an impression that fan feuds were forms of entertainment staged for fans, like hoaxes or student pranks, and not meant in earnest.

### ***Intermission 143, by Ahrvid Engholm***

I've seen something like this before somewhere ... oh, right. You also submit *Intermission* to eAPA.

Do you think maybe conventional politics and economics are like astrology, in proceeding from unfounded premises to foregone conclusions?

**Archive Midwinter, by Jefferson P. Swycaffer**

Re your comments to Ahrvid Engholm: I didn't know Jose Sanchez had been producing AI-assisted artwork. I have seen Alan White's AI-assisted art, and using some for my fanzine covers. (For example, *The Obdurate Eye* #40.)

Re your comments to John Thiel: there are plenty of faux-postmodern essays; in fact there is, or was online, a Post-Modern Deconstructionist Article Generator. When I was editing a clubzine I once used one of these essays as an editorial. (I think my readers Just Didn't Get It.)

Re your comments to me:

I thought the Venn diagram of crank theories was fun, so I copied it. Once I wrote a whole article surveying current crank theories (now available as a chapbook from my Stop Press imprint, as part of a fundraising effort for the Canadian Unity Fan Fund).

In an effort to be creative, or being under the impression that any good SF fan ought to create at least one crank theory, I have tried (several times) to invent a sort of engineer's version of sociology, starting with a mashup of symbolic logic, set theory, and probability theory. Only it threatens to become a formalized tool for social manipulation. Whether this is any different than the social manipulation we already experience, I don't know.

I rather enjoyed "The Stupid Equations"!

**Brandy Hall Issue 6 May 2024, by Mark Nelson**

You were following my writing as a model? Well, gosh.

From "The Mathom House": As I recall, I read H.G. Wells' stories *The War of the Worlds*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, *In the Country of the Blind*, *The Wheels of Chance*, and his books on history and *The Shape of Things to Come*.

This the first time I realized I had read this much of his work.

A question from Ahrvid to you: whether it is appropriate to have young-adult fiction about same-sex parents available to school-age children is not a matter anyone will resolve, anytime soon.

I know that some children as young as 10 are far more aware of sex, drugs, venereal disease and human trafficking than their parents are willing to believe. I know that any human population is *just going* to have persistent minorities of gender-diverse people (just as there are *just going* to be neurodiverse minorities, or for that matter religious extremists, political extremists, fans of crank theories and conspiracy theories, and Jehovah's Witnesses). *At the same time*, many children up to the age of 16 are not ready to realize all this stuff. It is hard to know what a child is ready for, and their parents may be at least as unaware of it as their teachers.

Come to think of it, my quasi-Victorian parents *never* told me about sexual hygiene. Or, for that matter, housekeeping or personal finance or making plans for my life.

Re your comments to John Thiel: As I recall, the 20<sup>th</sup>-century trend to increasing occupational specialization – and, therefore, increasingly specialized and segregated

areas of knowledge, so that different occupations had trouble communicating – was countered by an ongoing movement from the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to look for generalities: thus the occasional call for “generalism”, or a “gestalt” appreciation of a situation, “holism”, or “synergy.” As usually happens, some people started using these terms as buzzwords, without clear definition. But they do in fact have meaning, and can be used meaningfully. Synergy, as I understand it, is what happens when two or more factors or processes act upon each other in a system, and increase their mutual effect, as when radiation sickness and epidemic diseases combine to devastate a population far more than one or the other factor would do by itself. Conversely, enzymes in a biochemical setting can enhance digestion, growth, healing, or other processes, for specific chemical reasons.

I happened across one of the early works on General System Theory – predating the rise of computer systems analysis by several decades, in fact – by a gentleman named von Bertalanffy, who taught at a western Canadian university for years.

In closing: I didn’t realize there were so many Swedish loanwords in English, probably because I scarcely know any of them. Now I wonder: how many Swedish loanwords (or Scandinavian, anyway) can I think of?

Akvavit

Knorr

Lingonberry

Lutefisk

Rotfisk

Ski

Not very many, are they?

### ***Ye Murthered Master Mage 270, by George Phillies***

It sounds like you’re facing one of my perennial problems – finding out how to motivate people.

Maybe we should announce an N3F competition to produce the most creative crank theories our pointy little heads can generate? Better yet, make it open to members and non-members alike, with the stipulation that all entries must be new and original ideas! (I have a lot of potential stand-up comedy routines along this line.)

Upon request I can send you my article surveying existing crank theories, in order to rule out slightly disguised versions of long-established crankiness.

### ***Fan-Fic 1 by George Phillies***

As you will have seen, this issue of *Brownian Motion* features “The Jade Ring,” my attempt to answer your call ... but it is, obviously, *faanfiction* – a story about SF fans, by a fan. If that isn’t what you were driving at, *mea culpa*. If you suspect the characters and half the events are based upon people and events I knew, you’re quite right.



Your story, "Shepdon Downs," interests me despite its slow and talky beginning. I am the kind of reader who takes that in stride. The story premise is different enough from *The Midwich Cuckoos* to be original.

**Samizdat... Ish #25, May/June 2024, by Samuel Lubell**

Interesting comments here to all the APA members.

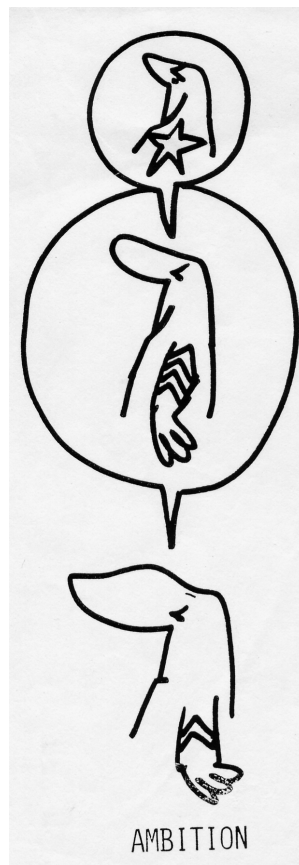
Re your comments to me:

I've sometimes wondered what the vague and nebulous mystique about "literary" fiction revolves around; you have given me a working definition, although I still don't see what's so great about a focus on style and character, and neglect of story and plot.

As to *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, I remember reading it when I was a lot younger ... and I didn't make head or tail of the ending, not enough to perceive that Merlin threw the Yankee back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Re your projects: I see how this compares, and contrasts, with my 15-subject life task list. We may both be running into the limits of our time, or energy, or attention to devote to, well, everything. How would you measure those limits? People I correspond to tend to talk about "having enough spoons," which expression took me a good long while to grasp.

Maybe we could work up a Crank Theory of Oddball Weights and Measures, and thus define the International Standard Spoon as a measure of time/energy/attention.





## Snow Poster Township #17

July 16, 2024

*Snow Poster Township* is an apazine published by Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. Banner artwork by Henry Chamberlain. *Snow Poster Township* is prepared for contributors to NAPA, members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and select others. A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.

### Trip Report: Chicago and Wisconsin

After spending July 4 and 5 in the Los Angeles area—enjoying the fireworks from blankets on Playa Del Rey Beach with my wife and son—Caitlin and I flew to Chicago for the weekend to see friends from college. Our flight Saturday morning went smoothly, and we took the Pulse bus from Chicago O'Hare International Airport east into Evanston near our Airbnb, which was within walking distance of a friend's home.

Friends were gathering from throughout the United States for a backyard cookout Sunday afternoon, so we had time to explore the area—returning to the campus of my alma mater Northwestern University. Saturday night, we met up with friends, one arriving on a later flight before the rest of his family followed from another location, for dinner at perhaps Taboun Grill in Skokie, Ill. (<https://taboungrilltogo.com>). There were five of us present to recognize our host's birthday, and we ordered a number of dishes to share, including the signature Palestinian flatbread, as well as a malt beverage that was more soft drink than beer despite its placement on the menu.

In our Airbnb, a basement unit in a row of townhomes behind a gas station, we watched some

television, including the end of *Sunset Boulevard*, the beginning of *Silent Running*, and portions of a couple of *RiffTrax* episodes, including *Hillbillies in a Haunted House*. I'd not watched *RiffTrax* before but was familiar with *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. They're similar and involve some of the same people—Mike Nelson and Kevin Murphy—but don't feature the hecklers' silhouettes and seem to comment on a wider range of material, including relatively recent movies, which perplexes me.

Sunday morning, before going to my friend's house for the cookout, we walked east to Dempster Street and Chicago Avenue in order to walk north toward Northwestern's campus. We stopped at a nearby Jewel-Osco for suntan lotion before grabbing a breakfast of pastries and coffee at Pâtisserie Coralie on Davis Street. We'll return there in the future.

We walked around NU, revisiting some of my old stomping grounds, including the former location of WNUR, University and Deering libraries, Shakespeare Garden, and the water along the Lakefill before trying to get into Norris University Center. With classes not in session, gaining access to buildings on a Sunday was challenging, but we did find one open building—and bathroom—before continuing our walk.

Before walking to my friend's house, however, we stopped by a friend's comic book store, Comix Revolution Evanston (In the early 1990s, owner Jim Mortensen and I co-founded the NU Comic Book Interest Group, which hosted events featuring Scott McCloud, Chris Ecker, Larry Marder, and others.), and Bookends & Beginnings, which had relocated from its previous location in Bookman's Alley. Comix Revolution is notable because it stocks a well-curated selection of non-comics books as well as comics and graphic novels.



Sidewalk self-portrait

Then we headed west along Church Street toward the Evanston-Skokie border. The cookout was wonderful, with many friends present, delicious summer food, non-alcoholic beer, and a rainstorm. I played badminton with friends' sons, and despite the rain, several of us walked to a nearby sculpture garden in a local sculptor's backyard—necessitating a change of clothes and some time with ours in the dryer. The afternoon cookout turned into evening pizza from Lou Malnati's Pizzeria (<https://www.loumalnatis.com/evanston>), and we left just as a game of *Cards Against Humanity* was about to break out.

Monday morning, before heading back to O'Hare for the bus to Wisconsin, we met friends for breakfast at Walker Bros. Original Pancake House in Wilmette. I had a western omelet with rye toast, and after a relaxing meal and ongoing conversation, Caitlin and I picked up the Pulse bus back to the airport. We arrived early enough to catch a bus before our planned bus, and I texted my parents about our earlier arrival.



We spent the next five nights south of Madison, Wis., spending time with my parents and sister. While there, we enjoyed a couple of day trips. One involved Old World Wisconsin (<https://oldworldwisconsin.wisconsinhistory.org>) in Eagle, which includes a number of relocated historic homes and structures. Its staff re-enacts life during the late 1800s and early 1900s, and we enjoyed exploring the Scandinavian and other homesteads that reflect the state's history.

Additionally, we went to Baraboo to visit the International Crane Foundation. (<https://savingcranes.org>) After walking around the grounds—even seeing the retrieval of a replica egg from a “nesting” pair—and exploring a hiking trail briefly, we went downtown for lunch. The food at Driftless Glen Distillery (<https://driftlessglen.com>) was excellent, but the real allure included Circus World (<https://>

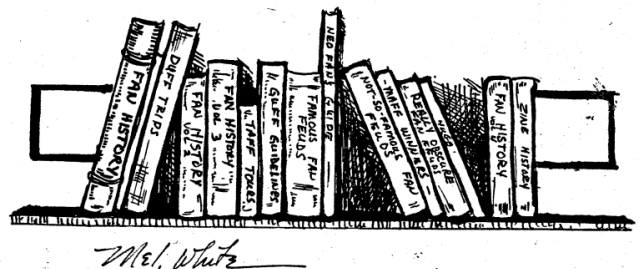
[circusworld.wisconsinhistory.org](https://circusworld.wisconsinhistory.org))—which I've gone to previously; this time we just stood outside—the A.L. Ringling Brewing Co. (<https://alringlingbrewing.com>), located in a historic home; the International Clown Hall of Fame & Research Center (<http://www.theclownmuseum.com>); and a local bookstore, The Village Booksmith (<https://villagebooksmith.com>), where I picked up a few sf anthologies in paperback. Incidentally, the proprietor is also Baraboo's mayor. The shop even had back issues of *Star\*Line* dating back to 2012 on the shelves!



This “Yankee Home” was relocated from the town I grew up in!

As a side note, on the way to Baraboo, we passed through Sauk City, once home of August Derleth. We didn't go to Place of Hawks (<https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/artsandculture/august-derleth-house>), but we looked down Lueders Road toward it as we drove by. Another highlight was a visit by a high school friend who drove up from Janesville. I'd texted him as the bus drove through that city earlier in the week, and we enjoyed a walk, conversation, and hug, as well as reminiscing with my family. I look forward to seeing Steve again.

Our return home was uneventful. On a Saturday in mid-July, we made the bus south to O'Hare on time, arriving earlier than expected, which made our flight back to Los Angeles International Airport painless despite a brief delay on the runway.



## From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

***ABCs of Physics*** by Chris Ferrie (Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2017)

Part of the publisher's Baby University series, this 28-page board book is written for preschool and kindergarten readers, though the text offered addresses several reading levels of progressive maturity. The first line is for the earliest readers, associating a physics concept with a letter of the alphabet. The next sentence expands on the scientific topic for slightly older readers, and the final text on each page is perhaps aimed at adults reading along with a child.

Over the course of the book, Ferrie considers 26 areas of physics—or notable scientists—from Atom to Zero-Point. Other interesting topics include Black Hole, Fusion, Kelvin, Newton, Relativity, and Wavelength, though they're all fascinating ideas for such young readers.

I'm not sure how meaningful the book would be for preschool and kindergarten readers, but I love that this book exists. It could help develop an early interest in science and encourage longer conversations with a parent, family friend, or teacher about topics children that age might not usually be exposed to. And the progressively more challenging text can meet readers' needs as they age—or inform accompanying adults who might be less well versed in science.

Each page includes a simple illustration representing the scientific concept. Here's one page's text as an example:

D is for Diffraction

Diffraction happens when a wave hits an object.

Waves can be made up of different things like liquid, light, or sound. When waves hit more than one object, multiple diffraction events can create beautiful designs called interference patterns.

Overall, the Baby University series includes more than 40 books, including titles such as *Statistical Physics for Babies*, *ABCs of Biology*, and *Baby Medical School*. I've now found the ideal unexpected present for toddlers and young children. This is a book—a series—to remember in the future!

***The Freeze-Frame Revolution*** by Peter Watts (Tachyon, 2018)

While Watts considers this book a novella, it actually qualifies as a novel, though it only clocks in at 186 pages. It's a wonderful read, concentrating on the crew of a generation ship, the *Eriophora*, on a 65-million-year mission to build gates and hubs that serve as entrances, exits, and transfer points for a network of

wormholes that enable faster-than-light travel. The *Eriophora* has no such luxury.

Given the extreme length of the mission, whether those gates and hubs will ever be used is unclear, as is the fate of humanity overall. So the crew, awakened periodically by an artificial intelligence (named Chimp) piloting the ship to help build the gates, is increasingly discontent—and suspicious. Awakened only in small groups, just a few at a time, they begin to rebel against the AI, creating locations in which they can't be monitored or overheard, and communicating through handwritten music that the AI can't access or process.



*Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 1956

That code is replicated in part within the text of the book. Throughout the novel, individual letters are printed with red ink, and I was able to transcribe several lines of a message that relates to and represents those in the story—a nice touch, though I didn't fully transcribe the code.

In addition to the concepts of FTL travel, a network of wormholes, an advanced AI, and a generation ship, the length of the mission—65 million years!—also allows Watts to consider evolution. That mostly shows up in the portions of the book in which a group of the rebellious crew members are hiding in a hydroponic garden of sorts. They hope that the AI mistakes the genetic engineering of particularly aggressive plants for evolution.

Parts of the book reminded me of Brian Aldiss's *Non-Stop (Telegraphs & Tar Pits #34)*, though the crew doesn't devolve or fracture into factions like they did in that novel. (Not everyone on the crew is involved in the rebellion, so there might be an in crowd.) Instead, given the short periods of time that they're awake over that time span—in stasis otherwise—they barely even age. Except for one notable character, who feigns death and goes entirely off the grid, as it were.

I'd not read anything by Watts before checking out

this library book, but I found this novel wonderful. He's an impressive writer, and the book is chock full of big ideas, handled well in such a small page count. I will seek out his other books. This might be part of a series, the Sunflower Cycle.

Los Angeles Times, July 27, 1956

*This Skin Was Once Mine and Other Disturbances*  
by Eric LaRocca (Titan, 2024)  
I spotted this on the new book shelf at the library and checked it out, unfamiliar with LaRocca's short horror

fiction. The collection includes four stories written over the course of two years, as well as an introduction of sorts that serves as a trigger warning. I wasn't sure what to make of that. While apparently intended earnestly, why would you pick up a book of body horror stories if you might react badly to reading it? Can there be horror that doesn't unpleasantly shock or surprise someone? Perhaps, I suppose. This is not that book.

Many of the stories aren't at all supernatural, so the horror stems from people treating other people badly. Exceptionally so. The title story touches on possible child abuse and *Flowers in the Attic*-like imprisonment—and reminded me somewhat of Jack Ketchum's *The Girl Next Door*. "Seedling" is somewhat supernatural, though its ending suggests the narrative might be hallucinatory. That story touches on the death of a parent, open wounds, and body autonomy, as well as inappropriate parent-child relations.

"All the Parts of You That Won't Easily Burn" falls away from the supernatural and instead concentrates on self-harm, the endorphin rush that can result, and the recruitment of others to seek seemingly solitary "pleasures." The ending suggests that turnabout is fair play when seeking such horrible delights.

And the final story, "Prickle," builds on that theme, with two elderly friends reuniting and falling into their old routines. In a public park, the two play a game of Prickle, in which they try to hurt a stranger without that person's awareness of their agency in that hurt. That story ends similarly to the previous piece, and one man is caught in a dastardly act while the other watches.

While I tend to like a little more supernatural in my horror, LaRocca's short story collection is very well written and enjoyable to read—if you enjoy horror fiction. The queer underpinnings are intriguing if not overly present, and I was surprised not to see indications of previous publication in the indicia. LaRocca's stories would be well suited for many appropriate prozines.

### Comments on N'APA #270

In a Mini-Editorial, **Jefferson P. Swycaffer** responded to George Phillie's query in the *National Fantasy Fan* whether N'APA should welcome fan fiction. While I would welcome fiction within our apa's pages—first publication or reprints—I'd be wary of including fan fiction. By this, I don't mean fiction written by fen, but fiction utilizing other established characters and creators' intellectual property. I'd encourage fiction, but not fiction riffing on Harry Potter, Twilight, Percy Jackson and the Olympians, the

Lord of the Rings, and the like. The N3F's historic concern about fan fiction in that sense has been copyright oriented. But original fiction written by fen? Bring it on, sez me.

Incidentally, the four book series listed above are the most popular book-related categories on *FanFiction*. (<https://www.fanfiction.net>) The next six, to round out the top 10, includes the Hunger Games, Warriors, the Mortal Instruments, Maximum Ride, *The Hobbit*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*. Interestingly, perhaps all of those would be appropriate for a fannish publication.

The top 10 movie list is also intriguing: Star Wars, the Avengers, Pirates of the Caribbean, How to Train Your Dragon, X-Men, *High School Musical*, *Rise of the Guardians*, the 2009 *Star Trek* flick, Thor, and Frozen. The television show top 10 starts to stray from fannish works but still concentrates heavily on genre: *Supernatural*, *Glee*, *Doctor Who*, *Sherlock*, *Once Upon a Time*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Stargate: SG-1*.

Regardless, while I enjoy and appreciate fan fiction, let's keep N'APA free of it. Fiction, however, I'm all for. Mr. Swycaffer, I would certainly welcome reprints of works to which you retained the rights.

I previously commented on *Intermission* #143 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #19: "In *Intermission* #143, **Ahrvid Engholm** opened with a History Corner piece recognizing the death of Christopher Priest—and his participation in the 1985 Swecon. I don't have any Priest books cataloged in my library yet, and I don't know that I've read much, if any, of his writing. What do eAPAns recommend? Inspired by Engholm's press clipping, I looked for mentions of Priest in the *Los Angeles Times*. 2006 seems to be a high point in terms of local coverage of the author—focusing primarily on Christopher Nolan's movie *The Prestige*, which adapts Priest's 1995 novel. The *New York Times* has woefully neglected Priest's writing, but the *Chicago Tribune* reviewed Priest's *The Adjacent* in 2014. A 2015 *Tribune* review of Darran Anderson's *Imaginary Cities* mentions Priest's *The Inverted World*. So that's three for me to check out, at least!

"Having recently read Jack Finney's novel *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, I should probably read John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* soon, too. Have you listened to *Moon Phantom*? Shades of Whistler's Mother..., the cover art to Mark Clifton and Frank Riley's *They'd Rather Be Right* seems awfully—almost eerily—familiar. I wonder where I've encountered it before. Seems strange that it'd be selected for a Hugo rather than the other books you listed, but that might be hindsight in action.

"I enjoyed your writeup of the short film festival. I missed this year's Fantasporto (<https://fantasporto.com/pt-pt>) this winter (almost spring!) in Portugal but hope to check it out at some point. When I return to the States, I need to return to attending screenings hosted by the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films. Upcoming films include *Laroy, Texas*; *The Fall Guy*; *Challengers*; *The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare*; *Kidnapped: The Abduction of Edgardo Mortara*; *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*; and *In a Violent Nature*.

"Today, my wife and I ran into two friends from Braga while we were shopping at Ikea in that city. They told us about a recent experience seeing a movie through a local cineclube. Such film clubs are something I haven't experienced before. They're not commercial movie theaters, and they're not quite membership organizations, but they're smaller, independent groups that frequently host screenings of less commercial movies, usually just for a single showing.



*Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 1956

"In Lisbon, there's the open-air Cine Society (<https://www.cinesociety.pt>), which screens movies almost nightly—and which has mostly sold out its events through early June. The Alvalade Cineclube (<https://alvaladecineclube.pt/en>) in Lisbon doesn't seem to be too active in recent months. The Cineclube do Porto (<https://cineclubedoporto.pt>) seems much more active. Closer to where we live when we're here, the Braga Film Club (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bragafilmclub>) seems promising, and the Lucky Star Cineclube de Braga (<https://www.facebook.com/cinebraga>) even more so. Thank you for sharing your *Vimeo* channels *Filmfandom* and *Club Cosmos*."

In *Archive Midwinter* dated March 10, 2024, **Jefferson P. Swycaffer** commented on the strategies employed during war time. I wonder which is more important, negatively affecting a country's economy and production options and therefore the morale of the citizenry, or negatively affecting the morale of the

soldiers. That might depend on your enemy and whether they take cues from the general population.

Speaking of publishing blunders, even though my *Snow Poster Township* #16 was not included in the previous distribution—though I submitted it before deadline—here I am with #17. You lucky N’APAn get two issues this time around! While *Crank Dot Net* has been archived and is no longer being updated, it remains available at <http://www.crank.net>. Might still be worth sifting through.

Thank you for informing us about the Emerald Cove books! *Exiles of Eeria* (<https://amzn.to/3Y6zWYF>), *Kidnapped!* (<https://amzn.to/4d6G3An>), and *Stolen!* (<https://amzn.to/3W4BZKh>) all look worth checking out. I quite like the idea of themed anthologies. I am curious how your chauffeuring Marion Zimmer Bradley went badly.

That you reprinted your “The Stupid Equations” in such close proximity to discussing whether N’APAn should publish fiction in their fanzines made me chuckle. Your repeated use of the sentence, “The Emergency Craft is a miracle of engineering efficiency,” was utterly delightful. And the ending! Oh, the ending. More of that, good sir. More of that!



*Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 3, 1956

Mark Nelson’s *Brandy Hall* #6 expressed that he doesn’t “think War Crimes mean anything other than Victors Justice.” Is there no international standard for war crimes or human rights? What is the cost when a country recognizing an international body such as the United Nations breaks that standard? In recent years, I wonder about that even in the context of the United States.

Your and Ahrvid Engholm’s discussion of appropriate materials for school libraries gave me pause. There are queer people in the world. And same-sex couples. And transgender people. Why shouldn’t children be exposed to that in an educational setting? I’m not sure it’s a debate, but a portrayal of How the World Is, and How People and Families Are or Can Be. To educate children as though the world doesn’t include such people or families seems odd to me.

Part of the purpose of schools—and perhaps larger cities—is to serve as empathy engines, environments in which people can learn about the rich diversity of

the human experience. By bringing different people together, from different backgrounds, homes, locations, and situations, we expose each other to Other Ways of Living. Ideally, that increases our understanding of and empathy toward people who are different from us, and in some cases, it might be very meaningful to see your own family structure or identity within the school setting. The alternative feels like hiding ideas, pretending that things don’t happen, and trying to keep people from considering a different way of living as okeh, healthy, and good.

I enjoyed your etymology of “robot” and “android.” I will share your commentary on *Snow Poster Township* #15 with contributor Cy Chauvin. Your remarks on Marion Zimmer Bradley reminded me of the recent revelations about Alice Munro (<https://tinyurl.com/MunroeNAPA>) and perhaps Neil Gaiman (<https://tinyurl.com/GaimanNAPA>). I’ve not read any of Munro’s work, but it’s interesting that many of her characters might have been in situations similar to her own. Personally, I think Bad People can create Good Art and that one can still appreciate and enjoy their art. Whether you give them your money might be another issue entirely.

In *Brownian Motion* #8, Garth Spencer recounted his early days in fandom. I enjoyed that mightily. I first was introduced to the idea of making your own media by Jules Feiffer in his book *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, in which he reprinted some of his juvenalia, homemade comic books. That changed my life for the better. Finding my first issue of *Maximum Rocknroll* led me to *Factsheet Five*, which showed me you could make your own magazines and music. Imagine my pleasure, when I saw your name in early issues of *F5* while going through Marty Cantor’s fanzine collection. Worlds collide. Who knew that my fannish interests would eventually bring me to sf fandom, where Gunderloy cut his chops before delving into the world of mundane DIY media?

I appreciated your News-Like Substances. Thank you for sharing the news! Recently, I mistakenly thought I was already a member of the Canadian SF and Fantasy Association to the extent that I sought assistance logging into the Web site. I am not yet a member, much to my chagrin. Kalin was quite kind.

My sympathy and empathy for losing so many files. When my home office was burgled (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #16), the perpetrator made off with at least one external hard drive. I have no idea what was on it, so I can’t really miss it, but I wonder what wonders were lost. What pen names did Elisabeth Vonarburg use when submitting her stories that had been rejected? Was she rejected as a woman but accepted as a man? She’d previously been published as a woman,

so I wonder why her work had been rejected.

I'll share your feedback with Cy Chauvin, too. Yes, you understand my cover exchange idea correctly. I draw you a cover, and you draw me a cover. Voila. Marion Zimmer Bradley and Walter Breen's connection to Diana Paxson and therefore the Society for Creative Anachronism and Asatru piqued my interest. When was she expelled from the Troth? You're now accepting advertisements? Paid? Why, Mr. Spencer! You've gone mersh.

**George Phillis's** *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #270 included Very Good News: "Last year the count of Short Story Contest entrants hit a recent record." How do we build on that if that's where our growth is? Offer more writing-related activities and services? Offer contest applicants a membership discount? Seems like an opportunity. If we decide to pursue fan fiction (see above), perhaps we consider a fan fiction-only apa in addition to N'APA—so if something happens, it's more contained. That could also be an activity that's supported by the N3F—members help manage it—but not be an official activity. But given the success of the contest, original fiction might be more intriguing. Regardless, I applaud your inclusion of "Shepdon First."

Despite your interpretation of the reasons for their leaving, I quite miss David Speakman and R-Laurraine Tutihasi—and their contributions to the N3F. I wasn't involved in the situation, but when someone reacts to actions so strongly, it might be helpful to consider the actions. Both remain active in fandom, but in different quarters, so it's the N3F's loss and broader fandom's gain.

*FanFic* #1, then, offers **George Phillis's** contribution of fiction, "Shepdon Downs." I will read the story with greater attention in the future—after the deadline—and thank you for including it!

**Samuel Lubell's** *Samizdat* #25 reminded N'APAns that he got involved because of and during the COVID-19 pandemic. That's what pushed me to join the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, too! A good reason to seek the company and ideas of others. I'm glad you've chosen to stick around. Thank you for the Hugo Award reminder. I still plan to vote in the short fiction and fan categories, and the deadline is coming up soon!

Wait... is your Balticon this year or next year? Did I join 57 as a supporting member but not 58? Oof. It looks like I joined 56 and then forgot to keep doing so in order to support your con. The best laid plans, as they say. I hope it went well and look forward to reading all about it. Thank you for reminding us you "run the magazine discussion group for the Washington SF Association..." Would you be willing

to let us know what the bimonthly selections are so we can perhaps discuss in parallel ourselves? I know I'd welcome the reasons to read.

I read and enjoyed your Author Spotlight on Harry Turtledove. I was unaware that he'd "worked as a technical writer for the LA County Office of Education," which makes him a local in addition to his time at UCLA. It makes sense that he incorporated his interest in history into his writing. I also enjoyed your Artist Spotlight on Omar Rayyan, though I would have welcomed some examples of his art, had permission been given. Luckily, we can sample his work at <https://www.studiorayyan.com>.

After deadline, I'll return to the serialization of your undergraduate thesis. It's appropriate you turn to history thish yourself, given the profile of Turtledove. As always, your project updates interested me, particularly Project Nonfiction thish. After my trip to the Virgin Islands (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #59-60), I started reading John A. Michener's *Caribbean* but have not continued to do so. Perhaps I should return to that novel! I, too, made very little progress.



*Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 10, 1956