

# THE ART OF GARTHNESS #10

February 2016



***Voting for the Sir Julius Vogel Award (Best Novel) by Feb. 28!***

*Voting for the next Talossan election!*

*Where Convention is ACTUALLY being held!*

*VCON 41 details in full!*

## Table of Contents

Static in my Attic .....	1
Letters .....	3
Micronational Politics .....	11
The Common Life Skills Book – progress report .....	16
Phan Niuuz.....	22
Semiprozines and other marketlike news .....	23

## Colophon

Welcome to *The Art of Garthness* #10, dated February 2016, a personalzine from Garth Spencer at 4240 Perry Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5N 3X5. You can also contact me at [garth.van.spencer@gmail.com](mailto:garth.van.spencer@gmail.com). This fanzine is available for contributions in the form of articles, letters, illustrations, or other fanzines in trade.

## Art in This Issue

Taral Wayne.....	cover
David Thayer .....	pp. 3, 10, 15, 20
Facebook meme .....	pp. 6, 24
Copyright-free art .....	pp. 17, 18
Charles Dana Gibson.....	p. 21

## Missing

<[phil-lies@4liberty.net](mailto:phil-lies@4liberty.net)>

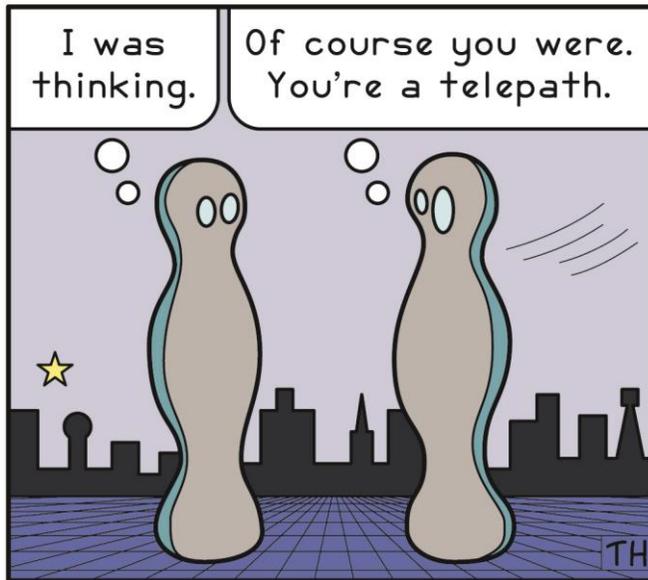
## Static in my Attic

Things I posted on Facebook while waiting impatiently for sleep:

- Where are the mad scientists in Vancouver? We need a few mad scientists. Is it just me, or are all the heathens living in Surrey? Are there any abandoned properties or forgotten subterranean structures in Vancouver where criminal supervillains could set up their lairs? Is it true that Canadian water supplies are doped with Prozac? When the Arctic ice cap finally melts, will we find evidence of lost human civilizations, or mind-melting Lovecraftian horrors that time forgot, or just more mineral resources to fuel a 22nd-century gold rush? Is there an English word that rhymes with orange?
- What if Somalia became a \*successful\* anarchist country?
- Maybe what the U.S. and Israel and Syria need are war games organized like televised sports, with teams drawn from the contending ethnic groups. Maybe it could work. Apparently Italian towns have organized annual contests that seem to release public tensions and actually lower their rates of violent crime.
- Why don't different religions compete to outdo each other's good works?
- Maybe we could phone random people on April Fool's Day and recite a random poem to them. Or write mathematical jokes in bathrooms at various businesses. Or email surreal compliments to celebrities and elected officials.
- If a civilization could be defined by a limited set of fundamental concepts, and civilizations are preceded by forests and followed by deserts, are we facing a challenge of inadequate civilization design? Are we missing a few key concepts that would sustain our civilization past the next two hundred years? Or do we have to shed one or two concepts if we want to survive? The kind of concepts I'm thinking of are not particularly different from the generally-shared values, or preoccupations, that a semiotician notices - Gain, or Scoring off people, or Vanity/Recognition, or Power/Domineering, or Competition, or Cooperation, or Creation/Producing, or Ripping off, or Cleaning/Completion. If you look at the major institutions and activities in your society, you may see different or additional concepts.
- What sort of publication does the world need now? An impartial global newspaper, with editions in Esperanto, English, Russian, Chinese, and Spanish? An introductory guide to Anglo culture and modern urban life skills aimed at refugees from Third World countries, autistic adults, disguised aliens, and high school students generally? Or a graphic novel series about the real crises and adventures facing us - like the contagious Cranio-Rectal Inversion Syndrome that is destroying the United States and spreading to other countries?

- I would like to believe that, like other human processes, the current fad for stupidity and vulgarity and the worst behaviour is a phase, and in due time a cycle will bring us to a new phase, a fad for intelligence, civility and the best behaviour we can offer. Do you find this credible?
- After the last several years of extraordinary stories of public stupidity on display, it dawns on me what the next generation of prosthetics must be: personality supplements. Plug-in artificial intelligence, or empathy, or skill sets for the congenitally disabled. The question is, will this ever be conceived and realized outside of a Greg Bear novel?
- I have sometimes daydreamed about a world where everyone wakes up one day with amnesia, retaining only their language skills, technical skills and physical knowledge of the world; and all history books, monuments, newspapers and religious scriptures have disappeared. How many mechanical disasters would you expect, in these circumstances? How many military engagements would simply evaporate? Would people remember to supply Antarctic research stations and the International Space Station? Would the world descend into tribal anarchy and gang warfare, or would most of the world construct cooperative and productive societies?
- Do you know the difference between governments and protection rackets? Lots of people don't.
- One of my idle speculations is that the hippie movement was concocted by one or another intelligence agency in an attempt to reduce anti-authoritarian/anti-war protesters to absurdity.
- Why does my keyboard keep defaulting to Basque layout??
- STUPID T-SHIRTS FOR CONVENTIONS:  
#1. "Will exercise for sex."  
Other suggestions?
- What would a \*sensible\* conservative party look like? In any country? I have to ask because, as a 59-year-old Canadian, and someone who follows the news, I still have no way to know.
- Is there any way to \*make more land\*? Given that aboriginal land claims in BC alone amount to 150% of the available land area.
- Is there a market for bachelor kibble? What kind of recipe would you suggest?
- I have been reminded that some of my friends may be undercover federal agents. Well, if any of you work for the Canadian or US governments, could you give me some advice? Do you think there is a legitimate scope for citizens researching public figures, and political parties, and the budgets of municipal, regional and federal services, on the grounds of being an informed citizen? If that's too much homework for average citizens, is there a way to establish nonpartisan public interest research groups? Or is that duplicating what has

already been done? (There was an organization called PIRG, or alternatively Pugwash, years before we heard of Wikileaks or Anonymous.)



## Letters

**William McCabe, February 4, 2016**

In [your latest] e-APA contrib you asked how to read PDB, PRC, and RAR files. Calibre can apparently handle the first two and convert them to other formats ( [http://calibre-ebook.com/download\\_windows](http://calibre-ebook.com/download_windows) ).

RAR is a compressed file like zip; depending on content, you might get Calibre to convert it to a book. Otherwise, you need to open it with some kind of decompression utility. I've been using JZip, but supposedly recent versions of that are corrupt. Others I know prefer WinRAR.

*((Thank you!!))*

**Chuck Connor, February 4, 2016**

Just to let you know it looks like you missed out the fanzine reviews. You get as far as p. 13 (p. 15 in Adobe Reader) and then it stops – so no review of *Polar Bearhasalice* – or anything else, come to that.

*((As I said on p. 13 of that issue, fanzine reviews in the following issue. This one.))*

**David Malinski ([www.rsreal.com](http://www.rsreal.com)), February 5, 2016**

FOCUS

*"After this long I realize I am a compulsive writer ... "*

F=follow

O=one

C=course

U=until

S=success

Skip lampooning things or making any more such suggestions; focus your energy!

FOCUS

FOCUS

FOCUS

Drop anything that does not match your vision of the success YOU WANT.

Stop wasting time and energy where it is not appreciated.

For you, this appears to be writing; so sit at your typewriter (computer) and bleed!

*"Can I go on to write saleable fiction? And make a reasonable return on my investment of time?"*

YES YES!

the price is TIME and FOCUS.

*((David, if you didn't know by now, I have to re-establish my focus, every day. I forget, remember, and forget again that I am about getting things said, finding what people overlook, and supplying what is missing.*

*((Sometimes lampoons place a concept where it is needed.*

*((How do you define success? I define it as reaching a goal. This begs the question of what the goal is. It appears my goal is not by nature a commercial objective.*

*((I take on a wide variety of projects in an attempt to bring a sense of wealth and depth to my life. Granted, as Dale Speirs points out below, this can work against me.))*

+++++

*"13. Convention relationships are like cruise ship relationships."*

Considering I have never been on a cruise ship and have no plans to ever be one, I found this an intriguing statement. I have had more than one long-term (over 3 months) relationship with the opposite sex come about because of a convention connection – indeed, my wife of 19 years – we first met at a sci-fi&fantasy convention.

Other good friends – whom I have had longer-term connection with than others I was in the military service with – I am still on good terms of connection with the convention contacts, less so with the military.

If you mean that the cruise-ship relationships are hit-or-miss and vibrationally matched (like all relationships in the world), then I cannot say that they are different than any other connections you might get. If you mean that these folks are unlikely to

meet you in any other context, then yes I agree, similar to a cruise ship, you will only find like-minded people there.

*((You meant “vibrationally mismatched”, I think. My experience was of transient relationships, unfortunately.))*

+++++

Thank you for the mention regarding the recordings; we learned much about the mind of 90's convention attendees and what motivates people to attend the events.

The MMI has become MME and was run in Vancouver last weekend. I was volunteering in Seattle at the same time. I will keep an eye out for the next one in Vancouver area.

Yeah, the 2008 crisis and 2009-11 dip wiped out a lot of people (myself included). The trick has been to keep a positive mental attitude, and an awareness of what is going on in the markets, to be able to 'bounce back'.

*((You mean I can turf the old tapes now?!))*

+++++

Garth, the work of writing is still valuable, relevant and current.

You have a passion and desire to do that work; my advice would be to connect with any successful writers you are able to, and glean from them any advice to operate in the current marketplace.

The real writers of today and now are your best resource.

*((Okay, okay, I'll read sfwriter.com more and correspond with Robert Sawyer some more.))*

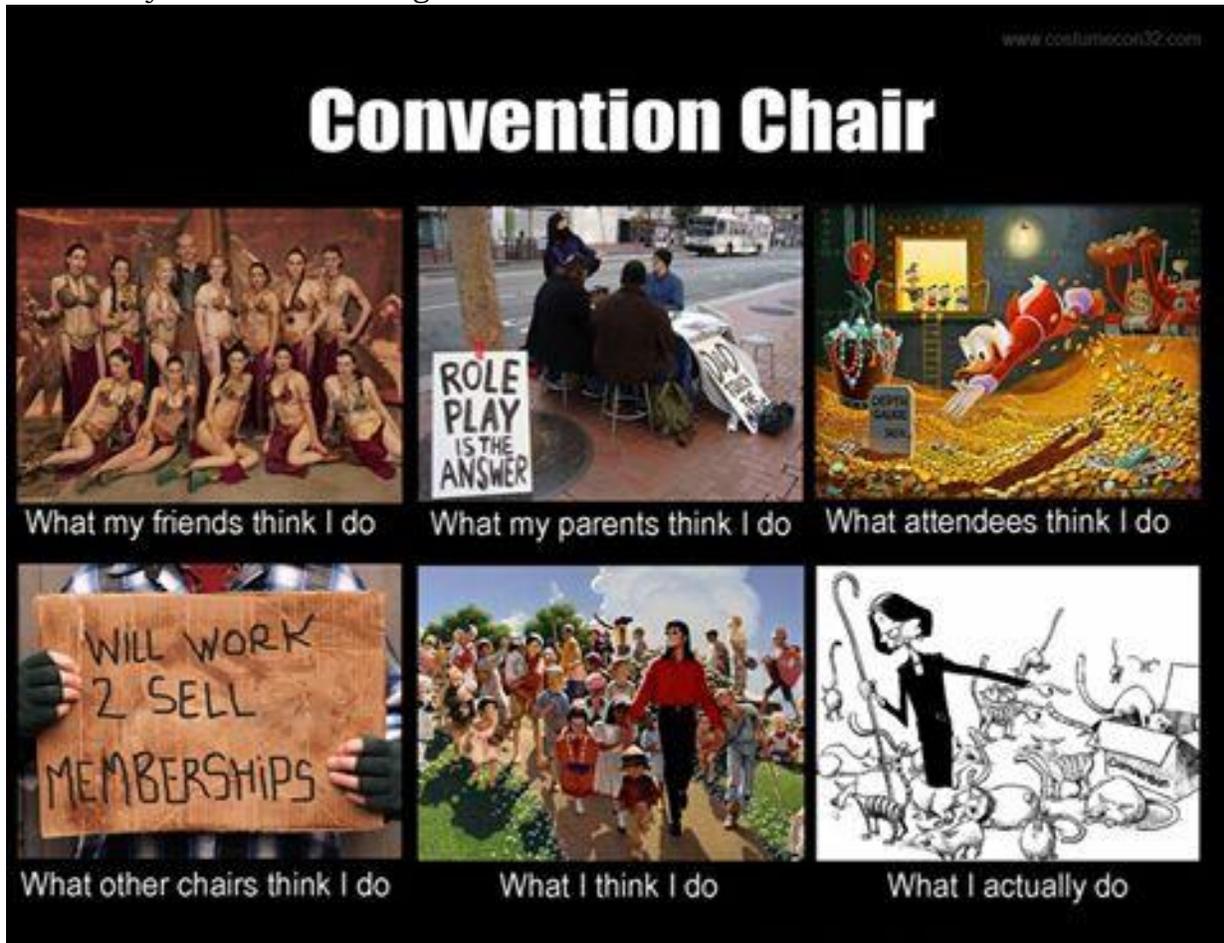
**Lyn McConchie, February 6, 2016**

On 4/02/2016 9:07 p.m., Garth Spencer wrote:

*One grey temple of an awful rite,  
Ring within ring of wizard stones circled about some central place,  
Every circle an initiation,  
Every initiation eternal loss ...*

*Is this a vision of the Motor Vehicle Bureau, or of the Conservative Party caucus?*

More likely a conglom meeting!



And - I thoroughly enjoyed *Boring Mundane Stories*. It was a great Xmas present, and I honestly hope you will do a sequel since I was enjoying the serial and felt slightly cheated when it stopped. So, get on with it!

And - on *TAoG* 9...

Really basic commonsense isn't nonsense. Don't jump off high cliffs unless you can fly/have a parachute/can levitate/or have some other method of not making a hard landing.

Don't stick your hands into working machinery unless you have some way of making certain you won't be injured. Hope and good reflexes usually aren't enough.

Ditto annoying really big dogs that aren't chained up.

Basic common sense simply means that you don't do dangerous things without understanding that there are consequences and what they may be. Understanding contemporary urban life skills may be something else, similar but more particularly targeted. As in - don't annoy people for no good reason, and if you think you have one, it had better be really good, and when you do, expect retaliation in some way, shape, or form, sometime, because what you see as a good reason may not meet their expectations and they may not care *HOW* good it is anyway. Or - don't cross *that* park

after dark, don't be rude to the gang lounging on *that* corner, or cross the main road against the lights or off the pedestrian crossing.

*((There are times when this so-called "common sense" does need to be spelled out - as you have done - but it rarely is.*

*((My modest ambition is to compensate for my own social awareness deficits, but I also want there to be an information source that would just spell out the things any clued-out people need to know.)*

Of course, common sense isn't. People do silly stuff all the time, and the odd thing to me has always been, that for some reason they honestly *don't* expect to pay for it.

*((David Gerrold is the originator of the phrase "common sense isn't.")*

and:

Don't assume those disks were corrupted. It could be the interface you're using to upload them to a computer. I had and still have a stack of some 50 floppies, and (gifted by a friend) I have two thingies that you slot a floppy into and hook the other end into your computer for translation and uploading. I discovered that some of the floppies were said to be corrupted. Being an optimist I then tried them in other one of the two gadgets, and bingo, suddenly they were readable. The too, a more knowledgeable friend may be able to run a programme for you that will uncorrupt them.

*((Would anyone who is reading this be able to read a 3.5" PC-formatted disk, if the MS Word/PDF/ PageMaker documents on it are problematic? How about aged 5.25" PC-formatted disks, with WordPerfect 5.1 documents – on many of which I changed the filename extension?))*

Meanwhile I must get this emailed, I'm having a week of scrambling to clear items so I can start the new book on Tuesday with everything up to date and a number of things done in advance to be sent out painlessly during book time.

**Allan D. Burrows, February 7, 2016**

On 4/02/2016 9:07 p.m., Garth Spencer wrote:

*One grey temple of an awful rite,  
Ring within ring of wizard stones circled about some central place,  
Every circle an initiation,  
Every initiation eternal loss ...*

*Is this a vision of the Motor Vehicle Bureau, or of the Conservative Party caucus?*

Just me, I suppose, but my first guess was Nightvale City Hall.

**John Bartley, February 7, 2016**

*[Re my comments] Isn't "compulsive writer" redundant?*

> Can someone tell me what formats the following filename extensions signify: PDB, PRC, RAR?

PDB and PRC files are for the Palm. Remember the Palm? [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palm\\_\(PDA\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palm_(PDA))

Calibre [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calibre\\_\(software\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calibre_(software)) will convert them to EPUB, MOBI, PDF or less popular formats.

RAR is a compressed archive format, similar to ZIP. What happens when you right-click on an RAR file? If it demands a password, well, yer hosed. Otherwise, it should open if you have RAR reading capability in your system.

p7zip-rar, rar, and unrar are Linux packages you can add from Synaptic Package Manager to a Debian, Ubuntu, Mint and other Linux installations. For Windows, you can install 7-zip from <http://7-zip.org/> .

*((Thank you!!))*

**Dale Speirs, February 10, 2016**

Re: your plan for freelance work. Be careful what you put on your Facebook page or pdf zines. Standard practice for employers these days is to run a Google search on candidates and read what they publish online. Any employer checking your material would quickly learn, from your own writing, that you have trouble getting along with people and are a procrastinator who has too many uncompleted projects. Thus you won't even make the first cut.

*((ANGST! You scared me into doing a lot of online correcting. Even knowing it was far too late.*

*((In fact, I try real hard to accommodate everyone, and my only uncompleted projects are my own ideas – like, the idea that I still had to transcribe tapes of congoer interviews from the 1990s. But if people insist on misunderstanding my texts, then I have to censor myself; I understand that.))*

Some people try to block their sites to Google. Before I retired in 2010, one of our hiring interview tactics was to ask a candidate to show us his Facebook page or blog on our computer and explain about it. We had one guy whose front page was a cartoon of an Orthodox Jew like the shark zooming up to a swimmer in the JAWS movie poster. He had given a good interview about the job but needless to say we didn't call him back.

Re: “What I Learned From Fandom”. The same thing is true of other hobbies I've been involved in. What bothers me is the sea change in volunteerism, famously described in Robert Putnam's book *Bowling Alone*. The Millennial generation is now conditioned to the idea that successful volunteering means a Facebook page with a thousand likes or a Website where bloggers can slag each other without doing any actual work like physically setting up tables at a convention.

That fans are not slans has been known for decades. At an SF convention, for every computer programmer who earns \$100,000 per year, there are a half-dozen convenience store clerks and a dozen temps. Fandom is an escape, not a better reality.

Canadian fandom was atomized even before the Internet. As you know from your own fanhistories, Canfans seldom interacted between cities and were usually ignorant of what had even happened in a previous generation in their own city. I once thought the World Wide Web would help overcome this, but most modern Canfans seem content to post comments on an American blog and then sit back with the idea that they've done their part.

*((I was hoping to make a point beyond that, Dale. Like, if people seriously want communities of friends and family to live in, why can't we create the conditions to support it? Does that not immediately mean anything, like ways to make a living, or ways to design homes and urban space, that don't isolate people? Or to start small: clubs and activities with mandated activities that don't encourage egos, powertripping, larceny or rumour-mongering?))*

*((It occurs to me that people have an upper limit to the number of family and friends and acquaintances they can interact with; until the 1960s, SF fans were starved for the company of people they could talk to, but after Star Trek fandom, there were a surfeit of fans in the local area, so there wasn't so much drive to link up with out-of-town fans; and in Canada, or presumably Australia, the distances and other factors that isolate local communities are much more significant than in the States, or in Britain.))*

Calgary seems to be doing better in some respects. The annual readercon When Words Collide is very popular, to the point that the membership cap is usually reached two months prior to the convention ([www.whenwordscollide.org](http://www.whenwordscollide.org)). I seem to be the only pdf zinester in Cowtown but there are still one or two non-SF zinesters around on the Papernet.

### **Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, February 11, 2016**

*Art of Garthness 9* is here, I am at home job hunting, and do I ever need a break from that. Time to write a fast loc, and relieve the depression inherent in the job search.

Planning is always good, and I know people laugh at lists, but lists keep me focused and in relative control of my life. I keep a single 2-page Word document I laughingly call Dumb Things I Gotta Do. It lists all the things I do have to do in the future, plus a calendar of things coming up on specific dates, all the things happening on the upcoming weekend, upcoming conventions, initial plans for the next weekend afterwards, things to do (and done) for our trip to London this coming August, and lined areas to make notes once the sheet is printed out. I simply do not trust my memory, so I keep this sheet with me at all times, ready to accept a written note while I think of things.

*((From time to time I make up a list like that; if I don't call it exactly the same thing, I call it the Karma List.))*

I am on Facebook, LinkedIn, Indeed.ca, JobRapido and many more job hunting websites. Out of the bunch, which one do I find best for what I do? Indeed.ca. Most of the jobs I apply to, I find there. Even my employment consultants think that LinkedIn is not all that great, especially the Premium version. I have also found there's a number of community colleges that can help you with job hunting, resumes and even job searching for you. Humber College does that for me, and thank Ghu for that.

*((I was disappointed by the unselective, "shotgun" approach that Workopolis or Monster.com search agents took on my behalf, as though the programmers who designed the list of job selections didn't really understand how jobhunters needed to focus down their job searches.))*

The old tradition of trading zines between individuals and between clubs seems to be fading. There's the attitude, you want it so badly, download it yourself. More convenient, perhaps, but again, the victim here is community, and it continues to fade away. With that in mind, congrats to Vanfandom for reviving FRED, and I hope it builds the community again.

*((There are people who have the concept of community, and people who don't. There are people who find all the people they need right where they are, and people who still haven't found what they're looking for. If there is no one person to organize social events, they won't happen. The rule, if any, looks like "there are functions that may go for a long time without some volunteer to carry them out".))*

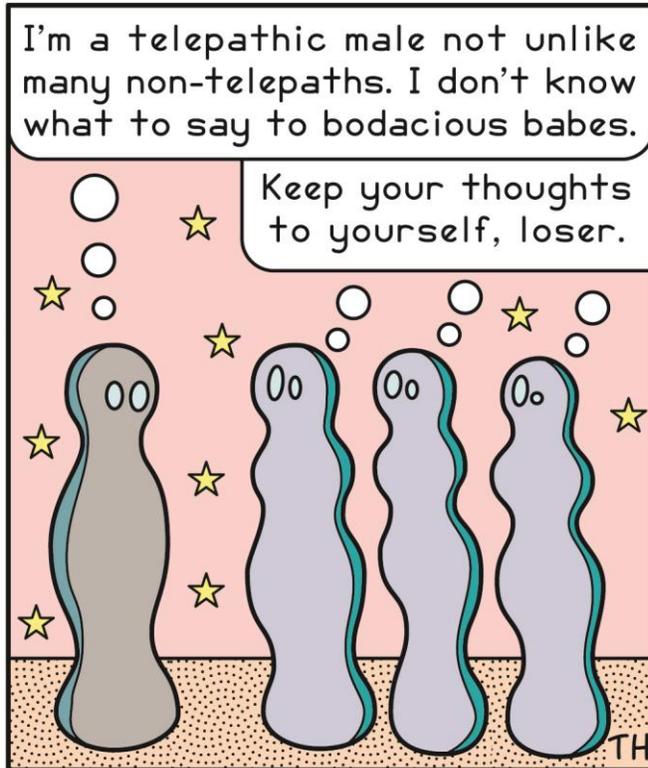
"What I Learned From Fandom" ... all so true. Fans are not slans, but are mere humans, with all the usual weaknesses, and sometimes more.

Time to go, getting close to lunch time. Take care, stay warm, and see you with the next one.

**Steve Green, Feb. 12, 2016**

Please accept my apologies for this bulk e-mail, but I shall be suspending this Yahoo account shortly in favour of my new address – [steve.green@ghostwords.co.uk](mailto:steve.green@ghostwords.co.uk) – and would invite you to update your contact details accordingly.

*We also heard from: Graham Charnock, Felicity Walker, R. Graeme Cameron, Michael Bertrand, Bill Burns*



## Micronational Politics

One of the fun things that people do in their spare time is to declare independent countries, such as the Kingdom of Loges des Corbeaux in the Rockies or the Hutt River Principality in Australia. If you spend any time looking up constructed languages online, sooner or later you will read about invented nations, some of them with their own languages.

One of the longest-running micronations is Talossa, which lays claim to Milwaukee and its environs, an island off of France, and a chunk of Antarctica. Like other micronations it has had its vicissitudes, including a republican reaction against the founder, King John.

I was interested in this mainly because of the constructed language (Talossan) worked out by the founder (based on the premise of a Romance language enduring in northern Africa, but heavily influenced by loanwords adapted from all over the world, and brought home by seafaring Talossans). However, most of the activity of Talossans is parliamentary or legislative, as witness the following.

Daphne Lawless sent the following email on February 6, 2016:

*(Free Democrats of Talossa)*

*“Twelve years ago the Talossan Republic was formed in the aim of protecting Talossan tradition from tyrannical Royal overreach. Four years ago, with myself as President, the Talossan Republic peaceably merged into the Kingdom of Talossa. This was not a declaration of surrender; rather, a recognition that the continuing struggle for a*

democratic Talossa, belonging to all its people, had to be carried on among the main body of Talossans.

*“That struggle continues today. And we need your help.*

*“In June last year, King John I of Talossa suddenly "discovered" that he had the right to simply refuse to enact Organic Law amendments which had been validly passed by the Ziu and by a referendum. I have been at the forefront of fighting back this royal overreach - not only challenging its legality in the Uppermost Cort in an ongoing case, but by taking on the leadership of the only Talossan political party which is determined that this aggression against our rights and liberties shall not stand.*

*“The King has also shirked his duties by only bothering to actually function as King when it benefits him or his political allies personally. For example, the election is happening one month later than usual this year, simply because the King forgot to dissolve the Cosâ! This is not what even the most devoted monarchist would consider proper behaviour.*

*“The Free Democrats of Talossa is the ONLY party standing in the current election which will not retreat or surrender in the face of Royal overreach. Some other parties claim to be in favour of monarchical reform - but they are all, without exception, proudly monarchist parties, with the deference before the current Monarchy which that entails. When push comes to shove, they will ALWAYS choose Monarch over People. That's just the logic of their position. In contrast, the Free Democrats include both monarchy- and republic-minded Talossans - but who all insist on DEMOCRACY above all, and that King John I has simply not being [sic] doing his job right.*

*“As citizens of the Republic of blessed memory, you helped say NO to a previous King acting like he owned the nation. I am now asking you, on bended knee, for your help once more - by voting FREE DEMOCRATS in the upcoming Cosâ election, starting February 15. As the only party which wants both to put "manners" on the King, as well as forming an active and competent government team, we are hoping for a Cosâ majority this time - for which we will need around 50 votes, twice what we got last time.*

*“Ambitious? You bet! But then have you ever known me to be anything less?*

*“Please visit our website, <http://www.freedemstalossa.wordpress.com>, which explains our policy, our leadership, our candidate nominations and everything else you might want to know about the Free Democrats of Talossa. Also, if you haven't yet done so, would you mind filling in our election survey, at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GMPSGM2> ? It would be of great help.*

*“Thank you so much. With your vote, we can carry on the fine legacy of the Republic-that-was and get King John under control.*

*“restéu voastră, Miestrâ Schivâ, first Seneschâl and last President of the Talossan Republic, Leader of the Free Democrats of Talossa”*

Those important links again:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GMPSSGM2>  
<http://www.freedomstalossa.wordpress.com>

The following appeared on February 17, 2016 from a contending party:

*(Talossan National Congress)*

This is Breneir, the leader of the **Talossan National Congress**. I've been a Talossan for nearly 10 years and I can say that as our Kingdom grows in population my pride seems to grow as well. In the previous Government I served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and worked to raise awareness of our Kingdom with other states and to build and deepen relationships. I wrote the legislation which the Ziu passed to create Talossa's humanitarian aid organization which now has contributed to UNICEF to help Syrian refugees. Now, I have the honor to join with Talossan progressives around the world as a part of the TNC to further our mission to make Talossa's government more efficient, to revitalize our cultural programs and to show the world how special our little Kingdom is.

I hope you'll join me and vote for the TNC. With your help our vision moves ever closer to becoming a reality.

***Breneir (Brandon Nakasato)***

**Vote on Witt:** <http://talossa.proboards.com/thread/11318/official-49th-cosa-voting-thread?page=1&scrollTo=141703>

**Vote on the Talossa: Database:** <http://www.talossa.ca/files/vote.php>

**Vote by email to the Secretary of State:** [sos@talossa.ca](mailto:sos@talossa.ca)

*(RUMP)*

***Some reasons why you might want to vote for the RUMP (REMIX PART TWO: SHARKNADO STYLE)***

Azul, citizens and pets of the Kingdom of Talossa!

We're here to give you a few reasons why you might want to vote for the RUMP... why we think it's time for a change.

The MRPT and FDT have had three terms to produce some results for Talossa. But the country has fewer and fewer active citizens, and we can't take much more of this. Two years have gone by... where are the coins? Why aren't we making stamps available? What have we gotten instead from our government, during these past two years? An outdated website, completely abandoned social media, and not much more. They can go on the attack all they want, but it's not going to change the facts.

Now the RUMP is asking for your vote, so we can start making a difference in Talossa - - so we can start making your life as a Talossan *better!* *Here are four reasons why you might want to vote for us!*

**1. We want to print ID cards for any citizen who requests them.** We did it before, and we want to do it again. If you vote for the RUMP, it's a vote for ID cards.



**2. We want to promote our assets.** Did you know that there are sheets of Talossan stamps, printed and available? Probably not, because for years the government has been *wasting* them! And did you know that there are entire Talossan language courses available on such websites as MemRise? Probably not, because the government has just let them be forgotten and never done anything to promote them. It's a waste of Talossan time and money, and we need to get those things moving again!

**3. We have a proven record of *big* accomplishments that matter to you.**

We created stamps, the designs for coins and stamps, the current terpelaziuns (parliamentary questions) system, the MIB II modern budgeting process, the creation of the modern government system by creating the current Cabinet and Household, the repeal of the special House Law that applied only to the monarch, the separation of powers that restricted the monarch from important jobs, the creation of most the entire huge website (even with the new and incomplete [talossa.com](http://talossa.com), most of the actual content is just copied over), the passage and implementation of the only census to have ever actually been conducted, the printing and mailing out of ID cards, the creation of TalossaWare and vending of it, the printing and distribution of flyers throughout the GTA, a Google AdSense advertising campaign, the acquisition of Shiny Objects, and many many other things. We made a difference in the lives of Talossans.

We want to get back to work for you, and make things happen. We were in office for years, just like the current government. The main difference is that when we left office, we had a *lot done*.

**4. We have an actual plan to keep the government active.** This past government has been so inactive that our national website has pages on it that are years out of date. Even the page on the Seneschal is seven months out of date! The solution is not different staffers, it's different management... let's stop rearranging the chairs on this sinking ship of bad policies!

The RUMP is the *only party* to have made strict promises up front about how we'll keep ministers accountable: in the first month, we'll have published lists of projects

and specific timelines for goals. We need a government that doesn't ignore the government transparency reports, like the current one! We need a change!

The RUMP promises:

1. We will not miss any of the legally required government activity reports.
2. We will update the national web properties to reflect ongoing government projects, and update them regularly from the beginning of the term to the end.
3. We will update the national web properties with accurate staffing and contact information, immediately, and keep it updated throughout all changes.
4. In the *first month* of office, the Seneschal will require all ministers to create and report to the Ziu their planned projects in significant detail, including timelines and *specific dates* for completion.
5. Every government official will be required to know the laws that apply to them and to know all their required duties.
6. If a minister feels overwhelmed, asks for help, or needs a break, we will not ignore them. We will act to help them. No one stands alone.
7. If need be, an inactive minister will be promptly replaced. This doesn't mean being a jerk about it.
8. If we don't do any of this, quote this back at us and rub our faces in it.

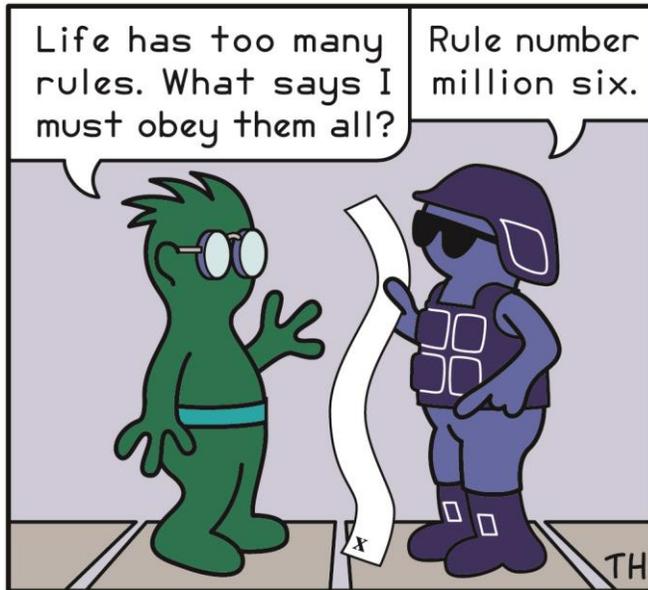
**It's time for an active government to make Talossa better for *you*!**

**[Follow this link and VOTE RUMP!](#)**

***Sir Alexandreu Davinescu***

**<http://rump.boards.net/page/platform>**





## The Common Life Skills Book – progress report

What does “common sense” really consist in? An almost instinctual sense of how one thing leads to another, and what follows next ... or just a mishmash of learned social knowledge, and ignorant assumptions, and misconceptions we formed but never realized were wrong?

A basic, general outline of common knowledge, skills and behaviour is coming into focus; but I keep running into limitations, or hurdles, in getting this organized. I mean, how would *you* organize a reference manual for, say, immigrants, or high-functioning autistic adults, or average teenagers? Alphabetically by topic, or chronologically, say by education level?

When I tried making an alphabetical list of “How To Adult” tasks, I came up with this:

### ***Parts of a Life***

- Arts & entertainment – things to know
- Business in general – things to know
- Crafts and practical skills to know
- Educational resources to locate
- Environmental requirements
- Family to relate to
- Finances to take care of
- Housekeeping/homemaking routines
- Industry/ies to know about
- Making a living/means of support
- Politics/public services to engage with
- Sciences and technologies to know about
- Sports to participate in
- The Care of the Soul

(Anyone who feels like being a Renaissance Man, or Woman, has to make time to practice an art, a science, a sport, a craft, a business, a public or non-profit charitable service – at least one of each – *on top* of making a living. Sort of crowds out television and social life, doesn't it? And lack of time explains why committing yourself to any one or two major activities means you don't get much common knowledge about others.)

But when I tried organizing life skills by educational level, I came up with the following:

### ***Primary school: Material Skills***

In childhood we are taught a lot of iron rules, without explanation or reason. Perhaps every culture teaches its members from childhood the *obvious* things - how to dress, how to eat, how to clean up, and some basic mechanical physics. E.g.:

- Wash all over, with soap, at least once every day.
- Wash your hands, with soap, before leaving the bathroom.
- Eat everything on your plate before leaving the table.
- Clear the table after every meal.
- Wash the dishes at least once a day, perhaps after every meal.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Put away your toys when you finish playing.
- Turn off the lights when you leave a room.
- Turn off the radio/TV/computer when you finish using it.
- Take off your shoes and coat and hat when you come indoors, and put them on when you go out.
- Lock the door when you go out.

Whether students *absorb* lessons about basic nutrition and basic mechanics is a question, especially when you look at some of our citizens, or at some of the accidents made famous on YouTube.

### ***Primary school: Social Skills***

Perhaps every culture teaches its members from childhood its social customs - dressing appropriately, table manners, a sense of responsibility to others, and common courtesy. E.g.:

- Stand at least two feet from people when you speak to them, three feet from people you don't know (in Anglo society – this varies in other societies)
- Speak softly indoors, and louder outdoors
- Say “excuse me” when you have to pass people, or have to ask for the attention of strangers
- Think twice before speaking; some facts and some subjects are not welcome
- Look at people when you speak to them
- Say “please” and “thank you” when you have any exchanges with people.

## Age-Appropriate Chores for Children



© Copyright 2013 www.flandersfamily.info

### Ages 2-3

- Put toys in toy box
- Stack books on shelf
- Place dirty clothes in laundry hamper
- Throw trash away
- Carry firewood
- Fold washcloths
- Set the table
- Fetch diapers & wipes
- Dust baseboards

### Ages 6-7

- Gather trash
- Fold towels
- Dust mop floors
- Empty dishwasher
- Match clean socks
- Weed garden
- Rake leaves
- Peel potatoes or carrots
- Make salad
- Replace toilet paper roll

### Ages 10-11

- Clean bathrooms
- Vacuum rugs
- Clean countertops
- Deep clean kitchen
- Prepare simple meal
- Mow lawn
- Bring in mail
- Do simple mending (hems, buttons, etc.)
- Sweep out garage

### Ages 4-5

- Feed pets
- Wipe up spills
- Put away toys
- Make the bed
- Straighten bedroom
- Water houseplants
- Sort clean silverware
- Prepare simple snacks
- Use hand-held vacuum
- Clear kitchen table
- Dry and put away dishes
- Disinfect doorknobs

### Ages 8-9

- Load dishwasher
- Change light bulbs
- Wash laundry
- Hang/fold clean clothes
- Dust furniture
- Spray off patio
- Put groceries away
- Scramble eggs
- Bake cookies
- Walk dogs
- Sweep porches
- Wipe off table

### Ages 12 and up

- Mop floors
- Change overhead lights
- Wash/ vacuum car
- Trim hedges
- Paint walls
- Shop for groceries w/list
- Cook complete dinner
- Bake bread or cake
- Do simple home repairs
- Wash windows
- Iron clothes
- Watch younger siblings

Notes: Almost the first thing that English families do, if they're like mine, is to train members to repress their impulses, and not to expect that they can have anything they want. Most of us – if not all – get the message that you have to give something for what you receive, whether in a cash transaction or in gift-giving. (Well, perhaps not American high-income family cultures, such as produced this year's Republican candidates.)

### **Primary school: Self Development Skills**

Fundamental attitudes that children may absorb – or may not – are not always as obvious as

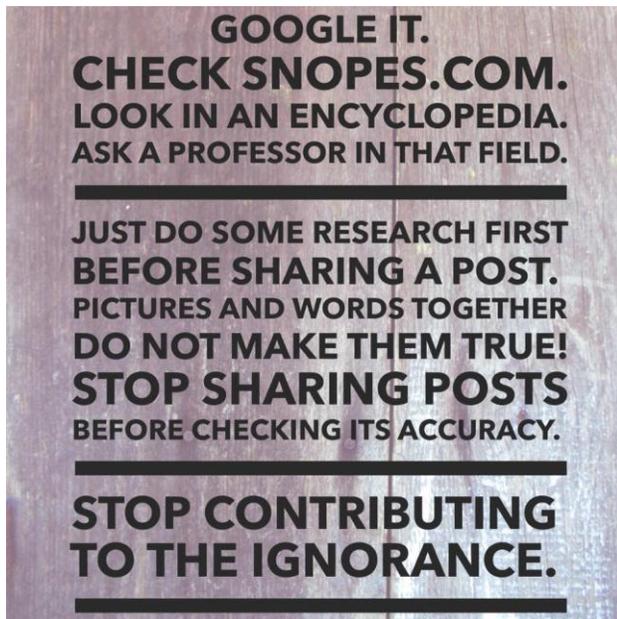
- You are as valuable as I am
- I am as valuable as you are

- If I respect myself, then I respect you
- If I want to be treated right, I will treat you right

A majority of human beings develop both language skills and a sense of conscience well before puberty ... and a few, in every generation, *don't* develop one or the other.

From all the reports I have received, raising children is a crapshoot: you can't be sure what sinks in and what doesn't, or what experiences will influence children profoundly (sometimes with inspiring, and sometimes with crippling effect).

It may be pointless to argue whether psychopaths and sociopaths lack conscience and empathy due to their environment (lack of effective parenting), or due to their nature (genetic or neurological deficits). Everyone is the product of both nature and nurture, by the time we learn anything about their personality.



### **Secondary school: Material Skills**

- How to exercise
- How to eat healthy
- How to bicycle (or drive) safely
- Why you clean up after yourself
- Basic first aid
- How to parse a sentence
- How to total a column of figures, and balance a budget
- How to calculate the area of a room, the area of a property, ...
- How to schedule time, and judge distances in terms of travel time
- The basic science in nutrition, home construction, home appliances, vehicles, public

utilities

- What local geography is like
- What regional and world geography is like

In adolescence we can start to gain some useful material skills, whether domestic or mechanical or electronic. The curious thing is how limited, or specialized, are the knowledge and skills we obtain; or how limited our abilities and talents are considered to be.

Maybe it would be a great thing to offer *all* students education in a wide range of material skills ... and in self-defence, emergency response and first-aid skills, as well. Or perhaps it's too much to assume anyone can be a Renaissance multi-talented prodigy?

## **Secondary school: Social Skills**

In adolescence we begin to learn reasons for rules, based at least on physical consequences, and often on the consequences of one's actions to oneself and to others.

E.g.:

- How to take a telephone message; how to write a coherent email, a Facebook post, a letter, or an essay; how to tell a joke, or a story
- How to carry out double-entry bookkeeping, to a trial statement
- How to complete a tax return
- The background story of one's family, city, and country
- How to reckon and satisfy social obligations
- What not to say and when not to say it
- Consideration and its payoffs
- How to fight fair
- How to compose a quarrel
- How to defend yourself, physically or verbally
- The difference between weapons and tools
- Statutory holidays and their meanings
- Ordinary and Formal table manners
- Ordinary and Formal titles and forms of address
- Ordinary, Formal and business attire (and what it signifies)
- Other cultures in the same city, and requisite courtesies (holy days for Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Confucians and Buddhists; various restrictions on dress; kosher, halal, and Hindu dietary restrictions; etc.)
- Business manners, especially abroad or for foreign visitors (e.g. bowing properly and presenting cards properly, for Japanese or Chinese values)

Maybe the best way to teach adolescents is by granting responsibilities in graduated stages. Granted, not all adolescents will be open to communication, not from anyone older than they.

Notes: are sexual ethics more of a practical, material matter to teach adolescents, or more of a social-skills matter? Considering how lethally some people react if you offend their mores, rules for sexual behaviour can be a matter of life and death. And it isn't as if we have a social consensus: we have several very different subcultures in every major city, and every opportunity for conflict. And adolescence is precisely the stage of life where people need some sort of guide that will save their lives, or at least their future prospects. Quite aside from the increasingly dangerous, antibiotic-resistant venereal diseases going the rounds. (Amazingly enough, I received **no** guidance from my own family in sexual ethics.)

For another thing: In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, industrialized countries seemed to offer more employment opportunities in information technology and services than in manufacturing or technological innovation. Especially there was a great invention of new financial products and services. But secondary education has not kept pace, and the market for unskilled labour is neither large nor well-paying. (Again, I received **no** guidance from my family in finding employment – apparently their notion of

employment opportunities, or available wages versus cost of living, was at least forty years out of date.)

### **Secondary school: Self Development Skills**

How to distinguish

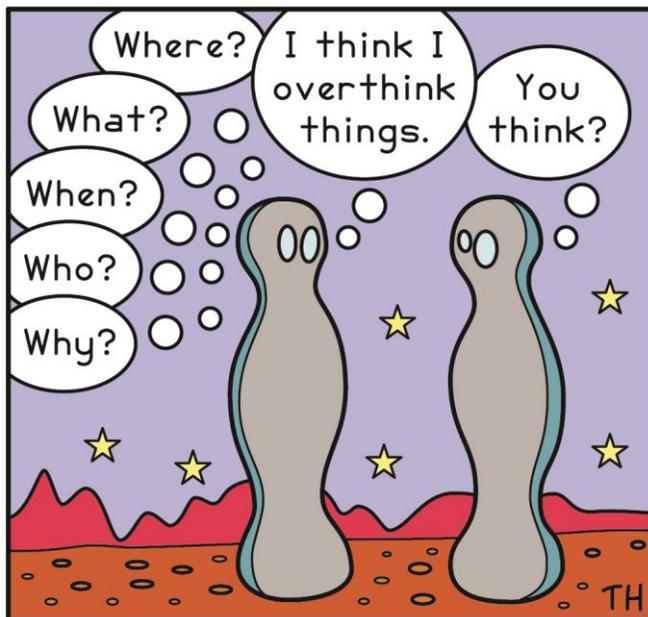
- Values from prejudices
- Self-worth from pride
- Self-respect from vanity
- Self-assertion from arrogance

Note: when I want to estimate what behaviour to expect from people, my current hypothesis is based on the “bell curve” distribution. This is a feature that shows up again and again, whenever we measure the variations in any human features.

My theory, which is mine and belongs to me, is that if we could measure integrity or character in different populations at different times as we do height or weight, manual dexterity or endurance of pain, we would discover that there will *always* be a minority of saints and a roughly equal minority of villains in every population. Most of us fall somewhere in the middle, more or less decent but more or less swayed by threats or temptations.

Notice that our societies are disproportionately constructed to cope with villains, psychopaths, sociopaths, or career criminals, whether domestic or foreign. They cause damage, or the fear of harm, quite out of proportion to their numbers.

Maybe “post-secondary” or master-class life skills are a whole ‘nother level ... more on this to come.



Phan Niuuz

**CORRECTION TO AoG #8: When Words Collide 2016 will host Convention 36** in Calgary, Alberta, August 12-14, 2016 at the Delta Calgary South, Calgary, Alberta ([www.whenwordscollide.org](http://www.whenwordscollide.org)).

(The Usual Suspects, Feb. 13, 2016)

**VCON 41 will be held at The Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel** (Surrey) from September 30th to October 2nd, 2016.

Theme: “Muppets, Puppets, and Marionettes” - everything from giant puppets to stop motion models to Supermarionation. (Secondary theme: “The Small Press Cabal” – small-press publishing in Canada.) Author GoH: Robert J. Sawyer. Supermarionation GoH: Jamie Anderson. Film Design GoH: Eric Chu. Editor GoH: Karl Johanson. Godzilla FanGoH: Stan G. Hyde. Artist GoH: TBA. Master of Ceremonies: Spider Robinson.

**Artists! To Purchase table or panel:** Go to Eventbrite site: [www.eventbrite.ca](http://www.eventbrite.ca). Queries can be sent to: [artshow@vcon.ca](mailto:artshow@vcon.ca).

**Dealers:** Queries can be sent to: [dealers@vcon.ca](mailto:dealers@vcon.ca).

**Room Reservations:** Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel, 15269 – 104th Avenue, Surrey, BC CANADA V3R 1N5. Reservations via [www.starwoodmeeting.com](http://www.starwoodmeeting.com)

**Memberships:** CURRENT RATES for Full weekend Memberships - Adult = \$50 – (July goes up to \$60); Senior = \$40 – (July goes up to \$45); Adult Student = \$40 – (July goes up to \$45); Teen (13-18) = \$30 – (July goes up to \$35); Youth (9 – 12) = \$30 – (July goes up to \$35); Child (infant to 8) = Free. To register, go to <http://vcon.ca/> and click on “Register for VCON 41”. Alternatively, Just write a cheque, or send a post-office money order, made out to “West Coast Science Fiction Association,” and include a mention it is for a VCON membership (or) Art Show panel (or) program book ad (so we don’t think you’re simply sending us money out of the goodness of your heart), and mail it to: W.C.S.F.A./VCON 41, Box 78069, Grandview RPO, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5N 5W1.

(The VCON Vanguard #3, February 17, 2016)



## Semiprozines and other marketlike news

### **Pulp Literature open to submissions**

“We have now placed most of our 2016 stories and are in the process of contacting authors, which means we’re gearing up to start reading for our 2017 issues.

Submissions are open until the end of February and we will begin reading in March. We have instituted a \$10 reading fee to fund payment for authors. The good news is this will allow us to have more submission openings each year, and provide faster responses.

“We wish we could operate this paying market based on subscriptions alone, but so far the sales numbers don’t fully support the magazine. We had 1200 submissions in the last reading period. If we had that many subscribers, it would cover all our author and artist payments for the year. If you’d like to see the reading fee go down or disappear altogether please spread the word and encourage your reading and writing friends to subscribe!

*Current & Upcoming:*

**Pulp Literature Issue 9, Winter 2016** is “A GMO future fairytale by George McWhirter, time-travelling mystery by Mel Anastasiou, spec-fic, horror and steampunk by Greg Walklin, Matt Andrew and Stephanie Charette, winter poetry by Ashley-Elizabeth Best and Mary H Auerbach Rykov, comic-book philosophy by Anat Rabkin, the next instalment of Allaigna’s Song by JM Landels, and the winners of the 2015 Hummingbird Prize for Flash Fiction. Order here!

“**Pulp Literature Issue 10, Spring 2016** is due out in April, with stories by Carol Berg, Gregg Chamberlain, Susan Pieters, Sarina Bosco, Andrea Lewis and Stephen Case; poetry by Matthew Walsh, Ev Bishop, and Ada Maria Soto; the winners of the 2015 Raven Contest, a new Stella novella, a comic by Kris Sayer and the penultimate instalment of Allaigna’s Song, all under a fierce cover by Britt-Lise Newstead.

Pulp Literature Press, 8540 Elsmore Road, Richmond, BC V7E 0A1,  
<info@pulpliterature.com>

{Pulp Literature e-news, February 2016 newsletter}

### **Sir Julius Vogel Award – Best Novel**

“My latest SF novel is now eligible for New Zealand's Sir Julius Vogel award for Best Novel (Written by a New Zealand author and published in the previous Year - 2015). I'd really like to see it on the ballot and I'm asking if you can find time to email FFANZ who organise the awards at [svj\\_awards@sffanz.org.nz](mailto:svj_awards@sffanz.org.nz) and nominate the work before February 28th.

“ Nominations can be made by any member of the public. Nominations are accepted from within New Zealand *and* overseas. Making a nomination is free of charge.

“To nominate, here is the information required.  
item nominated – book - *VESTIGES OF FLAMES*  
published by – Lethe Press USA.  
Author – Lyn McConchie,

Year of first release (June) 2015,  
nominated in - professional awards. Category - SF.

“Copies of the work are available from Lethe Press. Works that appear on the voting form are determined by how many nominations it gets. The more nominations a work gets, the greater the chances of it getting onto the voting form.

(Lyn McConchie, Feb. 2016)

### **Productions from Ghostwords TV (SteveGreen, UK)**

“*Ghostwords TV* is a new fortnightly vidcast, available via YouTube. Our first show includes an interview with British horror author Ramsey Campbell, plus news, reviews and special offers. You can view it – and subscribe for free to the channel – at <https://youtu.be/sAjHtRWotJE>.

“*Rose of Eibon* has just complemented its reviews and news coverage by launching its own range of horror-themed T-shirts, which you can check out at <http://store.roseofeibon.co.uk/> (please note we’re only taking UK orders at present).”

(Steve Green, Feb. 12, 2016)

