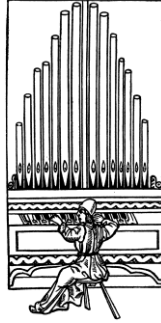


OBDURATE EYE #27



THE OBDURATE EYE #27, May 2023, a personalzine from Garth Spencer, 6960 Doman Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5S 3H7, Email garth.van.spencer@gmail.com or hrothgarweems@gmail.com . Garth acknowledges that he does this on the unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm, səlilwətəl, and sk^wxwú7mesh peoples.



The organ of no clique or party

Table of Contents

Inconsequential Wibbling	1
Facebook Repartee: What Theme for My Cult?.....	2
LoCs.....	3
One Way to Look at It: The Disney Bloodbath	4
The Autists’ Revenge.....	8
Facebook Repartee: What Motto for My Cult?.....	9
Nooz	9
MY LoCs.....	12
My LoC to Ionisphere.....	12
My LoC to BCSFAzine	12
My LoC to SF Commentary.....	13
My LoC to This Here	13
My LoC to Dark Toys	14
My Loc to SF Commentary.....	15
My Loc to the CSFFA Members’ Newsletter	15
My Loc to the last Simultaneous Times Newsletter	15
My Loc to Alexiad.....	15
My Loc to Littlebrook.....	17
New Fantasy and Science Fiction Releases, April - May 2023.....	18

I need more fillos.

Inconsequential Wibbling

What do we know, after even a few years in fandom?

All things change, and we change with them. In the 1980s, well beyond the time that every other fandom outpaced fannish fandom in growth and prominence, fanzine fans were producing fandom guides that barely recognized this fact.

We cling to first impressions – at least, the impressions that formed our worldview, and our definitions of ourselves. It can take a long time to acknowledge change.

SF clubs were, I gather, the setting in which a lot of fans' interests and activities emerged. It appears that even when clubs last for decades, they can eventually fold up and disappear.

Fanzine fandom – the fannish activity that formed my first impressions of fandom – is still around. It's just been marginalized, rather like ham radio, letterpress printing, or calligraphy have become marginalized media.

(No one has explained to me *why* fanzine fandom seemed to cease inducting new members, at least not attracting them as fast as other fandoms. I hear rumours about older fans alienating younger fans, but I can't substantiate them.)

Everyone else knows more than I do about the fandoms that took on a separate life from SF clubs, and fanzine fandom: the fandoms of anime, comics, costuming, fanfiction, filksinging, every kind of gaming, Makers, media franchises, special effects and video production, and the Society for Creative Anachronism.

Conventions seem to be undergoing major changes, and not mainly because of COVID-19. Part of the reason is the falling volunteerism of attending members, and another reason is the current, prohibitively high cost of hotels, and their inflexibility about contractual demands.

(My opinion, frankly, is that local fan-run conventions have to be reinvented; only rather high-volume conventions will justify their costs, and that includes media-format gateshows. Any new convention – whether brand-new, or a relaunch of a previously long-running fan convention – will probably have to start out as a one- or two-day event in a community centre, or a fraternal or ethnic meeting hall. I will not be surprised if new, small fan-run conventions have to run Kickstarter campaigns to collect seed money.)

The appearance of the Internet and the Web – and the rising costs of printing and postage – helped to move a lot of fanactivity from print to electronic media. I remember realizing this as early as the 1990s, when I looked at “fandom guides” that included nothing about electronic billboards, social networks, websites, blogs or podcasts.

All of the foregoing is about the need to examine our assumptions. I know this is nobody’s favourite thing to do; few of us know *how* to pull our assumptions out where we can see them. But clubs destroyed themselves and conventions have destroyed themselves because the fans organizing them would not correct their false assumptions.

I have known people who assumed fandom meant fanzine fandom; or who assumed it meant *Star Wars* fandom, or comics fandom, or gaming; or who assumed a convention just *had* to advertise itself as the biggest thing since sliced beer, if it were to succeed at all; or who actually declared conventions were a business. (Obviously, *that* idea came from fans who didn’t see how businesses were run.)

Even before the 1990s, conventions were actually like medieval fabulous beasts – that is, they were compounded partly of writers’ conferences, and partly of boat shows, and partly of book fairs, and partly of frat parties, and let’s face it, the parts conflicted with each other. Add to this that many conventions were conceived and run by amateur volunteers, and ... sometimes, it *really* showed. (I am advised that for legal reasons, I can’t tell some of the most instructive stories.)

So, if clubs dominated one stage of fandom, and fanzines – as variously redefined – dominated subsequent stages, and conventions began to dominate after the early 1970s ... what is coming next?

Facebook Repartee: What Theme for My Cult?

Steven Barnes, April 29, 2023: “I love to bet people that they are smarter, tougher and better, with more control over their lives than they think. Fun to see who’ll take me up on it.”

Garth Spencer, April 29: “Can I use this for when I start my Liberal Secular Rational Humanist Cult?”

S. Patric Marino, April 30: “This is socialism. As it is a useful means of production, you should probably put it to a vote of the people.”

What is the will of the people? ... Don’t all speak up at once.



LoCs

**Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd.,
Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2, April 9, 2023**

As I promised in an earlier e-mail, here are comments on the last two issues of *The Obdurate Eye*, 25 and 26. Easter Sunday seems to be the only day I have right now to get some writing done.

25...I haven't heard anything from Wolf von Witting in some time. I think by now, he's made his move to Romania. I hope no news is good news, and that he is planning another issue of *CounterClock* soon.

((I guess he must have changed his email address, without notice.))

Ad Astra seems to be on the lips of many here. It hasn't happened in some years, but I have heard rumblings that it might re-start next year as a relaxicon. I will believe it when I see it. Based on my own interpretations of corporate law, the board of directors are in contravention of a law that states there must be a BoD meeting once a year. There may have to be an emergency General Meeting called to solve these problems, and possibly get the con going again.

((See their announcement elsewhere in this issue. When was Ad Astra last held?))

My letter of comment...Yvonne has been able to sell at 540+ tables in the Anime North Vendors' Hall, and of course, with any event like this, we have to deal with people who do not like the terms of the room, and demand special treatment/rights/entries/more, and they cry like toddlers if they don't get it. We do understand them to some extent; for many of them, Anime North is usually the best payday of the year, outside of the even bigger Fan eXpos. There are thousands of dollars at stake, and they want every perq we can put together for them, and more.

((That's history on the hoof.))

I did vote on the FAAn Awards...when it comes to the Auroras, I am so far out of the loop, I do not consider myself an informed voter. I trust I will see the press releases when they are given out.

Everything has gone up in price, and that certainly includes hotels and hotel rooms. I doubt people here who might go to a convention would be willing to

pay for the hotel rooms, and I suspect the function space would be well beyond what a fan-run con could afford. The church and Legion halls would be perfect, but might turn such events into locals-only, with no hotel rooms with cut-rate prices available. Still, if we want the opportunity to gather and see our friends again, this is what we are going to have to do.

((Even yet more history happening right now.))

26... Cathy Palmer-Lister does indeed reside in Québec. She's been working for Montreal fandom for some time.

((My mistake.))

I think I will have to look into Mailerite. The continuous stream of changes and improvements to Mailchimp has made it difficult to use for some who just want to be able to send out to a list without being accused of spamming.

I would be surprised if there were any fanzine programming at Dragoncon, and there is usually little at Worldcon. As you say, fandom has been Balkanized for many years, and the more interests it encompasses, the more it is divided. We aren't very tolerant that way.

Just finished, and just got over to a second page. Many thanks for these, and keep sending them along.

We Also Heard From: Bruce Gillespie, Ashton Green, Perry Middlemiss, Cathy Palmer-Lister



One Way to Look at It: The Disney Bloodbath

Den Valdron, Facebook, April 2, 2023

Pull up a lawn chair and grab some popcorn, Disney has finally become entertaining.

But first, a bit of public servicing. For some reason, Disney has ended up as Ground Zero of the Culture Wars, on both sides. I'm not sure why, and I don't really care.

I have bad news for both sides. It just doesn't matter.

Look, I'm just going to single out the "Anti-Woke" here and be very blunt. Listen up: If all you ever complain about is "Woke! Woke! Woke!," if that's all you got, then please piss off. You got nothing to say. You have nothing else, nothing interesting. You have one thing, one idea, you said it, you have nothing else. Go away now. I don't care.

Or change up your game. Get some other ideas. Actually have a thought that isn't shrieking bitterly against "woke!"

Seriously – *Star Trek* had an episode involving racism by white black people against black white people. They were that blatant. Lucas' *Star Wars* were a metaphor for Vietnam. His prequel trilogy was a hot take on the Bush II administration. There's nothing wrong with a well-done political tract – *On the Waterfront* is a great movie? *The Maltese Falcon*? The Marx brothers?

The problem with Disney isn't woke.

The problem with Disney was that they were giant screw-ups, and now the bill is coming due.

Look, here's the thing with Disney. They bought Lucasfilm, for billions. They bought Marvel, more billions, they bought 21st Century Fox for tens of billions, they started a Netflix level streaming service, more billions or tends of billions, they committed to creating content, more billions and tens of billions. They just went through an incredible amount of money. Massive overextension.

To make all this work they needed to make an incredible amount of money, they needed to pump out blockbusters one after the other.

I think they needed to make more money than it was possible to make.

So... giant, reckless, poorly considered expansion? What comes next? Collapse.

You're basically growing crazily by piling up debt; you keep ahead of the debt by basically paying the installments, but sooner or later the whole house of cards collapses.

That's what's happening. Massive contraction, thousands of people laid off, and purging at the top, as everyone points fingers and cuts throats. Seen it before a thousand times a thousand places.

The thing is, usually when this happens, it all breaks apart, the sharks come along, the predators swarm because there's money to be made from dismemberment.

I don't think that's going to happen, or not completely. Disney is just too damned big. A big fish gets in trouble, that's one thing. A whale? The damned thing is so huge that no matter who bites, it doesn't make a difference. The thing just sits there and bloats. No one is going to come along and devour Disney.

The Disnificators will devour themselves, and each other. So, purges up and down the line, wrongful dismissal lawsuits, defamation suits, lots of backbiting, public accusations, leaks galore as everyone starts a whisper campaign, and it's going to get worse, particularly with specific films and television shows, stances, as every failure and fiasco results in people getting thrown under the bus. And perhaps a certain amount of deliberate sabotaging, as people realize you don't have to actually succeed, you just need to make sure that the other person fails dramatically.

I swear, it's going to be great! This has the makings of an epic bloodbath. We're talking Roman orgies with passive aggressiveness.

As for the actual blame game? Here's my scorecard.

Marvel is in trouble. Their big problem is that they outran their success – after *Phase 3* and *Endgame*, what do you follow it up with? They saved the Universe, the entire frigging Universe, resurrected 50% of the population of Earth, and completed the arcs for all their major characters, to the point of taking several of the big ones completely off the board. *Iron Man*, *Captain America*, *Black Widow*, *Black Panther*, everyone's gone.

How do you follow that up? What do you follow that up with? They really have no idea. They've coasted on *Doctor Strange* and *Spiderman*, and leftover concepts like *Wandavision* and *Loki*.

But after that, they're struggling to find a direction or raise up a bunch of second-tier characters like Captain Marvel. Failures of the latest *Thor* and *Ant-Man* movies, the devaluing of the brand with random television series has undermined them. They're basically in an understandable slump, but this is at a time when corporate is demanding that they have to chug out more product than ever before, and it's got to make more money than ever before. Corporate needs a new Endgame level Marvel Spectacular every couple of months, like a rabbit out of the hat. And that's just not possible.

Then we have *Star Wars* and Lucasfilm. I have no kindness. This is possibly the most spectacularly mismanaged franchise in Hollywood History. It's stunning to see them drop the ball so often, so hard. And sadly, most of it comes down to Kathleen Kennedy, living proof that at a certain level of power, it is only ever possible to fail upwards.

In the last decade, they've produced literally only one good movie – *Rogue One* – and they basically inherited that. *The Force Awakens* was mediocre, with some genuine potential. *The Last Jedi* was a grisly act of sabotage. *The Rise of Skywalker* was a dumpster fire. And *Solo*? God help us all. The television side has had one genuine success, *The Mandalorian*, and that's kind of losing its way.

These aren't honest failures, where people try their best and just don't make it.

The Last Jedi deliberately set out to sabotage its characters, including Luke, Leia, Finn, Poe and so on, to the extent that the actors – including Mark Hamill and John Boyega – are openly resentful today.

The trilogy was a conceptual mess where no one seemed to be talking to each other, or worse, actively undermining each other, as a slippery melange of half-baked ideas and impulses.

The Rise of Skywalker originally had Matt Smith as the villain. It turned into a complete mess, with massive reshoots and re-edits. At one point, according to rumour, there were four different versions of the film. In the end, Matt Smith completely vanishes for a re-engineered Chimera so bankrupt of ideas, that Palpatine is brought back.

Then there's *Solo* – neophyte directors so inept that they're fired halfway through the movie, a lead actor so inept he's sent for acting lessons during principal photography, a new Director, 70% of the movie reshot, a script that reads like Mary Sue fanfic, and for some inexplicable reason, the sabotage of Billy Dee Williams' Lando Calrissian, which makes me wonder why Kathleen Kennedy hates black characters.

Behind the scenes at Lucasfilm, there's a bizarre revolving door of endless announced projects, writers and directors, recruited and summarily fired or abandoned. The few projects that actually go forward end up being subject to massive re-writes and even more massive reshoots, which seems clear evidence of extremely poor conceptualization at front end. The fact that they consistently flounder at the back end means they didn't have their act together at the front end, they didn't *get* their script, their ideas, what the hell they were doing. Everything is just poorly-thought-out garbage, desperately retrofitted along the way, sinking ships full of misbegotten ideas desperately patched and repatched. And everywhere, a ludicrous level of executive meddling and micromanagement, ranging from the persecution of Gina Carano to the forcible insertion of ridiculous scooters in Boba Fett, to hiring writers who have never bothered to watch the source material or simply don't like it. There's a level of mismanagement bordering on contempt for the material.

And sadly, this ineptitude was spreading. Half-baked concepts, with endless post-principal photography reshoots and creatives unsympathetic or inept about the material? That kind of describes the *Thor* and *Ant-Man* movies.

What's going on?

Desperation.

Disney needs gigantic movies. It needs incredible amounts of new product. It can't have ordinary movies, it can't experiment, it can't take chances. Every movie has to be a sure-fire, mega-gigantic blockbuster, everyone's career is depending on that. This is a recipe for reckless, desperate greenlighting and half-baked hasty approvals at the front end, and insane levels of second-

guessing and micromanagement at the back end. Anything which shows any sign of success is swarmed by desperate executives and managers, eager to insert ideas so they can share in the credit.

It's not about woke. It's about hubris.

The Autists' Revenge



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It would be so funny if autistic people started describing allistic experience the same pathologised way doctors describe autism



ana-bolism [Follow](#)

Symptoms of being neurotypical:

- You have immobile, frozen hands that do not fidget.
 - Your interests are shallow.
 - You read into phrases past their actual meanings.
 - You are unbothered by eye contact and enjoy staring into people's eyeballs.
 - You do not notice patterns in numbers and objects even when they are logically connected.
 - You don't mind doing things without planning them out first.
 - Instead of saying exactly what you think, you expect others to infer it based on subjective social rules.
-



ana-bolism [Follow](#)

Don't be discouraged if you're neurotypical. If you work hard, you too can be decent at math and accomplish the same things autistic people can!



defectivegembrain

You just need to work hard with an expert on neurotypicalism to reduce those problem behaviours like your meaningless social rituals! Every time you avoid small talk or resist a fashion trend you will get a lovely sticker! I heart someone with neurotypicalism! You can succeed despite the entire way your brain works! <3

(via John Bartley, copying Amanda Butler on Facebook, April 30, 2023)

Facebook Repartee: What Motto for My Cult?

Bernadette Bosky, April 29, 2023: "A polyamory group asked, 'What is something that you are amazing at?'"

Garth Spencer, April 29, 2023: "Once I invented mocha tea. That's right, tea with chocolate powder. Another time I discovered I had taught my landlady's cat to say 'Woof.' ... Also I invent words. Sometimes whole strings of them. *Frong baroo gnortz. Thnig wobbitz fooby sork vlib.* I await whatever meaning people will assign to them. In the meantime I can use them as slogans for whatever imaginary societies I make up next."

What is the will of the people? ... Don't all speak up at once.

Nooz

Awards given at Corflu Craic

in Belfast, Northern Ireland on April 2, 2023:

Corflu Lifetime Achievement Award: Rob Hansen

Corflu 41 awarded to Las Vegas, NV and will take place at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino, February 29 - March 3 2024.

FAAn Award Winners summary:

FANZINE CATEGORIES

Best Genzine: *Portable Storage* (ed. William Breiding)

Best Perzine: *This Here...* (ed. Nic Farey)

Best Special Publication: *1957: The First British Worldcon* (ed. Rob Hansen)

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES

Best Letterhack (Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Award): Jerry Kaufman

Best Fanartist: Ulrika O'Brien

Best Fanwriter: (TIE) Justin E.A. Busch, Nic Farey

Best Fanzine Cover: *BEAM 17* (Alan White)

FWA (Fanzine Writers' Association) Past President election:

2022 Past Presidents: Nigel Rowe, John D. Berry
1959 Past President: Keith Freeman

(from Nic Farey, FAAn Awards Administrator)

COR41U (Corflu 41)

The 2024 Corflu will be held in Las Vegas from February 29 to March 3rd, 2024. The Corflu 41 website is now live at <https://corflu.org>. The venue will be the [Gold Coast Hotel & Casino \(4000 W Flamingo Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89103\)](#).

Room rates for one or two persons (inclusive of taxes and resort fees) are:
Thursday: \$98.63, Friday/Saturday: \$137.18, Sunday: \$82.76
Triple occupancy: add \$22.68 per night. Quad occupancy: add \$45.35 per night. (\$ = USD)

Membership Rates: Attending Members, \$100, £85, €90; Supporting Members (with publications and streaming access), \$50, £40, €45; Supporting Member (streaming access only), \$12.50, £10, €12. Attending membership is inclusive of the Sunday lunch awards banquet.

Membership Payments: PayPal payments should be sent to either Jen Farey: fareyjen@gmail.com for US dollar and other denominated payments, or Keith Freeman: keithfreemanrbas@gmail.com if GBP denominated. Choose the “For Friends and Family” payment option on PayPal. Please send your postal and email address details with payment, and, if paying for memberships other than yourself, the name(s) of the other membership recipients. If paying in currencies other than USD or GBP, please enter the payment amount in US dollars/pounds and let PayPal convert currencies.

(<https://corflu.org>)

The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund

“UK fan Sandra Bond has been elected the 2023 Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund delegate for 2023, and will be coming across the Big Pond to attend Pemmi-Con in Winnipeg. She's looking forward to meeting a lot of new (and old) friends in Canada and beyond.”

(Michael Lowrey, on *Polar Borealis Magazine* website, April 13, 2023)

Ad Astra “Dormant”

“It is with a heavy heart that I must announce that the Ad Astra Board has decided to wrap up the financial aspects of the Society and enter a dormant

phase. This decision was not entered into lightly, but after examining the current marketplace, the currently available convention/meeting spaces that would meet our existing business model, the volunteer situation and our current financial state, the majority of the board felt this was the best course for at least the near future.

“Our limited resources do not permit us to run a traditional Ad Astra and simply holding onto the limited monies that we do have, most of which is owed to various creditors, including members and vendors, is irresponsible given that we do not have a clear way forward to return value to those to which we are indebted.

“As it is, we do not have sufficient funds to pay out all creditors to their full value and we will be prioritising first members owed significant sums for bills paid, then the large lenders, then vendors, and then any remaining funds will be prorated to prepaid memberships.

“All this makes for a sad day, to be sure, however, Ad Astra isn’t dead yet, just resting (Norwegian Blues prefer kippin’ on their backs).

“All the very best to all Ad Astra members, past and present, for the love and dedication you have shown over the years to our little fan-run effort, it is because of you that we have been as successful as we have been over the years and hopefully, we will return in some form in the future. “

Paul Roberts, President of the Board, Ad Astra Science Fiction Society

(via R. Graeme Cameron, Help Keep VCON Alive! Website, April 13, 2023)

John Mansfield (d. April 19, 2023)

John Mansfield, owner of Pendragon Games in Winnipeg and a longstanding figure in Winnipeg SF conventions, died in mid-April, 2023. He is survived by his wife, Linda Ross-Mansfield, who co-chairs the 2023 NASFiC, Pemmi-Con.

John was a peripatetic figure in Canadian fandom from the 1960s onwards, being present at the founding of the Ontario SF Club in Toronto in 1966, and chairing Oromoctocon in New Brunswick in 1970. After opening Pendragon Games he became known for *Con-TRACT* (1989-2002, a regular listing of upcoming conventions featuring his opinions about them. He helped found KeyCons in Winnipeg, and chaired the 1994 Winnipeg Worldcon.

(File770.com and a cloud of fans on Facebook)

Marty Cantor (1935-2023)

“Devoted fanzine fan and long-time LASFS member Marty Cantor died April 29 of cancer. He was 88.”

(Mike Glycer, April 30, 2023, File770.com)

MY LoCs

My LoC to *Ionisphere* #40, March 2023, John Thiel ed., 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, IN 47904, U.S.A., email kinethiel@mymetronet.net (bureau head, Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau)

Dear John,

Thank you for *Ionisphere* #40! Thank you also for mentioning that there is N3F literature to be found at <http://n3f.org>.

Editing a magazine – well, a fanzine – struck me as less of a gamble and more of a project for which I was free, for once, to exercise my initiative. (I came from an environment where initiative, even good sense, was ruled out of order. It was a relief to have a better place to go.) Granted, not everyone would appreciate what I did for them, but you simply can't get a unanimous response out of people.

The sense of conversing with myself sometimes came over me, too, while fanediting. The simple fact is that a majority of people do not respond in writing, the minority who do respond have their own points to make about their own concerns, and the attention readers to others – for example, to the editorial points you are making – is at a premium.

Or maybe I have a bad habit of dragging every conversation around to the threat to all civilization represented by the Evil Sinister Belgian Subliminal Mind Control Plot. Maybe I should give that a rest?

My LoC to *BCSFAzine* #552, April 2023, R. Graeme Cameron ed.

Dear Graeme,

I will take your suggestions about current fanactivity and coordinate with other fan fund delegates coming to Pemmi-Con.

Just a little quibble about the locs – I see Felicity walker thought I discovered fanzines *in* university. Actually, the SF Association of Victoria was off-campus, and kept their fanzine library in an Oak Bay community centre. It was *while* I was attending university that I discovered their fanzines. The fanzines were only about a decade old, largely coming from Fabulous 1970s Edmonton Fandom; and yet their focus was on fannish fandom. The point being, it took me a long while to notice that the fans around me were largely into gaming, costuming, *Star Trek* (or *Star Wars*), or just *not* into printed text.

Your revived *BCSFAzine* keeps recalling some fanhistory. There are moments when I wonder if I shouldn't leave the Canadian fanhistory I am wrestling with

up to someone else. Then I remember there is no one else interested in this, and you have only too much to do already.

Your account of the Hibited Men actually rang some bells. I met one member, Victor Samoila, in Victoria in the 1980s, and he mentioned the 1950s Vancouver SF group, without much detail. Mainly I noticed his mention of Al Purdy, the poet. It would be amusing to recover his poem “The Condemnation of Vancouver” and see whether it’s dated or still timely.

Of course we’ve been here before – trying to get people to point out their fandoms, so that we can cater to them, if that’s our jam. (Putting it that way, it sounds like a strange use of our time, but I’ll raise the question at the next WCSFA meeting.) I look forward with interest to the responses to Joe Bardsley’s questionnaire.

[My LoC to SF Commentary #111](#), December 2022 (!), Bruce Gillespie

It is very sobering to read the increasing number obituaries in fandom, especially when one is in the same generation as the deceased.

Your book reviews are illuminating and broadening, as always, but I’m never sure which works you recommend!

[My LoC to This Here .. #63](#), Nic Farey, 2657 Rungsted Street, Las Vegas NV 89142, or Email fareynic@gmail.com

Well, news that sucks is better than no news at all, I guess. And your condition is at least chronic, rather than acute, and you have palliative care. But I would far rather you could achieve complete remission.

In response to your news about S&ra’s TAFF win, I look forward to seeing her in Winnipeg. I really must coordinate with her about how to promote fan funds. (Would you be so kind as to put us in touch? I do not have her email.)

The May issue of my fanzine should include the Corflu 41 particulars, for those readers who may not have gotten the word already.

I see the ongoing discussions of mundane issues still approaches the mathematical description of chaos. Maybe there should be a publication titled “All the Troubles of the World” where the monthly miseries can be summarized: just the facts, all the facts, and only the facts. Maybe the U.N. and several intelligence agencies already do this, buried in several different departmental publications, and at least six months out of date.

Loved Marc Ortlieb’s description of Ditmar debates of old. I want to write a Canadian fanhistory in that vein. Unfortunately I am advised that there are

Politically Correct restrictions, legal barriers such as libel laws, and non-disclosure agreements in place. We shall see how much trouble I can get into.

[My LoC to Dark Toys #74](#), Taral Wayne, 245 Dunn Ave. Apt. 2111, Toronto Ontario, M6K 1S6, email taral@bell.net

What has happened to you in the past month? Did Traveling Matt get fixed or replaced?

You seem to have more than your share of tedious irritations and frustrations. Some of them pretty serious, given your mobility issues. There are moments, while trying to get repair services or social services, when you have to wonder which country or decade you're living in, aren't there?

Not that this is news. I have frequently had the impression that I was somehow transposed to Bizarro World, or at least another timeline, where people do things almost but not quite entirely unlike the social norms I learned. After a while it just isn't worth it to try to keep track.

As to the annoyances and even life-threatening conditions represented by an Eastern winter, I can only conclude that we should fill in Hudson Bay to prevent Arctic weather patterns from encroaching on our continent.

Now, I know what you're thinking, but filling in Hudson Bay actually makes sense! Consider the advantages: by eliminating this intrusion of the Arctic Ocean and encouraging climate change in Canada, we could *finally* push the limit of settlement northward, and *finally* expand our population and economy enough that Canada could deal with other nations from a position of equal strength. We might even live up to our NATO and peacekeeping obligations! And prevent Eric Mayer's heating woes, and solve some of the immigration employment problems Rob Jennings points out.

The Adventure of the Shattered Shot Glass is a familiar and common experience. Not so long ago I had a remotely similar experience, while replacing an overhead light bulb: the glass bowl covering I was putting back slipped in my hands and shattered. Now, I have a cat, and keep her indoors, so I try to keep the indoor environment safe for her: one more reason to keep the floor free of sharp and unhygienic obstructions. But after scrupulous sweeping and mopping I was still discovering itty-bitty shards in inconvenient places. This is bachelor life.

Eric Mayer's comment on Lloyd Penney is apt. He has been such a prolific loccer that I sometimes wondered if he were the secret love child of Harry Warner Jr. by Georgina Ellis. Given his current editorial responsibilities at *Amazing Stories*, though, he will have to slow down.

My Loc to SF Commentary 111, Bruce Gillespie, 5 Howard Street, Greensborough, VIC 3088, Australia, Email: gandc001@bigpond.com

This issue of *SF Commentary* seems to be a celebration of good people in fandom, and how many of us are overcoming physical and financial difficulties. The fact that many good people have passed on may be outweighed by our remembrance; the fact that many of us are facing difficulties may be outweighed by how we are dealing with them.

I had the pleasure of meeting Lorna Toolis once, when we were both invited to a convention in Quebec. For a while I got to trade personalzines with Frank Denton. It would have been good to know them better.

It is beginning to dawn upon me that you produce a major literary revue. Otherwise I can't account for the breadth and depth of the book reviews you feature. Very humbling to realize who I'm trading with.

Very amusing to see Dennis Callegari's "Camelot Station" pastiche!

"The Writing of 'The Flight of the Brolga'" was absorbing, because the challenge of completing a story – particularly, the problem of story conflict – has been defeating me for a long time. I read stories as a series of connected events, but not necessarily as conflict and a resolution, so trying to write fiction has been frustrating. Maybe the writer has offered a way forward?

My Loc to the CSFFA Members' Newsletter, May 2023

Thank you for the announcement of the Annual General Meeting. I should be free to attend online. I hope that my email to the President will reach you – a previous email to you bounced back.

Is this only for CSFFA registered members, or will CSFFA publicly announce the agenda and the decisions of the meeting? I ask because I have been concerned for years about the general awareness of the Aurora Awards, and of fannish news in general. In fact I try to incorporate news for Canadian fans in my monthly personalzine.

My Loc to the last Simultaneous Times Newsletter #36, April 2023 (Space Cowboy Books, <https://spacecowboybooks.com>)

What, this will be the last newsletter? And here we had just gotten acquainted. Waaah. Well, you're operating a bookstore, and your own publishing enterprise, and editing *Star*Line* and podcasts and Space Cowboy publications, so I guess you're busy enough!

My Loc to Alexiad #128, April 2023, Joseph & Lisa Major, jtmajor@iglou.com

Thank you for *Alexiad* #128. It is past time to show that I have actually received and actually read and enjoyed your zine!

Lisa's short editorial reflecting on past and present technology sparked a few thoughts of my own. Of course we have a lot of appliances that would amaze our grandparents, and of course we take them for granted; it is less a matter of course that we have to apply the old buyer's principle, *caveat emptor*, and not greet every new application with enthusiasm. There was an episode of an SF series that alluded to this, when a young Nikola Tesla is diverted by a temporal castaway's cell phone – the castaway was naturally far more concerned with somehow being cast out of the 21st century and how to get back. (*Sanctuary*, I believe the series was.) Like Lisa, I have been warned about having too many apps on my phone; I have experienced the consequences.

Joseph's short editorial makes a point that needs repeating – we seem to have a *lot* of alleged self-help/pop psychology that looks like highly-promoted nonsense; and a *lot* of popular nonsense getting air time on radio and TV, even on channels ostensibly specializing in history and science documentaries. Granted that there's always been a market for this material, are we really seeing more soft-headedness these days, or simply a lot more promotion? Do you wonder why, sometimes?

Your article "Masquerade" entertained me. Just before my voice broke I became fascinated by codes and ciphers and cryptography generally. Mind you, this was well before the field became an exercise for computer programmers; I was just as fascinated by foreign alphabets and systems of symbols. Learning that some hoaxes and frauds had been published in the form of treasure hunts entertained me, but ... there's something ultimately disappointing in stories of treasure hunts with archaeological trappings; they hold no real surprises.

Joseph's review of *The Dirty Tricks Department* and Rodford Edmiston's latest "The Joy of High Tech" column brought some questions into focus: if SF fandom just missed being a fandom of wannabe mad scientists, each with his own home lab, what are the classic texts on engineering and invention they should turn to? Where is the fabled "Rubber Handbook" that summarizes everything an engineer needs to refer to, even for recreating civilization? What set of industrial processes - not just, what basic set of machine shop tools – does a community need to reproduce, if it is cut off from outside communication and transportation indefinitely? Maybe this ventures outside the scope of Mr. Edmiston's subject; maybe not.

I would have thought (harking back to the beginning of Mr. Edmiston's column this issue) that some of the most important inventions of the 20th century were not so much engineering, as *conceptual* inventions. Consider Shannon's mathematical definition of information, or the concept of complex systems, including mathematically chaotic systems. These are definitely post-Victorian conceptions, and popular culture – even academic cultures – are still absorbing

them. I invite you to consider the ramifications: that it takes a combination of several factors to cause certain kinds of events; that some few events, such as weather patterns, are hideously sensitive to slight variations in initial conditions; that other events, such as nuclear and volcanic explosions, are “robust” in the sense that they will predictably cause widespread effects on weather; that you cannot do just one thing with engineering such as fracking, damming, mining, you will inevitably have “side effects” – contaminated aquifers, an epidemic of river delta parasites, damage to forestry and agriculture, desertification – that you can neither foresee, nor can you always eliminate them.

Which is why I have not yet disclosed my proposal to drive nuclear-powered electric railways from the cities of southern Canada to the farthest reaches of Nunavut.

[My Loc to Littlebrook #12](#), March 2023, Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins (aka Suzle). Our mailing address is P.O. Box 25075, Seattle, WA 98165 USA, email littlebrooklocs@aol.com

It was a pleasure to read about your congoing, and your correspondents’ adventures. It was a shock to read about Suzanne’s medical experiences – I had absolutely no idea what she was going through. Respect to you! And to Andy Hooper, and Carrie Root, and all your supportive friends!

Suzanne’s writings on online music, and the “Reactors” Youtube channels, were an education. In a way I am unsurprised at how many people haven’t heard of famous bands – this is a time when our entire culture is balkanized, because there is so very *much* content out there, and no one can be exposed to more than a very little of it. The more I think of it, the more I realize, this is what Samuel Delany was writing about in *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand*.

And now I’m going to write and ask Ulrika O’Brien if I may feature some of her art, pretty please.

Also received:

Incomplete Register from Nic Farey

MT Void from the Mt. Holz Illuminati

N3F Review of Books and other zines from George Phillies and Ninth Fandom/N3F

Christian New Age Quarterly

A whole whack of titles from Heath Row

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Akers, Tim. WRAITHBOUND. [SPIRITBINDER SAGA #1]. Baen, 23.00 tp.

Akers, W. M. WESTSIDE LIGHTS. [GILDA CARR TINY MYSTERY #3]. Voyager, 21.99 tp. New York, 1923.

Asaro, Catherine. JIGSAW ASSASSIN. [SKOLIAN MAJOR BHAAJAN #4]. Baen, 12.99 pb.

Battis, Jes. THE WINTER KNIGHT. ECW, 24.95 tp.

Beagle, Peter S. THE WAY HOME: TWO NOVELLAS FROM THE WORLD OF THE LAST UNICORN. Ace, 37.00 hc.

Blake, Olivie. ONE FOR MY ENEMY. Tor, 35.99 hc.

Bonansinga, Jay. THE ARMAGEDDON CODE. [STAN LEE'S THE DEVIL'S QUINTET #1]. Tor, 23.99 tp.

Brom. SLEWFOOT: A TALE OF BEWITCHERY. Nightfire, 26.99 tp.

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Brust, Steven. TSALMOTH. [VLAD TALTOS #16]. Tor, 36.99 hc.

Carey, M. R. INFINITY GATE. [PANDOMINION #1]. Orbit, 23.99 tp.

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Correia, Larry. TOWER OF SILENCE. [SAGA OF THE FORGOTTEN WARRIOR #4]. Baen, 36.50 hc.

Crowley, John. FLINT AND MIRROR. Tor, 23.99 tp.

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Dewes, J. S. RUBICON. Tor, 26.99 tp.

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Grassmann, Preston (ed). MULTIVERSES: AN ANTHOLOGY OF ALTERNATE REALITIES. Titan, 22.95 tp.

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