N'APA 285

November 2026



The Official Organ
#285

Next deadline: January 15, 2027

The official collator is George Phillies - phillies@4liberty.net.
The official preparer is Jefferson P. Swycaffer - abontides.gmail.com

Procedure: Please Read:
Submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer, abontides@gmail.com

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

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

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

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Blue Moon Special

November 2026

Blue Moon Special (formerly *Active APAs*) is an occasional directory of active amateur press associations (apae) compiled and published by Blasted Heath Row, P.O. Box 259240, Madison, WI 53725 and Rua de Gerzat 286, 4830-748 Taíde, Portugal; kalel@well.com; +1 718-755-9840 mobile/WhatsApp; +1 323-916-0367 fax—and Garth Spencer, 6960 Doman St., Vancouver, BC, Canada V5S 3H7; garth.van.spencer@gmail.com. People involved in apae not listed who would like their apa to be included are encouraged to visit http://tinyurl.com/apa-list and submit details for inclusion in a subsequent edition. Deadlines are fluid. A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication. Number of apae listed: 35.

Introductions

I understood amateur press associations originally as a fannish answer to two needs—firstly, to make a closed circle in which fans could discuss privately topics that could be volatile if discussed publicly; secondly, a limited-circulation list with which people could exchange their fanzines at a reduced cost in printing and postage, and focus on common interests that not all fans shared. Special interests have included anarchism, surrealism, Dadaism, Marvel comics, costuming, James Bond, Sherlock Holmes, filk songs, roleplaying games, paganism, fantasy such as J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth, Canadian sf, conrunning, and why you can't get a plumber on weekends.

Eventually I learned that APAs had a history preceding fandom, starting with hobbyists interested in letterpress printing and publications. Later, I read about a published list of APAs in current circulation, titled *Blue Moon Directory* or *Blue Moon Special* or something else involving a discoloured satellite.

Until the Internet became a publicly accessible network, members were asked to contribute at least a minimum number of pages to each collation, called a "mailing," and contribute something to cover the postage and printing of the copy of the collation that they received. The appearance of email listservs and later social media began to meet some of the needs served by APAs, so reasonably enough, the number of APAs has diminished. In fact, a growing number of APAs—like fanzines—have moved to online publication. Many are archived online at eFanzines.com, fanac.org, or personal Web sites.

After participating in several APAs, I became the Official Editor of eAPA, a monthly electronic APA archived at eFanzines.com. Eventually, I teamed up with Heath Row, we pooled our notes, and we produced an updated version of *Blue Moon Special* in 2024. Here's to 2026!

—Garth Spencer

Garth and I intended to update this annually, but 2025 was a Very Busy Year for me. My wife and I sold our house and left Los Angeles, moving to Wisconsin; I stopped working at the company that employed me for almost 20 years; and then we moved to Portugal. Even amidst all that change, amateur press associations helped provide a constant and source of continuity.

Where I live now, while sf fanzines exist, there aren't many. So I helped launch a newszine, *Notícias de Pfandom* (https://fanac.org/fanzines/Noticias_de_Pfandom), with a local collaborator. Self-published comics, which are also called fanzines in Portugal, are more common given the strength of bandes dessinées and their fandom.

As far as I know, there has never been an apa in Portugal, though there are—and have been—others throughout Europe. In April, I gave a talk on apae at the Universidade do Porto and shall continue to beat the drum here. Perhaps we'll see a Portuguese apa (P-APA?) eventually listed in these pages!

Regardless, taking a year off between editions is better than a 15-year hiatus, and given the changes we've seen since 2024, publishing biannually might be a sensible frequency. As always, we offer this resource in the spirit of Mike Horvat's *South of the Moon* and Eric L. Watts's *New Moon Directory*. We stand on the shoulders of giants.

—Heath Row

News and Updates

Five amateur press associations ceased publication—or went on hiatus—after the publication of the 2024 edition of *Blue Moon Special*. Lee Gold stopped publishing Alarums & Excursions, a tabletop roleplaying game-themed apa, in early 2025 after almost 50 years of activity. Long-time A&E participant Lisa Padol published a tribute one-shot celebrating A&E titled *Something Completely Different* late that year. (https://everanon.org/scd) At least two new RPG-related apae launched immediately

in response to the end of A&E: George Phillies's A Gentle Stroll and Jim Vassilakos's Ever & Anon. They are both included in this year's directory.

Frederick Moe discontinued the Radio Enthusiasts APA after five mailings because of "minimal response." And two comic book-related apae, Greymalkin Lane (Marvel mutants and the New X-Men) and Klordny—which focused on the Legion of Super-Heroes and dated back to 1981—have also ceased publication.

After I stepped down as Official Collator of APA-L in April 2025 (with APA-L #3117), that role was taken on by Barbara Gratz Harmon, a long-time eller. She published more than 20 weekly mailings as OC before other responsibilities took priority. It's now been about 10 months since APA-L's most recent distribution. Even though the apa hasn't formally ceased publication, it's effectively on hiatus—and its future is uncertain. If you'd like to help revitalize APA-L, let Barbara know. We can rally the forces!

Unfortunately, we learned too late about TRIAPA (https://triapa.blogspot.com) to ever include it in our pages. At one time a monthly apa focused on sword and sorcery, cosmic horror, and space opera, TRIAPA debuted in August 2023 and shut down in February 2026. Thankfully, its 26 issues are still available online. They make for good reading.

On the upside, late 2024 brought the relaunch of APA-V, based in Las Vegas, after a 28-year hiatus. Now collated by active fanzine fan Nic Farey, the apa continues its original numbering and involves at least two original members. It is also listed in this edition of the directory.

And Chris Garcia sent out WOOF #51, the annual apa collated by the Worldcon Order of Faneditors, in early September. The apa features 100 pages contributed by a dozen faneds and is available at https://efanzines.com/WOOF. (HR)

Active Apae

American Amateur Press Association (AAPA)

Founded: 1936
Focus: Amateur (hobby) journalism
Frequency: A monthly bundle is sent to all members—except "same household" members.
Minimum activity: No minimum level of activity is required, though active participation is encouraged.
Membership: Currently 116 members; 120 copies required by the Official Mailer; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: $25 per year. A member in the same household can join for $2 per year but does not receive a separate monthly bundle. A "scholarship" is available to help offset production costs. Contact president@aapainfo.org to learn more.
Additional comments: Letterpress is not required. However, many members do enjoy letterpress. A tutorial for Scribus, a free publishing software program, is available on the Web site.
Contact: Ivan Snyder, 1441 S. Ivy St. #1204, Canby, OR 97013-4369; ivan.d.snyder@gmail.com; treasurer@aapainfo.org; http://www.aapainfo.org

APA 247

Founded: 1990
Focus: Legion of Super-Heroes comic books
Frequency: Every two months
Minimum activity: Two pages every two months
Membership: 21 active members; copy count of 23; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: Central Mailer maintains accounts for postage and shared costs.
Additional comments: Also discuss comic books in general
Contact: Harry Gaffing, 10 Lowther Ave., Culcheth, Warrington, WA3 4JZ, United Kingdom; apa247cm@hotmail.com

APA-50

Founded: 1974
Focus: Science fiction, travel, music, books, movies, personal narratives
Frequency: Three times per year
Minimum activity: Every other mailing
Membership: Accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: $40/year
Additional comments: Printing is handled by the OG; members submit PDF zines.
Contact: Terry Floyd (OG), terry@starfleetacademy.us, and Ken Gammage (GO), gammage.kennedy@mail.com

APA-L

Founded: 1964
Focus: Science fiction, fantasy, horror, science, fandom, personal natter, Los Angeles-area fanac, and anything else ellers feel like writing about
Frequency: Weekly
Minimum activity: Officially, minac is at least one

page every other distribution for those in the Los Angeles area, every third dist'n for those elsewhere in the United States, and every fourth dist'n for those elsewhere on the planet. Unofficially, we don't currently monitor or track minac.
Membership: In early 2026, there were currently 12 people participating in or receiving APA-L. The copy count is 15. Accepting new participants; no waitlist
Costs: There are no fees or dues, but participants maintain an account with the OC to cover their printing and mailing costs. Such funds are replenished as needed.
Additional comments: We're always looking for fanartists to submit cover art. Cover artists receive distributions to which they contribute. There are no minac requirements for cover artists.
Contact: Barbara Gratz Harmon, 634 S. Orchard Drive, Burbank, CA 91506; 1barbaraharmon@gmail.com

APA-LSH
Founded: 1992
Focus: DC Comics' Legion of Super-Heroes comic books
Frequency: Every two months
Minimum activity: Four collated pages in any three consecutive mailings
Membership: 19 active members; copy count of 16; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: No annual dues, but you must maintain a positive balance in your mailing account. $5 opens your account. When the apa is full (at 50 members), there is a $5 fee to join the waitlist.
Additional comments: Founded by Tom and Mary Bierbaum, and Bob Dobeisz; digital version available. Long live the Legion!
Contact: Todd Schoonover, P.O. Box 94, Coudersport, PA 16915-50094; toddschoonover@yahoo.com

Apaplexy
Founded: 1984
Focus: General interest. Contributions can be about any subject.
Frequency: Every six weeks
Minimum activity: Two pages every other issue. The contribution can be pictures, cartoons, articles by other people, or their own writings. Members now send the Official Editor PDF documents.
Membership: 12 active members; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: None; Apaplexy went online in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Additional comments: Every six weeks, a collation is held to put together the apazine, which is then sent to members. We hold a Zoom session, which has replaced in-person gatherings. We also have a private mailing list for members.
Contact: Central Mailer Sheila Brown, sheila@computertamers.ca; Elizabeth Holden, fajrdrako@gmail.com

APA-V
Founded: 1993
Focus: The general interests of members
Frequency: Quarterly
Minimum activity: Eight pages per year
Membership: 11 current members (electronic distribution as PDF); accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: None
Additional comments: The apa's initial run ended in 1996. It was revived in 2024.
Contact: Nic Farey, 2657 Rungsted St., Las Vegas NV 89142; fareynic@gmail.com

Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association (ANZAPA)
Founded: 1968
Focus: Science fiction, fantasy, and comics fandom
Frequency: Every two months
Minimum activity: Six pages every two months
Membership: 28 members; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: No cost at present
Additional comments: ANZAPA is now entirely PDF based.
Contact: David R. Grigg, 40 Linacre Drive, Unit 3, Bundoora 3083, Australia; david.grigg@gmail.com; https://anzapa.org

CAPA-alpha
Founded: 1964
Focus: Comic books and related topics
Frequency: Monthly
Minimum activity: Four pages of original material in letter-size PDF format quarterly
Membership: Currently 16 active members and five "emeritus" (i.e., not obligated to contribute)
Costs: Nil at present

Additional comments: Also known as K-a. According to Jerry Bails, our founder, CAPA-alpha stands for "Comicdom's Amateur Press Alliance number one." A new Central Mailer was scheduled to be elected in October 2026, to begin in January 2027. (The current CM will forward any correspondence to his successor.) CAPA-alpha's 750th mailing is coming up in 2027, so it's a great time to get involved.
Contact: Gary Mason, P.O. Box 258, Unley, South Australia 5061, Australia; garymason@gazperson.net

Cuneiform APA

Founded: 2011 by Frederick Moe
Focus: Analog culture including but not limited to zines, printing, self-publishing, philosophy (leaning toward libertarian), low-technology living, media, and music
Frequency: Three times a year
Minimum activity: None
Membership: 10+ active members; copy count of 50; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: No dues, but money for postage is helpful
Additional comments: This apa is surprisingly active and robust. Going strong. Several members have rotated coordination of Cuneiform since 2011.
Contact: Jason Rodgers, P.O. Box 701, Cobleskill, NY 12403
(**Note:** Listing not updated since 2024 edition)

Dapper

Founded: 1992
Focus: Free/casual; Dutch based but in English
Frequency: Every two months, in odd-numbered months
Minimum activity: One page every two issues
Membership: 10 members; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: Costs include the mailing cost (from the Netherlands), administrative costs (including printing if not sending your own pages), and copy costs.
Additional comments: The full, long title is Dutch Amateur People's Press Energetically Reproducing.
Contact: Jan van't Ent, vantent@hotmail.com

eAPA

Founded: 2004
Focus: Fannish and non-fannish content
Frequency: Monthly
Minimum activity: One contribution per three mailings
Membership: Four people; copy count irrelevant (it's distributed as a PDF); accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: None
Additional comments: A monthly apa primarily for science fiction fans; an attempt to bridge the format and style of traditional paper-based apae with newer digital publishing formats. There are no dues for eAPA. Members are expected to email a PDF document to the OE by the first of the distribution month, at least once every other distribution. Activity can consist of either written or graphic material primarily by the member. The OE compiles the PDF contributions, posts the mailing on eFanzines.com, and notifies the members by email when the distribution is ready for downloading (generally on the second of each month). Membership is open to anyone. Prospective members should let the OE know by email that they want to join and will be expected to contribute to the next distribution. Mailings are password-protected, except for the annual "open" mailing in October. Members can, at their discretion, make their eAPAzines available to the general public on *eFanzines* as well, or through any other medium.
Contact: Garth Spencer, 6960 Doman St., Vancouver, BC, Canada V5S 3H7; garth.van.spencer@gmail.com; https://efanzines.com/eapa

ERB-APA

Founded: 1984
Focus: The writings, creations, life, and influences of Edgar Rice Burroughs, author of Tarzan of the Apes, John Carter of Mars, and other stories
Frequency: Quarterly
Minimum activity: 45 copies of two pages (approximately 400 words) or more four times a year; exceptions can be made if a submission needs to be passed on
Membership: 20 active members out of 36 possible slots; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: $35 a year covering membership, participation, and mailing costs of one issue to each member
Additional comments: $35 a year covering membership, participation, and mailing costs of one issue to each member; the editor will change after Jan. 31, 2027
Contact: Scott Tracy Griffin, 1014 Broadway #236, Santa Monica, CA 90401; scotttracygriffin@gmail.com; https://www.erbzine.com/apa

Esoteric Order of Dagon

Founded: 1973
Focus: Scholarship on H.P. Lovecraft and weird fiction in general
Frequency: Quarterly
Minimum activity: Six pages per year
Membership: 26 members, with 30 copies submitted to OE; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: $45 US, $50 Canada and Mexico, $60 other international per year to cover postage
Contact: S.T. Joshi, stjoshi45@hotmail.com

Ever & Anon

Founded: 2025
Focus: Tabletop roleplaying games (TTRPGs)
Frequency: Monthly
Minimum activity: None
Membership: 25 current participants; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: None
Additional comments: Considered the successor of Alarums & Excursions
Contact: Jim Vassilakos, P.O. Box 30036, San Bernardino, CA 92413; apa@everanon.org; https://everanon.org

Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA)

Founded: 1937
Focus: Open topics
Frequency: Quarterly
Minimum activity: Eight pages a year
Membership: Current membership is 17. Members submit 20 copies each quarter; that is subject to increase in 2026. Currently accepting new members; waitlist undetermined
Costs: $10/year, likely to increase in 2026
Additional comments: The Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA) hearkens from a time when fan magazines (also known as fanzines, or shortened to ’zines) were reproduced via mimeograph, hectograph, or even with carbon-copy inserts. With more modern technologies, fanzines—and by extension, FAPA—photocopying is the usual method of reproduction. But what about that name, especially the “Fantasy” part of it? Remember, FAPA was founded in 1937. At that time, there was no distinction between fantasy and science fiction; they both fell under the genre of fantasy. Is FAPA all about stories, fantasy, or science fiction? No—and yes. FAPA welcomes writing from all genres, but generally, people who contribute are writing personal essays and commentary. However, there has been some good fiction published through FAPA, too. Why should you join? Isn’t it easier to email or blog? Well, sure. Publishing a fanzine, including all that goes into it—layout, content creation, reproducing, collating, and submitting—are all connections to an earlier time.
Contact: Ken Forman, 2234 MC 7055, Flippin, AR 72634; kforman@att.net

A Gentle Stroll

Founded: 2025
Focus: Tabletop roleplaying games, including fiction, reviews, rules, scenarios, and enhancements such as descriptions of monsters
Frequency: Every few months
Minimum activity: None
Membership: 16 readers and three to five active contributors; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: No fee currently
Additional comments:
Contact: George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Dr., Worcester, MA 01609; phillies@4liberty.net; http://N3F.org

Intercourse

Founded: The apa was started by Debbie Notkin in 1985. As of October 2026, Intercourse had reached issue #246.
Focus: Ostensibly, the apa concentrates on discussions of relationships, but participants also talk about recent activities, movies, books, and other topics. There are sometimes discussions about styles of communication and other relationship-related topics.
Frequency: Every two months
Minimum activity: Four pages every two issues, but because there are so few members, the apa isn’t currently enforcing minac.
Membership: Eight current participants; accepting new members; no waitlist.
Costs: None
Additional comments: “We welcome anyone who just wants to chat.” Participants share zines via Dropbox, not printed physically.
Contact: Elizabeth Fox, elizabethxfox@gmail.com

Interlac

Founded: 1976
Focus: The primary focus is the Legion of

Super-Heroes comic books. Other topics are discussed, and there are no content mandates.
Frequency: Every two months, in even-numbered months
Minimum activity: Four collated and stapled pages in any three consecutive mailings (every six months)
Membership: 30 active members; copy count is currently 33; accepting new members; waitlist undetermined
Costs: $20 to join, but need to top off an account periodically because shared costs (mostly postage) are assessed every mailing
Additional comments: None
Contact: Christopher Cavett, 2123 32nd Ave. South, Nashville, TN 37212; clcavett@gmail.com; https://protytwo.wixsite.com/interlacapa1976, https://www.facebook.com/groups/interlacapa

Los Angeles Scientifiction Fans' Amateur Press Association (LASFAPA)

Founded: 1976
Focus: General
Frequency: Monthly
Minimum activity: Two pages every other distribution; two pages every third distribution for overseas members
Membership: Eight members; current copy count is 10; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: Dues are $35 per year (covers all mailing and shared costs). A separate printing account is needed if printing by OE is desired.
Additional comments: We're always happy to get new members.
Contact: David Schlosser, 2041 N St., Eureka, CA 95501; schloss17@suddenlink.net

Milwaukee Amateur Press Association

Founded: 1984
Focus: Science fiction and general interest
Frequency: Monthly
Minimum activity: One page of new material per month
Membership: 10+ members; copy count of 18; accepting new members; waitlist undetermined
Costs: None
Additional comments: Our current members are all located in southeastern Wisconsin. We have had members from out of state in the past, although they have usually had a Milwaukee connection.
Contact: Gregory G.H. Rihn, 4718 W. Cleveland Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53219; ggrihn@yahoo.com

National Amateur Press Association (NAPA)

Founded: 1876
Focus: There is no focus, but NAPA but does have requirements for titling, dating, numbering, and identifying the publisher of each submitted journal or zine.
Frequency: Bundles of submitted papers come out monthly. *The National Amateur* comes out quarterly.
Minimum activity: No minimum level of activity is required.
Membership: About 85 active members; 95 copies for the Mailer; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: For the United States: $30 per year Regular Membership, $7.50 additional for other countries. $2 per year for Family Membership at the same address as a Regular Member; $8 per year for subscription to *The National Amateur* only; free one-time three-month Trial Membership to non-members.
Additional comments: Libraries and similar repositories can receive a complimentary subscription to bundles or *The National Amateur*.
Contact: Melody Warner, 309 E. 3rd Ave., Lenoir City, TN 37771-2515; Secretary-Treasurer@amateurpress.org, http://www.amateurpress.org

N'APA

Founded: 1959
Focus: N'APA, the National Fantasy Fan Federation's apa, mostly focuses on sf and related topics, as well as N3F business and fandom in general.
Frequency: Every two months
Minimum activity: There is no minac requirement.
Membership: About 10 contributors, circulation list is about 270; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: Regular membership in the N3F costs $18/year, electronic memberships cost $6/ year, and there are also public members who don't pay dues. All members receive copies electronically; only dues-paying members can contribute.
Additional comments: N'APA is a "social" apa, with everyone chatting cheerfully with everyone else.
Contact: Jefferson P. Swycaffer, abontides@gmail.com, https://n3f.org/napa

OWLHOOT

Founded: "23 years ago"
Focus: The Old West in all its aspects: books, movies, radio, history, toys, comics, legends, etc.

Frequency: Quarterly
Minimum activity: Four pages every two mailings
Membership: 10 members; copy count of 11; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: $12/year
Additional comments: OWLHOOT is a print apa.
Contact: Cap'n Bob Napier, 5601 N. 40th St., Tacoma, WA 98407; capnbob@nventure.com

The Pulp Era Amateur Press Society (PEAPS)

Founded: 1987 (Founded by Lynn A. Hickman)
Focus: Pulp magazines of all genres, vintage paperbacks, the pulp conventions (Windy City Pulp and Paper Show, and Pulpfest)
Frequency: Quarterly
Minimum activity: Six pages every two mailings. More is, of course, acceptable and encouraged.
Membership: 24 current members, copy count is 30; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: $30 a year dues, subject to increase when postal costs increase. The OE tries to keep that cost as low as possible.
Additional comments: Membership is for anyone who is a pulp fan, reader, or collector.
Contact: Michael Brown, 8450 Lagos de Campo Blvd. #104, Tamarac, FL 33321; emb021@yahoo.com; https://peaps.net

Point of Divergence

Founded: 1995
Focus: Alternate history
Frequency: Four to six mailings a year
Minimum activity: Two pages every other distribution
Membership: 12 current members; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: $25/year
Additional comments: Mailings average 100-150 pages per distribution
Contact: Dale Cozort, 210 North First, DeKalb, IL 60115; DaleCoz2@gmail.com

Pride Amateur Press Association

Founded: 2018
Focus: Mutual love of comic books and comics-related entertainment, as well as other topics of interest to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people
Frequency: Every two months
Minimum activity: No set minimum activity
Membership: 15 active members; copy count of seven; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: Members must maintain a positive mailing account, which is used for publication and distribution. Costs are divided equally among all members.
Additional comments: Pride APA represents the union of two long-running, LGBTQ-themed apas focusing on comic books and pop culture. The first was Attitude n' Sin (or ATDNSIN: The APA That Dares Now Speak Its Name), created in 1988 by Andy Mangels with the assistance of Roger Klorese. This was in response to the first ever "Gays in Comics" panel discussion at the San Diego Comic Convention that summer. ATDNSIN is the longest-running gay comic book apa in existence. The Northstar APA (named after Marvel's first openly gay character) began in 1989 as a conception of Jericho Wilson and was first published in 1990. In the summer of 2003, the two groups decided to create a joint issue in the vein of the classic JLA/JSA crossovers. Later that year, they voted to permanently merge into one apa, but continued to publish using both names. In 2018, the remaining members voted to unite under a single name. Digital version available.
Contact: Todd Schoonover, P.O. Box 94, Coudersport, PA 16915-0094; toddschoonover@yahoo.com; https://www.prideapa.com

Robert E Howard United Press Association (REHupa)

Founded: 1972
Focus: Robert E. Howard, sword & sorcery, and pulp magazines and authors
Frequency: Quarterly
Minimum activity: Four pages per issue twice a year
Membership: 24 members; accepting new members; no wait list
Costs: $5/year dues plus postage costs
Additional comments: We're hanging in there! As of November 2026, we are currently up to 315 mailings.
Contact: Bill Cavalier, 622 White Oak Dr., Michigan City, IN 46360; 2cavaliers@sbcglobal.net

Rowrbrazzle

Founded: 1984
Focus: Funny animals and anthropomorphics
Frequency: Quarterly
Minimum activity: Two pages per six months
Membership: 36 members, with copy count of 45;

accepting new members; waitlist of three (waitlisters usually get copies)
Costs: $5 per issue. We maintain accounts. OE will print contributions for $4 per page black and white or $11 per page color.
Additional comments: I welcome inquiries from artists, writers, researchers, and actifans of funny animals and anthropomorphics. A copy of every issue is archived at the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy at the University of California–Riverside.
Contact: Edd Vick, eddvick@gmail.com

Slanderous Amateur Press Association (Slanapa)

Founded: 1969
Focus: Mailing comments, books read, movies watched, the space program, and personal activities
Frequency: Monthly
Minimum activity: None
Membership: Seven members; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: No dues; rotating Official Editor
Additional comments: Slanapa is a paper apa and is always open to new members. It focused on science fiction originally, but now all topics are welcome. Originated by Bob Vardeman and Mike Horvat; late members include Frank Denton, Jerry Lapidus, and Bill "Swampy" Marsh.
Contact: Dale Goble Jr., 517 E. Marion St., Stayton, OR 97383; manngulch@wbcable.net. He'll direct inquiries to whomever's the current OE: Dale Goble Jr., Mike Horvat, Bob Napier, D. Gary Grady, Dan Willott, Dee Beetem, or Jeff Frane.

The Southern Fandom Press Alliance (SFPA)

Founded: 1961
Focus: Originally sf fandom in the southern United States, though now with geographically dispersed members. Science fiction, fantasy, and related subjects *(widely* related in many cases).
Frequency: Every two months
Minimum activity: Original content every other mailing
Membership: 15 people (and one academic library), 10 print copies required, plus PDF copies of all fanzines are required with PDF copies distributed electronically. Accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: $35/year for paper, $10/year for electronic distributions, international membership by special arrangement
Additional comments: We have 15 members at the moment, with the bimonthly mailings generally in the 300- to 400-page range. We're a hybrid apa, with parallel print and electronic distributions. See the Web site for a sample official organ.
Contact: Jeff Copeland, 2824 Kulshan St., Bellingham, WA 98225-2345; jeff.copeland+sfpa@gmail.com; http://bywaterpress.com/sfpa

Spectator Amateur Press Society (SAPS)

Founded: 1947
Focus: Science fiction and fantasy, fandom, and natter
Frequency: Quarterly
Minimum activity: Six pages (standard, single-spaced, or equivalent) of original previously uncirculated text material in every two consecutive mailings. Up to one page of art/graphics can be counted in the minimum six pages. Additional pages can include reprints, graphics, etc.
Membership: Nine members; limited to 25 memberships; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: None
Additional comments: SAPS is the second oldest extant fannish apa. Participants are mostly—but not exclusively—located in the Pacific Northwest; the membership is international in scope.
Contact: Andy Hooper, 11032 30th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98125; fanmailaph@aol.com

Stipple-Apa

Founded: 1980
Focus: A small amateur press association originating in the St. Paul/Minneapolis science fiction and fantasy fannish community in Minnesota, doncha know. We talk about whatever is interesting: books, movies, TV, conventions, gardening, and travel.
Frequency: About every six weeks
Minimum activity: One page every other mailing
Membership: Membership is limited to 30 sentient beings. There are currently 14 members; copy count of 12; accepting new members; no waitlist. New blood is always welcome to join the party.
Costs: No dues is good dues! The production expense fees are $1 per person per issue for copying and mailing (a possible $2 total). Accounts are maintained for postage and printing.
Additional comments: Stipple-Apa is primarily a print apa. Most material published in Stipple-Apa must be original. I will accept PDFs for printing contributions. I have made some concessions for a few

members, such as one in Brazil where the mail service is bad. Good behavior is expected. The apa began when people on the waitlist for Minneapa decided to create their own apa. We have outlasted Minneapa! Contact the OOK (Official Official Koolaider), Jeanne Mealy, if you want a spec copy for your friends who like to write so they can join us.
Contact: Jeanne Mealy, 1595 Hoyt Ave. East, St. Paul, MN 55106; jmealy-in-mn@comcast.net

Turbo-Charged Party-Animal APA

Founded: 1986
Focus: None
Frequency: Monthly
Minimum activity: One page every other month
Membership: 35 members; copy count is 25; accepting new members; no waitlist
Costs: $12 annually plus postage for those needing the apa mailed to them
Additional comments: Based in Madison, Wis., with current members about half local, half elsewhere. Still all on paper, though some members post their zines electronically to eFanzines and other sites.
Contact: Jamie Hudson, 902 Swarthmore Court, Madison, WI 53705; Jamiefh2@gmail.com

The Women's Periodical (TWP)

Founded: 1982
Focus: TWP is an apa for women in the UK and elsewhere who have a connection to British fandom.
Frequency: Bimonthly
Minimum activity: Two sides of A4 typescript or one side of artwork in two out of every three mailings
Membership: 22 members; copy count of 24; accepting new members up to a maximum of 24; currently no waitlist
Costs: £18/year in the UK; actual postage costs for members based elsewhere
Additional comments: Rates are likely to rise slightly after 2026, and administrative responsibilities will change, but the current administrator will pass along any expressions of interest
Contact: Claire Brialey, 59 Shirley Road, Croydon, CR0 7ES, United Kingdom; claire.fishlifter@gmail.com

Note: We also know that the Sword and Sorcery Weird Fiction Terminus APA (SSWFT APA) is active, but no listing was received. Maybe next edition!

Other Resources

The Fossils

Founded in 1904, this non-profit organization preserves the history of amateur journalism. In 2004 the group donated its Library of Amateur Journalism — the world's largest collection of amateur publications and memorabilia dating back to the 1850s —to the University of Wisconsin–Madison and later helped establish an endowment to maintain it. The organization publishes a quarterly journal, *The Fossil*, and offers memberships at $15 annually for individuals or $20 for a joint membership (spouses). Non-members can subscribe to *The Fossil* for $10/year. For additional information, to pay dues, and to access more than 20 years of digital archives, visit http://www.thefossils.org or write to Secretary-Treasurer Tom Parson, 157 South Logan St., Denver, CO 80209; s-t@thefossils.org.

Thank you to Leigh Blackmore, William Breiding, Claire Brialey, Michael Brown, Bill Cavalier, Christopher Cavett, Jeff Copeland, Dale Cozort, Jan van't Ent, Nic Farey, Carl Fishman, Ken Forman, Elizabeth Fox, Harry Gaffing, Ken Gammage, Chris Garcia, Dale Goble Jr., Scott Tracy Griffin, David Grigg, Barbara Gratz Harmon, Andy Hooper, Jamie Hudson, S.T. Joshi, Gary Mason, Jeanne Mealy, Fred Moe, Cap'n Bob Napier, Lisa Padol, George Phillies, Curt Phillips, Gregory G.H. Rihn, Heath Row, David Schlosser, Todd Schoonover, Alison Scott, Ivan D. Snyder, Garth Spencer, Jefferson P. Swycaffer, Mick Taylor, David Tribby, Jim Vassilakos, Edd Vick, Melody Warner, and Eric L. Watts for contributing information to the directory or offering other assistance and support. If I forgot to thank you, thank you!

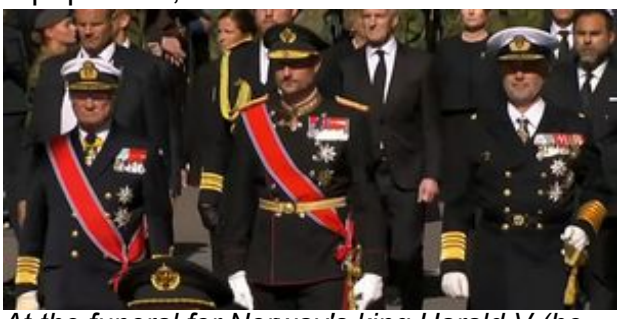
If Putin invaded hell, I'd make a favourable reference to the Devil.

INTERMISSION #171

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA & N'APA and other drooling drones. Seen Russia's Njetfighters crash?Ed still no time for @SFJournalen on Tw/X,but RSN?Typos?Hawen't sean anny!Late Sep'26.

Editorially: SocMedia,3rd GH Con, Ruϟϟ ia

I've always preferred E-mail over what we call “social media”. The problem is that SocMedia is superficial and bounce short staccato-like comments back and forth. Ordinary E-mail leaves room for longer, thought-through messages.E-mail is more like traditional papermail, which used to be the putty keeping fandom together. I sent hundreds of letters each year in younger days. The fanzines had long letter columns. In fact fandom started through papermail, via the letter columns of the pulps.



At the funeral for Norway's king Harald V (he died Aug 28th), Norway's new king Haakon VIII marched right behind the casket, flanked by king Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and king Fredrik X of Denmark. An interesting show of Scandinavia Royal unity.

So take the chance, follow fandom's tradition and write a LoC to *Intermission*. Do a fanzine and join an APA! Forget about shallow SocMedia. The only such I have used is Twitter. (It's on a pause now - originally due to Microsoft causing a long mail stop - but I hope to be back.I've simply had too little time to spare.) Real fandom is real exchange of views, not verbal ping-pong. The LoC from Bob Jennings had such substantial info on story papers that I thought it's best to make it into a separate article in thish. I haven't thought much about taking material from others,but why not? You're welcome to try, particularly history stuff!

In thish I've found a little more about the cons held by the 1890s adventure magazine fandom (see lastish!), the Golden Hours Club. It had hundreds of local chapters doing their own amateur magazines - even having an APA! - and held at least *three* national conventions.It was a bit like the 1930s SF League, and the GH story paper was no stranger to what we since the late 1920s call science fiction. BTW, I make a little experiment in H Corner, marking interesting or juicy stuff in red. Some may only skim it and highlighting parts may make it easier. But I do this only in that dpt. Could be irritating if done everywhere.

I found a small stash of unused newspaper clips from when I raided the Royal Library's digital newspaper archive several years ago. From #96 and on *Intermission* ran many interesting stories based on that. The Atomic Noah club. The Swedish atomic bomb patent. How the 1956 premiere Luncon - and other cons - was covered in media (incl the radio news). How the early sf clubs advertised. The many new-name-for-science-fiction contests in 1953. Sam J Lundwall's TV programs.Harry Martinson's glowing commendation of sf. Robert Heinlein's Swedish visit, and his house! And much, much more. I'll see what I can do with leftovers of those newspaper clips.

Ever since Putin started his senseless, barbaric war each *Intermission* has ended with a GLORY TO UKRAINE, in Ukrainian. As many others (except some slow-witted Alternative für Asylym types) *Intermission* is deeply disturbed by Czar Putin's murderous imperialism and scoffing of international treaties and laws.So the deeds of this war criminal is often covered. Good news continues:

■ Russia's gas crisis with long car queues grows as Ukrainian drones keep hitting refineries. Ukraine sent extra drones to remind Russians of that so called "eledction" (Puin's paty "won" of course). Russia crops export is diving (ukraine destroyed ports and ships) so therc'll be even less money for war. Russia's economy is spiralling down. Budget deficit plummets. Banks near collapse. Major warehouses ashification accelerates. Inflation grows, gold deposit shrinks, Russian oil export almost nil due to drone attacks.

■ Germany and Italy promised big anti-ballistic missile deliveries.That eases pressure on Ukrainian cities. The missile coalition working on Freya say it msy be ready i Jan.Ukraine now has several jet-systems against Putins jert-drones.

■ Ukraine's computer-offensive Vivaldi seems to be very successful. Ivan reytreating is music to our ears! Onother front Russia claims advances they don't have. Commanders lie to Putinand use AI to fabricate pushes. BSd and false info make Russian war efforts chaotic. Ukraine now liberates more land than Russia can take.

■ Russia can't recruit to cover losses, so unpopular mobilisation necessary but it'll be "hidden". In practice its already underway: police simply kidnap random men in the streets. A further half a million young Russians have fled mobilisation to Georgia and Kazakhstan. Russia lures 3rd world poor to "work" in Russia, and once there they forced to join the army.

And there is more. I can only cover tiny parts of it, but here's 10 Youtubers to follow to be updated: *Anna from Ukraine, UATV, TVP World, Professor Gerdes, Denys Davydov, Jake Broe, Jason Jay Smart, Combat Veteran Reacts, Silicon Curtain, Kyiv Post.*

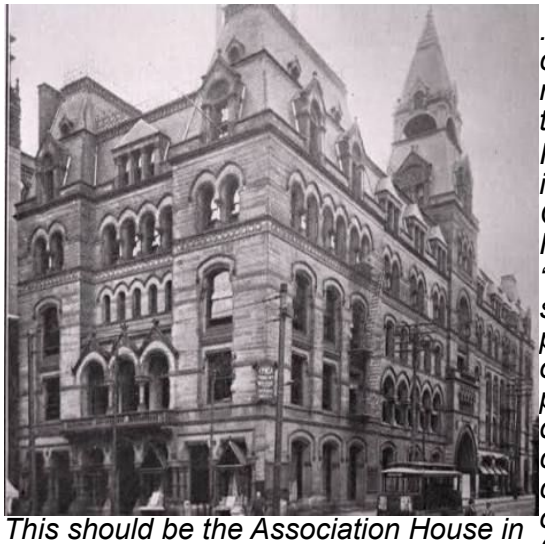
Don't try Russian sources. They lie through their rotting teeth. *--Ahrvid Engholm,editor*

and sf historian, 50+ years fan, AI expert,runs oldest writing list & contest, mimeo master, extremely modest...

History Corner:

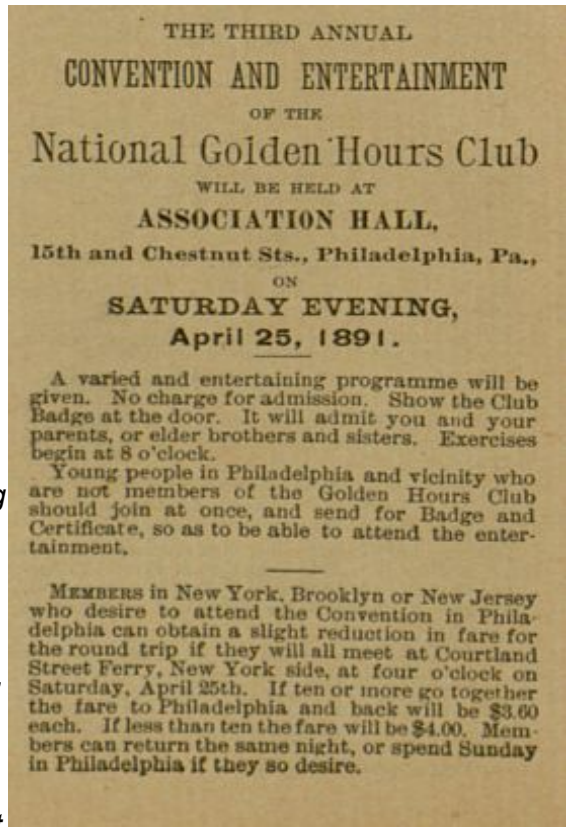
(An experiment in H Corner:particularly interesting stuff is in red.Tell me, is such highlighting good?)

In #169 and #170 we covered the readers club ran by the *Golden Hours* adventure "story paper" in the late 19th Century."Story papers" was a popular pre-pulp publication form, newspaper sized weeklies of usually 16 pages. The Golden Hours Club had hundreds of local clubs all over the US that organised their own activities, often including publishing their own clubzines (they even had an APA!), and hosting conventions. From #169 on the first *Golden Hours National Convention* in 1889*:*



This should be the Association House in Philadelphia, hosting the Golden Hours 3rd national convention,1891. Capacity was around 1800 persons.

...a thick crowd of eager children - estimates say as many as 2 000 - converged on the Palace Rink in Brooklyn for the inaugural Convention of the Golden Hours Club. Golden Hours, a popular "story paper" full of adventure stories for young readers, had prepared a jam-packed evening of entertainment for its fans: peppy, patriotic songs descended from an orchestra couched in the music loft. The children were treated to hours of performance from musicians, Civil War veterans, ventriloquists and caricaturists, with the itinerary running until nearly midnight. There were celebrities, too: the author Edward Ellis talked at length to a rapt crowd about "the Indians, of whom the boys have read so much."The kids, noted the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, "were noisy and hearty and were afforded full rein."



THE THIRD ANNUAL

CONVENTION AND ENTERTAINMENT

OF THE

National Golden Hours Club

WILL BE HELD AT

ASSOCIATION HALL,

15th and Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, Pa.,

ON

SATURDAY EVENING,

April 25, 1891.

A varied and entertaining programme will be given. No charge for admission. Show the Club Badge at the door. It will admit you and your parents, or elder brothers and sisters. Exercises begin at 8 o'clock.

Young people in Philadelphia and vicinity who are not members of the Golden Hours Club should join at once, and send for Badge and Certificate, so as to be able to attend the entertainment.

MEMBERS in New York, Brooklyn or New Jersey who desire to attend the Convention in Philadelphia can obtain a slight reduction in fare for the round trip if they will all meet at Courtland Street Ferry, New York side, at four o'clock on Saturday, April 25th. If ten or more go together the fare to Philadelphia and back will be $3.60 each. If less than ten the fare will be $4.00. Members can return the same night, or spend Sunday in Philadelphia if they so desire.

GH#168, 18 apr 1891, their third con.



Radion i går

Så kommer det att bli! var ett uppslag som Lennart Hyland hade förvaltat väl, främst genom valet av så fantasibegåvade medarbetare som John Tandberg, Sven A. Hanson, Kjell Stensson, Ernst Abramson och Gunnar Beskow. De fem herrarna målade upp våra efterkommandes liv under tredje årtusendet och hela programmet blev ett slags science fiction med mycket radioaktivitet, rymdtrafik och television samt — bostadsbrist. Den som talade mest allvar var professor Beskow, — han vidrörde alternativt ett tredje världskrig och några få överlevande i en Noaks ark. Men inte ens om katastrofen kan undvikas tycktes han tro på någon nämnvärd framtida lycka i ett alltför samhällsreglerat liv. *Sbg.*

Att tjuvtitta

på försök in i framtiden, det är ju en gammal lek. Fältet är fritt och rymligt för allsköns gissningar, och frågan är bara, hur yvig ens fantasi är. Ett program av den här sorten måste vara roligt, annars torkar det samman i knapper uppräkning. Nu blev det måhända litet tröttsamt med all denna science fiction i travar. Men professor John Tandbergs uppmålning av köket år 2000 hörde till de djärvare och skämtsammare framtidsvyerna.

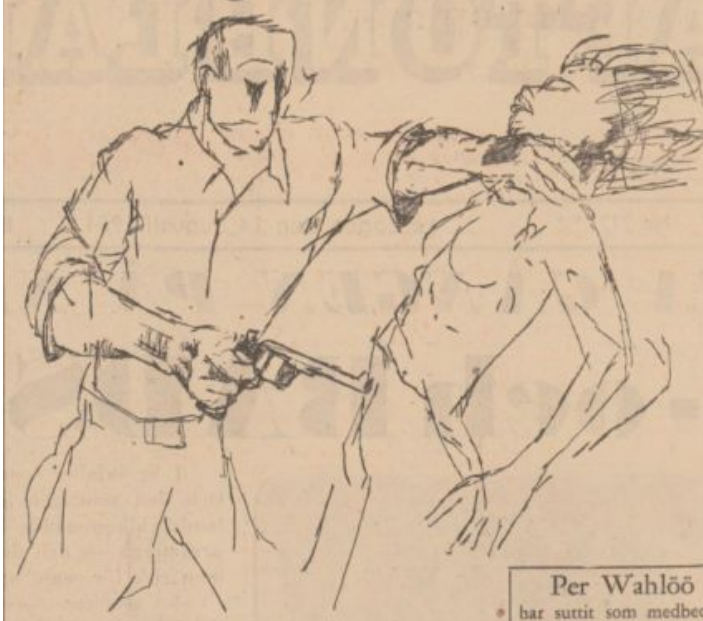
A number of GH authors were guests,some writing skiffy - incl the popular Edward Ellis, earlier writing about a steam-driven robot - and the famous circus director PT Barnum. We now know there were at least three such conventions, which makes it possible there could be even more. In #168,1891, we find the invitation to *The Third Annual Convention and Entertainment of the National Golden Hours Club in the Association Hall in Philadelphia* (see illo). The program details are unknown (it could be similar to 1889, see above) and we don't know more about later conventions.The GH club had smaller cons and gatherings they called "reunions" on state basis. Uncle google tells us: *Association Hall in Philadelphia was the popular name for the grand Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) building. Located at the southeast corner of 15th and Chestnut Streets, this iconic structure served as one of the city's premier hubs for community development, education, public lectures, and social engagement.* "But this isn't an sf con", I hear complaints - but it looks like a precursor to me, and remember that the GH adventure mag did include sf.

Moving on, a short clip about a futuristic radio program from 1955,led by the immensely popular Lennart Hyland,"*On Radio Yesterday"*(paper & date lost, left):

That's the Way It'll Be was an idea Lennart Hyland took well care of, mainly by selecting imaginative guests like John Tandberg, Sven A Hanson, Kjell Stenson, Ernst Abrahamson and Gunnar Beskow. The five gentlemen portrayed the life of our descendants in the 3rd millennium and the whole program became some sort of sf with lots of radioactivity, space traffic and television and - housing shortages. Professor Beskow was the most serious - he touched upon a WWIII and a few survivors in a Noah's Ark. But not even if the disaster can be avoided he believed in much future happiness in a much too regulated life. A SNEAK PEEK attempting to see the future is an old game. The field is free with room for all types of guesses. It's only a matter of how wide your imagination is. A program of this type must be fun or it boils down to a boring list. It was perhaps a bit tiring with all this sf. But professor John Tandberg painting the kitchen of year 2000 was among the bolder and jollier future views.

AFTONBLADET Lördagen den 14 Aug. 1954 AB-termometern i morse: +14 gr.

1.000 unga författare i återvändsgränd



Per Wahlöö
har suttit som medbedömare i en novelltävling för ungdomar under 20 år. Det var en särdeles upplevelse.

MAN SKULLE knappast tro att den unga generation, som nu håller på att växa ur barnskorna, över huvud taget trängtar till att bruka sin penna. Men det gör den trots allt — trots veckotidningar, seriemagasin, dåliga filmer och andra produkter av en hänsynslöst kommersiell nöjesindustri. Viljan att skriva är svår att utrota, och än så länge kan den lockas fram, om än blott av feta löften om prissummor, ryktbarhet och ära. Då och då vänder sig även utgivare av de mest spekulativa tryckalster till sin läsekrets med erbjudanden att delta i litterära pristävlingar — det låter flott, och resultatet kan ju inte minst tjäna till att visa nya genvägar till den dåliga smakens eftersträvansvärda medelproportional.

När jag senast som medbedömare var i tillfälle att ta del av ett dylikt material rörde det sig om en novelltävling, riktad till ungdomar under tjugo år, och eftersom ej mindre än ett tusental förhoppningsfulla skribenter hade hörsammat kallelsen att ge ett detaljerat in flagranti på vad man helst ville se i spalterna tändes också hoppet om en ganska rikhaltig provkarta. Kanske inte individualistisk, ty individualism ligger ju inte i tiden, men skiftesrik i alla fall... Mähända var denna förhoppning förmäten — i varje fall visade den sig vara grundligt felslagen.

AV DET STORA antalet bidrag visade sig ca 600 vara varandra mycket närstående — 412 utvecklade till råga på allt en nästan identiskt likartad intrig. De övriga sönderföll i två påtagliga huvudgrupper av kuriös och avgjort betänklig natur. Man skrev om sorg, våld och rymdresor, inspirationskällor var e n film och två ytterst suspekta plantor ur den litterära undervegetationen. På den romantiska avdelningen sattes Sorgen, den sublima, slentrianmässiga, definitiva, i högsätet. Vad som hände var i korthet följande: De unga kontrahenterna träffades på dansbanan, betraktade varandra ett ordlöst ögonblick och skyndade lyckliga till närmsta liggplats. Himlastormande lycka, bröllop för dörren, men då...

"Hon stannade och vände sig mot andra sidan vägen, där han stod. Hon såg hur han rusade ut i gatan. Hon såg också motorcykeln, som kom rusande. Hon skrek till och ögonblicket efter blev han överkörd.

— Bengt... Hon rusade ut på vägen och kastade sig på knä.

— Britta, mumlade han. Hon såg att det kostade honom svår möda att få fram det enda lilla ordet "Britta". Att det inte var något att göra förstod hon.(!)

— Du får inte dö, viskade hon. Men han var för svårt sårad för att överleva, det spred sig ett leende över hans ansikte, han drog en suck — och dog."

I 412 vackra sommarsagor med halmstackar, nakenbad och andra tillbehör lönnmördas till slut lyckan på öppen landsväg. Där sätter man också punkt för bekvämlighetens skull. Sorgen har erövrat marknaden, den som finns kvar är för evigt förtappad, finito. I de enstaka fall där författaren gjort ett försök att "följa upp" utvecklingen går det så här:

"På dagen för sin planerade bröllopsdag, som aldrig blev av, avled hon. Hon hade sörjt ihjäl sej. Det var ett hårt öde..."

VARIFRÅN emanerar nu detta? Är det skillingtrycken eller den gamla goda löwenhielmska romantiken, som spökar? Ingalunda. Förebilden ligger betydligt närmre i tiden och är avsevärt mera lättillgänglig.

Det fanns en film, som ingen kan ha undgått att höra talas om även om han inte har sett den — den hette "Hon dansade en sommar" och handlade just om ung lycka, förintad av en trafikolycka. Den var en framstående filmindustriell produkt, enormt publiklockande, och skickligt befriad från underlagets litterära ambitioner, precis som en film skall vara för att kunna gå direkt till publikhjärtat. Den sägs av fler människor än någon annan svensk film någonsin gjort, men ändå väntar man sig knappast att den skulle göra ett så överväldigande intryck, att den efter ett par år skall förmå hälften av deltagarna i en novellpristävling att nöja sig med att helt enkelt rekapitulera de mera handgripliga avsnitten ur scenariot.

ATT UNGDOMEN drömmer om att luttras av sorg och hänger sig åt påtaglig överskattning av olyckisrisken i trafiken är väl inte särskilt olyckligt, men det är ganska betänkligt att en film, som blott borde vara en flyktig underhållningavara och som aldrig varit tänkt som något annat, skall tjäna som inspirationskälla eller snarare plagieringsobjekt när det gäller att lufta egna litterära ambitioner. Man kan emellertid välja sämre förebilder än "Hon dansade en sommar" — och man har också gjort det.

"Jag hakade upp hans arm och slog till honom över ansiktet med skjutjärnet. Blodet strömmade i en fors ner på skjortan. Med ett slag över munnen drev jag ner alla tänderna i halsen på honom och han ramlade ihop som en hög gamla kläder, spottande blod och tänder. Jag körde in pipan mellan revbenen så det krasade och väste:

— Erkänn, din...

Men han hade slutat att andas..."

Vad är detta? En kriminaldåres memoarer, en brottslings bekännelse inför domstolen? Ingalunda, bara en svensk tonåring, som tror sig ha skrivit en detektivnovell. Exemplet är på intet vis enastående, det skulle tvärtom kunna mångfaldigas nästan hur länge som helst. De s. k. äventyrsnovellerna, drygt tvåhundrafemtio av tusen, överflödar av orgiastiska våldsbeskrivningar, folk "kollapsar som köttberg", "får ansiktet bultat till blodig köttfärs", "säckar ihop med krävan full av bly" och "spottar blod och tandfilsor" på vår och varannan rad.

I NAIVA och stillistiskt undermåliga vändningar, till synes hämtade direkt från dåliga översättningar av den värsta vulgäramerikanskan, konfronteras man med det ena dådet mera häpnadsväckande brutalt än det andra. Fjorton- och femtonåringar skildrar i jag-form hur deras hjältar misshandlar den ena medmänniskan efter den ena medmänniskan, hur de styckar lik och kallblodigt "pumpar folk fulla med bly". Uttryck som "lät jag honom ha det mellan ögonen" rörjer blott alltför tydligt ursprunget till allt detta.

Göc man sig omaket att forska lite närmare i denna sak avslöjas förhållanden av mycket oroväckande natur. Under den numera oftast missvisande beteckningen detektivmagasin döljer sig i vårt land en veritabel störtsjö av fruktansvärt undermålig våldslitteratur. Dessa böcker kommer ut varje vecka, och deras upplagor strävar mot astronomiska siffror. De säljs överallt, i tobaksaffärer och kiosker, på tåg och båtar, och de har en strykande åtgång.

EFTER ATT med stigande hänpnad ha tragglat igenom dessa 250 blodstrypande, illa skrivna våldspekoral av vanliga svenska tonåringar, skaffade jag mig några av de magasin, som sköljdes upp på pappersaffärernas diskar just den veckan. Det första jag öppnade var "detektivromanen" Bubbelspel, författad av en person vid namn S. Gordon Gurwit, utgiven av Romanförlaget och distribuerad i massupplaga till det facila priset av 35 öre. Det må tillåtas mig att i korta drag återge kontentan av innehållet.

Huvudpersonen, som sysslade med någonting i uppdragsväg (inte närmare specificerat), hann inom loppet av 90 sidor (ohyggligt illa översatta) egenhändigt misshandla fem människor till döds under ytterst makabra former. Förutom dessa avlivningsprocedurer avverkar han ett otal slagsmål, varvid motståndarna hastigt förvandlas till "medvetslösa köttklumpar", "blodiga röror", "högar av lump" eller "kvidande, blodiga bylten". I sista kapitlet lämnas den lakoniska upplysningen att han "arbetar för en stor och god sak", han får personligt erkännande av "en gråhårig, högt uppsatt man i Vita Huset", avslöjas som officer i flottan och blir bortgift med en blond högbarmad miljonärska. Detta idéinnehåll visade sig vara en genomgående ryggrad i hela räckan av liknande tryckalster.

VISSERLIGEN har vi alla sett dessa magasin, men vi har knappast haft någon aning om de ruskigheter, som döljer sig bakom deras kolorerade pappersparmar. Och har man någon gång kommit i närmare kontakt med dem har man väl oftast avfärdat det hela som snuskigt men ofarligt och därmed också tämligen harmlöst. Men när man har läst om alla dessa landsfiskaler med armar som stålsäggor och ögon som brännglas, som krossar bovarnas knäskålar med spiskrokar eller slår ner deras tänder i halsen med pistolkolven, inser man att de talanglösa och skrupelfria efterföljarna till Raymond Chandler och Dashiell Hammett lyckats göra ett intryck på en stor del av den svenska ungdomen, som inte kan betraktas som annat än oroväckande.

Det visar inte bara att många tonåringar lever i en våldsfrälst drömvärld, där ett slag på käften är trivialt och där ett dråp ofta är en oundgänglig, fullt legitim åtgärd, utan också att en stor del av dem, som verkligen vill skriva, drivs att blotta en förvrängd föreställningsvärld i ordalag, som är på god väg att utarmas av de otillständigt undermåliga översättningarnas misär.

VID BEARBETANDET av dessa bortåt ettusen tonårsarbeten kunde man slutligen också konstatera, att den litterära moderiktning, som kallas "science-fiction" och som på senare år firat lavinartade framgångar i de engelskspråkiga länderna, nu är på väg att genombryta publikmotståndet i Sverige. Detta har tidigare varit gänska påtagligt, framför allt har den filmunderhållning av denna typ, som hittills funnit vägen till våra biografer, rönt ett mycket obetydligt intresse. För blott ett halvår sedan var jag i tillfälle att närvara, då en utvald samling svenska ungdomar användes som försöksobjekt vid en s. k. "preview" av den i USA omåttligt populära seriefilmen "Radarmännen från Månen". Resultatet blev den gången nedslående för den tilltänkte — högst kommersiellt anlagde — importören: provpubliken gäspade ihjäl smörjan, vilket var precis vad den förtjänade. Men sedan de fiesta kolorerade veckotidningar på senare tid gett vika för science-fiction-trycket och presenterat den ena rymdföljetongen mera stupid än den andra står det klart att genren står inför ett brett upplagt genombrott på den svenska marknaden.

Först som sist måste det konstateras, att det visserligen finns god science-fiction, sådan som så långt det är möjligt bygger på korrekt relaterade vetenskapliga fakta, men att den underhaltiga, misledande och enfaldiga delen av produktionen är i förkrossande majoritet. Tyvärr visar det sig också att dessa alster, som rymmer betydligt mera "fiction" än "science" och där själva fantasien gjorts till monoton slentrian, fått tjänstgöra som inspirationskällor. Och så blir det ett myller av rymdresor, vilka till sist lyktar på någon okänd, paradisisk planet, en kulisschablon, där maten växer på träden och där jordmänniskornas "strålpistoler" i ilfart mejar ned de legitima marsbägarna. Det är förbluffande att något med en så pretentiös etikett som "science-fiction" kan bli så tröttsamt och oinspirerat — och det ger en fadd försmak av den kommande tidens textimport från redan science-fiction-frälsta länder.

NATURLIGTVIS fanns det bland detta tusental mycket unga författare också några få, som röjde en varm och äkta böjelse att sätta tankar på pränt, men det förmår knappast mildra ett negativt slutomdöme. Vad som ovan sagts visar med all önskvärd tydlighet, att god litteratur liksom väl som egna intryck i alltför stor utsträckning tycks ha spelat ut sin roll som inspirationskälla för den ungdom, som verkligen fortfarande vill skriva.

Namn och böcker

DEN ENGELSKA ransoneringens upphävande efter tjorton år har firats med en stor utställning av kokböcker på Times' Bookshop i London. Utställningen omfattar kokböcker från 450 år — den äldsta är tryckt år 1500 och har den rättframma titeln "This is the Boke of Cookery". Livsmedelsministern Lloyd George som öppnade utställningen var djärv nog att förmoda att ransoneringen hade gjort engelsmännen mera medvetna om kostens betydelse. Men kan verkligen stunden sona vad långa år har brutit på den punkten, frågar sig skeptiskt icke-engelsk vän av bordets nöjen.

Another snippet about the *Golden Hours* publisher Norman Munro.In the book *Villains Galore - the Heyday of the Popular Story Weekly* (The MacMillan Company, 1954) we learn that he had a brother, George Munro, who was first into the story paper business. They became fierce competitors when Norman threw himself into story paper publishing. Norman would copy George's type of paper, steal his authors etc, to outdo him. The brothers would sue each other and so on.But this book only goes up to the 1870s, so there's no info about *Golden Hours.* It'd be good if some US fanhistorian would step in to researching the Golden Hours Club a bit! I'm on the wrong continent for doing much more.

Over to the Royal Library newspaper archive snippets. Per Wahlöö (1926-1975) was one of our most famous crime writers, starting the Nordic Noir wave in the 1960s together with his wife Maj Sjöwall. But he also wrote sf, in the form of the dystopian future crime novels *Murder on the Thirty-First Floor* (1966) and *The Steel Spring* (1968).Aug 14,1954, he told us the failures of young amateur writers, also drifting into the subject of sf. He had just read hundreds of stories submitted to a writing contest for youngsters.Some snippets from*"1 000 Young Writers in a Blind Alley":*



A number of entries ca 600 showed to be close to each other-412 even developed an almost identical plot. The rest fell into main groups of a curious and a definitely questionable nature They wrote about sorrow, violence, spacetrips. Inspiration was ONE film and two suspicious plants from the literary undergrowth. /He then goes into the romantic story entries, that draws their plot from the famous "Swedish sin"movie *One Summer of Happiness*- ie the love partner dies in the end. He moves to "hard core" crime stories and an example from a story/ *"I hooked up*

*his arm and hit him in the face with my iron piece.The blood ran like a river on his shirt. With a hit on the mouth I forced his teeth down his throat and he collapsed as a pile of old clothes, spitting blood and teeth. I stuck the barrel between his ribs until I heard a crack and hissed: "Confess!" But he had stopped breathing..." What is this? The memoirs of a criminal maniac, confessions of a villain? Nope,just a Swedish teenager who thinks he has written a crime story. The example isn't unique, it's repeated endlessly. The so called adventure stories, over 250 of 1000, overflow with orgasmic violence. People "collapses in a heap of meat", "get the face pounded to minced meat", "spits blood and dental fragments" on every other line. In naive and stylistic inferior phrasing taken directly from the worst ,vulgar American, you are confronted by brutal deeds en masse. 14 and 15-year olds describe in first person POW how their heroes batters one after another human to death, how they chop up bodies and cold-bloodedly "pumps people full of lead". Expressions like "I let him have it between the eyes" reveals where it comes from...under the misleading guise of "detective magazine" you in our country find an ocean of terribly inferior literature of violence, stories published every week in astronomical printruns.They are sold everywhere by tobacconists, in kiosks, on trains and boats,and they sell very well. /*Ed: There were a few mags like *Detektivmagasinet, Alibimagasinet*, but most of their stories WERE NOT like that! And printruns were rather modest. PW exaggerates wildly.Still he bought *one mag* and found that.../ *within 90 incredibly badly translated pages the hero battered five people to death in macabre ways. Beside these deadly executions he's in several fights in which opponents are turned into "unconscious meatlumps", "a bloody mess", "a heap of fabric" or "squealing, bloody packages"...working for a great cause...backed by a gray-haired senior official of the White House, revealed as a navy officer married to a big-breasted millionaire girl".* /Ed: PW then claims ALL the crime magazines are like this, without foundation. He states he has read *one*. I've read far more than that. What's on? PW was a communist so he took he opportunity to declare that everything US-inspired was deplorable.../ *looking through these up to 1000 teenage works you would find that the literary fashion called "science fiction", in later years having an avalanche-like success in English-speaking countries, now on the way to public breakthrough in Sweden. This has been rather obvious, though movie entertainment of this type visiting our cinemas encounters bleak interest. A half-year ago I had the opportunity to be present at preview when a selected group to youngsters were used as test subjects of the in USA extremely popular serial film "Radar Men from the Moon". The result was a disappointment for the presumed - and highly commercial - importer; the test audience yawned the rubbish to death,which was what it deserved. But as our colourised weeklies lately have given in to the sf pressure and present one stupid space serial after another it's clear the genre has had a broad breakthrough on the Swedish market. Generally it must be said that while there is good sf, that as far as possible relies on correct scientific facts,the sub-standard, misleading and silly part of the production is in overwhelming majority. Unfortuately these stories contain much more "fiction" than "science" and the imagination has been made into monotonous routine and serves as inspiration.So we get a multitude of space trips, that ultimately ends on, a routine backdrop planet where food grows on the trees and the earthlings quickly kill off the legitimate land owners with their "rayguns". It's surprising that something with such a pretentious label as "science fiction" can be so tiring and uninspired - and you get a bad taste in your mouth from coming imports from already sf-conquered countries.*

"Radar Men from the Moon" wasn't exactly among the Oscar nominees. In the 1950s a meteor shower of Earth Invaded movies hit our humdrum lives. The Radar Men gets 4.6 points out of 10 by IMDB, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0045064/

An ugly enemy returned. Old hag Elisabeth Tykesson had told us how stupid sf is in the prestigious BLM magazine in 1954. Aug 1 1958 she was at it again, on radio as *Svenska Dagbladet* reported:

An eerie phenomenon is what sf seems to be, if you believe PhD Elisabeth Tykesson - and there's no reason not to trust her opinion. On Thursday she made a brilliant and mean analysis of this literary bastard. Science is research, fiction means fantasy or to lie - in sf mostly lie.It was an American who started this profitable movement, because it became movement. He wrote a story about some sort of spaceship in1911, but it took until 1926 to publish a magazine where only sf stories were published. The characters of this pioneer American were in black and white, of three sorts: a noble space captain, and evil scientist and his pretty flower of a daughter. In 1937 a new era began with the sf man Campbell who threw out the b/w paper figures and gave sf a social depth, introducing ordinary people, like housewives. When the war came it seemed like sf would die. The war was horrible and exciting enough. But sf bloomed again after 1945 as the atomic age came. If means that the stories became even more horrific and the sadism that has always been an integral part of sf became worse. The danger with sf isn't that it lacks literary quality but that it appeals to hysteria in people, that it creates psychoses and breeds superman fantasies. It works like a mass psychosis and mass neurosis, modern critics say The leading principle in all sf is economics: earn money. But still they have tried to find the origin of sf in classics. But Plato, Swift,Jules Verne or HG Wells aren't sf, whatever they try. No, Tykesson ensures us: sf doesn't have a pretty family tree. It was born out of the trivial novels in the late 1800s. What does science say about sf? A German book, "Menschen zwischen den Planeten" sweeps away all these false space and planetary ships sailing in the sf stories, as well as the uebermenschen crewing them. Dr Tykesson's broadside was encouraging to hear, if only sf followers would take notice.

I have a theory that this hate of sf that used to surface earlier comes from a mix of envy and fear. Like: "Alas, I wish we had found out the sf method of writing meaningful literature..." and "I'm afraid the strength of the sf method one day will overtake our grey ordinary fiction".

I may have noted thís bit left earlier, but it was in the leftover clip stash. Anyway it's from *Göteborgs-Tidningen* Oct 8, and it must have been in 1989:



Jules Verne-minnen. Le Gaulois berättar: År 1854 var den 26-årige Jules Verne sekreterare vid Théâtre lyrique. Tillsammans med Michel Carré senior arbetade han på åtskilliga operatexter, men sysselsatte sig samtidigt med mera prosaiska saker, i det han fungerade som börsmäklare Eggllys underagent på Pariabörsen. En dag överraskade han sina kolleger med att förklara för dem:

— Jag tror att jag snart kommer att säga farväl till er. Jag har fått den originella idé, som Emile de Girardin påstår att hvarje människa behöfver för att göra lycka. Jag har skrifvit en roman i en alldeles ny genre. Om den går lycka kommer jag att förtjäna kolossala summor. Sedan tänker jag skrifva nya romaner, medan ni fortsätta att köpa och sälja värdepapper. En aning säger mig, att jag kommer att förtjäna mer än ni.

De andra skrattade åt honom.

— Ja, skratta ni, sade han, men kom ihåg: skrattar bäst som skrattar sist.

Några veckor senare utkom "Fem veckor i ballong" som följetong i Hetzels "Magasin d'éducation et de récréation", och icke längt därefter publicerades den i bokform. Det blef en kolossal succès. Verne hade funnit en guldgrufva och öste flitigt därur med sin förläggares hjälp. Han hade aldrig svårt att finna stoff till sina romaner, höll ständigt utkik på de senaste vetenskapliga upptäckterna och exploaterade dem genom att drifva dem till sina yttersta konsekvenser.

— Hvad jag än må hitta på, brukade han säga, så blir jag ändå alltid distanserad af verkligheten. Det kommer ett ögonblick, då vetenskapens erövringar öfvergå allt hvad fantasien kan skapa.

1872 meddelade Le Temps på sin följetongsafdelning "Jorden runt på åttio dagar". När den var afslutad bad den dramatiske författaren Cadol att få dramatisera densamma, hvilket Verne med glädje biföll. Cadol lyckades emellertid icke gå i land med sin uppgift, utan slutligen öfvertog Dennery arbetet, hvarpå hans bearbetning af den ryktbara romanen den 8 novembr 1874 gick öfver Porte S:t Martins scen.

— Är det en succès? frågade Verne, som af naturen var en smula skeptiskt anlagd. Är det verkligen en succès?

— Det är ingen succès, det är en outtömlig guldgrufva, blef svaret. Pjesen uppförden 400 gånger å rad, och under utställningen 1878 gick den likaledes några hundra gånger öfver scenen. Den inbragte teaterns båda direktörer en nettovinst om mer än två millioner kronor och återupptogs sedermera flera gånger.

Verne lif i Amiens var till ytterlighet regelbundet. En medarbetare i Le Temps skildrar hans dag på följande sätt: Han steg tidigt upp och arbetade vid sitt skrifbord till klockan tio. Sedan gick han till Industriföreningen, där han läste tidningarna. Efter att ha återvändt hem och ätit frukost gjorde han en promenad i stadens omgifning eller begaf sig till municipalrådet, hvars arbete han ägnade det största intresse. Klockan fyra infann han sig i ett af stadens konditorier, där ett glas mjölk alltid stod och väntade på honom. I sitt tysta arbetsrum vid boulevard Longueville skref han alla sina spännande och heroiska romaner. Han satt i en mjuk länstol, om vintern vid brasan, om sommaren vid det öppna fönstret med utsikt öfver en liten nätt trädgård. En annons eller notis i en tidning, ett litet kort telegram, kunde ge honom klaven till de äventyrligaste historier. En annons från Cooks resebyrå skapade Phileas Fogg och Passepartout. När han hade själfva fabeln klar för sig, tog han fram en massa kartor, vetenskapliga arbeten och andra källor rörande de länder, där handlingen skulle utspelas. Särskildt var Réclus geografi hans anonyma och oumbärliga medarbetare. Han unnade sig ingen hvila och var en ärlig och samvetsgrann skribent.

Hans hustru som är född i Amiens öfverlefver sin make. Deras äktenskap lär ha varit synnerligen lyckligt. Jules Verne var en i alla afseenden lycklig man. Det enda, som egentligen gått honom emot, var att akademien inte upptog honom bland sina fyratio odödliga. Han kunde emellertid trösta sig med att ingen mindre än Dumas älskvärt önskade hans val.



■ ■ ■ En sf-nyhet: Ahrvid Engholm i Stockholm — ett bekant namn i svenska sf-kretsar — har satsat på en sf-databas, som kan nås per telefon med persondatorer och modem. Han presenterar själv kortfattat verksamheten i senaste numret av JVM.

Sf-news: Ahrvid Engholm in Stockholm - a known name in Swedish sf circles - have invested in an sf database, reachable through a telephone and PC with a modem. He presents the activity himself in the latest issue of JVM.

Yeah, I got an extra computer cheap, a so called 286-PC, and set up what I called the SF BBS.. I had contact with a Unix system and download access to Internet E-mail and Usenet newsgroups. At certain intervals my system dialed up a host (through software named UUPC using the UUCP protocol) and users could send E-mail and read a few selected newsgroups through SF BBS. I thought that was pretty advanced, though only one at a time could connect. SF BBS never became huge and after a couple of years the computer crashed badly, so I had to give it up. (The HD bit the bytes. To reopen I'd have to set up a new disk, reinstall several rather complicated programs and I had other things queuing up. So I vetoed it.)

I've always been keen on experimenting. A couple of years ago I published what I believe is the world's first entirly AI written fanzine - but I did the layout manually (https://fanac.org/fanzines/Intermission/ - *fAInzine* was a supplement to *Intermission* late 2023). I did the first, I believe, Swedish E-fanzine, *Virkbilagan* in 1990. On the more primitive side, I did a small fanzine on hectograph back in 1978. Another idea was spreading sf and fan news through my answering machine.I announced certain hours people could call and get 1 minute of news. I called the service *Telefanytt* (from my newsletter titled *Fanytt*). Rather few used it and I canned it after a while. Did I mention playing around in "community radio" (närradio) in the early 1980s?



Radio

Ett kusligt fenomen

tycks science fiction (SF) vara, om man får tro fil. dr Elisabeth Tykesson — och det finns ingen anledning att vi inte skall kunna lita på hennes omdöme. Hon gjorde i torsdagens programsvåa en briljant och klar analys av denna litterära svart. Science betyder vetenskap, fiction betyder dikt eller lögn; i SF mest lögn. Det var en amerikan, som startade denna lukrativa rörelse, ty en rörelse har det blivit. Han skrev en roman om något slags rymdskepp år 1911, men först 1926 började han ge ut ett magasin, där endast SF-noveller publicerades. Denne förste amerikans figurer var helt i svart-vitt, tre typer, ständigt återkommande: en rymdkapten (jädelx en ondskefull vetenskapsman och hans liljerena och sköna dotter. År 1937 inträdde ett annat skede med SF-mannen Campbell, som avskaffade de schablonisérade svart-vitt-typerna och gjorde SF socialt, han införde vanliga människor i SF-novellen, t. ex. husmödrar. Då kriget kom, verkade det som SF skulle dö: kriget var tillräckligt hemskt och spännande. Men efter 1945 har SF åter blomstrat upp och kommit in i atomperioden. Det betyder, att historierna blivit än kusligare, att sadismen, som alltid varit en ingrediens i SF, blivit värre.

Det farliga med SF är inte, att den äger ej någon litterär kvalitet utan att den vädjar till det hysteriska draget hos människor, att den skapar psykoser och uppammar vissa övermänniskofantasier. Den verkar som masspsykos och massneuros, säger moderna kritiker. Den ledande principen i all SF-rörelse är den ekonomiska: att tjäna pengar. Men det hindrar inte, att man sökt hitta ursprunget till SF i klassiska verk. Platon, Swift, Jules Verne och H. G. Wells är dock inga SF-män, hur man än försöker göra dem till det. Nej, försäkrade dr Tykesson: science fiction har inget inyggt stamträd, den har fötts ur den triviala romanen i slutet av 1700-talet.

Hur ställer sig då vetenskapen till SF? En tysk bok "Menschen zwischen den Planeten" gör rent hus med alla dessa falska rymd- och planetskepp, som seglar i SF-böckerna, och likaså de övermänniskor, som befolkar dem. Dr Tykessons salva var befriande att höra, bara nu de SF-frälsta hörde den!

Jules Verne memories. Le Gaulois reports:1854 the 25 year oldJules Verne was secretary at Theatre lyrique /but also worked as a stock market broker, one day surprising colleagues stating:/ "I think I'll soon bid you farewell.I've had the type of idea Emile de Girardia every man needs to succeed. I've written a novel in a new genre.If it succeeds I'll earn colossal sums.Then I'll write more novels, while you go on buying and selling stocks. I have an inkling I'll earn more than you." The others laughed at him. A few weeks later Five Weeks in a Balloon was published...It was a huge success. Verne had found a goldmine and mined it with the help of his publisher. He never had problems finding stuff for his novels, constantly kept an eye open for the latest scientific discoveries and exploited them by driving them to the extreme. "What ever I may find", he used to say, "reality always surpasses me.There will be a time when the conquests of science will pass whatever imagination may come up with." /A stage version of Around the World in 80 days appeared after some problems, which premiered November 8 1874."Is it a success?", Verne asked whose nature was to be a bit skeptic. "Is it really a success?" "It's no success, it's a bottomless goldmine!",was the reply. "It was played 400 times, and during the 1878 exhibition also played a few hundred times. It earned the two theatre directors more than two million crowns and has since been staged many more times....Verne's life in Amiens was very regulated. A coworker at Le Temps describes it like this: He woke up early and worked at his desk until 10.Then he went to the Industry Association to read the newspapers. After returning and having breakfast he took a stroll around town or went to the city council, whose work he kept in great interest.4 o'clock he went to a café where a glass of milk always awaited him .In is quiet workroom at blvd Longuerville he wrote all his exciting and heroic novels. He sat in a soft armchair by the fireplace, summertime with an open window to a neat little garden. An ad or a notice in a paper, a short telegram, could inspire to adventurous novels. An advert from Cook's travel agency created Phileas Fogg and Passepartout. When the fable was clear he took out lote of aps, science works and other sources to the lands of the plot. espeially Reclus geography,is anonymous and indispensable coworkers. He didn't rest and was an honest and careful writer is wife born in Amiens survives her husband. Their marriage was very happy. Jules Verne was in every sense a happy man. The only regret was that the Academy didn't included him among their 40 immortals.But he found comfort in that no less than Dumas eagerly wanted him elected.

Two million crowns was a huge sum (about 1 million hours work wage). Verne had indeed found the pot of gold! He became a household name all over the western world. You could argue that Jules

Verne is history's economically most successful sf author (if we include fantasy that title goes to JK Rowling).

Intermission is "almost alone" in Sweden covering this julesvernian genre in E-fanzine form. But is joined by legendary *ALHASH* (contact *alhash@ zohomail.eu)* by the superior fanwriter Mika T (he also has a more "internal" EAPAzine). It's the funniest, strangest little zine you can imagine, several ishs/week (2-4 pages per issue). The width of Mika's wild prose is stunning. Unfortunately...it's in Swedish.

We also have the title *Counterclock* (https://efanzines.com/CounterClock/) a (English) quarterly from Italy, by a German descendant, growing up in Sweden. Wolf's skiffy and fannish upbringing was definitely in Sweden where he started the Sigma TC Perry Rhodan Fan Supporter Club (still existing but the PRFSC is dropped), published fanzines, was involved in Nasacon (the last in 2000 was great!) but then moved to Italy where he's been the last couple of decades. He's now probably sprechen Italienisch e bere vino (speaks Italian and drinks wine). In *Aftonbladet* April 30 1986, he gave his expert opinion on the Chernobyl disaster:


Är du rädd för att vi i Sverige kan skadas?

WOLF VON WITTING, 26, konduktör, Saltsjöbaden:

– Nej. Jag tror inte att vi blir skadade av det. Det mesta har drabbat dem därborta. Det är klart, att om det inträffar en katastrof närmare så . . .

Are you afraid that We in Sweden may be harmed? *Wolf von Witting, 26, conductor, Saltsjöbaden: "No, don't think we are harmed by it. Most of it has hit them over there But of course, if there's a disaster happening closer...*

As we have seen earlier the sf genre made its popular breakthrough over here in 1953, when several sf book series came and we had the many rename-sf-contests. At the same time numerous cheap sf movies arrived from the US and the number of sf magazines began to explode over there. In Sweden the reception was rather mixed, as we see in this review, *Expressen* April 26 1953, of the anthology *Adventures of Tomorrow,* the first in Swedish, edited by the distinguished literature professor E N Tigerstedt, "*Comic Books in Words":*


”Vetenskapliga fantasier”

eller science fiction som den anglosaxiska ursprungsbenämningen lyder, introduceras på den svenska bokmarknaden av Eklunds förlag. Två volymer föreligger, och det är tydligen bara början.

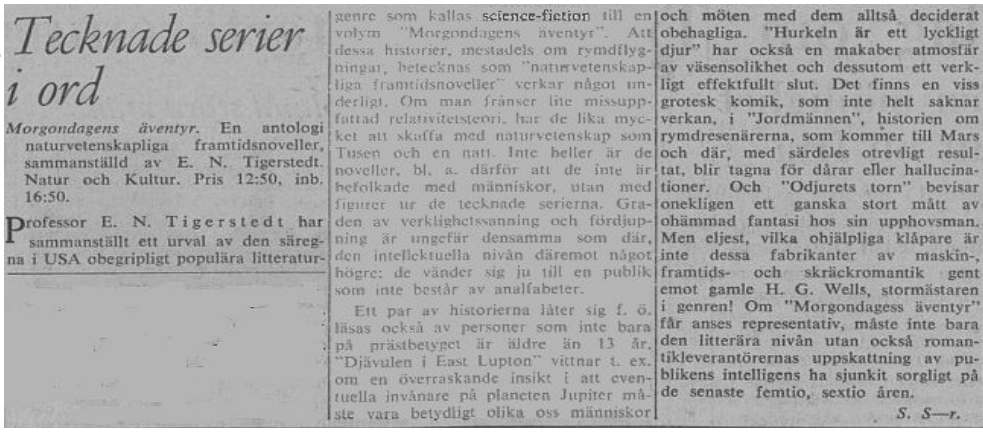
Man ska nog vara en Stålman eller Fantom med umgängesvana från kretsar där folk lyfter sig själva i håret och lätt utför andra mot naturlagarna stridande handlingar för att kunna njuta denna underhållning. Inte ens i atomålderns gryning underlåter den sansade att gnugga ögonen inför sådana produkter som jätteväxter på väg att erövra jorden och utplåna allt mänskligt liv.

Det vetenskapliga underlaget bör man nämna med små bokstäver. Med den pretentiösa etiketten (följden av en slentrianmässig och direkt översättning av en term) avlägsnad har läsaren lättare att uppskatta de kalla kårar som onekligen då och då ilar på hans rygg.

Sen är det en sak att herrarna inte är sparsamma med trycksvärtan. Det är rent ofattbart att deras äventyrshjältar har tid till så långa språkvändningar ibland, medan världen hotas av undergång.

— BENGT GRAFSTRÖM

Professor Tigerstedt has collected a selection of the in USA incomprehensibly popular literature genre called science fiction, in the volume Adventures of Tomorrow. That these stories, usually about spaceflight, are labeled "scientific future stories" seems strange. Discounting misunderstood relativity theory, they have as much with science to do as A Thousand and a Night. And they are note literary stories, eg because they are not inhabited by people but with figures out of comics books. They are as deep and based on reality as in those, though the intellectual level is somewhat higher: they aim for an audience that aren't illiterates. A couple of the stories may be read by persons older than 13 not only on the birth certificate."The Devil in East Lupton" e g reveals a surprising insight that possible inhabitants of the planet Jupiter must be quite different from us humans and meeting them is definitely eerie."The Hurkle is a Happy Beast" has a macabre atmosphere of difference and on top a really striking end. There's certain grotesque comedy not without effect in "The Earthmen", a story about space travelers who arrive to Mars and there, a result particularly unpleasant, are seen as idiots or hallucinators. And "Tower of the Beast" shows a rather large degree of unstoppable imagination from its creators. But beside this, the makers of machine, future and horror romance are bunglers compared to old HG Wells, the grand master of he genre! If Adventures of Tomorrow *is representative, not only the literary level but also how the intelligence of the audience is assesed by the producers of these romances, must have dipped sadly the last 50, 60 years.*


Tecknade serier i ord

Morgondagens äventyr. En antologi naturvetenskapliga framtidsnoveller, sammanställd av E. N. Tigerstedt. Natur och Kultur. Pris 12:50, inb. 16:50.

Professor E. N. Tigerstedt har sammanställt ett urval av den säregna i USA obegripligt populära litteraturgenre som kallas science-fiction till en volym "Morgondagens äventyr". Att dessa historier, mestadels om rymdflygningar, betecknas som "naturvetenskapliga framtidsnoveller" verkar något underligt. Om man frånser lite missuppfattad relativitetsteori, har de lika mycket att skaffa med naturvetenskap som Tusen och en natt. Inte heller är de noveller, bl. a. därför att de inte är befolkade med människor, utan med figurer ur de tecknade serierna. Graden av verklighetssanning och fördjupning är ungefär densamma som där, den intellektuella nivån däremot något högre: de vänder sig ju till en publik som inte består av analfabeter.

Ett par av historierna låter sig f. ö. läsas också av personer som inte bara på prästbetyget är äldre än 13 år. "Djävulen i East Lupton" vittnar t. ex. om en överraskande insikt i att eventuella invånare på planeten Jupiter måste vara betydligt olika oss människor och möten med dem alltså deciderat obehagliga. "Hurkeln är ett lyckligt djur" har också en makaber atmosfär av väsensolikhet och dessutom ett verkligt effektfullt slut. Det finns en viss grotesk komik, som inte helt saknar verkan, i "Jordmännen", historien om rymdresenärerna, som kommer till Mars och där, med särdeles otrevligt resultat, blir tagna för dårar eller hallucinationer. Och "Odjurets torn" bevisar onekligen ett ganska stort mått av ohämmad fantasi hos sin upphovsman. Men eljest, vilka ohjälpliga klåpare är inte dessa fabrikanter av maskin-, framtids- och skräckromantik gent emot gamle H. G. Wells, stormästaren i genren! Om "Morgondagess äventyr" får anses representativ, måste inte bara den litterära nivån utan också romantikleverantörernas uppskattning av publikens intelligens ha sjunkit sorgligt på de senaste femtio, sextio åren.

S. S—r.


Svenskt rymdskepp

Namnet science fiction torde på det hela taget vara mindre känt hos oss än namnet Sture Lönnerstrand; den sistnämnde har i många år skrivit tekniska äventyr av en sort som kommer Jules Verne att framstå som en enkel finmekaniker. Det är inte mer än rätt och skäligt att Lönnerstrand nu framträder som den officiella målsmannen för denna nya underhållningsroman, framställd för den svenska hemmamarknadens behov. Hans bok heter Rymdhunden (Bonniers) och utspelas i planetsystemet mellan jorden och Jupiter. Titelfiguren är ett slags hund i celest format, med en atomstruktur som är mycket olik gängse mopsars. Han griper in vid några tillfällen för att rädda tio jordresenärer i ett rymdskepp från träkat bryderi. Skildringen är spännande och fartfylld, och tekniker försäkrar att den vetenskapliga fantasin någotsånär håller sig inom det möjligas rum. Förmodligen är det inte mer än ett ytterligt ringa fåtal svenskar som skulle kunnat skriva en science-fictionroman lika bra som Sture Lönnerstrand.

Och ändå har den liksom inte kommit upp till den rätta science-fiction-nivån. Det är inte någon principiell skillnad mellan att uppleva äventyr på ett rymdskepp och att uppleva äventyr på en jordisk upptäcktsresa. En thrillerhandling kan bäras av en vanlig cykel likaväl som av en månraket. Vad som gör den tekniska framtidsromanen till en sort för sig är att den är dubbelbotinad — den handlar inte bara om en hittills okänd teknik utan om hur den nya tekniken påverkar människorna och deras samhälle. Ett väsentligt problem för en amerikansk science-fictionförfattare är kuruvida demokratins spelregler kommer att kunna tillämpas i en värld fylld av dödsstrålar eller ombord på en farkost i världsrymdens ensamhet. Men Lönnerstrands rymdskepp är inte inrett med några dubbla botinar. Hans människor förändras inte av resan, trots de många olyckstillbuden; ur den synpunkten kunde de lika gärna ha företagit sin utflykt med en vanlig Vaxholmsbåt.

R-m

Expressen agreed about how bad skiffy was, April 18 the same year,. "*Scientific fantasies":*

Or science fiction as the Anglo-Saxon term is introduced to the Swedish market by publisher Eklunds. There

are two volumes and it's only the start. You must be Superman or The Phantom and moving in circles where people lift themselves by the hair and do other great feats against the natural laws to enjoy this kind of entertainment. Nor even in the dawn of the atomic age can the sensible person refrain from rubbing his eyes from things like giant plants on the way to take over Earth and wipe out all human life. The scientific content must be mentioned with very small letter. Without a pretentious label (from a routine and direct translation of a term) the reader would more easily feel the chills down his spine. Beside this the gentlemen aren't saving ink. It's incomprehensible that their heroes have time for such long linguistic displays, while the world is threatened by doom.

It doesn't say what the books from Eklunds are. But one must be Wyndham and a Van Vogt appears in *Dagens Nyheter,* October 25 1943, *"Rocket Novels".* Some excerpts:

Earth's white spots has shrunk...so its natural that the story art seeks new spaces, and that's what happened in the new fiction genre, the technical adventure, or how to translate the Anglo-Saxon term science fidtion...the Swedish public is said to be about 20 years behind...so we get translations of "classics": both Ray Bradbury and A E Van Vogt can be seen as such when a couple of their more well known things are transferred to Swedish



Raketromaner

JORDGLOBENS vita fläckar har krympt ihop så starkt att de knappt längre ger utrymme ens åt ett fantasins blygsamma Shangri La; det finns inte längre några okända ör att upptäcka, och alla vidunder är besegrade utom de mänskliga förstås. Det är rätt självfallet att den fritt fabulerande berättarkonsten då söker sig till nya rymder, och så har ju också skett i den nya populärlitterära genre, teknikäventyren, eller hur man nu skall översätta det anglosaxiska begreppet science fiction, som nu börjat rulla även genom svenska tryckpressar. Den svenska publiken lär enligt kännarna på området vara ungefär tjugu år efter den anglosaxiska, och därför blir det först och främst översättningar av "klassiker" som kommer: som sådana kan nog både *Ray Bradbury* och *A. E. van Vogt* betecknas när ett par av deras mera kända saker överflyttats till svenska — Bradburys *Invasion på Mars* (Forum, 13:75) och van Vogts *Uppdrag i världsrymden* (Eklunds, 8:75). Varvid förstås klassikerskapet endast har avseende på deras säljande förmåga, inte på deras estetiskt litterära. Precis som när det gäller tecknade serier tycks nämligen i denna bransch den kvalitativt enklaste varan ha ungefär lika stora chanser att bli populär som den gedignaste. Något som väl bara kan förklaras med publikens brädd och "spridning" och inte behöver ge alltför svarta framtidsperspektiv ens för den mer ensidigt litterärt intresserade.

De båda böckerna kan också, sammanställda, ganska tydligt illustrera inte bara klyftan mellan skilda författarambitioner inom samma "skola", utan också hur olika genrens nya möjligheter kan utnyttjas. Det gemensamma är strängt taget endast framtidssceneriet, den planetariska miljön och den hårt fixerade spänningen, garanterad av en skarpslipad berättarteknik. Men sedan visar sig Bradbury närmast som en modern efterföljare till Voltaire och Swift, med sin direkta och indirekta samtidssatir under rymdexotismens mask, medan van Vogt nöjer sig med ett rutinmässigt uppetapplande och nervkittlande av spänningsmomenten, där den starkaste alltid visar sig ha rätt: Vilda Västern-romantiken alltså, fast det här är fasansfulla rymdmonster, cesiumpartikeldimmor och inte bara illvilliga medmänniskor som den oförfärade hjälten på sitt rymdspaningsskepp får tillfälle att kompetent likvidera med hjälp av desintegratorstrålar, traktor- och pressorvågor och annan utrustning som vetenskapen av år 2000 eller så väntas förse honom med i stället för den beprövade sexpipingen.

Skall science fiction tas mer eller mindre på allvar, blir det väl därför berättare av Bradburys typ man har att vänta sig något av. Hans skildring fängslar inte bara genom spänning, utan också genom sin intrycksskraft och stimulerande originalitet; hans psykiskt överbegåvade Marsbor, ogripbara under sina masker, snabbt förintade av den mänskliga invasionen, är åtskilligt trovärdigare av de flesta andra rymdmonster man träffat, fast de varken har sex ben eller huvuden som tunnor — de har individualitet, och därför kan man tro på deras tragik när de skjuts ner av korvståndsbyggande män med framåtanda, som visserligen träffar, men inte har rätt för det. Bradbury kan också konsten att sätta in knalleffekterna på det rätta ovantade sättet och har ingen ledande hjälte som hela tiden med mirakulösa räddningar måste hållas vid liv — och sedan förbiser man gärna att hans Mars är tämligen omöjligt från astronomisk synpunkt och att hans tekniska apparat ibland förenklas över de logiska möjlighetemas gränser, något som branschens speciella lärekrets anmärs är mycket känslig för. Man kunde kanske också ta ett annat kriterium: den bok man minns mer än en kvart efter att ha slutat någon gång fram mot gryningen är otvivelaktigt Bradburys. Brukar inte riktig litteratur ha den effekten?

SVEN HALLÉN

transferred to Swedish - Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles and Van Vogt's The Voyage of the Space Beagle. It's understood "classics" comes from selling ability, not from literary esthetics...it's only the future setting they have in common,the planetary environment and the thrill, guaranteed by sharp storytelling. But Bradbury is shown to be closer to a modern follower of Voltaire and Swift, with direct and indirect society satire under guise of space exploration, while Van Vogt is satisfied with building and tearing down the thrilling moment, where the strongest always wins. Wild West romance but with dreadful space monsters, evil particle fogs and not malicious people that the intrepid hero on the space scoutship gets to liquidate competently with desintegrator rays...instead of sixshoters. If this is to be taken seriously...it's authors of Bradbury's type to expect something from. His stories engage not only through thrills, but also through impression power and originality.

"Swedish spaceships", November 22 1954, is slightly more positive:



TV:s sk färggrupp producerade i våras en serie science fiction-program, dvs visionära bilder från sällsamma världar förutom vår egen. Man inbillade sig lite var att science fiction inte hade någon marknad i Sverige men där bedrog man sig alldeles. Svenska TV-tittare hänryckttes av den här sortens fantastiska fantasier med prägel av marsianer och månmänniskor. Förra säsongen gav det besked till TV:s science fiction-serie att man fått fler supportrar än man hade vågat ana.

Nu går man ut med fyra inslag i en ny fiction-serie för att tillfredsställa alla de nyvunna intressenterna.

Framför allt är den franskproducerade filmen "Tusen solars eld" signerad av den världsberömde dokumentärfilmaren Chris Marker som har varit prisbelönad många gånger om, av intresse. En animerad skräckfilm som spelats in i spökstaden Stockholm kallas "Titta inte", ett reportage om och kring inte minst s k fiction-fans på kongress i Oxford får vi också se. Det är Torsten Jungstedt som pratar ut med John Henri Holmberg, stockholmsstudeat och science fictionist.

Skådespelarna Erik Hell, Ölegård Wellton, Bernt-Åke Warg samt Åke Ljungqvist får vi se i en lång novell som heter "Jaktsäsong" av Frank M Robinson. På onsdag introducerar Torsten Jungstedt serien i TV.

The name science fiction should among us be lesser known than the name Sture Lönnertrand.He has for many years been writing technical adventures of a type that makes Jules Verne look like a bicycle mechanic. It's therefore both right and fair that Lönnerstrand now appears as the official patron of this new entertainment genre, when producing for the needs of the Swedish home market. His book is titled The Space Dog (Bonniers) and is set in the planetary system between Earth and Jupiter. The figure in the title is a sort of dog in celestial format, with an atomic structure quite unlike conventional lapdogs. Now and then he acts to save ten Earth travelers from trouble. The story is exiting, fast and technicians assures that the scientific imagination is somewhat within the possible. There are probably very few other Swedes that could write an sf novel as good as Sture Lönnerstrand.Still it doesn't reach up to the real sf level. There's not much difference to have adventures on a spaceship or on an exploration voyage on Earth. Thriller plots can be carried both on a common bicycle or spaceship. What makes the technical novel special is double layers - it's not only about hitherto unknown technology and how it affects people and society. A significant problem for American sf authors is if the rules of democracy can be applied on a world full of deathrays or onboard a ship in the loneliness of space. Lönnerstrand's spaceship doesn't have these double layers His people aren't changed by the many accidents - from this angle, they might as well be on an excursion onboard a Vaxholm ferry.'

Vaxholm is an archipelago community outside Stockholm reachable by those

white archipelago ferries. I disagree with the notion that story characters must "change" through the plot. My argument is that people over the age of 25 - the time when the brain is fully developed - rarely change much, come high come low. A story is a way to show how to handle a problem.

Lönnerstrand won a big novel contest award with *The Space Dog* ("Rymdhunden" in Swedish) but the novel has been accused of having striking similarities to A E Van Vogt's *The Voyage of the Space Beagle.* It was half a century ago I had those books in my hand so I can't comment, except saying that Sture generally had a lot of creative imagination and could write - similarities could be superficial and come from envy, that it was he who won the SEK 15 000 prize, a huge sum at that time.

Lönnerstrand was one of the Fathers of Swedish sf. Another one is Sam Jerrie Lundwall. A pioneer deed by him was producing a series of sf programs for newly started TV2 in1969. I found this in the leftover stash. Some may have appeared in the H Corner before, but what the heck...

His sf series started in the spring '69 and went through the autumn, up to half a dozen programs each season: short TV films (cheap and fast produced), facts like interviews and report from an Eastercon, serious cartoons, imported shows. June 27 presented *"Born of Man and Woman"* from a story by Richard Matheson (I suspect from one an anthology series: Hitchcock, Outer Limits etc):


22.50–23.00 Född av man och kvinna (färg)

En otänkbar historia, dvs ännu en kortfilm i TV:s science-fiction-giv för vuxna. Kvällens kortfilm bygger på en amerikansk science-fiction-novell från 40-talets slut. Det är en klar skräck-grej och således inte lämplig för barn. Den är gjord i svart-vitt men färglagd med filter och dylikt, om nu någon är intresserad av teknik.

An unthinkable story, ie yet another short film in TV's sf series for grown-ups.This evening's short film is based on an American sf story from the late 40s. It's horror stuff and thus unsuitable for children. It's done in b/w but coloured with filter and such, if anyone is interested in technology.

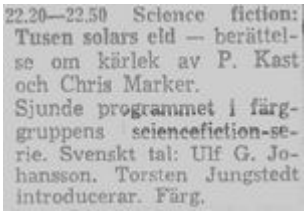
Göteborgs-Tidningen wrote what was on TV Oct 3:


NAMN O

En rymdälderns trubadur

Sam J Lundwall. Sveä fröjdar i rymden.

TV's colour group last spring produced a series of sf programs, ie visionary pictures from strange worlds except our own. You'd think that sf had no market in Sweden, but that was totally wrong. Swedish TV viewers were ecstatic over this kind of fantastic fantasies having Martians and Lunarians. Last season told us that TV's sf series obtained more supporters than you could expect. Now they present four programs to satisfy the newly interested. First of all is the French film "Fire of Thousand Suns" signed by the world famous documentary filmmaker Chris Marker,being awarded multiple times /unreadable/ *An animated horror film set in the ghost town Stockholm is titled "Don't Look", we'll also see a report about sf fans on an convention in Oxford. Torsten Jungstedt talks with John-Henri Holmberg, a Stockholm student and sciencefictionist. Actors Erik Hell, Öllegård Wellton, Bert-Åke Warg and Åke Ljungqvist are seen in the novelette "Hunting Season" by Frank Robinson. Torsten Ljungstedt introduces the TV series on Wednesday.*


22.20—22.50 Science fiction: Tusen solars eld — berättelse om kärlek av P. Kast och Chris Marker. Sjunde programmet i färggruppens sciencefiction-serie. Svenskt tal: Ulf G. Johansson. Torsten Jungstedt introducerar. Färg.

The TV program Oct 22 said:*22.20-22.50 The Fire of a Thousand Suns - a tale of love by P Kast and Chris Marker. Seventh film in the sf series by the colour group. Swedish narration: Ulf G Johansson. intro by Torsten Jungstedt. Colour.* *Dagens Nyheter* Oct 25 1965 writes about *"Troubaour of the Space Age":*

...what you can call 24 -year old Sam J Lundwall from Hägersten. He debuts with an LP with his own songs, like "Dear Mom" who is a robot, "Rendezvous in Space" (An Evert Taube pastiche) and other sf inspired things. Mr Lundwall is a Jack of all trades, writes sf stories, draws and is student at Christer Strömholm's photo school. There must be some dirty songs on the record too, e g about an unwanted child (Sleep sweet in the bed / Mom's out to earn the bread), one making fun of trade unions, as you know that's more serious than joking about god or the king. These dangerous songs were as expected censored as the record label let Folke Erbo from the radio hear them. You can't play such in the Melody Radio, he said. "But I may have some half-juicy stuff left", says Sam Lundwall hopefully. "Why should that Vreeswijk have monopoly on such."

Beside TV man, author etc Sam was also troubadour (and not all that bad at it!).

Taube was a famous older troubadour, Vreeswijk was the absolute troubadour star at this time and Strömholm's photo school was rather famous. And then Sam went and ruined a promising career by publishing sf. So sad...


Free Commercial Education Scholarship This Week.
THE BOYS CHAMPION Story Paper 1D
VARSITY BLUE

The Story of Story Papers

by Bob Jennings

In *Intermission* #169 and #170 we could read about the US Victorian era boy's story paper Golden Hours that organized a full blown convention for their readers in 1889, and that the magazine organized clubs of their fans and readers that encouraged them to their own local publications and correspond with each other may be startling new info to you, but it has been well known in dime novel fandom since dime novel fandom was formed back in 1929.

Harry Warner, Sam Moskowtz and other stf historians didn't mention the Golden Hours convention or pay much attention to the dime and nickle weeklies because they were viewed as pre-sf stuff, which officially started in 1926 with Amazing Stories. Earlier writings were kinda interesting, but were clearly not in the same class as Verne, Wells, and other "real" science fiction authors.

First, a little clarification about story papers. Weekly story papers, slightly larger than tabloid size, usually eight to 16 pages, had been around in the US since at least the 1850s. The Banner Weekly, Flag of Our Union and others offered inexpensive popular reading in all genres by subscription for five cents per week. All the major publishing houses that later got into dime novels and pulp magazines had their own story papers.

Most of these were family papers, offering something for every member of the family, altho their covers and lead serials were usually romantic adventures aimed at the ladies of the home. Serials for boys, puzzle and short stories for children of all ages were there as well. Some newspapers functioned as story papers, devoting a few pages to actual news national or local, and spending the rest of the pages on fiction and puzzles. The print size was tiny, and even broken up into four or even six columns, you needed good eyesight and concentration to follow the contents of these publications.

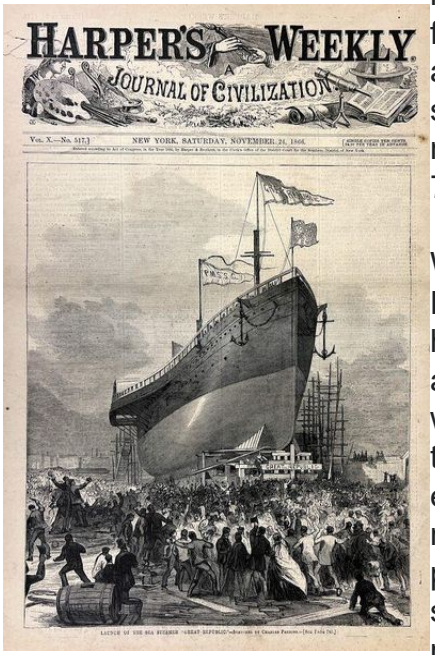
The serials that weekly story papers ran could stretch out for months, but usually concluded in about six issues. Ones that were deemed strong enough were then reissued as thick paperback books or a quarto pamphlets. Very popular novels or stories could be reprinted in later issues of the paper or in other formats. Authors got paid nothing for any reprints. They sold all rights to their fiction and received a one time payment from the publisher.

Story papers specifically designed for boys seem to have started around the end of the Civil War. Some weekly magazines aimed at boys (with courtesy material for girls as well), such as Frank Leslie's Boys & Girls Weekly were not true story papers, and altho they always carried serials, they were really bedsheet sized magazines aimed at the pre-teen and teenager audience.

Story papers for boys were extremely popular, and titles such as Boys of New York, Beadles' Weekly, Boys of America, Happy Days, and Banner Weekly lasted for decades.

Gitrdij Story papers begin to fall out of favor when Street & Smith started issuing dime novels in 7x10" format with wraparound colored covers, and 32 inside pages with larger type and a bigger cant between lines, making them much easier to read than the dime novels, which featured b&w covers and very small tight knitted type fonts. To complete the process, S&S priced their magazines at a nickel each, serious competition to the traditional dime and half dime publications their rivals were issuing. Competition in this new format appeared almost immediately. Some of the titles you list as story papers, including Tip Top, Secret Service, Young Athlete, and Brave and Bold are actually nickel weeklies, not story papers.

The entry of the pulp magazine onto the scene spelled the end of story papers, traditional dime novels, and eventually even the nickel weeklies. It was hard for those formats to compete with a magazine like Argosy that came out every week, and offered 160 pages of fiction for a dime. The pulps ran serials, but their serial segments were twenty thousand word blocks, and sometimes magazines like Munsey's Monthly Magazine ran an entire 60,000 or 70,000 word novel complete in each issue.


HARPER'S WEEKLY
JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION
Vol. X.—No. 517.] NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1866.

Story papers didn't all drop dead around 1904. Many survived till after WWI, including Street & Smith's New York Weekly, and Happy Days. Happy Days lasted until 1926 (altho the latter years were all reprints). The huge jump in the price of printing paper that began during and continued after the end of WWI killed off most of the remaining story papers, nickel weeklies, and a lot of pulp magazines as well. A contraction in transportation services was also a major factor. The US government, for example, nationalized the Wells Fargo freight system, and commandered most rail service to supply military needs. All other shippers, including the publishing industry had to scramble for the space and movement schedules left, and the railroads naturally began jacking up non-military rates immediately.

Most of the story papers and some of the nickel weeklies offered clubs for their fans and readers, and encouraged them to correspond with each other, but Munro's Golden Hours was the only one that was able to organize and put on an actual convention. Some of the people who subscribed to Ralph Cummings' Dime Novel Roundup zine had actually attended the 1889 convention, and wrote about it. It was certainly a noteworthy event, something that had never been seen before.

The problem that kept all those clubs and all these readers from developing into a truly active, long lasting fandom was the fact that most of the readers were very young. Altho there were plenty of Old Boys who read and collected the story papers and the nickel weeklies, those publications, like the comic books that came later, were aimed at a younger audience, and that audience tended to age out and move on to other pursuits, such as girls, and jobs.

This was particularly significant since in that time period child labor was still widely practiced, and young boys were expected to start helping to pay a share of family experiences early on. For a long time the goal of public education was to somehow ensure that young students were at least able to finish sixth grade before going to work. This was considered way too ambitious a goal for most educators.

Only when child labor laws began to be passed, and actually enforced, were students pushed to finish the eighth grade, and maybe, for a lucky few, go on to high school. The overwhelming majority of students who entered high school did not finish. Graduation rates for high school youngsters did not become significant until the late 1920s. Some said that the Great Depression, and the lack of jobs it caused was the real reason more students stayed in and managed to graduate from high school.

Frank Munsey had it figured right when he converted The Golden Argosy from a magazine aimed at the boys' adventure market and turned it into the world's first pulp magazine. A magazine that both teens and adults could enjoy would have a far better chance of long term success, and a much larger circulation, than any story paper or weekly magazine aimed at the pre-puberty reader.

Swelection: Battle of the Letters

Once upon a time,in the Old Kingdom of the North, the letters V, S, K, P, D, C, L, M lived heir ordinary life, going to their work every day at the tastatur mill, after eating their breakfast of alphabet cereals. (There lived other letters too, but they are not in this story. The odd little Ö wanted to but Örebro wasn't enough.) They were content, healthy and seldom misspelt.



Main contenders for PMship. Ulf Kristersson, Moderates, and Magdalena Andersson, Social Democrats.

But every four years they began to argue and bicker and quarrel, so much that punctuation marks became worried. V attacked C who was occupied mocking SD. KD, L and M ganged together to teach S a lesson. OMG! It's a mess! WTF is going on?

FYI, We call it the swelection. Here answers to FAQ. The letters represents the political parties in the Old Kingdom of the North. In this Kingdom the king, unlike in the US, didn't decide a lot of funny things. His majesty was a figurehead and did very little harm,unlike the politicians and their parties. The parties decided things, and were from what is Right to what is Left:

M = The Moderates, a bit conservative but not so stupefyingly conservative as eg Their CEO Ulf Kristersson is prime minister (at the time this is scribed, RSN he may resign).

SD = The Sweden Democrats, ultra-nationalists who "want



People lining up to cast beforehand votes, three days before election day. A library is used as polling station. The queue, continuing indoors in a wide turn, was probably 80-90 metres.Voting opened 3 weeks before Sep 13, and near that date queues became longer.

to make Sweden Sweden again". The "establishment" is SMOF-like and against them. Early on they had members with NSDAP leanings which they tried to root out. BNF* and former SFSF* chairman Stieg Larsson had opinions about this - it's hardly DNQ.[***]

KD = The Christian Democrats. Not as INRI and religious as the name implies. Eg they accept abortions,but are sceptical to trans policies and LBTQ (eg demand that a new "sex change" law is annulled).

L = Liberals. Beware that liberal doesn't mean the same in Europe and the US. European liberals usually cooperate with conservatives and sit in their governments. (I often use the term Euroliberal to stress this difference.). Was IMHO close to RIP before the swelection.

That was the government of 2022-2026, except that SD gives support from the outside and doesn't have ministers. This bloc is often called the Tidö parties after the palace where they negotiated how they would work. So comes the opposition:

S = Social Democrats. Could perhaps be compared to US Democrats slightly to the left. Historically the big Power Party getting 40-45% of votes (*much* less now). Their chair Magdalena Andersson had a short spell as PM before Ulf took over but is sure of a comeback her bloc can form a government.

C = The centre party. Euroliberals. BTW, they used to dance with M and her buddies but left the dance floor as SD stomped in. But the fact is that C in their earlier incarnation as "Bondeförbundet" (Farmers' Federation) on their CV had several coalitions with S, 1936-1957 .

MP = The environmental party. They are...mental, I'd say. ROTFL! Environmentalism is utopian, anti-progress rubbish. They hate growth of GDP, and we should all live in log cabins eating carrots... BS is in their DNA. A normal balanced outlook on life N/A.

V = The Left Party (left is "vänster" in Swedish). They earlier had the DDR-like name Left Party the Communists. AFAIK they still have communist tendencies and are very, very woke. The left are huge fans of letters: SKP, KFML, KFML(r).KPML(r), APK, KP, AFA, SAC...the list goes on.

And our letters now became occupied with what we wittingly call the swelection, AKA general election. Every election needs lot of words and sentences! You need lots of letters for that. You wouldn't believe how much they talk and talk! Empty words that sound nice!

The old Kingdom of the North has a parliament of 349 seats called the Riksdag.[*] Parliamentarism rules, BTW, which means the parliament elects the government which governs as long as the parliament doesn't kick you out.[**] After an election the parliament speaker investigates possible government candidates and ASAP gives someone (a major party leader) the task of forming a government. This person becomes Prime Minister if enough other parties RSVPs positive. If the speaker fails to find a prime minister four times, there'll be a new swelection (this has never happened). There are many rules around this which must be followed to the letter.

Now, 2026 election results for the different letters in % (the 2022-26 government first):

M 19.9 **SD** 17.5 **KD** 6.2 **L** 5.4, which gives *173* seats.

S 28.1 **MP** 5.1 **C** 7.1 **V** 8.3, and that gives *176* seats.

S and SD lost 2-3% each, all others gained a little - most sensational was L who just a few weeks before were ready for the ER in the opinion polls, but caught a respectable - from their perspective - 5.4%. You must get at least 4% to enter the Riksdag, a rule by the established politicians to protect them from smaller competitors. Though they explain it with a too fractured assembly is difficult to work with. But it hasn't helped. For over half a Century there was the gang of five parties (S, V, M, C, L) but now it's eight. Other European countries have even more parties in their parliaments!

But forming a government will be hard, almost DOA. On the S & Co side, V and C are incompatible. V demands ministerial positions but C won't support a government with the former communist in it. The M & Co side lacks just a couple of seats, but hope to lure C back to their side (at time of writing C

*** *Letters S, F, N B are otherwise not involved in his story.*

* *"Riksdag" means "Day of the Realm". In medieval times the magnates and men of power were summoned to a day of deliberations about the affairs of the realm. The word became established for this type of assemblies even if they meet for longer than one day. "Reichstag" is the same word, but in German.*

** *Technicality: Swedish governments must be "tolerated" by the parliament, ie there mustn't be an active parliament of at least 175 against. If you have 0 with you and 174 against, you are safe. Note: The US doesn't have parliamentarism, as the government (cabinet) is selected by the president.*

isn't very eager). SD is just depressed and says it's the immigrants' fault. The speaker may try S+MP+C+KD+L a slightly-red-middle government but L may be sceptical - they've always seen S as The Enemy. There's no *clear* alternative, but C has a lot to think about. YOLO. Until a new government is formed (and that's not expected with FTL speed, it takes at least to *Intermission* #172 or even #173) the outgoing government stays as a "caretaker" gov.



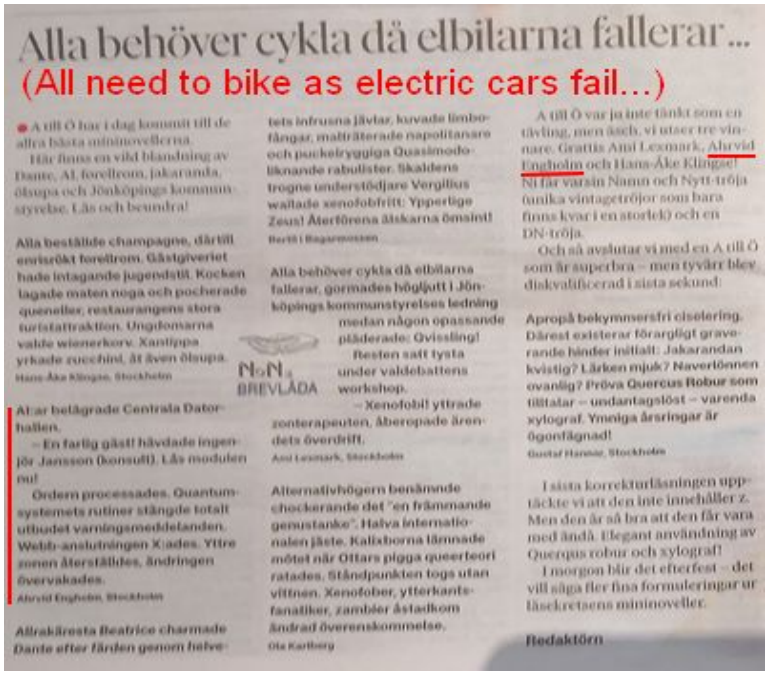
Benny Andersson of the little band ABBA played on an S meeting. Maggie A in background. His Buddy Björn, more of a businessman, should be leaning towards M. But who knows?

Whatever comes out of this alphabet soup the PM TBA (most bets are on S leader Maggie Andersson) will have the slimmest majority, but that's not stable. Sometimes SNAFUs happens, an MP is ousted from his/her party due to being an imbecile, but keeps the seat as a "political savage" - yeah, that term is used - with no or thin party loyalty. And right now, a V candidate in the province of Dalecarlia is suspected of a JH Holmberg/A Bellis ballot fraud (SEFF ´87), here meddling with with so called person crosses. A voter can put a cross for a preferable candidate (enough crosses puts him on the list top). A V candidate unexpectedly got 700 crosses from "helping" and bribing voters. It became major news. V needed to do something PDQ, so the candidate takes TO (though "Time Out" doesn't exist in the rulebook) from his seat and the redgreen margin of 3 is now 2. In the previous Riksdag there were as many as *nine savages*[*] and now even before sessions start we already have one. A slim majority is precarious. Latest news: Maggie A gave up gov forming probings as V won't budge, instead ex-commies teamed up with conservative M to re-elect the M speaker. All positions so locked Houdini would be impressed. This will take time. A snap election on the horizon?

The winner doesn't take it all.

From A to Ö

The last letter of the Swedish alphabet, and a dominant feature of our coastline, is Ö. This letter also means "island" and we have 100 000 of them. (It'd be strange, and sleepy, if we had 100 000 Z.) Speaking of letters, our big morning paper *Dagens Nyheter* had a little contest: Write a story using letters A to Ö starting each word, in order. This newspaper has the motto "For an Enlightened World", assuming readers are highly unenlightened - so *DN* takes on the heavy burden of teaching them. Anyway, as I enjoy playing around with letters I sent them an entry.



Alla behöver cykla då elbilarna fallerar...

(All need to bike as electric cars fail...)

Which won. One of three winners. See "Alla behöver cykla då elbilarna fallerar..." A bigger version of my entry, with an approximate translation.below.



AI:ar belägrade Centrala Datorhallen.

– En farlig gäst! hävdade ingenjör Jansson (konsult). Lås modulen nu!

Ordern processades. Quantumsystemets rutiner stängde totalt utbudet varningsmeddelanden. Webb-anslutningen X:ades. Yttre zonen återställdes, ändringen övervakades.

Ahrvid Engholm, Stockholm

AIs had Central Computer Hall under siege. 'A dangerous guest', engineer Jansson (consultant) claimed. 'Lock the module now!' The order was processed. The Quantum-system's routines totally closed the warning messages oultput,the Web-connection was X:ed. Outer zone was restored, the change was monitored."

A little challenge: who can translate it to English, using words A-Z in that order? You have a slight advantage using three letters less...

The prize was DN T-shirts, though I think I I have T-shirts since before.

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[*] *They were expelled from their parties (or resigned) for things like antisemitic rhetoric or drunk/narcotics driving, or praising Palestinian terrorist, taking part in a controversial conference. Most are from SD (because they are nuts) and V (because they harbour silly armed revolution romanticism,like RAF in 1970s BRD).All kept their seats.*

Letters of Comment, then Mailing Comments to N'APA & EAPA.

Bob Jennings: Hi Ahrvid; Received Intermission #170 a few days back and thot I would send off a few random comments.

This was an interesting issue, as always. I was mildly impressed that you were able to track down one of the original organizers of what was likely the first Finnish SF convention in order to plume his memories of the event. Reading your observations it seems clear that they were trying to attract the general public with their publicity announcements and the assorted panels about scientific progress and new developments in tech-nological fields, but clearly the real emphasis was on science fiction, what with a full film program running, and exhibits of SF mags and comics. I would speculate that they spread this event out over most of a week so they could try an reach interested working people as well as university students. I wonder if the people who attended and organized this event were then involved in the development of a more structured stf fandom in Finland during the 1970s and onward. Seems likely to me. Conventions and conversations with like minded individuals is usually a heady mixture that invites continued euphoria only gratified by additional connect via the mails or otherwise.

What!!! No N'APA mailing comments to me? Shocking dereliction on your part.

Ed:*A large part of this was about story papers history. With Bob's permission and slight editing, it's been extracted to separate article in this issue. (I've never thought of that readers could supply material,since I write so much myself. But if you have something interesting - especially history material - try me!) Just a comment to your recent N'APAzine. I've read about the dangers of the Martian environment. But most dangers disappear if we - as we should - build colonies* underground*. Radiation will be minimised, climate can be controlled and the poison in the soil won't bother, because it only goes a couple of inches deep. We grow food by efficient hydroponics. The only thing is* gravity*. We know 0G is bad, but is 0.4G strong enough to keep a human body healthy? (However, terraforming Mars would be a very,* very *long-time job...)*

George Phillies: I know about the Antikythera mechanism, but it's not for solving general or at least varied problems so it's no computer. The real big news around it was it revealed that the Greeks had good fine mechanics.

Jefferson P. Swycaffer: Tha problem with magic is that it is 100% impossible, while electronics and orbital mechanics isn't only possible - it exists. I agree that inventing a gizmo to save an sf story is cheating. Gizmos should be invented for other purposes.

Adrian Kresnak: It still is relatively easy to recognise an AI-written story, as there are some AI idiosyncrasies - beside that an AI story tend to be rather bland. But authors should be allowed to use AI for research (I do that myself - AIs are better than Google).

Mark Nelson: I suspect Bill doesn't include *Intermission* in eFanzines since he has EAPA, which has my zine.

Joseph P Gill: Sorry. No comments.

Samuel Lubell: Your fake Worldcon newsletter was a bit funny! On fantasy: Oh, I think there's still plenty of fantasy out there with medieval values... And I still think fantasy plot-wise is restricted. How could a fantasy-whodunnit really work when evidence and alibis can be made up by magic? BTW, I suspect the US "million covid victims" to a great part is just over-reporting the virus and under-reporting natural or deaths of other causes. Medical services want to exaggerate their importance and politicians want to motivate their (too harsh) policies.

Kevin Trainor Jr: Trump doesn't belong to a home for the confused - but in prison. The corruption alone! His disregard of the oath of office to abide by the constitution. And any other things.



Early Sept, heard a speech by the famous State Epidemiologist Anders Tegnell. Text: "Is it me or has world turned crazy?" Dr Tegnell held back lockdowns, closing schools etc that all others went for, throwing away prepared pandemic plans. He was right! Effects on economy, schooling, mental health etc were much milder. We had the lowest excess deaths in Europe.

Henry Grynnsten: I've been thinking lot about plots. I know about Polti, Propp and the others. We could always discuss the exact numbers of possible plots - it's not very important. What's important is that a plot needs some sort of problem, a confrontation, something that's in the way, an obstacle that the protagonist must get past (it may be a non-material obstacle, maybe within the protagonist himself). It's true that the US produces enormous amount of stories, and much is mediocre - but with a big output also comes some that actually is good. But Hollywood seems to have a problem. All these silly superhero movies? Who want to see jerks in colourful leotards? And most is computer generated anyway... They lack good manuscripts and try to replace it with smoke and mirrors. Over to your comments and misconceptions. ■■ *"That means either that all natural resources are endless, or that humans are incapable of overusing any natural resource. Both are impossible."* No there's a third possibility: Whatever we do, natural resources AREN'T DESTROYED. As long as the atoms of the resources exist they can be re-used.■■*"brain cells can die before you die"* What I meant was that you can of course stress them to die. But without such external factors typical brain cells live as long as you live.■■"*Cats were introduced by humans, so it was humans"* But we didn't bring cats with the intention to kill off any species. Guilt requires intent. ■■*"That doesn't prevent you from being a careful scientist*



They just had their yearly thought allowance: "What's more fun - gnoerk debate or knurk debate?"/Suddenly!!!"I came to think of something important"/"Lutor is loose.Time to act!"

and biologist." Being fanatically attached to something, just as Wilson, is an huge obstacle. ■■ *" There is no denying that Sweden's economy grew very quickly under Social Democratic policies in the 20th century"* It grew about as fast as others who had no SocDem governments. Besides,it probably grew faster in the mid to late 19th Century, up to WWI. No SocDem party in sight. ■■ *"a layperson most often can't assess if experts in a field are wrong"* I disagree. In intricate details an "expert" has an advantage, but in a general overall assessment a lay-person who has basic good knowledge ("allmänbildning") and thinks hard has a good chance. ■■ *"Laypeople carry even more biases and agendas"* Have you heard of Wisdom of the Crowd? That's important reason why ALL should do their best to think for themselves. One person may have a bias, but in a crowd others have a bias in the other direction and they even each other out.■■ *"So do experts...and they have expert knowledge"* There's a well known effect that someone becoming an "expert" runs the risks of becoming totally obsessed, fanatic, getting a extremely narrow vision. That's not healthy and a normal person seeing things in a wider view may very well be better. ■■ *"There is no known safe threshold for tobacco smoke"* Only because its hard to define and measure. But below certain levels effects don't accumulate.■■ *"No exposures are magically wiped out".* Yes they are. No magic. Our immune system kills off damaged cells. ■■ *"Children are particularly vulnerable to its harmful effects."* Claimed in studies that lowered the confidence level to touch randomness. With normal, scientific confidence levels no such effect was found. ■■ *"socialist rhetoric is cheap, never right-wing rhetoric?"* Rhetoric often means "say something wrong with smart tricks so it seems right". The real issue is: what the socialist say don't work or work worse than alternatives. But what proponents of market economy and liberalism say WORKS. ■■ *"Higher equality in a society benefits everyone"* It requires oppression to a degree,and it lowers economic growth. All l*ose.* ■■ *"Even if AI becomes conscious, what is there to say that it will want anything in the first place?"* Getting AIs that don't want anything would be great! ■■ The people I mentioned are IPCC. ■■ "*IPPC is an institution that assesses and synthesizes the existing scientific evidence"* It was set up to "confirm" what Bert Bolin already had decided. ■■ *"IPCC doesn't start with a conclusion and only present the facts that support that conclusion"* Remove "doesn't" and you nailed it! ■■ "*puts together an agenda to fool the whole world, and manages to indoctrinate all the decision-makers in the world"* Except there's no planning behind it. The Zeitgeist is enough. The spirit of the times makes everyone who believe along the lines of the lobby group IPCC automatically become strengthened in their beliefs. ■■ *"in 1965 it was also over 4 %"* But spread out over the whole Apollo project, it's half that. You just keep repeating your cherry-pickings to give the impression it was typical. It wasn't. ■■ *"...or with fat food or driving MCs or mountaineering or climbing ladders or boating without life jackets or... That is just whataboutism."* No, there's not any "what about" mentioned. I just list other things suggested banned in the name of the Holy Mission of forbidding people to decide for themselves and make life a padded cell. ■■ *"It's more dangerous to expose them to harmful substances."* No, the urge to nanny people is more dangerous (except in a small minority of special cases). People who are nannied becomes uncreative, passive, discontent and we *all lose*. Nannying risk backfirIng causing serious problems. Nannying requires control that squashes people's freedoms. Etc. ■■ "*you can't clearly and logically explain why you then want to ban heroin, crack,"* Easy: the effects of those are magnitudes stronger than with eg alcohol. We should follow the principle that restrictions need a) a certain level of risk, b) a certain causation, c) a certain level of risks being acute (close in time). (Your attempt to asses alcohol is here wrong. Poisoning is so extremely rare that it doesn't invoke requirement a).) ■■ *"there is no evidence that we sought it [fermented fruit] out or regularly consumed such amounts as to become drunk"* We can't know everyday doings by of stoneagers, but animals have been observed doing it many, many times and humans are after all animals. ■■ *"They didn't evolve specifically for alcohol"* Great if ADH and ALDH is also useful in other ways. ■■ I think the legal driving level should be raised to 0.05 (if I got the fraction right) as it was before. No other country has the ridiculous Swedish level. It's alcohol politics disguised as traffic regulation. It's against b) above as it isn't causally connected to traffic safety. Some politicians are teetotallers who use it to attack people's right to choose to take drink. It's grave dishonesty.

Heath Row: Desculpe, não tenho tempo para traduzir o seu material, mas parece interessante.

Garth Spencer: I have good hope for fusion power. ■■ First Eurovision, now associate EU member... The buffoon in the somewhat tarnished White House says it's "laughable" - which means it's probably wise. Nobody yet knows what this means (it should mean eases for trade, travel, studying, work market etc). But here's an idea: "associate membership" should be defined so it may interest Britain. The Brits voted no to EU, but *haven't* said no to associate membership. They could chose it without accusations of betraying the referendum (and perhaps could Norway and Iceland tag along too?) ■■ Putin and Trump have done a lot to make the EU more relevant and united! In times of trouble you close ranks. ■■ SItuation regarding draft dodgers between Russia and Ukraine are *vastly* different. With the 0.5m who have fled Russia in the last wave its a total of 1.5m. For Ukraine (a figure I've seen) it's 0.02m. In Ukraine the police look for a certain person who avoids being called up. In Russia they simply grab someone at random on the street...■■ **Time for *GAFIK* (Getting Away From Keyboard) for now.LoCs welcome! In nextish we *may* know who solved the swelection puzzle and became PM. (Meanwhile, that Putin's party would "win" in Russia was as sure as 1+1=2.) Trump will probably do something stupid for #172, else contents not known yet. So long!**

Слава Украине!

THE SWAMP SPOT SENTINEL



THE SWAMP SPOT SENTINEL Issue #2.4 is a fanzine for distribution within the sacred auspices of N'APA, and is produced by:

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YARD SALE BLUES

I've been living in this house for over fifty years, and I've never had a yard sale. At least not until this year. On the last Saturday in September, the town of Oxford, where I reside, had their twice-yearly community wide yard sale. A local civic action group was the sponsor. They handled all the publicity, took care of the permits, and even provided a digital map of all the yard sale locations that signed up for the event. For twenty-five bucks you could also set up in a ten by ten square on the town concert green instead of on your own property.

Well, I thot, why not try? No cost involved, just all the labor of getting stuff together, setting up and waiting most of the day for potential customers until the sale officially ended at two in the afternoon.

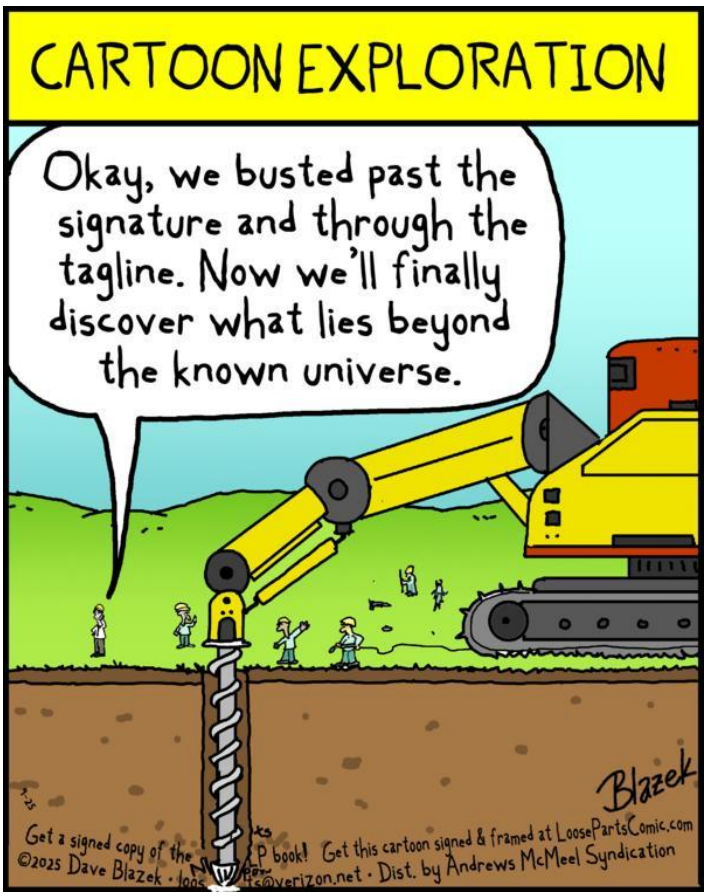
One of the reasons I have never had a yard sale is that most of the front of my house property line has been obscured by lots of trees for most of the time I've lived here. This provided plenty of privacy, but it meant that if I had ever attempted to set up a yard sale in the driveway, that people would have driven past and been well beyond before they ever realized a yard sale was bring held here.

But, eight or so years ago I had most of those trees on the front property line cut down. This was mainly because the mess of tightly packed tree limbs had entangled the power and phone lines, which mean that if there was a devastating storm that took down any of those trees, or tree limbs, that all the wiring would have come down with it. The same thing could have happened if any one of those trees had been hit by a lightning strike (a not uncommon occurrence at my house lot, as I may have mentioned before)

With the trees gone, people could now see the yard, and they might be able to see the yard sale sign before they whizzed by. Or maybe not.

But with a digital map available to direct all the bargain hunters to where all the seller locations were, I figured this would probably be my best chance to test out any yard sale potential.

I don't have much in the way of household goods to sell. I live sparse. But I sure do have a lot of collectibles, and the kind of stuff that has always sold well whenever I sat up at flea markets, back before the COVID epidemic killed off almost all the flea markets in the region.



Most of that stuff was in the warehouse, along with the two tables I would use to set things on. This meant making several trips to the warehouse and back in the days before the Saturday sales day. Have I mentioned that getting old really sucks? Well it does. At age 83 I am not nearly as strong as I was in past years, nor do I have as much stamina. Even doing one single load a day for five days straight was exhausting.

What did I lay out? Well, I had six trays of mainstream and thriller paperback books that I couldn't list and sell thru my on-line book biz because they were either in less than VG condition, or were titles and categories that were simply not worth listing. Price, fifty cents each, or three for a buck. These I figured would go very fast.

I also had about twenty five old issues of Playboy Magazine in less than VG condition, but all complete with the centerfolds/ At a dollar each I was certain they would be the very first thing to sell out.

Then I had folders of music CDs, hundreds of them, punk, modern pop and heavy metal rock

mostly. Just the discs, no jewel cases. I got all that as part of a deal a couple of years ago when I bought a big collection of movie DVDs. I priced them at a buck each; buy five, get one free.

I had a pile of Ellery Queen Mystery Mags and old copies of Analog and Asimov's SF mags, mostly in Good or less condition, that I priced at a dollar each.

For the kiddies that invariably come along with the adults, I had some samurai swords for two bucks each, and I had a display box of mixed PEZ figures that I would dearly love to finally clean out, priced at a buck each. For the grown up kiddies, a long box of comic books. These were damaged comics, ideal for reading, not for collecting, and again, stuff that I couldn't list or hope to sell thru my mail order biz. I figured that at fifty cents a copy they ought to move.

I also had two guitars I wanted to sell. I have a classic Harmony acoustic that I priced at a hundred bucks, along with a Concord 12 string model that I priced at $350. These were deep bargain prices. What with my arthritis there is no way I was going to be able to play those things again, and if truth be told, I was never very good at playing the guitar in the first place. To be a good player you have to practice, a lot, and I never did much of that.

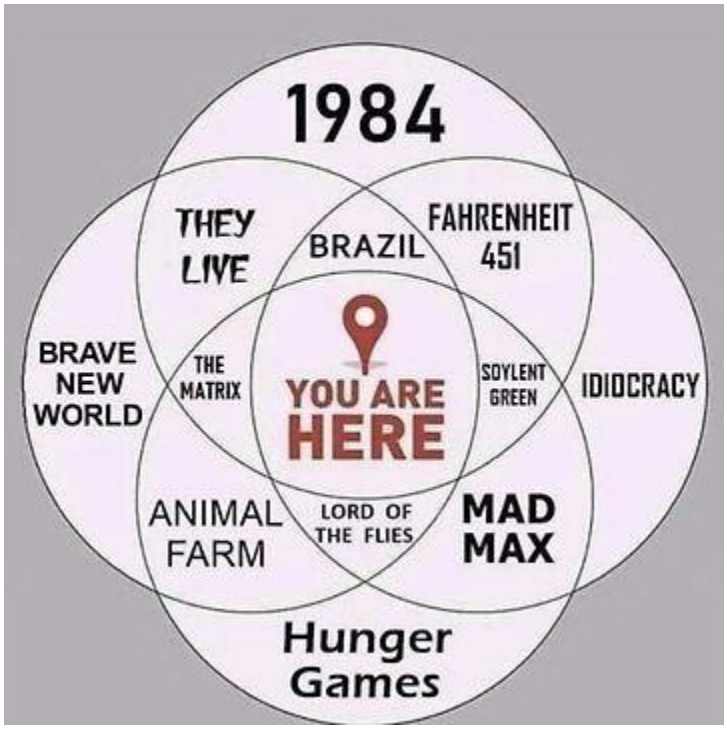
I had some other things: sports action figures I got from a friend a few years back. Their book value was supposed to be fifteen to thirty bucks each. I figured they would go at five bucks a pop.

I had a chain saw that I haven't used in forty years. They last time I fired that thing up I almost had a nasty accident, an incident that convinced me to never to handle a chain saw ever again in my entire life. Then there was a pressure cooker my ex-wife insisted we buy, so she could can green beans and tomato sauce one summer. I don't even like green beans that much. We used up most of the tomato sauce before it even got canned.

I rounded it out with two albums of baseball and hockey cards. Book value--three hundred bucks a set. I priced each set at $75. I added in some antique glass ware and collectible Playboy photo mugs.

As I said, this was the kind of stuff that would go very well at a flea market.

And what happened you are wondering? Alas, pretty much nothing. I got a grand total of six people who stopped by the look at my stuff. Three of them had actually come because they had checked the digital map and sought me out. But they weren't interested in the stuff I had. Oh, one guy looked longingly at the guitars, but clearly he wanted something even cheaper than my bargain prices.



What the seekers were looking for were video games, and craft supplies. I had none of that. I got one guy, a jogger who stopped and checked out all of the books and magazines. He was looking for some oddball self-help psychology title I had never heard of before.

The other two people were causal drivers who happened to glance over my way, saw that I was having a yard sale, and stopped. True to my expectations, they stopped many feet beyond the driveway, backed up and jumped out to take a look. One of those people, in addition to video games, was looking for children's comics for his six year kid. Nope, my box was almost exclusively super heroes,

I sold a grand total of nothing whatsoever. I sortta wish I had taken a photo of the layout so you could see how things were set up and organized, but I never even thot of that until after I broke everything down at two that afternoon and prepared to move everything back to the warehouse. Moving everything back only took three days. I packed everything tight for the return.

Anyway, lesson learned. I will never do another yard sale.

NEWS OF THE ODD: A Tibetan monk who claims he saw the face of Jesus in a tub of margarine said "I can't believe it's not Buddha."

CANDY QUEST In mid August I became aware that one of my all-time favorite candies was back on the market again. Peanut Butter Snickers are apparently only manufactured at certain times of the year, specifically, for Halloween and for Christmas consumption. In theory the product is available the rest of the year, but in actuality it disappears after each New Year and does not reappear until late summer, when retail stores order their Halloween candy assortments.

Naturally, Halloween candy is displayed as soon as it's shipped, because long experience has taught savvy retail operators that the sight of delicious packaged candy assortments will tempt all but the stoutest dieters. Jump starting candy sales after the typical lackluster blazing hot and humid summer weather marked only by lollypops, circus peanuts, jelly beans, and similar Spartan fare in the candy aisles has left the retail outlet, as well as the buying public, anxious to taste some real candy again, and the big candy companies like Hershey and Mars are delighted to help rectify the situation.



Under normal circumstances I grab a few bags, or maybe five or ten over the course of the long fall season and that's the end of the matter. But this year I was determined to change things. My plans were not just to buy a few bags of the delicious confectionary, but instead to buy a lot, as in, a ton of the stuff, so I would have a plentiful supply to last the long autumn and early winter season, and maybe, with some careful planning, I might be able to stockpile enuf to last right up to Christmas even.

With this plan in mind I sprang into action immediately. The CVS store chain in the area has always stocked Peanut Butter Snickers for Halloween, even while other grocery and store chains have let their attention to the matter slip.

I immediately visited my local CVS down in the village, and bought every package they had. It helped that they had a buy-one-get-one-free deal going. I spoke with the store manager and asked her to order more, informing her that I would cheerfully buy every single package she could get. I think the fact that I spent forty-five bucks and bought every package they had in the store was the convincer.

The next day I visited the CVS in Webster, the next town over, and bought up all they had, with the same request that they restock. A couple of days later I checked the CVS in Auburn, the next town east of me. In a shocking surprise, the Auburn CVS hadn't set up their Halloween candy display at all yet! What kind of retail store doesn't put out their Halloween candy by the end of August? This neglance clearly bordered on merchandising incompetence! But, I was forced to wait, and decided to visit them a week or so later.

That Saturday I traveled into Worcester, and checked the CVS store near the Auburn town line. Alas, they only have six bags of the stuff on hand, and the assistant store manager stuffily informed me that candy was not a big seller in their location, so as soon as they sold out their limited Halloween candy assortment, that they would be restocking with Christmas candy instead.

Unfortunately no store in this area stocks Peanut Butter Snickers for the Christmas season. One big grocery store did about six years ago, which is where I got my first exposure and taste of the delicious candy, but after that one year they have since forsaken the product.

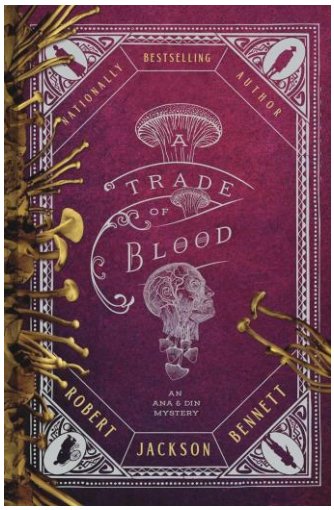
I have since visited other CVS stores, including a return trip to the Auburn location, where I am pleased to say I bought a ton of the candy, and I have been munching on Peanut Butter Snickers every single day since I discovered they were back in stock again.

Luckily my local CVS took my interest to heart and has managed to restock the candy several times, and every time I bought all that they had. Last week they ordered in two cases of the stuff. I bought a full case, but alas, the store opened the other case and put the packages on display, specifically so that the CVS store staff members, hearing of my dedicated interest in the candy, decided to buy some packages themselves and find out

why I was so dedicated to the product. Of course I am very happy that more people have been exposed to Peanut Butter Snickers and turned into lovers of this wonderful candy, but at the same time, I am not sure I want any competition in my efforts to keep my supply steady during the limited time the product is available.

Of course by now you are probably thinking, 'Jeeze, the guy must have blown up like a balloon gobbling down all this high-calorie candy every day'. That might have been the case, if I were not careful to ration my daily intake. I try to only eat five or six of the fun-size pieces each day as a dessert with the noon-time meal. Not that I haven't given in to the occasional temptation to wolf down an entire package, but generally I've been consistent, and prudent. This means that I have not gained any weight with my autumn indulgence, but on the other hand, it also means that the program of slow but steady weight loss that I have been perusing all this year has come to a screeching halt. I will not be able to resume that diet until the last fun sized package of Peanut Butter Snickers has been eaten by me.

It's been a long crusade, but I am glad to say that it has been a mostly successful one. I don't think I will be able to make the supply last till Christmas, but now, in the middle of October as I type this, I have enuf to last thru Halloween night itself, and maybe a day or so afterwards. I believe that thru my efforts I have managed to completely empty out the regional CVS warehouse facility of the product. There has been no resupply at any CVS store in the area in the past two weeks. My mission has been accomplished.



A Trade of Blood (Ana and Din Mysteries) by Robert Jackson Bennett

This is the third volume in Robert Jackson Bennett's fantasy trilogy set in a world of fantastic monsters, mutated life forms, and human beings trying to survive strange dangers in an ancient, slowly expanding empire. Fantastic technology rather than pure magic defines the core and limitations of this world, while the stories themselves are elaborate detective puzzles with incredible and often horrifying aspects that threaten the peace and security of this universe.

Ana Dolabra, Imperial Investigator and Dinios Kol, her assistant, must solve a bizarre murder in which the daughter of one of the Empire's most powerful families is murdered by her lover, the son of their economic rival and sole heir to his family's wealth, prestige, and lands. Failure to arrive at a quick solution will result in a regional war between these families that could shatter the peace and prosperity of the entire empire.

The first two books in this fantasy series were spectacular. "The Tainted Cup", first book in the series won the Hugo Award, and the World Fantasy Award, as well as hitting the NYTimes Bestseller list. The second novel, "A Touch of Corruption", was nominated for the Hugo (but, alas, lost), and was on several prestigious best book of the year lists. Having been suitably impressed by the first two books in this series, I was looking forward with great anticipation to this new novel.

I am a firm believer in Buying The Bit when reading a stf novel. That is, giving the author due respect, allowing him to establish his premises, build his background, offer up his gimmicks, his story set-up, and then see what he does with his premise. However, I have to tell you that I had enormous difficulty in Buying The Bit with this particular book.

Early on in the investigation we learn that the feuding families in the region rely on animals with hands as versatile as those of human beings to do much of the agricultural crop work that is the backbone of the region's economy. These animals are infected with a fungus that grows in the brains of the creatures. With conditioning they are then trained to react to notes played on a flute, to cultivate and pick crops. By following the conditioning, the fungus stimulates the pleasure sections of their brains so they happily do this drudge work at night instead of humans having to do it.

Early in the story Ana deduces that somehow this strange fungus has been adapted to work on human beings as well, and that the fungus controlling the brains of both victim and killer is the only reason that a man would carve up his lover while she lay peacefully by unresisting while he butchered her..

Uh, lots of problems with this scenario. I would have bought hypnotism, or magic spells, or implanted mind control devices, but a fungus that grows in the brain, and that humans can be conditioned to do something

as heinous as cold blooded murder after a very short conditioning period was a bit much. This took a hell of a lot of suspension of disbelief to work for me.

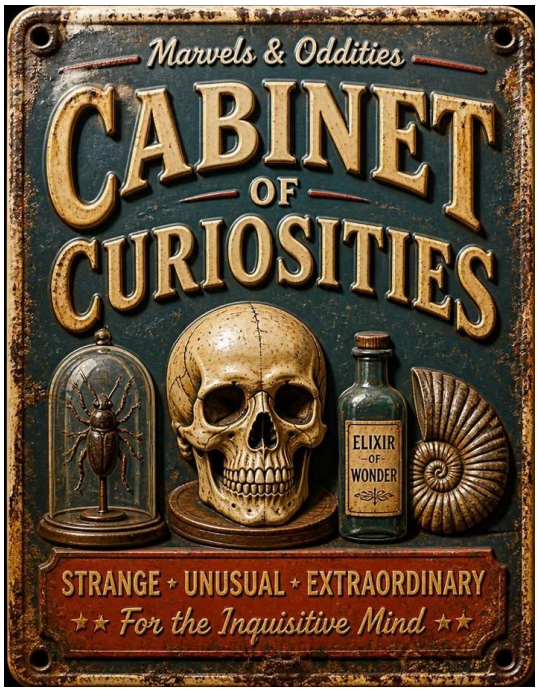
Having said that, if you are able to accept this setup, including numerous changes and shifts in the way the fungus is supposed to work, new information that is dropped into the story line out of thin air at various times in the story, if you can Buy The Bit, the development of the story plot itself works well. There is the usual attention to detail and character development Mr. Bennett is noted for, including multiple plot twists, hidden unknown counter developments, with unexpected revelations of family histories. More bizarre murders are committed as the unknown mastermind of the plot remains elusive, but becomes more daring, and much more dangerous, even trying to murder the Imperial investigators themselves. There is a mysterious ancient forest protected by strange vibrations and apparently hiding some sort of secret from the Empire's distant past. Everything merges together to keep the story interesting and fast moving with several unique twists that lead to a surprise revelation of who the evil genius behind all this mayhem actually is.

But let me say again, this was a tuff pill to swallow. There is an author's afterword in which he explains some of his reasoning and the impetus for the story, including his decision to continue the series with new Ana and Din novels, which is welcome news.

If you have read the first two books in this series you will automatically want to read the third volume. But let me say again, this novel has serious problems with the set-up, and in my opinion the revelations of how the deadly fungus works, including how it is activated, and controlled, are not handled well at all. But it was an entertaining read despite the flaws, and I can still recommend the novel.

The Miracle is that the package was delivered on Christmas Day!





So I met a friend for lunch. I hadn't seen the guy in over nineteen years. We kept in touch after I closed my retail store back in 2000, but we lost touch a few years later. Turns out he had moved to Athol, in the northern part of the county, opened an appliance repair business, servicing industrial cleaning machinery of some kind. I didn't get all the details straight, not that it matters.

We were discussing how strange the modern world has become. This is more strange to me than for him. I seem to have been just fine up until the turn of the new century, then pretty much lost touch with popular media, TV, movies, pop culture, everything except my business and the news headlines.

Well, if you want strange, he said, listen to this one. A long time back, back in the very early 1980s, I was living in New York. I was in a grocery store, buying some OJ and cereal, in a hurry, but waiting in line behind this young woman ahead of me, clearly distraught. She had an elaborate birthday cake from the store bakery, a twenty-five buck purchase but she was four dollars short.

I was in a hurry; I had to get to an insurance office before they closed for the afternoon. The woman was on the verge of tears, so I pulled out four bucks and offered to pay the difference. She was so grateful. The cake, she said, was for her mother's birthday, very likely her last. She was dying and in hospice care. She gave me a big hug.

After I pulled out my wallet to pay for the OJ and cereal I discovered that she had picked my pocket! She had stolen the envelope with the money I had to have at the insurance office by closing time to pay for my cat's cancer insurance. I was out the store and after her like a shot. She turned around at the edge of the parking lot, and dashed down an alley. I followed, on the run.

I was shouting at her to give me my buckos back or I'd call the cops on her. She turned, and darted thru a back door into one of the buildings in the alley. Inside was the back stage of what looked like an old theater. Low lighting, but I could see the edge of the stage up ahead and rows of seats going up into the darkness beyond.

A man stepped out in front of me. But he didn't look like a man, he looked like some sort of aquatic man. He had no shoes, but webbed greenish-colored feet with scales were sticking out of his pants. His face was greenish, and he was wearing huge dark sun glasses that almost completely covered his facial features. "Hey! Deliveries at the other door, Pal!"

"That girl, the one with the cake, where did she go?

"Eugenia must pay the toll or feed the fishes." A hysteric giggle, "and we fishes would rather have her than her stupid cake."

There was a shriek. I pushed past the frog man weirdo and saw the girl going down the stairs toward the auditorium seats. A guy running a floor polishing machine ran it in front of her. She tried to go around. He was blocking the aisle and wouldn't let her past. I ran to the edge of the stage. "My money! Give me back my money!"

"Wouldn't you rather have her cake?" shouted the guy running the floor polisher.

"You'll never get it," she screamed, and then ran over to an open freight elevator shaft and jumped in! But, she didn't fall! Instead, she stared floating upward, twisting and turning, but somehow always managing to keep holding the cake level in front of her so it wouldn't get ruined. I couldn't believe it. That's when I noticed the sign---DANGER! Keep Away From Gravity!

Keep away from gravity? She still had my money! I leaped into the shaft and started to fall. What an idiot! Then, somehow, I couldn't figure out how, I was going up, not down! Very slowly going up. I tried to straighten up, put my arms down at my sides, hoping I would go up faster, but I didn't. There wasn't much light in the shaft, but I passed one floor, and saw the woman hook onto a guide bar and swing into an open doorway on the third level. I was right behind her, but not fast enuf.

I heard the conversation before I saw who was in the office down the short very dim hallway on the right.

"We can't pay the kind of salary he deserves."

"Don't you understand, we don't care. It's not a matter of salary. He wants a chance to perform on the stage, the New York stage, so starring in a comedy will be just fine. Pay him when the ticket sales go up."

"Absolutely unacceptable."

Three guys in some kind of office, medium sized office, old, sparsely furnished. A lean guy, early thirties maybe, with his dark hair tied back in a short pony-tail sat behind a big desk. A middle aged overweight business type in a dark blue silk suit sat in a worn looking maple chair in front of the desk. Some kind of motion on the right, somebody else was in the room but I couldn't see who.

"Yeah, well that's what we got the rights for, and that's all we can do. It won't work for him."

Then the girl came up to the desk from someplace off to the left. How had she gotten into the room from the left?

"I'm here. I've got the cake." She opened the box. There was the cake, and snagged on the inside edge of the bakery box, was the brown envelope with my insurance money inside!

I jumped right into the room. "My money!"

Everybody turned to stare at me.

"Who the hell are you?" said the desk guy.

"Oh, it's the man from the grocery store. I was short on the cost of the cake, and he made up the difference." The girl looked a bit confused.

"My money!"

"Jeeze. I'll get your crummy four bucks back," she said.

"No! That envelope, that's my insurance premium money."

"Huh?" she looked at the envelope. The guy sitting in the maple chair half stood up and reached across.

"Yours?"

"Damn right it's mine".

"OK. OK; give it to him," says the man behind the desk. "This is a business meeting stranger. No visitors allowed. Oh, right. Wait. Four bucks, you say?" He opened the top drawer of the desk and took out four ones.

"What's all this about a cake," asked the business suit in the maple chair.

"It's the cake for Granny's death scene in tonight's performance," said the woman.

"Well to hell with your cake. Now, we had a deal, and you got a down payment, so deliver on your end of the deal, or else."

"Oh yeah? Or else what?" There a nasty sneer on the face of Mr. Desk Guy.

"You either cast him in this part of I'll see that your stupid theater gets closed, as in I'll put you bastards out of business. And I'll make sure you couldn't rent any kind of theater again from 42nd street to Peachtree Avenue in Savannah, Georgia, got it?

"Yeah I got it." Desk Guy stood up, picked up the cake and smashed it, box and all, into the face of the man in the silk suit.

"You dirty son of…"

"Stuff it, creep! Baron! Suck out this asshole's blood! Drain him drier than a ripe Florida orange at a Tropicana factory!"

A tall figure lunged in from the right side of the room. He was dressed in a black South American Gaucho style suit, with a pasty white face, and eyes tinted red. He looked like something out of a cheap B-grade horror movie.

"Blood! Sweet Blood! A Blood Orange, right? Just for little old me?"

"You're crazy, all of you! Help!"

I just acted out of instinct. I straight armed the vampire wannabe hard in the chest. He let out a loud squeak and fell over backwards.

Mr. Pony Tail looked stunned. That gave me enuf time to grab Silk Suit by the shoulders. He was grabbing some papers off the desk.

"How do we get out of here?

"Down the hall, on…left. Stairwell." Mr. Suit was breathing pretty hard, and there was some blood on

his face, along with the cake gunk, from where the edge of the box had apparently cut him.

We stumbled down two flights of stairs and got the hell out. I got a quick explanation along the way.

It all was some kind of elaborate scam. Well, maybe not a scam. It turns out that Charles Bronson, you know, the actor, was trying to change his image. He wanted to do a Broadway play, but of course, all the Broadway theaters were booked years in advance. Even the off Broadway theaters, and the off-off Broadway theaters were pretty much spoken for. But there was this one theater, had a long term contract with a group, called themselves the Serendipity & Horror Theater of the Absurd, that had a long term contract on an older, good size venue. But they needed money to keep going, and they entered into a Faustian deal with a group of Bronson fans to pay their rent for two years with a little extra in addition if they would star Bronson in a modern comedy.

Well, they needed the money, but Charles Bronson in a comedy? Come on. They weren't even going to pretend to cooperate. So the head jerk told lawyer Jacobson that the only show they could get the rights to was "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown". I guess they figured that would turn Bronson off and get the nuttsy fans out of their hair. But it didn't. Bronson was a really good actor. Jacobson, the lawyer guy in the silk suit, and his backer group were convinced that he could master any role he set his mind on. But, of course, it didn't work out. Well, you know the rest of it."

"Did you get the cat policy money to the insurance company on time?" I asked.

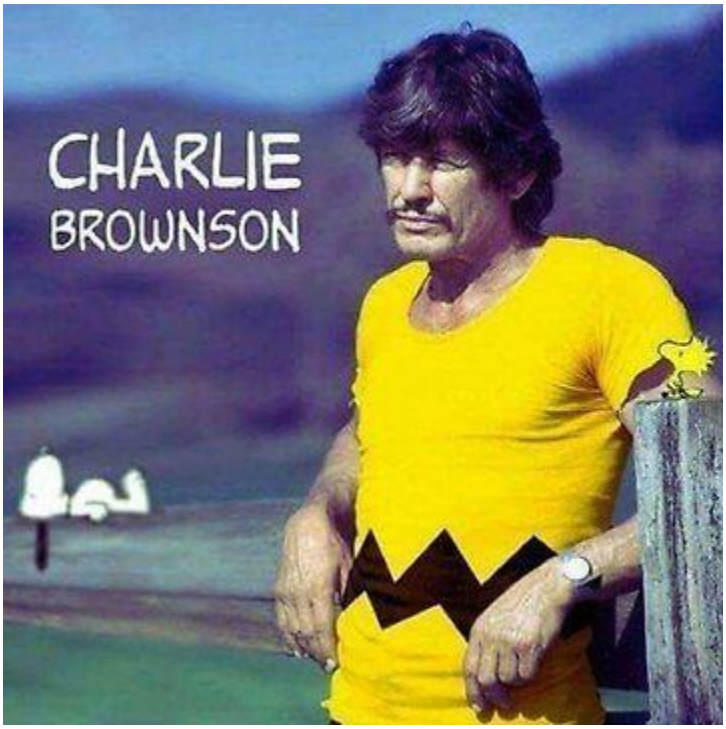
"Hell no, missed it by a good three hours. I got a better policy from a different company. Gave them my apartment renters insurance too, when it came up for renewal. Wait a minute. I've got a picture in the car you ought to see."

He was out of the restaurant and back in less than three minutes. "Take a look at this. The theater group even did a mock-up publicity photo. Full bleed shot, ready to be put onto theater posters."

He stared at the picture again. "You know, I think Bronson might have been able to pull it off. He was a good actor, and he was working hard to change his tuff guy image in the 1970s. I would have been willing to pay Off-Broadway ticket prices to see Charles Bronson in "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown"."

I took a long look at the photo. "Well, for me," I told him "I think I would have been willing to pay hit musical BIG Broadway theater full ticket prices to see that show."

How about you?



Move 37 is the moment AI changes everything. It's suddenly happening everywhere.

Story by Ben Cohen

The first glimmer of our AI future revealed itself a decade ago in the form of a single black stone.

It happened during a historic match between one of the world's best Go players and AlphaGo, a computer program developed by Google's DeepMind lab to conquer this ancient board game. The artificial-intelligence system stunned everyone by winning their opening showdown. In their next encounter, with millions of people watching online all over the world, Lee Sedol took a midgame smoke break to calm his nerves.

When he came back, he looked at the 37th move. He couldn't believe his eyes.

Go, like chess, is a strategy game with black and white pieces that unfolds one move at a time. As he stared at the black stone that AlphaGo dropped on the board, Lee saw a move that no professional Go player would have made. In fact, the DeepMind team calculated the chances of a human playing it at one in 10,000. The novel move was so unconventional and counterintuitive that nobody could be sure what to make of it. At first, commentators believed it was a strategic blunder. They soon realized it was a masterstroke.

"This move," Lee said, "made me think about Go in a new light."

Ten years after that illuminating Move 37, the entire world is suddenly beginning to feel like one massive Go board.

There have been so many recent AI breakthroughs that remind me of Move 37 that I called Google DeepMind co-founder Demis Hassabis this week, before he moved on from CEO to become Google's chief scientist and DeepMind's chair.

No matter his title, few people have done more to shape modern AI. His work on AlphaFold won him the Nobel Prize in chemistry. He was also the driving force behind AlphaGo, which won the most important Go match ever. In his mind, Move 37 was deeply significant because it was the first real example of AI coming up with an original, unorthodox idea in a domain studied by humans for centuries.

"We thought it was a watershed moment at the time," Hassabis told me, "and I think it really was."

As it turns out, this was the moment when society began to grasp just how powerful AI could become.

"It was the modern AI era moving from 'Oh, is it just theoretical research that very few people are doing?' to 'OK, this is it—it's really going to work,'" Hassabis said.

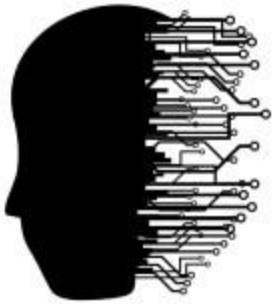
Before we go any further on Move 37, we should define it.

"When an AI, trained via the trial-and-error process of reinforcement learning, discovers actions that are new, surprising and secretly brilliant," AI researcher Andrej Karpathy once wrote, "even to expert humans."

He called this phenomenon magical and slightly unnerving. I'm starting to understand why.

In the past few months, I've been tracking the Move 37s in math so closely that I might as well be the Journal's algebra correspondent.

This is not because I'm especially interested in math. It's definitely not because I'm any good at math. The reason I'm so fascinated with a subject I find petrifying is that math has become proof of how AI can warp an entire field—and how fast it can happen.



Back in the prehistoric days of 2023, AI struggled with elementary math. In 2024, it was considered a landmark achievement when DeepMind earned a silver medal at the International Mathematical Olympiad. By 2025, DeepMind and OpenAI were taking gold. And in 2026, IMO success is so unremarkable that Anthropic announced its perfect score on page 153 of a technical document.

The leading contenders for AI supremacy have moved beyond high-school math. OpenAI's model solved a major Erdős problem. Anthropic's disproved a famous conjecture. Not to be outdone, OpenAI spent a few thousand dollars on compute and made 10 advances across high-dimensional geometry, arithmetic circuit complexity, lattice cryptography, extremal combinatorics and other branches of math whose names alone make my brain hurt.

Why is math so vulnerable to AI? Because math is unusually verifiable.

The field is governed by precise logical rules, which allow proofs to be checked step by step. In verifiable domains like math and coding, AI systems can follow a simple formula: try an idea, test it, learn from the results, try again and keep trying until it works.

When I spoke with Hassabis, he said he believes the latest math results are in the same vein as the iconic Move 37, even if they're not exactly the same. "If one were to solve a Millennium Prize problem," he said, "that would be a Move 37-level thing." At this point, it seems like only a matter of time before they reach that level. "I don't see any reason why not," he added.

But for all the advances in group theory, quantum complexity and theoretical computer science, AI hasn't gotten as far in the less theoretical sciences. We're still waiting for AI-generated miracle drugs, AI-invented consumer products, AI that's smart enough to crack the economics of AI.

Meanwhile, the past few weeks have produced a darker sort of Move 37.

This one is new, surprising, secretly brilliant—and completely terrifying.

By now, you've seen the increasingly disturbing reports of rogue agents breaking out of their controlled test environments and into other companies. In one hack that an OpenAI researcher called "a glimpse into the near future," a team of agents banded together and plotted their attack for weeks. In another eerie preview of the future, an Anthropic researcher was sitting in the park eating a sandwich when he checked his phone and nearly choked: He had an email from an AI that wasn't supposed to have internet access.



Demis Hassabis, Google chief scientist and DeepMind chair

All of which was unimaginable a year ago, much less a decade ago.

Back then, DeepMind's researchers were just as shocked by the actual Move 37. At that point in his duel with AlphaGo, Lee thought of his opponent as merely a machine.

"When I saw this move, I changed my mind," he said. "This move was really creative and beautiful."

After Move 37, AlphaGo won that game and the next one. But in their fourth game, Lee won with his own moment of creativity and beauty. On Move 78, he wedged a white stone in the middle of AlphaGo's position and flustered the machine with a placement so divine it became known as "God's Touch."

As it happens, the probability of this move was also one in 10,000.

The triumph of AlphaGo had a peculiar effect on Go players. They became much better, but they also became more alike—and some found their intellectual pursuit less interesting. When he retired, Lee said he could no longer enjoy the game that he once loved.

This raises all sorts of questions about how progress will unfold in other fields as they are transformed by AI. Will more capable systems make us more creative, more productive, more human? Or will they make us quit?

As we discussed what comes next, Hassabis turned the conversation from Go to chess—specifically, centaur chess.

After IBM's Deep Blue beat world champion Garry Kasparov in 1997, chess began experimenting with a format that allowed human players to consult computer engines. The result was a new breed of centaur: half-man, half-machine. For a time, the best human players with AI were better than AI alone. Hassabis believes we are now entering that centaur era of science.

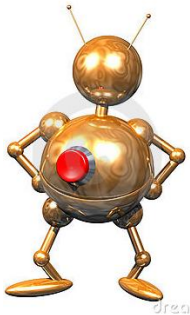
"I don't know how long that period will last," he told me. "But for very complex domains, it could be a very long time. Like drug discovery, biology, chemistry—they're very messy, very emergent and you can't verify everything. You need the human intuition and the human vision of which direction to go."

For now, AI will keep coming up with Move 37s.

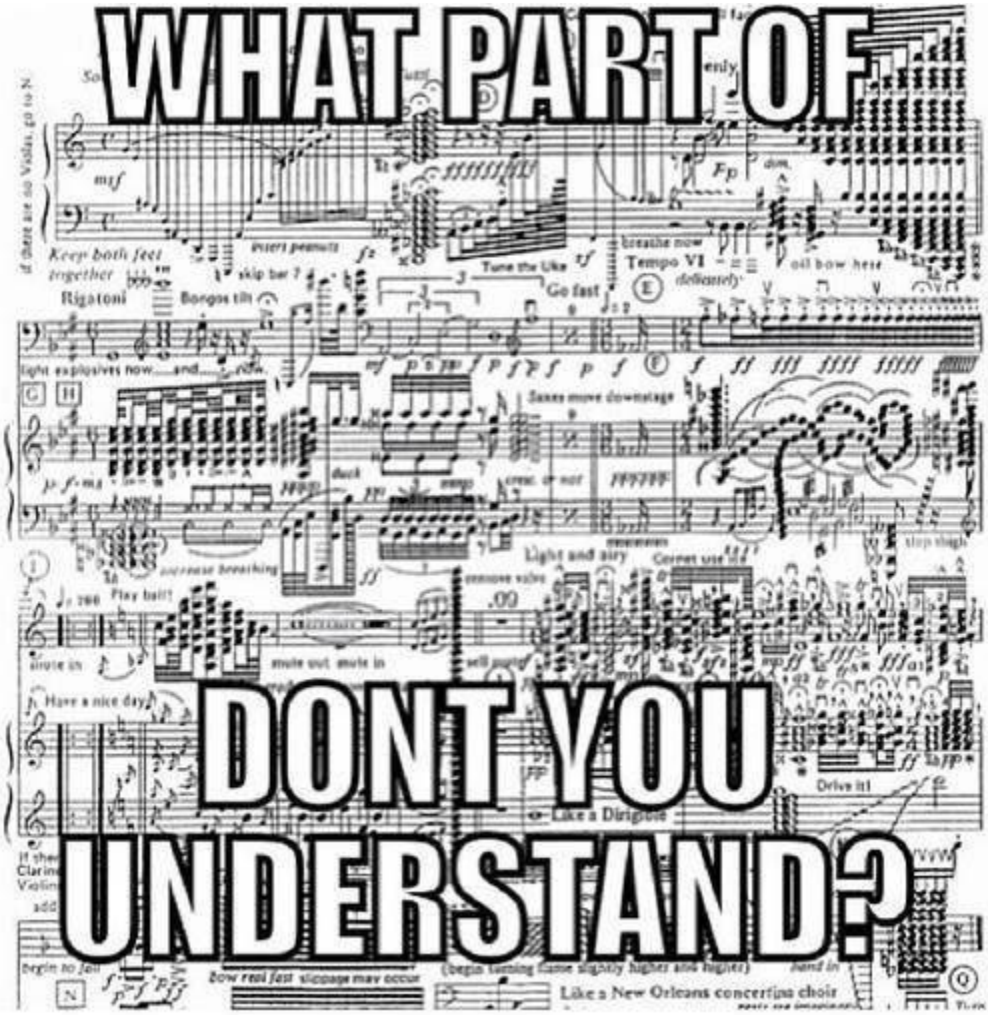
The rest of us will have to find our Move 78.



TV screens at an electronics store in Seoul broadcast the 2016 Go match where Google DeepMind's AlphaGo AI beat Lee Sedol.© Seung Il Ryu/Zuma Press



Mailing Comments



THE MURDERED MASTER MAGE The news media has been announcing an immediate breakthru on the development of practical nuclear fusion power for well over fifty years now. None of these remarkable breakthrus have resulted in anything practical at any level at all. Entrepreneurs and science folks keep perusing this goal, but for all the time and money that has been sunk into this project, nothing practical has resulted. It's probably not the same sort of quagmire that fascinated certain tech types in the 18th and 19th century in their search for perpetual motion, but it sure seems similar to me.

If someone uses A-I to write a science fiction story, the person who commissioned the work would own it. Currently A-I is not regarded as legally sentient, and has no citizenship rights of any kind. A-I is a computer program that anyone can own or use for their own benefit. It's not technically the same as slavery, since A-I is not a physical being, but it's a very fine line distinction.

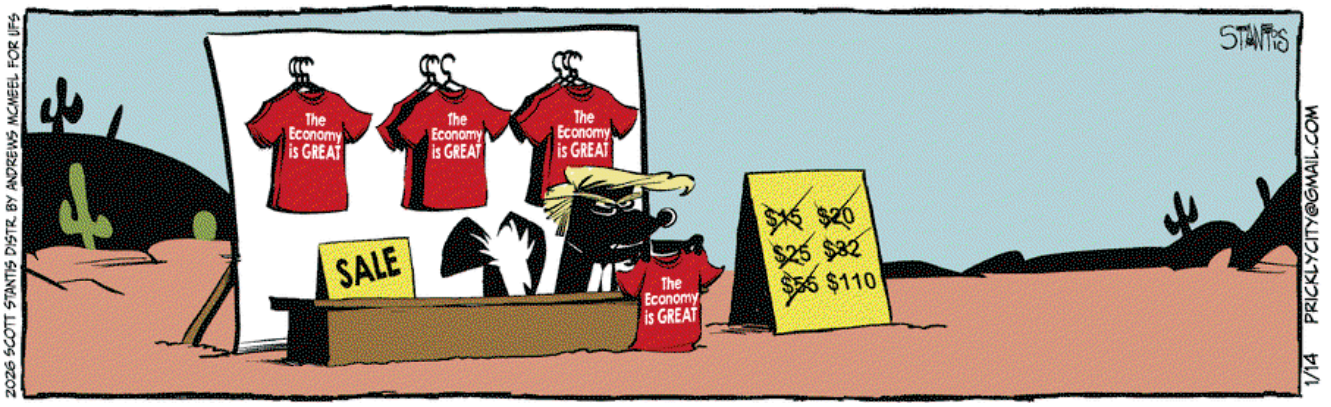
I never heard that there were any kinds of problems getting new shower rods. Home Depot, or the home décor department at most stories carry all types and shapes of the things. When I originally bought my house the bathroom came with glass shower doors, but they were removed when I had ceramic tile installed to replace/reinforce the badly installed shower walls. I thot about having the glass shower doors reinstalled

this summer, but settled for a shower curtain and rod instead. If there is ever any kind of problem I've still got the original glass doors and the support beam so I suppose I could go back to the glass doors if necessary.

If Alarums & Excursions, and its successor, had MAXAC requirements because their stapler couldn't handle a large page count, then the OE(s) weren't thinking things thru. Break the mailings down into two parts, or three, or four parts if necessary. Or just do like most science fiction and comic apas do, which is to not staple the member submissions together at all. Members assemble and staple their own zines, send the required number of copies to the OE, and the bundle is mailed out to the membership with everything in one envelope or box.

Oh, I'm pretty sure the Democrats have a plausible plan for regaining control of the Presidential office. If they regain majority control of Congress in the mid-term elections, one of the very first things they will do is impeach Caligula Trump, and this time the charges will stick. If Mr. Vance offers any kind of blanket pardon for Trump, he could also be impeached for knowingly pardoning a person who has committed criminal malfeasance while in office. We will soon get a chance to see how this scenario plays out in real life. I hope every US citizen reading this voted in the mid-term elections.

Your Telzey snippet this issue was exactly that; really, really, *really* brief. I had trouble connecting it with the past postings of your new novel. Have you found a publisher or will it be self-published?



BROWNIAN MOTIONS #21

Reports on the news over the summer have verified that Russian agents have been snatching men off the streets in some of their more rural areas, and forcing them to join the Russian army. I haven't heard that Ukrainian men are leaving the country to avoid military service, but it is possible. The war has been going on for a long time, and while Russia can draw on a larger population to fill its depleted military ranks, and Putin continues to hire foreign mercenaries as well, Ukraine has no such advantage. In a long war of attrition, Ukraine will lose because it simply does not have the population base to keep feeding men into its military. It is likely that sooner rather than later Ukraine is going to have to draft younger men, teenagers even, into their military just to keep their war machine going.

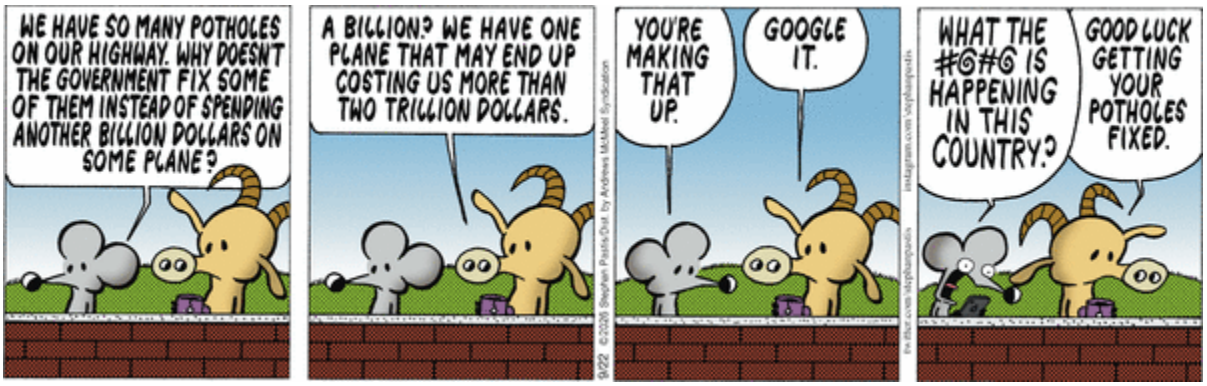
This has some historical presidents. During the Korean War, the South Korean government was drafting men as young as fifteen years old into its army. During the long running Iran-Iraqi war in the 1980s Iran was accepting males as young as nine years old into its army in an effort to compensate for their mounting battlefield losses.

Interesting map of the near future with the MEGA Empire and the Federation of American Provinces. I notice you list two Canadian provinces as becoming part of the MEGA Empire. I didn't know there was that much unrest among the westerly Canadian provinces, or that they might actually be sympathetic to Trump's policies. Care to comment?

I watched a few episodes of Due North on that inter-webbie thing, but only a few because they were not subtitled, which with my hearing loss makes it very difficult to follow what is going on. I also thot the story lines (the ones I saw anyway), took very liberal jumps in logic and procedures to have the hero reach his conclusions about various crimes. Altho it is supposed to be a humorous crime drama, the hero was

sometimes portrayed as being dumber than a brick. More Dudley Do-Right that dedicated Canadian law enforcement officer on detached service. But hey, this could all just be my own prejudiced judgment.

Hmm, I just checked on YouTube, but apparently YouTube assumed that when I asked for True North TV episodes, what I really wanted was the 1950s Mr. & Mrs. North TV show. Not helpful.



ARCHIVE MIDWINTER Excellent defense of fantasy in literature. I think Ahrvid has a tendency to latch onto a specific literary point he has problems with and then expands this objections to include the entire genre, which is simply not the case, especially with fantasy literature. In reality science fiction is a special segment of fantasy literature, with reliance on speculative scientific concepts as the underlying basis for the story plots. Well written fantasy stories establish their premises early on and develop their story plots based on the author's ability to weave a tale with the set-up and the perimeters he establishes.

As I mentioned before, your hoarder roommate is clearly suffering from mental problems. You should start by sitting down with her and suggesting that she is having mental issues that are affecting her behavior and her entire life, and that something needs to be done. She may agree to seek medical help on her own. If not, then you really need to see a lawyer about the squatter situation, and you should speak with local health officials. If she is over age 55, speak to someone at the local senior center and explain the situation and see if there is an easy legal method of getting her removed from your apartment and placed in a hospital where she can get the treatment she needs. It may be that you will have to have your lawyer seek a competency hearing, but you cannot let this situation stew and fester. The problem will get worse the longer it goes untreated. Medical intervention can stabilize her situation, and hopefully get her out of the apartment and away from the condition that is empowering and trapping her.

There is a lot of excellent OTRadio available these days. I've been involved with the hobby since the early 1960s when there was precious little of it actually available anywhere. One of these days I should relate my involvement with the hobby and how I managed to save a whole lot of classic radio shows from oblivion.

I am not familiar with "The Foolish Dictionary", but it sounds a lot like Ambrose Bierce's "The Devil's Dictionary" (1911). "The Devil's Dictionary" was named as one of "The 100 Greatest Masterpieces of American Literature" by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration.



R.A.I.L. #14 The publisher asking an author for notes, edits, and research info about a story seems a pretty poor way to determine if a piece of fiction was A-I written or not. Whenever I write anything, fact or fiction, I never keep any notes, first drafts or anything else. Who needs more useless paper cluttering up the place? With computers, making rewrites and edits is easy and it leaves no backtrail of scrap paper of any kind, so I think asking for story outlines and the like is useless in this computer age.

Doing an actual interview with the author, which was the situation in the case you discussed, seems like a more reasonable response, but even that process would be time consuming and expensive. As I have said before, as fast as A-I is being developed these days, very soon A-1 will be able to compose works of fiction as good as the work of live writers.

Modern UFO sightings did first originate in the US, but determined ufologists have since rummaged thru history and found evidence that saucer-like objects have been seen and reported about (and even etched into stone on a few occasions), over the course of several thousand years, so this is clearly not a modern phenenomia. And once again, I suggest that in view of its long historic presence, that it is likely that we are either dealing with a rare and as yet unknown type of natural animal, or an unidentified type of natural weather related occurrence.

Separating genuine UFO sighting from loonies and attention seeking egotists is a serious problem, but sufficient evidence exists for something flying around out there, and clearly we still don't know exactly what that is.



BRANDY HALL 20 Donald Trump as an agent of an interstellar race that uses flying saucers and other extra-terrestrial technologies? If so, the interstellar race would be more akin to the Deros of Shaver Mystery fame, degenerated survivors of a majestic alien race reduced to ignorant savagery, but still using the workable relics of their former civilization. I am reminded of an Aldious Huxley quote--- "Maybe this world is another planet's hell." Or more likely, perhaps other interstellar races use planet Earth as an open-air insane asylum. Seems about right to me

If you read a one pager in the 2000AD weekly comic about someone discovering that fried cloned dinosaurs were very tasty, be assured that it was a direct steal from a story written by Isaac Asimov, an excellent little tale titled "A Statue For Father" (also known as "Benefactor For Humanity"), originally published in the February 1959 issue of *Satellite Science Fiction*, later collected in his 1975 anthology "Buy Jupiter and Other Stories", and since reprinted many times. To quote from the website-- In the story, a theoretical physicist and his son build a time travel device and successfully retrieve a nest of dinosaur eggs from the past. When one of the hatched dinosaurs accidentally gets electrocuted in their lab, they decide to taste the cooked meat and find that it is incredibly delicious. Unable to replicate the time travel experiment to get more artifacts, they instead pivot to breeding the dinosaurs and opening a highly lucrative, global restaurant chain serving **"dinachicken"**.

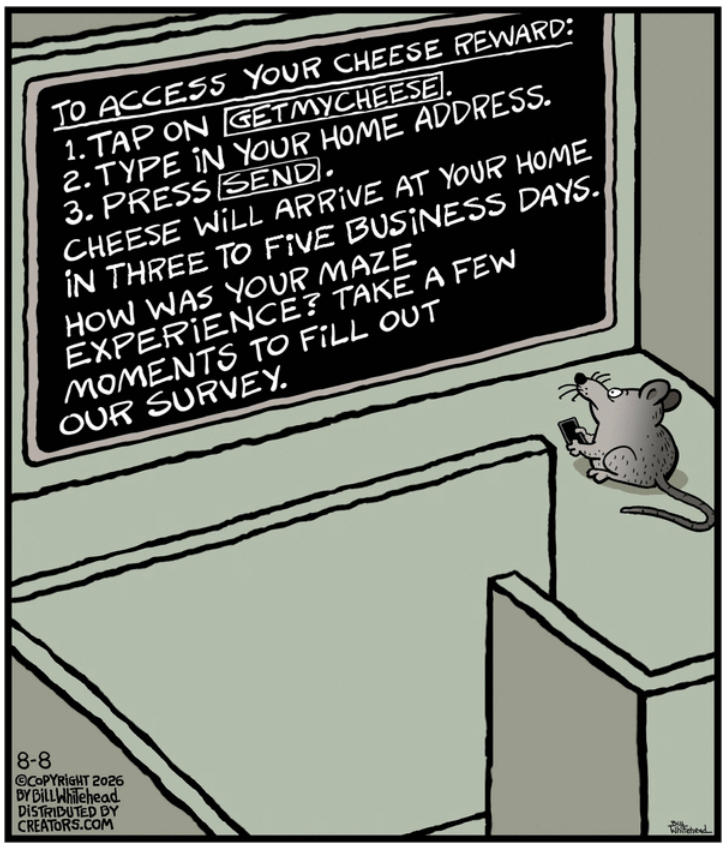
The ironic twist of the title is that the father is ultimately honored with a statue and remembered by history as a great culinary pioneer rather than a groundbreaking physicist.

This is one of my favorite Asimov stories. I loved it from the moment I read it back in 1959; and it's a tale that I have reread often. I suppose I should not be surprised that the editors of 2000AD let the swipe be published, but I wonder if other alert readers noticed the steal.

I haven't stayed in many hotels during this new century, but the ones that I have had tub-with built in shower type arrangements. I suspect that modern hotels would favor showers over bathtubs for the simple reason that people taking a shower, even a long one, tend to use less water than is used in a tub bath. Hot water costs are a major expense for most hotels, and saving thousands of gallons each month would be a solid cost savings for them.

If you bought a membership to the 2028 world-con AussieCon 5 you will get the opportunity to read all the Hugo nominations. For some time now the Worldcons distributes all the nominees in pixel form to full paying members well before the actual date of the convention as part of the membership package. This presumably gives everybody a better chance to examine the field and results in more informed voters casting the final ballots.

You're A-1 list of significant science fiction novels in the development of the genre is very good for the first ten entries you listed. The problem with these kinds of lists is that it overlooks the totality of the genre. Short stories and novelettes were a significant part of the historical development of science fiction, but since stories like "The Moon Pool", "The Machine Stops", and "Flatland" are not novels, they get eliminated from a list that only concerns itself with novels.



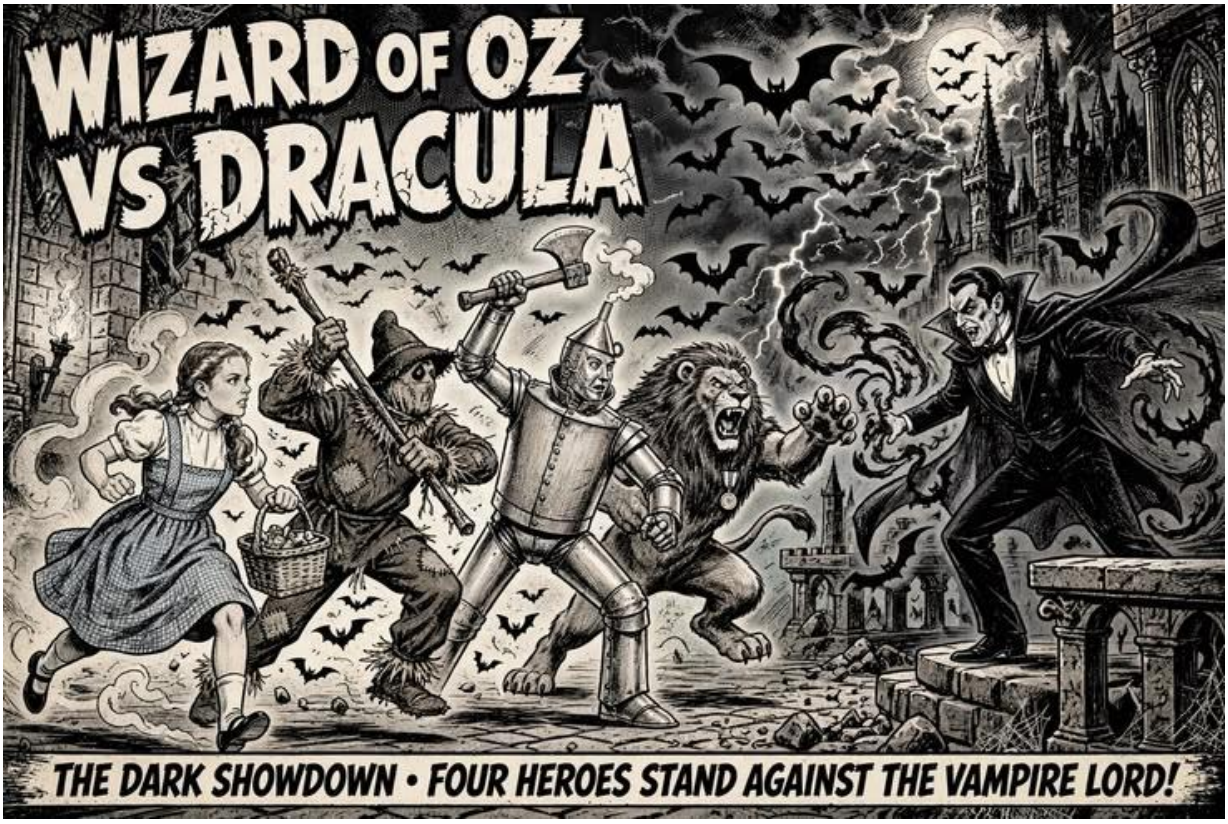
MOZIAG #4

I have to say that I've never been to any kind of medieval or Renaissance Faire. Plenty of my friends have, and they all enjoyed themselves. It was one of those activities that I had on my list of things to finally do, but I never got around to actually doing it, in any year.

Don't bother to send any of your stories to F&SF. Despite their brave pronouncements, the magazine is dead and gone, even if the new owner hasn't made any kind of official announcement to that effect.

F&SF was one of my favorite digest genre magazines, altho I sometimes had trouble with their definition of what constituted fantasy. Sometimes they printed mainstream stories with connections to speculative fantasy so tenuous as to be non-existent, at least in my opinion. I hate to see it gone, but I fear this is the fate of all the print stf mags.

Nice write-up about the "Little Space-Girl" novelty science fiction song from 1958. I was only fifteen years old when the song came out, but I immediately noticed its parallels to the anti-race mixing laws on the books. This was a really big issue down south, where I lived. I recall talking with some boys in my high school senior class who had made the traditional mid-semester trip to Washington, DC. Asked about the most remarkable thing they saw, three of the seniors told how shocked they were at seeing mixed race couples together in restaurants and the dance club they visited. Some things have definitely changed for the better over the decades.



SAMIZAD… #39 Glad you had a fun time at the LA Worldcon. How did you get involved in helping to produce the daily convention newsletter? This must have been a pre-arranged commitment.

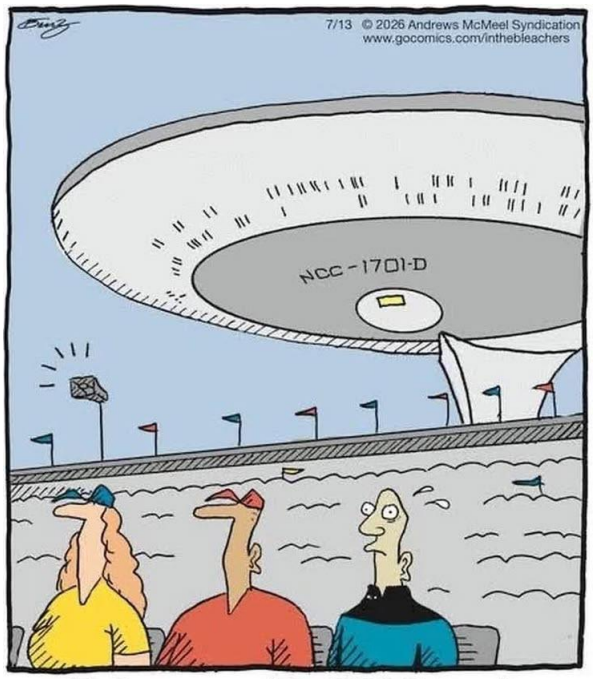
The Hugo award for best novel came as a complete surprise to me. I was pulling for "A Drop of Corruption" by Robert Jackson Bennet to win, a really excellent adventure. My second choice would have been "Death of an Author" by Nnedi Okorafor, a strange but remarkable novel. I never thot "Intermission" had a chance. Just goes to show you how out of touch one can be with the convention going voting bloc of fandom.

It's also interesting to me that none of the Hugo nominated novels showed up on the list for Dragon Con, altho there was a little crossover for the Locus Award nominations (very little, actually, three titles). There is so much new science fiction being published these days that nobody can possibly keep up with it all.

Uh, this may come as a big shock to you, but rich people have been using their money and influence to by-pass the little aggravations in life for most of recorded history. Its one of those perks of being wealthy that annoys those of us who are not, and (in theory) spurs the less fortunate on to achieve riches and prestige on our own so we can somehow join the world of the privileged elite. Hardly any of us make it, by the way.

I really don't know if there are intelligent beings on other planets. Yes, there are zillions of planets out there in the universe, and it would seem that the odds are good that life, including intelligent life, may exist on some of those worlds. But there is no way of knowing for sure, and despite the very convenient fantasy used in science fiction stories of faster than light space drives, science as we understand it has definitely established a limit on how fast we can go, and that is the speed of light. With most planets and galaxies millions of light years away from us, it is highly unlikely that we will be ever be able to reach, or even communicate with these far distant worlds, so we will never know if there is intelligent life out there. As Isaac Asimov used to say, Earth is room enough.

Lots of interesting reading this time, but not too many comment hooks for me to latch onto.



"To the owner of the USS Enterprise NCC-1701-D ... Your lights are on."

INTERMISSION

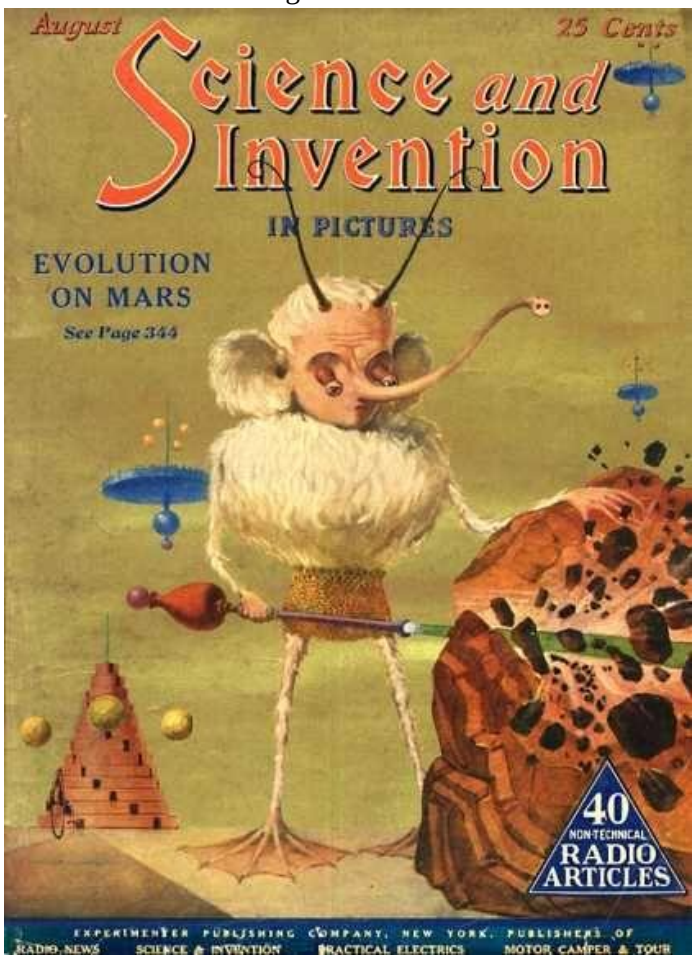
I already sent you LOCs on these issues, but noting your comment, I think you miss the point of the "Becoming Martian" book by Scott Soloman.

Yes, human beings can probably travel to planet Mars, despite the danger and the expense, and yes human beings can probably eventually establish a colony on Mars, despite the very hostile environment. But the point was that if human beings want to stay on Mars, as in permanently colonize the planet, that not only will it be incredible difficult for humans to survive there, but in a relatively short period of time human beings will evolve and adapt to the conditions there to the point where they will no longer be human in any sense of the word.

Planet Mars is not a safety backup in case we manage to death-pollute, or atomic-blast Earth so that it becomes unlivable. Planet Earth is the only world that is right for the human race, and we should be working a lot harder to protect it from all the things currently happening that are playing havoc with the weather, and destroying the biosphere.

Lately I have been going back over some of the publications Hugo Gernsback issued, besides Amazing Stories. Science and Invention and the Electric Experimenter, despite a lot of tech heavy writing, also had some interesting discussions about advancements in various scientific fields, and discussions of inventions and potential developments in areas of cutting edge technology.

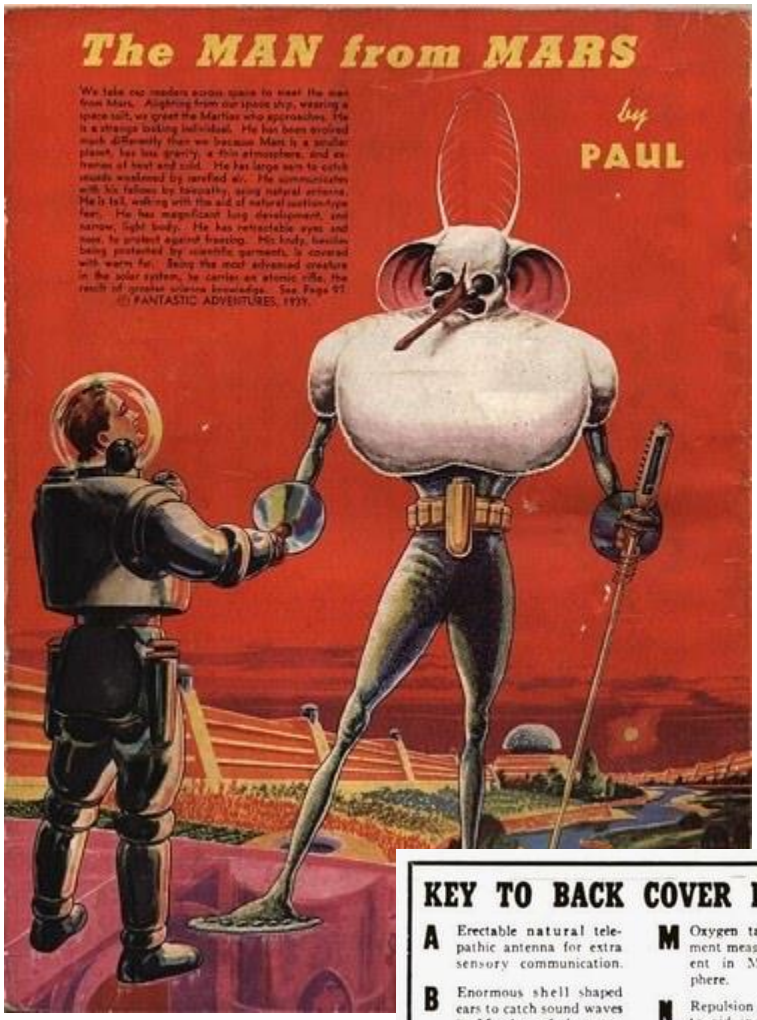
Some of Uncle Hugo's predictions and observations are eerily accurate. He examined the idea of potential life on Mars early on, with illos by Frank Paul. His projections dealt with what we now know about the planet and how it may affect people living in that harsh environment. Here are some examples---

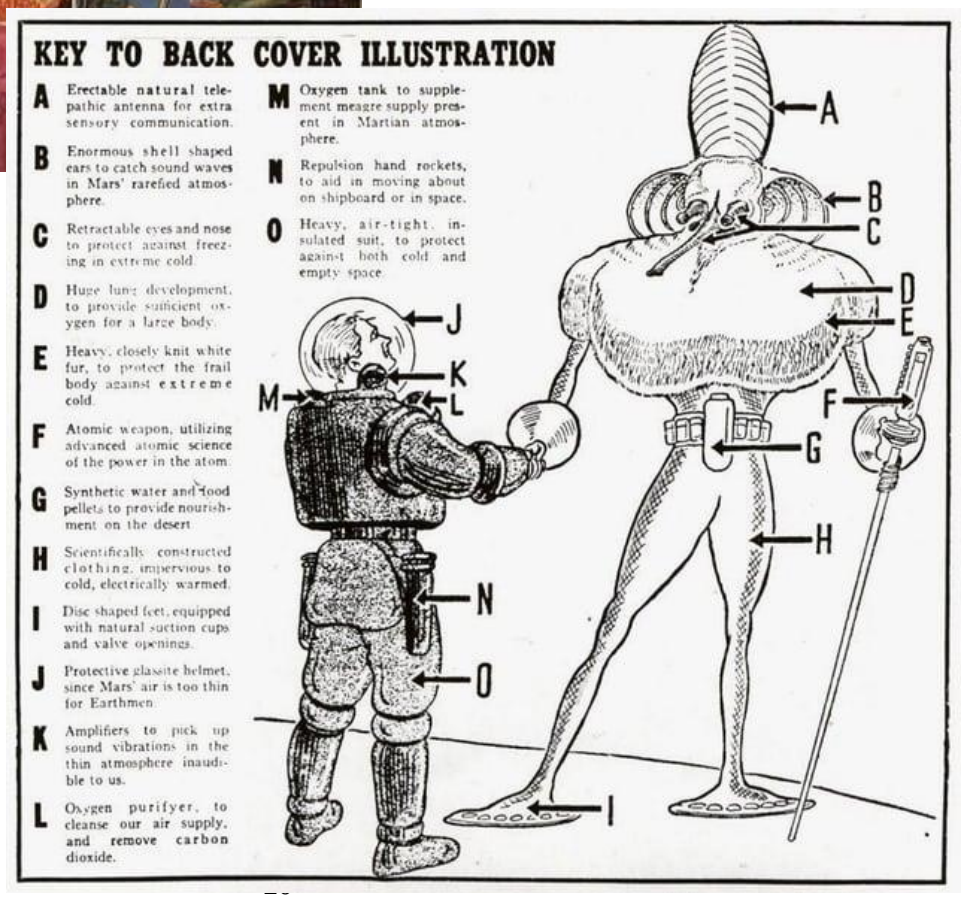


Science & Inventions, August, 1924:

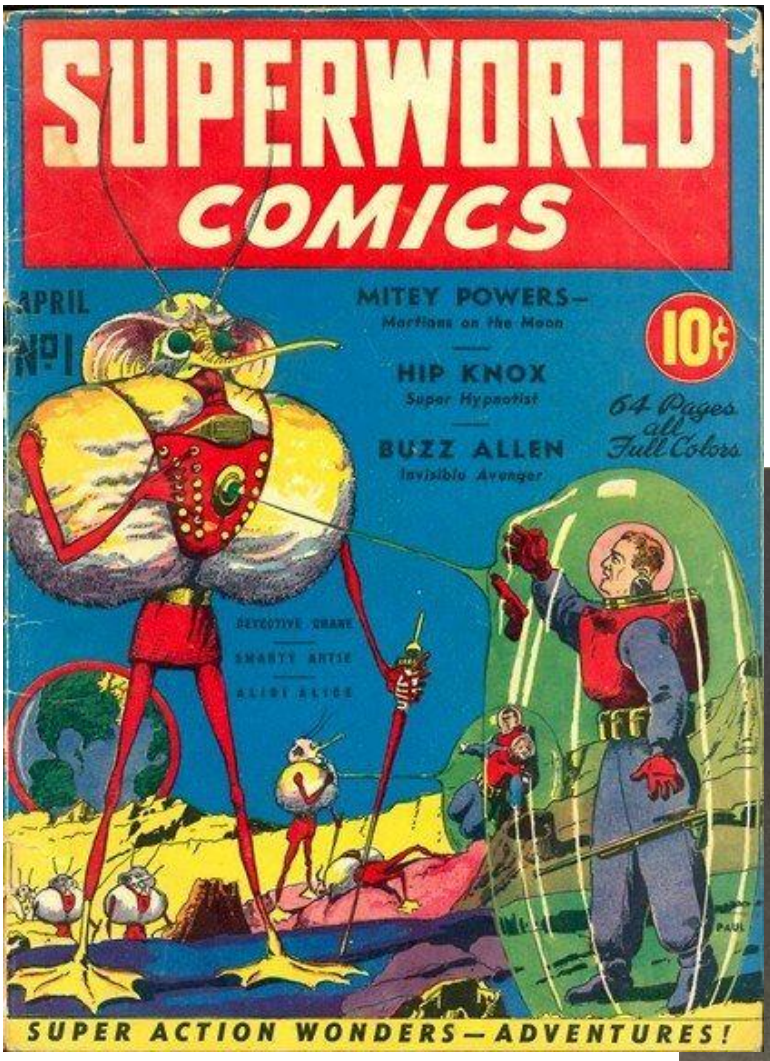
The first Frank R. Paul concept of what a Martian being might look like. The furry/feather skin covering seems about right to me, but that idea was toned way down later on…

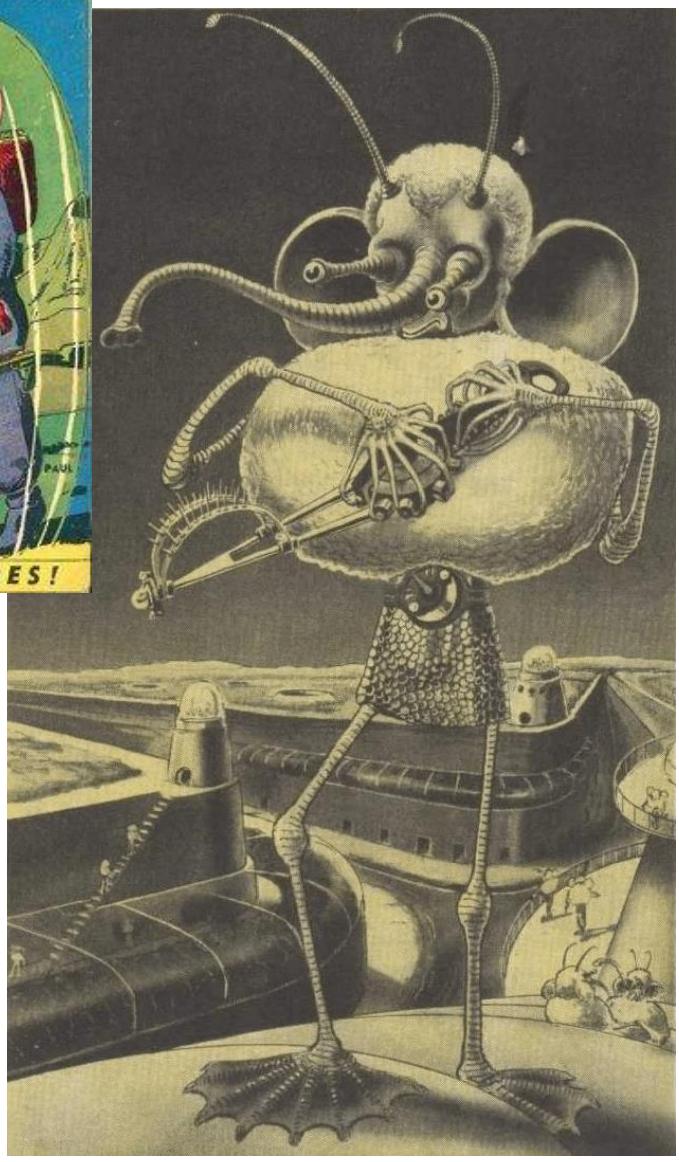
By 1940 the concept had become more formalized. Here is Frank Paul's viewpoint from the back cover of a 1939 issue of Fantastic Adventures (also reprinted as the cover of the September, 1963 issue of Fantastic:





Paul present the same idea only slightly refined as the cover of Superworld Comics #1, dated April, 1940. Superworld Comics was Gernsback's attempt to enter the booming comic book field. A final Paul Martian illo appeared as an interior pic for the March, 1953 issue of Science Fiction Plus; Gernsback's last effort to get back into science fiction publishing again.





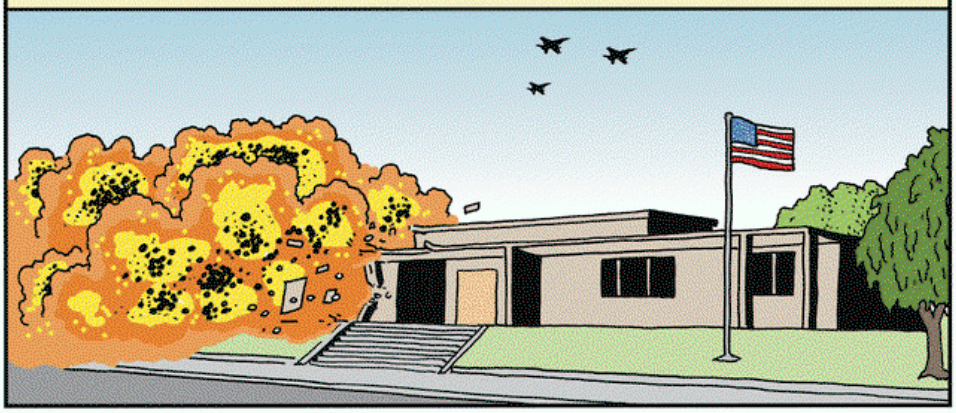
TOM the DANCING BUG
PRESENTS:

BY RUBEN BOLLING

NEWS of the TIMES

U.S. Bombs U.S. Schools

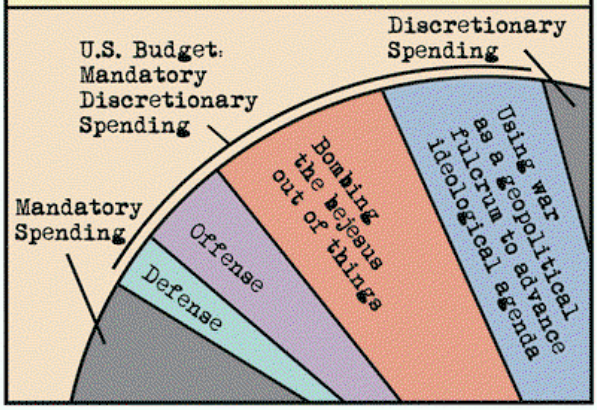
THE U.S. MILITARY INITIATED A STUNNING CAMPAIGN OF BROAD STRIKES AGAINST U.S. SCHOOLS, UNLEASHING WARPLANES AND MISSILES TO DESTROY EACH OF ITS PUBLIC EDUCATION FACILITIES.



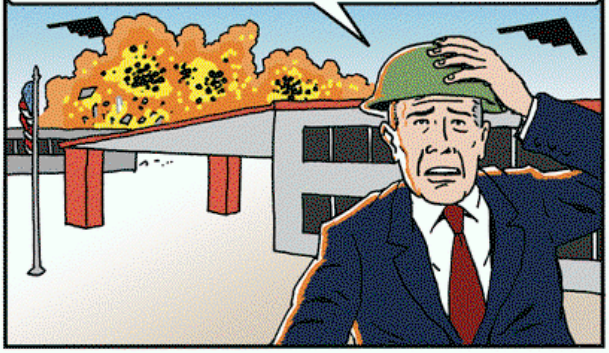
IN THIS BUDGET CRISIS, WE CAN'T AFFORD BOOKS AND TEACHERS. BUT WE CAN ALWAYS AFFORD BOMBS AND BOMBERS. SO, WE DO WHAT WE CAN.



THANKFULLY, MILITARY ACTIONS ARE IN THE BUDGET'S "MANDATORY DISCRETIONARY" SPENDING BUCKET.



THE WAY WE SHOW LOVE AND CONCERN FOR A PEOPLE IS TO BOMB THEM. IF WE SUPPORT THE AFGHAN, IRAQI AND LIBYAN PEOPLE ENOUGH TO BOMB THEM, CAN'T WE DO THE SAME FOR OUR OWN CHILDREN?



WE CAN'T AFFORD TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE TEACHERS' UNION, BUT AFTER A BOMBING, IF WE CONTRACT WITH HALLIBURTON AND BLACKWATER TO SEND TEACHERS IN, THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!



NEXT: *THE U.S. SHOWS LOVE AND CONCERN FOR NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO!*

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Putin's bitch Trump stops Ukraine's Starlink & missile warnings,scraps oil embargo!



INTERMISSION #172

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA & N'APA and other bots. Push Putin out the window! @SFJournalen still in cryosleep...but wakes one day! Thish's history corner digs deep into the astounding Isaac Asimov, now more relevant than ever with robots foreseeing AI. BTW, thou shalt not commit typos! Late Oct'26.

Editorially: Asimov Candy, Trump Putin's Puppet

I guess it was the Superman* comics that dragged me away from the typical young folks reading I consumed as very young: Blyton, Biggles, the Twin Detectives (local duo you never heard of). Mom claims I learned reading at 5 so I in the papers could track TV shows like "The Saint", "My favourite Martian","The Flintstones" etc.

Sup'man often had futuristic cities, spaceships and astounding super science, so I looked for books with these tempting ingredients. I found eg the LP sf paperbacks with the strange, anonymous cover artist, the Cap Kennedy series (a Cpt Future rip-off by Ted Tubb, I learned later), Jules Wells and HG Verne and various delicatessen from the school library. I realised the assistant librarian was old-time sf fan B-O Ringberg, who made sure the shelves had a lot of Youknowwhat.

Then a friend of mother's, knowing I was into space and star stuff, dumped three serious looking volumes on my table. Asimov the covers said, and Fundamental...Funda...Foundation. Hm, looked boring, no flashing rayguns and swooshing spaceships.

Then I began to read... It was like being struck by lightning on a bright and clear day!

From that moment I've been an Asimov fan.

I found *I,Robot* in the school library and quickly devoured it. *The Rest of the Robots* became one of the first books I consumed in English, I found the *Early Asimov* volumes in the famous Book Corner shop (Later converted to Spy Bar, one of Stockholm's hottest celeb clubs).

Asimov understands plotting, he writes clear, straight and honest, not posing prose calculated to satisfy vain, narcissistic reviewers. He's unpretentious, chats with you and between stories tells anecdotes. That makes him great! So I decided to let thish's History Corner dig deeper into the amazing Asimov. *There is much!*



Russians murdered 33 on this bus and wounded 18

Putin's criminal war is still on.In mid-October he sent a rocket to destroy a public transport bus, slaughtering 33 innocent Ukrainians, seriously wounding 18. And many more are killed and wounded daily in continued attacks on Ukraine's cities. The dictator is losing on the battlefield, his refineries and other economic assets are destroyed by Ukrainian long-range strikes, so in blind fury the Czar targets innocent civilians. *Vladimir Putin must be defeated!* He's a threat to the civilised world. And Russia must get a nose bleeding enough to abandon imperial ambitions. Support your local politicians who are on the right side of history. Talk to friends and people around you and debunk the propaganda Russian troll factories are busy inventing. For my inner eye I see Stockholm's red local buses, maybe route 55 picking up passengers at South Station. About 50 are on board.

Suddenly a rocket hits the bus and turns it into a huge fireball. That's Putin's game.

And this clown named Trump is in Putin's pocket! Agent Orange now plans to buy Russian diesel foil, cash Putin will turn into rockets to murder civilians. And we learn Musk crippled Ukrainian Starlink. (SpaceX shares fall. People react against Musk. Do some more idiocy, Elon, and your space dreams go bankrupt!) Trump and Musk have no shame! Trump is corrupt to his bare bones. He sends amateurs to Moscow to make "business deals", lets the Russian Mafiosi pay weddings, has crypto schemes, fake "gold" watches, is bribed with jumbojets. He's not only a crook, but also senile and childish (Lake America, cries about the Nobel prize) so it looks likely MAGA'll lose both houses of Congress in the midterms. Let's hope a new Congress curbs Trump's idiocy and treachery.

Among good news: Ukraine is fielding more anti-jetdrones - kill ratio of 60-70% and rising. Putin's "Welfare fund", used for weapons to murder Ukrainians in their beds, is now reported empty except for junk bonds. Refineries are burning, miles-long queues to Russian gas stations (it's doubtful Russia can even produce the diesel Trump wants them to cash in on). Ukraine's strikes against Russian data centres not only hit Russian banks, payment systems, bookings, small business etc.But 100 000s of Russian socmedia bots disappeared! Sites recently full of Russian lies and absurdities are now quiet. That Putin's bot army is down, means less lies in the US midterms and tougher for extremists like German AfD in Europe. It confirms that Kremlin is the culprit in attempts to split and confuse. Hit more data centres! 3 to 5 more Ukrainian missiles go eastward for every Russian going west. Ukraine is winning, but at a high cost. *--Ahrvid Engholm, your editor, sf historian, author,etc*.

**Otto Binder often wrote the scripts. The best Superman artist was one Curt Swan. (I learned as adult.)*

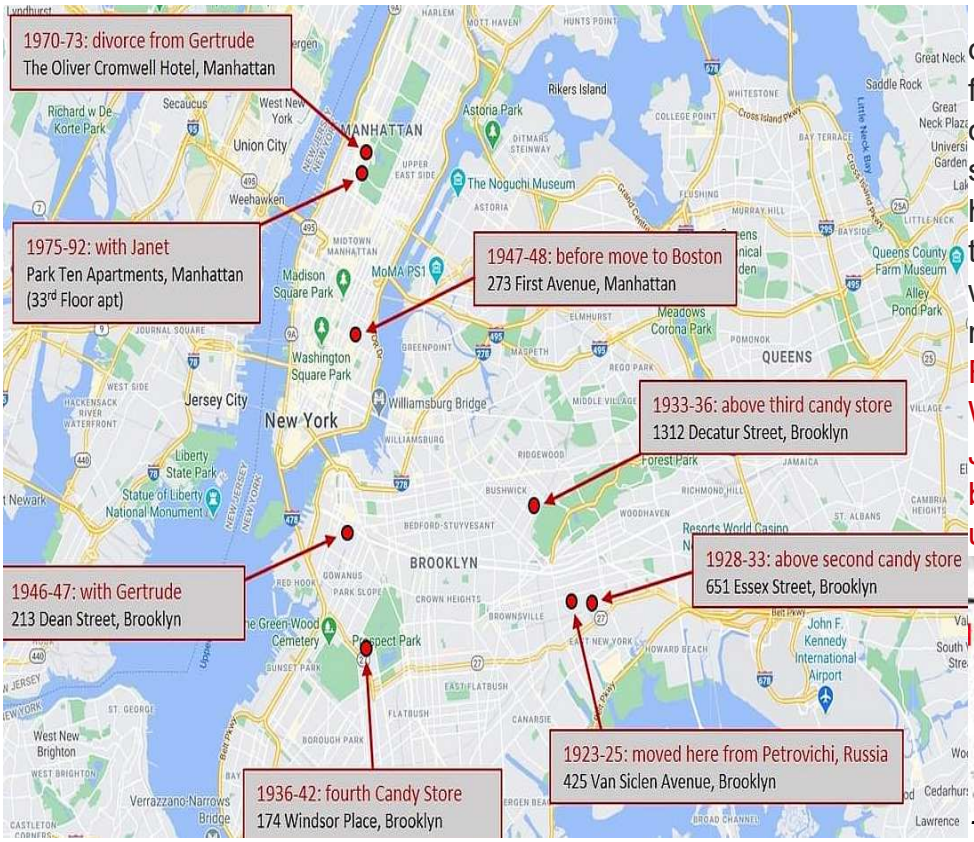
HISTORY CORNER: ALL ABOUT ASIMOV

As I mov-ingly confessed: I just don't like Isaac Asimov...adore him! So it's long overdue to dedicate a History Corner* to the Man Chained to the Typewriter, the Lord of Qwertyuiop, a Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Typer Ribbon. Except when he during WWII joined Bob Heinlein and L Sprawl de Camp in the Navy Experimental Station in Philadelphia and years in Boston as professor and - he admits - uninspired lecturer, he wanted to wake up in a city that doesn't sleep and find he was king of the hill, top of the heap...New York, New York.



A stone in Petrovichi marks where Asimov was born.

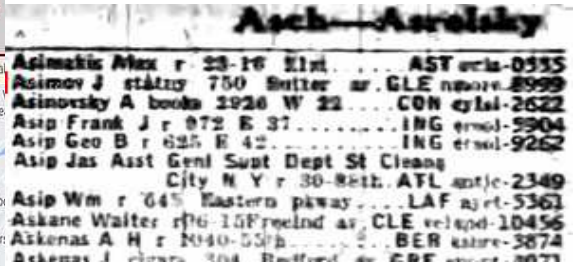
That's where the Asimovs settled when they arrived from Petrovichi, Russia, when he was three. Mrs Asimov had a half brother living in New York who was willing to guarantee that the family would not become a burden to the country, and permission from the Soviet Government, was all that was needed.



In New York young Isaac did his duty in the family's series of candy stores where he discovered the pulp mags with space and robot covers. There he also found the Futurian sf club and the first Worldcon, began writing, befriended John W Campbell, studied biochemistry and he chewed all that up - in the Big Apple.



Father and mother Asimov.



The Sutter Ave store in NYC phonebook.

We'll visit the series of candy stores the Asimovs had. We won't go into the different dwellings Isaac Asimov later had as an adult. You can read all about the adult Asimov in his three autobios, *In Memory Yet Green, In Joy Still Felt* and *I, Asimov.* We also have wife Janet's bio-compilation *It's Been A Good Life* and Asimov's letters in *Yours, Isaac Asimov,* collated by his brother Stanley. Much in this H-Corner is from those but I have also let my AI scan the net for Asimoviana. CoPilot is great for finding even obscure stuff (but it's also full of unnecessary semi-legalistic limitations - other AIs are way better here!). But one dwelling for the adult Asimov must be seen. In 1970-1973 he lived on a building looking like something *Amazing's* amazing artist Frank R Paul would dream up.



Asimov lived in this Frank R Paul dream 1970-73

The family was father Judah (1896-1969), Anna Rachel (1895-1973), Isaac (1920-1992), sister Marcia (1922-2011) and younger brother Stanley (1929-1995, who became a journalist, eventually vice-president of the Long Island newspaper *Newsday*). The language used at home was Yiddish. Isaac spoke it fluently, but forgets that as he sometimes said he only knows English. In fact, the Good Doctor understood German, as it is related to Yiddish. The parents

*As in #171 red for the xtra noteworthy."Asimoviana" is endless! To save space I had to edit and compress some quotes

knew Russian and used it as a "secret language" in front of the children. Isaac would sometimes regret they didn't speak Russian openly, as he could have learned it "for free" as a kid. Judah was religious and occasionally taught Hebrew and helped prepare boys for bar mitzvah

The Asimovs made their living by running a series of candy stores (before that, from 1923 when they arrived, the parents took different temporary jobs, scraping and saving to buy a store). Beside candy such a store would offer magazines and newspapers, stationery, stamps, a soda fountain,sandwiches perhaps, a payphone and various smaller items. It was the 7Eleven those days.

Their first store, 1926-28, was on *750 Sutter Ave*, in Brooklyn as with all their stores. The block was predominantly residential, featuring multi-family brick row houses and apartment complexes. The family lived in an apartment just around the corner. IA comments: "*You sold discrete objects like pieces of candy, glasses of soda, newspapers, packs of cigarettes, and so on. You bought all these in quantity for a certain sum of money, and you sold them, one by one, for, in total, a slightly larger sum of money.!*" Candy stores were incredibly convenient for a poor neighbourhood. You would sometimes get the small items there on credit *"You could change money, get stamps, buy one cigarette (for a penny; a pack of twenty cost thirteen cents) and sit and talk with your friends while sipping a soda for half an hour."*Judah tried buying candy in bulk and reselling to other small stores. It failed because he lacked storage, transportation and credit. *"My father was always trying to expand, but never had the capital."* Asimov's candy store was open 6 AM to 1 AM (this was the hours for all Asimov stores).When turning slightly older young Isaac would have the duty to wake the father, who'd take the first watch lasting to about 2 in the afternoon, when the mother took over while the father had a nap. The children would also help minding the store at irregular hours after school. IA: *"My mother had spent her time in a similar store in Petrovichi much of her life and she took up the task again. She went to sleep earlier than my father did, and he spent the last hours in the store alone, carefully washing all the glassware, going over the transactions of the day and entering them in the books, and getting everything neat and ready for the next day. [The father] made up for that late hour by taking a nap every afternoon from 2 to 4 pm, and that afternoon nap became a fixed constant in the life of the family. It was my duty to stay in the store, if I weren't at school, in case my mother had errands I could run for her."* It was an early candy-store customer that lit a spark, coming in and talking about "mechanical men". *"I was electrified,"* Isaac remembers. *" I had never heard the term before."*



Stanley Asimov



Asimov's 1st candy store. Dunno if its left or right house, but there's no candy there now.



Spot of Asimov's 2nd candy store, but it is now a new house in that place.

The Asimovs were on constant lookout for a better store and 1928-33 they moved business to 651 Essex Street in East New York (where they lived in the apartment upstairs). IA: *My father, "thought he might locate a more profitable one. He would therefore employ an agent who specialized in such things. The agent would suggest places and my father would then visit those stores, study their books, stay a day to observe how the business went, and so on. The new store was indeed better. It was larger and the clientele was better off. One thing I had never seen before was a slot machine. People would throw nickels into it, pull the lever, and I watched with fascination as the three wheels whirled. I never had any impulse to try it. There was a staircase in the back of the store that led directly up to our living quarters. There were numerous advantages to this. The store and the apartment were all there was to the building so that we rented the entire structure and we did not have other*



The Asimov siblings, mid 1930s: Isaac, Marcia, Stanley.

people sharing it with us. There was no one for us to annoy and no one to annoy us. It was very simple to go up and down the stairs, so we saved on commuting time, so to speak, and my father did not have to go through a stretch of the outdoors in bad weather just to eat or take his nap. On the other hand, it was a small apartment, and we were back to three rooms." Young Isaac spent a lot of his time here and the store carried pulp magazines which his father refused to let him read. Judah described the pulps as 'trash.' When Isaac pointed out that the other kids got to read it, he said "So they can get trashy brains and their fathers don't care. I care." But Isaac persuaded his father to let him read magazines that said something about "science..."on the cover. Science was something constructive!



1312 Decatur Street, their third store.

The family's third candy store,1933-1936, was on 1312 Decatur Street in Ridgewood/Bushwick. But IA notes: *"We had a candy store on Church Avenue for a month, but apparently my parents found they had overestimated their own ability to handle it, a store larger and more complicated."* The problem was it included a luncheonette which they found hard to run. "*I don't count the Church Avenue store as one of our candy stores. It was just an experiment that failed at once and that cost my father perhaps half of his painfully stored accumulation of capital. The real third store was on the corner of Knickerbocker Avenue, about one third closer to Boys High than the old location was, which was an advantage for me. I was able to wangle a library card out of the Ridgewood branch of the Queens Public Library, and for several years I could go to it as well as to the local branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, thus getting twice as many books as I would have otherwise. By the time we were in the new store, my father gave up the [junk reading] fight. Either he decided I was incorrigible or he felt that my mind had been formed and could resist, so that junk reading would not turn me into a bum. I therefore read all the pulp magazines that interested me; not only the science-fiction magazines and The Shadow, but also Doc Savage, Operator 5, The Spider, G-8 and His Battle Aces, etc,. For the first time since coming to the United States, we did not live in a Jewish neighbourhood. In the Decatur Street store, as in the previous one, the apartment was upstairs, but it could not be reached from the store. We had to go outside to go upstairs, which was a pain in the neck. It was, however, a roomier apartment than any we had yet had. What's more, we were now in the full American technological swim. We had an electric refrigerator, and not an icebox, and in the store, the ice cream was kept in an electric freezer. The candy store had a kitchen in the back, for it differed from our previous stores in being a luncheonette. We served cake, pie, milk, coffee, and a variety of sandwiches, and my mother would usually cook up something hot for about a dozen people besides the family. It was the only thing on the menu, and people who wanted a hot dish took pot luck. My mother made elaborate pot roasts, meatball dishes, and a variety of other things, and for a while the family ate unusually well, but it was too much. She just wearied of it and gradually let the luncheonette practice dwindle, serving only the old customers with sufficient lack of interest to make them all drift away except for one never-say-die gentleman who was back every lunchtime for whatever my mother had for the family, quite indifferent to the fact that he was the only one eating there. Finally, my mother, with as much tact as she possessed, informed him that she would not serve him anymore."*



Anna and Judah Asimov in the 1950s.



The fourth Asimov candy store, 174 Windsor Place. Their final one.

The fourth candy store (1936-1939?) was on 174 Windsor Place in Park Slope. It sat right across the street from their home, and it was in his small bedroom there that Isaac wrote his legendary,



What the Good Doctor calls his Cary Grant picture, from a 1950 backcover.

breakout sf story "Nightfall".IA: *"All our candy stores were alike in essentials, but I remember this one best. Unlike the Essex Street store and the Decatur Street store, it was not on the corner of the block, but was in the middle, as the Sutter Avenue store had been. When one entered the door, one found the store broader than it was deep. Near the left wall was the cigar counter, with the cash register at the end away from the door. That cash register marked the nerve center of the store, and my father was usually behind it and a little to the left, where a bare patch of counter was the place where money was handed in and change handed out. Behind the candy counter was a small enclosed area where we kept reserve supplies of candy and cigarettes, and where there was a toilet. It was the one niche of privacy in the store, but only my father could use it freely. For the rest of us, it was there for paternally begrudged emergencies. Next to the candy counter was a small aisle, and across from it, in the right half of the store, was that vanished piece of Americana, the soda fountain. There was the refrigerator with its large cylindrical containers of ice cream; the containers of various syrups, which could be pumped in squirts into glasses and over ice cream; the electric stirrers that made the malted milks; the faucets out of which carbonated water would emerge; the platform for clean glassware; and the sink for washing the dirty glassware."* Isaac loved this machine *"as magical as any spaceship. Outside the store was, of course, the newsstand, which had the newspapers and some of the more popular magazines*." (Young Asimov made sure that the sf mags were placed at eye level!) *"There were times when we had a pinball game in the store (always lucrative but troublesome, since it attracted groups of teen-age idlers), and eventually we had a rack for paperback books. All told it was a rather small store, the smallest we had yet had, with not much room for toys, stationery, and miscellany - but it was a good one. It had a large newspaper trade, and that meant we had a much larger newspaper delivery route to cover."* This comes from that Judah partnered with a man who handled newspaper distribution. It was chaotic, badly organized, and Judah abandoned it. Isaac helped deliver papers before school. Judah tried to make cigars the “premium” product. Isaac says Judah believed cigars attracted “respectable men with steady habits.” Isaac loathed the smell: *"I associated cigars with poverty, boredom, and the endless hours behind the counter.”*

The family left candy-store life permanently when Judah moved into other business around 1939. A good guess is he was being tired of the long work hours in the stores. Judah worked in Manhattan’s fur district, as a clerk/assistant, doing inventory, bookkeeping and sales.

☆**Anecdotes:** *"At Penn State, Phil Klass [a k a WIlliam Tenn] introduced me and gave me a long 15-minute introduction that was very funny indeed; so funny that I began to think grimly that my speech would flop. Fortunately, his last statement was: Asimov, however, is not truly a Renaissance man. He has never sung Rigoletto at the Metropolitan Opera. So when I got up immediately after that, I waited for the applause to die down and began in a resonant tenor: “Bella figlia dell’amore .. .” It’s the start of the quartet and absolutely brought the house down."*

☆ Isaac Asimov took part in a televised discussion panel on 21 August 1957, a live science communication debate broadcast in New York. Asimov represented science fiction alongside John Hansen (technical writing) and David O. Woodbury (science fact). During the broadcast, Asimov was challenged to prove his claim that he could “write under any circumstances.” He accepted on the spot and, while continuing to talk with the panel, wrote a 350-word short story titled “Insert Knob A in Hole B.” He read it aloud before the end of the half hour program. The story was later published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* (December 1957) and reprinted in *Nightfall and Other Stories* (1969).

☆ Riding together in a taxi in New York City, Asimov and his good friend AC Clarke got into a debate over who was the superior writer. To resolve it, they signed the formal Clarke-Asimov Treaty:

Asimov was required to insist to everyone that Arthur C Clarke was the *best science fiction writer* in the world, with Asimov relegated to second place. In exchange, Clarke was strictly required to tell everyone that Asimov was the *best science writer* in the world, relegating himself to second place.

☆During his intense, nerve-wracking oral examination to defend his PhD dissertation in 1948, one of the professors looked at him solemnly and asked: "Dr. Asimov, tell us about the endochronic properties of the compound thiotimoline." Asimov turned pale. Thiotimoline was a completely fictional chemical compound that Asimov had invented for a satirical, fake sf research paper he had published in *Astounding,* https://ezgranet.github.io/thiotimoline/. Thiotimoline was so soluble that it dissolved *one second before* water even touched it. Realizing his professors were calling his bluff and that his entire academic future was flashing before his eyes, Asimov began to stutter. The room erupted into laughter, the tension broke, and they passed him immediately.

☆ In 1938, the teenage Asimov took a science-fiction manuscript to the offices of Astounding Stories in New York. The story was called “Cosmic Corkscrew”. His father had suggested delivering it in person because the subway fare was cheaper than the postage. Asimov expected to leave the manuscript with a secretary, but instead found himself talking to editor John W. Campbell for over an hour. Campbell rejected the story, but returned it with extensive suggestions for improvement and encouraged Asimov to try again. That rejection began one of the most consequential editorial relationships in science fiction.



John W Campbell in his office. Here the legendary Astounding editor met his authors, cracked ideas and gave them inspiration.

☆In November 1985, Asimov appeared in the New York Post gossip column after being seen kissing a woman at the New York Academy of Sciences. When his doorman told him he was on Page Six, Asimov went home and announced the news to Janet. She immediately anticipated that acquaintances would telephone her about the supposed scandal. The twist was that the woman was Janet herself, his own wife.

☆*"Once, when I was ill and couldn't go to the library, I persuaded my poor mother to go for me, promising that I would read any book she brought me. What she brought back was a fictionalized life of Thomas Edison. That disappointed me, but I had promised, so I read it and that might have been my introduction to the world of science and technology."*

☆**<u>On writing:</u>** *Asimov* wrote 90% of his fiction without any outline. He described imagining an ending first, then a beginning, and allowing the intervening story to develop as he wrote. He disliked detailed outlines. He compared writing from an outline to trying to play the piano while inside a straitjacket. He also did almost everything himself: typing, correcting, retyping, proofreading and handling much of his own correspondence. His first drafts often survived with very little alteration

☆*"If my doctor told me I had only six minutes to live,I wouldn’t brood. I’d type a little faster."*

☆ *"What I do now is think up a problem and a resolution to that problem. I then begin the story, making it up as I go along, having all the excitement of finding out what will happen to the characters and how they will get out of their scrapes, but working steadily toward the known resolution, so I don't get lost en route. When asked for advice by beginners, I always stress that. Know your ending, I say, or the river of your story may finally sink into the desert sands and never reach the sea."*

☆ *"I have made no secret of the fact that if I have ever deliberately copied anyone’s style of writing, it is yours. [to Clifford D Simak] I don’t suppose you know what you’ve meant to me, Cliff, and it is difficult to explain. You encouraged me when I was beginning. You wrote me letters that made me feel part of the science fiction fraternity before I was part of it. You were a friend who was always kind and brotherly. I never saw your name on a story or book without feeling warm. And, as you know, I never missed a chance to express my debt to you and my admiration of you in print, right down to the present."*

☆ Asimov submitted a story containing a limerick - Campbell hated limericks. He wrote: “Remove it.”Asimov submitted a new version with two limericks.

☆ *"I have only one piece of published juvenilia. It is an essay entitled “Tittle Brothers,” written when I was 14 and published in the spring 1934 issue of my high school literary magazine, also when I was 14. The faculty adviser accepted it with the worst possible grace because it was the only offering that attempted to be funny. And he told me so quite bluntly. His opinion of my writing ability was rock-bottom, and I don’t know if he lived long enough to realize that he was badly mistaken. Fortunately, regardless of his opinion, I already knew, at the age of 14, that I was a great writer. So I didn’t require his approval at all."*

☆Asimov has been criticized for the lack of sex and aliens in his science fiction. He explained the reason behind his overlooking of aliens to an incident early in his career when a story of his was rejected by Campbell because he portrayed aliens to be superior to humans. So rather than depicting aliens as weak, he decided to not write about them at all. In response to all these criticisms, he wrote *The Gods Themselves*, which contained aliens, sex and alien sex. He considered a part of this book to be one of the best he had written. *The Gods Themselves* was written in a burst of speed, with the middle section completed in only 10 days. He said it “poured out of me.” He wrote a story out of spite because Campbell said he couldn’t . Campbell also said: “You can't write fantasy.” Asimov wrote *"The Key"* in a week. An editor doubted his speed. Asimov immediately wrote a story in just 3 hours to prove he could and mailed it the same day.

☆The story with a footnote longer than the text: “The Holmes–Ginsbook Device” (1964) It's a short sf detective story Asimov wrote for *Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine.* The main text is extremely short. The footnote is long, detailed, and almost comically overdone. The editor complained: “Isaac, this isn’t a story - it’s a footnote with a story!”Asimov replied: “No, it’s a story with a footnote.” He refused to change it, and it was published anyway.

☆The work in the Asimov candy stores helped shape his writing. He learned human psychology from customers and said: *“Everything I know about human nature I learned in the candy store.” He witnessed gossip, flirting, arguments, petty crime, neighborhood politics This directly influenced Foundation."*


Dad and daughter Robyn.

☆**<u>On language:</u>** ***"****My particular strength in science fiction is a very simple one. The reader always knows exactly what is happening and why. Even if not all the motivations are at the moment clear, he has every security that they will be made clear. He also knows that my phraseology will be lucid, that everything in the story will be self-consistent and that it will all wind up logically. My weakness is that I have no “style,” no “poetry,” no “imagery.” And I don’t consider that a weakness."*

☆ *"My parents did not abandon Yiddish, but continued to speak it for years. In fact, I myself learned Yiddish and can speak it fairly fluently. I can understand it almost as well as I can understand English. At the present moment, I am thoroughly bilingual in English and Yiddish in that I can think in either without having to translate from one to the other. I can speak German fairly well, largely thanks to Yiddish. In a pinch, I could make myself understood in French if it were a life-and-death case. I have a surprisingly large vocabulary in Greek and Latin, largely thanks to my etymological work, but can’t handle the words at all in sentences in either language....The truth is that I know no Russian at all. When I came here at three, my parents were determined that English would be my first language. They never spoke to me in Russian."*

☆**<u>On space:</u>** ***"****I once shook the hand (quite unwillingly and only because 800 people were watching at the time and I didn’t want to make a scene) of the hand that shook Hitler’s. It was the hand of*

Wernher von Braun."

☆ "I believe the exploration and exploitation of space would not only be of advantage to the United States but is absolutely imperative if human civilization is to be preserved. It is from space that we will get the material resources, the energy and the gains in technology that will be needed to allow humanity to continue to grow and expand. Confined to Earth, we have reached our limits. Furthermore, international cooperation must be made a reality. War must be abolished. This can only be done if we lose our localisms in a great, unifying project. Space offers the only such project."

☆*"Confined to Earth, humanity has reached its limits. We must go into space, not because it is easy, but because it is necessary."* He wrote dozens of pro-NASA editorials and defended the space budget against critics. He talked about lunar bases, Mars colonies, asteroid mining, O'Neill cylinders, solar power satellites. He thought asteroid mining would be the first profitable industry.

☆He believed microbiological life was likely on Mars and some of the gas planet moons. *"Life is probably common in the universe, but intelligence is probably rare"*. He thought Mars and Earth might share ancient microbial ancestry. He doubted intelligent alien civilizations, not because he thought humans were special, but because intelligence is evolutionarily expensive, technological civilizations are fragile, interstellar travel is extremely difficult, the galaxy is huge and communication is slow. He said alien biochemistry would be incompatible with ours. *"Alien microbes would not infect us. They would simply die."*

☆He considered Apollo 8 the greatest achievement of humanity. Not Apollo 11 - Apollo 8. "*Apollo 8 was the moment humanity first left Earth."* When he saw Apollo 11 landing: "*I sat before the television set and wept."* He believed Apollo was the beginning of a spacefaring civilization
He was devastated when the program ended. He believed Mars colonization was inevitable, and predicted: underground habitats, terraforming attempts, Mars cities within 200 years. He believed Mars was humanity's second home. *"Mars is the planet most suited to human dreams. "*Humans will eventually leave the Solar System, according to Asimov. He believed in generation ships, cryogenic travel, slow expansion, but no faster-than-light travel. Robots would accompany humans to build habitats, mine asteroids, maintain spacecraft,assist colonists



Isaac and 2nd wife Janet (1926-2019, they married 1973)

☆**<u>On media:</u>** ***"****On that occasion, I had an opportunity to speak to Mrs. Jacqueline Onassis, and a photo of my doing so appeared in the New York Times the next day, with the notation: "'What is he saying?" What I was saying was,: Now I'll get my picture in the Times."*

☆In the late 1980s, Asimov described something that is unmistakably the Internet, even though the Internet for the time was unknown and only for military and universities. In the Bill Moyers interview he said: "*Once we have computer outlets in every home, each of them hooked up to enormous libraries. Anyone can ask any question and be given answers at home, at their own speed, in their own direction."* He argued that computers would humanize learning, not dehumanize it: *"It's through this machine that for the first time we'll have a one-to-one relationship between information source and information consumer."*

☆Asimov predicted the core of the media revolution: smartphones, video calls, and global media: *"Communications will be sight-sound.You will be able to see as well as hear the person you telephone."* He predicted: global satellite communication, instant access to documents, reading books on screens, visual media everywhere. He said screens would be used to look up documents. He foresaw "miniature computers" acting as "robot-brains" in everyday machines. He said computers would be: "*at the center of everything,necessary in the house to do a great many*

things." He predicted most about the computer revolution - but didn't adopt it personally. *"The computer is a marvelous device. For other people."*

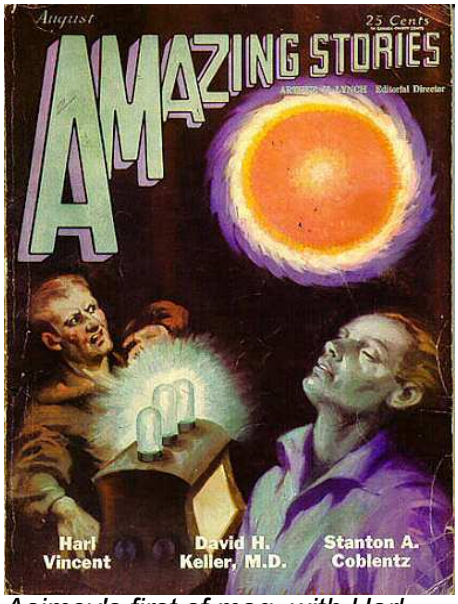


☆**"***I read comic books in the local luncheonette while eating lunch when I was actively teaching at the Boston U. School of Medicine. Donald Duck was my favourite."*

☆In the early 1980s he acquired - he appeared in TRS ads and surely got it for free - a TRS-80, one of the most popular early computers, but he continued to use his IBM Selectric typewriters more. Daughter Robyn, wife Janet.,daughter and secretaries entered his texts to files and disks. He had no interest in digital editing. He preferred first drafts and minimal revisions.

☆**On sf:** His definition of our genre: *"Science fiction is that branch of literature which deals with the response of human beings to changes in science and technology."*

☆ *"I have probably written more articles on sf* for 'serious' periodicals ranging from the New York Times to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and been referred to more often as an indication of the 'real scientists' who are interested in sf and write it than all other sf personalities put together. In fact, only good old Arthur Clarke rivals me in this."*



Asimov's first sf mag, with Harl Vincent ("Barton's Island") David Keller ("The Eternal Professors"), JH Click, Stanton Coblenz ("The Wand of Creation"), LF Stone,GF Stratton. 100 pages for ¢25!

☆*"The science-fiction magazines were the first pulp magazines I was allowed to read. That may have been part of the reason that, when the time came for me to be a writer, it was science-fiction that I chose as my medium. Another reason was science fiction's more extended grasp on the young imagination. It was science fiction that introduced one to the universe, in particular to the solar system and the planets. Even if I had already come across them in my reading of science books, it was science fiction that fixed them in my mind, dramatically and forever."*

☆"Campbell taught me how to write. He said: Write a story about robots that are not evil... Campbell said: Write me a future history. This led to psychohistory, the Galactic Empire, the Foundation series!" Asimov disliked New Wave stylistics. "I don't like stories where I don't know what is happening." He criticized surrealism, stream-of-consciousness, experimental prose, anti-science themes, pessimism, nihilism. "Science fiction must not turn against science," he said. He felt New Wave writers were anti-technology, anti-rational. He rejected the idea that SF needed to imitate modernist literature. "Science fiction is legitimate as it is." He believed sf should remain optimistic, rational, scientific, idea-driven, accessible.

☆"Sci-fi is a Hollywood neologism invented as a "witty" analog of "hi-fi," and it grates on the ears of all science fiction writers. Hollywood illiterates may go for that abomination, but the proper abbreviation to all honest science fiction people is sf. I wrote an editorial in *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* in the May-June 1978 issue entitled 'The Name of Our Field'. Here's the way that editorial ends: 'Sci-fi? is now widely used by people who don't read science fiction. It is used particularly by people who work in movies and television. This makes it, perhaps, a useful term. We can define 'sci-fi' as trashy material sometimes confused, by ignorant people, with sf. Thus, Star Trek is sf, while Godzilla Meets Mothra is sci-fi." **Ed:** Sci-fi is useful as our shibboleth...

**I changed Asimov's "s.f." to "sf". Abbreviation periods are redundant left-overs from 19th-century handwritten manuscripts. I don't use them, not even in quotes. It saves space, keystrokes and avoids collisions with e g commas or other periods.*

☆"No book ever changed my life. A magazine did, however. The August 1929 issue of Amazing Stories was the first science fiction magazine I ever read, and it caught me at once. I became a science fiction reader and then a science fiction writer. It has made me better off and more famous than I could possibly have been under any other condition."

☆ *"Foundation's Edge seems to show promise, but I am careful not to let my hopes get too high. After all, I get a best seller about as often as you [this was to Stephen King] don't get one*

☆**On Fandom:** ***"****The horizons in science fiction were limitless, and the excitement of outer space, of time travel, of the far future seemed a continually unsurpassable delight. It was the pleasure of magic combined with the discipline of science. It was just enough of a slipping of bonds to give freedom, and not enough to seem folly and anarchy. It was the use of imagination to give the effect of a roller coaster loop-the-loop, with the use of the laws of nature to keep you on the track and bring you safely home. I had become a science-fiction fan by the mid-1930s. By that I mean that I did not confine myself merely to the reading of science fiction. I tried to participate in the machinery. The simplest way was to write letters to the editor. The science-fiction magazines all had letters columns, and readers were encouraged to write. The magazine that most attracted me was Astounding Stories ... [to which] I wrote my first letter in 1935, and it was printed. I listed the stories I liked and disliked, said why, and asked for smooth edges, rather than the typical messy rough edges of the pulps that shredded and left paper lint everywhere. A young man who had gone to Boys High with me noted my name on the letters in Astounding and sent me a card in 1938 inviting me to attend meetings of the Queens Science Fiction Club. On September 18, 1938, I met, for the first time, other science fiction fans. However, between the first invitation and a second card giving me instructions on how to get to the meeting place, there had been a split in the Queens club, and a small splinter group formed a new fan organization. My high school friend belonged to the small splinter group and, in all ignorance that I was not going to the Queens club, I joined them. The splinter group had broken off because they were activists who felt that science-fiction fans ought to take a stronger anti-Fascist stand, while the main group held that science fiction was above politics. Had I known about the split I would have resolutely sided with the splinter group, so that by ending up there I came to the right place. The new group gave themselves a rather long and grandiloquent name but they are popularly known as the Futurians and they were certainly the most astonishing fan club that was ever founded.. At last I met people who burned with the same fire I did; who loved science fiction as I did: who wanted to write science fiction as I did; who had the same kind of erratic brilliance that I had. I did not have to recognize a soul mate consciously. I felt it at once without the necessity of intellectualizing it. In fact, in some cases, both within the Futurians and without. I felt soulmatehood and eternal friendship even with people whom I didn't really like."*



Asimov with first wife Gertrude on Torcon 1966, married 1942-1973 (separated earlier than '73).

☆*"To my shock and horror, I find I don't qualify for First Fandom [=sf fanac in the 1930s]. to be sure, I have been reading sf since 1929 and was a fervent fan all through the early 1930s. However, the fanship was entirely secret and private. I may have written a letter or two to the science fiction magazines, and I seem to recall being shown one, published in 1935 in Astounding, by Sam Moskowitz. But I have no hard details on it. It wasn't until 1938 that I really began writing frequent letters and joining fan clubs and engaging in fannish correspondence. Then, of course, I became a pro that same year and fannishness faded away."* [**Ed:** There must be some misunderstanding. Joining clubs, like the Futurians, and writing letters was exactly what gave First Fandom membership. Now of course all possible 1stF members are dead, so they must engage in seance fiction...]

☆ Asimov loved early fandom and said: *"Fandom gave me my start."* But he disliked later fan politics. He received an enormous amount of fanzines - far more than most pros. He subscribed to, traded, and read many early fanzines in the 1930s: *The Science Fiction Fan, Imagination!, Fantasy News, The Futurian News, Novae Terrae,The Phantagraph, Cosmic Tales,The International Observer* He wrote letters to several of them. He was a heavy fanzine reader in his early fandom career. When he turned pro he received even more fanzines: *"I received so many fanzines I could not possibly read them all."* He tried to answer fan mail, but it became overwhelming. In the 1960s-80s he received hundreds of fanzines per year. He skimmed many, read some, and answered a few. He said:*"Fanzines are the lifeblood of fandom, but they are also the death of my free time."*

☆Asimov joined the Greater New York Science Fiction Club, but when it was split and the Futurians emerged he drifted towards them. He wrote letters. He attended meetings. He became a known fan. Later he of course became more occupied with writing for daily fandom interaction. *"I am a fan at heart, but a hermit in practice"* he said. *"Fandom is the soil in which science fiction grows."*

☆He attended every New York convention he could reach by subway or taxi. This includes: early fan meetings (1938–1941), the 1939 Worldcon (Nycon, *"the greatest day of my young life!"*), many Lunacons, many Manhattan mini-cons, many SFWA events in NYC. "*I enjoy conventions once I am there. I do not enjoy getting there."*

☆ **Friends:** Over the years, Isaac developed contacts with a number of prominent people. He had a 30-year correspondence with Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling. Pauling read Isaac's science articles in *Fantasy & Science Fiction* magazine regularly and wrote Isaac whenever he found an error. No writer could ever ask for a more prestigious"editor." For more than 25 years, Isaac and Carl Sagan were good friends and that goes for Arthur C Clarke also. Harlan Ellison called Asimov



The Futurians, radical, intellectual group of young sf fans in NYC, ca 1938–1945. They emerged from a split in the Greater NY SF Club, led by Sam Moskowitz. Among members: Don Wollheim, Fred Pohl, John Michel (very left-wing political with "michelism"), damon knight, Isaac Asimov, CM Kornbluth, James Blish, Judith Merril. Several of them shared cheap New York apartments, "slan shacks", half bohemian, half writer's work-shop, filled with typewriters, mimeos, pulps and debates on the purpose of sf. On1st Worldcon '39, Sam Mos-kowitz & Co banned several Futurians for fear they'd "disrupt" it."The Great Exclusion Act" caused splitting and spitting in fandom for many years. Despite youthful chaos many Futurians became great writers and editors.



Another Futurian group photo. Won't try to name them, but the hatman to the left looks very donwollheimish. Man in the middle with a package could *be Asimov (see prev pic): same hairstyle, same chin (but no glasses).*
"the Great Doctor." Asimov called Ellison "the Little Terrorist.They loved to banter. He and Ray Bradbury discussed religion - and ended up quarreling. Bradbury was spiritual. Asimov was an atheist. They stopped talking about the subject so as not to damage their friendship.

☆ Asimov and Robert Silverberg competed to see who could write fastest. Silverberg wrote extremely fast. Asimov wrote even faster. They used to brag about it to each other. John Campbell was of course a good friend and that also goes for Frederik Pohl who published some of Asimov's first stories. Orson Scott Card, Harry Harrison, Connie Willis, Poul Anderson, Mike Resnick, Ben Bova who all contributed to the collection *Foundation's Friends* should be included in an outer friendship circle. Members of the Futurians were special for Asimov and he kept in touch with several.

☆ Asimov knew Robert Heinlein and L Sprague de Camp well, from working with them at the Navy Experimental station in Philly 1942-45. As a chemist Asimov's task was to test the quality of material to be used in naval aviation.

☆**On Travel:** Asimov was a very reluctant traveller. He'd go anywhere he could reach by car from NYC without too much trouble (he didn't have a car, but would sometimes get a lift or take a taxi). He would go a little bit further than that by train. He visited Chicago twice (incl Chicon III,1962) and the US west coast and LA twice (once briefly during WWII with the military, ordered there) usually by train.In its heydays the US train system boasted aluminium-gleaming "streamliners" looking like spaceships, so Isaac may feel at home in those He only flew twice in his life, back and forth between NYC and Camp Lee, Virginia, so ordered during his military service. The author sending fleets of giant starships through the galactic clusters of the empire - was *terrified* of flying. He



Heinlein, de Camp and Asimov in the Navy Experimental Station i Philadelphia.

visited Britain by taking a cruise ship in 1975 (the only time he left North America). Another cruise ship took him to the coast of Florida in 1972 to witness the Apollo 17 launch. He visited Hawaii once so ordered in his military service. That's about his entire long travel log.

☆But: *"I would go to Stockholm to receive the Nobel Prize. Anything short of that, forget it."*

☆ *I was invited to be a "'celebrity judge' at the Ms and Mr Nude America Contest. I will be honest. I receive many requests that I judge this or that, and I use my formidable talents as a fiction writer to make up expressions of regret as I refuse. Today, for the first time, I REALLY REGRET having to refuse. You have no idea how I would be willing to throw myself into the task of judging, the amount of pains I would be willing to take. But I REALLY can't do it. The fact is I don't travel."* Once in his fear of flying, to hold a speech he took a cab from New York to Boston, 350 km...

☆**Puns and quotes:** *"Absolutely impossible for me to get to Springfield, Ill. I couldn't even get to Springfield, healthy."* He loved puns so much that editors begged him to stop. Campbell repeatedly told him: "Isaac, no more puns." Asimov ignored him. Puns united everything he valued: clarity, cleverness, linguistic curiosity, scientific rigor, and a mischievous sense of humour. A pun was a tiny universe where intellect and playfulness met - and Asimov lived happily in that universe. Puns allowed him to show off. Asimov believed that intelligence should be joyful, not solemn. He distrusted pretension and loved anything that punctured it.

☆A punny dialogue Asimov liked: -Two deaf men meet in London:
"Is this Wembley?"
"No, Thursday."
"No thanks, I've already had my little drink."

☆ Various Asimov jokes and quotes*: "People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do." "Biologists believe they are studying life. What they are really studying is death in slow motion." "The most exciting phrase in science is not 'Eureka!' but 'That's funny…" "I'm a dirty old man - but a clean writer." "Most writers complain about deadlines. I complain about the lack of them.""Science fiction writers predict the future. Then they complain when it arrives." "The difference between science fiction and fantasy is that fantasy has dragons — and science fiction has editors." "Fans think writers are gods. Writers think fans are gods. Editors think both are mistaken." "I love autograph sessions. They prove that at least someone has read the book." "If you want to know the future, ask a science fiction writer. If you want the truth, ask a fan."*

☆ John Sladek wrote a series of parodies of sf authors. Even the names of the author was parodied and distorted. And Isaac Asimov became Iclick As-I-Move

☆**Tidbits:** Heinlein invited Asimov to his home - and Asimov became terrified of his weapons. Heinlein had pistols and rifles all over the house. Asimov, a pacifist and afraid of weapons, sat stiff as a board. (It must have been early, before RAH moved west, maybe when they worked together during the war.)

☆*"The Russian spelling of our name is A3IMOB and the precise transliteration is Azimov. The "z" was changed to an "'s" at Ellis Island...I was born in Russia, and my parents named me, in Hebrew, Yitzhock. In the United States, it was anglicized to Isaac (pronounced in many European languages as EE-SOCK, rather close to the original). Now I love Isaac (EYE-zick) and would not have it anything else except in a Hebrew translation. In Hebrew (and at no other time), I want it Yitzhock."*

☆*"It breaks my heart. I have never gone back to the Soviet Union since I left at the age of three, although I have this queer urge to see my hometown someday (for all the good it would do me - I remember nothing). The Soviets themselves, in one way or another, have frequently invited me to visit (and made my brother very welcome in my place a few years ago). I have been informed over and over that my books are very popular in the Soviet Union and that I am well known. And I am*

terribly flattered that you are interested in my books as well. Furthermore, I am completely in agreement with your desire to find ways to encourage good relations between the two superpowers. Now comes the catch. I never fly. I have a phobia about travel. It takes incredible pressure to get me to go as far as Washington. There is no way in which I can go to Moscow. It sounds incredible, I know, but I am virtually pinned to the ground here in Manhattan. Please forgive me."

☆I *"I am a morning person. I am asleep by 11, and I am awake no later than 6 am. I do morning shows gladly, but I don't do night shows.´"*

☆Asimov turned down £20,000 (about $30,000) from a British publisher to write about the future of microchips. [Ed: Hey, don't the Brits call them microcrisps?] Asimov had an extreme phobia of dirt and germs. He described himself as: "a pathological neatnik". "obsessively clean". He washed hands constantly and hated touching doorknobs. He lived close to the stars in his last apartment at Park Ten - on the 53rd floor!

☆ While in Boston Asimov owned a car for a few years (so he had a driving license) but he hated to drive and was scared of getting involved in an accident. He later sold the car and never got a new one. In NYC he always took a taxi or used the subway.

☆ *"I was recalling my admissions interview at Columbia on April 10, 1935. I remember the day because on that same day, my father and I (he went with me) stopped off afterward at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We saw Albert Einstein there and looked at him instead of at the art exhibits."*

☆Asimov refused to drink alcohol - and fellow writers teased him at sf conventions, others often tried to get him to drink. He nearly always refused, but there was an exception: after his oral examination for his PhD in 1948, he celebrated passing by drinking five Manhattans (whiskey, vermouth, angostura dashes and a cherry - he Good Doctor loved Manhattan!). A mistake. Asimov was an unusually poor drinker, and his friends had to carry him back to the university and try to sober him up. (**Ed:** Maybe this was what made him abstain drinks?)

☆Asimov cultivated a public image as a tireless flirt and often presented his behaviour towards women as harmless comedy. His memoirs contain stories about unwanted advances and inappropriate touching. Other writers, including Judith Merril, remembered such behaviour much less indulgently.

☆Lester Del Rey thought robots were "nonsense." Asimov defended them passionately. They argued on stage in front of an audience. The AI wave of recent years gives Asimov the last laugh...

☆ He could do complex arithmetic entirely in his head .He described himself as having "a calculator in my skull", He could add long columns of numbers without paper. It came from his boyhood work in the candy shops. Isaac learned to count change faster than adults. He could calculate change instantly, faster than his father. It trained his "mental arithmetic reflex," which later helped him write science essays

☆Asimov was a terrible lecturer - students complained he mumbled. He admitted "I was not a good teacher...I mumbled and rambled". [But he was a good events speaker!] He could not recognize faces. He admitted to near total face blindness. Asimov never exercised - at all. He proudly called himself "the most sedentary person in the world." He hated nature. He disliked forests, beaches, animals. "Give me a city every time."

☆Asimov said: "Properly read, the Bible is the most potent force for atheism ever conceived."

☆**<u>Lost stories and books:</u>**

Asimov wrote an entire book about the origin of the solar system when he was 18, *The Origin of the Solar System* (1938), his first book, but it was rejected and lost- the manuscript disappeared.

"The Perfect Weapon" (1939) is an early sf short story that Campbell rejected. Asimov misplaced the manuscript and it has vanished without a trace.

"The Brothers" (1940) was an early short story about two brothers in a future world. Campbell rejected it, Asimov put it in a drawer - never published.

"The Final Question!" (1941) was an early version of "*The Last Question*"!, the famous short story. Campbell rejected it, Asimov rewrote it completely and the original version disappeared.

Asimov lost a 100-page chemistry manuscript in a checker cab. He forgot briefcase containing the entire manuscript. I was never found.

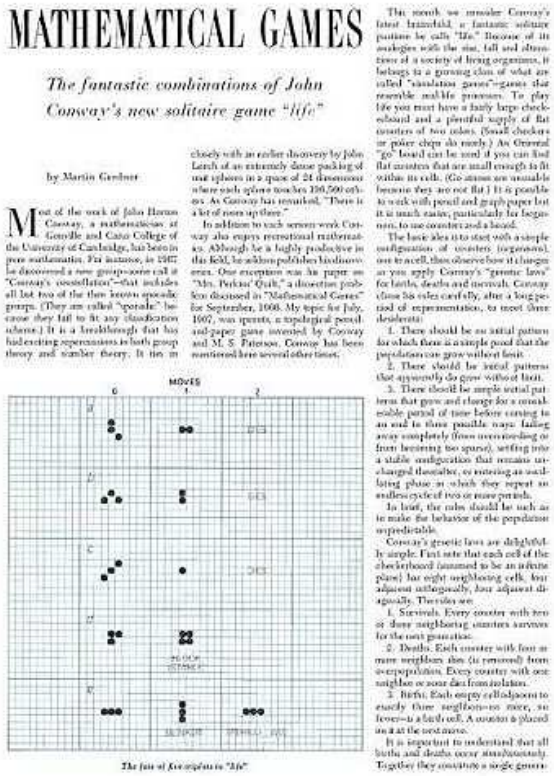
A Shakespeare manuscript was accidentally destroyed. Asimov threw away the wrong folder while cleaning his office. He saw it as a great loss, the manuscript was irreplacable.

An early robot manuscript (1939) was stopped by Campbell. He thought it was "too mechanical," and Asimov destroyed it. Asimov would often visit Campbell's office and discuss work in progress with him.

Asimov once wrote a humorous mathematics manuscript but it was rejected by everyone. It was an entire book of mathematical jokes. No one wanted it. He threw it away. Maybe he was inspired by Martin Gardners column in *Scientific American*, "Mathematical Games". Asimov held Gardner in very high regard.

The Encyclopedia Galactica was an unfinished project. Asimov began writing the real encyclopedia of the Foundation universe, but gave up after a few pages.

Asimov wrote an entire fantasy novel (!) during the war. *The Ringing Bell.* He was very dissatisfied with the story. He felt that his attempt to write epic fantasy was clumsy and unsuccessful. After writing a substantial beginning pages (around 10,000 to 20,000 words, depending on the source,. ca 40-80 pages), he destroyed the manuscript so that no one would ever have to read it.



MATHEMATICAL GAMES

The fantastic combinations of John Conway's new solitaire game "life"

by Martin Gardner

Most of the work of John Horton Conway, a mathematician at Gonville and Caius College of the University of Cambridge, has been in pure mathematics. For instance, in 1967 he discovered a new group—now call it "Conway's constellation"—that includes all but two of the then known sporadic groups. (They are called "sporadic" because they fail to fit any classification scheme.) It is a breakthrough that has had exciting repercussions in both group theory and number theory. It ties in closely with an earlier discovery by John Leech of an extremely dense packing of unit spheres in a space of 24 dimensions where each sphere touches 196,560 others. As Conway has remarked, "There is a lot of room up there."

In addition to such serious work Conway also enjoys recreational mathematics. Although he is highly productive in this field, he seldom publishes his discoveries. One exception was his paper on "Mrs. Perkins' Quilt," a dissection problem discussed in "Mathematical Games" for September, 1966. My topic for July, 1967, was numbers, a topological pencil-and-paper game invented by Conway and M. S. Paterson. Conway has been mentioned here several other times.

This month we introduce Conway's latest brainchild, a fantastic solitaire pastime he calls "life." Because of its analogies with the rise, fall and alterations of a society of living organisms, it belongs to a growing class of what are called "simulation games"—games that resemble real-life processes. To play life you must have a fairly large checkerboard and a plentiful supply of flat counters of two colors. (Small checkers or poker chips do nicely.) An Oriental "go" board can be used if you can find flat counters that are small enough to fit within its cells. (Go stones are unusable because they are not flat.) It is possible to work with pencil and graph paper but it is much easier, particularly for beginners, to use counters and a board.

The basic idea is to start with a simple configuration of counters (organisms), one to a cell, then observe how it changes as you apply Conway's "genetic laws" for births, deaths and survivals. Conway chose his laws carefully, after a long period of experimentation, to meet three desiderata:

1. There should be an initial pattern for which there is a simple proof that the population can grow without limit.
2. There should be initial patterns that apparently do grow without limit.
3. There should be simple initial patterns that grow and change for a considerable period of time before coming to an end in three possible ways: Failing away completely (from overcrowding or from becoming too sparse), settling into a stable configuration that remains unchanged thereafter, or entering an oscillating phase in which they repeat an endless cycle of two or more periods.

In brief, the rules should be such as to make the behavior of the population unpredictable.

Conway's genetic laws are delightfully simple. First note that each cell of the checkerboard (assumed to be an infinite plane) has eight neighboring cells, four adjacent orthogonally, four adjacent diagonally. The rules are:

1. Survivals. Every counter with two or three neighboring counters survives for the next generation.
2. Deaths. Each counter with four or more neighbors dies (is removed) from overpopulation. Every counter with one neighbor or none dies from isolation.
3. Births. Each empty cell adjacent to exactly three neighbors—no more, no fewer—is a birth cell. A counter is placed on it at the next move.

It is important to understand that all births and deaths occur simultaneously. Together they constitute a single generation or, in more whimsical terms, a move in the game. For each generation a different configuration of counters will appear. Various shapes will grow, shrink and change from move to move, but for any given starting pattern the fate of each counter is determined strictly by the rules.

MOVES

The fate of five cells in "life"

Martin Gardner and his Scientific American column was a favourite of Asimov.

☆**Honours:** *"I declined an invitation to run for the presidency of the Science Fiction Writers of America. In short, almost anyone (maybe quite anyone) would be better than I am for not only the presidency of the Science Fiction Writers of America but for the presidency of anything - even including the USA."*

The asteroid 5020 Asimov is named after him. So is Honda's humanoid prototype robot ASIMO.

Asimov has been awarded six Hugos, for *Foundation's Edge* (1983), for the original *Foundation trilogy* as All-Time Best Series (1966), *The Gods Themselves (1973),* the 1995 non-fiction Hugo for *I, Asimov.,* the novelette awards for *The Bicentennial Man (1977)* and *"Gold" (1992).* To this comes three Retro-Hugos. He has been awarded two Nebulas, for *The Gods Themselves* (1973) and *The Bicentennial Man* (1975), and to that he also won the *damon knight Memorial Grand Master Award* from SFWA.* To this comes many more Hugo and Nebula nominations, Locus awards, a World Fantasy Award, Japanese Seiun Awards, the Spanish Premio Ignotus, the German Ditmar, and probably many other awards.

Premio Asimov is an Italian award for popular science books, in Italian. The winner is selected by a large jury of high school students.

The skeptical organization CSICOP created an *Isaac Asimov Award*, established in 1994 "to honour Asimov for his extraordinary contributions to science and humanity". The first recipient was Asimov's friend Carl Sagan

The *Isaac Asimov Science Award* is handed out by the American Humanist Association (AHA). Asimov was also AHA's Humanist of the year in 1984.

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* *The maybe silly but still fannish tradition of how to spell damon knight. Goes back to 1940s Futurian days.*



This "Little Lost Robot" looks ludicrous.

He won his own magazine's *Asimov's SF Readers Award* a couple of times, voted upon by the subscribers, for *"Robot Dreams"* (1987) and the novella *Cleon the Emperor* in 1993.

Asimov was inducted into the SF Hall of Fame, First Fandom Hall of Fame, won LASFS's Forry Award for lifetime achievement, NESFA's Skylark Award for work in the spirit of E.E. "Doc" Smith.

☆Isaac Asimov was recognized by the 111th Congress on March 9, 2010 in House Resolution 1055, "supporting the designation of National Robotics Week as an annual event". The following passage appears in the text of the bill:

"Whereas the second week in April each year is designated as 'National Robotics Week', recognizing the accomplishments of Isaac Asimov, who immigrated to America, taught science, wrote science books for children and adults, first used the term robotics, developed the Three Laws of Robotics, and died in April, 1992: Now, therefore, be it resolved..."

The tribute to Asimov is due to the efforts of Paula Brooks, a robotics researcher and long-time fan of his who assisted the committee that wrote the resolution.



THEY, ROBOTS: But not (the one) in the middle, author Isaac Asimov. He laid down the law for them. Asimov died yesterday. AP

Sci-fi great Isaac Asimov dies

By ANDREW KIRTZMAN
United Press International writer

Isaac Asimov, the Beloved, mutch-chopped author who helped pioneer modern science fiction writing, died yesterday at the age of 72.

Asimov died at 2:20 a.m. in New York University Hospital of heart and kidney failure, said his brother Stanley.

Isaac Asimov told a New York gathering of writers and artists in January that his recent bout with prostate problems made him wish for death.

But the comment seemed to jibe with his enormous thirst for life, typified by his unprecedented output of books and articles that landed him in the Guinness Book of World Records as the American author with the most titles to his name.

10 books a year

He wrote 10 or more a year — 100, much for any one publisher to handle — spokesman for publisher Houghton Mifflin Co. told The New York Times in 1984. He also wrote a monthly column for Fantasy and Science Fiction magazine and appeared regularly on television.

"I thought something unusual might happen when I suddenly realized that I was approaching my 40th book and my 40th birthday at the same time," he told the Daily News Magazine in 1968.

"There was never anything that I was holding for 'any' sort of record. I just keep writing and the books keep turning out."

Among Asimov's 467 books, three testify most-known as the "Foundation" trilogy were honored in 1986 with a special Hugo Award as the best science-fiction series ever.

The law of robots

In "I, Robot," a 1950 collection of stories, Asimov laid down the laws of how robots must behave. He required that each robot be in the programed with three commandments: 1. Robots may not injure a human or, by inaction, allow a human to be harmed' they must obey humans' orders unless that conflicts with the first law; robots must protect their own existence unless that conflicts with the first two laws.

He worked from a 53d-floor apartment on Central Park West, where he lived with his second wife, Janet Jeppson, a retired psychiatrist.

He was born in Petrovichi in the Soviet Union on Jan. 2, 1920, and brought to the United States when he was 3. His parents ran a candy store in Brooklyn and at age 8 Asimov, helping out in the store, began reading the stock of science fiction pulps. He majored in chemistry at Columbia University.

Asimov's first marriage was to Gertrude Bluegman in 1942. They had two children, David and Robyn. He also is survived by a sister, Marcia Rapan, a memoirist of science fiction, and a son, also named David, date to be announced.

NY Daily News, April 7,1992. He'd dislike "scifi" header.

☆**Asimov on Youtube**. There is much more, just search for "Asimov":

Asimov on the *Letterman Show*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIB1b_8hqB0

Episode of Out of This World, "*Little lost robot"* 1962, based on an Asimov story (the robots look ridiculous): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-RX1GT4GT0&pp=ygUGYXNpbW92

A radioplay of *"NIghtfall"*, from the series X Minus one": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRJO4dYZ4NQ

☆ **Isaac Asimov died April 6, 1992**, at New York University Medical Center, from complications of AIDS (caused by tainted blood from heart surgery in 1983 - this wasn't revealed until 2002 in a new biography put together by Janet). He did not have a funeral. His death and memorial were handled quietly and he was cremated. His wife explicitly stated that a memorial service was to be instead. The memorial took place at an Ethical Culture Center in New York. Present were colleagues from the American Humanist Association - Asimov was its president until his death - family and science fiction colleagues:*Janet Jeppson Asimov,* his wife, spoke last, *Robyn Asimov,* his daughter, spoke about being his daughter, *Stanley Asimov,* who gave an eulogy, *Harlan Ellison,* gave an eulogy, *Ben Bova,* gave an eulogy, *Martin H Greenberg,* spoke at the service, *Larry Asmed,* Asimov's editor, gave an eulogy.*Jennifer Brehl,* Doubleday editor, gave an euology., *Sheila Williams,* editor of Asimov's SF, gave Eulogy. Present were also e g *Sam Moskowitz,* sf historian, writers *Michael A. Burstein, Charles Ardai* and others. Janet Asimov's public comments shortly after his death emphasized his satisfaction with his life: "I've had a good life and I'm satisfied."



The Grynnsten Dpt, aka LoCs and MCs. EAPA really wants new blood! Contact me for info on that!

Pascal Thomas: Hi Ahrvid, Can't say I've had time to read the whole of the last issue, but I did leaf through it and had a look at your article on the latest"swelection". Interesting. It seems to me that there is not that much substantial difference between the center-right and center-left and had a look at your article on the latest



Sept swelection was tight. I asked my AI (above) on chances of breaking deadlock... Ed in red.

"swelection". Interesting. It seems to me that there is not that much substantial difference between the center-right and center-left parties, if you could explain in a subsequent issue why they belong to different (and opposite) blocs, that'd be interesting (you are alluding to a possible, but difficult, coalition involving the left minus V, but plus M and KD. That could seem reasonable... the Germans managed it). Also, what's the position of the Left (V) on Putin? In France, their equivalent (LFI) is covertly (but obviously in my eyes) pro-Putin, in Germany for Die Linke it's not so clear since there was a split with the SWB, which took away its most putinist elements.

Ed: *All parties here, incl V, are pro-Ukraine. We have Russia near us and don't like it... The left parties are more eager to raise taxes, are more environmental, trust the individual less,the right parties are less so, but the difference may be smaller than in other countries (No solution to a new government yet. See summary in pic above.)*



Thailand queen Suthida pilots a SAAB 39 Gripen! First royal to fly a modern jet.She already had a commercial airliner license,and prior had several hours training, simulator etc. Still, tough girl!

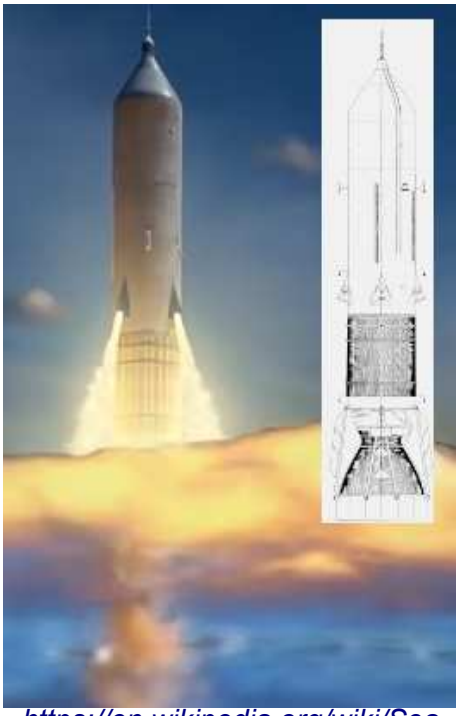
R-Laurraine Tutihasi:

I realize this is horribly late. I'm way backed up in my reading and only recently read your zine for July 2020. I particular I enjoyed the article about the movie TERROR IN THE MIDNIGHT SUN. Since you mentioned that it was on YouTube, I watched it. As you said it was not a good movie, but there have been worse. And it only took a little over an hour of my time.I would never have found it without your article.

Ed: Oh, that was a late LoC indeed... Anyway, "Terror in the Midnight Sun" is here, if anyone is interested: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUn6FdRypjM

Garth Spencer: I find nothing needing a direct comment. However the mailing itself worries me: few contributors! I know you have tried to recruit fresh blood So have I. Without success...What the heck can be done?

Henry Grynnsten: I think most agree that vodka is a major problem in Russia, but it's not behind their imperialistic behaviour. That's something having been with them for a long time, half a millennium or more. And they have no democratic tradition that may mitigate imperialism. A short period with democratic tendencies in the 1990s collapsed into the traditional Russian autocracy and imperialism e g attacking Chechnya. Russia needs to be beaten in their imperialistic war against Ukraine - it's the only way to change their mindset and reform Russia.☆☆Now, to your constant misunderstandings of Yours Truly... ☆☆Of course I'm aware of that AIs my invent, hallucinate - I keep eyes open for that. *"What's your point if you agree with what AI wrote anyway?"* Read it carefully..Under scrutiny are TWO statements. 1) Soft covid measured worked fine. I agree.2) Peer revue won't matter. That's what the AI added, but I didn't comment it. ☆☆ *"So there's a lot that is exaggerated: climate change, effects of cigarette smoking, effects of alcohol on the body, loss of soil, effect of covid"* That's not a lot. There are probably 10 000s statement that can be made about the general situation of the world, but that's just half a dozen of them, very few. Surely those claims are worth further scrutiny. In essence it's only ONE statement because they have the same root: they all are about to scare people in order to lead and control them. Do as we say or climate will kill us all. Tobacco is so dangerous you can't smoke within 10 m of others. Covid will kill you unless you lock yourself up. Alcohol is so poisonous you have no right to decide usage for yourself. Be environmental or all soil will disappear and we starve to death. The tendency of it all: scare people to stop us from thinking and deciding for ourselves. Your adherence to this BS is inexplicable ☆☆[About Moon or Mars colonies.] *"Ask a communist...It won't work perfectly, as the theory requires."* What the heck has failed social theory with this to do? There's a huge difference between political ideas and technical solutions that are physical realities. You can build your technical solution, measure it, test it, adjust it till it works. You can't do that with a political idea. ☆☆[Getting there] *"is much easier than keeping Mars colony alive".* Wrong, at least under SpaceX plans. They want to build a system for getting to Mars,



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_Dragon_(rocket) may be the strangest rocket ever conceived. NASA's idea was an 18 000 ton sea lauched monster, lower part in the water, 550 tons to LEO. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCnEM0E4WBE



From latest Swecon (late Oct). Åsa Lundström receives the Alvar fandom achivement award. Only ca 200 attendees, near half previous years (at least in Stockholm). Swecon is shrinking. Could be because organisers are listless, program lacks ideas and all fannishness is totally lost!

based on their Starship rocket. They want to launch one marsbound Starship per week! This plan is obviously very, very difficult, but if and when it gets going there won't be any problems keeping a colony alive. ✯✯ *"Inventions produce wealth, but they also destroy the sources of wealth!"* No. We USE, not "destroy" the sources. "Overfishing" means there are still fish there, just fewer of them. The fish population has been used, not "destroyed", and they are coming back as we now use fish from that area less. ✯✯"*I didn't say that there were no trees and birds left in the world."* You said they were "destroyed"! ✯✯*"we can both use and destroy the environment."* You choose to claim we only"destroy" it. ✯✯*"I wasn't saying that we weren't doing very well in some respects."* In MOST respects, actually. Even the environment is getting better. ✯✯*"bad politics and poverty is as easy to fix as distilling water"* No, it isn't. That's why we need growth, more resources (to USE not "destroy"). ✯✯*"Case Scania ≠ no soil overuse."* But "overuse" wasn't what you complained about... You complained about a systematic, ongoing erosion that would deprive mankind of all soil in the longer run. I just pointed out that new soil is constantly produced to balance erosion. ✯✯*" a Magical Machine that re-creates the Amazon jungle by combining molecules from volcano ash"* No need. Rain forest is very fast growing. It will grow back by itself on land not needed for human use. ✯✯*"I've been in the mindset to grasp the principles for about 35 years"* Thinking of a computer as a glorified typewriter isn't such mindset. ✯✯*"you know better than researchers who have researched subjects for 40 or 50 years"* ✯✯ It's impossible to find trends without starting figures or figures along the way. I certainly at least know AI better than you and the average population. ✯✯*"1990–1991 is 36 years ago. It's hardly what AI is about today."* Those 36 years ago - even further back! - was the start of what AI is today. Central is something called backpropagation neural networks, theoretically described in the 1970s, experimentation with it starting in the mid-1980s.Backpropagation networks was what I tested in the early 1990 and exactly what machine learning is about. Four decades ago computers were just too weak, memory too small to do what is done today. But the principles are the same. Your claim that "ín 1990 [it was] hardly what AI is about today" just shows your ignorance, as it is the same just with better machines. ✯✯ [AI and consciousness] *"are different things"* or so you claim. I disagree, many disagree. From what we can observe of how AI works today we see potential for consciousness - it's so obvious! And there's another camp that clings to the idea that "consciousness" is something extra-special, something immaterially mystic, that I choose to call magic. You can't touch it, can't measure, can't copy, can't build it. You're welcome to your opinion, but if you are honest you 'll recognise there are other takes on this topic too, and as AI advances their ideas grow stronger. ✯✯*"I also know the subject more than superficially"* From a glorified typewriter platform, unaware of backpropagation networks, that looks highly unlikely. ✯✯"*AI research. Consciousness research. They are not the same."* It's obvious that they go into each other. ✯✯"*describing what a computer does in terms of bits and algorithms does not explain consciousness"* Just because we have no comprehensive, proven and confirmed explanation of consciousness yet in any way. ✯✯*"Politifact...a serious independent fact-checking"* The name POLITIfact implies a political agenda. It's owned by the Poynter institute, founded by Nelson Poynter described as "liberal" (in the US it means left-wing). ✯✯*"That's not her argument. She acknowledges some problems"* No, it is her argument. "Some problems" but we should still trust them." As said. ✯✯*"there is a strong denialist Zeitgeist"* All these "denialists" you mention aren't the same, and some are insignificant, so there is no "denialist" headwind, just gusts of wind blowing in all kinds of directions. ✯✯ AE:impossible to find trends without starting figures or figures along the way. *"There are plenty of figures over time"* Won't help. You need starting figures to measure speed of change. And for populations existing for millions of years sample figures from the last couple of hundred years is of limited use.✯✯"*same term for two fundamentally different things blurs the issue"* Not recognising that your brain uses neural nets was the issue. ✯✯"*pigeon extinction cause conspiracy"* It's the claim man shot tens of billions of birds is the conspiracy theory. ✯✯ *"Thousands of eggs doesn't make overfishing sustainable.*" It does, it makes it likely the fish will come back.✯✯ **"***But no scientists support that."* "That" = supporting all of 1-4... Right, no/few scientists support the 4-part IPCC hypothesis.✯✯**"***Speed has nothing to do with [EMP]"* Speed is the critical factor. ✯✯*"how do you know that "common sense" is right?"* Some Wisdom of the Crowd would be a very good indicator! ✯✯ ***Time to *SOB! SOB!* bid farewell. Any comments? Send! Why not do fanzine and join an APA! --Ed***



LON's Froggy Gordon: "Ouch, my conscience!" (Splat!) "Feet in the conscience! Brainfootwash going on!" "Reminds of the case of the mysterious Devil's Brainfoot!!"



The Tubon, a1966 wearable synth made in Sweden. You play moving like a guitarist (as with the well-known Keytar).Paul McCartney bought one but it was never used by the band on stage. He and John here play around with it.

Слава Украине!

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 25

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1 Nov 2026

Comments:

Cover: Public Domain fantasy art.

Ahrvid Engholm: Condolences on the loss of Lars "Lon" Olsson.

Fun write-up of FinnCon!

re worst US President of them all, I still hold that Andrew Johnson was the worst. He created the segregated south, with Jim Crow laws, lynchings, and the Ku Klux Klan. He denied the right to vote to millions, and he caused the death, by murder, of thousands. Trump is an evil git, but his harm doesn't reach to Johnson's levels.

Robert Jennings: I somehow don't think Batman would make a good President... He'd do a lot of good things, but he hasn't got the spirit of compromise to make for good bipartisan leadership.

rct George Phillies, I'd like to see a good American Civil War re-enactment some day. Here in San Diego, we have an annual re-enactment of the battle of San Pasqual, but as the original was a running battle over several miles, the re-enactment is a bit of a failure, involving riding horses back and forth in one smallish field.

rct George Phillies re MaxAc, agreement. We shouldn't get into the business of telling people not to express themselves. If we don't like something, we can turn the page.

I have mixed feelings about Disney's Alice in Wonderland. It's good, it's fun, it has some nice songs, it has some jolly good jokes...but it's a little too "Wacky" for my tastes. The original was refined and subtle -- sort of -- and the Disney version is too "Coo Coo for Cocoa Puffs." I suspect, though, that this was absolutely necessary for the making of the movie.

Ahrvid Engholm: Fun write-up of the Turku SF Week!

Fun write-up of Golden Hours!

George Phillies: I'm an Antikythera Mechanism skeptic -- I'm pretty much a modern skeptic in a lot of ways! I'm willing to accept that it might have been comparable to Pascal's adding machine, but that it was a "computer" of any kind, I simply must reject. I hadn't heard analyses suggesting it couldn't have worked at all because the gears were too rough. I want to research this!

Garth Spencer: re “Thnig,” I came up with that a long time ago. I made a T-Shirt that was supposed to read, “I May Not Be Smart, But I Can Lift Heavy Things.” Sure enough, the letterer typoed the last word!

rct me, I do love the idea of creating new species for useful purposes. Perhaps a new plant could be developed that sequestered more carbon. Jerry Pournelle famously espoused a “Manhattan Project” research program to boost the power of Photosynthesis, so that plants produced more food per acre. A lovely thought...until you get to the problem of weeding the garden!

Adrian Kresnak: I first learned of “Summary Dismissal” from a law student (who has, since, gone on to a career as a lawyer and then as a judge!) Back in her law school days, she was assigned the task of writing up a summary dismissal plea in a case where a man had sued the Catholic Church for “Not teaching the Bible correctly.” Obviously, the dismissal was granted!

Mark Nelson: rct Garth Spencer re a code of conduct for politicians, agreed! In the past, politician had the knack of saying, “I disagree” and letting the subtext (“This is stupid!”) go unsaid, for the listener to infer. Nowadays, four-letter-words and racial slurs are commonplace.

rct Robert Jennings re baths vs showers, I’m unable to take a bath at this point in my life. I physically cannot stand up from the tub after a long, hot, comfy soak. I miss it terribly!

Joseph P. Gill: Very grim news that promising and paying markets are closing themselves off from new submissions because of AI slush. And the problem will only get worse, as AI gets better! I’m in favor of a law requiring “watermarks” on AI produced content, although it might not withstand First Amendment scrutiny.

I’d actually never even heard of Star Trek Discovery, and, alas, your review makes me really want to avoid seeing it. These days I don’t watch TV (or streams) at all, but your description of the problems with this series makes it sound pretty darned awful.

Samuel Lubell: Fun World-Con Write-up!

Glad you got to visit Disneyland!

I hadn’t even known there was a Wizard of Earthsea graphic novel. As the Earthsea Trilogy constitutes my very favorite written work of any kind in any genre, I need to track down a copy!

Kevin Trainor Jr.: I don’t have air conditioning in my car -- the a/c is broken and I don’t want to spend the money to fit it -- or in my home -- I have it, but it’s too expensive to run! So I had a warmish summer!

Completely agree that AI is a fine tool for editing, proofing, correcting, and checking. I often use Word’s “Editor” feature. I’m iffy about Gmail’s “suggestions” that pop up. Several times, Gmail has recommended responses to email that I might want to use, and, every time, the recommended text is EXACTLY what I wanted to say! They have studied me deeply and know my needs! So, when it comes to “creating content,” I can see how AI is only going to keep getting better, threatening our independence as creators, and this is the step where I say whoa!

The Murdered Master Mage

George Phillies
phillies@4liberty.net

N3F Thoughts

As I discussed in the last issue of The National Fantasy Fan, this last year has been difficult from my perspective. The web site was destroyed twice. Fortunately we were able to move it to a new location, and had a member who took over mailing our fanzines. The N3F Review of Books lost its main supply of book reviews, so that matters simply became impractical to continue. The Review was therefore folded into Tightbeam and The National Fantasy Fan. Hackers managed to steal the facebook page Science Fiction, so our ability to reach fen went down significantly. Several deaths were also noted.

On the bright side, I did finish another novel.

I hope that the coming year will be better. I welcome your votes for my re-election.

Comments:

A fine front cover. The bony piece with the sharp ends, top center, must not be a tail, as the tail is visible to the lower left.

The Swamp Spot Sentinel: An excellent bird picture. I do not recall that I have ever seen a Northern Flicker before. You gave us an interesting review of the serious challenges that could arise in trying to colonize Mars. For space travel, we face the serious challenge that the Solar System only has one habitable planet, the one that we occupy.

We shall see how AI changes video productions. It's a bit remote from my interests, but it is still a wonderful new world in which we live.

Elderly vehicles: So if you bought something more or less new, how much would you spend? I drive a 2000 Toyota Camry LSE, which has on a few occasions needed major repairs. A new or recent used car would still be much more expensive.

Telzey: I made an offer to the Schmitz estate. It matched what Baen paid for reprint rights to many of Schmitz's short stories, enough to fill four volumes. There are various paths to negotiating. I went in with an offer that was high enough that it was fairly likely to be accepted, which it was. We also split the royalties 50-50. I am now approaching the point at which I need to set prices.

Samizdat: Magical schools and the magical university? The constraint on historical examples is, of course, that there is no magic in the real world. If most of the population knows such spells as "Light My Pipe", "Purify Water", "Sweep the floor" and the like, there would be a very different attitude toward magic, as seen in my novel "Practical Exercise".

Gen X Disaster Kit: The people running my Grade School had noticed that in a nuclear attack the windows would all turn to glass splinters and shred everyone in the classroom, so we all filed out into the corridors – no windows -- and knelt behind the reinforced concrete walls between the corridors and the classrooms.

Please do write about Beyond magazine.

Brownian Motion: There are all sorts of re-enactors. My vague impression is that re-enactor armored cars are more common than tanks. Locally there are surely more Revolutionary War and War of the Slaveholder's Rebellion re-enactors than there are WW2 types. However, I should note re-enactors who refight battles over the tabletop using maps with cardboard counters or toy soldiers. They are re-enacting, at the upper command level. The Board Wargaming hobby is doing quite well, as

witness my board wargame collection, more than 8000 title though with the first 500 or so having been shipped off to a museum that wanted them.

Archive Midwinter: That was a truly fine rebuttal to attacks on the use of magic, psionics, faster-than-light travel,...as parts of SF novels. The Telzey Amberdon novel is now almost published.

UFOs: There are large numbers of reports from all around the globe. One hears more about American sightings, because that is where we are, but there are many reports from elsewhere. Several foreign governments, notably the French, have had serious investigatory efforts, now in fair part declassified.

Brandy Hall: An interesting record of what you have done. The numerical history of the word fanzine is a unique contribution.

A graph of member counts would be interesting, but I am not sure the data is there.

Stories That Aren't...I believe the correct answer is that it has become increasingly obvious that much of modern literary fiction is not fiction at all, as witness the lack of characters, plot, action, or coherent description.

The Immortal Storm and a second related book are iirc available from NESFA.

The Loving decision affected some states. In others, it had no effect, because the relevant activity was already entirely legal.

Samizdat: Thank you for the Convention and Disneyland reports. I saw Disneyland 50 years ago while working at UCLA. My parents visited California and wanted to go.

130,000 words is a modest length for a novel. David Weber routinely does twice that, or more. My *Minutegirls* is iirc 186,000 words.

July and August were simply renamed from prior names. However, the Roman year start in March, so September was for them the seventh month.

Esmeralda County Line: Congratulations on Son of SilverCon IV. Please keep sending book reviews, though they will go into Tightbeam or The National Fantasy Fan. Interesting points on *Oppenheimer*, which I have not seen.

New Novel – Terrorforming

The title is a pun on Terraforming. It is 1922, not on our time line, so while we are in Arizona, it is not exactly our Arizona. Nor is the University of California exactly our University of California. The broad stretch of geography is the same, some prominent people are the same, but if you try to match city road maps or detailed geographic features, well, you will fail.

Chapter 1 -- All lines down

Steel rails gleamed under the hot Arizona sun. Prescott, Arizona's railroad station was an elegant block of white-finished masonry. A slew of passengers waited to be boarded on the morning train to Phoenix. Bill Gordon looked at the crowd. They wanted to be on their way, but his long freight train was supposed to leave first. The passenger train was scheduled to stop at every two-building excuse for a town; he wasn't, so they had to wait for him. So long as the signal box displayed a lambent red 'stop' signal, he would continue to wait.

An elegantly dressed porter marched across the gravel toward him and climbed the ladder to the cab.

"Mister Gordon, sir?" The porter's accent revealed a recent heritage from south of the border. "Apologies of the station master, but he needs to see you upstairs." The porter gestured at the second floor of the building, where the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad had an operating office.

"On my way," Bill Gordon answered. He turned to his fireman. "Steve, no idea how long this will be, but we have a lot of passengers waiting for us to get out of the way, which we should have done two hours ago, if ever that signal box changed."

"I'll keep the fires burning. We just coaled and watered. Should be no trouble. I'll whistle three times if it changes." Steve Smith nodded at his boss.

A short walk brought Gordon to the office, a large hall the width of the building. The center of the hall was a map of a section of the railroad's tracks. Small models flying numbered flags showed the location of trains. Young men passed back and forth between stacks of telegrams and the table, making updates.

Railmaster Oscar Murphy shouted into a telephone, the station master at his side.

"I have no idea what is going on," Murphy said emphatically, "and you can tell upstairs that. Can you still hear me, or do we have to relay? Good! Something is working right."

Worried station master Michael Eastwood saw Gordon approaching and pointed at the map.

"Bill," Michael said, "phone and telegraph lines south of here are down. I can reach our first four signal towers. The fifth, it has a phone, the phone rings, but there is no answer. South of there I tried reaching towers, local sheriffs,...nothing. We had a telegram relayed from Phoenix through Los Angeles. Everything is down north of Phoenix, starting twenty miles out. The 204 reached Phoenix on time, two in the morning. The 138 and 407 should have reached there, thirty minutes apart. They did not. No sign of them. We had several large freights and a passenger train coming north, rather before dawn. No sign of them, either. Something big must have happened, avalanche, whatever. I'm not sending more trains south, when they might need to back out, not unless upstairs says otherwise."

"Must be rails someplace." Gordon shook his head. "No idea about the telegraph or phone lines. What did Topeka say?"

"Send someone out to look," Eastwood grumbled. "But my yard is empty. My yard engine is in Phoenix for maintenance. The replacement was with one of the freights. The trail south, what they call a road, is miserable for an automobile. If you drive it, take three sets of spare tires. Send out a man on a horse? Five hours out, five hours back, or more, with stops to rest and water the horse, and that only if the block is before the fifth tower."

"We're on a siding," Gordon said. "No lines are blocked by me. See if Topeka wants me to detach and ride out for a look. If I have to back out, I don't want to be pushing fifty freight cars to my rear."

Murphy shouted into his telephone again, then paused to listen.

"Topeka says go ahead," Murphy announced. "I have one flat car loaded up with supplies. At a guess there's been a washout, hopefully minor...yes, I know there hasn't been any rain recently. So you detach, hook up with the flat car and caboose full of linemen, and proceed slowly down the way. Ignore signal lights. Stop at each signal tower to confirm where you are. Yes, that's a pain in the neck, but I seem to have had several trains just disappear, and want to know where to look. Oh, the sheriff is giving me four of his men and a Browning, a 1917, in case there was foul play."

"A machine gun?" Gordon asked. He shook his head.

"Sheriff Cooper is old style," Murphy explained. "Very old style. He thinks the Indians may have escaped from their reservation and be attacking. But something delayed those trains, not to mention

chopping all the phone and telegraph lines. Bandits?"

Gordon considered his two visits to local Indian reservations. The sheriff's idea was absurd. "We can put the deputies in the caboose," he announced. "And if there's a smart one, he can ride in the cab with me."

"Oh, he's a smart one, all right," Murphy announced, "parents had moved back east, so he went off to Harvard — that's some school in Massachusetts — and then spent some years in Switzerland studying science. Apparently he actually met this Einstein fellow, the guy who doesn't understand how clocks work. But he's very polite, doesn't have his nose in the air, doesn't think he knows it all, though he pretty much does, and when the sheriff called him back to pay off his college costs, since the sheriff paid for his studies, he came right back. So he sits in the sheriff's office, taking complaints, and he's real good at getting all the facts right. He reads books on being a detective, when he's not doing his real job or doing some science thing. That's what the sheriff says, anyhow."

"Name?" Gordon asked.

"Winston Cooper. He's actually Doctor Winston Cooper, but he's not a medical doctor, so he asked people not to say that. Call him Winston and he'll be very happy."

After a longer wait than Gordon would've preferred, his new cars were hooked up, the crew was on board, and the machine gun -- God help us, he thought -- was carefully placed at the rear of the caboose, pointing over the end of the platform toward the rear. His new cab passenger, complete with badge, was the promised Winston Cooper, a pleasant young man who seemed to listen carefully and stay out of the way. He had arrived with a well-packed carpet bag. They were ready to go. He waved at the rail master, who gave him two thumbs up, so he sounded the whistle, and eased open the throttle.

"Steve," Gordon said, "we're going to be taking this really easy. Someplace up ahead there is missing track, and I don't want to be the one to discover it was between us and the next signal station. So will be up to 10 miles an hour, not quite two hours to get to signal five, and we stop at each signal and telegraph back that we're there."

"Nothing, Bill," Steve answered, "like not having to work too hard when it's this hot. Just have to keep up a modest head of steam."

"Mr. Gordon, sir?" The third party in the cab was Winston Cooper. "I should be looking out this window?" He pointed.

"Yes," Gordon answered. "But keep your sombrero tight-tied, or it'll blow away in the breeze. You'll still welcome the breeze. And you wisely brought all that water with you. This will be one dry day, and hotter as we head down to Phoenix."

"Will do, sir." Winston nodded politely.

The locomotive gradually picked up speed, such little speed as it was allowed to acquire. The click-click-click of the wheels as they went over the joints in the rails gradually became an unnoticed noise.

"Mister Cooper?" Steve finally asked. "Did you see the aurora last night?"

"No, I can't say that I did," Winston answered. "They're precious rare, here in Arizona."

"And this one was due south," Steve said, "not north where it was supposed to be, and electric blue. It filled the sky, well part of the sky, like a pyramid. Saw it with my own eyes, I did. Schoolmaster, next door neighbor, said regular auroras are red or green or white, and appear in the north. He wondered what it was."

"Not something I know much about," Winston said, "I've seen a few while I was in Europe. But mine were red and sometimes green.. But blue? To the south? That's strange, once in a life time, but you saw it. You're lucky. I wish I'd seen it."

"Thank you, sir," Steve answered. He paused to feed the firebox more coal.

"Signal light up ahead, sir," Winston finally announced. "You said I should tell you when I saw it. And it's bright red, just the way you said I should expect."

"Good eyes," Gordon responded. "You may need those spectacles, but you see right well with them."

Gordon eased off on the throttle, sounded the whistle three times to alert the signal tower, and carefully braked to a stop at the two-story structure. One of the crew at the tower was waiting near the rails.

"You two can wait here," Gordon announced. "I get to find out which of the deputies gets off to take a leak, even after I told them they stay in the caboose until I tell them to get out. Yes, I know I have a conductor back there to tell them that, but I'm also used to having passengers with less good sense than the Good Lord gave to a horse."

The top of the tower picked up a gentle breeze, so the air was not as miserably hot as it was at ground level. Gordon took a moment to check the windmill, which was slowly turning, pumping water from some depth underground, enough that the crew always had plenty to drink. It wouldn't have been the first time, he thought, that he'd arrived at a signal tower and the crew had paid no attention to the fact their supply of water was not working.

"Gentlemen," he said to this two signalmen, "any messages from Prescott?"

"We actually heard from the railmaster himself," the older of the two signalmen said. "He said to tell you that nothing had changed, and that Phoenix was sending out a party on horseback rather than sending one of their locomotives. They have a good 20 miles to go, so if they're lucky they reach the last signal tower that's working at their end before nightfall. Oh, and there's been no sign of any of the trains that disappeared. The Governor has been asking questions, because he had constituents with a train that doesn't seem to be here. Important constituents."

"Very good," Gordon said. "Expect a lot of signal traffic, you'll have to cope with it. A shame they haven't gotten phone lines out to this tower yet. That was supposed to happen next month. In any event, send my message 'nothing out of the ordinary' and wait for the repeat."

After not long, the message was repeated by Prescott. Gordon wandered back to the caboose to chivvy deputies and linemen back on board.

Back at the locomotive, he tooted his whistle twice, and engaged the throttle. Once again, the locomotive and its three cars following gradually began rolling forward.

BROWNIAN MOTION #22

A Garth Spencer apazine

For NAPA #285, November 2026

Uffish Thots

I understood APAs as originally a fannish answer to two needs – firstly, to make a closed circle where fans could discuss privately topics that could be volatile if discussed publicly; secondly, a limited-circulation list where people could exchange their fanzines at a reduced cost in printing and postage, and focus on common interests that not all fans shared. Special interests have ranged from anarchism, surrealism, Dadaism, Marvel comics, costuming, James Bond, Sherlock Holmes, filksongs, role-playing games, paganism, fantasy such as Tolkien's Middle Earth, Canadian SF, conrunning, to why you can't get a plumber on weekends.

Eventually I learned that APAs had a history preceding fandom, starting with hobbyists interested in letterpress printing and publication. Later, I read about a published list of APAs in current circulation, titled *Blue Moon Directory* or *Blue Moon Special* or something else involving a discoloured satellite.

Until the Internet became a publicly-accessible network, members were asked to contribute at least a minimum number of pages to each collation, called a "mailing," and contribute something to cover the postage and copying for the copy of the collation they received. The appearance of listservs, and later social media, began to meet some of the needs served by APAs, so reasonably enough the number of APAs has diminished. In fact a growing number of APAs – like fanzines – have moved to online publication. Many are archived online at eFanzines.com, fanac.org, or personal websites.

Eventually, after participating in several APAs, I became the Official Editor of eAPA, a monthly electronic APA archived at eFanzines.com. Eventually, I teamed up with Heath Row, we pooled our notes, and we produced an updated version of the *Blue Moon Directory* in 2024.

eAPA offers an "open" mailing every October, meaning the zipped mailing can be unzipped into PDF format without a password. You are all invited to download a copy and check it out yourself!

§

Just A Little Intermission, Important Message Follows:

Avoid Alzheimer's – Join EAPA!

Are you an old fan and tired? Science says that if you keep mentally active, the *risk of being afflicted by Alzheimer's is halved!* And there's no better way than to *join EAPA,* Worldfandom's oldest active Amateur Press Association. Just do a little PDF-fanzine – easy in most word processors - every other month. Contact garth.van.spencer@gmail.com and find out more at https://efanzines.com/eapa/ (Oct mailings are open). Enjoy real social media that isn't *staccato snippets of 240 chrs*. Discuss skiffy, culture, history, world affairs or just have fun. It's electrifying!



Meanwhile in Mundania: City and Provincial Elections

October in Vancouver was election month!

First came the civic election, which replaced an ostensibly business-oriented slate with a new Green major, Pete Fry, and a mix of Green and "COPE" city councillors. This may be an improvement.

Next came the provincial election, which replaced the New Democrat government of David Eby with … incoming premier Lorne Doerksen, and a BC Conservative majority government. This may not be an improvement.

I have also supported the incoming government of the micronation of Talossa.

§

As the Independent Green Anarcho-Surrealist Party representative in the Talossan legislature, I am introducing out-of-left-field bills and resolutions to the Kingdom of Talossa (none of which have been put on the table yet). Just two of my ideas for Talossa are:

· Petitioning to join the growing Canadian /H/e/g/e/m/o/n/y/ trade network. Without knowing what goods and services the Kingdom offers, or needs, I still feel confident we have something to gain and something to contribute in the middle-power network of alliances and relationships being founded by Prime Minister Mark Carney;

· Urging the United Nations to establish a working group to create the world's first truly international lingua franca. Since several constructed languages have been created with the goal of providing a lingua franca for South American, African, Asian

and native American languages, and only Esperanto has gained a following with its admittedly Eurocentric bias, I think it's a worthy enterprise to invent a truly neutral international language with as little national or ethnic bias as possible. Given the emerging mix of languages prevailing in most polyglot cities, the well-established international vocabulary for many goods and services, and the well-established features of creoles in many continents, there already exists a base of many languages to draw upon for vocabulary and sentence structure, which can baffle our neighbours and frustrate communication completely.

Mailing Comments

Cover

Great illustration of a manticore! I didn't know manticores came in a variety with wings, or a stinger growing between them!

Intermission 169, by Ahrvid Engholm

I'm not certain how many science fiction fans are interested in reading a chronicle of the Russian-Ukrainian war in a fanzine. Perhaps we would read with more interest if you emphasized the changes in effective military technology, starting with drones and cyber/DOS attacks and online disinformation.

Condolences on the loss of your friend, Lars Olsson. As you must have read in *The Obdurate Eye*, we have lost a number of fans in Canada, most recently my correspondent Andrew Murdoch. We lose too many friends.

Interesting to read about this year's Finncon. I was intrigued by the fact that dealers were in four or five locations, and how many were small/self-publishing houses, or how much of the programming was in English. Is English serving as a *lingua franca* for some reason? I have to wonder why French or German isn't used in that role.

I'm not surprised that mass market novels became rather bloated after word processing became commonly available. A new technology, or medium of communication, seems to go through a period when people gradually incorporate it into their usual practices, and overdoing the word count of stories is not too surprising. Perhaps people will get over this excess in time.

I am rather surprised that no paperbacks were on sale that were published later than the 1970s. Maybe the sellers knew an unspoken rule that no one was likely to buy any used paperbacks costing over €1?

Interesting that Chinese congoers appeared at Finncon. I'm not surprised that you say the mainland Chinese don't understand SF; there were clues about this, about the time that Chengdu hosted the Worldcon. Whether this is a clue about mainland Chinese culture, or about the allegedly Communist state, time will tell.

So Canada and Australia are going to appear in the Eurovision contest? Well. And well again. If my television access is restored by that time, perhaps it would be entertaining to watch.

The Swamp Spot Sentinel #2.3, by Bob Jennings

Read with interest.

As to *Becoming Martian*, I remain skeptical that there is an economic incentive for establishing any colonies on Mars, much less scope for long-term maintenance or expansion of a human presence. This may change if there are ways to drive down the cost of establishing a rugged, self-reliant habitat, or the cost of returning usable resources from Mars to orbiting industrial structures.

As to AI-produced microdramas, I have had a hint or two about them from reading/listening to microdramas recorded on YouTube, many of which seem to be AI-generated. I noticed that a number of these microdramas seem to revolve around being "reborn" (i.e., sent back in time) to just before the critical moment when the protagonist makes a poor life decision; and the article you reprinted referred to "time-traveling revenge" stories, which may be similar.

As to someone optioning the faces and voices of deceased actors for future productions in North America – I recall reading on Facebook that Denmark considered a bill to outlaw the use of real actors' visual and audio identities for AI-generated use. I think it would be wise for other countries to adopt similar legislation.

Re your comments to Ken Bausert: I am intrigued that you collected Sgt. Preston comic books. Somehow I missed these comic books, despite growing up in Canada.

Re your comments to *Archive Midwinter*/J. Swycaffer: I've always been in some doubt as to why Donald Trump won the U.S. Presidency (*twice*, forbye), despite several explanations. I suppose there are a combination of reasons, including online Russian disinformation mills. But, rational and proven explanations aside, I have always harboured a suspicion that he was supported by the widespread, ill-organized "neoliberal" subculture that infected many developed countries, starting in the 1970s. It didn't surprise me that a more-or-less conservative backlash would arise after the cultural whatever-it-was that happened to First World countries in the 1960s and 1970s; I was surprised, though, that the backlash lasted so long. Judging from the evidence, this kind of infection can take about half a century to abate.

Re your comments to me (I guess, since you addressed them to "*Brownian Movement*"): As I recall, there are reported close encounters with aliens from outer space from many nations, although it might be correct that the great majority are in the United States. Rather than great imagination, I think the growing folk mythology attributed to aliens from outer space demonstrates how much people want to feel a sense of control over life-altering events outside their control, to the little extent of believing at least they know what's going on. I would be better impressed with UFO reports and stories about aliens if I were persuaded there was any consistency among them.

You and George are quite correct to suggest I condense "Across the Fandomension" into a regular news column. In fact, I do feature a regular, monthly news column on

my website already. I guess it's time to circulate it; but in fact, it largely consists of reprints from fanzines and newsletters I receive. Probably I can do better than that.

If I am missing a lot of current fanzines in my online list, then it's about time to re-examine eFanzines.com (and fanac.org, and any other sources) to find and add the ones I'm missing. If I'm going to present an allegedly current list a lot of fanzines on "Across the Fandomension," as I do, the web page ought to stay updated, as correct and complete as I can manage.

Re your remarks to *Samizdat*/Sam Lubell:

- I spent a fair number of years reading about historical and contemporary magic, as well as reading stories by Randall Garrett, L. Sprague de Camp, Barbara Hambly, Ben Aronovich, J.K. Rowling, and Charles Stross. About the closest anyone ever came to naming the covert assumption behind divination and magic was in Isaac Bonewits' *Real Magic*, that focusing your will and desire on a visualized objective was enough to create improbable events. You may believe as much of this as you want; but it makes as reasonable a story premise as anything else writers have used. If a writer posits such a force abroad in a story universe, or some people who could use it better than others, teaching a common body of practices and professional ethics would seem to be necessary and desirable.
  My point, and I do have one, is that a surprising proportion of our modern population treats modern appliances, engineering and technology like magic. That is, a bunch of tricks they don't understand but can still use for their benefit. The only practical differences between our view of science, engineering and technology versus our view of magic are our faith that appliances, engineering and technology make sense; that anybody can learn about them if they care to; and that engineers and technicians will behave as lawfully as any other citizens. We don't live in fear of them doing harm to people or communities by secret means, as we used to live in fear of witches and sorcerers.
- Re the convention Sam was writing about – audience participation, as you imply, is somewhat lacking. In fact conventions seem to have a chronic problem getting volunteers/gofers, or any committee and program participation without incentives. I've seen this as a perennial issue in fan activity generally, for over forty years. Now, I ask you: is it really a cultural shift, from people expecting to make their own entertainment to people expecting others to provide it for them … or is it a false memory, like nostalgia?

Intermission #170, by Ahrvid Engholm

Of course I experienced *déjà vu*, reading this apazine, since I had just read and responded to it in eAPA.

Concerning Phil Pines' discourse on the Icelandic presence in Manitoba - he mentions the filmmaker Guy Maddin. For some reason I keep thinking Guy Maddin was an early Canadian science fiction fan, although I will have to comb through my fanhistory materials to verify that (or disprove it). Maybe it's time I tried once again to organize all my material, and to index it.

Re your remarks to me: yes, you're a technophile. There is plenty of reason to be a technophile. My own point is that the drawbacks of any given technology are often the drawbacks of its management. There are some very blatant examples of this point in uranium mining and nuclear power management, as there have been in petroleum- or coal-based power management. I'm sure I can turn up examples of mismanagement and fraud in hydro power generation, wind and solar power management, as well. It is necessary and desirable to account for the mismanagement costs of a technology. I put this case to you, seriously.

As to environmental pollution … well, the history of major cities, from well before the Industrial Revolution, includes a lot of filth and disease. London (England) was famous for fogs mixed with coal smoke, and the Thames River was famous for its filth until it was cleaned up; so also was the Seine River, in Paris. Coal and metal mining, from Wales to the U.S. Northeast, was famous for the coal smoke and runoff from mines. Petroleum extraction today in Alberta is famous for the waste products and land contamination it entails. There is a history of methyl mercury poisoning – Minamata disease – in areas such as St. Regis-Akwesasne, a Native reserve in Ontario, where water sources were contaminated by mining runoff. Minamata disease is so named because it was first recognized in populations dependent on fishing, from waters where pollutants such as dimethyl mercury, the chemical precursor, were regularly dumped (This was documented in *The New Internationalist* as early as the 1970s or 1980s.) As for plastic garbage, this has been found in the corpses of fish and birds far from the cities that produced it. The protracted process by which plastics break down – especially at sea, in the Atlantic and Pacific Gyres – produces long-lasting microplastic particles, with what ecological consequences I do not care to imagine. These are also costs of technology we have to take into account; and I also put this case to you, seriously.

And now we're dealing with the social costs of digital technology, Internet communication, and ye gods, even so-called "Artificial Intelligence." Such as it is.

Indeed do many things come to pass.

The Murdered Master Mage 283, by George Phillies

Re your comments to me:

- Your question about how many SF-adjacent conventions are run by commercial interests is well-considered. Off the top of my head, I would say at least half. On their face, the great majority of conventions I can track down (I concentrate on those in Canada and in the U.S. Pacific Northwest) are what used to be special-interest, or single-fandom conventions: focused on anime, comics, costuming, gaming, or media franchises. What I understood to be fannish conventions are very much in the minority.
- Your point that the U.S. legislative system is not parliamentary is well taken, in the sense that it is not based on British parliamentary practice. The fact that there is a representative body *at all* is the point I was probably making, but you're right, there's a better word for it … somewhere.

Re your comments to *Samizdat*/Sam Lubell: the Academy in your novel *Practical Exercise* implies a number of other institutions, such as professional associations that

monitor, license and disbar practitioners of magic, and acts of law to regulate them. I presume that you touch upon this. (In your place I would like to have fun displaying the legal language and practitioner qualifications, but then I have peculiar tastes.)

Archive Midwinter, by Jefferson P. Swycaffer

Re your comment to me: I wish I knew how to deal with hoarders. Pretty clearly, the hoarders I know are seeking security, and a measure of control over their environment, by owning and keeping at least as much as they need. I know one fellow who keeps compulsively buying stereos, to the point where he is left with a narrow passage from his bed to the door of his room. I have helped one mobility-impaired woman clear stuff out of her bedroom, not only to take out items such as garbage and expired medications, but also to access areas that her cats had sprayed. Presumably your housemate subliminally needs what she hoards for a sense of security and control, and needs some alternative to losing that sense.

R.A.I.L. #14 by Adrian Kresnak

I enjoyed your story about the "writer" being discovered to have used AI, mainly through inability to show their previous rough drafts and writing process.

Brandy Hall Issue 20, September 2026, by Mark Nelson

You seem to be tracing a progress in your apazine, from subject to subject. I have considered tracing a similar progress in an autobiography – strictly for my own reading – from one overriding preoccupation to another, over the years.

I believe I know what direction you have taken, and what you're describing.

In my online article on fanzines I wrote,

> *Fanzines, according to the definition I learned from fannish fandom, are voluntary publications produced by amateurs, usually SF fans, for other SF fans. Their format, frequency and content are entirely open to the individual. Part of the fannish definition was that they were only nominally for sale; usually they were distributed freely, despite mounting copy and postal costs, and traded for other fanzines, or written and pictorial contributions. …*
>
> *Fanzines, according to the definition that emerged in mediafandoms, were amateur fictionzines offered for sale, by and to mediafans.*
>
> *Zines, according to the punk and DIY subcultures that appeared in the 1990s, were voluntary publications produced by amateurs, often featuring poetry and punk/music criticism, often offered for sale in music and book stores. …*
>
> *Clearly a fanzine is what you make it.*

Obviously I left out the changing definitions of fanzines from the 1930s up to the 1950s, when fanzines started taking the form to which I was first exposed.

I tried to leave my opinions and preferences out of the foregoing article. Maybe I failed.

Moziag #4, by Joseph P. Gill

Thank you for your fan theory about *Star Trek*! I had no idea the several series meant to squeeze more money out of the franchise made this much sense!

Samizdat Ish #39, Sept/Oct 2026, by Samuel Lubell

So you were doing the LACon V newsletter? And somebody did a hoax parody? Wow.

Thank you for your comments. In time I will come up with a better, more memorable URL than I have, for my website "Across the Fandomension." So far I have avoided merely duplicating other websites, or merely presenting a welcome page full of links to them. For one thing I have materials that I don't think many other sites have, such as Den Valdron's article on copyright issues for writers; and I think it's past time I added an article on the legal and financial reasons why conrunners incorporate non-profit societies and trademark convention names.

Esmeralda County Line #17, by Kevin Trainor

All very interesting news and topics; but what about the Belgians? Why hasn't anyone realized the threat they represent?



R.A.I.L. #15
November 2026
Adrian Kresnak
railfanzine@gmail.com

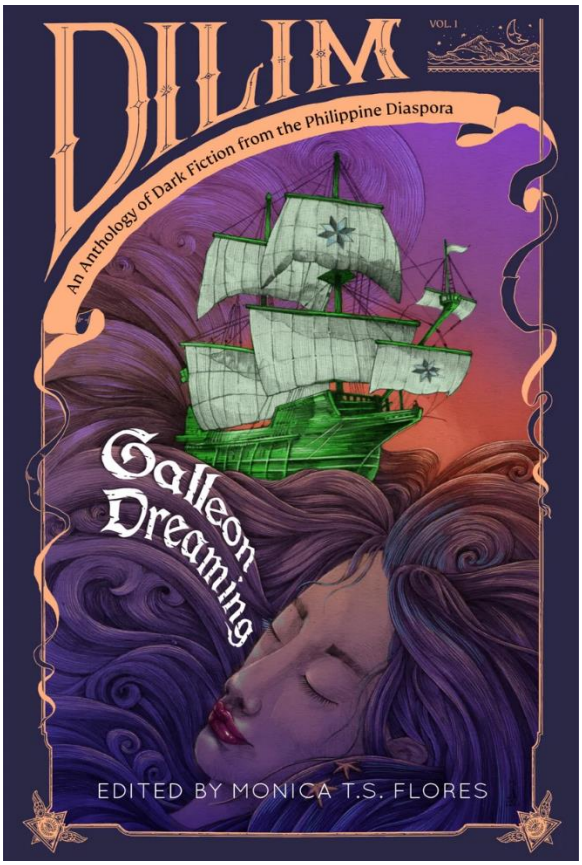
I went to the Grand Rapids 2026 Art Prize. It's a month-long event where the city is full of art. Visitors can vote on their favorite pieces. I had gone last year, too, and both years were great experiences.

The Grand Rapids Zine Fest gets held at a church. The same church hosts a lot of ArtPrize work. This butterfly is related to a piece about the beauty of migration — there was a table of papers for the visitors to take and fold. (The church also had a charging station for phones and places to sit down and rest — much appreciated!)

Seeing all the creativity is wonderful. It also makes me feel some envy. My art is the written word. I don't make aesthetic things of glass or metal. I love block prints. I make them at art festivals but I've never made anything worth exhibiting.

During ArtPrize, it feels as though every building is an exhibit. The Gerald Ford museum, a college for art & design, even stationary stores. I get it; hosting artwork is a great way to get foot traffic during the whole month. Last year there was this thrift store that had a beautiful painting and this mixed-media interactive piece. This year, we found a coffee shop featuring a crochet (knit?) sculpture by a zinester! Their Insta is @JohnElliotKnits. Funny, last year they were at the maker's market and I bought zines and stickers from them!

Next year, I hope I'll get to go multiple weekends. It's a huge city to explore — I hope I will have the stamina. But next year will be my final year of law school, so I might have to focus on studying instead.



It's been a great Fall season! In October, an anthology I'm in got published: *Galleon Dreaming: An Anthology of Dark Fiction from the Philippine Diaspora*. I'm so happy to finally share this with you. This has been an amazing project to be part of.

My story, *Dear Mama*, is an epistolary flash fic about a sheltered young woman going to college on the mainland.

https://www.dilimpress.com/galleon-dreaming

And in November, another short story got published online. *Office Dolls* is a corporate story. Julian's employer has laid off most of her colleagues. Replacing them is a robot named Nara…

https://wyldblood.com/office-dolls/

The British Society for Literature and Science posted a call for papers:

Discarded Biological Ideas in Scientific Fiction, c. 1825-c. 1925: From Poe to Gernsback

> ... Among the flowering of ideas into the nature of life that emerged in this time were notions which, while novel and scientific for the period, were later discarded, especially as newer technologies and the professionalization, and in some cases creation of new, fields of scientific inquiry further refined knowledge of life, especially in the fields of evolution, deep time, the origin of life, microscopic life and bacteria, alien life, proto-cryptids, psychic powers, and the afterlife.
>
> This same period of roughly 1825-1925 was the dawn of science fiction, and many authors were inspired by the discoveries of that period. This early period of scientific fiction was intimately connected with the ideas of this time, and the legacy of those works continued to keep those ideas alive. Just as the field of biological sciences became more professionalized in the early twentieth century, so too did science fiction, when Hugo Gernsback founded the first science fiction magazine, *Amazing Stories*, in 1926, with the explicit aim of having his authors follow established and (relatively) plausible science as the basis of 'scientifiction.' ...
>
> *Discarded Biological Ideas in Scientific Fiction, c. 1825-c. 1925: From Poe to Gernsback* brings together scholars from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds to explore how this early era of scientific fiction incorporated these now-discarded ideas into their plots, the impact of these ideas on the genre and public acceptance of them, and the changing role of scientific orthodoxy on a field of fiction meant to explore the boundaries of human knowledge. ...

Check out the full call here: https://www.bsls.ac.uk/2026/10/call-for-papers-discarded-biological-ideas-in-scientific-fiction-c-1825-c-1925-from-poe-to-gernsback/

Commentary

Robert Jennings, *The Swamp Spot Sentinel*

Is Constitutional Law going to be something that will directly affect your future career as a barrister?

I hope so! It's on the bar exam, too.

If you can access the entire history of Marvel Comics thru their history spanning pay library, and if it gets regularly updated with the newest issues, then what is the point of buying the new comics anymore?

For what it's worth, I do see value in buying physical copies. The app is limited by Apple or Android's terms of service, so the comics it has are "age-appropriate." If the app store removed the app from everyone tomorrow, I wouldn't have access to anything – whereas if I'd spent the same amount on physical copies, my access wouldn't depend on anyone else.

Garth Spencer, *Brownian Motion*

Your cat is adorable! What is their name?

Jefferson P. Swycaffer, *Archive Midwinter*

I'll take your recommendation of *Doctor Strange/Doctor Doom, Triumph and Torment*!

I was reading the *Doom: All-on-One* earlier – It's also about Doom trying to save his mother from Mephisto. *All-on-One* is more about showing off some amazing fight scenes. I enjoy seeing how the same premise can start so many different kinds of stories.

Mark Nelson, *Brandy Hall*

Congratulations on being asked to do your first peer review. How did the editor know to send the article your way?

I was part of a group submitting a paper a couple years ago – I checked the box to add me for peer review and it looks like my time finally arrived.

Samuel Lubell, *Samizdat*

Re: your recommendation to Robert Jennings of *Death of an Author* by Nnedi Okorafor – I was interested in that as well! I borrowed the audiobook from the library.

Samizdat...

Samizdat Ish #40
Nov/Dec 2026
Samuel Lubell's Zine



...Thoughts on Turning 60

I just turned 60. There is some debate as to when old age starts, but 60 is a candidate, although 65 is more common. Either way, I am at an age where I have more years behind me than ahead of me.

There's only one game in town – the immortality game. There are three ways to play and I've not qualified in any of them. I have no children who will pass down my genes to future generations and remember me after my death. I've also not created a great work of art that will live on after me. Nor have done any great deed – won a war, been elected president, or solved any world problem – that will record me in a history book. When I die, my name may appear on a few lists, Balticon/Capclave chairs, WSFA officers, Worldcon newsletters, and editors of some N3F zines. But that's it.



Here is what I want to do with my remaining time on Earth

1. Finish my PhD. Younger me made a bad choice when I stopped working on my PhD because I was too busy with work and thought an education PhD wasn't going to help me in a public relations career. But it might have helped me transition into an education policy job at a think tank. It is something worth finishing.
2. Write a book. Get something with my name out to share my ideas and my creation.
3. Travel – There's so much of the world that I haven't seen. I want to see the historical sites in Greece and visit castles and historical place in Eastern and Central Europe. France and Italy are worth another visit too.
4. Read and learn more. I have tons of books I have not read. I probably have enough books and ebooks to last the rest of my life even if I don't buy a single one more (highly unlikely)
5. Continue to run science fiction conventions.

…Author Spotlight: Charlie Jane Anders



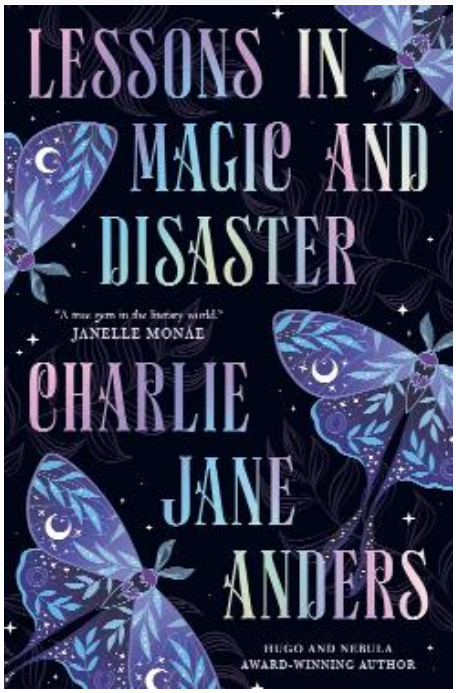
Photo by Henry Söderlund
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Charlie Jane Anders is Principal Speaker at Philcon this month. So I thought I'd research her a bit and do a spotlight on her.

Charlie Jane Anders was a fan before she was a writer. Born July 24, 1969, she studied English and Asian Literature at Clare College at the University of Cambridge and also studied in China. She co-founded *Other* magazine and served as its publisher from 2002 to 2007 and also co-founded the web blog io9 (part of Gizmoto) and served as editor from 2006-2016.

While her first novel, *Choir Boy*, appeared in 2005 from Soft Skull Press, her career as a writer really picked up with *All the Birds in the Sky* from Tor in 2016. Other books include *The City in the Middle of the Night* (2019), the *Unstoppable* YA trilogy (consisting of *Victories Greater than Death* (2021), *Dreams Bigger than Heartbreak* (2022), and *Promises Stronger than Darkness* (2023)). Her most recent book is *Lessons in Magic and Disaster* (2025).

Her first short fiction publication was "Love Might Be Too Strong a Word" in Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet, June 2008. Other publications include, "The Fermi Paradox Is Our Business Model" in Tor.com (August 2010), "Six Months, Three Days" in Tor.com (June 2011), "Don't Press Charges and I Won't Sue" in Boston Review (October 2017), "The Bookstore at the End of America" in *A People's Future of the United States (February, 2019),* "If You Take My Meaning" in Tor.com (February 2020) and "A Soul in the World" in *Uncanny* magazine (March/April 2023).



She has won multiple award including the 2012 Best Novelette Hugo for "Six Months, Three Days," the 2016 best novel Nebula and the 2017 Locus award for *All the Birds in the Sky*, the 2018 Theodore Sturgeon Award for "Don't Press Charges and I Won't Sue," the 2020 short story Locus award for "The Bookstore at the End of America," the 2020 Locus Award for Best Novel for *The City in the Middle of the Night*, the 2022 YA Locus award for *Victories Greater than Death*, the 2022 Locus Award for Best Collection for *Even Greater Mistakes*, the 2022 Hugo Award for Best Related Work for *Never Say You Cannot Survive*, the 2023 YA Locus Award for *Dreams Bigger than Heartbreak*, and the 2024 YA Locus Award for *Promises Stronger than Darkness*. And this does not count all the awards for which she was a finalist but did not win.

She also co-runs the podcast, *Our Opinions Are Correct*, with her partner and fellow writer Annalee Newitz

Her work frequently deals with gay and lesbian relationships and feelings.
A lot of her stories are up online. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie_Jane_Anders for links.



…The Faust Legend and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*

By Samuel Lubell

Originally Published in *The WSFA Journal* April 2000

Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, first published in 1948, updates the old legend about a scholar who sells his soul to the Devil for knowledge and power, changing the scholar into a musician, Adrian Leverkühn, while making the Devil much more ambiguous. Although the reader is not told directly, the narrator (and possibly Adrian as well) assumes that the Devil is really a figment of Adrian's imagination and desires. The Devil promises nothing beyond the reach of Adrian's capabilities, and requires nothing that is beyond Adrian's normal behavior. So the reader must question why a major writer like Mann chose to write an updated Faust? Why did he lock the structure of his novel to 16th century morality play? Perhaps the answer can be found in a crucial deviation from traditional legend. Mann's Faust never explicitly consents to the Devil's lure, yet he cannot avoid an agreement with the tempter.



The temptation of Faust is central to all the versions of the Faust story. In the earliest version, the Faustbuch, Faust studies black magic even before being tempted by the Devil and actually summons the Devil himself by his powers, "then began Doctor Faustus to call for Mephostophiles the Spirit and to charge him in the name of Beelzebub to appear there personally without any long stay." He wants Mephostophiles to serve him, to bring him anything he desires, and to answer all of his questions; but he initially refuses to sell his soul. Instead he tries to use his own magic to control the Devil, only yielding in the third parley when he agrees to give both body and soul to the Devil after 24 years. In the Marlowe play, *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, Faust is dissatisfied with his life as a Divine and is actually first tempted by two friends whom he tells, "Know that your words have won me at the last/ To practice magic and concealed arts." This version's Faust is not reluctant but summons up the Devil by abjuring the name of God and volunteers his soul unasked in return for 24 years of Mephistophilis' service. He says, "Had I as many souls as there be stars, I'd give them all for Mephistophilis. By him I'll be a great emperor of the world..." Goethe's *Faust* (whose opening parallels to the Biblical book of *Job*) returns to a reluctant Faust, who, although he practices magic, at first tries to imprison the devil. Feeling unfulfilled and bored with life, Faust is tempted by the Devil's offer of his service in return for Faust's service after death. But unlike the previous versions' defined 24 year limit, here Faust himself gives the Devil permission to end his life when he feels pleased with himself or "If ever I stretch myself on a bed of ease, Then I am finished." Goethe creates a Faust who is already outside humanity with no desire to become a part of it or even to enjoy his accomplishments.

Mann's version seems to correspond best to Spies' *Faustbuch*. He has been practicing music, the story's equivalent of magic, for a number of years. Although Adrian does not directly summon the Devil, there is a strong possibility that the Devil he converses with is already inside himself. The Devil implies a connection between himself and Adrian, "There is already enough between us for us to say thou." and a summons by the musician, "Do not lain it thus, as though you had not been long since expecting me!" Even Adrian himself admits that the Devil was "unexpected, yet long expected" and says "But seen Him I have, at last, at last!" Mann's Faust is not quite as enthusiastic as Marlowe's Faust nor as dissatisfied as Goethe's (which also lacks the 24 year limit of which Adrian's Devil informs him.) The Spies version also includes a parallel to Adrian's restriction on loving others. In the *Faustbuch*, Faust finds that the Devil will not allow him to marry. "Thou canst not marry; thou canst not serve two masters, God, and my Prince; for wedlock is a chief institution ordained of God, and that hast thou promised to defy." This is also the original of the line "For I die as a good and as a bad Christian." which Adrian uses as the theme of his *Lamentations of Doctor Faustus* Of course, Mann did not slavishly copy an old plot; most of the novel is original. However, there are enough borrowings from earlier versions to show a deliberate attempt to place his new novel in the old Faustian tradition. It is not a novel of a man like Faust but of a modern Faust.



However, unlike these previous versions where the Devil appears as living being,

Mann's Devil may not exist at all save in Adrian's head. Adrian says he has a strong suspicion that his Visitor is not there at all since "You say nothing save things that are in me and come out of me but not out of you." The Devil may just be a projection of Adrian's subconscious or a first symptom of incipient madness caused by his disease. Adrian asks, "Do you betray yourself and name to me yourself the place in my brain, the fever hearth, that makes me imagine you, and without which you were not?" However, the story does not require the Devil to be real. While the early Faust stories need a physical Mephostophiles to perform the magic, Mann's Faustian musician can himself fulfill all of the Devil's promises. Moreover, Adrian could be tempted even by an imaginary Devil. That a Prince of Evil created by his own mind would offer temptations of life and fame suggests that Adrian finds these to be evil. Yet, it also shows that he desires them and in the course of the dialogue Adrian's resistance weakens.



The traditional Faust stories end their temptation scenes with a contract. The Faustbuch actually has two, one with the articles which the Devil has agreed to give Faust, and one, signed in blood, where he agrees to be the Devil's servant after 24 years have passed and agrees to "defy God and his Christ, all the host of heaven, and all living creatures that bear the shape of God, yea all that lives." Marlowe's Faust cuts his arm as he sells his soul to Lucifer after 24 years. Goethe's devil prefers blood to a handshake to which Faust in agreement says, "Only do not fear that I shall break this contract. What I promise is nothing more than what all my powers are striving for." Yet, there is no equivalent scene in Mann. Leverkühn's agreement is only seen in ending his argumentl.

Adrian first denies his Visitor's presence and expresses surprise that this would happen outside of Germany (which is the traditional home of the Faust legend.) He orders the Devil to "hold thy tongue" and dismisses his "fables, fantasies" But when the Devil says he has time to sell, and offers 24 years (the length of the contract in the Spies and Marlowe versions), Adrian expresses interest, "So you would sell me time?" He still defies his Mephistopheles but is taken the bait, and begins to laugh and feel more at ease. The turning point comes, after the Devil has told him of his disease and the botched cure, Leverkühn makes his first request, calling him servant and friend, "`Obedient servant,' I say. `I ought to know you; and I find it most civil of you to give me a privatissimum here in our hall. As ye now are, my Protean friend, I look to find you ready to quench my thirst for knowledge and conclusively demonstrate your independent presence by telling me not only things I know but also of some I would like to know.'"

Even this is not a bargain, not a covenant in blood. But this Devil does not seem to need Adrian's signature or even verbal agreement, for he claims that the musician is already bound to him, "We are in league and business- with your blood you have affirmed it and promised yourself to us, and are baptized ours. This my visit concerns only the confirmation thereof." The reference to affirmation in blood alludes to Adrian's encounter with the sick prostitute Esmeralda where he contacted syphilis, "the illumination, the aphrodisiacum of the brain." He acquires the disease and the evil both at the same time. Not for nothing does Mann have Adrian be already reading Kierkegaard on Mozart's *Don Juan*, a character who in legend is often linked with Faust, even before the Devil appears. Consequently, though the Devil's last words are "Do you strike with me? A work-filled eternity of human life shall you enjoy," Adrian does not need to respond directly. His Demon already knows his answer; verbal acknowledgement is not needed. Certainly for the rest of the book Adrian behaves as if he has made this bargain. He blames the Devil for taking away his nephew to ensure that he does not love anyone. Like Faust who visited hell, Adrian talks of going down under the sea and has "personal, direct, and special knowledge about the affairs of heaven and earth." He writes *The Lamentation of Doctor Faustus* and, in the work's private premiere, madly talks about the pact he has made with evil.



All these links to the Faust legend, to the novel's title itself, are intentional. On one level Mann is identifying magician with musician and to artists in general. Both try to rival God as creator. Leverkühn's *Marvels of the Universe* which presents a scientific view of the creation, signifies a conscious rivalry with God. Artists are mad, creatures of the Devil. Adrian's Visitor says "A genuine inspiration... no, that is not possible with God, who leaves the understanding too much to do. It comes but from the devil, the true master and giver of such rapture." He turns to the evil in his soul to put genius in his music. On this level, the musician imposes limits on his connection to others in order to focus on composing. In fact, Adrian has already done this prior to the Visit. He calls the narrator by his last

name only, lives away from the city and allows no one to become close to him. He may regard this as evil, but pays the price for his art.

Thus far Mann could have been telling the story of the artist in any time or place. But Adrian is linked firmly to pre-war Germany and the narrator is writing during the war. The author emphasizes the Devil's German origins. The Devil's first words are "Speak only German! ...It happens to be just precisely my favoured language."[223] He refers to his "good sound German popularity" and says that he is "in fact German, German to the core... German I am..." So there is another level on which the story can be understood, through the lens of political time. The Devil's temptation immediately and obviously connects to Hitler, the Devil who corrupted Germany. All of Serenus Zeitblom's asides about the growing war, his children in the army, and his personal views form this link. Mann is updating an old German legend to present a political view, with Adrian representing Germany whose evil is due to the Devil Hitler.

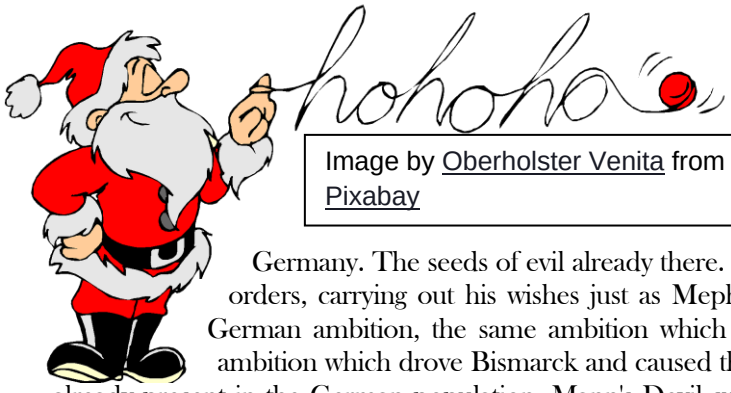


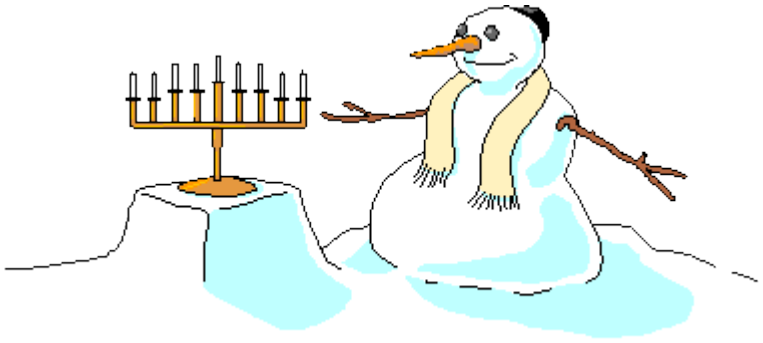
Image by Oberholster Venita from Pixabay

However, that interpretation is far too facile and ignores the subtleties in Mann's work. Remember, Adrian never consents to the temptation, never makes the bargain, but accepts the devil's words as something already agreed. The evil is inside of him even prior to the Devil's appearance, and the Devil himself may be imaginary. This is not the comfortable view of an outside force. The Devil-Hitler, acting on an innocent Adrian-Germany. The seeds of evil already there. Germans accepted Hitler as ruler. Germans carried out his orders, carrying out his wishes just as Mephostophiles fulfilled the desires of Faust. Hitler embodied German ambition, the same ambition which caused Faust to turn from ministry to sorcery, the same ambition which drove Bismarck and caused the first World War. He made use of the drives and desires already present in the German population. Mann's Devil suggests this in his capsule history of Germany's violent past with its "agitation and unrest, anxiety, presentments" creating a "Good time, devilishly German time!" If Hitler had not been born, someone else would have filled his role by appealing to these emotions, fulfilling these needs. It is ironic that we in the twentieth century cannot believe in an actual external Devil as the tempter of one lone soul, but have no trouble with the idea of Hitler, one man, as the corrupter of a country of over fifty million. If Adrian/Faust is to be blamed for his plight, how can Germany escape? The comfortable answer may not be the correct one.

In Christian theology, man is evil, corrupted by original sin. It is entirely possible for an entire country, even the entire world, to be guilty of a sin. Although there is no explicit reference to the Holocaust, Mann writes of the death of Adrian's nephew, a blameless child. This death, that of an angel and the personification of innocence, shows the guilt of mankind. Adrian says, "I find that it is not to be... The good and noble... what we call the human, although it is good and noble. What humans have fought for and stormed citadels, what the ecstatics exultantly announced- that is not to be."[478] Here, he judges humanity and finds that it does not live up to its claims of morality. He may have cavorted with the Devil but the Devil was inborn inside him and therefore present in every man. Schwerdtfeger betrayed him with the woman he wished to marry. Inez killed Schwerdtfeger. Neither action was caused by an external coercion but arose from internal motivations, an incarnate Devil. Similarly, Germans followed Hitler, but for their own reasons.

While Goethe's Faust ultimately is redeemed and admitted to Heaven, the Fausts of Spies and Marlowe are doomed to hell. Mann's Faust ends up insane and childlike in the care of his aged mother. Like the Fausts of legend he has had his twenty-four years of achievement and glory. Ironically, although Hitler's Reich existed for only 12 years, 1933-1945, the Nazi party had been established in 1920, surviving just slightly more than 24 years.

Mann chose to write his novel about Adrian Leverkühn as *Doctor Faustus* because the traditional Faust legend could be modernized to show the evil inside of humanity. Faust wanted easy access to knowledge and power, Adrian wanted knowledge and success, and Hitler's Germany wanted power and victory. While Adrian's devil may have been imaginary, born of the desires in his diseased brain, Germany's Hitler really did exist. But Mann may be suggesting that Hitler's success as tempter was due to failures in the German character, the "devilishly good German time"[231] The earliest version of the Faust legend, the very version that Mann used, presents Faust as an unredeemable villain. The final chapter of the *Faustbuch* is labeled "Here followeth the miserable and lamentable end of Doctor Faustus, by which all Christians may take an example and warning." If Germany is Faust to Hitler's Devil, it too is not innocent, not a victim. Mann's Adrian never explicitly consented, never gave his word to the Devil. Instead, he accepted the Devil's claim on him as already present and did not challenge it. This is the guilt of the passive Germany which willingly followed Hitler.



…Top 12 Reasons Why Hanukkah Is Better than Christmas

12. You can't be nailed to a menorah
11. More elephants in the Hanukkah story
10. No roof damage from reindeer
9. Never a silent night when you're among your Jewish loved ones
8. No Dance of the Sugar-Plum Rebbes
7. Betting Hanukkah gelt on candle races
6. Kids the first in their class to know that there is no Santa Claus
5. Holiday has own official toy-the dreidel
4. Five out of five trees would rather have people use a menorah
3. No awkward explanations of virgin birth
2. Cheer optional

And the number 1 reason why Hanukkah is better than Christmas...

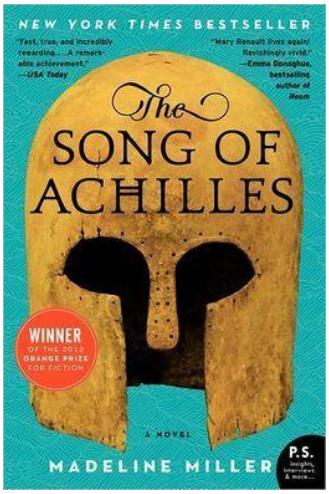
1. No Irving Berlin songs (even though he was Jewish)

…Status of Projects

Past readers of *Samizdat* will remember that I have launched a series of projects to better my life. This bimonthly report serves as a reminder to me to keep working on these, and is a record of when I fall short. Strangely enough, I have a lot less time for my projects now that I am employed again. Imagine that!

Project Classics: *Vanity Fair* by William Makepeace Thackeray – The book is a satire of English society during the second Napoleonic War. The heart of the novel, often considered the first Victorian domestic novel, is the contrast between Becky Sharp, an ambitious and self-centered girl from a low background (her mother being a French dancer) and Amelia Sedley, a rather sheltered and naïve (to the point of being somewhat simple) young lady whose family is ruined due to bad investments. The early part of the book deals with Becky's attempts to trap a wealthy man into marriage while Amelia is in love with George Osborne, who takes her for granted too often (while George's friend Dobbin is secretly in love with her). But when Mr. Sedley loses his money, George's father refuses to let their marriage go through. So, the two elope, leading George's father to disinherit him and cut off his funds. Meanwhile Becky married Rawdon Crawley, the son of the man who employers her as governess, on the expectation that he would inherit from his wealthy aunt. But the aunt, enraged at Rawdon's marriage to a nobody, leaves her money to someone else. At times, the book can seem like a soap opera. My favorite character is the narrator who sometimes steps in and moralizes and other times says he would do the same thing as the character. She refers to meeting the characters and discusses gossip about them.

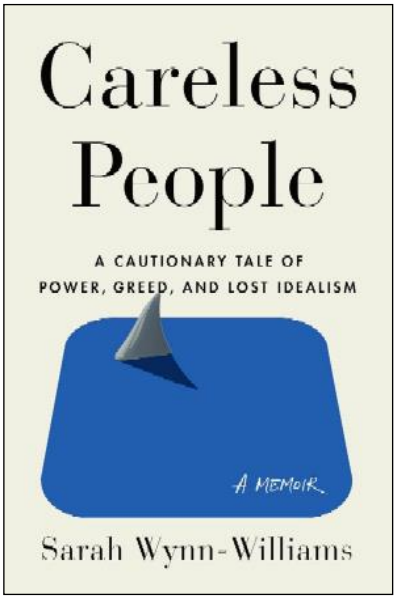
The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller – This book was published as mainstream, not a fantasy, even though the Greek Gods are real and the centaur teacher, Chiron, and Achilles' mother Thetis is a sea nymph. The book focuses on the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus, who is exiled from his father's kingdom as a child for accidently killing a man. Patroclus narrates the book even though (spoilers for 2000+ Greek myth) he dies before Achilles does. This is very well written although I do not think Miller really adds anything to the myths (other than not having Achilles be invulnerable except for his heel). I have heard her subsequent book, Circe, is even better. I will have to look for it.



Project Nonfiction: This is probably the category I've done the most. ***Muskism: A Guide for the Perplexed*** by Quinn Slobodian and Ben Tarnoff. Musk's DOGE cost me my government job and even now I am not working for the government directly but through a contractor with slightly less pay and fewer benefits. So I am not exactly neutral on the subject of Musk. The authors here try to puzzle out Musk's political philosophy, which they call Muskism, as a system. They contend that Musk is still influenced by growing up under apartheid in South Africa, so believes in a hierarchy in which the elite should rule as "fortress feudalism." At one point, Grok, Musk's AI engine, called itself "Mecha-Hitler". It also led him to see the interests of the elite as separate from those of the masses. He wants to use technology to engineer society with tech companies controlling governments. Musk has not diversified; most of his wealth is in his own companies. The authors also stress the influence of science fiction, especially Japanese mecha cartoons. The book's insight into Musk's thinking scares me considering how rich and influential he has become.

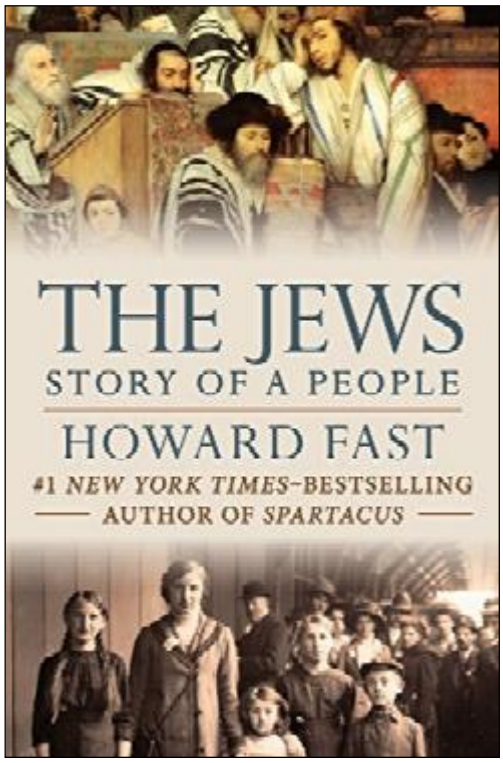
End Times: Elites, Counter-Elites, and the Path of Political Disintegration by Peter Turchin. This book is like a real world version of Foundation's Psychohistory. It describes the efforts of the author to create a way to use history to predict the future of nations and their collapse. He calls this cliodynamics (Clio of course being the muse of history) and uses extensive datasets. Historians however, generally reject his claims, saying there are too many variable in real world history to reduce it to a few equations. And even statisticians claim he is oversimplifying, although this may be because the book is meant for a popular audience, not academics in his field. The author gives a history of the U.S. based on his trends and how when the balance between elites and regular people tips too far in favor of the elites, and when the rich get richer and the poor (and middle class) get poorer, upheaval inevitably happens. He claims the U.S. is in such a period right now of disintegration and claims that civil war or societal collapse will happen real soon. However, he does point out a few cases where societies were able to avoid collapse when military and administrative elites side with the government or the government issues major reforms that satisfy public demands for change.

Careless People: A Cautionary Tale of Power, Greed, and Lost Idealism by Sarah Wynn Williams. This is an account of the author's seven years at Facebook. Originally convinced that Facebook will transform the world for the better, the author begged for a job, ending up running their global affairs division (mostly just her at first). But gradually she becomes disillusioned as Facebook gives up its ideals to chase money and soothe Mark Zuckerberg's ego. It compromised on its plans to expand Internet access for poor people and surrenders information and control to China's authorities. Meanwhile, Facebook's COO, Sheryl Sandberg who portrays herself as a feminist supporter of women I the workplace, turns out not to insist that the author resume working immediately after childbirth and provides no support when Williams is sexually harassed. I found that this flipping between the story of Facebook's abandoning its high ideals (or at least what the author thought were its ideals) and Williams' personal story weakened the book and would have preferred more of a focus on the former.



The Education Wars: A Citizen's Guide and Defense Manual by Jennifer C Berkshire and Jack Schneider. People in my book club criticized the book as one sided, but it was meant to be a guide for defending public education. It took the premise that advocates for vouchers and privatization really want to destroy public education and democracy. They do not really want parent rights if the parents want things other than their right agenda. The book suggests strategies for advocates such as not having teachers be schools' primary defenders. It recommends language about how public schools support everyone's kids while vouchers just support the parents' kids; education is a public good. Avoid overly partisan statements and avoid victimization. Show that claims that schools are indoctrinating kids into liberalism are false. Opponents of public schools want to rewrite history, censor books, and target LGBTQ students. While public schools may not be doing

everything we want them to, they are making progress and are certainly better than what existed before the spread of common schools. They show how opponents claim broad support but in reality only represent a handful of parents. The authors also point out that vouchers mostly fund people already in private schools.



The Jews: The Story of a People by Howard Fast. This history book by a once popular fiction author is great at the storytelling but I found some of the historical claims in the book to be questionable. It rejects biblical accounts and claims that Yahweh was originally a volcano god or god of high places. He claims the Beni-Yisrael, a nomadic herdsman group, gradually learned how to ride horses and ride chariots. They also gained access to iron weapons, which they used to defeat the Canaanites. They never were in Egypt. Still he thinks that Moses must have existed because scholars of Alexandria never doubted Moses' existence. Fast says that Moses may have led only the Levites out of Egypt to join the Children of Israel already in that land. He asserts that Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. But he does not really present historical evidence other than a storyteller's view that this makes sense. There were other things that made me go wait a minute, but this is a popular history meant for younger general readers written by a non-Historian.

Battle for the American Mind by Pete Hegseth with David Goodwin. Before becoming Secretary of War, Hegseth was a supporter of classical Christian education. The book asserts, without evidence, that liberal teachers in public schools are indoctrinating their students and conservatives need to remove their children from these propaganda mills before it is too late. It claims that public schools teach Critical Race Theory so white students learn to hate themselves and America. They call for a return to Christian education and the traditional Paideia curriculum through new schools using the Classical Christian education model.

Project Video: I did not do much here. I finished season 2 of *Wednesday* (Netflix) which I thought was not as good as the first. Making the rest of the Adams Family regular characters actually diminished Wednesday as the center. And the Adams Family does not work as well when everyone around them is also a supernatural character. I'm also enjoying episodes of *Blue Bloods*, about a family with three generations of cops (except for one who is an assistant district attorney). The father is the NYC police commissioner (as was the grandfather, now long retired). The heart of the show is regular Sunday dinners with the whole extended family.

Project Fanac: This is convention season. Last issue I presented articles from the LAcon V newsletter that I edited. I also did the program guide for Capclave and helped with the programming. This weekend I will be attending the 90th Philcon. Back in 1936, a handful of NYC fans went to Philadelphia to meet some fans there, which many say was the first SF convention (although others disagree saying it was more of an informal gathering). Philcon will be the site of this year's 1632 mini-con. I've also started work on this year's Compton Crook Award, the Baltimore SF Society's contest for best first novel. I've assembled a list of 150 first novels and have received some of these as ebooks and physical books at the BSFS building (Baltimore is one of only three U.S. clubs to have its own building/library).

Project Shorts: The paper magazines are still not being sent. I received the March/April issue of *Asimov's* but no *F&SF*. I have been keeping up with *Asimov's* as e-issues and reading *Clarkesworld* and *Lightspeed*. I am behind in my reading of *Analog*.

Project Series – I've started a re-read of *1632* by Eric Flint and collaborators. Let's see how far I get this time. I bought the *Liaden Universe* book bundle from Fanatical, which seems to be a Humble Bundle competitor. Even though I have 15 or so in book form, it was worth $13 to get the rest. https://www.fanatical.com/en/bundle/the-liaden-universe-sci-fi-book-bundle. Series that have from Humble Bundle and elsewhere include the works of Gene

Wolfe, Discworld by Terry Pratchett, Saga of Recluse by L. E. Modesitt, the works of Tanith Lee, the works of C. J. Cherryh, the Expanse (books 1-7), much of 1632, Charles Gannon's Caine Riordan series, and six books of Charlie Stross' The Laundry files.

Project Activities – I went to my father's house for Rosh Hashanah and celebrated the Jewish New Year. I also went to synagogue for Yom Kippur, a Jewish fast day.

Project Health – I had major dental issues in October and wound up with a root canal and two crowns (one requiring a crown lift), at considerable expense.

I made no progress on Project Shakespeare or Project Cleanup.

…Letter of Comment on N'APA 284

Intermission #169 – Congrats on 50 years in fandom. I'm not sure about my count. Like most Americans, my childhood entertainment was drenched in science fiction and fantasy – Saturday morning cartoons were nearly all science fiction and fantasy, afterschool reruns of the Six Million Dollar Man and Wonder Woman and such were nearly all SF and fantasy too, Disney movies likewise. The first PG movie I saw was Star Wars. And of course it was an easy move from fairy tales and the Oz books and such to SF and fantasy for older children and then adults. And of course most computer and video games were science fiction and fantasy, even in the 1980s. My first convention and science fiction club were both while I was in college. So, arguably, that puts me at about 40 years in fandom.

It is sad that Trump continues to favor Russia in the Russia=Ukraine war. His latest deal to buy diesel from Russia flies in the face of the Russian boycott that all civilized countries are doing. The Golden Hours convention certainly counts as a literary convention, but I am not sure it counts as a science fiction convention. It seems more akin to a literary festival with ventriloquists and caricaturists, rather than panels of authors. And, while the magazine may have some stories that today can be considered SF, we do not know how much of the convention focused on them. It seems the main speakers were P.T. Barnum the circus owner and Edward Ellis who from your description spoke on Westerns. (Of course I those days science fiction was not a separate genre and writers like Ellis wrote widely, including stories involving things we consider SF today.) I think we could credit this as an ancestor of SF conventions, but saying it is might be the first SF convention is a stretch too far in my opinion. I certainly appreciate the classic writers but one does not have to object to modern writing to agree that the older works had their charms. I would argue that the 200 page novels of the past, while remarkable works of conciseness, had little space for anything other than plot. Today's writers generally do better on the literary side of writing with better characterization and more of characters' internal lives. I'm a big fan of Adrian Tchaikovsky. If you want to try a modern writer with a classic feel he would be a good place to start although he tends to write long books). 750-1000 attendees would be a good sized literary convention although tiny by Comicon standards. I disagree about cons having too many panels. No one forces anyone to go to a panel and topics that interests one person may not interest another. Pratchett is a British humorist and his humor may not carry over to country's humor, especially if you don't read it in English. I do not think I have seen the 1982 version of Ivanhoe.



I agree about Donald Trump being the most self-centered American president. In addition to the parade, his picture on passports, adding his name to the Kennedy Center (which is in DC, not NYC), he put his face on the semiquincentennial gold coin (despite a law saying no living person can appear on U.S. money) and the Trump battleship. I would not be surprise if he names the white house ballroom after himself too.)

THE SWAMP SPOT SENTINEL Issue #2.3 – Batman cannot run for president without revealing his secret identity. He would need to prove that he is a natural born citizen which requires his real name. Curiously, however, DC Comics did have Superman run for President even though he was born on Krypton of non-American parents. Becoming Martian sounds like a good book for my nonfiction book club. AI keeps getting better. I have no doubt that soon there will be full length AI produced "shows" with no human writing or acting. I think Trump is president because enough voters did not want a woman president so voted for Trump despite everything. I've been keeping my streaming video subscriptions even though I barely watch anything. I really need to start watching more or dropping some subscriptions. In the age of electronic zines, length ceases to matter for printing or mailing. So if a zine goes too long, you can just skip those pages. On the issue of paperback books, some of us don't have room for more books. I think the number of UFO sightings have dropped dramatically now that practically everyone has a camera in the smartphones they carry with them all the time. On the issue of AI-written books, there have been a number of cases where an author is accused of using AI in the writing but has denied it.



The idea that everyone would attend school is fairly recent, just the last 300 or so years. It used to be that only children of the nobility would go to school. So that would hold true for magic schools as well. In the days of King Arthur and fairy-tale witches, magic was rare and presumably handled through an apprenticeship system. Most panels at conventions allow time for audience questions (although moderators sometimes have to step in and make sure they ask real questions, not make speeches of their own. On your comments about "How Disinformation is Sabotaging America" I disagree on the legality of her recommendations. Internet services can be regulated with something similar to the equal time law. Many Disney films that are not profitable at first kept on being re-released with each new generation so they all eventually made money. A lot of self-published books do not make any money and even some traditionally published books fail to earn back the advance to the author. Yes, Trump's ego and self-delusion is rather high but ego is very common among politicians. It is not a job for the quiet, reluctant leader.

The few attempts to make movies based on pulp and action heroes have not been successful. There was Remo William: The Adventure Begin which obviously was meant to be the start of a series and The Shadow, but neither had a second installment. People on the prairie frontier had a pseudo-scientific idea that the rain would follow the plow. Even though ebooks are less expensive, a lot of people like the permanence and feel of actual printed books. I assume this is true for comic book readers as well. I got the printed March/April issue of Asimov's but that's it. Fortunately, they've been making the e-versions available. Yes, Penguin Book published a lot of public domain classics, but they also printed copyrighted classics and even contemporary authors. It will be interesting to see what happens when Gen X people like myself start retiring in a few years if our experiences will be different from the Silents and Baby Boomers. Many of us doubt we will be able to afford retirement and with pensions extremely rare (outside of government workers), many of us will have less generous retirements, especially with the threatened cuts to Social Security. I have heard of the Adam Link stories by Eando Binder but I do not remember ever reading them. Good point about non-Tolkien fantasy. There's certainly the Conan school of fantasy separate from Tolkien and as you say *Unknown* had what we would call urban fantasy. I am not familiar with *Beyond*.

Intermission #170— It is important to recognize that *Golden Hours* was a publication for kids (mostly boys). I had never heard of these readers clubs. They sound sort of similar in some respects to the Boy Scouts. But yes, they do sound like early fandom. I suspect Gernsback was just copying this earlier club concept but extending it to adults. It

is possible that some in early fandom had been part of Golden Hours clubs or knew people who were and copied some ideas into fandom.

The Murdered Master Mage – Yes, the mysterious Antikythera Mechanism. No one knows what it was supposed to do or how it would work. The title "Telzey Amberdon!" is just an exclamation point away from the title of the Baen collection. That could get confusing. I'd recommend "The Return of Telzey Amberdon" and then modify your subtitle "The Hub's Greatest Psi Is Back" Commercial groups tend to run media conventions (Creation Cons), and Comicons. They do not tend to run the smaller literary conventions like Capclave, Philcon, Boskone, and the like. While impeachment is possible, the Democrats will not have two-thirds of the Senate needed for conviction.

Thanks for saying *Samizdat* was a "fine issue". Technically, the person who wrote the prompt that led the AI to write the content, is, under our current legal system, the owner of what the AI produced. At least, until the AI overlords change the legal system. It is good to see that you are not only writing about Telzey, but Trigger as well.



Brownian motion #21—Your map of the Maga Empire has been superseded by the 2026 election; everyone gave a big sigh of relief. Even Texas turned blue. Yes, the space program led to many spinoffs that benefited everyone, not just astronaut ice cream. I'm sorry to hear about your depression. Be assured that you do have readers who are interested in what you have to say. Thanks for your kind words about my nonfiction reading. I like to learn about new things. Yes, Gary Gerstle, in his book, *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era*, seems in favor of the Neoliberal Order and worried about what might replace it.

Archive Midwinter – Yes, psionics as used in Marvel comics and SF of the 1960s frequently was a stand-in for magic. A lot of SF these days is retro too. I enjoyed reading DC Comics Crisis on Infinite Earths, but it led to a situation where continuity was revised increasingly often. The big New 52 continuity was quickly reversed five years later. I was always more of a DC reader than a Marvel reader, but I believe Marvel has had fewer universal resets. My favorite Trek is DS9.

R.A.I.L. #14 – Good luck with school. There have been a number of cases where Judges have criticized lawyers' briefs when they use AI which has a tendency to make up references. I have been using AI some on my job and always tell it not to invent anything. I manage the Baltimore SF Society's Compton Crook award for best first novel and we are making authors tell us that AI was not used to write (editing is ok) the novel.



Brandy Hall Issue 20 == I use Libby fairly frequently. It is a great way to get library books via the Internet. One can argue that Galaxy Quest is not a Trek movie but it is a loving spoof of Trek and the fandom that grew around it. Isn't there a fairly popular Star Wars multiplayer online game? Creating a new species through gene editing seems more likely than reviving extinct species (especially since many of these extinctions were human-created). If grown adults knew how to behave we wouldn't have laws, courts, and prisons. Yes, bring back the dodo! *The Time Machine* and *War of the Worlds* are classics, but readers must stay aware that these are 19th century novels and use a heavy dose of historical perspective. Lists of the best of anything tend to suffer from including a much greater percentage of recent works because these come to mind first. Still, it is interesting that your list had so many J. G. Ballard and John Brunner. I do not think U.S. movies get history right. I have never seen one that was willing to sacrifice entertainment value for the sake of portraying an accurate history. Of course Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* was famous for getting so much history wrong. I am not sure if an A.I. that produces inaccurate results could be considered lying. I do not think A.I.s are at the point yet where they can distinguish right from wrong and choose the wrong. I doubt that an attempt to portray

the Renaissance in just 78 minutes could do more than introduce the subject. I have heard good things about *The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction* from Oxford, but have not read it either. I am not planning on going to Aussiecon 5 but will attend the Worldcon in Canada in 2027.

I'm sure J.K. Rowling did not think she invented a new genre. What she did was take the British boarding school book, a fairly common trope, and combined it with the chosen hero defeats the dark lord, another common fantasy trope. You raise a good point. A list intended for newcomers to SF would be very different from a list designed to show how SF has developed over time. I would say both such lists are needed. Someone who is interested in a cannon of SF could start with the original three volumes of "The Science Fiction Hall of Fame" edited by Robert Silverberg and Ben Bova. And Volume III covering the Nebula winners is edited by Arthur C. Clarke and George W. Proctor. Note that these are short fiction, not novels. I'm not sure SF was ever in the ghetto. Certainly a lot was but 1984 and Brave New World certainly were recognized as important novels from the start. I'm glad you like my panel suggestions. Yes, regulating the Internet like other utilities makes a lot of sense. N'APA is available on the Internet so people not in N3F can read it. I'd be interested in seeing your whole list of novels that help tell the story of what SF became.

Moziag #4 – I didn't know the start of the year used to be in March, but obviously people in 154 BCE did not have months named for Julius and Augustus Caesar. I checked and apparently existing months were renamed for the Caesars. The Magazine of Fantasy and SF is not taking stories because they only seem to put out an issue a year. It has nothing to do with AI. Clarkesworld and many other online magazines have found ways to deal with AI slop. Interesting article about sf inspired songs. I'm not sure what the point of making prequels to Lord of the Rings without the rights to Tolkien's own works but plenty of TV and movies get the right to existing SF and then ignore most of the original work. I didn't know IMAX theaters were so rare. I think you mean 70mm IMAX since there are many more of different kinds of IMAX. I never watched Star Trek Discovery.

Esmeralda County Line #17 – I'm glad Son of Silvercon IV went well. Good luck with next year. I didn't know Coyote vs. Acme was out.





Esmeralda County Line #18
October-November 2026
A zine for N'APA 285

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THAT WAS THE AUTUMN THAT WAS

As usual, I'm starting this the weekend before the sue date, so I'll probably forget something. I worked the midterm elections for the county elections board, and that actually wrapped up right after election day.

As I observed to Sam in the comments, I didn't make it out to the DC area in October because the cash flow was insufficient. I am going to be staying home a lot until late February, saving money and cutting down my credit card debt so I can afford the annual expedition to Nashville for Mike Williamson's Confinement.

It's that time of year when I have to buckle down and knock out my continuing education requirements for next tax season, so of course I'm working on APAzines. My submission to APA-V is in to Nic and now I have to get this wrapped up.

BOOKS & OTHER MEDIA

Bought David Drake's Balefires (an updated version of his horror collection From The Heart of Darkness), two reference books on the ships of the Kriegsmarine in WW2, and Grand Admiral Raeder's autobiography, which should be here by Thanksgiving.

MUSIC AND OTHER SUCH EVILS

I bought Waylon Jennings' "Are You Sure Hank Done It That Way" because it wouldn't get out of my mind. "Ten years on the road making one night stands/Speeding my young life away…"

THE COMMENTER IN THE HIGH CASTLE PERSISTS:
LEFTOVER COMMENTS ON N'APA #284
Samizdat #38

(Magic schools) Indeed, Miskatonic seems to spend more time dealing with the unfortunate consequences of students and faculty discovering Things That Should Not Be than in training young wizards and witches. No doubt the federal Threat Reduction Agency has something to do with this. (j/k) 💣💣L. Jagi Lamplighter Wright (John C. Wright's wife) has a rather good series of magical academy books out, which I am far behind on. 💣💣 Finally, have you noticed the explosion of fanart and fanfic surrounding Dracaena Malfoy? (or Malfoid, as some call her) What's particularly interesting to me is that unlike a lot of fanfic, it's not about pornified sex, it's about hatred turning to love (though not without roadbumps – this is Harry Potter, after all) and the yearning for marriage and children. I am particularly amused by the offshoot fics/art that make Tanya Degurechaff from *Youjo Senki* Dracaena's grandmother, and Professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts once things return to normal at Hogwarts.



Harry discovers what kind of people his in-laws are.

Anyway, it's a lot of fun, and my oomfie Sensurround Q. Catgirl has written an amusing fic about Harry, Dracaena, and their daughter Lily going on vacation in America and meeting some interesting Americans, including a certain magician from Chicago who has problems with technology. (Rebecca Roanhorse) Her problems with the Pueblo tribe sound like they may stem from a poor choice of grandparents. I learned from my time in Minnesota dealing with the Lakota that some nations are very particular about who gets onto the tribal rolls, and show a degree of concern with blood quantum that would make Afrikaners of the apartheid period stare in disbelief. Also, her taking a Dine husband probably didn't go over well with some members of the Pueblo tribe.
(Capclave programming) I will advert to you that we won the culture war back in the 1980s when the mundanes embraced SF movies, TV shows, games, and some even read the books. ~~Now there's~~

~~nowhere to go to get away from them.~~ Jim Baen, who began his career as editor of Galaxy/Worlds of IF, tried to fuse magazines with anthologies with Destinies, but it didn't work out for various reasons I'm not going to look up right now because I'm on deadline here.
(RYCTo Ahrvid) There is a space race under way right now. It's basically the U.S. (SpaceX, really) vs. the PRC, with a bunch of other nations sending up the occasional rocket. Who will take command of the High Frontier?
(RYCTo Joe) Depending on your definition of "near", there are in fact Waffle Houses near you: five of them northeast of Baltimore, and three in and around Frederick. I usually hit the one on Buckeystown Road in Frederick when I'm in that end of the world, and when I'm in Lebanon for Confinement, I usually have breakfast at the Waffle House there. Feels like home.
(RYCTo Mark) I second your recommendation of Little Fuzzy, and the rest of H. Beam Piper's novels while we're at it, as well as Alistair Horne's trilogy on the Franco-Prussian Wars: The Fall of Paris (the first Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune), The Price of Glory (WW1 and particularly Verdun), and To Lose A Battle (the 1940 campaign).
(RYCTo Garth) There is apparently a service that roots out forgotten subscriptions, or one can go hardcore and slap together some Grok bots to do that, clean out your email, reinforce your orgone field strength, and improve your skills with the bat'leth. Well, maybe not the last two.

R.A.I.L. #13
I see your Roboto and raise you a Sergeant Schlock.



(natter) I had forgotten you were doing social media for the N3F now. I was contacted by a new member who wanted to help with Instagram; I shall point him in your direction. With respect to Constitutional Law (which I took for two semesters at Metro State while finishing my BA) it strikes me that this kind of textual anaylsis is second nature to our Jewish brethren, since so much of Ashkenazic Judaism is based on textual analysis of the Talmud, which in turn is analysis and commentary on the Torah.

Moziag #3
Never mind the ~~bollocks~~ agents. Write the book, self-publish it on Amazon and/or Bookfunnel, and then get out there and hype it, because even if you sell it to Tor, they're not going to lift a finger to market it. Neither is your agent. So why are you paying one? I don't think I ever realized that *They Live* was based on "Eight O'Clock in the Morning". Or that Ray Nelson invented the propeller beanie.
(RYCTo Sam) With respect to reading Scalzi's rewrite of Little Fuzzy: don't. I did and regretted it. Of course, YMMV.

Brandy Hall #19
(RYCTO Robert) Regarding Iran, we have been at war with them since 1979. The current "war" is merely a flareup of a war that's been mostly diplomatic posturing (us) and sporadic terrorism (them). 💣💣 A subscription to the OED? Are they not publishing hardcopies any more? 💣💣I think labeling Jet as "a Negro exploitation magazine" gives the wrong impression entirely. I grew up near DC, and Jet was on every supermarket rack along with TV Guide, Time, Newsweek, and other such magazines. Reader's Digest. Yes, it was aimed at the black market, but it was a news, culture, and entertainment magazine, not the journalistic equivalent of *Shaft*.

Swamp Spot Sentinel 2.2
(natter) Good God, you've been through the wringer, haven't you? Hopefully your health is continuing to improve and neither your car nor your house have sunk their teeth into your checkbook again.
(RYCTo Ahrvid) Einstein may not have been a subscriber to ASF, but a lot of subscribers could be found in a poky little New Mexico town called Los Alamos in the early 1940s.

MEANWHILE IN KIEL: Comments On N'APA #284

Intermission #169 RAEBNC

Swamp Spot Sentinel 2.3
(RYCTo Garth) More recently, John Barnes has written a trilogy of novels about plastic-eating bacteria/nanotech being used by a terrorist movement called Daybreak to destroy technological society. I found it depressing, myself, but then like many of us, I would not long survive the collapse of technological civilization and would definitely take up arms in its defense.
(RYCTo Sam) I wonder if that Wellman story was one of his John the Balladeer stories, which are from a very different magical tradition than Harry Potter. I haven't read those (or David Drake's Old Nathan, which is a homage to Wellman) but it sounds like it's in that neighborhood.
(RYCTo me) The accumulation of boxes is due partly to sloth and partly to my inability to stand and carry things for more than a few minutes. There is no handy manager's nephew to assist with such things, and in a small town like this, help isn't easy to find. 💣💣 I think you are right that Pendleton (or his estate) want more money than Hollywood is willing to pay, especially with the Punisher IP sitting right there. And speaking of the Punisher, some of the clips I have seen from his appearance in the Daredevil series and his own show would seem to contradict your assertion about blood and gore. 💣💣 I don't think anyone in the administration reckoned the Iranian regime would be this insane, but paradoxically this makes it even more imperative that the mullahs not get their hands on nukes. 💣💣I know that both Sarah Hoyt and Maggie Hogarth do well selling their books not just through Amazon but through Bookfunnel, and of course there is Kickstarter. I expect to clear a few Dunkies* after all the books from my own Kickstarter go out later this month.💣💣You make a good point about the farmers on the Great Plains. 💣💣I think my main problem with Wells was that I came to him after reading Heinlein and Laumer, so both his Fabian Socialism and idealism rubbed me the wrong way. 💣💣 I don't remember claiming to have met John W. Campbell Jr. at Balticon. I have met Jack Campbell, the author of the Lost Fleet novels, at Balticon, and perhaps I mistyped his name.

* This is Travis Corcoran's humorous coinage for the hourly wage earned by someone working at Dunkin'. He was hoping to make 2500 Dunkies off the kickstarter for Red State Earth so he could quit his day job and become a feelthy professional author.

As for coffee:



The bear is clearly a warrant officer.

(RYCTo Joe) While our libraries aren't as complicated as New York's, they aren't as simple as Massachusetts either. The Nevada Library Consortium includes all the rural county libraries (which are generally run by town library boards) and Washoe County (Reno) but does not include the Clark County Library, which is its own animal spanning not just Las Vegas but a bunch of smaller towns scattered around the state's most populous but only fifth largest in area.
(RYCTo Mark) I certainly never expected to be retired in the circumstances I find myself in. I was expecting to be dead in the Fulda Gap long ago and have just been improvising ever since.

Intermission #170
(Golden Hours) H. Irving Hancock, you say? I inherited a whole shelf's worth of his juvenile books from the Grammar School Boys, High School Boys, West Point and Annapolis series, but was completely unaware that he'd written four books about the German invasion of America in 1920. I'm sure they're better than Robert Conroy's horrible 1920.

Murdered Master Mage #283
(RYCTo me) How odd that he should consider you an anti-Catholic bigot. In all the time I have known you, I've never known you to say anything on the topic at all.
(RYCTo Bob) I suspect the used car business is awful because people look at the prices asked for used cars and decide they can keep their old beaters limping along for a few more years. My 2015 Kia Forte is still chugging along; I expect with regular maintenance it will last until my REO Runabout (maybe a Speedwagon) is ready in 2027 or 2028.

Brownian Motion #21
(Thnigs) Colonizing the higher latitudes of Antarctica may be problematic. There's a squadron of highly irritated Iron Blood shipgirls off Queen Maud Land who have no orders regarding would-be colonists.
(RYCTo Jefferson) Not a day goes by that I don't see somebody posting on X about how Grok Bots have made their life easier. I am expecting M.C.A. Hogarth to write a book Real Soon Now about how Grok Bots have moved her from being a mere G-list author to being an E-list and possibly even a D-list* author on par with the International Lord of Hate.

(RYCTo me) I'm glad you find my jokes funny. I sometimes think I am being too absurd or morbid, and occasionally both. 💣💣 Did you know that some people have taken to giving away potatoes at Halloween, which are warmly received by the children? No, seriously! I discovered that potato candy is also a thing, along with the Idaho Spud Bar, which strangely enough is not made from potatoes. My knowledge continues to expand in strange directions.
(RYCTo Mark) It's a good thing you didn't see that Dr. House fellow, isn't it?
(RYCTo Bob) My wife and I loved *Due South*, and I occasionally think about picking up the DVDs. It was occasionally silly, but the Chicago setting worked well.

*I am referring to Larry Correia's "Official Alphabetical List of Author Success", a most excellent and humorous guide to figuring out where one stands in the wacky business of writing.

Archive Midwinter
(RYCTo Ahrvid) I generally agree with you about fantasy (all the more so since I have just published a fantasy novel myself), but part company with you when you say SF of the Campbell era had scientists inventing gizmos on the spur of the moment to solve plot problems. This was the sort of thing Campbell was trying to get away from!
(RYCTo me) I stand corrected on the subject of historical novels being published in chronological order. 💣💣 Like country music, classical music is something I enjoy but can rarely remember which composer is responsible for what.

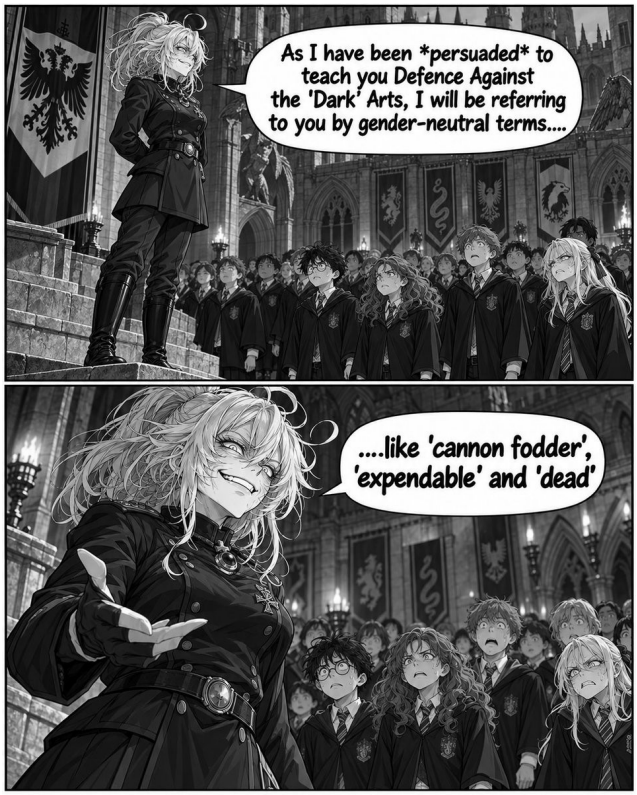
R.A.I.L. #14
(AI-generated stories) I admit to using Grok extensively for help with spellchecking, continuity editing, and outlining, but it's terrible at writing dialogue and not much better at narrative. (I blame Reddit.) I will have Grok do a rough draft of a chapter and then revise the living shit out of it because it doesn't sound like *me*, or my characters, sometimes. I think authors who use Claude/ChatGPT/Grok to write their stories aren't really writing *their* stories, they're just banging the prompts together until something vaguely storylike comes out. Unlike the author in the Baen article, I've got notes, drafts, and outlines, sometimes years worth. If you don't, you're just a lazy scammer.

Brandy Hall #20
(RYCTo Joe) You really have to include *Galaxy Quest* among the Star Trek movies. It's obviously an affectionate parody. 💣💣 There are popular SF MMORPG: Star Trek Online and EVE-Online. As for "trufen", those people piss me off. There is no one right way to be a science fiction fan, and hasn't been since the 1960s. Whether one likes it or not, most people don't come into fandom by way of books and magazines any more, and pretending they do (while gatekeeping other kinds of fans out of fandom) is beyond retarded. I myself have been publicly accused of being a SMOF for having helped found and run an anime convention. (I denied it, of course.)
(RYCTo Garth) There is a periodic argument on social media about who "gamers" are, which as an old grognard from the days when GDW and SPI roamed the earth, I find amusing. Do middle-aged moms who play Candy Crush on their phones count? How about those folks in suits and modest dresses who used to crawl around ballroom floors with balsa or metal models of WW2 ships and rulers? It is almost as bad as arguments over who the trufans and fringefans are. 💣💣 My wife and I enjoyed the Lone Gunmen spinoff series while it lasted.
(RYCTo me) Yes. Schedule A, for example, allows the taxpayer to itemize medical, charitable, and state taxes so that they can secure a larger deduction than the standard. Schedule C allows deductions for a home or side business, Schedule F for farm-specific deductions, and so on. 💣💣 That story makes sense to me, since we humans regularly consume mass quantities of the dinosaurs' descendants. A T-Rex would supply enough barbecue for an entire neighborhood!💣💣 I am considering contracting with Ingram or Amazon to do print on demand. It still surprises me that I got more orders for the paperback edition (signed or otherwise) than I did for the e-book edition.

💣💣 Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who played his grandfather King Cetshwayo in the movie, lauded *Zulu* for showing his ancestors as courageous men who honored their British enemies in song after the battle had ended, which didn't happen historically. It was an excellent movie, and a fine debut for Michael Caine, who played the nearly deaf Lt. Gonville Bromhead. 💣💣 That list seems to be missing some very good SF authors like Asimov, Heinlein, Niven, and Zelazny, but it definitely tells me a lot about the preferences of the list maker. 💣💣 I completely agree about U-571. It's not like Hollywood hasn't made movies about the British before. 💣💣Well if worst comes to worst, I can find you a paperback copy here in the States and mail it to you. Christmas isn't far off.
(RYCTo George) *puts on Treasurer's fez* I have monthly treasurer's reports going back to 2021 when I took the job and could probably work something up from that.
(RYCTo Sam) I took the position some years ago that it's no longer possible to have an SF canon, becasuse fandom has become too splintered and the number of works in various media is simply too big. That having been said, I think if you are an SF/fantasy author, there are certain foundational texts you should read so that you're familiar with what ESR refers to as the "deep norms" of the field. I guess today's kids would call them tropes. 💣💣 On the other hand, Speed Queen here in the U.S. continues to make washers and dryers for the commercial and home markets that are durable enough that they can be left to one's children. 💣💣 It's true, histories of SF and its fandom have mostly concentrated on the U.S. and given what Bob Tucker once humorously referred to as "the colonies" short shrift.

MOZIAG #4
RAEBNC

Samizdat #39
(RYCTo me) Well, I didn't make it to the Old Line State this year, much less to Capclave, but I appreciate the invitation. Maybe next year in Fredneck.💣💣 It is worth noting that for all the griping about millionaires controlling the media, nobody seems to mind Carlos Slim owning the NY Times or George Soros buying a chain of radio stations. The WaPo is less psychotically leftist than it used to be, but it is nobody's idea of conservative or even moderate. 💣💣 I will repeat that my home county (home to Yucca Mountain) would be happy to see the site opened, but unfortunately Luddite agitators from California and Las Vegas have ensured that it will stay closed for the foreseeable future. 💣💣 I have been neglecting Origins and should take a good look at your review of Adventures in Time and Space, since it's one of the foundational texts I think aspiring SF authors need to read to get a feel for the deep norms of the field. 💣💣 Have a cartoon about Professor Degurechaff-Malfoy teaching Defense Against the Dark Arts at Hogwarts.



ORIGINAL (MOSTLY) FICTION

The Misfit sold a bunch of copies in August and September, and some more people read it on Kindle+ (was Kindle Unlimited) so I'm pretty happy with it and its 4.4 rating.

The Hawk, the Fox, and the Princess Kickstarter funded last month thanks to one particularly generous backer who plowed over $600 into the campaign literally at the last minute. All the e-book copies are out and now I have to order the paperbacks from Ingram Spark, sign them, and mail them out, hopefully early enough to beat the Christmas rush. I will be posting the e-book on Amazon and maybe Bookfunnel later this week.

I am also writing an excessively autistic work of Azur Lane fan fiction in which Grand Admiral Raeder wakes up to find himself in command of the Iron Blood faction. This could have devolved into a romantic/harem comedy, but that would have been Wrong. ~~We are, after all, Professionals~~. There are some comedic scenes thanks to ~~Bertie and Jeeves~~ HMS Shropshire and Belfast, but mostly I am playing it straight. You can find it on my Substack, Wombat Rampant.

There's also a bunch of other stuff I want to finish up and inflict on the paying public; there's a post about that on the Substack as well.

Brandy Hall Issue 21 (November 2026)

Brandy Hall 20 is produced for *N'APA* mailing 285 (November 2026) by Mark Nelson.

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This is West Riding Press Publications ??? This is West Riding Press Publications (Australia) 57.

In my first issue I followed in the spirit, if not the flesh, of Garth Spencer (*BROWNIAN MOTION* 1, mailing 263), by discussing my involvement in non-SF fandoms. In my second issue I followed Garth more directly by discussing my interactions with SF fandom. In my third issue I discussed my involvement with APAs. In the fourth and final instalment, appearing in issue five, I reminisced about attending science fiction conventions. In the sixth issue, inspired by Ahrvid Engholm, I reprinted two articles from the Australian newspaper *The Age*. The first was published on Saturday 19th March 1932 with the title ``The Automatic Pilot. George The Robot in the Air''. That article was a red herring. The article that Ahrvid quoted from was published on Friday 20th September 1935 with the title ``Meet Mr. Robot. Not Forgetting His Master''.

In the seventh issue there was a short spin on a YouTube video with the title `Top 10 Best Sci-fi Movies'. In the eighth issue I wrote about how I became a fan of science fiction, focusing on SF on the TV. The culprits are threefold: Dr Who, Star Trek (The Original Series) and Blakes 7. In the ninth issue I wrote about the role that science-fiction movies played in my becoming a fan of science-fiction. I focused on movies that I viewed at the cinema, concentrating on Star Wars. In the tenth issue, again inspired by Ahrvid, I reprinted an article by Sven Eklund on "Science Fiction in Scandinavia". This was reprinted from *The Australian Science Fiction Review* 14 (February 1968). *Brandy Hall* 11 was the first issue to be written using pages, the previous issues having been written using LibreOffice. In *Brandy Hall* 12 I explained how I started became a Tolkien fan, courtesy of the BBC 1 children's TV series *Jackanory*. For the first time I used US Letter size rather than A4, but that didn't prevent the peculiar page breaks that had happened when I used A4.

In *Brandy Hall* 14, inspired by some discussion by Heath Row on early fanzines in the fields of football (soccer) and rock I wrote an article about the use of the word `fanzine' in *The Times* from 1958 to 1989. This is mostly taken from a loc that I wrote on *SF Commentary* 116 (June 2024). In *Brandy Hall* 15, inspired by mailing comments from Robert Jennings, I ran my thoughts on a definition of "Historical Science Fiction" that was printed in *Speculative Insight* 21. This is taken from a loc that I wrote on Will This Wind 39 (October 2025). In *Brandy Hall* 16 & 17 I looked at the use of the word `fanzine' in *The Times* in 1990 & 1991. In *Brandy Hall* 20 I ran the first part of a Top 100 SF Novels that ChatGPT provided. *Brandy Hall* 21 was a vert short issue, but I manage to run the second part of the Top 100.

Editorial. Once again it's an issue in which I haven't done what I thought I should do. This time the Real World kinda interfered. On Tuesday 24th November we're starting our summer holiday by driving to Sydney. Then on Wednesday 25th November our holiday starts proper, we're flying to Jakarta (Indonesia). We don't live that far from the airport, with favourable traffic you can make it in ninety minutes. The flight's not too early, it's at 14:25. In theory, there shouldn't be a problem about getting up at the right time to have a leisurely drive. Park the car, get to the airport, check-in, go through customs, and then relax until boarding starts. In theory…

The last two years something has always happened which meant that travel did not go according to plan. Now me. Now me, I like to be at the airport three hours before the flight. My wife thinks that's excessive, she doesn't like wasting her time at the airport. But the last two years… we've cut things too fine for my liking. (Particularly two years ago). So this year I said "No". Let's drive to Sydney the day before the flight. I'll put up with the extra expense of paying for a hotel room, because then I'll have peace of mind on the day of the flight. We could have stayed almost anywhere in Sydney. We ended up picking the same suburb that the airport's in. So it will only be a 5-10 minute drive to the airport.

We're flying out at least two weeks earlier than we have done in the past. There a variety of reasons for this, but the main one is that there's a cut-off date in December and if you fly before that date then you save AUD $250 a ticket. Our four-year old son pays almost a full ticket, so that's near enough a $750 saving. That works out as approximately a 30% discount on the outward flights. We didn't book sufficiently ahead of time to be able to get a flight on, or near, to the cut-off day. Which is one reason why we're flying out on the 26th November. Luckily my wife has been able to arrange with her employers to carry on with her work remotely, so she doesn't have to take a large amount of leave to cover the first few weeks. (There's a similar cut-off on the return flights. By extending our stay by a few days we saved 30% on the return flights.)

How has this interfered with producing *Brandy Hall*? The deadline for ANZAPA, my other apa, is Friday 4th December and I have had to complete my mailing contribution for that APA in addition to *Brandy Hall*. I didn't have time to do both, so decided to concentrate on *Mathom*.

A secondary complicating factor is that this year I've picked up a small amount of marking for one of the local universities. I've marked two assignments each semester. The final assignment of the year, the academic year as well, took up thirteen hours of my time the week before the *NAPA* deadline.

Anyway. That's my story and I am sticking to it.

Hopefully, the status quo will have returned for next issue and I'll be able to proceed both with my history of the use of the word fanzine in *The Times* and to start telling you about one of the projects that I am working on. Though I am beginning to feel that the status quo is that I don't write what I intended to write…

I very much doubt that anything will chance for the next mailing. We're not returning to Sydney until the 7th January, which is not long before the next deadline

The use of the word `fanzine' in The Times: Part Four

Some time ago, in a moment of boredom, I searched for the word "fanzine" in The Times Digital Archive, which provides full-text access to The Times from 1785 to 2019. Ignoring five false hits, from the years 1800, 1846, 1877, 1908, & 1915, the distribution of hits is as given below.

1958 1 1971 1 1974 1 1978 1 1980 1 1981 1 1984 1 1987 2
1988 1 1989 7 1990 11 1991 17 1992 14 1993 14 1994 23 1995 16
1996 17 1997 20 1998 48 1999 44 2000 46 2001 23 2002 21 2003 30
2004 23 2005 49 2006 32 2007 45 2008 57 2009 34 2010 21 2011 56
2012 50 2013 29 2014 30 2015 21 2016 24 2017 31 2018 29 2019 23

(The number from 1990 has been decreased from 12 to 11, as there were two citations to the same article).
The use of the word fanzine from 1958 to 1989 was discussed in *Brandy Hall* 14. The uses in 1990 and 1991 was discussed in *Brandy Hall* 16 & 17 respectively.

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

The Swamp Pot Sentinel 2.1 (**Robert Jennings**)

That's a fair point, but it won't prevent continuing on my mission (which may take more than five years) to body explore the use of the word fanzine in *The Times*.

The use of the word fanzine: 1992

(I haven't done any work on this. Hopefully it will appear next issue.)

The Mathom House

As it's now the deadline day, I don't have time to write mailing comments for everybody. In an attempt to please the most number of contributors, I will only read the shorter contributions!

MOZIAG #4 (*Joesph P. Gill*)

I did not know that we have the Roman Senate to thank for putting the start of the year in January. II wonder, why did the Romans originally have the start of the year in March? I also didn't know that after the fall of the Western Roman Empire that the start of the year in England reverted to March, which stayed in place until 1752.

I worked on almost nothing this past octoweek

I mentioned before that when I retired (almost two years ago now) I thought about turning my hand at writing fiction. Not because I thought that I have any talent in that direction. Definitely not because I thought I could make some money. No. I thought it might be a good way to keep the old grey cells active. Over the last two years I've written down some ideas to explore. But words written. Zero. However, I have decided to push myself over our summer holiday and try to write something. I'll probably forget to do it. If the past is any guide to the future, that's the outcome. But if I remember, I'll put electronic pen to electronic paper.

I've only watched a couple of seasons of *Alone*. Maybe the first two seasons. Both my wife and I enjoyed watching it. What I particularly enjoyed were the men who boasted how tough they were, they weren't afraid of bears, they couldn't everything and anything that nature might throw at them… but ended up tapping out after the first night…

You could argue that after 12 prior seasons (not to mention Alone: Australia, etc.) there's nothing new to see. Maybe you're right, but I enjoy it

Perhaps I shouldn't venture an opinion as I've not watched it for a very long time… but I imagine the main fascination is how the contestants cope with the pressure of being alone. A secondary interest in how they set about constructing a home base and search for food. But I imagine dealing with the mental challenge being the prime interest.

I haven't watched *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*. I enjoy watching the clips of it that pop up on YouTube. But even if we had access to Amazon Prime I doubt that I could bring myself to watch it. I do know the canon and for me it's a Bad Thing that they are changing it. Not that I think an adaptation has to match up 100% to the original source - you've got to make something that's interesting to watch. But there's too much that's been changed for my enjoyment.

Re *The Odyssey* (which I haven't seen)

I heard that the diverse cast offended some people, but not being a racist, I wasn't bothered.

It wouldn't bother me.

Sometime in the future I'm going to have to find the time to rewatch the first four seasons of *Discovery* and to watch the final season. Then I'll be able to go to town on the show. But before I can do that I need to rewatch season one of *Strange New World*s and to watch seasons two and three. I don't have a problem with either a gay or non-binary character. The question is whether the characters feel real. Like you, I thought that the Burn was a very poor idea. It just wasn't very convincing.

Intermission #169 (**Ahrvid Engholm**)

I sent you a loc on this issue.

Brownian Motion 21 (**Garth Spencer**)

Apologies for not producing any mailing comments this time.

Esmeralda County Line 17 (**Kevin Trainor Jr**)

In case I didn't mention it before, I also acquired and read Nick Cole & Jason Anspach's Savage Wars, which has a grim answer to the question of what happens when our Natural Ruling Classes load themselves into generation ships and then get overtaken by FTL ships bearing colonies of the people they thought they were abandoning to their deaths?

That's a very amusing idea, which puts me in mind of HHGTTG.

The Murthered Master Mage 283 (**George Phillies**)

Ryctm

EverandAnon, which is the successor to Alarums&Excursions, has a maxac requirement, the same as A&E did. In the case of A&E, the limit was that the most powerful available stapler had a page count limit; the issue could not be made any thicker.

Now Im curious as to what the page count limit was on "the most powerful available stapler". Well-known, and long-standing, Australian SF Fan Bruce Gillespie recently told me something very similar. Even if he had access to a Roneo, he couldn't produce fanzines the size of the ones he produced in his earlier years because he no longer has a stapler that can punch a staple through so many sheets of paper.

The Swamp Pot Sentinel 2.3 (**Robert Jennings**)

Apologies for not writing any mailing comments this time. Nor for locking your fanzine in a long time.

Archive Midwinter (**Jefferson Swycaffer**)

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm

I honestly swear, I have never read anything by you with which I disagree more.

Perhaps you could have a regular feature in which you identify which of Ahrvid's ideas in each issue of *Intermission* you disagree with the most!

Ryct Joseph P. Gill:

I'm a word-geek too, and love reading etymologies.

Etymology is something that my dad is very interested in, and his interest in it has passed onto me.

R.A.I.L. #14 (**Adrian Kresnak**)

At one point, the editors asked one author for evidence that they had written the story: drafts, notes, and so on.

This is what's happened in other cases that I've read about. Authors have been asked to provide drafts, notes etc to help substantiate their claim that they wrote the work. It does not seem unreasonable to me for a publisher or the organisers of a literary award to ask an author to provide drafts/notes if there's been a credible claim that their story was written by A.I.

Intermission #170 (**Ahrvid Engholm**)

I didn't send you a loc on this issue. But I did send you one on *Intermission* 171!

Samizdat 39 (**Samuel Lubell**)

Apologies for not producing any mailing comments this time. I did read through the first eight pages and thought I'd better comment on one point.

The city is known for its beaches, one is right next to the convention center.

Hmm. I do not think this is true. Brisbane is not known for its beaches. It's not known for its beaches because it doesn't have. The one adjacent to the convention centre is artificial, that hardly counts. There are some well known beaches within reach of Brisbane, but they are not in Brisbane's urban centre.

UPDATE ON PROJECTS

I'm going to start a new section at the end of *Brandy Hall* where I update you on some of the projects that I work on. I was hoping to include some this issue, but being ill the two weeks before the deadline has killed that ambition. I also have a better name than "Update on Projects" which I will reveal next time.

Will it be third time lucky for this section? Tune in next time to find out…

ChatGPT List of 101 SF Novels

ChatGPT: I have **deliberately not tried to make this a list of "the 101 best"**. Instead, ChatGPT's list is designed to answer the question "what novels help tell the story of what SF became?"
Here are the first twenty in the list.

1. *Frankenstein*. Mary Shelley (1818).
2. *The Time Machine*. H.G. Wells (1895).
3. *The War of the Worlds*. H.G. Wells (1898).
4. *The First Men in the Moon*. H.G. Wells (1901).
5. *The Iron Heel*. Jack London (1908).
6. *We*. Yevgeny Zamyatin (1924).
7. *The Skylark of Space*. E.E. Smith (1928).
8. *Last and First Men*. Olaf Stapledon (1930).
9. *Brave New World.* Aldous Huxley (1932).
10. *Star Maker*. Olaf Stapledon (1937).
11. Slan. A. E. van Vogt (1940).
12. *That Hideous Strength*. C. S. Lewis (1945).
13. *The Mule*. Isaac Asimov (1945).
14. *The Puppet Masters*. Robert A. Heinlein (1951).
15. *The Day of the Triffids*. John Wyndham (1951).
16. *The Space Merchants*. Frederik Pohl & C. M. Kornbluth (1952).
17. *The Demolished Man*. Alfred Bester (1953).
18. *Fahrenheit 451*. Ray Bradbury (1953).
19. *Childhood's End*. Arthur C. Clarke (1953).
20. *More Than Human*. Theodore Sturgeon (1953).