

THE OBDURATE EYE # 16

May 2022



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MASTHEAD

THE OBDURATE EYE #16 (May 2022) is what Garth Spencer does when he doesn't know any better. You can send letters, pictures, trade fanzines, articles, and suggested therapies to him by email to garth.van.spencer@gmail.com.

Art Credits

Din Djarin (José Sanchez)	cover
Mission from Starfleet (Facebook)	p. 1
But I caught it (Facebook)	p. 5

Cover: “Din Djarin from the Star Wars *Mandalorian* television series, poses thoughtfully on the desert plains planning his next move...”

(Jose Sanchez, April 11, 2022)



For anyone going to Corflu Pangloss in Vancouver, BC:

Pandemic Measures in BC Now

As people in B.C. continue to step up and become vaccinated in record numbers, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have decreased, leading the provincial health officer to lift additional public health orders. The gist of the Provincial Health Officer's timeline is progressive easing of restrictions.

Since April 1, 2022, fully vaccinated travellers have not needed to provide a pre-entry COVID-19 test result to enter Canada by air, land or water.

"You must still use ArriveCAN [see "check if you qualify" link below] within 72 hours before your arrival to Canada.

Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children 5 years of age or older must provide a valid pre-entry test result, even if they are accompanying a fully vaccinated adult.

"Children who are less than 5 years old are not required to test, regardless of their vaccination status."

To check if you qualify as a fully vaccinated traveller, go to:

<https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/covid-vaccinated-travellers-entering-canada#determine-fully>

Since April 8, 2022, in British Columbia,

“Wearing masks in public indoor settings is not required by public health. Wearing a mask is a personal choice. Masks are encouraged on public transit and BC Ferries, but not required.

“Individual businesses and event organizers can choose to continue requiring masks on their premises.”

Similarly, there are no restrictions (masking or social distance) on personal gatherings, organized gatherings and events, like weddings and funerals, worship services, exercise and fitness activities, or swimming pools. There are no provincial restrictions on sports activities, restaurants, bars, pubs and nightclubs, but these venues may request masking and social distancing themselves.

(<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions>)

Locs

One of my cover emails for the last issue said, “It was a dark and stormy night ... when the snot ran out.” Taral Wayne responded “CUT! It was a knife fight and indoors!”

Steve Fahnstalk responded, “Woo-hoo! I got into the WAHFs! Do you know how many years it's been since I was a WAHF? Thanks, Garth!”

Heath Row, April 26, 2022

Having recently come across your fanzine *Obdurate Eye* #15 on eFanzines—my first exposure to your writing—I wanted to send a brief letter of comment. So, I shall.

What method do you use to lessen the size of your apazine files? I just recently started submitting my apazines to Bill Burns for inclusion in eFanzines—and returned to the National Fantasy Fan Federation’s N’APA after a 13-year absence—and would welcome any tips and tricks you can offer.

((There are some options I found in exporting Word files into PDF format, and in combining PDF files into a mailing, which allow one to reduce the size of files. In any case I send eAPA mailings to Bill Burns in zipped format, which saves a bit of space – not as much as I wish.))

Regardless of your technical challenges accessing television, what programs have you sought out via Chromecast TV, Google Home, and your tablet?

((I haven’t – I have too many other things I want to do! Otherwise, I would keep flipping between police procedurals and NCIS spinoffs and science documentaries, if PBS is showing them, and the latest excuses for science fiction on the tube.))

I tend not to watch TV or online videos on my iPad, but did welcome the opportunity to do so while preparing for a couple of medical procedures earlier this year. I was pleased as punch to be able to access our cable TV DVR on my tablet (a *Svengoolie* episode), as well as Crunchyroll (*Astro Boy*). I hope that you're over the worst of your bout with COVID-19.

((Well past it, thank you.))

Your commentary on linguistics and semantics reminded me of one of my favorite sayings, which I don't get to use often enough: Jargon is just slang for lingo. In one particular area I'm active in, participants occasionally pick nits about word selection. A recent instance inspired me to jokingly respond using a purposeful misspelling. However, much to my disappointment, no one pointed it out. (At a recent LASFS meeting, my mispronunciation of comic book artist Bill Sienkiewicz's name—which was decidedly incorrect—was corrected by a fellow fan; to my amusement, that correction was then *also* corrected, by someone who actually knows Sienkiewicz.)

The excerpt from your autobiography, commenting on the challenges facing convention organizers and the value of newszines in terms of fostering common knowledge, made me think of Filthy Pierre's *The Con Committee's Guide* (available at <https://tinyurl.com/runacon>). It's a little dated—1984—but remains my go-to source when I have questions about con organizing. What did you do with *The Maple Leaf Rag* to foster common knowledge? Regardless, I've experienced much the same; sometimes people are fine just muddling through.

((I simply published The Maple Leaf Rag in Canada between 1983 and 1987. Since that time, I gather, people kept on doing their own thing, their own way, regardless of practical and financial conditions. I am now informed that the period of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, along with much higher hotel space fees, have made pre-COVID conrunning guides useless.

((Trying to sound out current fandoms in Vancouver has only brought to light that they don't even know they were once in the same forum, and had any relationship, much less any parallels in their events. Not entirely unexpected, but still disappointing.))

How to Human's definition of "Agenda in Life" made me think about Sam Lubell's approach to breaking down avocational projects: Project Classics, Project History, Project Trek, and Project Shakespeare. Being explicit about one's areas of focus and interest is something I've done on an informal basis—and I think the concept merits additional consideration. I remember being surprised when I first learned there were multiple phonetic alphabets. In addition to the NATO phonetic alphabet, Western Union also had one of its own, for example.

((More and more I am convinced that anyone's life is a set of simultaneous projects, and we have to share our attention and efforts among them. More and more, I am also convinced, we all get insufficient training, and a certain amount of misinformation, about how to live our lives.

((I started the How to Human project on a false assumption, that the problem was to collect in one place at least the "core" body of factual knowledge and essential life skills – which I do not believe I received, for one – and make it available. But more recently I learned that there is no mainstream culture, nor is standard received culture particularly functional, or preferable. The problem with life seems to be How Do We Human, how to

make a life that works for oneself, whatever your limitations and assets are, despite the limitations and interference of a dysfunctional culture.))

In the letter column, Lloyd Penney's remark on Kumospace— "[W]ith hundreds, if not thousands of social media platforms, it's doing an even better job of keeping us apart"—gave me pause. Given recent news about Twitter, where I curate articles related to business, marketing, technology, culture, and fandom almost every day—Elon Musk bought it—I've been considering returning to blogging more actively. We'll see how well my tweets transform into longer-form blog entries at <http://mediadiet.net/> — as well as whether anyone finds or engages with them. Already, the N3F, in which I'm active, has some members who participate in Facebook, some involved in MeWe (another social media platform), and some not online at all. Even our clubzines don't reach a critical mass of our members.

((Not too surprising, again. The rise of cable TV meant that there was a lot more for people to watch, and a lot less shared experience, since they were watching many more different channels. The rise of the Internet, and the Web, had the same effect. None of this is particularly new.))

So, your comment that even at cons in the 1980s, the shared understanding—or common knowledge, again!—of what fandom was piqued my interest.

((The loss of shared understanding or common knowledge, rather.))

I've seen this in recent years at the San Diego Comic-Con, the Los Angeles Comic Book Convention... and less so at Loscon, which is much less of a mediacon and therefore attracts fewer "tourists." I missed the most recent Gallifrey One, so I'm not sure how much of a traditional con it is these days. But there definitely seems to be more room for people less involved in fandom to participate in such events. Personally, I think it's caused by the wider range of online outlets for fandom and information of a fannish nature, which were previously served through cons, fanzines, and the like—fandom has entered the mainstream to some extent. I also think the multitude of entry points is a good thing. But we do need to be more mindful of the capabilities and needs of that broader spectrum of fen.

Thank you for encouraging readers to submit book reviews to *The N3F Review of Books*. I second the motion! You can see some recent reviews of my own in the March 2022 edition. And I just sent Mr. Phillis another batch of reviews for the forthcoming issue. Even if you review books for a fanzine or apazine, we're open to reprints. Right now, we depend heavily on several online sources and are looking to diversify our reviewers.

Well, that's it for now. I hope you and yours are doing well. I'm currently reading A.E. van Vogt's *Mission: Interplanetary*, which is enjoyable so far—and tonight is movie night with a friend: either *In the Year 2889* or *Mars Needs Women*, both directed by Larry Buchanan.

(P.S. Buy my new book! [Communicating Ideas: 11 Steps to Selling Innovation](#) ([Sign up](#) for my occasional email newsletter, Media Diet.)

We also heard from: Alan White, Hugh A.D. Spencer



“But I caught it, Mum, can’t I keep it?”

From How Do We Human (in preparation)

How many of the following subjects strike you as common sense, or common knowledge? How many people do you know who lack some common knowledge, or

essential skills? How many subjects and skills do you know – or, for that matter, how many of them have you not heard of before? It's an issue.

Material Knowledge and Skills

Basic Material Know-How

Basic Clothing

Basic Cleaning

Basic Language

Basic Arithmetic

Handling Money

Clear Thinking

Alphabetical list of material knowledge and skills

Accidents and witness statements

Article and Essay Writing

Auto maintenance and repair

Bank accounts

Basic chemistry

Basic electronics

Basic mechanics

Bicycle maintenance and repair

Blogs

Budgeting money, and financial planning

Budgeting time, and other scheduling matters

Budgeting your energy, and knowing your limits

Building a web page

Building a web site

Business correspondence

Careers and life planning

Cleaning dishes

Computers

Consumer/ism/ reports

Cooking and Nutrition

Email writing

Emergency Preparations and Response
Fiction writing
Financial statements
First Aid
Food supplies, quality, and testing
Gardening
Housekeeping
Industrial processes
Laundry
Letter Writing
Medical matters
Pet care
Plumbing
Podcasts
Record keeping
Report writing
Resume writing
Tax returns
Traffic rules and conditions
Water supplies, quality, and filtration
Yard work
Social Life
Social Basics
Basic Human Behaviour
Basic Communication Skills
Non-verbal communication
Basic Manners
Making Friends
Making Apologies
Dining Out
Entertainment – dance, music, theatre, etc.
Games
Sports

Angry, Hostile, Dangerous, or Manipulative People
Boundaries and Asserting Yourself
Alphabetical list of social knowledge and skills
Advertising
Armed forces
Birthdays
Broadcasting
Civic knowledge
Cognitive disabilities
Communication disabilities
Communities
Constitutional knowledge
Corporations
Cults
Deceivers: Frauds, Con Artists, Scams, and Grifts
Employment
Fiction Writing
Geography
Governments, local, regional, and national
Intelligence services
Journalism
Learning disabilities
Legal procedures
Police forces
Private companies
Public services
Religious observances
Search and Rescue
Statutory Holidays
Urban Rescue
Self-actualization
Alphabetical list of self-improvement knowledge and skills
“Best Destiny”

Human Potential
Moral issues
Basic English Vocabulary and Definitions
Arithmetic Operators
Logical Operators
Laws of Physics (Mechanics)
Laws of Chemistry
Periodic Table of Elements
Laws of Electricity

Fanzines and their Titles

One of the curious legacies of “fannish” fandom was a love of strange titles for fanzines. Some of the more creative titles include *Eat That Duck!*, *Small Friendly Dog*, and *This Little Donkey Looks Rather Lost* (all from the United Kingdom, in the 1980s or 1990s).

To look only at currently circulated fanzines, consider the following names:

Alexiad – Joseph T. Major

Ansible – Dave Langford, United Kingdom

Captain Flashback – Andy Hooper

CyberCozen – Israeli Science Fiction Society, Israel

Ethel the Aardvark - Australia

Great Galloping Ghu! (formerly ...) – a personalzine from R. Graeme Cameron, Nanaimo, BC

Intermission – Ahrvid Engholm, Sweden

Nice Distinctions – a personalzine from Arthur Hlavaty, Yonkers, NY

Nowhere Fan – Christina Lake, United Kingdom

The Obdurate Eye (formerly *The Art of Garthness*, formerly *The Royal Swiss Navy Gazette*, formerly *The World According to Garth*, etc.) – a personalzine from Garth Spencer, Vancouver, BC

Opuntia – Dale Speirs, Calgary, AB

Pablo Lennis – a fictionzine from John Thiel

Perryscope – Perry Middlemiss, Australia

Rust – R Sjolander, Sweden

The Alien Review – Perry Middlemiss, Australia

The Drink Tank – Christopher Garcia

The Zine Dump – Guy H. Lillian III

This Here ... Nic Farey, Las Vegas, NV

Wild Ideas – Henry Grynsten, Sweden

Pages and Groups I administer

Ever since I first heard of The Elves, Gnomes and Little Men's Science Fiction Chowder and Marching Society, The Nameless Ones, or The Cult, I have been intrigued and entertained by the creative names of 1960s and 70s SF clubs. Some creatively-named clubs are still out there! I have tried to carry on this entertainment myself, with the following titles:

An Host of Furious Fancies (<https://www.vcn.bc.ca/~garth2>) This is a private website on the Vancouver CommunityNet, intended partly as a self-teaching exercise in web editing, and partly as a resource centre for some friends, and partly as an exercise in sheer exhibitionism.

The **Anarcho-Surrealist Party**

(<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069270907376&sk>) This is a splinter group from the Second Reformed Anarcho-Surrealist Party with a Hot Tub in the Back Yard Society Inc.

The **Autistic Separatist Society**, founded May 2020

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1163987750615374>): "This is a discussion group for the Autistic Separatist Party, with the immediate goal of mutual aid and advocacy for high-functioning autistics and other neurodiverse people, and the ultimate goal of establishing a community of the nerds, for the nerds and by the nerds."

The **Garth Spencer Society**, founded August 27, 2019

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2087566588219098>) "The object of the Garth Spencer Society is to help the several Garth Spencers now online to avoid confusion with each other. Suggestions and advice are welcome."

How Do We Human, founded June 23, 2020

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1579151242160606>) "How many different resources are now online - such as Lifehack - for people who want to catch up on manual skills, financial literacy, social skills, or emotional management?"

The **Liberal Secular Rational Humanist Cult**, founded April 30, 2021

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/265687376854050>) "Humour and semi-serious proposals by, for and about religious behaviour. You have been selected because \

- You used to belong to eAPA, or
- You are an original creative fannish-type person, or
- We got drunk and silly at VCON once, or
- I am trying to start an international underground humorist organization, or
- I am trying to build up eAPA membership again and I thought you might like to join."

The **Royal Swiss Navy**, founded June 30, 2007
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2375248447>) “The things you need to know about us:

- 1) We are not, in fact, royal.
- 2) We do not, in fact, have any affiliation with Switzerland.
- 3) We do float, but with difficulty, and currently own no boats.”

The **Second Reformed Anarcho-Surrealist Party with a Hot Tub in the Backyard Society Inc.**, founded Aug. 26, 2011
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/130212817075561>) “Any funny activities involving aerostat balloons, hot tubs, guerilla street theatre, or all three.”

The **Society for the Perpetuation of Fannish Fandom**, founded Nov. 24, 2014
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/467954116579566>) “This is a website by, for and about fannish fans, their activities, creations, products and events. Advertisements for actual fannish stuff are cool.

"Fannish" fandom was and is a flavour of fandom that started to become a sort of community, so participants got sort of invested in it. It is just as well to know something about it as some aspects of fandom - including the way conventions are set up - were influenced by this aspect of SF fandom. Some FAQs will be added to this group.

Any commercial notices, advertisements, and events which are not by, for and about fannish fans are Not Welcome Here, and will be deleted.

“Real Soon Now this group should include some lists of fannish websites, including clubs and conventions. In the meantime you are all invited to check out one of the main online repositories of fanzines at <http://efanzines.com>.”

The **Nine Unknown Fen**, founded Feb. 4, 2021
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/471472024027267/permalink/47147957735984>)
5) “The Nine Unknown Fen is an ancient, powerful, mystic order of SF fen that I just made up, with members in every region, club, convention, social network and cosplay troupe. We are among you now. We are everywhere. Anyone you know might be one of the Nine Unknown Men ... or might not be. We promote fannishness, irreverence, impudence, irrelevance and insolence by a variety of means. We aspire to revive April Fool's Day jokes that are actually funny, and neither insulting nor damaging to people or property. Also, we promote eAPA, one of the several online Amateur Publication Associations carried on by SF fans. Look up the Members of eAPA page now!
“For more information about the Nine Unknown Fen, email the Anarch of the Commonwealth at garth.van.spencer@gmail.com.”

The **World Government of Spuzzum**, founded Jan. 1, 2001
(<https://www.facebook.com/spuzzumruleworld>) “If we had a world government, what would be a reasonable range of powers and responsibilities for them? Monitoring economic production, distribution and consumption, environmental damage and remediation, and biodiversity; carrying out sanctions on corporations that pollute aquifers and fertile land, encouraging both sanitation and birth control in densely populated countries, and keeping a close eye on potential epidemics; and monitoring world climate and geology for possible floods, droughts, tornadoes and earthquakes - not simply international terrorism, crime and espionage. I think. Have you noticed that nobody talks about the Belgians quietly taking over the world? Or how our

legislatures have been colonized by shaved sasquatches pretending to be humans, and crowding actual humans out of career politics? Why does nobody point out that terrorism is an industry, sustained not so much by arms manufacturers and the gnomes of Zurich, as it is inspired, led, manipulated and orchestrated by a worldwide underground death cult, probably the direct survival of the Cult of Kali? Who speaks for the aliens kidnapped and raised from birth as humans, but never able to fit in? How come Anonymous and WikiLeaks haven't traced the flow of funds from Belgian banking interests to terrorist groups around the world, often with the knowledge and endorsement of shaved sasquatches? And what have the authorities been doing about it??!"

News from Bree

Note: unless otherwise indicated, the fanzines mentioned below are in PDF format and received by email.

Pablo Lennis #411, January/February 2022 & #412, March 2022, John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, IN 47904, USA. (hardcopy)

John Thiel is producing one of the few fanzines devoted to amateur fiction, poetry and art (as far as I am aware). The January/February issue also features an article, "Modern Military Uses of Ideas from Science Fiction," by Jeffrey Redmond. Interestingly, by his account,

"... many militaries are already engaging with the genre. The U.S. military and the French army use science fiction writers to generate future threat scenarios. The Australian Defense College advocates the reading of science fiction and, in Germany, Project Cassandra uses novels to predict the world's next conflict. The Sigma Forum, a science fiction think tank, has been offering forecasting services to U.S. officials for years."

Good luck to them, says I.

Far Journeys 3:1, February 2022, Justin E.A. Busch, 308 Prince St. #422, St. Paul, MN 55101, USA. (hardcopy) Justin Busch devotes his fanzine to essays and articles. That suits my taste. In this issue he features two in-depth articles on the works of H.G. Wells, and "The Five Ways Science Fiction and Fantasy Deal with Religion," by David M. Shea. Worth rereading!

Nice Distinctions 34, Arthur D. Hlavaty, hlavaty@panix.com,
<<http://www.livejournal.com/users/supergee/>>,
<<http://www.maroney.org/hlavaty/>>, Discordian Regimentation #134

I have missed Arthur Hlavaty's editorial comments and rather fannish smartassery for at least a couple of years. He catches up his correspondents on his own and his family's well-being – all is well, although I am astonished that he is now 80 years old – and he summarizes his social network posts since his last appearance in print. My favourite examples:

Upton Tea is selling "First Flush Darjeeling." If I were selling something that looked like that, I would find another name.

§

Like Communists with Stalin and Yankee fans with Steinbrenner, sane conservatives are comparing notes on when they gave up on the Republicans.

§

ProTip: When a website pukes up a big sign on your screen covering up what you want to see and telling you to turn off your ad blocker, always look for the fine print on it that says, “Yes, I want to be a horrible person and protect myself” and click on that.

§

In the old days they would have handed Prince Andrew a loaded pistol, reminded him that England expects every man to do his duty, and left him alone.

§

Cryptocurrency should not be called a Ponzi scheme. Charles Ponzi didn't waste huge amounts of petroleum-based energy.

Now do you see why I am into fanzines?

Perryscope 21, April 2022, is an issue of the personalzine published monthly by Perry Middlemiss, 32 Elphin Grove, Hawthorn, Victoria, AUSTRALIA 3122. E: perry@middlemiss.org

In this issue, Perry Middlemiss describes the memorial for his father, which was delayed for two years due to COVID-19. Food for thought.

He also describes his mammoth issue of *The Alien Review*; his podcasts about crime fiction and science fiction, co-hosted with David Grigg; and his wide and eclectic current reading.

Tightbeam 331, April 2022, Editors George Phillies phillies@4liberty.net 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester, MA 01609, and Jon Swartz jon_swartz@hotmail.com. An N3F monthly newsletter covering anime, comics and music, and featuring and short stories. George Phillies editorializes:

One of the wonderful aspects of the N3F Revival has been the efflorescence of new N3F fanzines. A few years ago, we barely had three zines, our club zine *The National Fantasy Fan*, our genzine *Tightbeam*, and an APA, N'APA, reduced to two fine members exchanging emails. We are now up to ten fanzines. Film reviews, traditionally seen here, are now sent to Films Fantastic.

We had longer articles, like Justin E A Busch's "Fanfaronade" and Cathode Ray's multiple columns, that became more and more difficult to include in *Tightbeam*'s page limits. Those excellent columns are now appearing in *FanActivity Gazette*. Correspondingly, *Tightbeam* is a bit shorter. Before *FanActivity Gazette* appeared, I proposed that the N3F should publish a newszine, and doubts were expressed as to whether or not we have enough material. The latest issue of *FanActivity Gazette* now included 15 pages material, including forthcoming SF conventions, a list of birthdays, an SF calendar, and announcements of forthcoming SF&F films.

I did not know that.

CyberCozen 34:4, April 2022, The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy, E-mail: Editor leybl_botwinik@yahoo.com

This issue features *Star Trek* stamps from Britain, commemorates the 1977 launch of *Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine*, and features think pieces, such as "History of the Fantastic."

FanActivity Gazette, Volume 1 Number 11, April 2022, "News of Fen of Interest to All Fen," another N3F publication from George Phillies and the Usual Suspects. In this edition: "Fanfaronade", fanzine reviews from Justin Busch, television and motion picture reviews from "Cathode Ray", lists of upcoming conventions, SF and pro birthdays, and Bob Jennings' April 2022 SF Calendar.

MT Void Vol. 40, No. 39, Whole Number 2216 to Vol. 40, No. 42, Whole Number 2219 from the Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society, Co-Editors Mark Leeper, mleeper@optonline.net and Evelyn Leeper, eleeper@optonline.net.

This newsletter features reviews of movies, books, and television series (some of the best movies and series are almost unobtainable, such as *The Rook* and *Motherland*), plus excerpts of letters *organized by topic*. This is original.

Origin 50, April 2022, Editor: John Thiel at kinethiel@mymetronet.net. Published for the National Fantasy Fan Federation.

Editorials and letters on familiar issues, such as reflections on the last umptieth issues of *The Zine* (50th, in the case of this zine), guarded warnings about the loss of some contributors, or *The Current State of Fandom* (I was surprised to find the last editorial from my personalzine quoted here), plus art and poetry.

This Here ... #52, Nic Farey, 2657 Rungsted Street, Las Vegas NV 89142, USA, or email fareynic@gmail.com

Among his examinations of TV and comics, fanzine culture and fandom news, Nic takes a look at the work of H.G. Wells, which for some reason has been mentioned a number of times in recent fanzines.

The N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono, April 2022, published by the National Fantasy Fan Federation, PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049, USA. Editor: George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609, phillies@4liberty.net.

At first, I thought this review had entirely too many book reviews for me to digest; then I saw there was a review of *Barrayar*, from the Miles Vorkosigan series that I keep rereading, and a different review by Robert Runte, a longtime acquaintance. Good reading!