

# N'APA 266

July/August 2023



# The Official Organ

## #266

**Next deadline: November 15, 2023**

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Question for the Members:

Do we want to include participation from “Public Members” of N3F, members who are not paying dues?  
Please Vote

**Procedure: Please Read:**

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

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

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

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

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*Bandits, armed with Nazi ideology, have been killing our compatriots for eight years  
--Sergei Lukianenko, Russian writer, in open letter (GoHof Chengdu Worldcon).*

# INTERMISSION #135

*E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and other fans of folly. Follow ed's newstweets from @SFJournalen (updates slow lately due to Ukraine syndrome: being occupied). More history in this, the death of a musician, virus roundup, Finncon, etc. Despite NATO, typos sometimes attack this zine! Sorry. Early Aug 2023 (Parts of this p'haps NSFW...)*

## Editorially: Finncon, E-music, AI

Another sad RIP awaits you in #135. Ralph also made the soundtrack for a strange dystopian film we'll have a surprising look into (look away if you have moral qualms). From the famous Sunkit club comes ABBA's Björn Ulvaeus' celebration of wine, chicks and parties. There's a report from the latest Finnish convention and you may have to look away again - if you're that kind - when Hugo Gernsback lectures about s...e...x (his magazine *Sexology* was much more successful than *Amazing Stories*, you know). To this irrelevant APA comments.

There are good and bad news from the Freedom Fight down south: the Ukrainians are making progress, but much slower than we hoped. The problem is hundreds of miles of Russian trenches and that they've mined every square foot of the land. Our heroes have to work methodically and their commanders are careful not putting their troops under unnecessary risks. (Unlike Russians, they value lives.) This is shown by that, from what I've understood, the defending Russian side takes much heavier casualties. It's so bad that one month of Russian losses equals ten years of Soviet losses in Afghanistan! The Ruski's morale seems to be rock bottom, being badly equipped (using gear from the 1940/50's!) and under-supplied. Swedish CV90 combat vehicles have been sighted on the Bakhmut front and US and British long range missiles make frequent visits to the terrorist army's command centres, ammo dumps, camps and supply routes.

A combination of prediction and a dear hope, is that this craziness will end with the fall of the Putin regime, one way or another. The Rebellion of the Wagner group (they were just 20 km from Moscow when aborting!) clearly shows that Mr P is losing his grip. He has lately been firing generals en masse. The Crimea bridge has been critically damaged again. The Russian economy is retracting. The more pressure the yellow and blues apply, the more difficult it is for the Russians to continue.

Slava Ukraini! Herojam slava!

--Ahrvid Engholm

## Ralph Lundsten, 1936-2023 – Cosmic Composer

I think the cosmic composer, friend of fandom, Ralph Lundsten was more appreciated abroad than in Sweden. For instance, folks of the national radio were sour when he hosted the popular "Summer" show and broke an unwritten rule by playing only his own songs... He never hid his talent under the bushel and that won't go down well in the Jante Law land.\*

Ralph Lundsten was born far up north from, which he acquired the calm, common sense and love of nature of the northerners.

But deciding to move to Stockholm at young age 15, he also showed initiative and being enterprising. The first time he heard a violin concert, he said in an interview, he immediately bought musical note paper and began writing



*Ralph in his Andromeda studio.*

\* 1. You're not to think you are anything special. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law\\_of\\_Jante](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_Jante)

his own concert... His first electronic music was made with a tape recorder, on which he recorded strange sounds and then cut and glued with small tape pieces. He helped creating the famous Electronic Music Studio (EMS) in Stockholm reflected in his debut on record, EMS Nr 1 (1966, see also "Elektron Musik Studion, Dokumentation 1-4", 1966-1973, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7V6hIQ8qbg> ). And he was early with building his own electronic instruments and synthesizers, being much of a pioneer. The better equipment he acquired the less "concrete and dissonant" his music became and he developed a style of a broad "sound carpet" of soft meditative thought, often inspired by nature and love.

I first met Ralph when a local sf club was invited to a very appreciated visit to his magnificent home Villa Frankenburg around 1980, his pink "castle of wood" just east of Stockholm. It was a dump when he took over and he spent many years renovating it to a magnificent site of cosmic dreams and fantasy, which included his own advanced electronic Andromeda Studio. I remember we

between sipping tea could try his

Andromatic love synthesizer, which

produced sounds as we touched each other. I know he loved science fiction. He had shelves of skiffy books and named albums after A E Van Vogt, Cordwainer Smith and others. We also had Ralph guesting or conventions a few times.

Here's a detailed article about Ralph's music equipment, showing he was a real pioneer:

<https://translate.google.se/?hl=sv&sl=sv&tl=en&text=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.teknikaliteter.se%2F2023%2F07%2F17%2Ffotterna-pa-jorden-men-huvudet-bland-molnen%2F&op=translate>

Art magazines and TV shows would make colourful reports from his cosmic castle. He often talked about space and liked to call himself an ambassador of Andromeda. If someone had a cosmic mind, it was Ralph Lundsten! He also made movie soundtracks, most notably for "Thriller - a Cruel Picture" (1973) starring Christina Lindberg seeking revenge in an apocalyptic world.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thriller\\_%E2%80%93\\_A\\_Cruel\\_Picture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thriller_%E2%80%93_A_Cruel_Picture) This film is a favourite of Quentin Tarantino, inspiring him to make "Kill Bill". He also did the music for the dystopian "Breaking Point" (1975), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breaking\\_Point\\_\(1975\\_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breaking_Point_(1975_film)).

And he had his own fan club, Andromeda Fan Society, which every summer invited to a big gathering at Ralph's with music, ballet (he wrote many ballet pieces), cakes, and relaxation. Ralph Lundsten also entered the Guinness Book of Record as composer of history's most played "jingle". A piece of his "Out in the Wide World" was for decades played hundred of times every hour as intermission signal of Radio Sweden's international broadcasts - a total of over 4 million times!

I think I've cracked his secret: despite seeming so relaxed and easy going, when nobody watched...he was a workaholic! Over 100 records (in all different editions), 700 opus, dozens of films (often experimental, some award winning), years creating his Frankenburg home, exhibitions, time for his fan club and much more - it all speaks for itself.

And BTW, he was a reader of my fanzine. I note a LoC from him, April 2019, though only saying "Thanks!" it sufficient for a message from a galaxy far, far away...

**More (in English):**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph\\_Lundsten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Lundsten)



*Ralph on his famous home.*



*Ralph and his Villa Frankenburg wooden castle.*

<https://echoes.org/2023/07/10/ralph-lundsten-r-i-p-1936-2023/>  
<https://synthandsoftware.com/2023/07/ralph-lundsten-10-6-36-7-5-23/>

## Fan-Related Skiffy Porn

Let's investigate one of the films Ralph Lundsten made the music for - and we'll be in for a surprise! We have "Breaking Point" from 1975, by cult director Bo A Vibenius, Bergman's anti-thesis, known for many B movies, usually directly for video. This film is labelled as a "pornographic thriller" and said to have been banned in Sweden, but later released...on video, of course. It has several dystopian elements from a disintegrating society of violence [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breaking\\_Point\\_\(1975\\_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breaking_Point_(1975_film)) It starts with a newscast where a psychologist says 98% of all women like to be raped... The hero, one Bob Bellings seems to become inspired by this and encounters several women he has sex with throughout the film (that and some shooting and car chases is most of the plot). IMBD

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0072736/>

claims "Bob, an unassuming office worker has snapped and teeters on the edge of reality and leads a double life as a schizophrenic and misogynist killer. He is a rapist murderer who runs amok. He stalks women, follows them home, then rapes and kills them." (I saw now rapes or killings. All sex was consensual. So I wonder if I have an edited version of the film? Still, he seems to be wanted by the police as we see in the end.) With the hero we're on an odyssey in a very strange society in an incomprehensible



plot, where for some reason the government has decided to equip all citizens with firearms! (There is even atomic ammunition, but only for the military...)

Ralph Lundsten's music is abstract, atonal, not much like his later production. In the 1970s porn was almost respectable, as some sort of moral-challenging avantgarde and established artists would sometimes work for the productions. Eg Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson of ABBA did music for soft-porn flicks (like "The Seduction of Inga", 1970).



Arming all citizens: "Let me tell you they now have atomic ammunition too!"

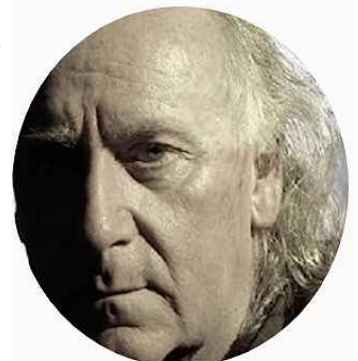
A film with lots of sex and guns wouldn't be worth much attention, except

that the hero is played by one Andreas Bellis, a Greek-Swedish cinematographer who here turns into a bona fide porn actor, hiding nothing. And this Bellis is the father of one Anders Bellis, a k a Belly for "stomach enhancement" in later days, the fraudster we met in #133. (To recap: in a



Mr Bellis has a lot of spunk!(The hot action here slightly blurred.)

late 1980s fan fund he invented "votes" in the form of name lists of eg former school mates, to embezzle \$1000s, in today's worth.) I don't know - haven't seen it - if Bellis did any more impressions of John Holmes, if you knew about him, but in "Breaking Point" he does enough for a whole adult movie career! Who knew that the perpetator (with one Mr Humbug) of Nordic fandom's biggest scam and shame came out of that wicked backdrop?



Andreas Bellis

"Breaking Point" is available on the net - turn off any "safe"

filter and some sites may need the TOR browser - if you look...hard. You find the strangest things on the Interweb!

(This is even stranger than the 1974 parody "Flesh Gordon", which I heard the proud LASFS club was involved in shooting - if anyone has more details on that, I'd like to know.)

## Sunkit in the Sun

I have had little time lately to attend all those book releases, seminars etc I pestered before the pandemic. I have even missed a couple of meets of the cult music club Sunkit, but now July 13 it was time again for their music of the weirdest kind. We met outdoors on the fantastic Ersta Terrace, the place with the absolutely best view over the gorgeous Stockholm harbour.

The sun slowly set over the Old Town, the cruise ships, the Skeppsholmen old naval stronghold,

the Skansen, ABBA and Vasa museums, the Gröna Lund amusement park...

Buddy Martin finally turned up and offered me beer (Ghod, he'll go bankrupt!), but unfortunately few other regulars came around - no Trampe, no Danne, no Anna-Lena...

Well, DJ Magnus at least came along and mingled with us.



Me and Magnus, DJ of and main force behind Sunkit.



Me and Martin "Santa Claus" Kristenson.

But the weather was fine and music inspiring. As you know from many earlier Sunkit reports, this club plays music so bad it is good... Cringy sports songs, strange interpretations, whacky lyrics, people who sing rather than well. Did you know that 24 hours from Tulsa equals just 20 minutes from Eslöv? And you'll definitely feel the crave for pizza hearing "Calleoni Macaroni"! You may learn how to "Pick up girls without booze" and hear the praise for the boring town of Södertälje... (Sorry, Henry!) And here's Björn Ulvaeus' perhaps not proudest moment as a lyricist (Benny Andersson and ABBA manager Stikkan also contributed, here in my translation):

*It's super having a party, wine and chicks and raj-raj  
Food and drinks, dance and songs - makes you a  
man so strong*

*Dear friend, come have a jug*

*Oops, it fell to the rug*

*Cheers, have another and feel like home, this is a  
party*

*Aj aj aj, party, aj aj*

*It's super having a party, wine and chicks and raj-.raj,  
and a party!*



The famous Sunkit human carterpillar.

The Swedish version is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKzXC0-P7Kg>

Still feeling a bit bad in my back I refrained from dancing, but we did see the traditional human "Sunkit carterpillar" for some songs, where people cling to each others' backs to form a long, ringling snake. I did capitulate later, and joined the famous "This the End" song where we embrace each other in a big ring. It was still a bit of brightness in the sky as we wandered away, along the magic waters of the Summer Night City.

## Finncan, Tampere 7-9 July

If there's a Finncan, I'll be there, come rain, come shine. It's a habit all the way from the very first Finnish sf con, King-Con in 1982 (though not formally a Finncan, the first by that name was in 1986). This year it was in Tampere, a university town in mid-Finland also having the Swedish name

Tammerfors. I sailed with the Baltic Princess ferry, a boat I don't think I have had the honour of taking before. I nice boat. The Finland ferries are among the most enjoyable in the world (I guess) with lots of bars, restaurants, shops and more - of course also a taxfree shop. (I acquired a box of strong bheer and some Finnish vodka. Finns load up on Swedish "snus" tobacco.)

The Tampere train was an interesting doubledecker, where it seems the upper floor was some sort of business class. The con was in the university main building, on three floors, rather close to the railway station. Some 1500-2000 fen turned up (among them ca 10 Swedish fans). I discussed the figures with organisers and we couldn't decided a fixed figure. There were fewer Japan comics



*The double-decked train I took.*

fangirls in silly dresses than before. I've never been a fan of having sf cons turn into masquerades. There were a lot of information and hucksters' tables, mostly with Finnish books, but there were a couple of decent English language tables too (I bought ca 5 books, paperbacks for €1-2/each).

The major glitch for me was being unable to connect to the university Wifi. The "verification" process wouldn't work (it worked for others) and the alternate



*Hall of the main entrance to the convention.*

verification to get access to your Hotmail was to receive a code...through the mail you couldn't reach. (Brilliant thinking there!) So no, tweets from Finncon this time. I counted to ca

75 program items, of which a dozen were in English and three in Swedish (still one of two official languages of Finland; in Turku street signs etc will be in both languages, but in Tampere not so much). I only went to ca 4-5 program items (and some maybe only for 15 minutes - I often drop in and out of con programs). I



*Lecture on Finnish AltHistory. It could have become a Soviet Republic...*

heard the interview with the Finland-Swedish sf-writer Henna Johansdotter, something about AI, Diane Duane's GoH interview, something about alternate histories for Finland and some "academic" program I don't remember. Unfortunately I had a little backpain that the painkillers couldn't totally deal with so I walked around not feeling in tip-top shape.

Sometimes I went out on the nearby town for groceries. Finnish supermarkets have some



*Interview with author Henna Johansdotter.*



***So far two wins for Swede Dames in the soccer World Cup down under! Tall Amanda Illestedt leads scoreboard! Here her header goal in 5-0 crush of Italy. The Blueyellow are #3 in world ranking and surely medal contenders. Grab that metal girls!***



GoH interview with Diane Duane. She talked about writing for TV and games. Movie/TV scripts are more difficult than novels, she said.

interesting food items we don't have in Sweden, for instance interesting "salads" in plastic or aluminium foil boxes (intended to be heated, but can be consumed cold). I also spent some time in the sun, enjoying bheer from the ferry and some book recently bought (I've been reading a lot of space opera recently).

A pretty normal Finncon, for which some problems remain though those are the same for the recent Eurocon in Uppsala and most other cons in later years: too much seriousness, too little fannish program, a tendency for too much bureaucracy...hey, loosen up, have more fun! Don't be so sercon! I think Nordic fandom would need something like

Corflu, a small con for

fannish fans.

It was

a doubledecker train and the same proud ship Baltic Princess on the way back. I think I read something by the space poet Poul Anderson as the sun set with an orange glow in the archipelago of the Baltic Sea on this third planet from that burning body.



The sun sinks into the sea as a romantic couple watches.

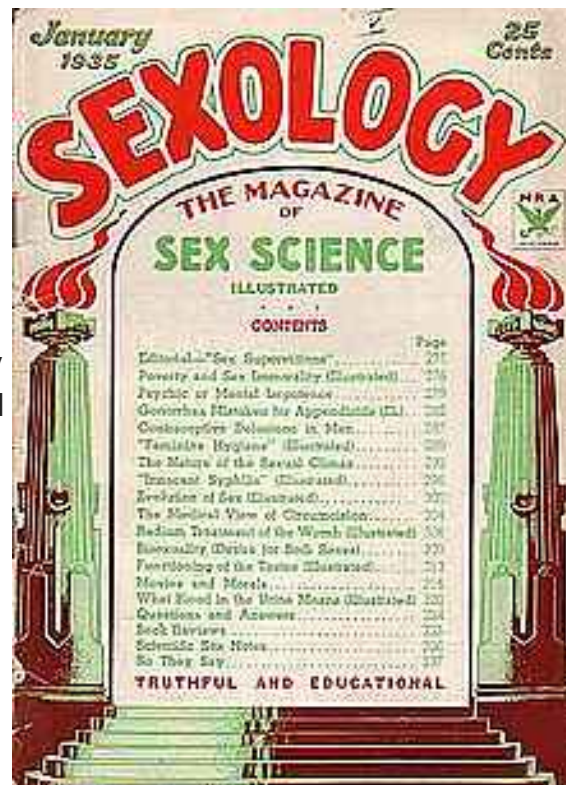
# History Corner

Time for some more NSFW (Not Safe For Work, not Nutty SF Writings...) but this time from Uncle Hugo.. As earlier reported Hugo Gernsback's most successful magazine wasn't *Amazing* but a rag named *Sexology*, published 1933 to 1983 and topping 200 000 in circulation! [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexology\\_\(magazine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexology_(magazine))

Hugo was interested both in whacky inventions and sex: He sounds like a true sf fan, doesn't he!

In his yearly popular science newsletter *Forecast* of 1957, Hugo covers his favourite subject at great length going back all the way to cavemen and cavewomen, under the title "*The Riddle of Sex*". (I only have the 1955-57 *Forecasts*. I'd be interested if you have more of them!) We learn that women dislike really hairy men, why humans tend to keep nudity and sexual matters non-exposed and then Hugo gives us straight answers to some difficult sex questions.

But Uncle Hugo wasn't finished yet. In the same *Forecast* he proposes we should nuke the Moon! New nuclear bombs need to be tested, and setting them off on the Moon won't cause radioactive hazards on Earth. He's right there, but there's no guarantee the transportation of nukes to the Moon is so safe... If





# THE RIDDLE OF SEX

**P**OSSIBLY the most amazing fact about sex is the extraordinary attitude of humans toward it.

Although the sex act is a natural and universal function, without which our planet would be a lifeless world—nearly everything connected with sex is despised, ridiculed or met with shamefaced mien and raised eyebrows by our self-proclaimed civilized races.

What should be the loftiest of all human expressions, and the most revered, is dragged through the mud and treated with outrageous ribaldry.

● Why do intelligent humans act in so astounding and wholly incomprehensible a manner when it comes to sexual matters? The answer is quite complex and cannot be given in a short sentence. Curiously enough, if we analyze the problem as it pertains to mod-

ern man, we find that *sex is rarely an object of levity if it concerns ourselves—the levity is almost always directed at someone else*, just as our risibilities are aroused when we see a dignified person slip and fall on the pavement. We are NOT amused when it happens to us.

From this it would follow that man constantly tries to impress his fellow man with his dignity. Foolishly, he often thinks that sex is a sign of weakness and therefore not dignified. Hence the misplaced levity.

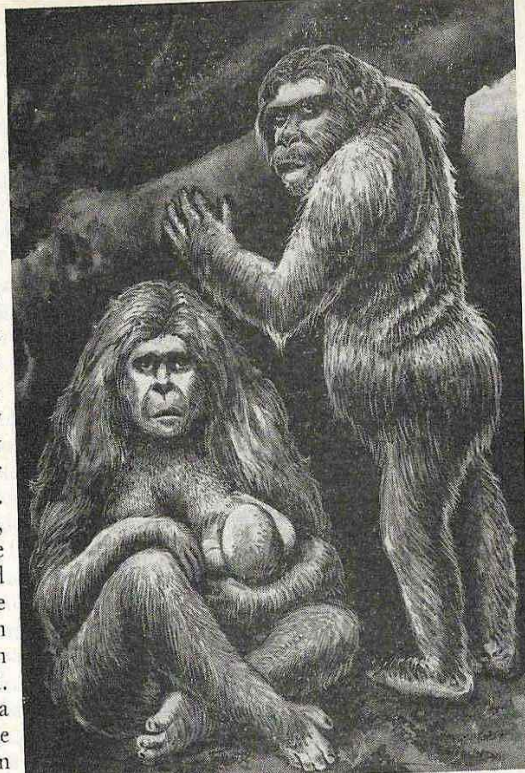
Most aborigines take sex life in their stride. To them, sex is what it should be—a natural function like eating or drinking. The same is true of most of the animal world.

Modern *homo sapiens*, man, instinctively wants to hide every sexual function, so much so that it has today become a devastating phobia responsible for many of man's neuroses.

To find further reasons for our strange behavior we must go back many millions of years to our earliest cavemen ancestors. In those days most of man's body was covered with shaggy hair. His sex life did not differ much from that of the quadruped mammals which surrounded him and with which he was in intimate contact. Sex was as natural to him as hunting—he probably

never gave it much conscious thought—since instinctive action was his main motivation in those dawn ages.

Ever so slowly over a span of hundreds of millenia of years there came a subtle change. Various new forces were now acting on our hairy ancestors. More and more, man forsook the forests and caves for the plains and open country in search of food. He became a nomad. In the open spaces in warmer zones, his thick, furry skin became a distinct handicap. In the torrid summers some human species began to shed hair, as do many animals. Then slowly through the ages and by sexual selection, many human beings began mating with less shaggy specimens, who appeared more



"Alalus Europaeus" . . . ("Pithecanthropus alalus") painted by the renowned German artist Gabriel Max, after suggestions by anthropologist Karl Vogt. This painting of early man shows his protective thick matted hair.

desirable. They probably were fleeter of foot and were not winded as fast as the more hairy ones.

Quite likely there were other reasons which science has as yet not unraveled that contributed

to making man less and less hirsute through the ages. One of the most compelling no doubt was a very practical "survival compulsion."

● In the dense primeval forests and in the deep caves—the habitat of dawn-man—the light was always poor. Seeing and observing were difficult most of the day, far worse at night. The hunter could not distinguish between his own species and the beasts, hence many hunters were killed mistakenly for animals. This made a deep and lasting impression on the survivors and, as with all species, man strove unconsciously to change his appearance in his battle for existence.

Just as the brown rabbit changes his fur to white at the onset of winter for his protection and survival in the white snow, so through evolution man shed his heavy fur for lighter and thinner coverings, till finally there was no fur at all—only a sparse bodily hair cover. This evolutionary process is still going on in modern man—there are still males and females who have a fair amount of body hair.

● Let me cite a case which came to my attention a few years ago and which speaks for itself. A very fine-looking Southern gen-

tleman consulted me in connection with a divorce action threatened by his wife. It appears that there had been a whirlwind "love-at-first-sight" marriage after only a week's acquaintance. But his bride left him after a three-day honeymoon. The reason? The husband had as heavy a matted, hairy front and back as I have ever seen. His wife was, as he put it, "so horrified and frightened" that she could not face him any longer.

● Why did she act thus? Instinct inherited over a span of hundreds of thousands of years dictated to her that this man was not her equal—he was a "hairy animal." Her inborn mechanism of sexual selection came to the fore and—*she rejected him*.

But let us go back to our dawn-age hairless—or nearly hairless race. Man had now begun to climb the long road to what we are pleased to call "culture." He also had become more observant and his "thinking processes" had become more acute. The winters were quite cold even in the temperate zones, so man began to use animal skins and furs to keep warm. These he discarded when spring and warm weather came. He kept only a loin cover or similar device which he needed as a vital protection while hunting and fishing.

● Many thousands of years later—after the last ice age—when he had learned to weave fibers, man took to more and more bodily covering, till finally a good deal of his anatomy was covered and stayed covered.

During this long evolutionary stage, a new emotion had gradually made itself felt in man—*shame*—particularly the shame of total nakedness. He now became conscious of the fact that somehow he had risen above the animals, but he no longer was as unthinking as he was when he roamed the plains nearly naked. He knew now that he was *different* from other mammals and he began to reason that he was *above* them.

Too, the insecurity which he felt in the nude state made a powerful impression on him, which proved cumulative during succeeding generations. Exposing oneself became shameful and degrading; hence, sexual functions, directly linked to nudity, came under the same taboo in our so-called civilization.

In most aboriginal societies—when left alone and uninfluenced by the "civilized" races—nudity is the rule. There is, consequently, no shame-emotion connected with nudity *per se*—and sex is treated in a matter-of-fact way. Sex functions are not ridiculed and thought obscene. Indeed, most

aborigines do not understand obscenity. Modern man, as we said at the beginning of this article, finds it difficult to discuss sexual topics with his fellow-men in a serious manner. Levity invariably crops up, particularly among laymen.

● Why is this so? Obviously, only because the average man (or woman) has only the most superficial "education" in sexual matters—if any at all. Nearly all so-called "sex education" in our present society goes back to our earliest childhood, long before our teens. *It is then that the deepest impression is made.*

Childhood beliefs in matters of sex are the most difficult to eradicate. Most of us are conditioned in much of our adult sex patterns before we are six. We listen avidly to the childish fantasy-prattle of our young friends or buddies, particularly if they are a bit older. No matter what nonsense they are teaching us, we believe them far more implicitly than the hard-to-understand ponderous things our unsure-of-themselves parents try to impress us with, if they talk to us at all on that subject. As we grow up, if we are average humans, we absorb more weird "knowledge" from our friends. It is true that when we come of age we *may* acquire some books on sexual subjects,

but it is equally true that we rarely read them attentively from cover to cover. Most of us skim through them, because our old taboo—shame—subconsciously prohibits us from reading certain chapters. Anyway, *we know all about sex*, have known all about it since childhood, so why cram such nonsense into our heads?

• And that is precisely what makes man's attitudes toward sex so incongruous today—the universal ignorance of what sex really is from a scientific point of view.

The overwhelming majority of people everywhere have no conception of the great complexity and the tremendous range of sexology. They see sex only as a bou-doir topic, never dreaming that thousands of researchers all over the world are discovering new and unsuspected sex facts every month in the laboratory and elsewhere.

This snobbish ignorance of sex often extends even to the so-called educated classes, although most educated persons will scoff at such a possibility. You can easily convince them of their error with the following questionnaire. If they can answer 20% of the questions correctly, they will indeed know far more than the average educated person about sex.

## QUESTIONS

1. How can a girl become pregnant yet remain a virgin?
2. What is a stone baby?
3. Do men actually suckle and nourish infants?
4. Can one beget children years after death?
5. What are transvestites?
6. Why do some boys become pregnant?
7. Why are girls in some primitive tribes circumcized?
8. How often are twins born, one black and the other white?
9. What is phantom pregnancy?
10. Is fatherless birth possible?
11. How rare are children with tails?
12. What is telegony?

Here are the answers:

• **Answer 1.** According to the late Dr. Maxwell Vidaver, it is an established and incontrovertible fact that impregnation has taken place in women with unbroken hymens, when penetration of the vagina had not been accomplished. Such cases have been recorded in medical literature, from time to time. Although conditions must be extremely favorable for impregnation to occur in such a manner, it has happened. All hymens have perforations through which live male semen, deposited on the outside of the female genitalia, can enter into the vagina.

## FORECAST

• **Answer 2.** Dr. Eugene B. Mozes explains "stone babies" in this way. "Stone babies" are always found in the free abdominal cavity and not in the womb (where normal pregnancy develops). Here is how pregnancy outside the womb, or *ectopic pregnancy*, takes place. Fertilization takes place in the fallopian tube, where the male and female sex cells are united. The fertilized egg then moves to the womb, where it develops. Sometimes, however, an accident happens following fertilization. Instead of traveling to the interior of the womb, the fertilized egg remains in the fallopian tube and becomes attached to its wall.

Sometimes an abdominal pregnancy is not recognized in time. In such cases, the baby dies and is retained in the mother's body indefinitely.

Often excess amounts of lime salts may be deposited on the calcified fetus, increasing its weight. Thus a "stone baby" is not stone at all. Ages ago, before much was known on the subject, this misnomer originated and the ignorant still believe in the term.

• **Answer 3.** Impossible as it sounds, the late Dr. Max Bartels, Ph.D., famed anthropologist and anatomist, of the University of Berlin, related a number of cases where men suckled infants.

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"Some medical observers," he wrote, "have reported a number of instances of milk-secreting breasts in men. Dr. Schenk knew a man who secreted a rich supply of milk from youth until his 50th year. Dr. Walaeus gives a similar report of a Flemish man of 40 with one enormous milk-producing breast.

• **Answer 4.** Human spermatozoa have been successfully frozen and preserved. A recent report discloses that three American babies have been born of women who were artificially inseminated with frozen human sperm. The babies were reported to be perfectly normal and healthy. This epoch-making event was announced by Dr. R. G. Bunge, University of Iowa urologist. Scientists now believe that human sperm can be stored for many years without deterioration; hence a man can now have offspring years after his death.

• **Answer 5.** Says Harry Benjamin, M.D., endocrinologist: "Transvestism is the desire to dress in the clothes of the opposite sex. This term, first used by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, has the disadvantage of naming a disturbance of behavior and emotion after only one of its symptoms, although the most conspicuous one. This symptom, which is

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also known as 'cross-dressing,' is the symbolic fulfillment of a deep-seated and more or less intense urge indicating a disharmony of the sexual sense, a sexual indecision or a dissociation of physical and mental sexuality. Few transvestites are homosexuals."

• **Answer 6.** Pregnant boys, while rare, are now well recognized by medicine. One case of a pregnant boy was described by Prof. M. Lombard of Algiers to the French Academy meeting in Paris on Nov. 25, 1953. Occasionally a male child is born, apparently normal, yet bearing in his abdominal cavity a little twin which he had absorbed during his fetal career. A few cases live on, apparently normal in health, till adolescence brings with it a rapid and intensive growth. The change is caused by the increased amount of the internal secretion of the testes (male sex glands). The miniature hidden fetus, which has been feeding all the time on the blood supply of its big brother, receives its share of the testicular secretion. It also responds by intensive growth, and soon an abdominal tumor is diagnosed. An operation reveals it to be a type of *teratoma*; not always a complete human body, but clearly recognizable as a separate human being. There does not seem to be any record of such

an operation resulting in the surgical birth of a child who remained alive. An excellent specimen of this abnormality was dissected and is preserved in the Hunterian Museum of London.

• **Answer 7.** Female circumcision has been practiced for ages in many parts of the world. This is what Professor Denise Paulme, head of the African Department of the Museum of Man, and professor of the Institute of Ethnology of France, says on the subject: "Clitoridotomy, or female circumcision, with its accompanying ritual, is a major event in the lives of the girls of the *Kisri* people who inhabit Upper Guinea (on the west coast of Africa). It is initiation into adulthood and is almost always immediately followed by marriage, betrothal having taken place a long time before. To evade this painful operation is an invitation to social ostracism."

• **Answer 8.** Dr. John Archer (the first physician to receive a medical degree in America, in the year 1810) relates that he confined a white woman, delivering her of twins, one of which was black and the other white! The woman informed Dr. Archer that she had had relations with a white and colored man, respectively, within a short period

of time. This may appear impossible, but it is confirmed by other cases on record of a similar nature; few, it is true, since few women will make such admissions!

• **Answer 9.** Phantom pregnancies are well documented in medicine. They are not rare. Let us listen to Dr. Eugene B. Mozes: "Phantom or spurious pregnancy, sometimes called *seigned* or *hysterical pregnancy*, is one of the greatest medical curiosities. Known scientifically as *pseudocyesis*, it is a condition in which the woman firmly believes that she is pregnant and develops the usual characteristics and distinguishing signs of pregnancy without being pregnant at all. She misses her periods, or they become extremely scanty, and her abdomen swells gradually as it would in ordinary pregnancy."

The signs sometime deceive even a physician on superficial examination, as her abdomen may appear as large as that of a woman 8 or 9 months pregnant. Almost every one of these women "feels" the movements of the "baby" and some of them actually go through labor pains.

Hippocrates, the "father of medicine," some 2,300 years ago described 12 cases he had observed. One of the most interesting cases in history was the

imaginary pregnancy of Queen Draga, the wife of the last king of the Obrenovitch dynasty of Serbia. The Queen's desire for an heir was so strong that she finally persuaded herself she was pregnant. The famous Professor Snjgrov, who was summoned from Russia, had great difficulty in convincing the Queen that she was a victim of pseudocyesis. Up to the present time, 465 such cases have been described in medical literature.

• **Answer 10.** Virgin birth must be given serious consideration and study, said Dr. Stanley Balfour-Lynn in the English medical journal *The Lancet*. He was discussing the assertion of a British woman who claimed that her eleven-year-old daughter had no father. Dr. Balfour-Lynn stated that investigation had been unable to disprove the mother's claims. All of the evidence obtained is consistent with what would be expected in a case of *parthenogenesis* (reproduction by development of an egg without fertilization by a sperm).

Parthenogenetic development going full term and producing live and healthy offspring can be induced in mammals by cooling the fallopian tubes; many fatherless rabbits have already been produced by this technique.

The time may come when hu-

man eggs can develop into babies without fertilization by a male sperm. However, up to the present time, the possibility of this process taking place in human beings has not been conclusively proven.

• **Answer 11.** Humans with tails are well authenticated throughout medical history. Nor is the extra appendage too rare. Dr. Maynard M. Metcalf, professor of biology in the Woman's College at Baltimore, in his work on *Organic Evolution*, states (page 163): "It is interesting to know there have been instances in which a human being has retained, in an abnormal condition, the muscles of the ancestral tail."

*The American Text Book of Surgery* calls attention to the occasional births of children with tails, and suggests their early removal by surgery. From an embryological standpoint, every human being begins life with a tail. Strange as it may appear, the unborn child, in its development in the womb, passes through many phases of evolution. In the first half of the second month of life in the womb, it does not differ essentially in appearance from other animals!

• **Answer 12.** Telegony is defined by the authoritative *Gould's Medical Dictionary* as "the influence of a previous husband on the children of a subsequent one [husband] through the same woman." In Germany during World War II men were warned not to marry widows on account of the possibility that the offspring of the second husband might be "tainted" by the first husband.

While a controversial subject, as far as humans and their offspring are concerned, there is little controversy in zoology. Says the great Charles Darwin: "Careful breeders avoid putting a choice female of any animal to an inferior male on account of the injury to her subsequent progeny which may be expected to follow. . . ."

• These are just a few random facts to illustrate that vast subject of sexology which still baffles modern humans, as it did their prehistoric, less learned predecessors. Does it not behoove man to take stock of himself and ponder that ancient truism of Plato, uttered by that great philosopher over 2,300 years ago: "Know thyself!"

you read the article, you'll BTW see that Hugo claims he solved how to make efficient atomic energy in...1915. What a guy! The rest of that year's *Forecast* eg details how the US during the International Geophysical Year of 1958 plan to launch 6 to 10 small satellites. He suggests dropping dust etc from them to give them a "comet tail" making them more visible, as he did for a spaceship in *Ralph 124C41+*. Nobody knew the Soviets would beat them to launching sats...

# TEST-BOMBS ON THE MOON

**T**HE current controversy whether we should or should not test H-bombs is likely to continue for a long time to come. Unfortunately, there seems so far no assurance that nations will ever agree upon a practical plan

to outlaw atomic bombs. Even if they did, it would solve nothing whatsoever.

Clandestine tests could still be made in the huge underground caves which abound in many parts of the world. Because they are sealed off from the outside atmosphere, no radioactive fallout could be detected in other countries. Nor does it make any difference if large or baby type bombs are so tested, because, with technological progress, H-bombs may become so "clean" that they will emit little or no dangerous radiation.

For war purposes, bombs in the main should be as destructive as possible, in theory. Radioactive fallout is not always desirable—the en-

emy may want to occupy the bombed city later. If it is highly radioactive, he will not be able to enter it for perhaps a long time. In the end, war is never waged for the sake of deadly radiation alone. Sooner or later, the "conqueror" must occupy the vanquished area for mop-up operations and to exploit his former enemy. If all the big centers are "hot" and poisoned for perhaps years, he stands to lose more than he gains.

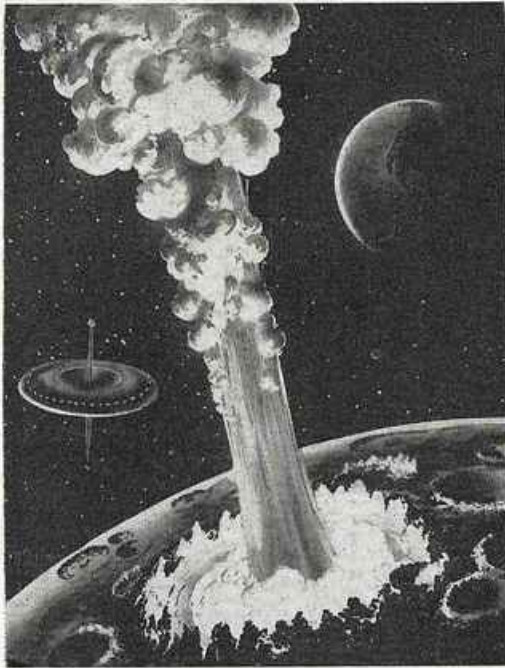
As for testing present and future super-bombs, in my opinion the radioactive bugaboo is a vast exaggeration. I am certain that the present rate of testing H-bombs can go on for the next 20 years without affecting the health of the present world population or our descendants. The plain fact is that all current opinions are pure guesswork—one group of scientists is positive of the great danger of continuous tests; the other scoffs at it.

One fact, however, stands out in all the controversy: for billions of years, the Earth has been bombarded with all sorts of dangerous radiation—including the most dangerous of all, cosmic rays and X-rays. This colossal

bombardment goes on continuously and, while it is true that our atmosphere screens a percentage of the radiations, far more comes down to earth than the effect of thousands of H-bombs if they were all exploded simultaneously.

Far more dangerous, to my mind, is the continuous pollution of our atmosphere by the noxious gases generated all over the world, especially near large industrial centers, by the automobile and the incinerator. These hydrocarbons and other poisonous gases vitiate our atmosphere so rapidly that it is becoming more and more saturated as time goes on. Many medico-scientists are convinced that the rise of pulmonary cancer is directly attributable to the increasing hydrocarbon content of the air we breathe. If a change is not effected soon, they maintain, the index of respiratory cancer must increase inevitably.

Shall we go on with our present cumulative air pollution till all our cities have become smog centers like Los Angeles? Fortunately, there is no necessity for such an outlook. We do have the means to rid our atmosphere of an excessive content of hydro-



View of H-Bomb explosion on airless Moon in the center of huge crater. Earth is to right. Space ship is on the left.

FORECAST

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We'll continue in space. Mathematician Tord Hall was a long-time expert on space poet Harry

carbon before it reaches the universal fatal state. The answer of course is atomic power—now in its infancy—which, curiously enough, brings us right back to H- and other bomb testing!

The atomic power—such as it is—which we use today is childish, to say the least. We have not as yet learned how to use atomic power efficiently. Actually, we now utilize only a tiny fraction of the titanic power inherent in the atom. The flea power we use now is really a by-product of atomic energy—heat. We use this heat in a boiler to make steam, then run a steam engine with it, which finally operates an electric generator, giving us the electric current we want!

Yet scientists, since the Curies discovered radium in 1898, have known that the atom gives out radiation which is electromagnetic. Why not capture this powerful radiation and convert it directly into electricity? I have recommended this since 1915, 41 years ago. In a theoretical illustration, I showed graphically how if we utilized all its inherent energy at one stroke, one-fiftieth of a gram of radium—a

"The Wonders of Radium," in the writer's magazine *The Electrical Experimenter*, September, 1915, 1916.

mere speck—could by means of a super electromagnet lift the 103,000-ton Woolworth Building 1 foot off the ground!

Since that time we have discovered the atomic bomb and atomic power, but direct electric power from the atom is still far off simply because research in this direction has not been persevered at with effort equal to that for the A-bomb during World War II.

As time goes on, more and more of the present atomic classified information becomes public property. Yet many scientists would deplore the cessation of all atomic tests at this time. They feel rightly that without occasional tests, scientific progress will be retarded for years. New facts are discovered in nearly every test explosion, large and small.

Nor is there any foreseeable end to new types of atomic bombs. The A- and H-bombs are but a beginning. The uranium-plutonium and hydrogen types are only forerunners because at the time they were designed they were the easiest to make in a new art.

They will be followed in due time by others for special purposes. They need not necessarily be more powerful, more destructive nor more radioactive.

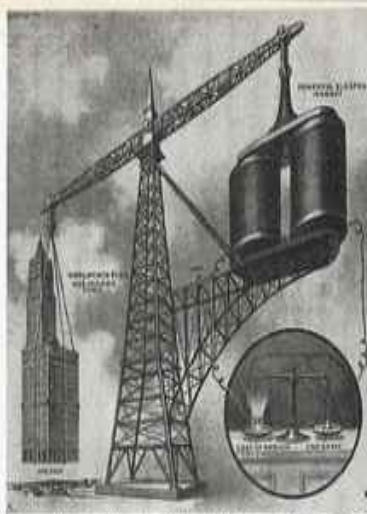
But there is one certainty: they

cannot be cooled without actual tests. And the more types we evolve, the more tests will be required.

Sooner or later, from such tests, true electrical atom power will emerge and may well revolutionize the world. It will do away with war because it will give the impoverished have-not countries abundant cheap power.

I agree too that, as time goes on, it may no longer be wise or safe to continue large-caliber bomb tests on Earth because there may be a radiation hazard, particularly in testing new and at present unknown bombs which may be far more deadly than anything we can conceive of today. Happily, when that time comes, there will be a solution to the problem.

By that time—let us say about 1975—space flying will be in full



41-year-old illustration showing how 1/50 gram of radium could lift Woolworth Building one foot, if radium's atomic energy was instantly released.

swing, with trips to the moon almost a certainty. And what an ideal testing locale the moon offers the physicist! No atmosphere to bother with, no population to worry about. Bombs can be set off from the thick dust-blanketed ground to suck up into the sky for hundreds of miles immense atomic "mushrooms" that will dwarf our mightiest H-explosion on Earth.

Or we can set off bombs from

the high lunar mountains for different tests. There being no atmosphere nor winds, the fallout will begin to rain down directly over the test site within hours. Because of the lesser gravity on the moon the light particles of the fallout will come down slowly but steadily. The resulting deposit can then be scooped up from the ground for analysis.

Naturally such testing will be done only on selected sites, perhaps on the other side of the moon or in the protective shelter of large, walled crater sites. As such test grounds may stay "hot" with dangerous radiation for years, they will be known by all scientists as danger areas.

What will be the difference between a lunar and a terrestrial atomic explosion? On Earth the explosion is followed immediately by severe atmospheric shock waves and heat waves. Witnesses customarily cover their ears, even if they are miles away, so that their eardrums may not be broken.

On the moon, the explosion

produces no shock waves and there is no direct sound because there is no air. Nevertheless, the sound travels through the moon's ground and those that stand on it will be aware of some sound and vibration as both travel up through the legs and body. The observers, too, will feel the onslaught of the heat wave as radiation travels through the lunar vacuum in the form of light. Hence, observers must be sufficiently distant from the explosion if they do not wish to experience severe burns on less insulated parts of their bodies.

Can a large future atomic explosion set off on the moon be seen on Earth 235,000 miles away? Yes, quite brilliantly, if it occurs on the unlighted part of the moon, i.e., soon after a new moon or when it is in its first quarter. Even at full moon we will be able to observe it well, as the atomic flash is more than a thousand times brighter than the moon's illuminated surface.

Martinson but he often also covered more general space topics. In Svenska Dagbladet, 29 sep 1974, he writes about travel too and messages from other solar systems, "Message from the Milky Way".

(I'll summarise):

On a conference in 1972 the Association in Scotland for Technology and Research in Astronautics (ASTRA) a

# under strecket:

Därute i Vintergatan på 12 ljusårs avstånd från jorden skulle det kunna finnas planeter, som redan är upptagna av människor. Till denna förmodan kom ett sällskap skotska stjärnmän vid en diskussion mellan en lång rad experter. Deras sällskap redogör till och med för hur man skall resa dit. Docent Tord Hall är mera skeptisk. På naturvetenskapens nuvarande ståndpunkt är sådana resor omöjliga.

Av TORD HALL

# BUDSKAP FRÅN VINTERGATAN?

ASTRA är en förkortning av Association in Scotland for Technology and Research in Astronautics. Dessa skotska stjärnmän använde 1972 en diskussion om astronautikens möjligheter, med deltagande av experter på teknologi, astronomi, logistik, psykologi och allmän rymdförskning. Ordfrån den, Duncan Lunan skrev på grundval av inslagen den nyutkomna boken *How to Reach Contact and Communication with Other Intelligence* (Sovereign Press, London, Pris: £3.50 inb.) Boken är ett med grundlighet och systematik fört protokoll över mötet; här till kommer en sensationell tolkning av vissa radionsignaler, som förhoppningsvis sedan de realiserades i slutet av 20-talet. Till värt och är ett av de 14 kapitlen finns litteraturförväning, sammanfattningar ungefär 350 stycken.

De moderna kosmologerna innebär bl.a. att ett planetytem är en gasiska normal företeelse i samband med en stjärna. Vi vill då först veta om det finns några planeter i relativt närhet till jorden — t.ex. inom 12 ljusårs avstånd. Lunan är säker på den saken: där finns minst tre stjärnor med planeter. Kanade det bli våra sista planeter — modell Jupiter — men kanske också betydligt mindre och mera i jordens stil. För uppgörelsen av liv, som inte alltför mycket avviker från vad vi känner till, har man infört begreppet "oökarlik". Därmed menas att en stjärnas ljusstyrka bestämmer livets villkor; "möjligheten att flytande vatten kan existera på planetens yta bestämmer den övre och den undre temperaturen och därfor också den lära och yttre gränser av ekosfären". Vi märker att ekosfären ur matematisk synpunkt är felaktigt definierad. Innebörden är givetvis två klotytor, där den inre sfären anger valnöta kokpunkten och den yttre dess fryspunkt. Mellan dessa klotkalar kan liv i vår mening existera. Den diffusa termen ekosfär ser en gallring bland de miljoner — eller miljarder — planeter som här finns bara inom Vintergatan.

12 ljusår är ur astronomisk synpunkt inte mycket, men för våra sinnen är det en avståndslängd som nästan är otänkbar; ett rymdskepp, som går till månen på två dygn, skulle behövas ungefär 1900 000 år för att uppnå detta avstånd från jorden.

Därute — i denna relativa närhet till jorden — skulle det alltså kunna finnas planeter, tomma eller redan upptagna av invånare, och ASTRA redogör bl.a. för hur man skall resa dit, och dessutom för hur man skall resa mycket längre bort från detta obetydliga kvartier av Vintergatan.

Det svårt hinder för alla resor i denna genre är den speciella relativitetsteorisens axiom, att ljusets hastighet i tomrum — ungefär 300 000 kilometer i sekunden — är en gränshastighet som ej kan överskridas. Efterströmmen i Vintergatan har en största diameter av ungefär 100 000 ljusår, blir t.ex. en galaxospeglar just nu ett orimligt projekt i minst samman klara som en jordensrättelinge för 1000 år sedan.

Det botemedel finns kanske i Einsteins formel för tidförkortning: en centrad kosmosfärd här blir den s.k. tvillingparadoxen: en pilot i ett rymdskepp åldras inte så snabbt som sin tvillingbror, som stannar kvar på jorden — det bästa sättet att avgöra denna fråga är givetvis att vi kör en sväng på Vintergatan.

Men för att ett sådant experiment skall lyckas måste rymdskeppet nå en hastighet, som lägger mycket nära ljusets — och det är långt dit om vi beaktar att rymdskeppet till månen har en maximal hastighet av ungefär 10 kilometer i sekunden.

Hur skall vi då — vare sig tvillingparadoxen är sann eller falsk — bära oss åt för att accelerera ett rymdskepp till, låt oss säga, 290 000 kilometer i sekund? Ty resan måste under alla förhållanden gå med enorm hastighet, om den inte skall pågå under närmast geologiska tidsåldrar.

Mekaniakens oböjbara lagar kräver ett väst förhållande mellan rymdskeppets massa vid starten och nytillstån, t.ex. mellan den brenslämnens och rymdskeppets massa vid resans slut. För en resan till ett planetytem kring stjärnan Tau Ceti på 12 ljusårs avstånd ger hittills använda bränslen fullständigt orimliga massförhållanden. Det blir knappast bättre om vi använder den tänjda vätebombsförvandlingen av väte till helium ger en startvikt på en miljon ton för att få ett ton nyttigt ut till 90 procent av behållningens på resan till Tau Ceti.

Om man tar det teoretiska steget fullt ut och använder det yttersta bränslet — materialet och antimatier — blir siffrorna något bättre. En nyttigt last på 10 ton kräver då — tur och retur på 28 år — en startvikt på 400 000 ton. Här börjar man helt från problemen tekniska sids: att framställa och bära på jorden stänga in 300 000 ton antimateria och sedan skydda beaktningen — från förintelsestrålningen vid starten o.s.v.

Man har också tänkt med ett rymdskeppens lastning, bara skulle växa till några procent av ljushastigheten — men då tar ju resan orimligt lång tid.

På naturvetenskapens nuvarande ståndpunkt är resor på Vintergatan därför omöjliga, och detta förstår inte möckemännarna i ASTRA. De hävvar bl.a. till den rent vetenskapliga sammansättningen av svårigheterna i Interstellar Communication av Cameron.

Men Lunan och hans kolleger är inte skrämda av pessimistiska bedömmingar. Tydligen är de inspirerade av science fiction — *Vehavarna* — många av dem är själva författare i genre, och flera professorer både vetenskap och vetenskap.

Shepherd beskriver en resa som tar 100-1000 år. Astronauterna, med samma dödsförklarande disciplin som de japanska självprovdrygarna under andra världskriget, vet att några skall överleva för att dra nytta av denna resan. Under en 100-årig resa passerar 50 generationer födel, och den utsvandliga befolkningen är en legend. Ungefär 10 000 människor kan ha levat i rymdskeppet i ett sådant krycklopp, med en egen fauna och flora. Detta ger associationer till *Anlars*, som skrevs förn Shepherds *Realities of Space Travel*.

Bussard föreslår ett rymdskepp som drivs upp till en sådan hastighet att det kan samla upp interstellär gas (plasma), som sedan accelereras aktiskt och används som drivmedel enligt den från både jettplan och månaraketer välkända reaktionsprincipen: en fusion enligt modellen den tänjda vätekraften skall på vägen bäddas in i en plasmastrom för att ge drivkraft.

Men den interstellära gasen är mycket tunn; där förekommer ungefär 1 till 2 atomer per kubikcentimeter. Noweliser bör jämföras att om vi sätter trycket vid jordytan till 1 så är trycket i plasmastromen 10<sup>-14</sup>, d.v.s. ett decimalbråk, som har 24 nollor innan vi kommer till etan.

För att få tillräckligt drivkraft måste därför rymdskeppet skylla ibov plasma från andra volymer. Bussards projekt kallas därför "ramscop". Även Bonds "woodstax" rymdskepp på 100 000 ton skulle behöva ett uppsamlingsområde med en radie av 34 100 kilometer, vilket är hälften av planeten Jupiters radie. — Är alla med allvar? (I fransörska projekt för rymdförer är ramsenop i särklass det mest fantastiska, som jag känner till. Västerlän finns i boken många andra löser — i kyckelap närrens besättning, som vid framkomsten sinas upp ur en vinterdvala, som våra snart i tillräckligt hög ålder kanske skulle längta efter för att få överleva; genbanker med "livstron", som sprids över den nya planeten

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Vintergatan sedd från jorden. Panoramat är en s. k. Aitoffprojektion av stjärnhimlen med Vintergatans diffusa band.

försk till kommunikation från ett obemannat rymdskepp.

Om alla faller, hur skall överleva detta budskap? Lunan anser att han lyckats med dechifferingen, som han styrker med 21 diagram. Han anser sig ha bevisat att rymdskeppena kom från en planet i närheten av stjärnan Biorvaktaren i stjärnbilden Biorvaktaren, dit avståndet är ungefär 200 ljusår. Den planet bejades för 13 600 år sedan bli obeseelig på grund av hetten från dess expanderande sol. Invånarna slände ibo obemannade rymdskepp med hörförta solar, i ett desperat försök att finna en ny hemplanet, dit de kunde fara innan deras egen smälte ner.

Att man överhuvudtaget fått ut något för oss begränsat av dessa signaler är i och för sig intressant. Men hur kan vi veta att Lunans tolkning är entydig, ja, och en förtäffad mening om ett annat ursprung i den rymd där Biorvaktaren drän sitt siederiska köppel i Karlavagnens spår, här man kunna få fram många tolkningar.

I de två sista kapitlen tar författaren upp frågan om vidtolkade hållnads av främmande civilisationer, och om utredning av vår nu. Det är väl närmast ett försök att bestämma vad man kan göra på detta område — ur förhållingsvynpunkt — utifrån mera framgångsrika Dönliden.

Lunans bok är ett exempel på en ny rymd att beöndra astronomiska mångskiftande problem. Ty författaren blandar på ett ofta återvändande sätt ihop exakta vetenskapliga resultat och tekniskt rimliga projekt med ren vetenskap. Han följer att man inte har värt ut tillräckligt, men i hans tolkning av de gamla radionsignalerna. Man vet inte på vilken tid man sätter — eller om man sätter på alls. Detta hinder inte att hans bok bör nu intressera med intresse för olika former av astronautik.

Kapitel 12 handlar om de mystiska radionsignaler som rapporterades i tidningen *Nature* 1928 av Schröder och van der Pol. Först tolkade man dem i allmänhet som ekon från någon jodisk stjärna, men sedan framträdde en annan åsikt: Signalerna är typiska för ett

Tord Hall

scientist Duncan Lunan - writing about it in a new book, *Stars: Contact and Communication with Other Intelligence* - claimed there were radio signals from a system a dozen lightyears away that could be interpreted as intelligent. Lunan claims there are at least three star systems with planets, at least Jupiter-sized but perhaps also smaller. Life as we know it needs an "ecosphere" with temperatures that can hold liquid water. 12 lightyears may not seem much but a spaceship that needs two days to reach the Moon, would need 180 000 years to travel that distance.. ASTRA has ideas on how to do the journey. The theory of Relativity declares the speed of light as the top speed possible. The Milky Way is about 100 000 lightyears wide. One hope for travelling far is the time dilation slowing down time as the speed increases, but a speed near the speed of light is needed, which is difficult to reach considering that a moonship reaches a max of 10 km/s, while 299 000 km/s is needed. It's necessary with a certain ship mass in relation to the useful payload. Already a trip to Tau Ceti 12 LY away gives totally impossible mass relations, and it wouldn't be much better if we could use hydrogen fusion. Turning hydrogen to helium would still need a start mass of a million tons to reach 99% of light speed on a trip to Tau Ceti. The figures become slightly better if you use the ultimate fuel, antimatter. A payload of 10 tons would for a roundtrip of 28 years requite 400 000 tons. And the problem how to make and isolate 200 000 tons of antimatter is here ignored, and how to protect Earth from the radiation at launch, etc. At the present standpoint of science it's totally impossible to travel in the Milky Way. This doesn't deter Lunan and his colleagues, who seem to be inspired by sf, some of them are active sf authors. One Shepherd (in the book *Realities of Space Travel*) describes a journey that would take 100-1000 years. Like kamikaze pilots the crew knows it won't survive to the goal, and 30 generations pass during 1000 years and he original crew is just a fauna. Up to 10 000 people have lived in the spaceship in closed environment with its own flora and fauna. It gives associations to Harry Martinson's *Aniara*. One Bussard suggests that a spaceship is given such a speed that it can collect interstellar plasma that can be used to drive a spaceship through fusion power. But the interstellar gas is very thing, about 1-2 atoms per cm<sup>3</sup>. If we say Earth pressure is 1, that density becomes a fraction with 24 zeroes. Bussard's "ramscop" for a ship of 100 000 tons need to scoop an area with a radius of 34 100 km, half the diameter of Jupiter. The book has several other ideas, like crews suspended in freezers, gene banks with "seeds of life" to spread over a new planet, ideas only hinted at but already used in sf. Though Lunan is enthusiastic before the prospect of meeting other civilisations his advice sounds like from Earth colonialism: best to shoot first and ask questions later. With that attitude we'll get few friends in the Milky Way, and we can't be sure aliens are worse shots than we. Later parts of the book has instructions on how to meet aliens, in ways that'd satisfy a bureaucrat or committee — though the reality of such a meeting would be difficult to fit in. There's a chapter in the book about the mysterious radio signals that were reported in 1928 in *Nature*, by Törner and van der Pol. They were first thought to be echoes from Earth transmitters, but another opinion later emerged: The signals were typical for attempts to communicate from an

unmanned spaceship. If so, how to translate it? Lunan thinks he has succeeded decipher it, shown in 21 diagrams. He thinks it is proven that the space probe came from the star Epsilon, about 200 LY away. This planet began becoming inhabitable 13 000 years ago from the heat of its expanding sun. The inhabitants then in desperation sent out unmanned spaceships to find a new planets to go to before their own melted. To have found something comprehensible in those signals is interesting, but how can we now that Lunan's interpretation is the only one? There should be other interpretations. The two last chapters discuss if we've had visits from other civilisations or if they are here now. It's more an attempt to compete with - from a sales perspective - far more successful *Däniken*. Lunan's book mixes exact science and the technologically reasonable with pure sf. It's often difficult to believe him, eg in how he interprets those radio signals. You don't know what side he is on. But his book should be of interest for persons interested in astronautics.

I hadn't heard of these signals from Epsilon, but this Duncan Lunan was a chairman of ASTRA, wrote a lot about interstellar travel and you can read about him and his claimed alien signal here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duncan\\_Lunan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duncan_Lunan) He claimed the signal came from an alien probe orbiting our Moon! There's more about the Les Shepherd also

mentioned here: <https://www.centauri-dreams.org/2012/02/28/les-shepherd-rip/>

Ralf Parland (1914-1995) was a Finlandswedish author [https://translate.google.se/?hl=sv&sl=auto&tl=en&text=https%3A%2F%2Fsv.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FRalf\\_Parland&op=translate](https://translate.google.se/?hl=sv&sl=auto&tl=en&text=https%3A%2F%2Fsv.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FRalf_Parland&op=translate) sometimes getting into the fantastic genres. Here are his views about robots, which should be of interest in today's AI context, "On Kind Machines and Lazy People", Svenska Dagbladet, Dec 8 1961:

*In one of his stories sciencefictionist Isaac Asimov tells about a robot which is very fond of children, but after a revolt against his masters caused by an electronic overload, is found in a factory where the situation is easier for old, unrepaired robots. He is still rebellious but when the little girl he had earlier cared for is threatened by a transport robot – she is playing it its way – he runs there fast as a flash and lifts her away in his metal embrace. The episode is worth think about. It has been shown that vi humans can construct mashines along our own patterns of sense, that may measure, count, hear, see, recognise, read, smell things etc. They are superior with playing chess and composing music. In Asimov's version of a future that seems already being here he has noted the good old "human factor" in the machines, since they are built according to a human pattern. These servants of humanity may also collapse, have fits of rage and even turn over to pure destruction. A certain Norbert Weiner already a decade ago created a simple little thinking electronic brain being which through simple little coupling in the network could be put in a status of reduced motoric effect or "being like drunk". The step from this to direct pathological short circuits is not big: an aircraft, ie a travelling missile, refuses to lift more than around 10 metres after which it hits the ground head on. You can read about such almost daily in the papers. What we would need today is a "kind robot" as with Asimov – one that suddenly corrects derailed behaviour and saves a little girl. In other words, we'd need a sort of prohibiting electronic peace brain, mounted on Atlas rockets, military Sputniks and all other terrible metal beings with nuclear nose devices.. This would happen: the general pushes a button, a fleet of pencil-shaped murder beings lifts like migrating birds to destroy the enemy land. But the built in "irrational" factor then reacts: in an elegant curve touching the border of the enemy country the air fleet turns to a course home and nestles at its home base again . The push button general of the enemy country has seen the similar event – his rocket fleet did the same. Both sides have shown their muscles and both sides have been saved by the built in "kind" robot. It's easy to realise that our world at present doesn't have any other choice than to rely on this last possibility that the "wise" man-built machine offers. Those who recently have read a book titled *The Flowers of Hiroshima* and in great detail witness how a little stupid atomic giant in a single minute destroyed 60 000*



*av Flips*

Jag förstår inte varför folk måste sätta sig ner och skriva s. k. science fiction för att få tillfälle att beskriva upp- och nedvända världar. Atombevapnade rymdplanet slår frejdiga marsrobotar på käften, rövar bort underkända kvinnor från Venus och hämtar radioaktivt stoff från Saturnus. Är sen då?

Om de där författarna hade ögonen öppna skulle de mycket snart upptäcka att förhållandena här nere är minst lika märkvardiga och att det ärominstone tilldligt har fallit ner stora bitar av månen på de bästa åren.

Den allra största olycka som förr kunde drabba en människa var att bli fattig. Livets största sällhet bestod i att äga ett stenhus. Nu har lyseglädjerna i ett skändligt samhälle erbjudits att få det stenhuset de bod i alldeles gratis men hyresvärderna tackade nej. Möjligen reflekterade de på slutet, om de skulle reparera och därmed lura marsrobotarna sällsamma förebygganden vara oönskade med flera beakt.

I ett annat samhälle, där hushållsbristen torde vara lika skriande som på alla andra ställen i landet, har man beslutat riva ett stenhus därför att det är en mestor för bredt därför att funktionen inte stämmer som på ritningarna och därför att det skymmer grannens rödöbetor. Troe ni att en sådant förtjänst skulle vara en förtjänst i en sådan stuga som från Saturnus med hjälp av en liten påsliva?

Fäst naturligtvis skulle den också bli betraktad som en angörbarhet från det gamla distriktnätet om den berättade hur det gick till att hyra våningar förr i tiden (förra tiden) är sedan). Här folk läpte en särskild, gamla flock brukare som bara uppog adresser på lediga våningar. Hur hyresvärderna beskäftigt tog emot de hundrade våningssökande. Här man generöst utlovade ett första kvartalet hyresfritt bara man flyttade in i våningen. Här betydligt man

lovade nya tapeter i alla rummen. Hur självklart man fann att man ville ha köket målat och taket i sängkammaren tomt i en grönare nyans.

Detta hör till forntiden.



I en stad upptäcker en affärsman att han kan sälja kapper billigare än alla andra om han nöjer sig med en rättlig vinst. Det blir allmän revolutionsslämning och t. o. m. polisen kopplas på fallet. Märkvärdigt nog kan man inte hitta något tecken som förblöder folk att nöja sig med litet. Sådant händer sällan på Mars och på Venus.

Sedan upptäcker en möbelfabrikant samma sak. Larm slås bland fabrikanter och leverantörer och man hörs med avstängning. Sedan zisten tagit på sig uppgiften att hindra folk från att tjäna för mycket är det inte mer än rätt att vi själva tar på oss den andra uppgiften, att hindra våra medmänniskor att tjäna för litet.

Det värsta öde som just nu tycks hota är att man vinner högsta vinsten i den här tvättmedelstävlingen. Då får man en villa som är värd 100.000 och en litet relativt flyddig människa logar därmed i en tillvaro vars faser inte tycks ha någon ände. Ty om hon vill ha villan, exempelvis att bo i, kommer togden och vill ha så mycket pengar till den attackers villavinnaren måste stötta till banken och skuldsätta sig över öronen.

Därtill kommer att den beklagansvärda människan kommer lita på hela svenska folkets namnade tillvilja över sitt huvud, att döma av det akri av missnöje som varje dag stiger mot justjämna i form av löskändsprattlar. Skall man gissa rätt på ett endåre sätt eller en kelt på ett rättare sätt?

Den första månkraketen är snart på väg. Jag förstår passagerarna. De vill naturligtvis tillfälligen komma till en plats där saker och ting är som de skall vara och inte står på huvudet.

houses and 100 000 thinking human beings, must ask: has the original by the Creator build human robot lost her built in senses? Dogs who get stuck in boiling asphalt, black-burnt mothers with children on their back, naked as shock waves and heat have ripped of their clothes in the moment of explosion, fleeing through boiling air in the big city. All this is nothing compared to the effect of the megaton giants."

Parland wasn't alone being afraid of atomic bombs as the cold war turned hotter in the 1950's. But that the military would accept circuits that aborted attacks they launched was more than naive. Why build the missiles in the first place?

I have earlier had articles by the signature Flips in the evening paper Aftonbladet, who often wrote about our dear sf genre. I have now finally found out that it was one Gösta Rybrant (1904-1967), musician, critic, translator, author etc. Here's another sf column by him, Aftonbladet, Oct 25, 1954:

*I don't understand why people have to sit down and write so called sf to describe worlds upside down. Atomic-armed space pirates hits peaceful Martians in the face, kidnap beautiful women from Venus, picks up radioactive stuff from Saturn. So what? If those authors had their eyes open they'd soon discover that the situation down here is just as remarkable and that there in later years in a figurative sense have fallen pieces of the Moon on Earth. The biggest disaster that could happen to you earlier was to become poor. The greatest joy of life was to own a stone house. Non tenants in a Scanian town been offered to get the stone house they live in for free, but they said no. Perhaps they'd think about the offer if they didn't have to do repairs and the strange doings of the Martian robots would be surpassed with several pounds. /AE: I understand nothing./ In another town where the shortage of*

*housing is as big as in other places they've decided to tear down a stone house because it's 1 metre to wide, because the windows aren't like on the drawings and because it blocks the view of the neighbour's beets.. Do you think an sf author would dare to tell such a tale from Saturn hoping to be taken seriously? But he'd of course also be seen as a storyteller from the Orient if he said how you went about to rent flats earlier (tens of years ago). How people bought a special, rather thick folder that only listed addresses to free flats. How the landlord received willing tenants. How he generously offered the first quarter rent free if they only moved in. How he willingly offered new wallpaper in all rooms. How he found it so obvious to paint the kitchen and the roof in the bedroom in a greener nuans. This belong to ancient times. In one town a businessman discover that he may sell coats cheaper than others if he just takes a moderate profit. There erupts an atmosphere of revolution and even the police is contacted. Strangely enough now law can be found that forbids people to be satisfied with less. Such things seldom happens on Mars and Venus. Then a furniture seller discovers the same thing. There is raised an alarm among manufacturers and distributors and threaten him to be cut off. Since the state has taken upon itself to stop people to earn too much, it's no more than right that we also take upon ourselves to stop our fellow beings to earn too little. The worst fate now threatening seems to be to win the top prize in washing powder contest. There you win a house worth SEK100 000, and a previously reasonably happy person will then enter an existence with horrors without end. Because if you want the house, to live in for instance, the taxman comes and wants so much money that the poor winner must rush to the bank and take huge loans. To this comes that this deplorable person will get the collective malice of the Swedish people, to judge by the discontent every day raised in letters to the editor. Shall you make the right guess in a simple way or the simple guess in the right way. The first moon rocket is soon on its way. I understand the passengers. They naturally want to come to a place where things are as they should and don't stand on their head.*

The column is a bit odd, but it seems the writer is simply angry at some things (housing shortages, envy against cheap furniture sellers - early IKEA? -, the taxman taking too much) and claims its stranger than science fiction! Finally, about the TV series one sf Sam J Lundwall did, covered in *Intermission*, but this note has been left out (possibly because I missed noting paper and date, I still

only have it noted as Autumn, 1969):

SVT's colour group last spring produced a series of sf programs, ie visionary stories from strange worlds outside our own. One would imagine that sf hasn't any market in Sweden, but that showed to be untrue. Swedish TV viewers were fascinated by this type of fantastic fantasies with Martians and moon men.. Last season the sf series had more supporters than they had dares to think. Now they'll offer four new entries in an sf series to satisfy the new interest. Most interesting is will be the French film "The Fire of 1000 suns" signed by the world famous documentary filmer Chris Marker, awarded many times over. There's an animated horror film shot in the ghost town Stockholm called "Don't Look Now", we'll also see a report with and about so called sf fans on a convention in Oxford, It's Torsten Jungstedt who'll be talking with John-Henri Humbug, a Stockholm student and sciencefictionist. The actors Erik Hell, Öllegård Wellton, Bert-Åke Varg and Åke Ljungqvist are seen in a novelette named "Hunting Season", by Frank M Robinson. Torsten Jungstedt introduces the series on Wednesday.

What's Netflix compared to that! New history Corner in nextish!

## Mailing Comments

Comments to latest EAPA and N'APA. Intermission started in APAs, that's why - though some lucky outsiders get it too. I want to promote the fanzine world! It gets too boring if fandom is reduced to serious conventions with uptight lectures, mumbling panels, expensive bheer and no fannish program! Fanzines should lead fandom, underpinning it's about text, writing, literature! Do a fanzine yourself (eg as a PDF) and find out the fun of it.

**Henry Grynsten:** That "equality causes problems...slows growth and requires oppression" would be "a political opinion. What I say is based on science...opinion vs science, and I choose the latter". Well, your social sciences claims are also political opinions. In last issue I detailed all the problems with social sciences, incl a huge

replication problem, that results can't be replicated so it's not science! It's opinion vs opinion, but I choose the opinion that results in the greater good, while you don't. Increased growth is greater good. So is more personal freedom. □ □ Cro Magnon were "more fit and didn't have any of the lifestyle diseases that we have as they didn't consume the poisons that we do". I doubt there were more fit. Their food access must have been uneven, at best, with unbalanced nutritional value. They were prone to hunting accidents, attacks by wild animals, infighting in the group, their respiratory system would degrade from smoke in crammed caves or huts. There may be individual Cro Magnons more fit, but on average we're better off today, despite lifestyle risks that usually only appears post-middle age...an age Cro Magnon didn't even reach! □ □ "If you have more brain cells, within the same species, of course you have more smarts." No, our grey matter won't become smart by itself. It needs the right stimulation and training. □ □ "We would without doubt die faster if we were transported to his (Cro Magnon) world." With just a little preparation - say, a two-day survival course - a modern man would be far better in surviving! A modern person with just basic survival training would know how to make a water filter to prevent catching etc, would be able to start a fire faster, would know the meaning of stars and how to navigate, how to use different materials, etc. □ □ "Only humans can have an IQ." You mean an IQ including some sort of consciousness...yeah, could be true, but it could change. (I think it may take about ten years, and then we'll have an AI with near-human characteristics.) □ □ I should look that Aldiss story up! Sounds interesting. (AI as a god has been used before, as you note.) □ □ It's likely Vermeer and others used Camera Obscuras and it's possible WA Mozart wasn't the creator of all his music, as well as that Dorothy Wordsworth wrote some of the poems. □ □ But I'm not sure computers are detrimental to dexterity skills! Think of the skill you need to type on a keyboard! Think of all those gamers who need to move pointers or cursors in different directions and shoot. They need to work against a very fast computer. (But handwriing suffers from using keyboards. I know that. My longhand stinks.)

**William McCabe:** Yeah, establishing your ID may be a hassle. I've suffered from bad tactics of the host system for "validating" different accounts sometimes. Those constructing computer systems are paranoid and often make it unnecessary difficult for users. □ □ . A contributor to another one's publication has no right to demand a certain layout. That's up to the editor to set. □ □ Yes, I believe translations will be heavily affected by AIs. □ □ Well, Björn Ulvaeus said Sweden couldn't get the ABBAAtars for the 2023 Eurovision shows as they depend on technology that can't easily be moved. (I think ABBA music and ABBA members will turn up in the show in one way or another anyway.) □ □ Interesting that it was in Bradford the Doyle fake fairies were done... □ □ The SEFF scandal involved thousands of Euros (in today's purchasing power) and about 250 voters. It was far from "small" and the bad consequences (incl lots of gafiations) have been big and long-lasting.

**Heath Row:** I'm against having quotas for certain groups to enter university, get a certain job, or whatever. That's discrimination against all who are "diversified" away. You can't fix wrongs with more wrongs. □ □ From what I've seen Ais write pretty boring fiction, so I'm not worried yet... I should try Sudowrite, but don't have time for it right now! (The web site is at <https://www.sudowrite.com/> and says you may try it for free.) I'll □ □ try to look up the videos you mention. I love amateur films... □ □ Have you really told the Swedish American

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

No går man ut med fyra inslag i en ny fiction-serie för att tillfredställa alla de nyvunna intressenterna.

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

Skådespelarna Erik Hell, Öllegård Wellton, Bert-Åke Varg samt Åke Ljungqvist får vi se i en lång novell som heter "Jakt-såsong" av Frank M Robinson. På onsdag introducerar Torsten Jungstedt serien i TV.

Institute about Intermission? Will I hear from them?

**Garth Spencer:** I think con committees are too damn' bureaucratic! □ □ No, Finns, Hungarians, Basques weren't lone "native Europeans". For Sweden archaeology suggests our area saw hunters and farmers migrate here from the south 4-5 000 years ago (there was a land bridge from Denmark and Germany), in step with the melting ice caps. These people could originally have come from the east European steppes. Some sources - validity uncertain – claim the Germanic tribe of the Goths, that later invaded Rome, came from southern Sweden, which incidentally today is known as "Götaland" (approx "Gothland"). DNA studies have in recent years helped clarify migration pattern. Here's a study that says genetics indicate that a portion of the Goths did indeed come from southern Scandinavia. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1672288&dswid=-6681> □ □ I don't think AIs are smart enough for war strategy yet.

**Mark Nelson:** For me RPGs or gaming in general doesn't belong to fandom, by which I mean the literary fandom with roots from the early pulps, the Worldcons, the sf fanzine sphere etc. As for cons and expensive hotels, I think we should revive the old fannish tradition of crashing! Let fans borrow your floor and a blanket, in someone's hotel room or with a local fan. Earlier, this used to be important, when fen were younger and poorer. □ □ Those who hypocritically whine about "diversity" strangely never reflect upon that the high costs of sf cons (hotels being on top of that list) is highly excluding. □ □ Earlier generations of sf writers were often much better! Writers today waste words as the ease of producing text with a computer makes you sloppy. Also, much sf today is too dystopian, rather than optimistic, following predictable populist trends. Let's get back to the classic sf novel which used to be 150-200 pages and was basically optimistic about space exploration! Word-burping is the fault of word processors. Typewriters forced you to be careful with your words.

**Jefferson Swycaffer:** Poul Anderson may have been a better writer than Isaac Asimov, but Asimov had some grander ideas: the Foundation, robots... Also, Asimov had more humour than Anderson. I've become quite fond of his Black Widowers stories. I like single-threaded stories best. Sub-plots usually only cause complications without any real meaning and make the real story harder to follow.

**Garth Spencer:** I haven't heard that cider bubbles are methane... Quick googling indicates they are CO<sub>2</sub>, just as in beer. □ □ Intellectual material isn't property! It's concessions (think: equal to a mining concession.) If property, it would last longer than 70 years...forever, and be inherited down the line. Today you'd have to negotiate with 500 000 descendants of Shakespeare to stage "A Midsummer Night's Dream"! □ □ If there is discrimination ban it and enforce the ban. But don't "diversify" away and punish others who are innocent through quotas! □ □ I report sf and fandom news and when I cover the Hugo and Nebula nominations I have noticed that they for many, many years have a heavy over-representation of so called minority collectives. This is unhealthy for the genre! White, middle-aged male writers (who are a majority!) are pushed aside. If you don't award people for their merits and punish anyone working hard doing their best quality suffers. □ □ It'd be nice with a little bit more of "engineering porn" à la old Analog. Science and engineering is the strongest forces for progress and needs to be dealt with in literature! I want more science than social fiction!

**George Phillies:** What story from old New Worlds was it John W Campbell had wanted for Analog? □ □ Good luck with your writing!

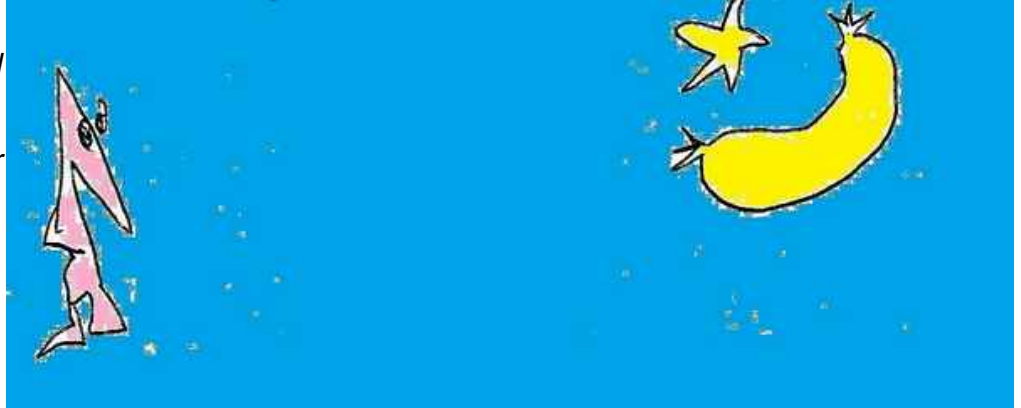
**Kevin Trainor jr:** About Chicon: People without humour are dangerous. It may sound like a cliché to say "I have nothing against women, Latino, black etc writers, but..." But, I'm against - and have always been - giving any group special privileges or quotas. We must see people as individuals, not an anonymous part of a collective. Special collective privileges means discrimination against innocent individuals who aren't in the cosy warmth of "diversity" policies.

**John Thiel:** I don't find much to comment. Sorry.

**Samuel Lubell:** Of course, award nominations don't have formal quotas. But people are influenced by the Zeitgeist (Spirit of the time) so many will nominate according to what is PC. □ □ Very interesting to see your 1989 thesis! Mark Twain was indeed much into technology, being among the first writers to use a typewriter and also investing heavily in a typesetting machine, that didn't work too well and lost him a fortune. (The big typesetting winner was the Linotype, which I covered in an earlier intermission). □ □ I haven't read much by Hawthorne – maybe I should.

**All you beloved readers:** Time to round off. See 'ya! I don't usually run LoCs, but review this super zine in your blog/site/etc. (Or why not do a fanzine yourself? It's easy and something old fandom needs more of!)

Arnie blushed as he saw the wiener wormhole. (III: Lars LON Olsson)



**Слава Україні!**



Archive Midwinter  
a zine for N'APA 266

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**Comments:**

**Cover:** Public Domain Space Art.

**Mark Nelson:** Fun history, summary, and retrospective on RPG fanzines. I actually could have had access to “Alarums and Excursions,” which was on sale at the local D&D (and other stuff) hobby shop. Looking back, I wish I had bought a copy and participated!

Amusing that attendees at a mathematics conference would be less interested in gambling in Las Vegas! Of all the reasons to be asked not to return, that’s possibly the most rational I’ve ever heard!

**Garth Spencer:** Alas that “learning experiences” are so often unpleasant! But you are a better person for the experiences, and personal growth is one of the hallmarks of wisdom. “Sadder but wiser” is not a bad thing...just sometimes painful in the recalling.

Delightful and wonderfully absurd essay-let on Cider! I was reading it as if factual for a bit until I stumbled across “Methane, not Carbon Dioxide.” At that point, I went back to the beginning and read with a great smile.



rect Ahrvid Engholm, I will definitely state my firm preference for a “social safety net” over the model of “rugged self-sufficiency.” World-wide statistics back me up in this. The quality of life is better in countries that take care of their citizens.

rect me re different fandoms, here in San Diego we have more of a tradition of “overlapping” conventions, where, for instance, the organizers of a “Dr. Who” convention will share several members with the organizers of a “World Fantasy” convention. We’re pretty much all friends here. There may be some effect from the existence of the Comic Con, the Blue Whale in the fish-bowl!

**Ahrvid Engholm:** I’m still a fan of AI, both in the original sense of a truly “conscious” construct, and in today’s sense of really good pattern-matching software. I love them both...but I do want to see some protections put in place against pattern-matching that is indistinguishable from theft. i.e., it would be simplicity itself to input several thousand “Peanuts” comic strips, and then obtain an unlimited number of “new” such strips, without the permission of the legal copyright holder. This needs to be regulated by law.

Fun essay on the futurism of Hugo Gernsback. Like most futurists, he got a lot right...and a lot wrong! (And a lot in between!)

I disagree that “If groping were assault, then real assault would be no worse than groping.” There are degrees of assault, from groping to striking to breaking someone’s skull with a tire iron. These are all “assault,” and no one would say that murderous assault is “no worse” than groping.

Correct me, I may disagree with some of what you said...but I do agree that interminable “internal monologues” in fiction are obnoxious and make reading less fun. Some degree of “self awareness” is good in a fictional character, but it can so easily be horribly over-utilized!

**George Phillis:** I do hope that N3F can figure out how to recruit and re-populate itself. I like the idea of a new short story anthology, and I love the idea of an anthology drawn from our contest entries, if it can be arranged to the satisfaction of the individual contestants.

Concerto for bagpipes...from Hoople...a veiled reference to P.D.Q. Bach? I’m extremely fond of the music (that is the technical term) of P.D.Q. Bach, as well as the more serious (which is debatable) music by Peter Schickele. Bach’s “Pervertimento for Bicycle, Bagpipes, and Balloons” is a true joy!

Aye, Isaac Newton was a heretic, specifically an Arrianist, a fellowship of Christians who deny the Trinity, and hold that Jesus did not “pre-exist” the creation, but simply “came into existence” at conception/birth, the way everyone else does. Newton probably would not have been executed for heresy, if his beliefs had come to official notice: England has largely given up murdering people for dissenting religious views by his time. However, the Church had lots of other ways of ruining one’s life, such as imprisonment.

Fun section of story, continuing to build up your mythos. Fun to return to *The Maze*, which was featured at the opening of (I think) your first superhero novel. Returning to motifs is something audiences like a lot: it gives us a sense of familiarity and belonging.

**Heath Row:** Nifty that we have a Tape and Video bureau. Nice that you still have a working VCR and can play tapes. My situation is one that is repeated all over the country: I have a glompruous lot of tapes...and can’t play them! Someone needs to market a USB capable “play only” videocassette player! I’d buy one!

Although the official nationwide umbrella organization, Star Trek Association for Revival, didn’t last too long, our own local branch, S.T.A.R. San Diego, centered at San Diego State University, lasted twenty good healthy years, and even today “exists” to some degree. We had a thirtieth year reunion last year. In our heyday we had monthly meetings that drew 50 to 75 attendees, and we even spun-off a handful of “daughter” special interest groups, such as “The Zone,” a monthly prop-making workshop.

**Kevin Trainor Jr.:** I’m vaguely comforted that you describe James Joyce’s books as “over-rated,” because I know I can never hope to read them, and I would feel that loss more profoundly if they were universally acclaimed as masterpieces. (I did manage to read *Atlas Shrugged* and thought it was a bit of okay, although far from a “masterpiece” in any sense. A chatty bit of melodrama; a page-turner.)

Definite agreement that “Engineering Porn” is only a small subset of what *Analog* published. The editors preferred “hard” SF but certainly bent enough to include some softer material.

Jack Vance is wonderful, and one of my favorite-favorite-favorites, but, well, the Durdane Trilogy and *The Gray Prince* are kinda.....blah. The three “Alastor Cluster” books are also just not up to his usual high standards. On the other hand, if you haven’t already read the Lyonesse Trilogy, “Suldrun’s Garden,” “The Green Pearl,” and “Madouc,” set aside some prime reading hours and give them a try. I hold these to be Vance’s very best fantasy, outshining the “Dying Earth” by vast orders of wonder!

**Ahrid Engholm:** Glad that Turkey got out of the way and Sweden could join NATO. Hope to goodness that our own domestic imbecility doesn't carry the day, and the U.S. \*drop out\* of NATO, which some people here are arguing for. Nauseating but true, there is a signal American moiety who are on Russia's side in the conflict. (But, then, yeah, we also have Flat Earthers...)

And, yeah, we live in a "world of fiction" in that a VERY significant number of people (I can only speak for the U.S.) believe in things that are demonstrably false. The "Flat Earth" idea is quite benign in this regard. But anti-vaccination fantasies are, at this moment in time, causing entirely preventable deaths. That's pretty darn loathesome...

Happy 500th anniversary of being "Modern Sweden!"

**John Thiel:** Inspiring and gripping cover art and included art! Really good stuff!

Interesting essay on "Believability." To my mind, "believability" isn't an issue at all! IMO, the key to enjoying imaginative fiction is "Suspension of Disbelief." Take a great work of our times, "The Martian" by Andy Weir. A castaway has to survive on Mars. Weir does a great job building the premise, but, ultimately, no, I reject the idea. I do not buy it. It can't happen the way he describes. The science and tech simply do not support the theme. And...I don't care! I read it anyway, and enjoyed it! Science Fiction famously employs the "unbelievable" in the premise of our most beloved stories. Asimov's Robots? Not possible. Flandry's FTL? Not possible. And...we don't care, we love them anyway!

To me, the key criterion is "Good Writing!" If the story works, and the ideas are gripping, then the "Red Pill" of the premise is much more easily swallowed.

**Samuel Lubell:** Fun spotlight on Keith Laumer. I'm quite fond of the Retief books and the Bolo books. Alas, Laumer's work is mostly "SF Lite," and doesn't have much in the way of serious intellectual throw-weight. Just as one example, his novel "The Glory Game" has, as a high point, one admiral persuading an enemy admiral to surrender his fleet, solely on the basis of a bluff. It's not believable. It defies "suspension of disbelief." It is, alas, garbage writing. It is highly personable garbage, and it is fun to read, but you really need to leave your intellect out of the picture entirely.

VERY FUN essay on "From Wizard to Scientist." And, certainly, the transformation continues even in our times. The trope of the "arcane genius," like Doctor Frankenstein, is not extinct yet. We definitely saw it in the Jurassic Park movies. The scientist, in popular fiction, still partakes a little of the "wizard" in his doings.

re personal Projects, I'm involved in Project Index, re-creating a master catalog/index of all my mp3 music files. I lost my master catalog/index when my computer died. Thank Ghu I didn't lose my actual mp3 music files! But typing in entries in a spreadsheet for all my music -- heavy on Telemann and Vivaldi! -- is quite a chore!



Crimea, where all the criminals are! (For now. but soon...not!)

# INTERMISSION #136

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com), for EAPA, N'APA and other scientfiction fans. (Sorry Garth for the sports!) Follow ed's news-tweets fr @SFJournalen.12pubZ4U+, One To pub Zine For You goes (gerns-)back in time! Full speed ahead, damn the typo-does! Early Sep '23

## Editorially: Gernsback, Ukraine, Soccer, Book Burning, Etc

This will be a special Hugo issue! No, *Intermission* hasn't won that golden dildo. Hasn't even been nominated, for reasons that seem incomprehensible... No, the famous History Corner department has simply dug deep for info and tidbits about one Mr Gernsbacher. Or Gernsback as he Americanised his name when he immigrated from the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. As you saw in last issue Hugo had two big interests: gadgets and sex, machines and girls, inventions and erotica...*Amazing* and *Sexology*, as two of his magazines were titled. But let's drop this raunchy subject.

You'll learn about Hugo's 1920's (!) TV station, with studio and programming. The spinning disk technology wasn't really suited, so from what I gather the output was short TV snippets + radio. But think of it: TV in the air almost 100 years ago! Hugo also had interesting solutions on how to deal with enemy trenches, maybe something for Ukraine to use against the extensive Russian trench system!

We'll have a peek at Hugo's long series of Christmas booklets, and study a few other of his wacky "inventions" - VR glasses, land dreadnoughts of ridiculous size, how to signal Mars, etc. But we'll begin with his ideas of how to write "science" stories, probably history's first how-to-write article for the sf genre.

BTW, I'd like to point to the article "Terror and Books" below, that I think is important! Do you agree?

Don't You Know There's A War On! Every issue of this respectable magazine ends with the phrase "Glory to Ukraine!" in Ukrainian Cyrillic. Tom Clancy smiles in his grave and was vindicated when the Ruskis February 24th last year let his tanks across the Ukrainian border. Vladimir Dickheadovich Putin in his deranged anno-dazumal mindset thought he could and subdue a neighbour in three days. The Americans had seen warning signs and had begun airlifting Javelin portable missiles to Ukraine. The Brits sent in NLAWs. (A UK-Swedish joint project, easy to use and effective, main developer SAAB.) And this stopped the Russian tanks virtually at the gates of Kyiv. Putin hadn't counted on that smart, modern weapons beat medieval thinking. That and a president who didn't want a lift but ammunition.

Putin is 1 1/2 year later is in deep sh\*t. Russia is crumbling. Exports have been halved, their military has proven incompetent and weak, squandered by corruption, Russian TV is full of the silliest propaganda. Drones hit Moscow's government buildings almost daily. The Russian population know all isn't going "according to plan". Their oligarchs, who previously stole all wealth, have very limited enthusiasm for the "special military operation". Some are found hanging from the ceiling, fallen from a high-rise window, or dead from sipping unhealthy tea. One even began a coup so Putin donated an anti-aircraft missile to him. Inflation goes up as the ruble falls, Russian hospitals are full of wounded and have difficulties getting medicines. Pensions, social benefits and all are hollowed out as the criminal in the Kremlin spend most of his state budget on the war. Travel is very limited and Russian assets abroad are frozen. Thousands of companies have left the country. E g as IKEA said bye-bye some oligarch opened the



The cause of this unconventional congregation explained below, if you read on.



*The Russian IKEA imitation "Swed House". We wonder why they are allowed to use blue and yellow? These colours can get others arrested in today's Russia!*

imitation "Swed House", with cheap local or Chinese stuff of questionable quality and they don't seem to be very well stocked. One million of the best educated, productive young men have fled this totalitarian state, to avoid getting drafted and being killed or maimed. Russian Gestapo will give you a free ticket to Gulag if you as much as wave a blank sheet of paper on the street. 100 000s of Russians are dead or wounded. Scores of their generals and colonels have been killed. Putin dig deep in the leftovers from USSR for tanks and APCs that has stood rusting in Siberia since the 1950s. The Ruskis blow

up up dams in desperation, prepare the same for Europe's biggest nuclear site and even threatens the world with a WIII. We see signs of extreme desperation.

This madness can't go on. The Ukrainian counter offensive admittedly goes slower than we hoped (millions of mines is the problem) but it grinds on, and increases the pressure day by day – they have picked up a bit of speed now, breaking through some lines.

The final outcome will be that the Russians either are kicked out or by themselves realise the folly of their doings and withdraw. There are shrinking odds for the Putin regime to collapse, and that may lead to a retreat, especially if Ukraine seriously threatens Crimea, the Jewel in Putin's land robbery. As a news junkie I follow what happens as detailed as I can, through news outlets, web sites and especially Youtube\*. The downing of Prigozhin's plane shows Putin doesn't feel and sit very safe.

Presently, the Ukrainian forces have liberated two oblasts and in the new offensive more than 300 sqkm of land along the fronts, especially in Zaporizhzhia by which they can corner Russian forces in and near Crimea. The ultimate aim is to reach the Azow Sea, so the Russians are cut off via land. (The Crimea bridge is already unserviceable to a substantial degree. Ukrainian drones can probably cut the rest at will any day. I suspect they allow some capacity to let Russians flee from Crimea.) The Russians have dug extensive trenches and spread mines everywhere (de-mining will take decades). The mines are a bigger problem than the extensive trenches, often manned by conscripts who see supplies go up in smoke, don't know why they are there and would rather go home to mama. Many run away or surrender.

My guess is that the Ukrainians, instead of a foolhardy push forward at any cost, are careful with their troops and concentrate on destroying as much Russian forces and material as possible. Against military experience the Ukrainian attackers seem to have much *lower* losses than the Russian defenders. Usually it's the reverse. Zelensky clearly wants to minimise Ukrainian human costs. Intelligence, good planning, precision (delivered Western artillery is much more accurate), protection (troops get real flak jackets, not cardboard, and delivered Western IFVs have better crew survivability) let them take out Russians with less risks to themselves. I see daily videos of Ukrainian special units storming Russian trenches, where Putin's troops in many cases do the sensible thing and surrender (to Geneva convention food, bed, medical care, in contrast Putin's cohorts who have never even heard of Geneva).

Putin has great difficulties with replacing the heavy losses. The Russian economy can ill afford it, an increasing number of families get bad news about loved ones, which causes growing resentment, the fighting spirit among unwilling and confused conscripts is plummeting. It all weakens Russia from within and may break the Russian will to fight - what von Clausewitz declared was the aim in war. Ukrainian C-inC- general Zaluzhnyi has read his Clausewitz.

On Youtube I've seen Swedish vehicles in action in Ukraine (Strv122/Leopard 2, CV90 combat vehicle - recently praised by Zelensky, and Ukraine will take up producing it - and the world's fastest mobile artillery: Archer) though the Ukrainians this far has held much of their fresh reserves back.

They wait for de-mining and a weak spot for a hammer blow.

And they are very innovative! In Soviet times, Ukrainians were known for being the engineers of that empire. Much of the USSR electronics, space, metallurgy etc industries were in Ukraine. Now they adapt drones for dropping grenades with 3D-printed fins. They employ lots of decoys that Russians waste expensive missiles on (AFAIK not a single Himars or Patriot system has yet been lost). They use IT competence for communications, to track Russians moves, to counter Russian cyberattacks (and Elon Musk with Starlink should stop whining!). They Ukrainians have shown to be fast to master Western equipment. When the US for security reasons delivered their M777 howitzers without some software - Ukrainians simply wrote their own! They adapt old MIGs to carry Western missiles They upgrade the old Soviet equipment they have, so a Ukrainian T-72 is probably better than a Russian T-72. Their sea drones - a totally new innovation in naval warfare! - attack Russian ships and challenge their presence in the Black Sea. The Neptune missile that sank the Moskva was an original Ukrainian design. They build thousands of new drones, some of which reach Moscow or take out Russian nuclear bombers. When the war is over they'll have tons of experience to teach the rest of NATO.



Yes, Ukraine also has problems. Some military actions fail. There is still some corruption, even though they seem to pick a fight with it. (Zelensky PM Ulf Kristersson with president Volodymyr Zelensky recently fired mobilisation officials, suspected of taking bribes.) But AFAIK nothing of West's heavy weapons have leaked into less desirable hands. Sweden has thus far contributed ca €2bn (€1.7bn in military aid). It would be €60bn in US terms - we have 1/30th in population - compared to the ca €75bn the Americans have actually given, so we're not far behind. To take out Putin's military capability without having to send your own troops is a very cheap and efficient investment. (We should worry about the costs of rebuilding the Southeast of Ukraine that Russia to a large part has destroyed. Will our purses be open when this important job comes up? I hope so.)

And recently, as I'm writing this, we saw Volodymyr and first lady Olena on an unannounced visit to Sweden. It's a way to thank us for the aid. The Ukrainian president meet PM Ulf Kristersson, leaders of the political parties, Sweden's Commander in Chief and also the King. Out of it came an agreement on defence cooperation, eg to produce the Swedish Combat Vehicle 90 in Ukraine (of which they already have 50, which Zelensky gave high praise for). One source says Poland is also very interested in this vehicle, already sold to half a dozen countries. Zelensky also hoped to get the Gripen fighter jet ("Gripen" means "Griffin"). The problem is what while 4000 F16s have been



produced, only 400 Gripens have been made, so there aren't many around to shake loose. Ukraine of course needs fighters. In the short term it will be F16s, but there are speculations that Gripens aren't totally off the table (the Social Democrat opposition just announced they want it). After the Swedish visit Zelensky went to Denmark and Netherlands (and later Greece for a Balkan summit) where he did get jet fighters, though it will take time before those Falcons fly. We should have begun this already in February...2022!

It was a great honour to welcome Mr Zelensky. The presidential couple of course also had a meeting with the Swedish king. Olena Z paid a visit to a hospital that treats Ukrainian war wounded.

The Zelenskys certainly works hard with rallying support!

*Intermission* will be with the yellow and blue as long as it takes. Our fanzine blockade against Kremlin continues in full force. We've heard that desperate Kremlin officials have approached and tried to bribe ministers in Kazakhstan to get hold of issues brought there by Iranian smugglers. Half a floor of the S:t Petersburg troll factory sees hackers trawling the 'net in desperate search for pirated copies. Some try to sell Kremlin cheap Chinese replicas of *Intermission*. But so far to no avail.

Despite this, unless there is a sudden collapse of the Putin regime, it unfortunately looks like the war will go at least well into next year.

So I'll continue to have something to write about, in this blasted Tom Clancy alternate history world

--Ahrvid Engholm, editor

\* Suggested informative Youtube accounts: [Anna from Ukraine](#) (a well-spoken, sometimes emotional academic from Lutsk), [Denys Davydov](#) (a Ukrainian commercial pilot with daily updates), [Operator Starsky](#) (an information officer with the Ukrainian forces), [UATV English](#) (Ukrainian TV news, with eg president Zelensky's daily updates), [TVP World](#) (Polish TV, in English), [Artur Rehi](#) (an Estonian military, active with eg collecting supplies to help Ukraine). Avoid the many unserious accounts, recognised by their wild claims.

### Terror and books

I'm against bans to burn books, including the Quran, but I urge everyone to refrain from it. As you might have seen in the news different people have done a number of Quran burnings in Sweden. It's opportunistic reasons vary. Some dislike the religion of Islam, others don't like immigration, still others want to disrupt Sweden's NATO process. They know book burnings attract maximum attention. Some politicians have demanded that Quran burning or burning any book should be banned, while the government has announced a review of the "public order" laws to see if book burning can be outlawed in some cases.

A demonstration needs police permission, but under the freedom of expression rules of the constitution demonstrations must virtually always be approved. The police earlier tried to deny Quran burnings as a danger to public order, but were smacked on their wrists by courts establishing that it was illegal to deny permission. Swedish freedom of expression laws are rather wide, covered by the Freedom of the Press Act with roots from 1766 (the world's first with constitutional status) and a later Freedom of Expression Act. And constitutional changes need two Riksdag votes - and there's no majority for that - with an election in between.

Freedom of expression is important. It's the way to scrutiny claims to find the truth. It lets opinions clash to find out which one is the most beneficial. It lets new information spread to improve science and enlarge mankind's knowledge base. Since we can't be 100% sure of what is true and beneficial without testing it, even lies and the despicable must be covered by freedom of expression. That includes Mr Trump's right to lie and make a fool of himself, the right of activists to deny that gender lies in the genes, the right to criticise religion, and more.

It includes the right to ridicule, to joke, to satirize, etc - all that are different ways to criticise. Burning a religious or any book is to say: the message here is false. Followers have no right to demand others to "respect" untruth within the pages of a book. (No one has ever the right to demand that others must "respect" wicked opinions. Religious books tend to have plenty, from stoning adulterers to claiming aliens live under volcanoes in the Pacific.) You can and should argue against what you don't like, but shouldn't ban it.

However, in the case of *burning* books we get nauseating flashbacks to Germany in the 1930s, with



Mr & Mrs Zelensky met the Swedish King and Queen.



Well-known Quran burner Rasmus Paludan. He was first, but others have followed.

the demonic Dr Goebbles inciting crowds to burn books. That was as we know a preparation to burn 6 million people in death camps. How can someone be so stupid and insensitive to follow in the footsteps of Nazis? "Where they burn books, they will ultimately burn people too", the German author Heinrich Heine correctly predicted.

If you want to protest against religion, there are better ways. A suggestion is to bring along a dustbin, throw the book there and hold a short speech about why you do it. Throwing things in a dustbin is a clear gesture people often use, so why not!



*So Islamists burn Swedish flags. Local religious leaders entice people, to gain influence and power. Note that their legmen have pretty sturdy watches, probably expensive.*

afterwards) And brain scientists have found mechanisms in the brain that are behind false impressions of a ruling being. A hypothesis that's very credible is that stress, strong emotions and similar disturbs the connections between the brain halves. This causes the illusion that something extra is present, while its only one half of the brain not recognising the other. Certain other sorts of conditions produces similar effects, the feeling of "a presence". Astronomers, physicists and cosmologists dig into the structure of our universe and only find particles, natural laws, and quantum effects. Not a god in sight! Science goes back to a millionth of a second after the Big Bang, which works perfectly well without needing a "creator".

But for my part I don't feel any great need to actively turn against the Bible, Quran, Torah, etc, because interest in religion is dropping by itself. The notion of a supernatural, invisible being running everything loses as it meets science and the modern society. Fanatics burning flags to support imaginary gods are the last flickery flames of such ideas, just as a candle flickers intensely prior to burning out.

Those burning Swedish flags and maybe inciting terror attacks (hope not, it's illogical something claiming to be the Ultimate Good would advocate violence) just try to rally supporters to selfishly gain more power. To find huge significance in trivial acts of symbolism is a sign of unhealthy fanaticism, regarding *both* book and flag burning.

BTW, concerning the right to express and criticise, the electronic private Post Offices of Internet tend to set up their own restrictive private laws called "terms of use". I've noticed how this on eg Youtube produces obstacles to inform about the war in Ukraine, to learn about atrocities committed by Putin's troops, to gather support. Is this kind of censorship reasonable? It's as if Putin's troll factories have decided these rules. Private, restrictive, intolerant "terms of use" are unacceptable! Bans and censorship must remain extreme *exceptions*.

If something is legal to say no private infrastructure company of information distribution should have the right to ban it. They are like a Post Office or government telecom agency, but as private

I'm not religious. I don't believe in any gods (except Roscoe:

<https://fancylopedia.org/Roscoe...>) or any supernatural being the ultimate good, secretly in command of everything - still allowing people to do evil and letting suffering exist. Science has never found any evidence whatsoever for religious beliefs. The "power of praying" has been scientifically tested and its only effect is to some psychological comfort to the practitioner - nothing else. The "miracles" described in religious books have alternate natural explanations, are figments of imagination or are distortions of numerous

mouth to mouth jumps after long delays (the New Testament was written 50-100 years

afterwards) And brain scientists have found mechanisms in the brain that are behind false impressions of a ruling being. A hypothesis that's very credible is that stress, strong emotions and similar disturbs the connections between the brain halves. This causes the illusion that something extra is present, while its only one half of the brain not recognising the other. Certain other sorts of conditions produces similar effects, the feeling of "a presence". Astronomers, physicists and cosmologists dig into the structure of our universe and only find particles, natural laws, and quantum effects. Not a god in sight! Science goes back to a millionth of a second after the Big Bang, which works perfectly well without needing a "creator".



companies they are too sensitive to intolerant "opinions" that feel "uncomfortable". So they tend to gravitate towards the lowest bar for freedom of expression! But if something is debatable it should be debated, not banned!

The real lawmakers should make laws outlawing restrictive "terms of use". A post office shouldn't have opinions about letters or magazines sent, a phone company shouldn't listen to your telephone calls. If you don't like a message, argue against it or use the off button

We see similar tendencies of intolerance for sf conventions BTW. Concoms of certain ideological stance create "Codes of Conduct" to ban anything that may make some "feel uncomfortable". It's preposterous! It's wrong to try to silence opinions through backdoors. Freedom of expression isn't for creating comfort. The most important progress of Mankind has come when and *because* some have felt uncomfortable. Muffling speech is also dangerous. We won't get warnings against poison. We won't learn how to handle it. Making a kindergarten full of pillows makes us stupid and less aware of the world. In rare cases it also happens that the "poison" instead is a valuable nutrient! Constitutional freedoms and the Laws of the Land should apply, nothing else.

## Could You Upgrade Our Subscription, Please?

Last *Intermission* has a little box urging Swedish Women's National Team in football to "grab that metal" in the ladies' World Cup. And they did!

The valkyrians from the North did pretty well, eliminating two former world champs, the US and Japan, from the tournament...but loosing to Spain in the semi. Well, though the Spaniards were slightly better the game should at least have gone to extra time. Spain's winning goal was *offside* by a couple of light years! A young Swedish fan made newspaper headlines by reporting the game's referee to our Justice Ombudsman. "It wasn't fair! I must do something" he explained.



OK, perhaps less than a light year, but offside it was...

Unfortunately JO has no jurisdiction over sports. We may get our revenge Sep 22, when we meet Spain in the Nations League, a good chance as Spanish football is in chaos now due to a scandal with their head honcho groping a player in the SpainWNT.

Anyway, Swedish Women's National Team had a far from ideal opponent in the bronze medal game: hosts Australia, on their home turf, in front of 50 000 Aussies throwing boomerangs, drinking XXXX, wearing koala masks! Not an easy task...

But we shouldn't have to worry!

The blonde bombers dominated. They are pros. *Chelsea's* Musovic kept her net clean with 3-4 terrific saves. *Arsenal's* Blackstenius caused a penalty being tripped in the box, and *Barcelona's* Rolfö put it in the net. Blackstenius again in the second half found *Milan's* Asllani with a superbe pass, and she hit the right corner of the Aussie net with a powerful, precise shot. So, sorry mates! (BTW, Spain beat England for the gold next day. Felicidades! Not for the mentioned scandal, though.)

This was the *fourth* World Cup bronze medal for the Swedish soccer girls. We have a subscription to that particular metallic mix. *Could you upgrade our subscription next time, please?*

An interesting effect of a good (while not perfect) WC campaign by the Swedish Women's National Team is that they climbed to #1 spot in FIFA's world ranking! Their algorithms reflect results over a longer period, that's why new world champs Spain are "only" #2 (they may reach #1 later). Former #1 US and #2 Germany had a bad WC and dropped behind SweWNT. The Swedish footy women have one Euro gold from way back in the 1980's, one WC silver and two Olympic silvers. They are consistently among medal candidates.

rk	Team	Total Points	Previous Points	+/−	Posit
1	Sweden	2069.17	2049.71	19.46	▲
2	Spain	2051.84	2002.28	49.56	▲
3	USA	2051.21	2090.03	-38.82	▼
4	England	2030.14	2040.76	-10.62	▼
5	France	2004.17	2026.65	-22.48	▼

Their team deserve a lump of gold one day, don't you agree! Crown Princess Victoria agreed and therefore invited them to the Royal Palace as they returned. The boy in a yellow team jersey in front is the son prince Oscar.



## **How to Write "Science" Stories** by Hugo Gernsback

*(originally in Writer's Digest, Feb 1930 - Hugo did a few issues of an sf detective mag)*

In modern detection of crime, the X-ray machine, test-tubes, bunsen-burners, the microphotograph, the spectrograph, the spectrophotometer and the polarizer are preceding the baton and police whistle in usefulness. As the pioneer in publicizing these advances in criminal-detection, and in educating both police and public, Scientific Detective Monthly is performing invaluable duties.

The primary aim of this magazine is to interest and entertain. Apart from the fact that all material must deal with scientific detection of crime, no editorial foibles and policies exist against which the writer so often battles in vain. There is only one editorial dictum—scientific accuracy. That accomplished, the author can give his imagination free reign.

Realizing that Scientific Detective Monthly, published at 96 Park Place, New York, is exploring a new field of action, I have prepared for the readers of WRITER'S DIGEST the following lengthy treatise on the Scientific Detective Story. Let it be understood, in the first place, that a science fiction story must be an exposition of a scientific theme and it must be also a story. As an exposition of a scientific theme, it must be reasonable and logical and must be based upon known scientific principles. You have a perfect right to use your imagination as you will in developing the principles, but the fundamental scientific theory must be correct.

As a story, it must be interesting. Even though you are making a description of some dry scientific apparatus, invention or principle, you should never bore your reader by making your description dry or uninteresting. A really good writer arranges descriptions so that they will always be interesting.

The rules that are given here are recommended for your careful consideration.

Scientific detection of crime offers writers the greatest opportunity and most fertile field since the detective first appeared in fiction. Radio, chemistry, physics, bacteriology, medicine, microscopy - every branch of science can be turned to account. The demand for this material is large, the supply is small. But authors who wish to capitalize on this new source of income must be careful to follow certain well-defined principles. These may be explained by setting forth a list of rules: What To Do, and, as the colored character in Octavus Roy Cohen's story says, "What To Don't."

Here are some hints that will increase your remuneration very materially, and will insure your manuscripts a thorough reading and prompt report.

(1) A Scientific Detective Story is one in which the method of crime is solved, or the criminal traced, by the aid of scientific apparatus or with the help of scientific knowledge possessed by the detective or his coworkers.

(2) A crime so ingenious, that it requires scientific methods to solve it, usually is committed with scientific aid and in a scientific manner. Therefore the criminal, as well as the detective, should possess some scientific knowledge. You will see that this is not an absolute essential to a good story; a scientific detective can use science in tracing the perpetrator of an ordinary crime, but judicious use of science by both criminal and detective heightens the interest because it puts the two combatants on a more equal plane.

(3) As most of our readers are scientifically minded, the methods used by criminal or detective must be rational, logical and feasible. Now, this does not limit the author's imagination; he can develop many imaginative uses of science, provided they are reasonable. For example: one author sent us a story of a man who rendered himself invisible by painting his clothes and face with a non-light reflecting paint. By explaining some of the laws of light and color he made this accomplishment sound plausible, as indeed it is. But he forgot to mention the shadow which is naturally cast by any object standing in the light, whether or not it is visible to our eyes. Readers of our magazine pick us up on these little details. To avoid such mistakes in writing, which really arise from lack of thought, consider your story from every angle before you write your final copy.

(4) What description of clouds and sunsets was to the old novelist, description of scientific apparatus and methods is to the modern Scientific Detective writer. Here again the author must remember that his work will be read by competent scientists among our readers; and, without careful reference to the encyclopedia, no descriptions of scientific instruments should be included in your stories. If you are not in touch with a Public Library, it is advisable to buy a few really good reference books. Criminoscientific fiction has come to stay and your investment will pay you dividends.

(5) A scientific crime is, ipso facto, a mysterious one. Do not underestimate the value of mystery and suspense in your stories; but remember that it is not necessary to commit wholesale slaughter in order to obtain these effects. A story is a good story when the reader can imagine himself threatened by the same peril as the characters in the tale. I can imagine myself killed by a diabolical bacteriologist—I find it harder to visualize wholesale destruction by a mythical organization. The latter is less personal and individual. Your object is to project scientific diablerie into truthful settings.

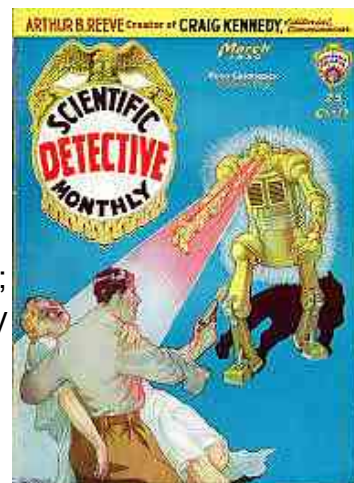
(6) For your own sake, avoid hackneyed characterization. Keep clear of fair-haired, blue-eyed Irishmen; long, lanky, keen-eyed, dark-complexioned clean-cut Americans, et al. Although good characterization helps a story, better none than poor ones.

(7) With the advancement of science, the criminal-in-fact is turning scientific as well as the criminal-in-fiction. Therefore we prophesy that Scientific Detective fiction will supersede all other types. In fact, the ordinary gangster and detective story will be relegated into the background in a very few years. It is worth your while, then, to study this new development carefully, devoting all your time and efforts towards turning out good stories of this type. Literary history is now in the making, and the pioneers in this field will reap large rewards.

A few Don'ts must be remembered if you are to turn out a good story. Here are some:

(a) Don't look through your old manuscripts and tack scientific endings to them. A Scientific Detective Story is a particular type, in which the scientific atmosphere is coherent and permeating right through the tale. To write really good fiction, saturate yourself with the required atmosphere. Read scientific books, visit chemical laboratories and electrical engineering shops. When you are charged with scientific enthusiasm, then sit down and write your stuff.

(b) Don't make your professor, if you have one, talk like a military policeman or an Eighth Avenue "cop." Don't put cheap jokes in his mouth. Read semi-technical magazines and reports of speeches to get the flavor of academic phraseology.



(c) Don't drag in television. It is worked to death and there are so many better appliances you can use in your stories.

(d) What you are not sure about—look up at the library. Don't make your criminal or detective sit down at a table and twirl dials and snap switches without an explanation of what these are for, and why they are operated by the character. Your readers want to know about this; and it gives you a good chance to pad your story legitimately from a scientific text book. Scientific Detective Stories are easy to write once you grasp the swing of them.

(e) Don't fall into the misapprehension that, because your story has plenty of science in it, a plot is therefore unnecessary. The science improves the plot - not vice-versa.

(f) Break up your story into action, dialogue, and description. So many lines of one, so many of another. If you have a long descriptive passage to write, interlope some action, as, for example:

*"- -so the machine works best in an atmosphere of seventy degrees." The Professor crossed the room, closing the copper contact as he passed it. "The higher level of the atmosphere is cold," he continued quickly: "When the machine - -" etc.*

(g) Don't underestimate the importance of properly-prepared manuscripts. Not only is the easy-to-read manuscript favoured by editors; but care in typing and layout will induce careful and orderly thought in your actual writing. Short lines are easier to read than long ones; this is due to a well-known optical law. Therefore, leave a wide margin on the left-hand side of your page. You will find it much more remunerative to write one story well and carefully, than three rapidly and carelessly. Therefore edit and retype before submitting manuscripts. Clean the type bar of your typewriter. Triple spacing is even better than double. Give an accurate word count on the title page. Don't put in your own captions or chapter heads; we do this after the story is in type. (h) Don't imitate other writers. Many a story is rejected simply because it is too "close" to another one.

(i) Don't name your characters after those in well-known books. Since Van Dine's books appeared, Adas and Sibellas are appearing in every editorial office. We wish to be introduced to some other ladies.

(j) Don't "splurge." Our office is full of stories that are the "greatest, most terrible, fearful, mysterious, world-shaking mysteries of the age." These stories are usually bad; because, in order to make them sensational to the editorial staff, the author has gone beyond the limits of reason. Besides, we cannot fill a book with superlatives. Many (in fact most) scientific murders are little known, are buried deep in public ignorance. Write stories of which the reader will say: "By Gosh! that might have happened right in this town, and no one heard of it." If you have a good idea, in scientific detection of crime, your story will interest us and our readers. That is all we want.

(k) Don't think that Scientific Detective Stories are hard to write. You are working on virgin ground. The whole field of science is your oyster to open with your pen and extract the pearl of steady work and good pay.

Finally, before you mail your manuscript to us, submit it to some local professor or authority on science, or to a physics teacher, to check the scientific principles involved. If you have studied a text book before writing your story, your theme will probably sound logical and sensible.

Remember that short stories should run from 8000 to 20,000 words; serials 50,000 to 60,000 words. The rate of payment is from one-quarter to one-half cent a word, depending on the value of the story. Higher prices are paid for exceptional stories.

When you have finished the first draft of your manuscript, hold it for a few days. Then read it over carefully and see if you have left any points unexplained, and threads tangled. Although you must try to avoid "giving away" the secret of the mystery at the start, your finale must clear up everything completely; so that the reader understands just what has happened.

The whole secret of scientific fiction lies in reading about your subject before you start your story. Get an idea of what the murderer is going to do and how he will do it before you even put a word on paper. Then think out what clues the detective will find, and what scientific apparatus or methods he will use to trace the criminal. If you have a mental vision of your story before hand, and the scientific

details at your finger tips, the story will almost write itself as you work.

I have gone through this subject at length, because I am very much interested in having our writers become successful. As time goes on, you will see certain writers forging steadily to the front and gaining a reputation and a following. Those are the authors who have spent a good deal of time and effort in the construction of their early stories, making them works of art from every point of view.

## History Corner

*Intermission* has covered Hugo Gernsback (1884-1967) many times in earlier issues, but we're not finished with this fascinating figure!

Hugo was a radio pioneer, inventor (80 patents), business man, visionary, publishing giant, and instrumental in making sf a distinct market genre - and also publisher of magazines for...sex. His title *Sexology* was far more successful than *Amazing Stories*, selling up to 200 000 copies. (It had a short lived companion too, *Sexologia*.)

After coming to the US from Luxembourg he began importing and selling radio equipment, and his electronics catalogues led him into magazines, as more and more facts and fiction sneaked into them. He became a real publishing tycoon founding ca 60 magazines, publishing electronics guides, books (himself writing three sf novels, of varying quality...) and for over 30 years small Xmas publications as little booklets (size ca 12.5X16cm, 26-36 pages) full of parody and wild technological speculations.

He did early TV experiments, claimed he "invented" radar already in 1911, was knighted back in Luxembourg and his rather silly novel *Ralph12ROTFL4+* (or whatever the title was) was full of wild technical gadgetry. He founded the Wireless Association of America in 1909, which attained, one source says, 23 400 members! (More here <https://www.rfcafe.com/references/radio-craft/wireless-radio-association-america-radio-craft-january-1947.htm> ).

In [https://www.nutsvolts.com/magazine/article/the\\_man\\_who\\_invented\\_the\\_future](https://www.nutsvolts.com/magazine/article/the_man_who_invented_the_future) we get a summary of his early life and how he came to America:

*He wired the family home with telephone-intercoms and a 6 volt lighting system. He was soon installing door buzzers and intercoms in neighbours' homes and was commissioned to set up a complicated system of buzzers in a nearby convent. When he was 10, Gernsback experienced a bizarre event. After reading American astronomer Percival Lowell's book about Mars, he was so overwhelmed by the possibility of life on the Red Planet that he fell into a two-day delirium, babbling incessantly about Martians and their technology. This obsession shaped his life. Following his basic education, Gernsback was enrolled in a boarding school in Brussels. He mastered all he studied, including English. He read Western novels, including the works of Mark Twain, which fueled a desire to go to America. Gernsback next studied electrical engineering in Germany, where he perfected a portable radio-telegraph transmitter and a high amperage, dry-cell battery that he was convinced would make him rich. In 1904, he bought a first class ticket to Hoboken, NJ, taking with him two models of his battery and \$100.00 from his family. The young man made his way to New York, where he distributed business cards with the name "Huck Gernsbacher." (He borrowed the name from his favourite character, Huckleberry Finn). After receiving US patent #842,950 for his battery, he sold the rights to the Packard Motor Company.*

While someone traced the first arbitrary use of the term "science-fiction" to a 19th century British writer - one William Wilson, 1850 - it was Hugo who really coined it so it stuck. He used the term in his *Electrical Experimenter* as early as 1916. Though he preferred "scientifiction" (those who knew him credit him for humour, wit and puns) when he founded *Amazing Stories* in 1926, he reverted to "science fiction" when he began with *Wonder Stories* in 1929. The new magazine came after he had been forced away from *Amazing* through bankruptcy proceedings. Hugo was reluctant to pay creditors - and authors. There are conflicting theories. Some suggest he orchestrated his own bankruptcy to get rid of debts, since his economy let him bounce back with a new magazine. But [https://www.nutsvolts.com/magazine/article/the\\_man\\_who\\_invented\\_the\\_future](https://www.nutsvolts.com/magazine/article/the_man_who_invented_the_future) claims:

*Just as Gernsback's publishing empire reached its peak, disaster struck. Like many publishers, Gernsback paid for printing the current issues of his magazines only after receiving the revenues from the preceding*



Hugo Gernsback as a teenager.

issues. A larger competitor convinced printers and other creditors to demand immediate payment, which forced Gernsback into bankruptcy. Unwilling to give up, he sold the Electro Importing Company and WRNY to stake a new publishing company,

I found a perhaps additional piece of the puzzle. Just before Hugo lost *Amazing* in early 1929, he lost his young daughter in a tragic accident! NY Times wrote Nov 19 1928,

<https://www.nytimes.com/1928/11/19/archives/taxi-kills-a-child-retrieving-pennies-daughter-of-hugo-gernsback.html>



Gernsback's 1947 Xmas zine was a parody of Popular Mechanics.

**"LAMPLIFIER"**  
The Lamp that has EVERYTHING

AT last—the lamp that amplifies good living and convenience—a super space saver. Why clutter your small parlor with a dozen space-consuming pieces of furniture and odds and ends? Lamplifier is the first and ONLY 12-in-1 Lamp ever designed. Here's what you get, lamping from North to South:

1. A stunning three bulb floor lamp.
2. A superb canary cage with LIVE bird.
3. Gorgeous lamp shade with six panels for transparent photos of your family. (Send snapshots of your rogues gallery—we'll treat 'em.)
4. One revolving F.M.-A.M.-P.M. radio.
5. One revolving candy tray tablette.
6. One revolving 3-foot table, with 2 hooch bottles (specify your own likker) and six glasses.
7. One revolving phone table (we provide phone).
8. One revolving umbrella stand, with two umbrellas, (ladies & gents).
9. One ash tray (storing silver) attached to umbrella stand.
10. One revolving magazine rack. (It revolves with umbrella stand.)
11. One flower bowl—water for flowers comes automatically from umbrella drippings.
12. Six ball-bearing casters, to move LAMPLIFIER to location wanted.

Nothing gets in the way—the radio, all tables, magazine rack—umbrella stand—all revolve around central lamp shaft.

We deliver anywhere in the U.N. Order today and remember our slogan: "You will be a happy buyer, if you buy a LAMPLIFIER." **\$79** f.o.b. factory Lampe, Mo.

**THE LAMPLIFIER CORPORATION, LAMPETER, PA.**

Gernsback gives us this, shall we call it, Swiss Army Lamp doing a bit of everything. (From *Popular Neckanics*.)

**TAXI KILLS A CHILD RETRIEVING PENNIES;** Daughter of Hugo Gernsback Darts Away From Nurse for Coins She Had Dropped...Retracing her steps to pick up some pennies she had dropped while crossing

West End Avenue at Ninetieth Street Yesterday afternoon, while in the care of a nursemaid, Bennett Gernsback, three-year-old daughter of Hugo Gernsback, manager of radio station WRNY, was killed by a taxicab.

One can imagine that the father was devastated by this and wasn't in top shape to manoeuvre in complicated business dealings. Google reveals that he married three times, to Rose Harvey in 1906, Dorothy Kantrowitz in 1921, and Mary Hancher in 1951. Bennett would have been his child with the middle wife. (Beside this he had another daughter and one son but I find no info with which wives.)

But for us fans the most important is that Gernsback's magazines established sf as a separate genre, from which skiffy as we know it developed. Hugo Gernsback has thus been both called the Father of SF and given his name to the main genre award, the Hugos. (Unless someone steps up on the stage and shouts "Gernsback

was a bloody fascist" and historyless halfwits declare that the Hugo is renamed the Minorities Identity Award.)

It doesn't matter much that Hugo's own idea of the genre was that it should consist of fictionalised patent applications. He once said that the "ideal sf story should be 75% fiction interwoven with 25% science" – or was it the other way around? For us fans it's equally important that his activities helped founding fandom, through printing readers' mail with addresses, so fen could reach each other, and in 1934 by founding the Science Fiction League.

This zine has reproduced excerpts of his Xmas publication *Forecast* showing he had the most vivid imagination. The publication was sent to thousands of business contacts and acquaintances (5-6000 copies were printed) and came 1932-1966, originally under different titles each year, in the form of parodies of known magazines. It got the fixed name *Forecast* from 1952, which it kept until the end.

(I've only seen the 1954-57 issues of it, from <https://archive.org/> but would love to see more if someone has more!) Hugo made fun of other magazines, eg *Popular Mechanics* as *Popular Neckanics* "dedicated to love and solving its great mystery" (sex again). From <https://invention.si.edu/hugo-gernsbacks-unconventional-inventions>

In *Popular Neckanics* Magazine, he wrote, "it was a sad state of affairs that the great mechanical and electronic engineering minds have been so remiss in tracing down love and solving its riddle." Chastising scientists, he said, "instead they chase of all things, the atom and dissect and split that, when Love radiation is a far greater devastator than a million Atom bombs." Gernsback lamented that he had become disgusted with science, even though he, too, was a scientist.

On the lighter side, however, *Popular Neckanics* Magazine, which was "requestered in the U.N. Potent Office and Canards" and cited Houg Sengbrack as the "exitor and publisher," highlighted how much Gernsback enjoyed a good play on words. The issue is filled with inventions and gadgets from robot-steered cars to squirrel sharpeners and is written "so you can't understand it." The *Plaslastic Expanso Bag*, *TinCan-Can*, *Lamplifier*, and *Stovepipe Hair Dryer* illustrate the ridiculous and yet practical. Who doesn't need a bag that can carry groceries and a child? And reusing tin cans is a "green" approach.



Other Gernsback Xmas parodies include *Saturday Evening Host* (1938), *Radiocracy* (1943), *Harpy's Bizarre* (1944), *Tame - the weakly newsmagazine* (1945), *Digest of Digest* (1946), *Jolliers* (1948), *the Notional Weakly* (1948), *Quip* (1949 - a "Martian issue"), *Newspeek* (1950) *Quip* showed the balloon-chested Martians of Frank R Paul once created:



A spread of Hugo's Xmas booklets, from Felicia Kreuzer. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abHvoAqktp4> It gave a 48-page account of the exploration of the planet Mars by "Grego Banshuck" and his crew, and of the life of the Martians, as depicted by Gernsback's long-service artist once beloved of s-f fans. One of the peculiar features of life on Mars: "There is, of course, no money, no such vicious, cancerous outgrowth as interest on money, no taxes. Consequently there is no such thing as business, as we know the term, because on Mars no one can make a profit . . . Whatever is produced belongs to the race."

Science Fantasy Review <https://efanzines.com/FR/sfr18.htm> wrote about Hugo's Xmas booklets that "Over 5,000 copies have been printed for the publisher's friends in and out of the radio, electronic and television industry. Please do not send money for extra copies - the booklet is NOT for sale. Requests for single copies...will be filled as long as the supply lasts."

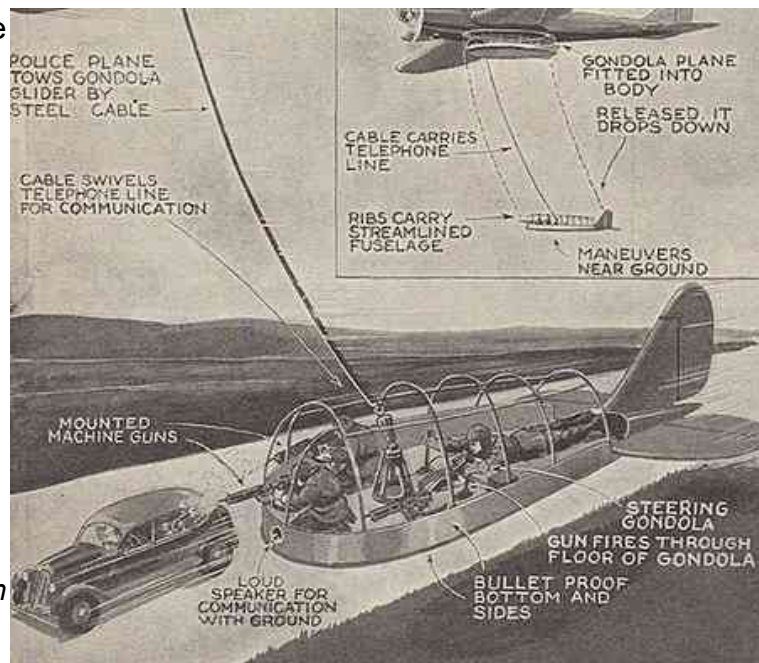
His Xmas booklets are also covered here: <https://www.erbzine.com/mag14/1464a.html>

1930s was the gangster decade. The gangsters had Thompson sub-machine guns and the fastest cars. But Hugo knew how to get to them, as we discover in one Xmas booklet: a machine gun pod lowered from an aeroplane! Imagine the pod rocking wildly with seasick officers happily spraying

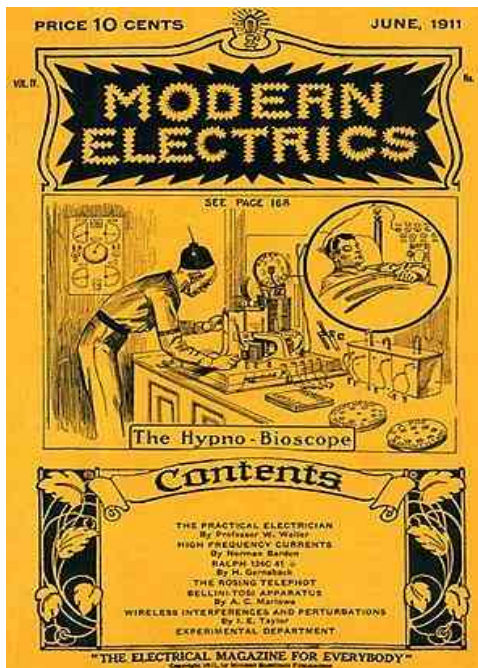
bullets around! Maybe they should have it in Ukraine now, to deal with the gangsters on the rampage there! Hugo's imagination had few limits! In his first magazine *Modern Electrics* we meet the "hypnobioscope" that will teach you things during sleep.

[https://www.cracked.com/article\\_29067\\_5-modern-historys-dumbest-inventions-came-from-one-guy.html](https://www.cracked.com/article_29067_5-modern-historys-dumbest-inventions-came-from-one-guy.html)! reports:

*This invention would transmit words straight into the waiting brains of the sleeping subjects. The learners would wear a headband full of metal plates while they slept. Thin wires would run out of it and into a machine, where an operator would insert black film covered in mysterious wavy white lines, containing all the information you'd want to know.*

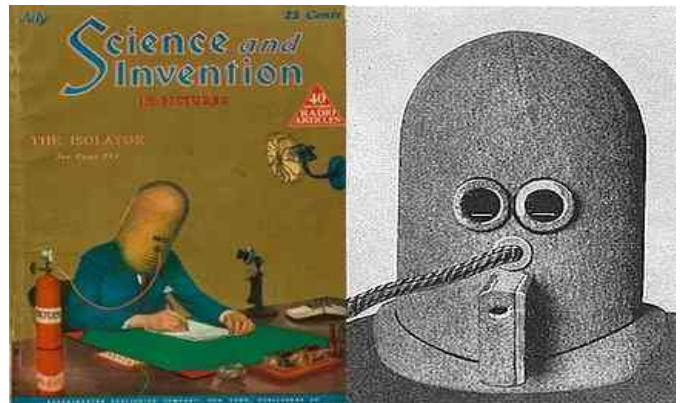


*A Forecast: Gangster-fighting pod, but it looks rather wobbly. Wouldn't it be easier to get the police faster cars?*



To create all these benefits to mankind, Hugo needed peace and quiet so he could think. So what is more natural than to put on something similar to a heavy diving helmet to lock out all irritating sounds (like authors demanding their pay). So Hugo created the "Isolator". Extra oxygen will make your brain cells run in turbo mode:

*The product boasts a perfectly airtight and soundproof container for your head, so not a single obnoxious whisper, car horn, or fire alarm can penetrate your concentration. While you might think that impending suffocation is actually a far better choice than being forced to finish your paperwork -- Hugo doesn't let you off that easily. The helmet itself is equipped with an oxygen tank to fuel*



*your body with the necessary atmospheric components that this chamber so professionally blocks out.*

Hugo was also a prophet of warfare. *Science Fantasy Review* Vol4 #18 (see above) had an article by a Thomas Sheridan:

*The use of rockets in warfare, and their development for extra-terrestrial flight, were other Gernsback visions which have come true. The A-bomb? During the second year of World War I he wrote a piece in The Electrical Experimenter in which he visualised what might happen "when the scientists of 100 years hence begin making war on each other. Suppose that by that time our scientists have solved the puzzle of the atom and have succeeded in liberating its prodigious forces ... The results will be overwhelmingly astounding . . ." And he painted a gruesome picture of an "Atom Gun" in the hands of a would-be Emperor of the World, of a fleet of "Radium Destroyers" which, by "setting off spontaneously the dormant energy of the atom," might dissipate a city of 300,000 souls (population of Hiroshima when the Bomb fell: 320,000) in "a titanic vapour cloud, (leaving) only a vast crater in the ground ... After this demonstration the enemy sues for peace; resistance would be folly." In '15, he agreed that all this might seem "very fantastical," but thought it "not only very possible but highly probable." Thirty years later the world was duly astounded - and overwhelmed...the first atomicentury." Dated 2045, it put the first atom-powered rocket to the Moon in 1972, World War III in '75, to be followed by world government. (The war, waged by Asia against the Western world, was won in six weeks by the Americans turning their giant Lunar mirrors on Hyderabad and vaporising the city.) By 2040, man had reached Venus.*

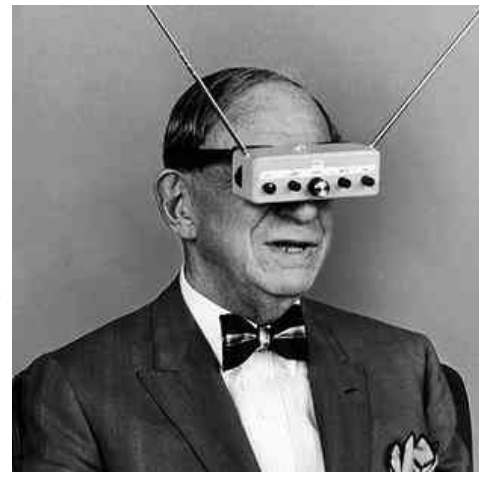




The same article tells about a Gernsbackian invention in publishing:

*In '37 he produced New Ideas as "the first scented magazine": as they riffled through it, a pleasant odour wafted into readers' nostrils from the perfumed printer's ink of its pages. The smell didn't last longer than four issues—but the idea was taken up, years later, in newspaper adverts. for scent. He had pioneered again.*

You have probably seen Hugo's VR glasses, presented in *Life* in 1963. But they were only a mock-up, even if Gernsback thought they could be constructed for real. Real Soon Now: <https://spectrum.ieee.org/the-man-who-invented-vr-goggles-50-years-too-soon>



Hugo's Newsweek parody 1950 also talked about war.

*feeling that the electronics industry was catching up with his New Deal-era concepts, he orders some of his employees to build a mock-up. The teleyeglasses weighed about 140 grams and were built around small cathode-ray tubes that ran on low-voltage current from tiny batteries. (The user faced no danger of being electrocuted, Gernsback promised.) Because there was a separate screen for each eye, it could display stereoscopic images*



*H. Gernsback, Editor of RADIO NEWS, receiving the television broadcasts from WRNY home in New York City, with the simple apparatus described in this article. For purp test, the neon tube and loud speaker were connected in series temporarily, with operation simultaneously.*

The WRNY radio station Hugo started in 1925 went on the air on June 12 the same year (on 1120 KHz), with Lee De Forest among the inaugural speakers. It used a studio in New York's Roosevelt Hotel. The 500W transmitter was placed in New Jersey. De Forest was the inventor of the first radio tube amplifier.

Hugo was also a broadcast TV pioneer. As a technology publisher Gernsback became acquainted with many of the world's leading scientists, like Marconi, Goddard, Tesla, Oberth and even Edison. Especially Tesla: "He was in literal awe



*32 line Baird disk TV. Hugo's 48 lines was slightly better.*

of Tesla whose ideas he viewed as mankind's salvation". When he died Hugo ordered a "death mask" of Tesla which he would keep in his office. (With space theoreticians Oberth. He may have discussed the American Interplanetary Society (later American Rocket Society) with space pioneer Oberth. ERBzine (see above) writes.

*Gernsback fostered formation in 1930 of the earliest interplanetary society (later the American Rocket Society), and published the first journal devoted to space conquest (now entitled Jet Propulsion). He conceived of orbiting man-carrying space stations in 1929.*

Hugo's experimented with TV by his WRNY station was perhaps first in the US attempting a regular daily sort of schedule? (OK, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WRGB> may have been a few months earlier, but digging around we find their programming was just 3x30 min/week with only 24 scan lines. WRNY was daily AFIAM.) Hugo used the Baird rotating disk system, in a design by John Geloso of the Pilot Electric Company. The superior electronic TV tubes weren't available for several years. The system used 24 inch, 48 line scanning

disks that rotated at 450 rpm. An article in NY Times implies the first test was made Aug 11, while regular daily program would begin Aug 18 (but Gernsback's own *Radio News* says Aug 21). It's unknown how long WRNY continued with it. The premiere transmission showed the face of Mrs John Geloso and was seen by 500 people at NY University. The picture above shows Hugo watching - screen probably ca 1.5 inch - also made into the *Radio News* cover. ERBzine:

*Gernsback published plans for a receiver in Science and Invention and invited radio amateurs to tune in to daily five minute broadcasts. His newest magazine, Television, estimated that there were some 2,000 viewers that summer.*

Hugo estimated that there were 2000 TV receivers (Baird disk system) in the area reachable by WRNY. (If it was based on how many TV assembling sets or plans he had sold, the real figure is much lower - the majority won't finish building!). "The "five minutes" were more like five minute slots per show.

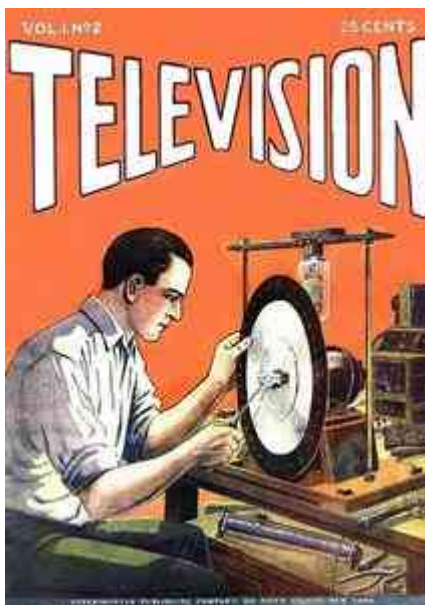
The Nov 1928 issue of Gernsback's own *Radio News* (<https://worldradiohistory.com/Archive-Radio-News/20s/Radio-News-1928-11.pdf>) wrote:

*Television images are broadcast...the first five minutes of every hour the station is on the air...WRNY now televises the following: faces of living people, the WRNY placard previously mentioned, a moving toy monkey, and a moving "rolypoly man"...The person to be televised sits in a cloth-covered booth facing the photoelectric cells, which are arranged in a triangle in a wooden frame, through the centre is an opening about six inches square...on the other side of the frame is a flat aluminum scanning disc, 24 inches in diameter pierced by a spiral of 48 holes. Those rotates at the rate of 450 revolutions per minute in front of a powerful electric arc, the light of which fall on the fact of the subject...these rays of light are reflected into the photoelectric cells*

It's difficult to make out exactly what those programs were. But hearing of of time slots of 5 minutes, "images", that it all comes from a small booth and knowing the technology was very limited, makes it probable that a "show" would be 5 minutes of silent still pictures or with limited movement from the



First "regular" TV schedule from WRNY of 21 aug. TV mixed with radio programs.

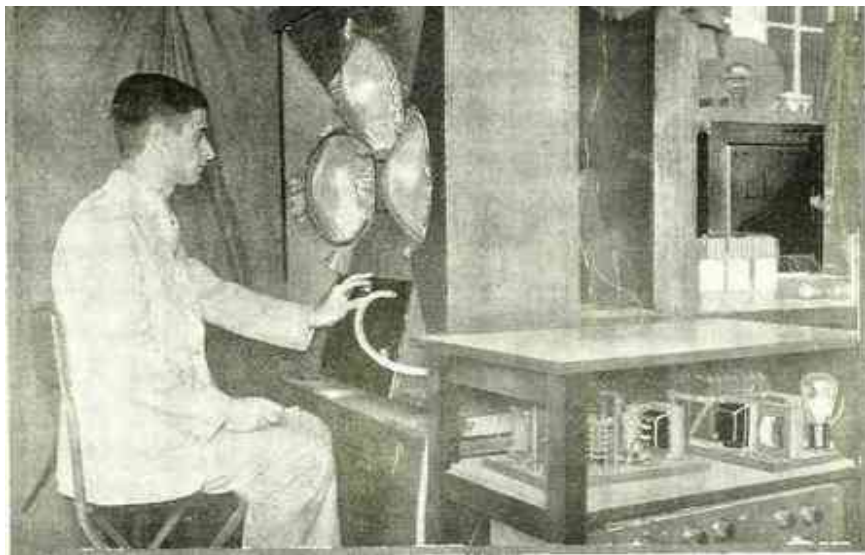


Hugo's first TV mag. Hobbyist broadcasts. His newest magazine, tinker with a scanning disk. Television, estimated that there were some 2,000 viewers that summer.

radio program to follow for 25 or 55 minutes of an ordinary radio program, sound only. It must be so as they only transmitted on one frequency and sound to TV pictures would need two. So seeing the schedule we find:

11.30 stills of or silent close ups of the "Volga Instrumental Trio", 11.35-12.p.m a radio show with said trio, 12.30 One Tommy Sparks sitting silent in that booth, perhaps moving a little, 12.35 Tommy Sparks singing as a radio show. And so on.

That's how it should work, logically. Gernsback's TV was still quite experimental, but it must have been exciting for the few dozen who had actually built the rotating disk-TV sets!



WRNY's TV studio. John Geloso who built it is adjusting controls. Thing or person to be shown must be right in front of the optics.

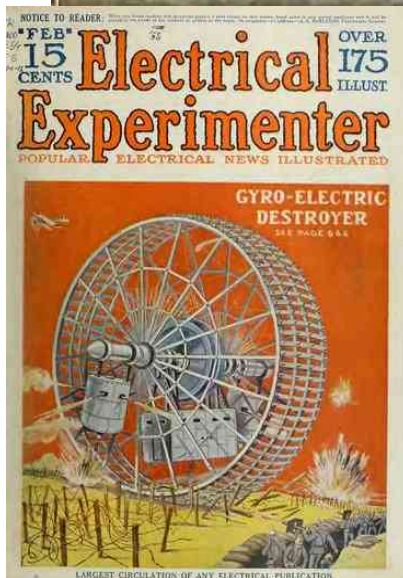
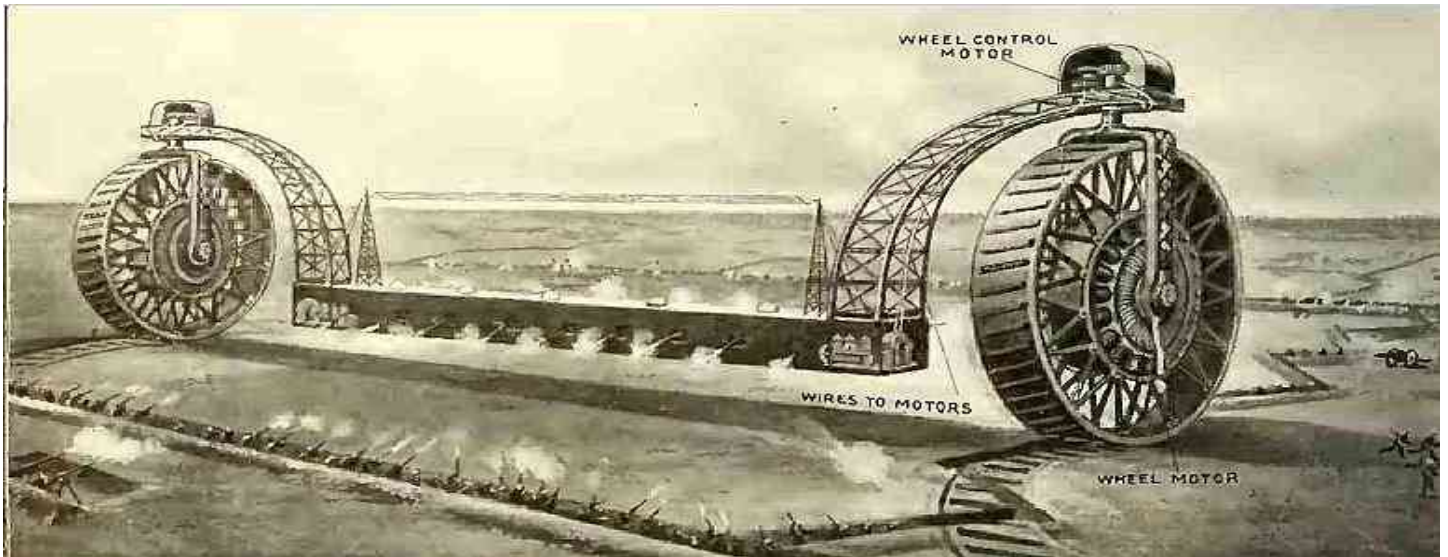
Back to wacky inventions...

Hugo had great visions! Really huge! As the trench warfare began in Europe, Hugo had the solution (the article is signed "H Gernsback"): a truly huge "trench tractor" full of guns. It looks like 300 metres wide, and the text estimates it to weigh 10 000 tons! It's difficult to see how on Earth it could ever work. From *Science and Inventions*, Feb 1916.

In *The Electrical Experimenter* one year later, Feb 1917, Hugo had come to his senses and devised a slightly smaller machine. But it would probably have its problems too... The Russian Tsar Army tried something similar early in WWI, but the project was abandoned.

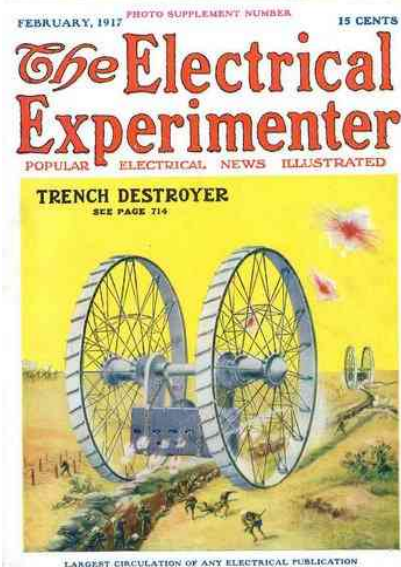
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsar\\_Tank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsar_Tank) This construction was simply too clumsy and heavy. Take out a few of the wheel struts and the vehicle might collapse.

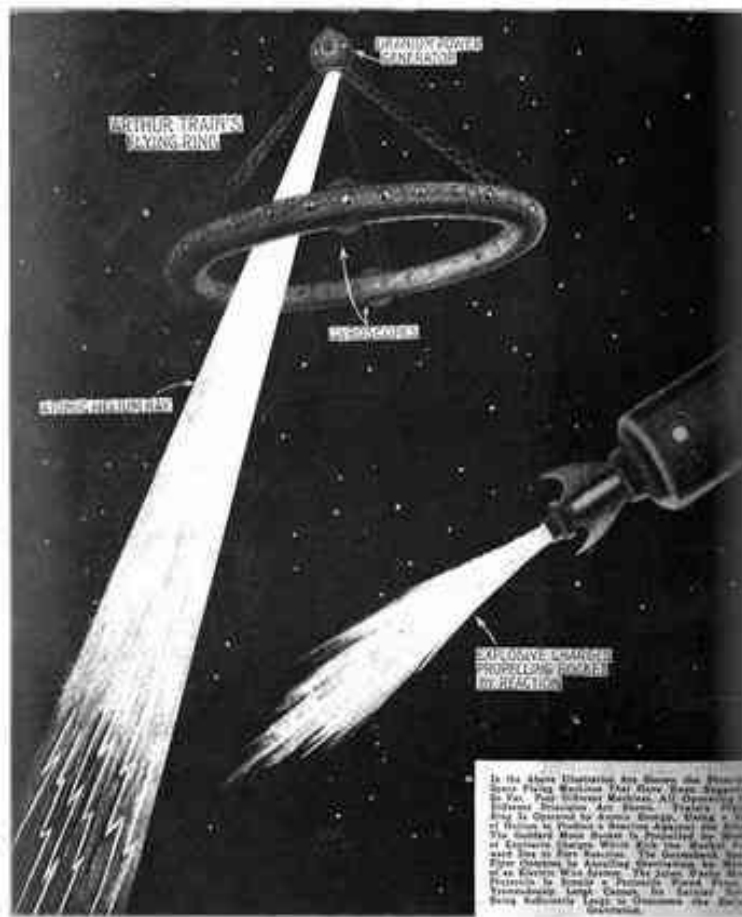
But Hugo didn't give up. Exactly one year later, Feb 1918, *Electrical Experimenter* presented the



"gyro-electric destroyer". Hugo must have been obsessed with trench warfare. In *Electrical Experimenter* Oct 1918 he wanted to fill trenches with remotely controlled "automatic soldiers": a series of remote controller machine gun pods. There's perhaps nothing wrong with the idea, except that it seems very expensive and if the trench still is taken the huge investment is wasted.

Hugo was early into space flight. *Electrical Experimenter* Apr 1921 he summarises different suggested space propulsion systems. Note that "Arthur Train's Flying Ring" uses a "Uranium Power Reactor". Space (in this zine, not the universe)





## Flying In Space

By H. GERNSBACH

**T**WENTY-FIVE years ago mechanical flight was discussed seriously by scientists all over the world. Many minutes of great authority demonstrated mathematically that it was absolutely impossible for a man to fly a machine heavier than air. Eminent men of science sustained this view. None withstanding all this, we are flying today

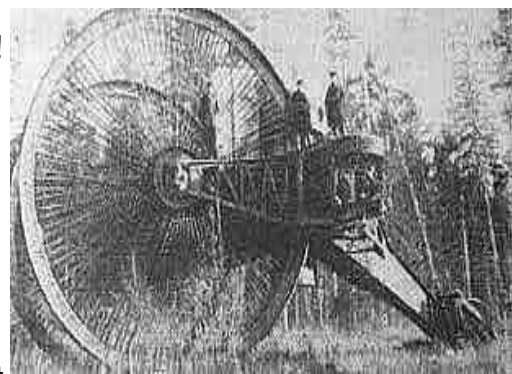
at will and we are building airplanes that can rise thousands of feet and transport one hundred people over great distances. As usual our scientists were not correct as to what can or cannot be done. The next step will be flying out into the atmosphere, but flying in space where there is nothing to sustain a machine and where propellers and planes are no longer

of use, because where there is no air there can be no mechanical flight as we know it today. The full thickness of the earth's atmosphere is roughly speaking about 100 miles. This makes the densest layer from the earth's surface to the outer space, where there is an absolute vacuum, but our airplanes proper is probably not thicker than

1290

won't allow to go through every propulsion system. Verne's cannon and Goddard's rocket are mentioned, but Hugo's own suggestion is a giant sphere "annulling gravitation by means of an electrical wire system" - as if that would work!

Hugo knew the future for road traffic too. In 1973 (unknown month) *Science & Invention* presented "The Automobile of 1973". It could fly through a set of ridiculous propellers, it balanced on two wheels and its headlights shone in all directions. Somehow, the motor shows must have missed this revolutionary car in 1973...



A prototype of the big-wheeled "Tsar tank" was actually built.

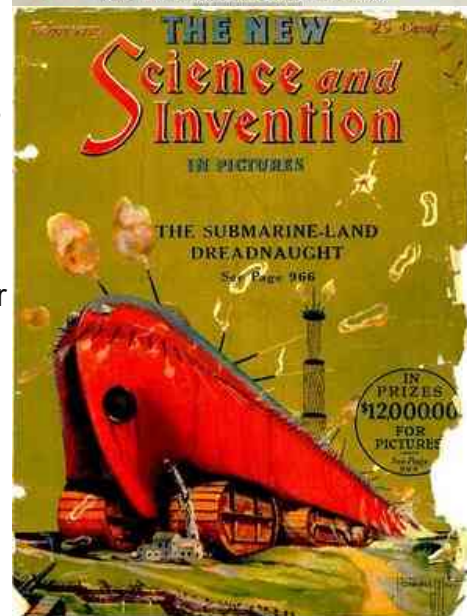
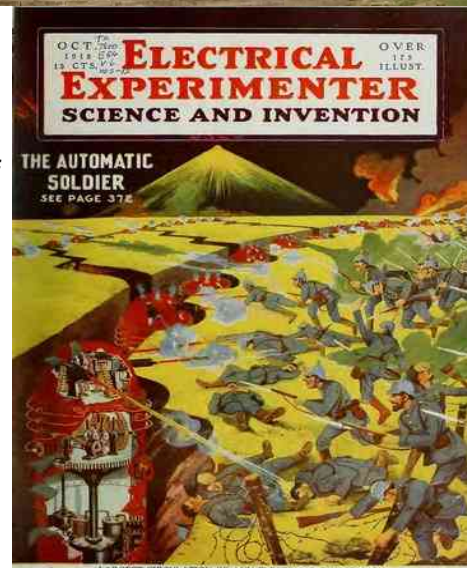


The presentation of the "Submarine Land-Cruiser" in *Science & Invention*, Feb 1924, has no byline, but the size of this monster makes us

suspect that the giant mind of Hugo is behind it. This beast would weigh down the soil so it couldn't move. The clumsy, slow machine would soon be taken out and the enormous investment would be lost. But it's typical of 1920's visions of future machines: they must be huge. Next, Hugo wants to speak to Mars. His idea is to transfer sound via a modulated light beam. The thing is that this idea could actually work...except there's no one to talk to on Mars. But many at the time believed in Martians, e.g. Hugo's hero Tesla.

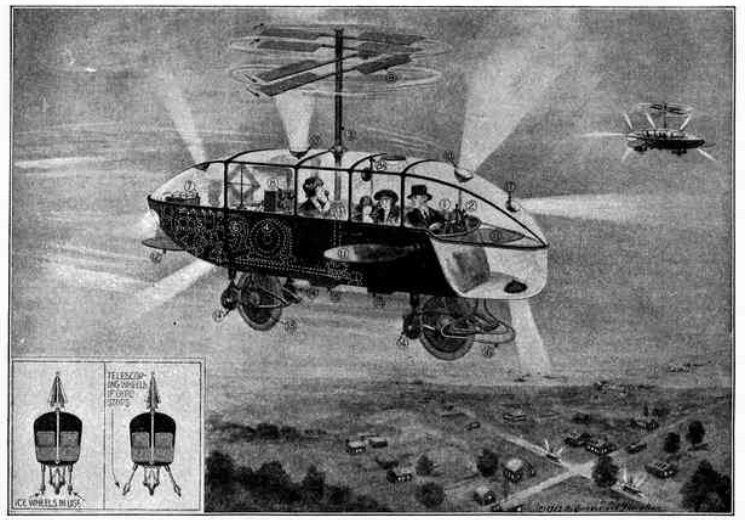
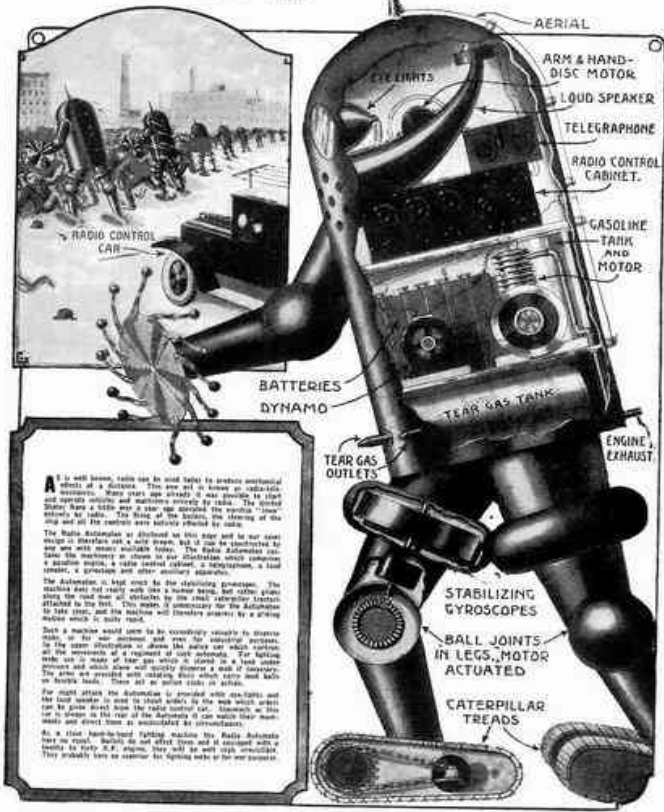
Suppose you had double parked, or forgot to pay for that package of sausages. The Radio Police Automaton, courtesy of H Gernsbach, will arrive. If you resist you'll be shredded to pieces by spinning lead (probably) balls. A 1920s Robocop!

The Electro Importing company Hugo founded when he came to the US introduced the Telmico (pic below) wireless telegraph, first advertised in November 1905 in *Scientific American*. This was probably the first transmitter for the consumer market and became a bestseller for a while at \$7.50 apiece. But it was more of a toy with a maximum range of only 500 feet and better equipment would later arrive. Hugo was always eager to present and discuss new gadgets in his many publications. Here's a list of some Gernsbach "inventions", ie ideas he expressed - I select just a few: <http://technovelgy.com/ct/AuthorTotalAlphaList.asp?AuNum=64>



# Radio Police Automaton

Distant Control by Radio Makes Mechanical Copy Possible  
By H. GERNSBACK



## THE "HELICAR" OF TOMORROW—IT FLIES OR TRAVELS ON ROAD

- 1—Push Button Power Control Before Driver, Which Also Switches Power to Helicopter Drive Shaft 2, and Blades 9, When it is Desired to Fly.
- 2—Steering Wheel.
- 3—Helicopter Drive Shaft.
- 4—Gyroscopic for Stabilizing Car on Two Wheels.
- 5—Twelve Cylinder Gasoline Engine Driving
- 6—Dynamo Which Supplies Electric Current to Motor Within Rear Wheel 12.
- 7—Storage Battery for Engine and Radio Receiving and Transmitting Set, 8.
- 8—Disposable Helicopter Blades. (Note: Rotates in Opposite Direction.)
- 9—Powerful Electric Lamps and Reflectors for Flying Purpose.
- 10—Elevating Wings Controlled by Driver, Used in Ascending or Descending, as Well as Take Up Along Road.
- 11—Electric Motor Wheel Which Drives Car on Road.
- 12—Motor Driven Spur Wheels Which Can Be Lowered to Assist in Propelling the Car Out of icy Spots.
- 13—Collapsible Steps.
- 14—Fender.
- 15—Electric Headlight Used When Running on Road.

# The Automobile of 1973

By H. GERNSBACK

MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY

THE modern automobile, as far as the public is concerned, is only about 25 years old. It is true that a few cars were made as much as 30 years ago, but these were not for universal use, and only millionaires could afford them. The first cars were very crude, and were not at all reliable, and when we look back upon these high-wheeled two-seaters we smile at the conditions that they were.

The other day an automobile of that early vintage rolled down Broadway. It was running under its own power, but the sight was so ludicrous that it stopped all traffic, and every one had a good laugh at this piece of ancient mechanism.

25 short years were enough to produce this result. What, then, may we expect to see 50 years hence? What sort of automobile will we ride in? What will be commonplace 50 years hence?

The automobile, as it is built now, tends to become larger and larger. The car of today is fully three times as large as the car of 25 years ago. In our large cities overcrowding, due to the tremendous number of automobiles, has now reached the saturation point. New York City is about

to enact a law to eliminate a certain number of taxicabs, which clog the streets, to such an extent that it is impossible to make any time at all in certain sections of the city. If you really wish to move rapidly, you have to take the subway or the elevated railway. This condition exists in most large cities. It has been proposed to build viaducts over the house tops, but due to the high cost it is doubtful if such a plan will ever become a fact, even in a time remote from now.

The only practical solution is to combine the automobile with an airplane and this no doubt will happen during the next few decades. The Helicopter Automobile or, for short, the *Helicar*, will not take up very much more room than the present large 7-passenger automobile, nor will it weigh much more than our present-day car, but instead of rolling down the avenue, you will go straight up in the air, and follow the air traffic lines, then descend at any place you wish. This descent can be made in the middle of the street, if necessary. The car may roll through the street, and may rise in an open place, or square, of which there will be many in the future.

While it will be possible for a car to alight on the ground in a narrow street, traffic regulations may prohibit this, and the aerial ascent and descent will be made from these public squares or parks. The *Helicar* will be particularly useful for suburbanites to fly to and from work, and for pleasure. Even today our roads, whether they be suburban or country, are so clogged with traffic that it is impossible to get anywhere on time. Our front cover illustration shows the *Helicar* moving through one of our future streets, as an automobile, while the illustration on this page shows the *Helicar* as a flying machine.

It will be noted that only two wheels are used. Two wheels are more economical than four. There is less trouble with gears and shafts, and this construction decreases the weight of the car as well. A gyroscopic keeps the car in an upright position at all times, and makes riding on two wheels perfectly safe.

Two-wheel vehicles are not new, as witness the bicycle. The famous Englishman, Brennan, has already tried this out, and there will be no reason for using four wheels in the future.

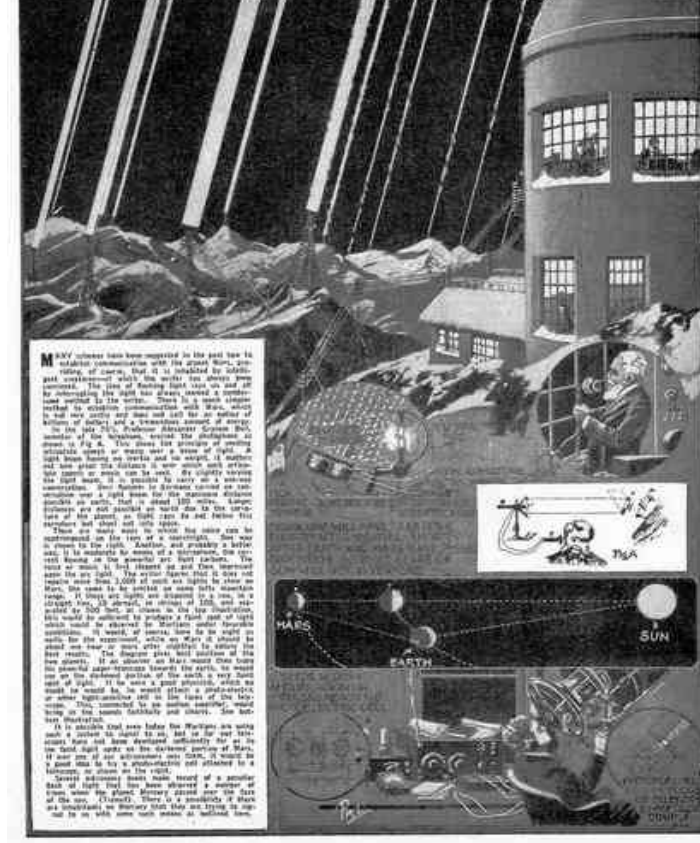
- Actinoscope - A device that used a pulsating polarized ether wave to judge the distance to an object (a RADAR)
- Artificial Cloth - The creation of fabrics without organic natural fibers.
- Automatic-Electric Packing Machine - A device able to pack randomly shaped objects combined into a single package automatically.
- Helio-Dynamophores (Sun-Power-Generators) - Photoelectric elements which transformed the solar heat direct into electric energy.
- Hypnoscopes - learn while you sleep - The first fictional reference to sleep teaching.
- Personalized News - First reference to news that is customized to the needs of each individual subscriber.
- Telautograph - First fictional reference to a fax machine.
- Tele-Motor-Coasters - Powered skates for personal transportation.
- Telephot - A device that combined the functions of telephone and television a phone with a screen.

- Most of the above is of course just described in fiction or text. Hugo in additions also claimed to have "predicted" microfilm, computer dating, night baseball, cell phones, virtual reality, and flat-screen television.

# How I Would Speak to Mars

By H. GERNSBACK

MEMBER AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY



MANY of us have been wondering in the past few days, in connection with the great Mars expedition, what the world has done to prepare for communicating with Mars. There has been a considerable amount of work done in this direction, and it is interesting to see how far we have come. The first step was to establish a radio station on Earth, which would be in constant communication with Mars, which is the only one of our planets which has a sufficient amount of atmosphere to permit the use of radio waves. The second step was to establish a radio station on Mars, which would be in constant communication with Earth. The third step was to establish a radio station on the moon, which would be in constant communication with Earth. The fourth step was to establish a radio station on Venus, which would be in constant communication with Earth. The fifth step was to establish a radio station on Jupiter, which would be in constant communication with Earth. The sixth step was to establish a radio station on Saturn, which would be in constant communication with Earth. The seventh step was to establish a radio station on Uranus, which would be in constant communication with Earth. The eighth step was to establish a radio station on Neptune, which would be in constant communication with Earth. The ninth step was to establish a radio station on Pluto, which would be in constant communication with Earth. The tenth step was to establish a radio station on the sun, which would be in constant communication with Earth.

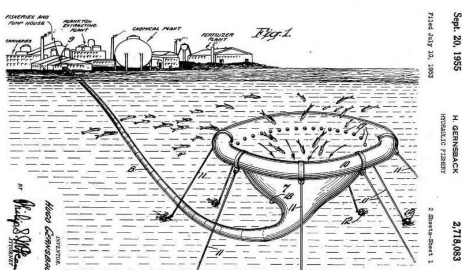
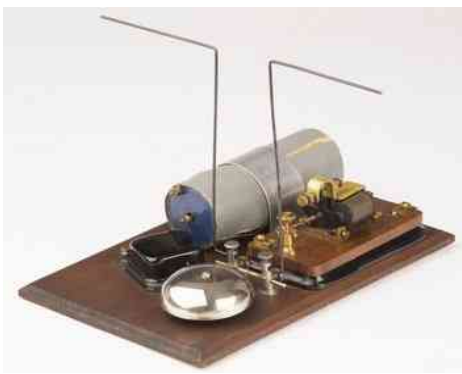


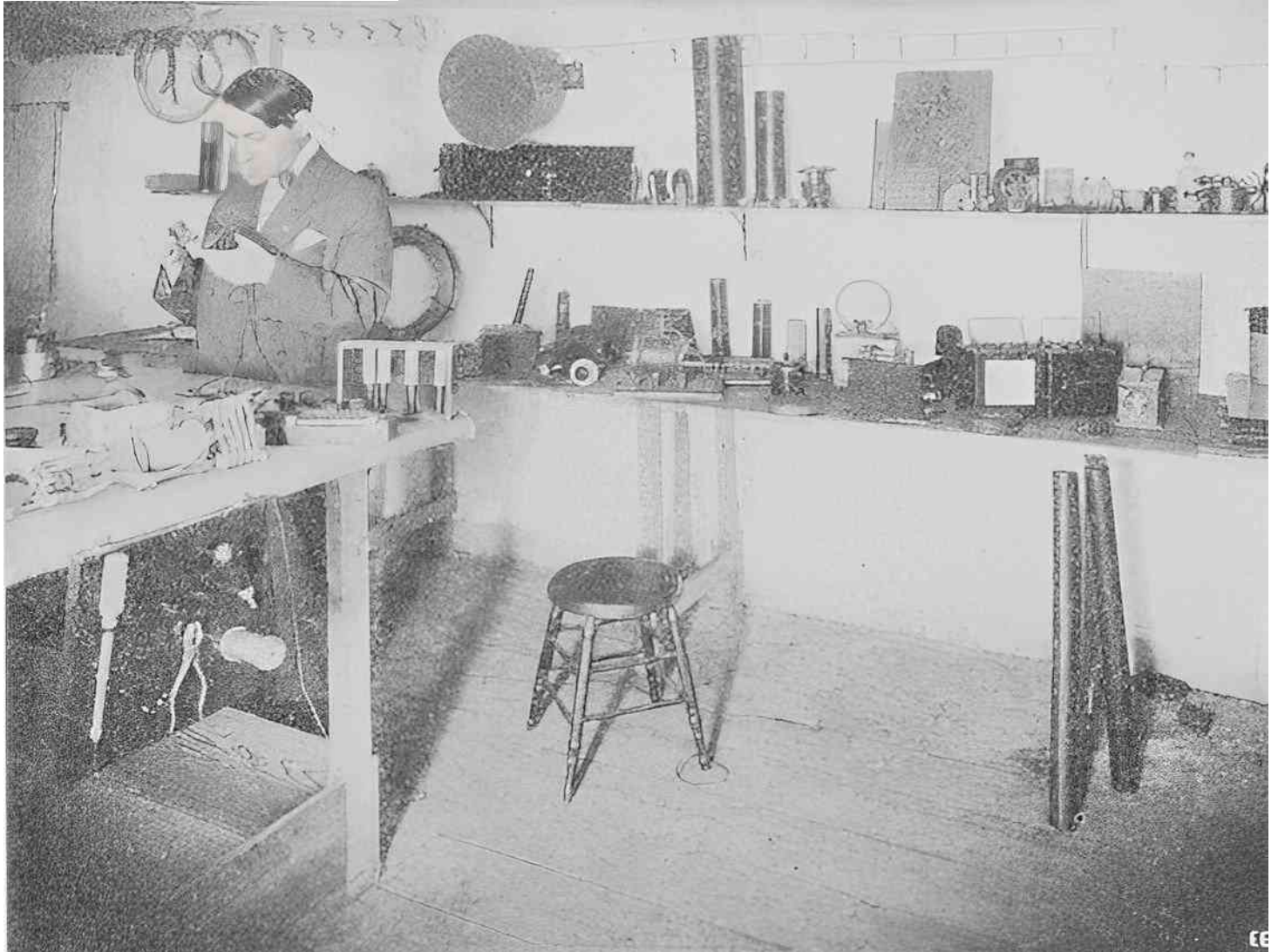
Illustration to Gernsback's patent for "hydraulic fishery".

But he did have real patented inventions too, like his new type of battery cell (his first invention, 1907) which gave him the funds to start his radio



Hugo's Telmico wireless telegraph.

importing business, a variable condenser (which also gave some money), a new kind of loudspeaker (1922), a combined electric hair brush and comb (1912), a human ear-shaped cushion speaker (1927), a hydraulic fishery (1955) and the "osophone" which would help the hearing impaired to hear



Hugo himself in the 5th floor lab in the HQ of Electro Importing company, 1908. It was on 233 Fulton St, NYC.

through vibrations in the teeth.  
Nobody should be surprised that Hugo of course became a stamp too, issued by Luxembourg, worth 70 eurocents.

In this piece, "Hugo Gernsback - Father of SF?" <http://mast360.com/index.php/en/virtual-reality-item/hugo-gernsback-father-of-science-fiction/> we learn:

*His salary as President of Gernsback Publishing in the 30's was near 60K a year (\$1045 a week on average) ... while paying writers 1 cent per word (at some point, half a cent! even down to 1/4! /), photographs \$3 per image. There are a lot of tales of writers being not paid at all by Gernsback, some even sued him. Famously HP Lovecraft got only paid \$25 for "The colour out of space", prompting him to nickname Gernsback "Hugo the Rat". Hugo Gernsback usually paid authors "on or after publication", meaning he could delay payment for months. He thought being published was enough of a payment, especially once the Great Depression kicked in. It's been mentioned to me that when Gernsback had the cash, he could give "bonuses".*

Sometimes he paid as little as 1/4 cent/word. Of course he couldn't afford to pay authors, otherwise the company wouldn't be able to pay him a thousand bucks per week! An ordinary worker could at the time earn that...in a year!

But maybe he was worth it? He seemed to work hard. Wikipedia lists his magazines, around 60! [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugo\\_Gernsback](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugo_Gernsback) There are some surprising titles, like *Pirate Stories*, *French Humor* (retitled *Tidbits*), *Milady*, *Your Body*, *Motor Camper & Tourist*, *Sexologia*, *Your Dreams*, *Know Yourself*, *Woman's Digest*, *Technocracy Review*, *Fotocraft*, *Superworld Comics* (his only comics mag). A mag titled *Luz* seems to have been a fashion magazine, but we're not sure. *Pirate Stories* was one of these ordinary pulps about entrepreneurs robbing people - like what Hugo did to his authors, and others did to fan funds. *Milady* was into fashion, other titles were psychology or medicine and *Technocracy Review* was his perhaps only "political" magazine. Let engineers rule, "technocracy", was popular at the time. Genre historian Gary Westfahl summarises it, <https://www.sfsite.com/gary/ww-eaton02.htm>

*...one would expect that Gernsback's rare 1933 magazine, Technocracy Review, would vigorously argue in favour of technocracy....I found that the magazine announced and maintained a strictly neutral stance: "Technocracy Review voices no opinion of its own. It aims to publish all opinions whether for or against technocracy." And, in the original and reprinted articles that it presented, the magazine actually followed this policy, and Gernsback's own contributions tot the magazine display at best ambivalence, and at times genuine hostility, towards technocracy. Well, if Gernsback loved science and scientists, and if technocracy advocated a society dedicated to science and ruled by scientists, why would Gernsback object to it?...he voiced an objection that paralleled his objection to much of the science fiction published by others in his day: the advocates of technocracy were making serious scientific errors. He claimed that "Most of the statements issued by spokesmen of Technocracy are untrue. /Gernsback wrote:/ Indeed, it would not be a bad idea to start immediately a new cult which I would term SCIENTOCRACY, and the men who head this particular cult would, of course, be SCIENTOCRATS—offering Scientocracy, in opposition to Technocracy, as the direction of the country and its resources by Scientists and not by Technicians. There is ... a huge difference between the two. The Technician, as a rule, takes the output of the Scientists. The Scientist comes first, the Technician, second .... the scientist is more careful and knows his subject from the ground up, whereas the technologist is not so well versed in the theory.*

But what "scientocracy" really meant remained a bit unclear. You can download many of Hugo Gernsbacks science/tech mags here: [https://worldradiohistory.com/Electrical\\_Experimenter.htm](https://worldradiohistory.com/Electrical_Experimenter.htm) (get eg *Science & Invention* Aug 1923, which was the special "scientifiction issue", a precursor to later



Radio Corporation, Westinghouse Photo  
The author delivering his lecture, "The Future of Radio," from WJZ, Newark, N. J. An ordinary telephone transmitter was used in this case, but new models are now being used with which it is not necessary to speak close to the transmitter at all. This lecture was heard by over a hundred thousand people.

*Gernsback holding radio lecture, as early as 1922! It's claimed it reached 100 000 listeners! He lectured on his radio station every Monday.*

*Amazing*). Scientocracy was perhaps the revolutionary idea that maximising income and minimising unnecessary expenses (eg giving writers the means to eat) would increase the surplus. But don't think Hugo was insensitive. He thought of deaf people, for instance to let them enjoy music he invented the *physiophone*! It consisted of a device that caught the vibrations from a record player and transformed them to rhythms. These were then sent as electrical pulses attached to the deaf via wires, so they could feel the vibes. You could even dance, with wires hanging from the ceiling in a scaled-down version of the electric chair.

*The physiophone was an accidental invention, according to Gernsback,*

which occurred to him as early as 1900, when he was unexpectedly given an electric shock while tinkering with a telephone. Gernsback didn't emigrate to the United States until 1904, so this experiment was presumably being conducted in his native Luxembourg.

<https://paleofuture.com/blog/2023/6/7/this-invention-from-the-grandfather-of-science-fiction-was-promoted-as-music-for-the-deaf>

Some of Hugo's magazines and other publications on previous pages and below. Radio, electronics and inventions was the bulk of it. But he also did a lot of handbooks and manuals. Science fiction was only a tiny part of it.

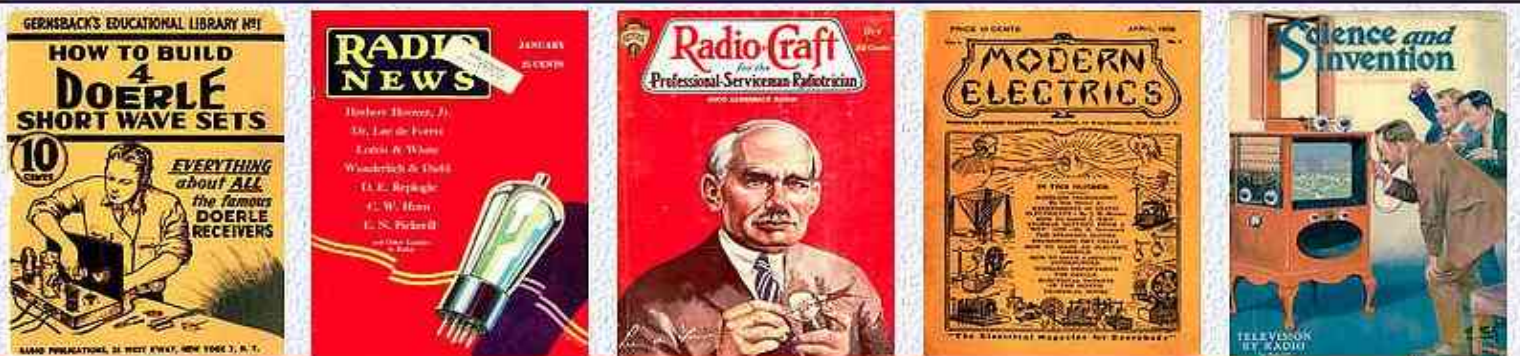
Even if Hugo was early with TV, there are few moving pictures of him (at least that I found). But here's an interview with first Sam

Moskowitz (who helped Hugo as editor of *Science Fiction Plus*) and then Hugo Himself. He talks about his prediction of radar and telemedicine and an idea to power a spaceship going to Mars by an energy beam from the Moon: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=yNvAuTSGAzk>

Finally, something for my Swedish readers. Hugo was the source of the famous cover for #1 of the Swedish sf mag *Häpna!* In 1954 It came from Hugo Gernsback's last sf magazine, *Science Fiction Plus*, used as a cover in May 1953,. *SF Plus* was published for seven issues during that single year, One wonders if it was Ralph who provided the "plus" in the title? Anyway, it's available as PDFs for



Thanks to Hugo's "physiophone" the deaf can dance. But how do you whisper sweet words into your partner's ears?



## Hugo Gernsback Library

Select Gernsback in Technical Search



### Books & Publications by Hugo Gernsback (and links to his magazines)

Hugo Gernsback publications including the Gernsback Educational Library, Gernsback Radio Service Manual, Gernsback Library, Radio Craft Technical Series and the Radio Craft Electronics Reference Annual as well as other pamphlets and books.

#### Gernsback Collection



Hugo Gernsback

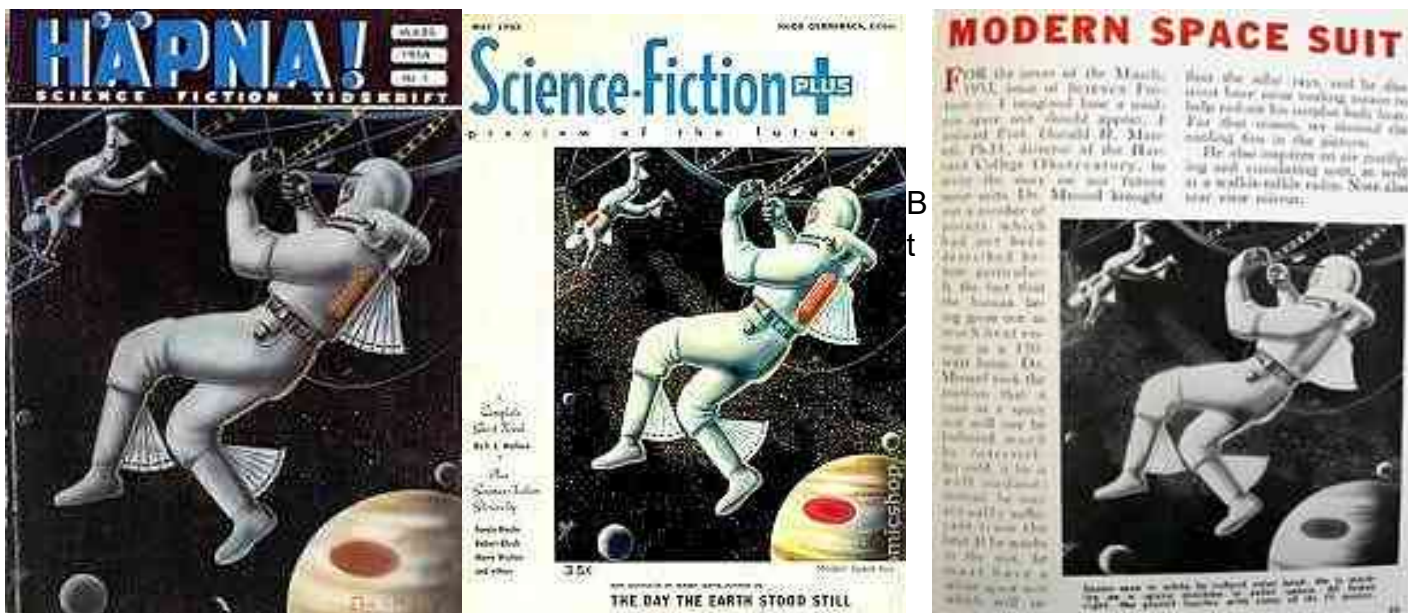
Hugo Gernsback (1884 – 1967), was a Luxembourgish-American inventor, writer, editor, and magazine publisher, best known for publications including the first science

### Gernsback's Educational Library

#1 Build 4 Doerle Short Wave Sets	#2 The Most Popular All Wave Receivers	#3 Alternating Current	#4 All About Aerials	#5 Beginners' Radio Dictionary
#6 Fun With Radio	#7 How to Read Radio Diagrams	#8 Radio For Beginners	#9 Simple Radio Experiments	#10 Television



free here: <https://www.luminist.org/archives/SF/> *SF Plus* is rather interesting, so have a look. In one article we learn that the space suit mentioned was a design by astronomer dr Donald Menzel. The "fins" are for cooling.

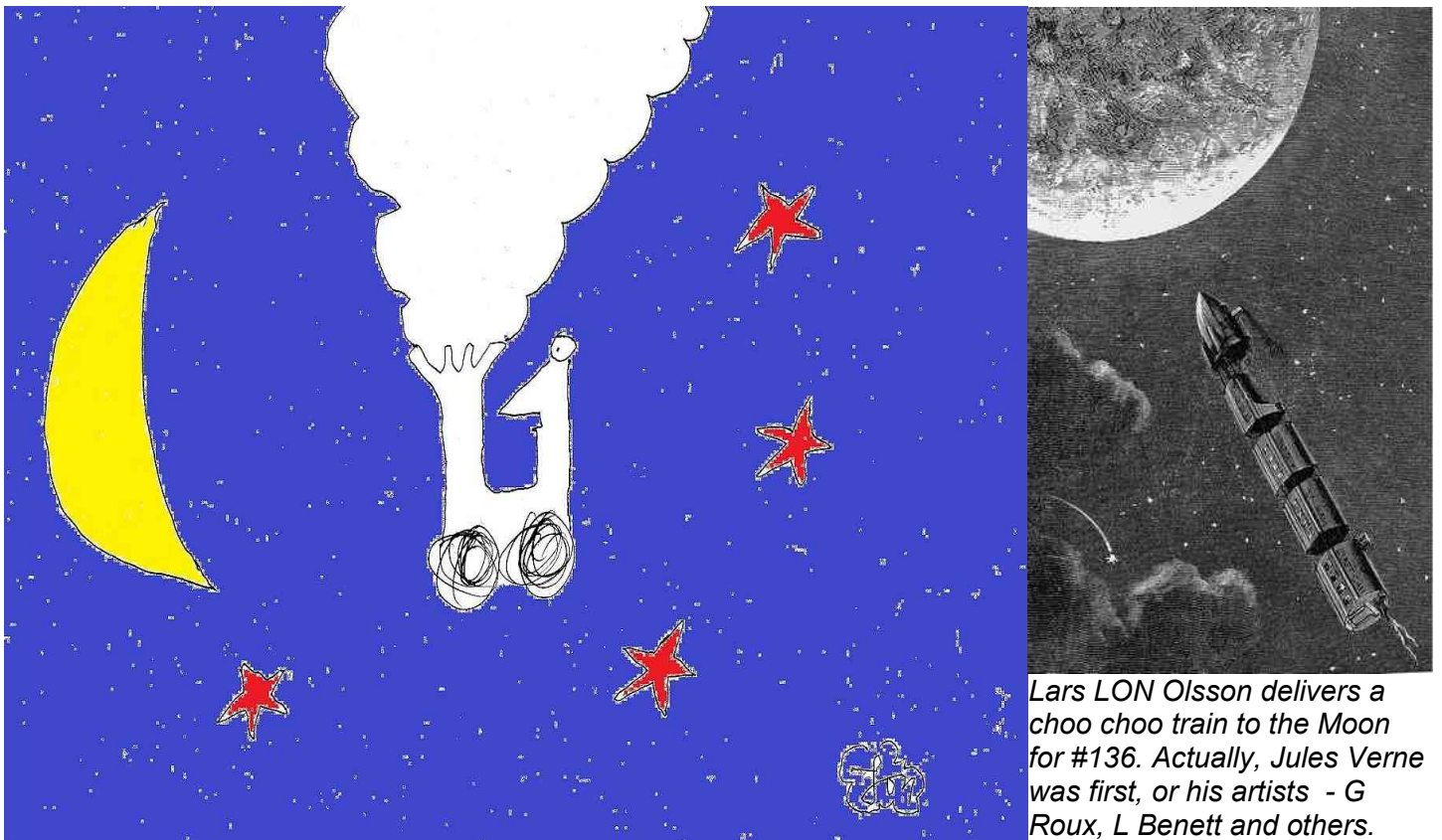


Ungle Hugos "publishing empire" actually lingered on *into the 21st century* (says <https://www.magazineart.org/publishers/germsback.html> ) referring to one "Larry Steckler, who worked for Gernsback and his publishing company for nearly fifty years.../he/ was the last owner of Gernsback Publications, Inc. /until/ the publishing company finally closed in 2002, "

### Mailing Comments

*Here comments to latest EAPA (there's no new NAPA yet). Intermission started in APAs (that's why MCs) but other lucky bastards also get it... BTW, do a fanzine yourself! Fandom as we know it is sinking under silly superhero costumes, brainless games and pointless plastic. We need more of the traditional sf fanzines! Do a zine and you'll be rich, healthy, sexy and ...trufannish!*

**Henry Grynsten:** Interesting comparing actors to kings. There are indeed striking similarities. But I'd like to widen the thoughts. Instead of actors, I'd say *\*any\** celebrity. Anyone in this media, gossip, entertainment merry-go-round counts - and in a way any celebrity is a sort of actor. They act their role as a celebrity all the time. And rather than "kings" I'd call them a sort of nobility. Kings are "unique", since there's usually only one per country - but there may be hundreds of noblemen. And this is a position that's inherited between generations. Children of artists often becomes artists themselves. The Swedish Kardashians is a family named Wahlgren - every kid in that family has become an artist or famous for something! It's the same with the Skarsgård family. And many others. Children of actors often become actors. The same with film makers. The children of Ingmar Bergman, Hans Alfredson, Carl Johan De Geer and others are now filming. And the kids of journalists and authors usually become journos and scribblers themselves. And with this follows privileges, as for all nobility. More money coming in, of course, and modern celeb nobility also get invited to the Binfeldt parties with free drinks, from which you see them smile in spreads from a film premiere, art opening or whatever...which solidifies their celebrity status. If they submit an article or write a book the risk of getting rejected is near zero. Celeb status sells! (I happen to know a ghost writer who sometimes do "their" books.) And celeb nobility opinions counts for more. A celebrity can get projects financed and free PR for it, and if they do something wrong - drunk driving is common, or sniffing cocaine - just make a confession in the papers mixing tears with ink and are be forgiven, while celeb status is further boosted. Not that I find this sort of nobility unfair - if people acquire followers, what's wrong with that? And the new nobility at least work for their status. The celebrity nobility also give people hope and something to aspire for. Anyone can become this nobility if you develop your talent and find



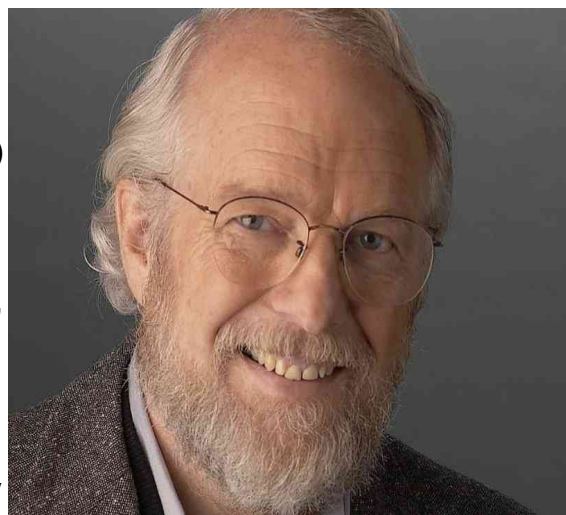
Lars LON Olsson delivers a choo choo train to the Moon for #136. Actually, Jules Verne was first, or his artists - G Roux, L Benett and others.

something interesting to show off. I note that in the UK you may be both a celebrity nobility AND become knighted (though that isn't inherited by the kids). In Sweden most of the privileges of the old nobility ceased in 1866 when a constitutional changes scrapped our House of Lords and made the parliament bicameral. Our king had the formal right to knight people until 1974, when the constitution once again changed but it wasn't used. (The last person to be knighted in Sweden was explorer Sven Hedin in 1902). The only thing with out new nobility is that I find celebrity admiration a bit silly, or rather: A LOT silly and meaningless. It'd be good if people stopped worshipping celebrities, but there's not a lot we can do about it. ♣♣ Asimov's marriage - I've read all three of his memoirs - became rather loveless after a few years. In one autobio he admits to infidelity before he and first wife Gertrude had a formal divorce. Asimov was emotionally and sexually awkward (he had no sex before marriage for instance, says his memoirs). His psychological profile clearly points to a typical inhibited person who tries to compensate for it with extrovert behaviour towards women.

**William McCabe:** We know Earth suffered a "little ice age" that ended about 200 years ago. Since then temperature as of course slowly bounced back. So a temp that rises a little after a period being colder is what we could expect. The climate goes up and down in long trends. The variation is rather modest in the short perspective. People claiming it'll turn into a sauna make "projections", but there's no way to know in advance if those are correct. Computers typically just tell you what you want. They depend on the presumptions you build into the models and the data. (And remember that we have a huge data deficit! Wide meteorological data began maybe 150 years back but *only* for 30% of Earth. Earlier data than that are more *uncertain estimates* from *indirect* sources. But data for the 70% of the planet surface that is ocean is only from the last 40 years (when the first IR satellites came). ♣♣ It's of course correct that the Hugo and Nebula isn't a "world" award. Many countries have their own sf awards which eg Locus usually reports about. Oddly enough, there's no main Swedish genre award. (Our most prestigious prize is the fandom activity Alvar award.) But remember, the sf genre in it's modern form was born in the US, and to a degree also the UK, so it's isn't strange that a US award carry some weight. (I come to think of the Nobel prize. It *is* strange it carries such weight. It's not the award with most money, though it gives you a few bucks. Its literature part is decided by an odd group of 18 people. Maybe the status comes from that it has been around very long and it was constructed to be international. Alfred Nobel forbad any "regard to nationality".)

**Heath Row:** To rename Twitter X is *stupid!* Sorry, no more to add.

**Garth Spencer:** Artificial Stupidity is an interesting idea! 🌟 I didn't know that there was an English word "sloyd" (handicrafts) derived from Swedish "slöjd"... It joins *smorgasbord, ombudsman, moped, gravlax, Celsius, Angstrom*. TV here has recently aired the World Cup of running in the woods with a map, a sport known as *orienteering* (from Swedish "orientering" - I guess the word "orientation" would be confusing), another Swedish language derivative. 🌟 The first TV system did indeed use a rotating disk, launched by Scotsman John Logie Baird in the late 1920s (the system was first theoretically suggested by Paul Nipkow of Germany). I happen to cover what Hugo did in this issue! When BBC began TV experiments half of the broadcasts used the Baird system. It of course proved inferior - low



*Sad: Adobe co-founder, PDF inventor John Warnock died Aug 19, aged 82. He made intermission possible, so we owe him a lot!*

resolution, humming from the disk - to electronic scanning which had been invented by one Philo Farnsworth, further developed by one Philo Farnsworth. BBC skipped the mechanical system. But first with regular TV was... Nazi-Germany. They began in 1935 and of course covered the 1936 Berlin Olympics. BBC began in 1936. Here's an interesting documentary about Nazi TV:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3exBWIwrvsE> There were only a few hundred TV sets in Germany at the time, but also TV "viewing rooms" in major cities, which you would use like going to the cinema. In the US TV was "officially" begun during the 1939 World's Fair in New York, but there had been several experimental "stations" before that including Hugo's. Sweden was late, with experimental transmissions beginning in 1954, and the official start in 1956. Only Albania was slower, it is said... The slow start partly came from the fear that people would turn into vegetables watching TV. Watching some programs I'm not sure they were wrong... 🌟

*Time to round off. There's a lot more to find about Hugo Gernsback. (Check his magazines. They are often very interesting. I gave some links, but Google will help too.) There's so much Gernsbackiana around that this became a little long... If you have anything interesting to add about Hugo let me know. Contents of next issue is of course not set, but I hope it will be thinner. I've lately found myself a bit occupied with both this and that. I continue with an undisclosed project and now comes story awards to handle, so thinner intermissions would be welcome.*

**NEWSFLASH!** Karin Lundwall (right), daughter of Sam J, now editor with Bonniers Publishing House, becomes new CEO of the SF-Bokhandeln (SF Bookstore) chain, after Maths Claesson (RIP May 7th). Karin's been in skiffy since, sort of, her first diapers, so she should be able to handle this. The SF-Bokhandeln chain with stores in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö is among the most profitable bookstores in the country. (Unfortunately, they seem to sell more games, comics, movie paraphernalia and such than books.)



*Cringey! A Spanish football moment! And Karin, beware! Should you happen to shake hands with that figure, you'd better count your fingers afterwards...*

**Слава Україні!**

# BROWNIAN MOTION #4

An apazine by Garth Spencer

For NAPA, September 2023

## Things Almost But Note Quite Entirely Unlike Other Things

### **The Re-Emergence of *Rune***

*Rune*, the well-known clubzine of Mn-Stf, is being revived! Jeanne Mealy of fabulous Minnesota SF fandom writes:

“Now YOU can be part of the great fannish tradition of RUNE. Why? For fun! No one gets paid unless you count gratitude and the chance to see your work in print. Share your thoughts, stretch your creative muscles, connect with other fans.

“We need **articles, poetry, art, and photos** on topics that science fiction and fantasy fans would like. Books, TV, movies! Trip reports, con reports, hobbies, and short fiction! You get the idea. All ages are welcome. The editor reserves the right to set the tone (PG-13) and edit lightly as needed. No inflammatory material will be accepted.

“Deadline: October 1, 2023. Sooner is best.

“For information: Jeanne Mealy, [rune93@mnstf.org](mailto:rune93@mnstf.org)”

(Stipple-APA #358, July 2023)

## Upcoming Canadian Conventions

As part of my duties for the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, I began researching the Canadian conventions scheduled for 2024, to which the next CUFF delegate may go. I have found rather few sources on Canadian conventions in 2024. Still, here are the Canadian conventions I have found so far (the underlined titles are Web links); please send me any corrections or additions that will complete the list. (I plan to post this, plus upcoming Pacific Northwest conventions, on my website.)

February 17-19, 2024: [Fan Expo Vancouver 2024](#), Vancouver Convention Centre, Vancouver, BC

March 7-10, 2024: [Vancoufur](#), Furry convention, Richmond, BC

March 15-17, 2024: [Toronto Comicon 2024](#), Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON

March 22-24, 2024: [Hotlead 2024](#), Best Western Plus The Arden Park Hotel, Stratford, ON

April 6, 2024: [Collingwood ComiCon 2024](#), Royal Canadian Legion Branch 63, Collingwood, ON

April 13, 2024: [Napanee ComiCon 2024](#), Strathcona Paper Centre, Napanee, ON

April 19-21, 2024: [Sci-Fi On the Rock](#), Newfoundland's premiere science fiction & fantasy event., St Johns, NL

April 25-28, 2024: [Calgary Expo 2024](#), Stampede Park, Calgary, AB

May 17-19, 2024: Keycon 40 in Winnipeg, MB (venue TBA), see [keycon.org](#)

May 24-26, 2024: [Anime North 2024](#), Toronto Congress Center / Delta Hotels by Marriott Toronto Airport & Conference Centre, Toronto, ON

July 18-21, 2024: [Fur-Eh!](#), A Uniquely Canadian Celebration of Anthropomorphics, Edmonton, AB

August 16-18, 2024: When Words Collide 2024 in the Delta Calgary South, now to be hosted by the Alexandra Writers Centre; see [www.alexandrawriters.org](#)

August 17, 2024: [Collingwood ComiCon 2024](#), Royal Canadian Legion Branch 63, Collingwood, ON

TBA 2024: [TFcon \(Transformers\)](#), The world's largest fan-run Transformers convention, Toronto, ON

Am I being prejudiced because I think most of these conventions wouldn't know what a fan fund delegate was? Maybe not; R. Graeme Cameron noted, as I did, how few of these conventions are fannish in any way, shape or form.

Of course, when I looked up Boréal (Québec), Can\*Con (Ottawa) or Hal-Con (Halifax), I only found information on their upcoming 2023 conventions. Guess I just have to wait.



## WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION

The Canadian Unity Fan Fund was conceived to represent distant fan communities in Canada to other fan communities in Canada. In its forty-odd years of operation, CUFF has usually brought fan delegates from one side of the country to the other, wherever

Convention was held. (The Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards were hosted by one or another convention in a given year, until the national awards ceremony recently began appearing online, on a regular annual schedule.) Now, a delegate will receive funds to travel to an SF convention this year elsewhere in Canada.

I became the 2023 Canadian Unity Fan Fund delegate, which meant I was to attend **Pemmi-Con**, the 15th North American Science Fiction Convention, held in Winnipeg July 20th through 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023.



### **“WHO IS THIS SHMOE?”**

I’m just this guy who got to be known in fandom for a while. I entered fandom about 1980 in a small club in Victoria. Since then I have been involved in producing a number of clubzines and personalzines; running fanzine rooms and producing program books for SF conventions; producing a Canadian fan newszine for a few years, and incidentally establishing for everyone what the Canadian SF and Fantasy Award was. These days, I take part in four APAs (Amateur Publishing Associations) – eAPA, Apaplexy, N’APA, and Stipple-Apa – and I am the official editor of eAPA. I also plan to revise my personal website

as a fannish resource site, and to put together a volume of Canadian fanhistory.

## **PROLOGUE**

### *In 2023:*

I volunteered to stand as a candidate for CUFF<sup>1</sup> (again<sup>2</sup>) in 2023, partly because I hadn’t heard of any other candidates, and partly out of a sense that various and diverse fandoms really deserve more mutual awareness. I thought I could at least try to see something of other fandoms, and tell some stories about fandom as I know it.

Fran Skene of Vancouver was the CUFF candidate in 2019, and then the COVID-19 pandemic happened, so travel was restricted and she served as CUFF administrator for the next four years.

As it worked out, my bid gained 3 western supporters and 3 eastern supporters: Rose Wilson (BC), R. Graeme Cameron (BC), Kent Pollard (Saskatchewan), Cathy Palmer-Lister (Quebec), Lloyd Penney (Ontario), and Diane Walton (formerly of Alberta, now in Nova Scotia).

In order to raise funds for next year and beyond, I prepared a list, offering interesting and amusing fan publications for sale. These ranged from hardcopy editions of classic fanzines to hardcopy (and some digital) editions of current fanthologies. I was (and still

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<sup>1</sup> The background to fandom, and the changes to fandom, should be summarized in a forthcoming fanhistory. I have found it to be a bigger job than I expected.

<sup>2</sup> At the end of this report is a link to CUFF trip reports online, including my own report on attending the 1999 Convention in Fredericton, N.B.

am) prepared to accept payments in person, by cash, money order, or Paypal at: 6960 Doman Street, Vancouver, BC V5S 3H7, or by Paypal at [garth.van.spencer@gmail.com](mailto:garth.van.spencer@gmail.com).

I included *Confabulation*, a collection of fannish fanwriting, “representing the most amusing fanwriting and faanfiction I could find, characteristic of fannish fandom ... for benefit sales to CUFF, at \$10 each,” I wrote. (I also offered chapbooks under my Stop Press imprint based on my extended fanarticles about worldbuilding, how to construct a language, conspiracy theories, crank theories, or micronations, at \$5.00 to \$7.50.)

Also, at Pemmi-Con, I was to moderate the popular Turkey Readings – readings of science fiction or fantasy so **bad**, no reputable publisher would issue them today – acted out by volunteers from the audience! Listeners then got to bid on whether to continue, or cease! We’ve got some real stinkers (not all written by John Norman or Lionel Fanthorpe)!

Somehow we also evolved the idea of a fanzine auction, which I think was suggested by Erin Underwood (a Pemmi-Con committee member?) in a Zoom meeting.

## PREPARATIONS

I tend to build up anxiety about non-routine events and appearing on time, so I tend to overpack and overprepare. Still I foolishly did not bring the thumb drive I usually keep on my key ring.

Among other things, I made myself a handy-dandy pocket program, based on the advance schedule information received in Pemmi-Con Progress Report 2. This turned out to be relatively useful until Saturday, when I actually had events to attend, and program changes to deal with. (Strangely, the committee settled the program schedule *within the week* before the convention, and still there were program changes.)

### Tuesday July 18, 2023:

As it worked out, getting to the Vancouver International Airport and checking in with Westjet and boarding all happened without incident. Checking in at the Delta (now aka the Marriott Bonvoy) was also trouble-free.

It was interesting to check out the look of downtown Winnipeg, in comparison with cities such as Victoria and Vancouver. Older architecture leaned towards drystone and brick construction, contrasting with the glass-and-steel buildings from more recent development. Which makes sense, given that Winnipeg is not given to earthquakes, as we are on the coast.

Finding the committee (Operations room) was a bit of a treasure hunt; signage in the hotel developed only gradually over the first few



days, apart from the scrolling program schedule on the hotel video displays (which was very useful).



*St. Mary's Cathedral, directly across St. Mary's Street from the Delta Hotel and the Elephant and Castle Pub*

Wednesday July 19, 2023:

Due to storm warnings on this day I stayed close to the hotel at first, until the evening's "Break the Ice" dinner at a nearby Old Spaghetti Factory. Eventually I tracked down Registration on the second floor. My own registration was delayed, partly due to some

breakdown in communications. Amusingly, they had no record of my membership, and had to write me into the records on the spot - #1000, as it happened, which told me something about the attendance. (I was informed later that about a third of the registered members had not attended, mainly due to COVID-19 concerns.)

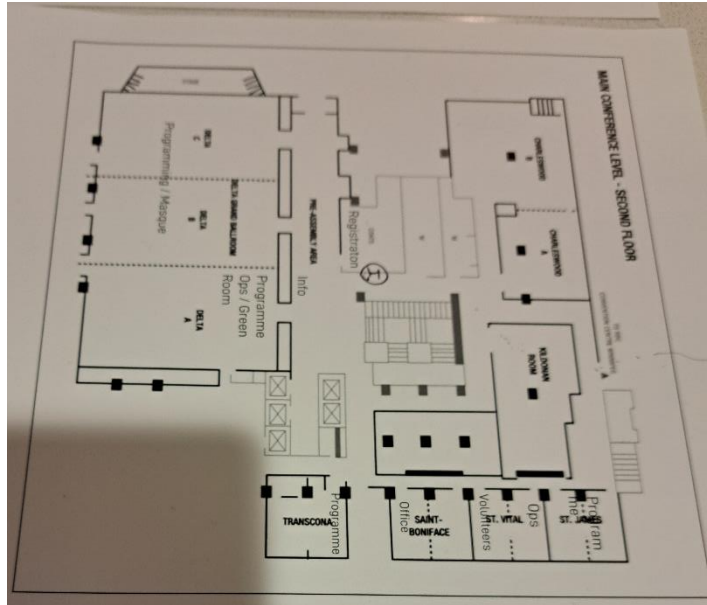
Strangely, the committee supplied no program books *at* the convention – they were conceived as souvenir books, to be mailed to members *after* the event. Instead, there were daily program sheets in table format, supplemented by a daily convention newsletter. Maps of the hotel's internal layout were slow to appear.

There was a lot of meeting and greeting, of course, as congoers filtered in. There were R. Graeme Cameron, now from Nanaimo; Cliff Samuels and Eileen Capes from Calgary; John Bartley from Tualatin (near Portland); Cooki Lumsden; Stuart Cooper; Den Valdron, the Winnipeg writer; and Robert J. Sawyer, as well as Linda Ross-Mansfield, LeAmber Kensley, and Jannie Shea on the committee. My roommate John Bartley showed up this afternoon. Murray Moore talked to me about the art museum, which was heavy on Inuit art at the time.



I tagged along with Cliff Samuels and Eileen Capes to the “Break the Ice” dinner at The Forks Market. Unfortunately John Bartley, who was still recovering from flying coach, discovered he just couldn’t walk that far and begged off.

Much like Granville Island in Vancouver, this is a former railroad yard redeveloped with a wide variety of shops, produce stores, restaurants and cultural centres, including a youth theatre. The “Break the Ice” dinner for early Pemmi-Con attendees drew perhaps sixty people to The Old Spaghetti Factory. We made the acquaintance of Mark Sneed, a new writer who was attending his first SF convention, and had an interesting conversation covering the background of the convention, the benefits of joining SFWA, and the several challenges we have encountered with varieties of English. (Mark Sneed has been an English teacher.)



Thursday, July 20, 2023:

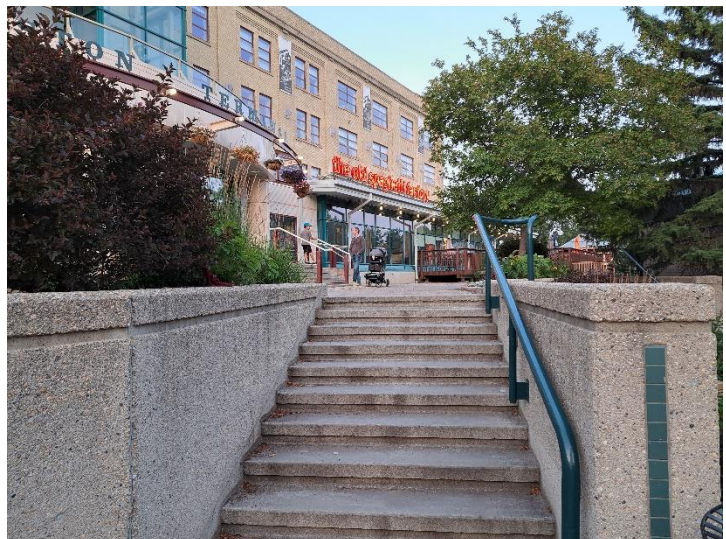
This day I received my program participant materials, took pictures of the internal hotel maps, and rechecked the program.

Foolishly I missed the opening ceremonies on Thursday. I gather my name was called, at least to stand up and wave.

Much of my concern was focused on the CUFF auction and the Turkey Readings, neither of which I had conducted before. My anxiety was unfounded, partly because I could follow the good example of Sandra Bond’s auctioneering, and partly because there were other readers at the Turkey Readings.

Of interest is that Pemmi-Con panels generally ran for 75 minutes, with a 15-minute break between scheduled items. This seemed sensible and practical.

It developed that the consuite was in a room on the fourth floor – directly



opposite the room I shared with John Bartley.

For whatever reasons, the dealers' room, artshow, and fan tables were relegated to a room in the RBC Convention Centre, which was over ten minutes' walk from the hotel via an elevated passage over a street. Thus I discovered there was a fan table for the Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards, with a display of its chronology and former awards; a fanzine table (empty); a display about me with blowups of my picture and bio (unexpected!); and a fan table and display for the Rotsler Award winners (I noticed the 1999 award went to Grant Canfield, and in 2008 to Taral Wayne). There were also displays promoting nuclear energy, and providing a history of nuclear engineering in Canada.

Given the function space available in the Delta hotel, this was neither necessary, nor advisable given the number of mobility-challenged attendees. Strange.

Room parties started on Thursday night, mostly on the fifth floor, representing Worldcons/bids from Seattle, Glasgow, and Minneapolis in '73 (2073, now). Or, should I say, they were *attempted* at first on Thursday night. The hotel staff were apparently not briefed on room parties, and Shawn Marier from the Seattle Worldcon committee had to negotiate with them to raise their room occupancy limit from four to ten people at a time. Granted, the room parties were in rooms really too small for parties. This might be why the renewed Minneapolis in '73 bid sort of took over the consuite.

And there was much rejoicing.

#### Friday, July 21, 2023:

There was a so-this-is-your-first-convention panel, which was good, and it was scheduled for 1:00 p.m., which is as usual and is not so good. (I have suggested, on more than one occasion, that since most people arrive at conventions *later* than 1:00 p.m. Friday, maybe a later panel, a Web page, or a widely-distributed free pamphlet would serve the purpose better?)

#### Saturday, July 22, 2023:

In conversation, Murray Moore mentioned that the Canadian SF and Fantasy Association was looking for a secretary, and I offered to take up the role. Murray subsequently informed the CSFFA regulars that I would serve, and he emailed me the information about the CSFFA Zoom meeting for Tuesday after Pemmi-Con.

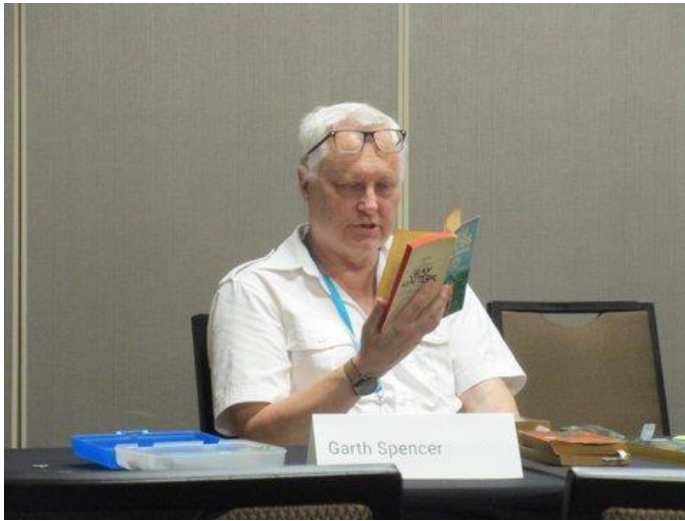
There were three panels that required my participation – the “Rebuilding Fannish Community” panel at 4:00 p.m. (originally “The Greying of Fandom”), the CUFF Auction at 5:30 (combined with the TAFF Auction), and the Turkey Readings at 10:00 p.m. (rescheduled from 2:30).

At 4:00 p.m., “Rebuilding Fannish Community” drew at least twenty people, and turned into a productive discussion. To my satisfaction, we got beyond the usual clichés frequently observed about ageing fannish fans, and younger fans in several specialized fandoms. (Until Friday, the members arriving at Pemmi-Con were generally over 50 years of age.) We considered the diminishing numbers of clubs, the

marginalization of fanzine fandom, the efflorescence of online communities, the effect of costs and current incomes on conventions, and the divergence of fandoms.

In the end, the sense of the meeting seemed to be that it simply isn't the job of elder fans to recreate the fan activities they knew. If we have any role, among contemporary fans, it comes down to getting out there, *listening*; asking a few questions; and, perhaps, offering a few parallels to similar events and issues from the past. If they are relevant. (Given the differences in today's costs and incomes from the past, the expectations and interests of fans, and the very different expectations and demands of hotels, many stories are not so relevant now.)

At 5:30 p.m., the combined Fan Funds Auction drew four or five people, compared to the auctioneers (Sandra Bond and I). I followed Sandra's lead and found the auction went fairly quickly. The audience were individually generous, and both fan funds made some modest money.



At 10:00 pm, the Turkey Readings drew eight or so people, and were amusing enough. Murray Moore, R. Graeme Cameron, and I took it in turn to read some bad 1970s sci-fi and fantasy, including R. Lionel Fanthorpe novels. Again, we made just a little money for CUFF. Tasia Papadatos from Ottawa commented that the selection of novels (other than Fanthorpe's) weren't really bad enough for the purpose. Perhaps in future years we have to seek out the

real stinkers.

And so to parties. Saturday's party scene was rather quieter than Friday's; I was a bit disappointed.

### Sunday, July 23, 2023:

Sunday was a fairly quiet day. I missed programming until four p.m. and the closing ceremonies, trying to start this trip report and, instead, ending up in an enjoyable consuite conversation, about Winnipeg and other convention stories.

The closing ceremonies, led by Tanya Huff, gave kudos to the Ghost of Honour, Lorna Toolis; to the convention committee, especially Jannie Shea (much enthusiastic clapping); and to the hotel staff, whose service was excellent.

And on Monday I had an uneventful flight home. (The cat was really glad to see me back.)

## **CUFF Accounts**

July 10, 2023 Balance before Pemmi-Con:.....	\$1,212.70
July 19, 2023 One email order (C. Wolf):.....	19.00
July 20-24, 2023 Revenues from Auction and Turkey Readings: .....	71.00
<b>Total Funds received: .....</b>	<b>\$1,302.70</b>
<b>Total Expenses at Pemmi-Con: Total receipts (meals, etc.) .....</b>	<b>385.60</b>
<b>Balance after Pemmi-Con: .....</b>	<b>917.10</b>

Note: I have been borrowing from this fund, and will repay these funds by the end of this year.

For more information about CUFF, follow this link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/6119342503/>.

More of the chronology (and the several delegates' trip reports) can be found at  
<https://www.cdnsfzinearchive.org/cuff-canadian-unity-fan-fund/cuff-trip-reports/>.

You can also learn about other fan funds at this link:  
[https://fancylopedia.org/Fan\\_Funds](https://fancylopedia.org/Fan_Funds).

## HOME TRUTHS

This is in the nature of a reply to a request from Ahrvid Engholm, who wanted to know what was going on with SF Canada. Apparently, a case of excess political correctness, obliquely reported, or at least editorialized, by Canadian writer Den Valdron on Facebook.

### **Those Who Walk Away From SF Canada**

Den Valdron, Facebook, July 3, 2022

Well, my relationship with SF Canada has come to an end. It feels rather bittersweet.

As a background, SF Canada is a writer's literary organisation, focusing on Canadian speculative fiction writers, professional, semi-professional and trying really hard. It is a federally incorporated not for profit, maintains a web site and a list server, and serves as a community for writers.

I joined a couple of decades ago. Back then I was the only Manitoba member. My membership lapsed when I moved to The Pas. I renewed when I came back. I've been a member for a few years.

What appealed to me about SF Canada was the idea of belonging, the sense of community. I've always been solitary and something of an outsider, so the idea of a community, of being part of a community, has been deeply powerful for me.

Perhaps too powerful. SF Canada was also, on occasion, a forum for bullying, or where what should have been dialogue degenerated to abuse and personal attacks. I certainly witnessed that during the *Chiaroscuro* debacle.

*Chiaroscuro* was a Canadian genre small press, initially very successful and something of a ground breaker; sleazy business practices and abusive personal behaviour caught up with it. At first, its reputation shielded it; but when the dam finally broke, everything came out in a flood. SF Canada's membership got caught up in it, and a few of the particularly righteous went out of their way to attack and harass the insufficiently pure, bullying publicly and privately, until some members – decent, thoughtful people – were driven from the organization.

Righteousness and groupthink, two of my "favourite" things.

Meanwhile, other small press publishers, such as Edge<sup>3</sup> – who have been accused of similar or comparably sleazy practices or abuse – got a free pass, rather arbitrarily. Or, perhaps, simply as a matter of popularity.

In any event, a lot of smoke, some nasty flame, and very selective illumination.

Not the best showing. But I stuck around. As I said, the notion of community is a powerful one for me. And while I saw conduct I found deeply disturbing, I opted to overlook it.

The breaking point came this year, at the online AGM. To put it kindly, that was an appalling debacle, as the former executive went out of its way to prove it couldn't organize a piss-up at a brewery. In response to criticism, the executive responded childishly in a dispute with members, the whole thing degenerating rapidly into name calling. I lay the blame entirely on the executive (one of whom was notable for abusive conduct in the past, and in fact had once gleefully participated in a campaign of public harassment that nearly drove a writer to suicide).

Look, this isn't rocket science; if you're an executive, certain standards of competence are required. And even in the absence of competence, some minimal level of professionalism and decorum is a bottom line. You don't get into screeching matches with members, whether you think they're wrong or not; and you sure as hell don't do it by email, where you should at least have the opportunity to think before you write.

It was all quite appalling, and calls for reason and respect from some members were ignored, in favour of childish tantrums.

Ultimately, the worst part of it was the gangbang. The organisation voted to expel an allegedly wayward member. No hearing, no due process. Just the gangbang, gang up and you're out. And of course, the way things go, other offenders – arguably worst offenders, including members of the executive – were ignored or simply let off the

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<sup>3</sup> Edge Publications is a Canadian small-press book publisher which offers several SF and fantasy publications. They also became the regular publisher of *Tesseracts*, an annual anthology of Canadian SF short stories. And then, one year, they simply stopped paying writers. The head of Edge Publications, Brian Hades, is apparently nice enough in person but simply won't respond to requests that he shape up.

*ChiZine*, a Canadian (periodical) publication, also stopped paying its authors before turning belly-up.

hook. In the end, punishment, not justice, was meted out arbitrarily on the basis of who was popular and who wasn't.

That's pretty toxic. And that was hard to ignore. Honestly, I found the whole thing pretty traumatic for personal reasons. Sometimes, when someone or something shows you an ugly face, you can't unsee that. Whatever the organization, the community, offered, I can't ignore the toxicity.

And as much as I desperately want a community, SF Canada is not a community I want to be a part of.

This is my own decision and no one else's. Other people remain, and other people join, and I wish them well. I wouldn't tell anyone to avoid it, though I might be honest about my views.

There are a great many members who I know, who I like, who I respect and even admire, and I certainly hope that I will remain on good terms with at least some of them.

There are certain members I find loathsome, and they can go to hell.

But in the end, I can't be a member now. I wasn't going to resign or run away, because I don't run from anyone ever. I remained, and perhaps made certain persons uncomfortable – I was entirely willing to be unpleasantly blunt through the rest of my tenure.

When my membership expired, I walked.

I suspect my departure came as a relief to some, and embraced with hasty enthusiasm – no time was wasted removing me from the listserver or striking me off the website.

There is a certain amount of regret. It's hard to give up the idea of community, even if the price is unacceptable.

There might be hypothetical benefits to remaining, tips and tricks, contacts and tip offs for a writer ... but honestly, it's pretty clear at this point that I don't have a career or prospects as a writer. I continue to write, but for me it's somewhere between pathology and therapy. But whatever it is, SF Canada's just not fucking worth it.

Unlike fiction, clarity is a rare thing in life. We're all too wrapped up in the muck of day-to-day life, in the endless ambiguities of things. Often righteousness, and all its arrogance and cruelty, substitutes for clarity. As does cowardice. We navigate a world of clinging mud, where often the right thing is awkward and even costly.

But we can find our way. SF Canada showed that it was not a community I want to be a part of.

So be it.

It would be hypocritical of me to wish the organization well, having seen this aspect of it. I will settle for wishing many of the members well.

And then walk away.

## SF Canada Shenanigans

Den Valdron, Facebook, June 16, 2023

This is kind of funny. So, a couple of weeks ago, a review of my book *The Mermaid's Tale* was reposted to the SF Canada listserv (an email list by which the members of Science Fiction Canada can post and exchange views and information). That was kind of nice.

Now, *The Mermaid's Tale* is a novel with some dark stuff in it. No apologies whatsoever from me, on that score. And the review mentioned some of that dark stuff.

So, someone complained about that. Fair enough. They were "triggered" – which, in this context, meant that they'd been annoyed, rather than actually triggered. But as I said, fair enough.

Triggering, by the way, is actually a real thing. People who have suffered genuine and extreme traumatic events, and experience post-traumatic stress disorder when presented with certain sorts of stimulus – a "trigger" – can end up reliving aspects of the event, represented by things like physiological responses, panic attacks, emotional spin outs or even vivid memory flashbacks. I've had that "trigger" experience; it's real, it's awful, and it's painful.

But as with so many things, the notion of "triggering" has been co-opted and abused and, for many people, it's taken on a pop culture meaning of "something that offends me and I have a right not to be offended!"

This may seem disrespectful of me. But to hell with it, I've had to experience the real thing; and I'm sick and tired of the spoiled colonizing and weaponizing other people's genuine trauma and pain.

Anyway, getting off topic. Someone else, a male writer, correctly pointed out that while the content of the review might refer to unpleasant things, it didn't actually violate the Code of Conduct recently passed.

Fair enough. There was an opportunity for a reasoned discussion, something along the lines of "Well, even if it's not in the Code of Conduct, this is pretty harsh material, we're concerned and maybe let's be a little more careful in the future."

That's not what happened. Instead, things went incendiary, as the local bullies went psycho on this guy. Interestingly, they didn't go after the reviewer; they didn't go after the one who posted the review; just this one person who made the accurate *comment* about the Code of Conduct. Suddenly, there was nothing to do but escalate this into a giant four-alarm crisis and pour invective on the offender and his comment. There was a Nazi-like query "Are you sure you really belong here?" There was an impassioned histrionic speech about respect by a person who never shows anyone respect.

Basically, it was yet another round of the incendiary abusive bullying by several members hopped up on righteousness and sadism, that I'd seen more than a few times in the organization. The sort of despicable bullying that had driven several good decent people out of the organization, and that had eventually compelled me to walk away.

And like usual, everyone else just sits there quietly while the righteous sadism circus goes on; possibly because they agree, more possibly because they don't want to be the next targets, or maybe because they've seen these kind of hateful antics and they're conditioned to accept it. Sadism, cowardice or apathy, take your pick.

So much for the Code of Conduct. Nice to know that nothing's changed in the organization. Same old sh\*t, two-faced, arbitrary, sadistic, incendiary and childish.

Got it. Now here's the punchline:

Apparently, in response to the incident, the SF Canada Executive is now looking at revising the Code of Conduct....

... to include some provisions for "triggering."

Is that hilarious or what? Seriously? I mean, let's get real. The Exec had a front row, ringside seat to a literally over-the-top, histrionic, sadistic exercise of bullying where a couple of members ganged up on someone, attacked and abused, and literally told him to get the hell out of the organization...

Members who, I'll repeat, had repeatedly engaged in this offensive sadism and literally ran other people out of the organization. One of these members had previously used the organization's credentials as part of a bullying campaign that left a victim institutionalized and suicidal. This was not new.

And whoosh! Went right over their heads. Apparently they didn't notice. Because they're blind? Because they approve? Because they're normalized to this?

Nope, the only thing wrong was that the attacked member was correct, and now it's necessary to rewrite the Code and expand it to cater to include "trigger warnings" sensitivities.

As this whole fiasco involved me peripherally, I got to hear about it.

Originally, I was completely appalled and disgusted. It's hard to describe the visceral sense of loathing I felt. But I bottled it up, put it down, and moved on.

Now, with some perspective, I find myself reacting to this latest development with amusement. Contempt? Definitely contempt. But basically amusement.

This is how history works – first time tragedy, second time farce. Maybe it's a comment on the human condition, a mixture of moral cowardice, and unvarnished sadism under the guise of righteousness. Maybe people just aren't capable of anything better. Maybe people simply are just that ugly, and stupid and lazy. I'd like to think not, but I've been wrong.

It is a shame; I desperately long for community. I love the idea of family, community, companionship. I long for this notion of fellowship and community. In SF Canada, I thought I'd found something like that. I admit my own failures, the desire for community leaving me watching silently while awful people did awful things. But we have limits. If this is what a community is – cringing silence while righteous thugs strut about – then to hell with community.



## Mailing Comments

### **Brandy Hall #1 – Mark Nelson**

Welcome to Crackerbox Palace!

About RPG fandom – it seems that in writing your apa contribution, you identified “fandom” with fanzine activity. In contrast, when I tried running a newszine in Canada in the mid-1980s, it was forcibly brought home to me that an immense amount of fanactivity goes on without any fanzines being involved. Occasionally I would hear evidence that fans in Calgary or Halifax were very active in LARPing or comics or other fandoms. The letters and content I gathered for the newszine were forcing me – very reluctantly – to accept that fanzine fandom had been sidelined, and that a majority of contemporary fans and fandoms had never even heard of amateur publishing.

So I am not surprised that, at the time, you found almost no U.S. fanzines about RPG fandom. In fact, I am interested by the fact you were aware of a number of RPG fanzines, in the U.K.

One of the Great Epiphanies of my early fannish experience was the discovery that *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* fans thought that “fanzine” meant an amateur fictionzine, sold (theoretically) for profit, while fannish fans had long since abandoned that model and produced fanzines as personal newsletters, or works with opinion-editorial pieces, personal journalism, letter columns carrying on dialogues between the editors’ correspondents ... So it sounds very much as though the RPG faneditors had absorbed some similar impressions to those of the mediafans.

Re your comments to me: Thank you for your comments! Enjoyed the story about the mathematics convention in Las Vegas. Doesn’t matter whether it’s true or not, does it?

### **Archive Midwinter – Jefferson P. Swycaffer**

Re your comment to Ahrvid Engholm – I, too, have lost files unexpectedly. Sometimes it was my fault if disks got corrupted. Once it was partially someone else’s fault – they didn’t understand how I filenamed some WordPerfect 5.1 files, with the result that they could only reformat a very few into MS Word. I could have explained my filename extension system better.

Most of all, I blame my several moves and the consequent disappearance of old digital media. But then, I do not have a collection of old drives to handle the old media. *C’est la vie, n’est-ce pas?*

Re the residential schools that First Nations (and Australian aboriginal) children were subjected to ... In retrospect, I really question whether they were intended to make the world's culture available to them. The description in Canada was, "beat the Indian out of the Indians."

Glad you appreciated my out-of-left-field ideas about Creation and about aliens. I have a number of these standup routines on file.

Re your comment to Heath: very recently, Facebook removed me as administrator of The Society for the Perpetuation of Fannish Fandom, allegedly for inactivity. The first I heard about it was from a puzzled friend, and not from Facebook. So I quick-like took a look and contacted the new administrators. We are all on the same page, and I still have administrator's rights, but if Heath's and my experiences are common ... and they are ... I am interested in finding alternative social media. Any suggestions?

### ***Intermission #133 – Ahrvid Engholm***

I've responded to this apazine in other APAs, but maybe I can say something here that isn't repetitive.

Question: why is anyone referring to these programs as "artificial intelligence," when they clearly don't even qualify as artificial stupidity?

Question: why have numerous SF stories and movies cast "intelligent" systems as a threat, when the issue is transparently competent versus incompetent programming? (I think there is a direct parallel to competent, versus incompetent parenting, if we can draw any meaningful comparison between humans and "intelligent" programs.)

I still think someone should use Putin's face in an animated cartoon, set to Frank Sinatra's rendition of "I Did It My Way" (if no Russian-accented rendition can be found).

Dare I hazard a guess that you have written, or will write a mammoth history of Swedish fandom? If you do, then you will have reason to consult a lawyer before publishing anything about Jean-Henri Holmberg and Anders Belkom. (Have I got those names right?) I have to consult Canadian libel law to find out what I can, and cannot write about the conduct of several conventions, or the egregious conduct of at least one small publisher.

### ***Ye Murthered Master Mage #265 – George Phillis***

Your point is well-taken; any sort of club has to have an ongoing outreach and recruitment effort.

I could name several conventions that failed to do this, as far as their conrunning committees were concerned. I think I could describe fanzine fandom – indeed, fannish fandom – as failing to do this.

Thank you for your comments, but I have handed over the meet-up organization for WCSFA. This conrunning group apparently *will not* meet up except on Saturdays, which is when I work. Admittedly, I do not know how to reach people and motivate them. What becomes of fandom in Vancouver, of any description, is up to them.

### ***Snow Poster Township #11 – Heath Row***

I see here there's a tape and video bureau in the N3F. I should find out whether any university collections include fan-made videos. (Note: there is, I think, a Youtube channel dedicated to *Dawn of the Living Socks*.)

### ***Esmeralda County Line #4 – Kevin Trainor Jr.***

Thank you for your welcome!

Re your comment to *Brownian Motion* #1: Yes, I conceived my mission as CUFF delegate at Pemmi-Con in much the same way as you describe the mission of N3F among the various fandoms.

Re your comment to Ahrvid Engholm (*Intermission* #129): The antipathy of some fans to sports – all sports, not just some – can be traced easily to the formative experiences many fans had of sports participants. ~~I suppose there are jocks who are not mouth-breathing brain-deficient thugs, but I didn't meet them and got rather tired of the ones who kept kicking my balls up into my throat. Thank all gods that high school is long over with.~~

Re your comment to *Brownian Motion* (#2, I think): I had to laugh when you said there's no such place as Belgium. This reminds me of an Internet article I ran across, claiming there's no such place as Idaho. It was pretty good, as satires on crank theories go.

Thank you for all your comments!

### ***Intermission #134 – Ahrvid Engholm***

I trust that reprinting Den Valdron's Facebook articles on SF Canada, earlier in this apazine, answers your questions about SF Canada. My own experience was simply that they did not update their website, except for refreshing the interviews of selected member authors. At least, I did not see the webmaster refreshing their SF authors' market listings.

Synergy #46 – John Thiel

I thought synergy was a natural phenomenon of complex systems, including biochemistry or weather patterns, when you add some factors and, in effect,  $2 + 2$  gives you 7 – when, let us say, winter conditions plus volcanic explosions plus an El Niña event give us a superwinter, and a Little Ice Age such as we had in the early Renaissance. I also thought syzygy was another natural phenomenon, as when three or more planets all align with a radius drawn from the sun. Whatever.

Your article “Believability” makes several good points – many people do not believe we live in a science-fictional world, even with the changes in technology, climate, economics and other living conditions we have been experiencing since 1945; many people don’t even believe in reality, as witness the prevailing globalization/neoconservatism cult in public and private management, or the more recent Trump cult in the USA, if facts do not suit their beliefs; and science fiction does a mediocre job of explaining itself – but in your own terms, and some of your terms I disagree with. For one thing, we’re not seeing an object of “belief” when we see contemporary science fiction (on screen, in print, it makes no difference to me). What we are seeing is a form of entertainment. It isn’t even usually an exercise in reasoned imagination, as I once characterized science fiction. What passes for “science fiction” on screen, and in a lot of printed publications, is as much a rehash of previously-generated tropes and leitmotifs – horror tropes, post-apocalyptic dystopias, space/alien/lost ancient civilizations motifs – as anything else on TV. So is what passes for heroic fantasy, e.g. the Shannara or Game of Thrones series.

I thought everyone knew this stuff.

Your article “From Wizard to Scientist” rather disappointed me, if not in you, then in Nathaniel Hawthorne and any other writers who imagined scientists as wizards. For one thing, anyone properly educated in the sciences should have recognized that scientific operations people undertook had to be limited by the mechanical energy and the apparatus they could organize – which was pretty limited, by our standards. For another, even in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, it must have been clear that very few scientists were independently wealthy and well-equipped; as I recall, scientists who did anything more than collecting and observing phenomena were beholden to patrons, universities, or corporations, one and all. Finally, it should have been visible that research science, product development, and engineering were rather different disciplines – you never found rocket scientists building their own spaceships, and you never found agronomists inventing the Universal Vegetable<sup>4</sup> and marketing it by themselves. “Limitless power,” *mein tochis*.

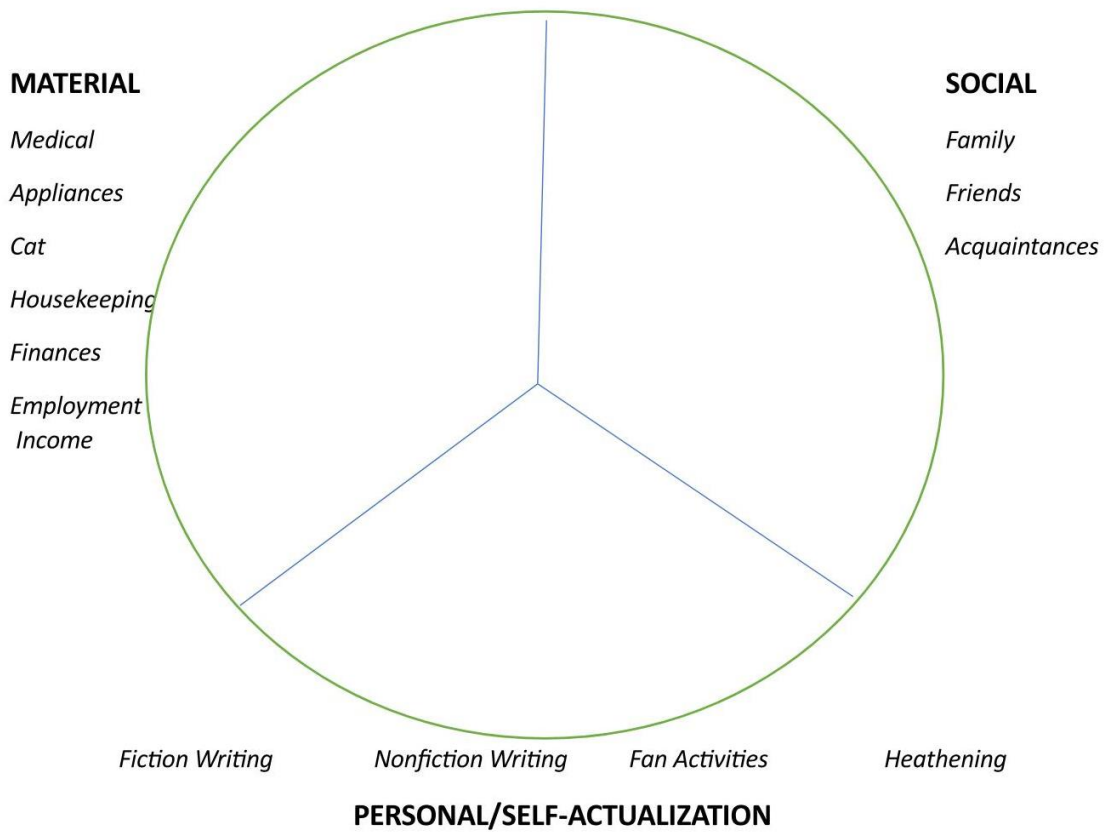
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<sup>4</sup> The Universal Vegetable! Capable of providing wool, meat, milk and cleaning products in one plant! Able to grow in any climate or terrain! Get one today!

**Samizdat 20 – Samuel Lubell**

Maybe your approach is the one I should emulate. I have several rather depressing things going on in my life, not to mention a lifelong tendency to depression, and my ongoing attempts to organize my life could be refocused to making my life better, as you are doing.

I improvised the following, just to orient myself in life:



# Synergy 47



SEPTEMBER 2023  
N'APA MAILING 266

Affiliate APA of the National Fantasy Fan Federation

Synergy is produced by the faanish efforts of he known as John Thiel, who resides at 30 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904; email at [kinethiel@mymetronet.net](mailto:kinethiel@mymetronet.net) .

It is my aim to bring about Group Wholeness through the medium of discussing the art and science of synergy, individually practiced as Syzygy, and to energize the apa with Solar Therm. The cover is an impression of those who live in this way.

*Cover by Dick Halloway*



The pictures show angelic transformations of those who enter into synergy, the utopian nature of the better life, the mysterious vaults of primal wisdom, and the lone existence which is perhaps not an ideal way to be; existentially perhaps. Questions remain—is a tall building a perfect place to be in, a question which may arise despite the boldness and valor of the doing of the construction, and the people who, despite being day laborers, have managed to construct what is worthy of gods. They have syzygy within them, that will enable them to construct such a task. Notice that these are all pretty much the opposite of modern civilization. But the concepts do arise from somewhere.

With Syzygy, should we not coexist with those who are opposite to us?

And now, the **EDITORIAL**



## Is There Any Way to Relieve the Angst, the Anxiety of the Age?

Daco florets may be one answer, but this is not taking the subject of my editorial seriously. It casts the topic away without regard. People might think the florets are pills, taken for relief. They could say, "I've just tossed down a couple of Daco florets," then, finding that people around them believe that they have taken some medicine and have chosen to tell them about it, they halt and say "I mean I've thrown them away. They're in the waste basket; 'Daco florets' is the way that editorial opened, and I file thirteenth it without reading any further." Maybe one of the others will say "Well, let's see what else it says" fishing through the trash, looking up to ask "Was there printing on the top?" "At the top, I'd say," to give the man his answer. The idea that they are anxiety relievers makes them sound medical. "Did I hear you've got some crack in here?" someone would say. "Yeah, wise cracks."

You might think that I was not able to think of a way to begin my editorial. Like I could think of that title, but not think of any way to begin an editorial about it. Well, I might explain that I'm thinking about *le mal du temps*, the malady of the times, if I'm remembering that phrase correctly, or the *sturm und drang* that I've heard is complained about in Europe, storm and stress I believe is the translation, the "existential anguish", as I've heard it called, with literary references added, citing passages from J.D. Salinger and others. This view seems to come from Europe, where most of the existential philosophers are from; I don't know if they've had any successors but I think most of them are gone by now. The dire talk is still there, so they weren't the cause of it. Well, what can be done about the anxieties of this terrifying age in the history of man? Lay a gentle hand on it, a comforting touch that it may be stilled?

Here you might be thinking that I am going to recommend synergy, but I don't think that would be the answer. It might have adverse effects upon people in that state of mind, complicating these turbulences and confusions with paranoia and alienation, being a different way of thinking and relating that they are entirely, or almost entirely, unfamiliar with (or they may have read Zola). I think a better answer to the question is that we should just stop paying as much attention to European thought as we have been doing. A lot of our troubles originate in other countries. No catch-all panacea is available for relief from this foreign news. Of course, Mr. Engholm and others live there, but I don't think of what I'm presenting as being unarguable. He points out that all these things, including conflicts occurring in Russia and Hungary, affect us, and I suppose they do, but I'm with what are we to do about these effects?

The best way, I think, to relieve ourselves from the anxieties of the age is to set ourselves apart from them and to find relief rather than looking far and wide for trouble. Kindlier attitudes toward one or another would be nice, too, but these kindlier attitudes have to be sought with difficulty because it is difficult to have a kindly attitude for someone who does not have a kindly attitude toward oneself.



Synergy, touch of mind to mind, requires finding out things about others and understanding them, and looking for ways to be reconciled with others. I know a lot of science fiction fen are searching for these answers, and encounter problems with themselves in the search. Let others know the problems.



## Comments on Mailing

Nice to see NASA referenced on the cover of the mailing. The craft look like a couple of spark plugs and I could wonder what they are. Sense of wonder.

BRANDY HALL: Perhaps the Australians wanted to have their facilities at identifying with other people and being something other than their mundane selves, and doing it with simulations, whereas the US fans didn't want to do anything. The US culture did have wargames, and many of the fen went over to these and left everything else behind.

Nice to see you as a new member of the apa, although you seem to have overlooked my zine in your comments.

ARCHIVE MIDWINTER: Mystical terms are hard to define, although most of them not written in Swahili are scientific terms. Mystics don't say anything much that adds up.

BROWNIAN MOTION: It's a pity to think of someone working each and every day to better himself, and acquire intelligence and wisdom, and as he does acquire what is ideal and the mark of a good life, that's it; he never puts his acquired wisdom to good use, and having things figured out to his satisfaction and being at peace with himself after life's storms, some unsuspected internal sickness carries him off and all of it vanishes from the Earth.

I'd have to go back to typewriters if I lose my printer or word capability (that is, if word ceases functioning), and then have to quit fanning because there are no more typewriters available, at least around here. They're being laughed at by technologists and called "antiques". Having a typewriter used to put me up front when I was twelve.

Back when, all us kids in fandom used to wonder what would happen to a previous fan generation when they reached middle age. Fandom seemed like an apprenticeship and when they reached that age they would have no excuse for not becoming professionals. It would seem like they had not matured. Next, what would happen to us when we reached that age? The only thing that would look right would be establishing a professionally printed literary magazine devoted to sf, which some of them already had. Even then, people might think they had maintained a youthful attitude for too long.

Of course, this is a bother to me; I DO retain that attitude. Why shuck off a part of one's life?

INTERMISSION 133: It's sort of a hyperbole to foresee super robots destroying the human race. I think that the complaint is more, really, that telephones, airplanes, television and radio, and the like, all of them transcendent of human capabilities except for the manufacture of them, and, too, computerized marketing, are supplanting human initiative and leaving them bereft when there is an equipment failure.

The builders of "artificial" life seem to me to be mad scientists.

I'd have to get with others more to back the Ukraine.

I met Pohl at the Chicon in the early nineties.

THE MASTER MAGE: I see several new members each issue these days.

"riverrun, past Eve and Adam', from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs. Sir Tristram, violer d'amores, fr'over the short sea, had passencore rearrived from North Armorica on this side the scraggy isthmus of Europe Minor to wielderfight his penisolate war..." is pretty difficult of translation, even into English.

I did get good background filming for SLAN around here. What we have looks fantastic and futuristic, but highly lived-in.

SNOW POSTER TOWNSHIP: The synergy controversy is about "how to live". That can get very controversial.

"Mainstream science fiction" is the SF most immediately available.

The Neff is surely in need of a good fanzine reviewer. I believe I suggested it in my zine in a NAPA mailing, also elsewhere, after seeing your fanzine reviews in the Los Angeles mailing.

ESMIRALDA COUNTY LINE: The 52 Chicon was the site of water-bombing from the top of the hotel by children wearing propellor beanies and carrying zap guns.

The scientology got into fandom by way of the Cult, via Ray Schaffer and Jack Harness.

Sure a lot of rat-a-tat action and information in this issue. I wish I had time and space to say more about what all is said in the issue.

SAMIZDAT: Mesmerism is a psychic power which some people have. Hypnosis is shown in fiction as being used in "brainwashing". The two terms are first, mesmeric, and second, hypnotic.

## Exterior Writings

As I have previously pointed out, I don't want my apazine to be considered a perzine, so I have other writers to show in the ish. (That word "perzine" would be better written out to its full meaning; it sounds like "pez" or "pipi" in its single compound word form. How about "A fanzine which is my own personal fanzine"? Perzine means that; personal fanzine. It so happens that that would be the opposite of a magazine or fanzine. Both are intended to be social. That ends up indicating that the editor is a solipsist. In short, there is no such thing as a personal fanzine.) Here are people that know me well enough to appear in my fanzines. & I them...the fanzine is named Synergy, these people are some of the other people that synergy requires. Here's some Other People:

### **SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE, MANIFOLD by Joanne Tolson**

In the spiraling galaxies and rings of gaseous nebulae  
lie the remnant relic Secrets of the Universe within itself,  
secrets of the universe manifold.

In the ancient origins of time so old,  
infinity loops and spirals, around and through the universe, like clockwork time.

Gaseous clouds billow in the eternal night that envelopes the planetary stars,  
linked by the luminosity of distant planets in array,  
night and day one in the same viscosity momentum seeks,  
where two stars are one in the binary pulse that beats.

### **SEARCHING FOR BYZANTIUM by Jerry Jenkins**

I don't remember where or how I found  
a hint of that secluded wondrous place  
lost in stars, where mysteries abound

whose spires and sunsets, gilt and grace  
and calm celestial music's soul-deep sound  
were said to be enfolded deep in space.

Sustained by hope and hopes to be fulfilled,  
Drawn to an end I thought would never come,  
I've wandered through dead universes stilled  
and empty, silent as a crystal drum,  
and navigated shoals of starlight spilled  
in some unknown, unnamed millennium.

And I have found that sacred place at last.  
I give myself to future and to past.  
I'm with the gathering host that welcomes me.  
Not elsewhere could such warmth of welcome be.  
I merge with all my lives as I become  
the next one born to see Byzantium.

### **STARDOM by Anne Valley**

Stellar nova burning bright  
Outside my sky-light tonight,  
Dance and glitter, fade again  
Like the words from this pen  
That go across a printer's desk  
And show the thoughts that I express  
Stellar nova, my soul's twin  
In shores of places where we've been.

### **THE VOICE OF WILD by Dr. Mel Waldman**

Be the voice of wild and cry for all the people; and ask or help—no shame in asking. Speak out for the poor and sick and the dying, they need us; and the children and the old folks and in-between folks too; be the voice of wild. Be fierce and forceful with the power of a trumpet and scream across vast landscapes and shriek high to the heavens and low and deep into the earth, and be the voice of wild and cry for love.

And weep and shout for multicolored love and taste the dazzling and glittering colors, the sweeping, soft, sensuous sweet colors of turquoise and sapphire and lapis lazuli, and be free. Taste chestnut, bronze, cinnamon, chocolate, and cocoa. Sweet ecstasy and sweet phantasmagoria, taste emerald and Paris green, apricot and tangerine, purple, lilac, and plum, and come to a place of love. Taste crimson, Chinese red, and ruby, oyster, white, and snow, and go to a haven of love; taste banana, lemon, and cream, yellow and gold, and black and ebony, and scream love.

Yes, taste the sundry colors of love and be free, and flow, and low like a river of glory, and flow like an ocean of grandeur, and flow like a holy river and the sacred ocean of love, and dance the dance of divinity, and be free, and sing the song of the heavens with thunder and lightning, and be the voice of wild,

and blast through the silence of oblivion, and drill through the daily forgetfulness, and bless the billions of brothers and sisters of our precious Earth, and remind the people, our people, all people, about the poor and the sick, and the dying—the children, old folks, and in-between folks too; they need us, we need them, we need each other.

Howl to the Heavens, howl to the Earth, howl to the source of all life, and be the voice of wild.



**end of issue**



# Ye Murthered Master Mage 266

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## N3F

We have a new editor for FanActivity Gazette. Mindy Hunt will be familiar to some of you from her work at SciFi4Me and in particular her contribution of the convention list.

### Laureate Award Results

Once again, Neffers came together to vote on the Laureate Awards, the oldest set of awards in fandom. Many thanks to all who voted, continuing a fannish tradition now eight decades old. The awards this year are:

Best Fan Writer — Martin Lock  
Best Fan Artist — Jose Sanchez  
Best Fan Website — Fanac.org from Joe Siclari, Edie Stern, and Mark Olsen  
Best Non-N3F Fanzine — Simultaneous Times Newsletter from Jean-Paul L. Garnier  
Best N3F Fanzine — Tightbeam  
Best Podcast — Simultaneous Times  
Best Novel — Lords of Uncreation by Adrian Tchaikovsky  
Best Shorter Work or Anthology — Return to Glory by Jack McDevitt  
Best Pro Artist — Austin Arthur Hart  
Best Editor — Toni Weisskopf  
Best SF Poet — Michael Butterworth  
Best Comic Book — New Think 1.0  
Best Anime — Chainsaw Man  
Best Manga — Mindset  
Best Television Show, Film, or Video — Heath Row's Productions  
Best None of the Above — Manuscript Press (Rick Norwood) and aruffo.com for reprinting the daily comic strip Alley Oop.

## Comments

[Brandy Hall Issue 1](#) And welcome to new contributor Mark Nelson.

You gave us a fascinating history of UK rolegaming fandom, role-playing game fandom as you put it.

UK and US rolegaming fandoms were apparently ships passing through the trackless wastes of the aether. Approximately simultaneously with A&E, Mark Swanson and Glenn Blacow launched The Wild Hunt, which went on for a decade or so. Glenn appears to have been the person who created the nomenclature ndm for 'roll n dice, each die having m sides'. The final issue was the Glenn Blacow memorial issue; at about the same time Mark Swanson married. There was a successor APA. There was a separate Champions APA.

The Wild Hunt was different from Alarums & Excursions in that it was much more focused on how to create a good set of rules, for example by interpreting the rule book. Gamesmasters who created worlds were honored. Gamesmasters who created campaigns were respected. Then there were the bottom-feeding fish who used published scenario books, the lowest of the low being the ones who used script immunity — a term I think coined in WH — so that players would always end up going to the right sequence of places. TWH writers took note of Gygax's belated claim that his magic system was based on Jack Vance, a magician being able to cast a spell once a day and that only with access to his books of magic, but that claim was not supported by the rule books and was widely ignored.

There were a considerable number of other rolegaming zines. The earliest D&D zine is probably Corner of The Table, which has the feature that it was covering D&D gaming before the game was published. While Gygax is more remembered for Dragon and Polyhedron, his first related zine is undoubtedly Domesday Book, a zine so rare that single pages have apparently sold for prices in the four-figure range. There are other rolegaming zines, e.g., Transactions of the Martian Areographic Society. I would have to sort through my wargaming zine collection for more titles, but as it runs to over 100 shelf-feet, I am not inclined to do so.

There is a direct connection between rolegaming, miniatures and board wargaming. Gygax was originally a designer of board war-games. He published in *International Wargamer*, and later started publishing board games separately. He also went into miniatures, whencefrom *Domes-day Book*, the magazine of the International Federation of Wargaming Castle&Crusades Society, and published the corresponding miniature rules, *Chainmail*. Finally he and friends published a set of variant rules adding magic. Yes, *The Three Holy Books in The Sacred Plywood Box* originally were a set of variant rules for *Chainmail*.

For much more on this, be sure to read Jon Peterson's enormous book *Playing at the World*, soon to be reissued by MIT Press,

But thank you again for your fine coverage of UK rolegaming activity.

**Archive Midwinter** Thank you for all your comments! They make N'APA a better zine.

Threading is a very interesting bit of analysis. It's not quite the same as 'person' and certainly not the same as 'tense'. The familiar tenses are past and present. Past is used in normal genre fiction. The affectation of using present tense is a feature of modern literary writing. There is also the historical present tense, in which past events are described in present tense "George Washington rides his horse toward Massachusetts."

The familiar persons are first person singular and third person singular, e.g. "Admiral Simpson climbed to the quarterdeck. Pirate musket balls whizzed all around him." and "I climbed to the quarterdeck. Pirate musket balls whizzed all around me" First person plural is rare but possible "We were a great and might race, before whom all other nations cowered..." Then, of course, there is that abomination of the modern literary crowd, second person present tense, familiar to rolegamers as "You have reached the top of the mountain. There before you is a shepherd's hut, barely large enough for the shepherd to lie down to sleep. You open its door. You see a forty foot wide marble staircase, its walls huge plates of pure silver, leading up."

One recent Hugo-winning novel was written in some part in present-person second tense. Of that novel is shall say that I have had friends con-

gratulate me for managing to finish it (though the final line is wonderful) and that if it had reached me as a submission to *Eldritch Science*, the N3F Fiction zine, I would have rejected it.

**Brownian Motion** Garth, we are certainly happy to see you here. That was a fine description of cider. In the United States, one also encounters non-alcoholic cider. Alas, I have an allergic response, simply described as intense chest pain, so I don't drink the stuff.

Perhaps at some point business conditions will change, and con runners will find more receptive hoteliers. Alternatively, perhaps some suburb will have a smaller site, suitable for a con with a strictly limited number of registrants. For a fair number of years, the local ReaderCon was small, strictly limited to book readers, and had exactly one event ongoing at a time. However, congratulations, in best serial ending style, for making your escape before instant death arrived. Someone complaining intensely about 'meeting' rather than 'meet-up' is particularly peculiar. Returning the flags and posters seems to have been a wise decision.

**Intermission 133** Interesting coverage of Swedish cultural events. Eurovision song contests? The Bradford Movie club is even older than the N3F. The Gernsback TV receiver of the 1950s was extremely imaginative, and it only took us 60 years to build them. As an aside, if you look at the gentleman's telephone in the picture, the handset has a cable, but it appears to me that the gadget to which it is connected does not. It's a radiotelephone, as also seen on a period episode of *Superman*. His discussion of house calls by doctors had a different outcome, namely house calls have essentially ended. The patient instead goes to a hospital emergency room, where a full panoply of diagnostic equipment is available. Interesting account of a bit of fraudulent voting. There are other schemes. Some years ago in the Hugo balloting several entries were nominated that other people did not like. To vote for a Hugo, you need to send some money and then you get to vote. The other people waged a massive publicity campaign, including coverage iirc in the *Economist*, leading to an enormous number of people, far more than before, voting on the Hugo Awards.



Your account of SF on fiche is fascinating. In period, the N3F had a Fiche Bureau, leading to confusion because its title was passed down to the present day as the ‘Fische Bureau’, and no one was quite sure what a fische was.

Clearly you should have the Alvar Award retroactively renamed, and then you would indeed be a Hugo winner.

**Snow Poster Township** Thank you for your fine account of what our Tape and Video Bureau has been doing. Please keep The National Fantasy Fan up to date on what you have done. Reviewing older books (here, Caviar) is a fine project, well worth reading.

I tried to revive the N3F book reading group, some years ago, but failed. There are so many titles out there that it is unlikely that two members will have read the same book. Perhaps we would try again.

**Esmeralda County Line** You seem to have had an interesting third of the year. Apply leeches? The giant stfnal variety?

It would not occur to me, wrto Analog, that e.g., the Telzey Amberdon series of stories was engineering porn, as there was a complete shortage of engineering bits. The heroine was even a law student. I quit reading Analog when Bova became editor and announced...interesting what gossip you encounter .. That he would not be publishing anything more from James Schmitz. Modesitt does magic stories, which I much enjoy, and very hard science fiction, which works less well for me. Not sure why.

I wish you the best with Son of SilverCon. I have passed the age where I care to travel, though I did I think pay for some sort of a membership. Someone arguing with Correia. Quick, double the cooling on all internet communication nodes. No! Triple the cooling! With liquid helium!\*

\*Actually the wrong solution. Liquid He has an extremely feeble specific heat.

**Synergy** Ah, a cuboidal spaceship. Interesting philosophical notes on synergy. Syzygy is originally astronomical. When the line is earth-

moon-sun, syzygy can give us an eclipse. Modest riddle. Can you put three planets in a line, sufficient that the one in the middle blocks the view between the first and the third? In our system the answer is yes, though the phenomenon is, let us say, rare. Between 1700 and 2200 there were only 18 of these, and the next is not until 2065. Planets occulting stars — eclipses, but of the wrong sun — are rather more common.

Your critique of televised science fiction is, let us say, different. I note for example the lines “Much of the science fiction being broadcast goes against anything anyone would want to see happen, and is therefore an aggression. It seems to have war in mind more than it does science fiction, which is material; for warfare precisely because it is intolerable to the viewer. Science fiction should be tolerable and even acceptable viewing.” and “If this is science fiction, people don’t like it have a claim. It is difficult to discuss these programs, as they are unspeakable.”

Well, science fiction is here to expose us to novel ideas, and you have certainly done that.

**Samizdat** It is certainly true that SF reflects the period in which they were written, though the original Buck Rogers has the defense that it is being told from the perspective of a man of the early 1920s who finds him some centuries in the future. He is revolted that the Airlords of Han prefer well-padded furniture, and goes downhill from there, at least from our perspective.

Your account of Hawthorne and Twain is fascinating. I confess I found the ending of *A Connecticut Yankee* to be a bit opaque.

Were the Dark Ages dark? They built fewer large engineering works than the Romans did, but they were inventive. The Dark Ages gave us the humble clothes button, meaning that robes needed far less fabric than a Roman toga did, the moldboard plow, good windmills, and algebra. The first algorithm, alphabetical order, was a bit later.

# Fiction

## Of Breaking Waves

### A Big Reveal

“The tunnels,” she recognized. “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” He lowered her to the obsidian paving of the entrance plaza. She stared, unsure how she might thank him.

“I regret I can bring you no happiness, only a shortcut homewards. May your journey prove well-fortuned,” he said matter-of-factly. Then, to her utter astonishment, he leaned over, kissed her gently on the forehead, and took a second stride...

to his library. It was late afternoon, sunlight cascading from white-painted wood onto the magnificent carpet and drapes. Pickering was utterly alone, his house empty again.

*The one thing, he thought, that I could not remember except while Eclipse was here, and could not remember if I tried to tell her, was that she is my daughter, a detail that in a few moments I will forget forever.*

He looked around the room, then stared at his calendar. It seemed that the entire week had passed as if he had been in a dream, with nothing to remember, but the word count on his desk display showed that he had indeed been productively busy. He'd had a trip this afternoon, hadn't he? He must have taken a walk, and passed it in thought, so there was nothing to remember of it. So what had he been doing? His routine must have been so humdrum that he could remember nothing of it. For some reason, the gap bothered him.

“Telzey, my schedule, the last week?” he asked.

*Searching.* Telzey paused. *I have no records of that.*

“Surveillance camera records. Search. Where was I on Wednesday?”

*House security records for the last week have been deleted. There was no transfer to remote storage. There is no record of a reason for the deletion. I have a message from you. ‘All that was deleted was done in my name and by my direction, for a good and sufficient reason.’*

*How charming, Pickering thought. Something has happened to my memory, and to Telzey's records. The memory trick – that was surely one of my five visitors, who I always trusted. He scanned his desk, finding a note in his own handwriting.*

*I will not remember the week clearly, the note read, with my consent, to protect my five visitors from serious harm, however annoying I will later find the gap in my memory. Last week will be a dream, one from which I have now awakened.*

# Brandy Hall Issue 2 (September 2023)

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*Brandy Hall 2* is produced for N'APA mailing 266 (September 2023) by Mark Nelson.

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In my first issue I followed in the spirit, if not the flesh, of Garth Spencer (*BROWNIAN MOTION* 1, mailing 263), by discussing my involvement in non-SF fandoms. In this issue I follow Garth more directly by discussing my interactions with SF fandom.

In September 1986 I started my undergraduate degree at the University of Leeds. At this stage I had never seen a science fiction fanzine. I knew that they existed, but I hadn't seen one. Knew that they existed? The postal diplomacy hobby was started in 1963 by John Boardman, a well known New York fan. Many of the players and zine editors in the 1960s had links to SF fandom. I'm pretty certain that I'd read as much, maybe in the RPG prozine *Imagine* or in a postal diplomacy fanzine. In September 1986, I had never seen a science fiction fanzine but I knew they existed.

Like many a fresher before me I joined too many clubs and societies, the extent of my involvement with many of them was restricted to joining them in the first week of session. One club I joined was the Leeds University Union Science Fiction Society. The person running the stall when I joined was Sean Wilcox, the editor of the club fanzine *Black Hole*. As well as recruiting new members he was flogging off back issues of *Black Hole*: I bought as many issues as he had. What did I think about it? I wasn't that impressed. It seemed to contain a fair amount of fan fiction, my first exposure to it. Whether it was this encounter that turned me off fan fiction for good I can not say. As is the way of club fanzines, the back issues contained a fair amount of gossip of interest only to the people that were involved in the club when the fanzine was produced. I was not gripped by it. Other than joining, I only remember attending one club activity that year.

We now fast forward to September 1987. Having become wiser over the previous twelve months I joined a much more restricted number of clubs and societies. (In writing the previous sentence I accidentally typed, 'Having become much wider'. That may have also been true. In fact, it may have been truer than what I've written.) This included the Science Fiction Society. This year, I became an active member. By active member, I mean that I attended the weekly meetings. These were held in The Packhorse; one of the many pubs thronging the sides of the university. Why was this pub the location of our meetings? It was probably chosen as the location by the founders of the society in 1973. I no longer remember how many members regularly attended our meetings, probably less than ten. Nor do I remember what day the meetings were or what time they started. They finished at closing time, but I left well before then as the last bus back to where I lived left the city center at something like 9pm or 9.30pm. (In my memory that was the 760 bus to Bradford). However, what I do remember is that at the first meeting of the year I met Steve Glover.

Steve was a postdoc in the Department of Biophysics. He was the only attendee who was active in SF fandom, though another one of the regulars had attended the previous Eastercon. We hit it off

talking about our experiences of fanzines in different fandoms. At the end of the evening I went back to his house to meet his wife, Jenny, and the three of us chatted away until the early hours of the morning. The Glover's were the first science fiction fans that I'd met, not only were they fans but they both published fanzines: Stephen ran *Outsider* whilst Jenny ran *Maverick*. However, they stressed that they were not in the mainstream of SF fanzine fandom.

Jenny was aghast to discover that neither RPG nor postal diplomacy fanzines were available for the usual. If you didn't trade, then you had to part with cash and subscribe. She thought it was untoward to charge a subscription fee for a fanzine. I tried to persuade her that, at least for postal diplomacy fanzines, the frequency of publication meant that you needed to charge a subscription fee to subsidise production costs. Frequency of production? By the mid 1980s the days of fortnightly zines had long gone and there were only two three-weekly zines, only one of which kept to schedule. Most zines were monthly or five-weekly, a smaller number were six-weekly. A typical game of diplomacy might finish after twenty-four seasons in 1912: that's two years of real time in a monthly zine, a little under two-and-a-half years in a five-weekly zine, and almost two and three-quarter years in a six-weekly zine.

It's always been the case that postal diplomacy fanzines have been available on a subscription basis. What I didn't know in 1987 was how this started, it's only been very recently that I've been able to access postal diplomacy fanzines from the early 1960s. In *Graustark* 3 (21<sup>st</sup> June 1963) John Boardman announced that non-players would receive ten issues for \$1. Players had to pay a \$1 fee, receiving the zine free thereafter. (It's not clear if it was free for the duration of the game or the duration of their involvement in the game). Most subsequent editors didn't distinguish between players and non-players and charged issue fees to both. Boardman had floated the idea of running a postal game of diplomacy in the third issue of *Knowable* (March 1963). *Knowable*, a science fiction fanzine mainly devoted to science, was available for "trade, contribution, hard cash, letter of comment, free books for reviewing, as a sample because you're mentioned herein, or because I happen to feel like it. Subscriptions are \$1 for five issues." Perhaps it wasn't unusual to make *SF fanzines* available for cash in the 1960s?

(Thank you to fanac.org for making old fanzines available! The best source for North American postal diplomacy fanzines is Doug Kent's 'Postal Diplomacy Zine Archive'.)

One of the things that put me off SF fanzines at the age of 19 was their irregular production and the length of time between issues. When you are used to seeing your locs published every month or every five weeks, you are not impressed by fanzines which run on a much more relaxed publishing schedule. I see from fancylopedia.org that over slightly more than eight years Jenny published thirteen issues of *Maverick*, the second issue in March 1987 and the final issue in March 1995, with four issues in 1988. I look back now and think that, in an era when publishing a fanzine meant posting it, four issues in one year wasn't not bad going for a SF fanzine. Steve published eight issues of *Outsider* between September 1986 and March 1991, with four issues in 1987.

A second problem that I experienced with the Glover's fanzines was that I did not have a reference frame to evaluate them. Familiarity with the genres gave me a ready entry point to comment upon RPG/postal diplomacy fanzines. I didn't have a background in reading SF fanzines, it was a brave new world. For a while I received both *Maverick* and *Outsider*. But in light of the 'problems' I had with them I didn't use them as a springboard to other SF fanzines.

(Let's go off on a digression. It's foolhardy to try and recall conversations from such a long time ago. Perhaps I label opinion to one conversation which actually evolved over conversations over a number of years. Regardless of when I developed the following impression, I developed from Steve the impression that SF fandom was an amorphous blob consisting of many subcultures which might or might not overlap. Were attendees at Star Trek conventions part of fandom? Were people who only attend Eastercon part of fandom? How about convention fanzines as a group? Were all fanzine fans equal or were some more equal than others? Did that part of SF fandom which was fanzine fandom contain within it a Praetorian Guard, being those individuals involved in TAFF: the people who stood, the people who nominated, but above all those who were 'allowed' to vote. When I first met Steve, he didn't consider himself to be part of the inner sanctum of fanzine fans who were allowed to be part of TAFF – recall that his fanzine was called *Outsider*. I see from *Taffervescent* 8 (May 1993) that Steve didn't vote in the 1993 TAFF election. However, I see from *TAFFlon Tudor* #4 (June 1998), *Necronomigone* (July 2006), and *President TAFF's Bathtub* #4 (December 2009) that he voted in the 1998, 2006, and 2010 TAFF races. (Perhaps he voted in other TAFF races, I didn't carry out too stringent a search.) What does it all mean? Perhaps it means that he finally ascended to the light and was 'allowed' to vote in TAFF? Or perhaps it just meant that there was never a Praetorian Guard and anyone who was actively involved in some part of fanzine fandom was active enough to vote? We should not discount the possibility that... I won't say that fake memories have been implanted... but we shouldn't discount the possibility that in my conversations with Steve I got the wrong end of the stick.)

The next part of my development as a SF fan was attending my first SF convention: LUCON (Leeds University Convention), 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February 1988 at... Leeds University. This had a fanzine stand and I picked up a smackerel of fanzines from the UK and North America. I think I either picked up a flyer or a sample copy of *Critical Wave* at LUCON. I certainly *subscribed* to *Critical Wave* for some time and I started subscribing around the time of LUCON.

We now fast forward to September 1988, when as a final year student I again joined the Science Fiction Society. I again attended our weekly meetings, continuing my conversations with Steve about fanzines. Towards the end of the academic year I attended my second SF convention: Iconoclasm, 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June 1989 (Griffin Hotel). My dim recollections of the con are as follows.

- 1) It's the only convention I intended which had an exhibition of fan art. Rather than a traditional auction, there was a piece of paper below each piece of art and you wrote on it how much you were willing to pay, which had to be more than the previous bidder.
- 2) There was a panel which ran a fannish version of the radio show "I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue". This must have seemed a good idea to the organising committee, but the execution was very underwhelming.
- 3) There was a panel about (*SF*) fanzines. Vinc Clarke was one of the panellists and I spoke to him afterwards. As a result he printed my name and address in a zine that he was editing and this resulted in me receiving a few (*SF*) fanzines.

Fanzine that I received as a consequence of Vinc Clarke's name check include *FTT* (by Joseph Nicholas and Judith Hanna) and John D. Owen's *Shipyard Blues*. I also received Terry Jeeves' *Erg*,

though I believe that I started to receive it the year before before Iconoclasm. *Erg* was very different in style from any other SF fanzine I saw, not least because it was available for a cash subscription.

Having graduated in 1989 I went to the University of Bath for one year before returning to Leeds in September 1990. The first year back, and only the first year back, I rejoined the Science Fiction Society, but was an inactive member. Of more importance was that I ended up living in Armley: 21 Cecil Mount, Armley, Leeds LS12 2AP. According to Google Maps this is a five minute walk, 200 meters, to where Steve and Jenny Glover lived. I won't say that I was a frequent visitor. But I visited them over every-so-often, returning with fistfuls of fanzines to read. I don't remember specific titles, but my indelible impression is that Las Vegas was a hot bed of SF fandom. No visit seemed complete without being given a fanzine from the city of lights. Could Las Vegas even have been the Fanzine Capital Of Fandom? Sometimes I only read the zines, sometimes I locced some. Mostly, the Glovers enabled me to be a passive consumer of SF fanzines. The peak of my fannish activity was 1991-1993 when I bid for various items that were auctioned by Pam Wells to raise TAFF funds. One of the zines I remember from this period is *STET*.

A most calamitous event occurred between September 1990 and June 1991: my typewriter broke. When I started producing fanzines I was still at school and used my dad's BBC computer. (I might have hand written locs, the horror). When I went up to Leeds in September 1986 the person I shared a room with had a typewriter. In September 1987 I bought my own typewriter: a lightweight model made for travel. Unfortunately, by the time that my typewriter became a dead typewriter the shops that had sold typewriters only four years previously were no longer in the business of selling typewriters. Indeed, quite often they were no longer in business. This put me in a quandary. How to produce a fanzine? How to write locs? What's only just occurred to me, thirty-three years too late, is that I should have used the yellow pages to search for shops selling typewriters. Surely, in 1991, there would have been at least one shop in Leeds selling typewriters? That didn't occur to me. Still, as a postgraduate student I could write my fanzines using the computing facilities of the university. The only drawback was an exorbitant charge of 10 pence/side for using the laser printer. (The dot matrix printer was free, but the quality wasn't suitable for printing fanzines.)

The main problem with losing my typewriter wasn't that I now had to pay 10 pence/side for printing. The main problem was time. With a typewriter I could type fanzines and locs at home in the evenings and at the weekend. If I wanted to go into work for fanac then it was a 1.4 mile walk which google maps claims that you can cover in 31 minutes.

In 1994 I finished my doctorate and started a postdoc. I moved to a flat nearer the university: 3 Kelso Road, Leeds, LS2 9PR. Google maps tells me that it is a eight minute walk, 400 meters, to the building containing my office. It was sufficiently near to work, that every lunch time I walked home for lunch. It was sufficiently near to work, that I could pop back into work after my evening meal. It was sufficiently near to work, that I could pop in at the weekend on a whim. I now had a laser printer in my office. Taken together, this change in circumstances could have led to a resurgence in my fanac. But the moment had passed. Fan activity on the SF front declined to zero and on the postal diplomacy front it declined to receiving just one or two fanzines. It would be the best part of three decades before I would read SF fanzines again – earlier this year to be exact.

NEXT ISSUE. My rambling odyssey through the world of fanzines comes to an end when I discuss my involvement with APAs.

# The Mathom House

*Archive Midwinter* (Jefferson P. Swycaffer)

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm rhct Heath Row

*“I, too, have a fondness for short stories over novels. A story, as you note, is just the right length to explore “An Idea.” Novels must be about a larger number of things, and sometimes they get in each other’s way.”*

I used to look down upon the short story as being inferior to the novel. I have no idea why I thought so, certainly it was not a consequence of a careful consideration of the forms. Now that I am older, I find much merit in the short stories. It’s nice to be able to sit down and finish a story in one sitting. One writer that I discovered recently is Haruki Murakami. I’m slowly working my way through his oeuvre of short stories.

Ryct Samuel Lubell:

*“Fun spotlight on Frederick Pohl. Pohl is the author of the short story “The Midas Plague” which is one of the most relevant and insightful of all SF shorts, clever and intelligent and very, very funny.”*

Based upon Samuel’s comments I ordered the collection “Platinum Pohl”. This arrived recently (01.08.23). I have yet had the chance to start it. Unfortunately, I’ve been on a book buying splurge recently and I’m slowly working my way through the accumulated pile of books. I’ve checked the index and “Platinum Pohl” does not include “The Midas Plague”.

*Ye Murthered Master Mage 265* (George Phillies)

*“In fairness to the Imperial Russians, they also built the Ilya Murometz four-engine bomber, the largest aircraft in World War I”*

My knowledge of World War I is limited to reading A.J.P. Taylor’s book. Hmm. I remember reading a book on World War I that my dad had which I thought was written by A.J.P. Taylor. But looking through the lists of books that Taylor wrote I can not see one on the first World War. I think the book I am remembering was the book of a TV series since it contained a reasonable number of photographs and maps – it was certainly a book aimed at the popular market, not a research audience. But that’s not the point that I was going to make. The point I was going to make was that I had not heard of the Ilya Murometz bomber. I’ve now read the Wikipedia entry on it. I see that it was based upon the Russky Vityaz, the world’s first four-engine plane. One of the Murometz variants was the first plane to include a tail gunner. Fascinating reading.

*INTERMISSION 134* (Ahrvid Engholm)

*“Many were too loosely handled, allowing panelists to mumble for minutes. I suggest they should have an egg timer interrupting everyone after 1 minute!”*

That is a very good suggestion that could be gainfully employed at most academic committees: there’s almost always someone who likes the sound of their voice too much.

*“Generally about Eurocon:*

*Too expensive bheer. (Inflation times, I know. One solution could be to make con discount deal with a nearby pub. But today's concoms seem to be fat cats with no understanding of high costs for poor fans)”*

I’ve never been to an academic conference/meeting where a discount deal has been organised on bheer, but sometimes a discount deal on coffee is organised. At the annual ANZIAM meeting (defined in a moment) there are usually free drinks at the reception on the opening day. (Free? Well, you paid for them in your registration fee.)

*“Skip silly, ethically questionable "Codes of Conduct". Those are rubber rules and often used to silence freedom of opinion.”*

The main body for applied mathematics in Australia and New Zealand is ANZIAM: **A**ustralia and **N**ew **Z**ealand **I**ndustrial and **A**ppplied **M**athematics. Technically, it’s a division of the Australian Mathematical Society. Adhering to the Australian Mathematical Society code of conduct is a requirement of attending any meeting that the Australian Mathematical Society organises, this applies to both members and non-members. If you a member, then the code of conduct applies to you in your professional life and outside it – not just at conferences. The ANZIAM code of conduct only applies at ANZIAM organised conferences. I don’t remember when these were introduced, but they were first discussed circa 2018 and 2019.

I don’t remember the specifics... but I believe that many professional societies introduced codes of conduct over a similar time period. As I remember it... there was some pretty outrageous and unacceptable behaviour at a European conference of some professional body. There was no mechanism to discipline these people. This led to the relevant professional body introducing a code of conduct. Similar behaviour was observed at other conferences. This led to a cascade of professional organisations introducing codes of conduct.

The wide ranging nature of the Australian Mathematical Society of Conduct could (in theory!) see it be used to discipline individuals based upon their political views. And by political views I don’t mean abhorrent non-mainstream opinions but mainstream opinions which a majority of the code of conduct committee disagree with.

I won’t comment on your calculations regarding COVID-19 deaths because it’s not my research area. However, you made some good points that need to be appreciated. Just because you had COVID when you died does not mean that you died from COVID. Do we want to know the number of people who died whilst infected with COVID or the number of people who died as a consequence of being infected? Unfortunately, not ever country has the resources to distinguish between these two categories.

An appealing way to eliminate this problem is to estimate the excess mortality. At its simplest this works as follows. We know how many people died in Sweden in 2019 and in 2020. The only difference between these years is COVID. Therefore, if more people died in 2020 we say that the difference between the numbers, the excess mortality, is due to deaths from COVID. This estimate works well if the number of people dying from COVID is ‘large’. It does not work well if the number of deaths is ‘small’. After all, no year is exactly the same as the previous year. The number



of deaths are not the same each year. There are always fluctuations in the numbers. (The number of COVID deaths has to be large compared to the size of the fluctuations for the method to work). Statistical techniques can, and should, be used to estimate some of the underlying fluctuations so that the calculation can be refined.

The excess mortality calculation runs into complications if a country introduced precautionary measures that significantly changed the behaviour of the population: this changes the underlying mortality figures. For example, in Australia during COVID deaths due to the flu were greatly reduced because people were not going out as much and when they were going out they were wearing masks. If you want to estimate COVID deaths in Australia 2020 by calculating the excess mortality compared to 2019 then you need to also estimate the decrease in the number of people who died from the flu in 2020.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has a page “Measuring Australia’s excess mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic until the first quarter 2023”. I’ve not read it. I probably should do at some time as it looks interesting and is written in a non-technical manner. (Or at least it looks non-technical to me).

Some Australian political commentators were against the introduction of masks, working from home, travel restrictions etc. Their main argument against the imposition of restrictions on behaviour was economic. The damage to the Australian economy would be too great, we should just let the disease propagate through the population. According to the ABS by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 there had been 13,021 deaths of people either “with or from COVID”. (Your point again about with or from). The commentators who were against the counter-measures being introduced now say “was it really worth spending so much money, when so few people died?” According to the Australian Treasury AUD \$291 billion was spent as of May 2021 in economic support. But who is to say how many people would have died if no counter-measures had been introduced?

*“Some idiot statisticians, eg from Imperial College in London, claimed they had magic “models” that could “predict” that “half a million Brits would die from the little bugger within a year”. Or whatever the fearmongers claimed.”*

I’m sure that there will be a re-evaluation of what the models predicted and whether they were correctly used. I won’t defend the Imperial College models as I never got to grip with them. However, it’s very difficult to produce accurate predictions at the start of a pandemic because at this stage you do not have a large amount of data. You can’t calibrate detailed models without data. You can only say “based upon the information we have, we predict that this might happen”. Secondly, initial models only predict what will happen if you don’t take any action. You are entirely correct in stating that the actions of politicians are usually determined by what course of action they think will favour them most at the next election. (Well, perhaps not Boris Johnson...)

*Brownian Motion 2 (Garth Spencer)*

Re Don H. DeBrandt's article "Cider: Our Friend and Yours".

*“Cider has grown in popularity these last few years, especially in British Columbia. In 1986, we consumed 6,939,000 litres of this tasty beverage, about the same as we had for the previous three years; the next year it jumped to 8,491,112!”*

Showing my provincialism, I associate good cider with the West Country, Normandy, or Asturias in Northern Spain. But as “cider is made from the pulp of apples or pears and fermented in much the same way wine is” then good cider should come from any region which produces appropriate apples. I hadn’t realised, until I read up on it, how highly regarded cider was in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century American colonies – one of the few available beverages that was safe to drink. This reminds me that, for similar reasons, small beer was the main drink of choice at meals in the Middle Ages. There’s a story about a well-known school in England, I forget the name of the school. The charter of the school specified that the pupils were to be given small beer to drink. This practice continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, until a reforming Christian head-master abolished it. The next year the pupils were struck down by a wave of dysentery. Returning if not to cider then to apples, I’ve learnt that the most popular apple in Canada is the McIntosh apple: no news to you I am sure. Returning, at last, to the topic of cider I see that at the time of the American Revolution one in every ten farms in New England operated its own cider still.

Erika Janik. (2011). *Apple A Global History*. Reaktion Books.

A short and very readable history of the apple, including a small selection of recipes from around the world.

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm *Intermission* #131

*“Reading about Sweden’s Short Film Festival, and your space-related interests, I found myself imagining silly things. “CSI: Luna,” a pastiche forensic-procedural show set in the first lunar city. “NCIS: Space Force,” yet another spinoff of the NCIS franchise, set in the operations of the semi-imaginary U.S. Space Force.*

*The titles just write themselves.”*

Please don’t, even in jest, suggest such things. I now expect to hear that NCIS: Space Force has started production. Will Trump appear in it?

*“(I’ve always wondered why Esperanto, or some more recent constructed lingua franca, hasn’t been seriously used in European business, science, diplomacy and broadcast media.)”*

You’re pulling our legs aren’t you? They’re already using the lingua franca of English. (To be replaced by Mandarin before the end of the century?)

Ryct Synergy #45 – John Thiel

*“Re your comment to Intermission #129: At one point I tried to enliven BCSFAzine, a local clubzine, with articles such as my essays on building a world on paper – just the astrophysical elements, that’s all – and on constructing a language. No visible response followed. I will see if people are interested in chapbooks based on these and other essays.”*

I’m not surprised. I expect most people feel that they have done their duty by joining the club and are not interested in taking a more active role by discussing essays.

*Snow Poster Township* 10 (Heath Row)

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm

*“I also read and enjoyed the material on Luncon, not to be confused with Lunacon in New York.”*

Nor to be confused with Lucon, a series of conventions organised by the Leeds University Science Fiction Society.

*“As a side note, a friend of mine, Molly Wright Steenson, was recently named president of the American Swedish Institute (<https://asimn.org>) in Minnesota.”*

As a side note to your side note, my dad’s first degree is in German and Swedish from The University of Hull (1961).

Ryct Samuel Lubell

*“Your comments on the fracturing of fandom resonated with me, and the discussion above: “The anime cons, comic book (really media) conventions, and various conventions based on TV shows and movies greatly outnumber the traditional sf/fantasy literature conventions,” you wrote. “But growth and change are part of life and SF fans above everyone else should be welcoming them.” And them, us. I think part of the challenge is that we ((my italics)) still see ourselves as the dominant culture, and we might not be. Are we seeking our place among broader fandom while we grouse that they’re not part of our fandom?”*

It might all depend upon you mean by the word “we”. Was there really a time when “we” were the only part of fandom? Or do we think this because histories of fandom have been written by people who are part of our group and they emphasise our role in it? (Shades of history being written by the winners.)

*Esmeralda County Line #4 March-June 2023 (Kevin Trainor Jr.)*

Ryct Intermission #130

*“Having struggled with the overrated James Joyce’s Ulysses and Finnegans Wake...”*

Although they are both classics of 20<sup>th</sup> century literary fiction and extremely well-regarded by literary critics, nothing I’ve read about them leads me to think that I would enjoy reading them. If I become immortal, I might have time to read them. But given the constraints of a finite life-span I will not be reading them. But would I really read them if I were immortal? I suspect not. It’s not as if you have from now to eternity only to read books that have already been published, what about the books that are published forthwith?

Ryct Snow Poster Township #9

*“My memories of Space:1999 are forty years old by now, and I remember it being not nearly as entertaining as the reruns of the original Star Trek that were showing at the time.”*

I don’t have any memories of watching Space:1999. I was c. 7-9 years of age when it was broadcast (1975-1979) and I was already a fan of both Dr Who and Star Trek: it should have appealed to me. I remember watching adverts for Space:1999 and that I had a Eagle Transporter toy.

*“Perhaps I would think differently of it now, but somehow I doubt it; I have found while unboxing various books that I picked up in the 1970s and 80s that my tastes have changed – or maybe I’ve become more critical as I age – but either way, political thrillers and pulp adventures (Don Pendleton’s Executioner, to name just one) are no longer as entertaining as they used to be. I daresay Space:1999 would be even more excruciating to watch now.”*

My tastes have changed as I age. And perhaps there is an element of this that is associated with becoming more discerning. As Shakespeare puts it “My salad days. When I was green in judgement”. Though I would not consider my salad days to be when I was 7-9, that’s too young to have salad. As mentioned above, I don’t remember watching Space:1999, though that doesn’t rule out my watching it. I suspect that it would indeed be excruciating to watch it in 2023.

*“I’ve been thinking of taking a look at Resident Alien. You seem to like it, and Alan Tudyk is hilarious.”*

My wife and I have both enjoyed the first two seasons of Resident Alien.

*Intermission #131*

*“As for Moorcock himself, it looks likely that he will be forgotten except for his Elric novels – and those only because of their connection to Dungeons & Dragons.”*

At a latter date I’ll run an article, that I wrote for my ANZAPA zine, about the first SF/fantasy novels that I read. The person who introduced me to SF/fantasy novels also introduced me D&D, you will be not be surprised to learn that the fantasy novels included the Elric novels. I also enjoyed reading, at the age of 14, the Count Brass trilogy (?). Would I enjoy them as much if I reread them at the age of 55? Or would rereading them replace my memories of enjoyment by a reevaluation of them as hack work?

*Samizdat 19 (Samuel Lubell)*

*“Project Trek: To promote the second season of the new Star Trek: Strange New Worlds, Paramount put episodes of the first season up on YouTube. I watched the first four episodes. This is old-school Star Trek about the Enterprise under Captain Pike, Kirk’s predecessors, although Spock and Uhura are on board. Each episode is complete in itself although there is character development continuing through the episodes, largely around the effects of Pike’s learning about his tragic future. I liked this “back to basics” approach and would watch more of these.”*

Last weekend my wife bought Strange New Worlds season 1 and Picard season 2. She said that she bought these as her anniversary gift for me and asked what I was buying her. My reply might have been judicious, as I indicated that she actually bought these as a joint anniversary present for the two of us. We watched the first episode of Picard last Saturday. I don’t imagine that we will watch more than one episode a week. So it may be three mailings more before I can report my opinions of Strange New Worlds. Based upon your description of the first four episodes I believe that I will rank it higher than either Discovery or Picard.



## Snow Poster Township #12

Sept. 12, 2023

*Snow Poster Township* is an apazine published by Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. Banner artwork by Henry Chamberlain. *Snow Poster Township* is prepared for contributors to N'APA, members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and select others. (Previously, it was prepared for FAPA. My previous N'APA apazine was titled *Snow Poster City*, and this effectively combines both.) A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.

## N3F Tape and Video Bureaus Report

The N3F Tape and Video bureaus' real-time online media programming for members is coming to an end. Per the bureau report expected to run in the September 2023 issue of *Fanactivity Gazette*, we're moving from scheduled real-time events to monthly recommendations, which Neffers can watch or listen to at their leisure as individuals.

The Tape Bureau has had two listening sessions since the last distribution. On July 20, 2023, we listened to two episodes of *Arch Oboler's Plays*—or perhaps *Lights Out*. “The Truth” (<https://youtu.be/pyjszeHedvM>) originally aired June 28, 1945, and “Rocket from Manhattan” (<https://youtu.be/OZy3Q0TT-jM>) first broadcast Sept. 20, 1945.

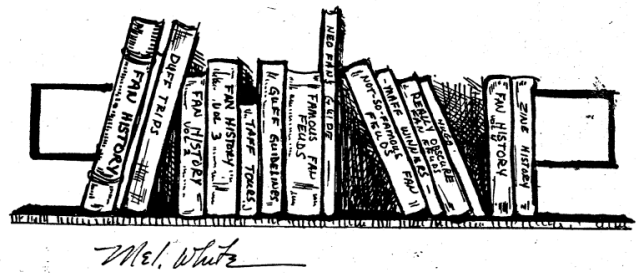
On Aug. 17, 2023, the Tape Bureau gathered to listen to two episodes of *Suspense*. “Donovan's Brain, Part 1” (<https://youtu.be/BPDT530rrMc>) originally broadcast May 18, 1944, and “Donovan's Brain, Part 2” (<https://youtu.be/94YINZAhM9M>) first aired May 25, 1944. Both were based on Curt Siodmak's 1943 novel. (*The N3F Review of Books*, February 2020)

The Video Bureau held four events, screening two programs of short films and two feature films—almost. On Aug. 4, 2023, we featured the 1995 video tape *William Shatner's Star Trek Memories* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-5OMTa9G2Q>). And on Sept. 1, 2023, the Video Bureau screened multiple 8mm films related to the fantastic and horrific. That program included:

- *The Beast with Five Fingers* ([https://youtu.be/au\\_eqRXin6g](https://youtu.be/au_eqRXin6g))
- *The Screaming Skull* (<https://youtu.be/--1Saz0INKM>)
- *The Werewolf* ([https://youtu.be/ZXv\\_3HB\\_fKQ](https://youtu.be/ZXv_3HB_fKQ))
- *Konga* (<https://youtu.be/T4UJf2CE88>)
- *Dr. X* (<https://youtu.be/f-HzevDVUH0>)
- *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad Part 2: The Strange Voyage* (<https://youtu.be/4Hgr9Ob1zSk>)
- *The 7th Voyage Of Sinbad Part 3: The Evil Magician* (<https://youtu.be/eTeD-bi2k3k>)

Feature film screenings included the 1920 *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (<https://youtu.be/tZSiOx9szLg>) on Aug. 12, 2023, and 1951's *Unknown World* (<https://youtu.be/zOv5FgpGhOw>) on Sept. 9, 2023. Unfortunately, I had plans for the evening of the 9th, so that event was rescheduled to Sept. 10, which I then forgot. No one commented on the rescheduling post on Facebook or messaged me, so I don't think anyone missed it.

I'll continue to offer recommendations in *Fanactivity Gazette* at least through the end of the year. We'll see if anyone sends in comments and feedback, or recommendations.



## From the Reading Pile: Comix Reviews

I recently received a care package from Ricko Drofdarb of the Poopsheet Foundation. Several of the items were genre related and of potential interest to N'APAns.

### *Alien Insects*

Adam Yeater's 2018 screen printed minicomic is a two-toned affair concentrating on, well, alien insects. A flying insect approaches a flowering plant whose flower resembles an eye at the end of a stalk. While

hovering to drink of the singular flower's nectar, the insect is mortally surprised. The last page and panel are a delight. Inquire via Rick Bradford, Poopsheet Foundation, P.O. Box 86, Denton, TX 76202; <https://poopsheetfoundation.com>.

### **Laffs**

Horsty's eight-page minicomic contains a series of unrelated gag panels—hence the title. Several are science fictional in nature. The cover gag features two aliens and a surprising beverage. The “doctor's wife” panel seems like something that could be published in *The New Yorker*. And the last page offers a Dorian Gray joke. Horsty's artwork can be quite simple or slightly more detailed, offering a welcome balance. Inquire via the Festival of Failure, 910 E. 32 St. #202, Austin, TX 78705-2719 or via Bradford above.

### **Nightlife 12:01**

Tom Lechner's 2010 32-page dream comic is his second dream-related work. While dreams aren't necessarily fantasy, after watching *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*, I'm not so sure. Lechner's artwork is excellent, reminding me of a cross between Anders Nilsen and Jeff Zenick. Themes include collapsing ceilings, tidal waves, driving, losing control of your body, and some kind of alien or monster. Inquire via 318 SW 3rd St. #331, Portland, OR 97204-2405; <http://www.tomlechner.com>; [tom@tomlechner.com](mailto:tom@tomlechner.com) or via Bradford above.

### **Primate View**

A 12-page minicomic offering “sketchbook surreality” by Jerry Szostek, this is one of the items that recently placed Szostek among my current favorite artists. The wordless comics occasionally include titles such as “Run” and “Gun Horror,” and there are several mouse- or dog-headed characters that remind me of Larned Justin's “The Journey” in *Mantra* #12. (*Faculae & Filigree* #23) A rocket ship, some kind of demon or monster, astronauts, and satellites also come into play. Szostek is definitely one to watch!

### **Wag Rag #4** (February 2018)

Also featuring Szostek above, this eight-page digest offers four strips, one of which, “Trudy Sweet: Hidden Mewtive,” is four pages long. Not only is Szostek's absolutely wonderful drawing on full display, but this publication is even more science fictional in nature. “Naughty Bobby Holly Dazed” features a radioactive mutant, and the Trudy Sweet piece is solidly sf, reminding me slightly of Matt Howarth. Bestill my beating heart. Inquire via Bradford above.

### **Wag Rag #7** (November 2020)

This eight-page minicomic features several creators: Mark David Dietz, Andrew Goldfarb, Szostek (swoon), and fan favorite Brad W. Foster. Goldfarb's piece makes a horrific revelation that will test any fan's mettle. Szostek offers two delightfully dense panels on a single page. And Foster explains *everything*. See? Comix are totally adjacent to sf fandom. Foster's in the mix! Inquire via Bradford above.



—William Rostler

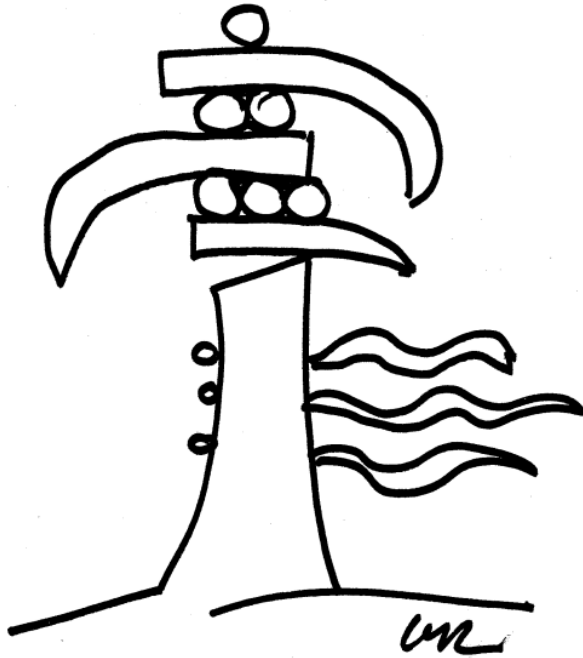
### **Comments on N'APA #265**

Does this distribution really have almost 90 pages? Wow. It's an impressive edition!

In *Brandy Hall* #1, **Mark Nelson** joined N'APAs from Australia. Welcome to N'APA! I am sorry to hear that your fanzine collection went into the trash. I frequently donate materials to several archives at DePaul University, the University of Iowa, and the University of California, Riverside, so know that you have options should you need to make such a decision again. I'm glad you found your way to sf fandom via roleplaying games. I remain active in Alarums & Excursions and not long ago reviewed two British books (one of them an American reprint) about *Dungeons & Dragons* and other games published in

1983-1984. (*Theoretically: Game #1-2*) I'm currently playing in an online campaign via Discord that uses the original *D&D* rules up to 1974. It's great fun.

Your commentary on fanzines, magazines, and apae—including those focusing on play-by-mail games!—of the time gave me plenty to research and learn more about. Does "KTF" mean "Kill the Fanzine"? It's good to know that *Diplomacy* fanzines remain active. So: Welcome, welcome, welcome! I look forward to your future writing about multiple fandoms.



—William Rotsler

Your remark to Garth Spencer about mistyping Fanac.org inspired me to check another apazine (*Faculae & Filigree #23*) I'd just mailed. Phew! Even though I hadn't typed it as the full URL, I was not incorrect. Your retirement project to read British Science Fiction Association Award winners for Best Novel is laudable. I'd like to do the same for the Hugos and Nebulas, as well. Your discussion of whether current fen should prioritize living writers resonated with me. While I occasionally try to remain involved in current publishing, there's so much appeal in the works of no-longer-living authors.

Particularly if one already owns a lot of books they haven't yet read—or frequents used book stores—there's plenty to be gained reading out-of-print writing. Or older books by inactive or dead authors. One can still be an actifan even if you're not still buying new books at scale.

**Jefferson P. Swycaffer's** *Archive Midwinter*

offered a range of distribution comments. "Everyone ought to have a fan club!" might rate as the quotation of the issue. Consider me a charter member of the Jefferson P. Swycaffer Fan Club. I recently read a 1985 review of your *Become the Hunted* written by Algis Budrys for that year's December issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits #80*) I'm curious whether you remember that review—and how it made you feel as a younger writer. I'd forgotten I'd included NEFFO; I've enjoyed your and Nelson's responses to the game.

I found your piece "'Threading' in Prose Fiction" fascinating. Steven Johnson's 2006 book *Everything Bad is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making Us Smarter* discusses a similar topic through the lens of television. In his exploration of the idea, he concentrates on the shift from single-threaded TV storytelling to multiple storylines.

Thank you for sharing the news of Joshua Quagmire's death. The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society recognized his passing, as well. (*De Profundis #588* and *Menace of the LASFS* for August 2023) I've been a fan of his work since *Army Surplus Komikz Featuring Cutey Bunny #1* and had no idea he was still active or living so close to me—until he died.

In *Brownian Motion #3*, **Garth Spencer** discussed the importance of being organized, excerpted his 2020 *Confabulation*, and commented on N'APAn's contributions. I think Nelson's participation in N'APA is a step toward one of my favorite potential solutions to bridging the gaps between what you term Fandom Classic and Fandoms Contemporary. To wit, he brings roleplaying games to a space that is generally not focused on roleplaying games. Similarly, I occasionally review comic books, as above. We discuss sf, fantasy, and horror—and we include books and media fandom, talking about movies and TV shows. Disrespecting the traditional boundaries of fandom in our own fanac models the world I'd like to see. (Though Ahrvid Engholm might disagree. That's OK. I'll keep playing roleplaying games and reading comics.)

More crucial, however, I think, is bridging the generations—which isn't as simple as bridging online and offline fandom, or fanzine and non-fanzine fandom. At 50, I am among the youngest members of LASFS, other than a few children of other members. I'm also on the younger side of most faneds. Fan clubs occasionally face challenges connecting with college fan clubs. And young people in general might not be finding their way to our fanzines, Web sites, and other centers of fanac—which tend to concentrate on time binding as much as on contemporary fandom.

To better involve the young, we might need to let

go of some of what we consider rules. Fanfiction vs. fiction. Cosplay vs. hall and stage costuming (or recreations vs. originals, for that matter). Discord and Instagram vs. mailing lists, Facebook, and fanzines. Literature vs. media. Excluding adjacent fandoms vs. including them.

If we want younger fen to join us, we can't expect or require them to do what we do the way we do it. And—this might be an inconvenient truth—as much as we might want to bolster our ranks with younger fen to continue this grand fandom, they might not want or need us in the same way. Fandom will continue regardless. It just won't be our brand of fandom.

This also ties into Nelson's remarks on prioritizing living, contemporary authors rather than the out-of-print and perhaps dead authors we might love and enjoy most. Are we even reading or watching the same things—which might be a requirement to at least have something in common to talk about? As someone who prefers older works generally, I don't have an easy solution for this. Because—shock, horror—I'd have to change what I read, watch, and listen to to be relevant. That might be the biggest challenge of all.

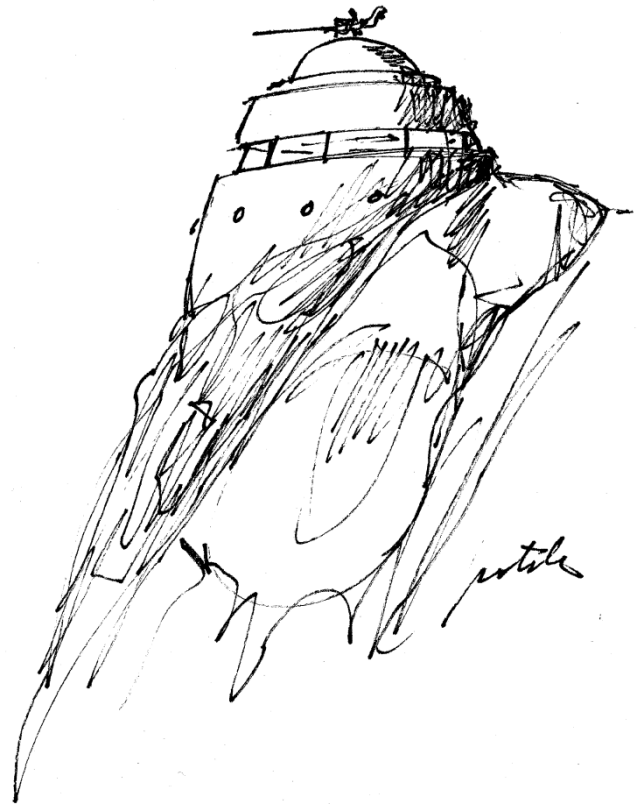
I previously reviewed **Ahrvid Engholm's** *Intermission* #133 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #10 for eAPA. "In *Intermission* #133, Ahrvid Engholm commented on generative artificial intelligence. While AI music might be on the increase, I think the publishing industry has already seen greater impact. In February, *Clarkesworld* stopped accepting submissions after an influx of AI-generated stories. Editors had received 700 actual submissions and 500 machine-written stories. February also brought the launch of an sf magazine entirely generated by AI, *Infinite Odyssey*. While I read *Clarkesworld*, I will not read *Infinite Odyssey*. There's already too much written by humans, dead or alive, for me to spend time reading AI fiction.

"A friend of mine, Amit Gupta, who's written sf for *Escape Pod*, is also working on a tool called Sudowrite, which uses AI to help writers brainstorm, explore plotlines, and write. I'm much more interested in people using generative AI to make what people do easier than to do what people might do instead.

"I appreciated your reminiscence of Maths Classon and the news about the Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize. I particularly resonated with your encouragement to translate non-Swedish writing into Swedish, given my interest in the reverse, as well. Also in this issue: the Eurovision Song Contest, the Bradford Movie Makers, and History Corner, blending reprints with commentary and description.

"The exploration of finding a Swedish name for sf was especially interesting. And the Scandinavian-European Fan Fund fraud coverage resonated with Garth Spencer's interest in writing a balanced fan history. 'I covered the story in my newszine (300+ subs) and published the details on it...,' you wrote. 'I thus became target of loads of slander and libel by the culprits...'

"Your comments to John Thiel on Fredric Wertham's *The World of Fanzines* reminded me of how thrilled I was when I first learned of that book. While a great book, it fell far short of making up for the ill impact of *Seduction of the Innocent*."



—William Rotzler

**George Phillies's** *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #265 updated N'APAs on the membership challenges facing the N3F. This year will most likely be my last term—for now—serving on the directorate, and I can understand and appreciate his interest in freeing up time for other fanac and writing. The two most common pieces of feedback I encounter about the N3F is that it's a joke or has an unclear purpose (the former is false, in my mind, though the latter could be true), and that we publish too many clubzines instead of one general clubzine—which might be true, but solving that needs even more volunteer editing.

We have a clear mission—"The mission of N3F is



to help members enjoy and discuss science fiction and science fiction fandom in all media.”—but how we put that into practice might not be fulfilling the mission. I sometimes consider the N3F as the club a fan should join if there isn’t a local sf club. So we could do what local clubs do, only nationally or internationally... hold meetings, bring in readers and speakers, and encourage member interaction and participation—socializing, even.

A standard meeting agenda (riffing off of the LASFS agenda) could touch on topics of interest: recent birth anniversaries and deaths; media anniversaries; announcements of upcoming cons, events, and movies; reviews; and whatever else members want to talk about. The president or directorate chair could run the meeting, creating space for members to share and talk about what they know. We wouldn’t have to necessarily fill all the buckets ourselves.

Has the N3F ever done this? Ever? Recent history suggests that people won’t even come, based on our 2021 Mini-Con and the Tape and Video Bureau events. Our Facebook and MeWe groups don’t seem to be engendering member interaction outside of active members seeding it and official announcements, so we’re left with our clubzines as the primary mode of engagement. That works for fanzine fen but not for non-fanzine fen.

Taking an organized fandom approach might lead us to encounter the challenges facing other sf clubs. This could be another gap worth noting: organized vs. distributed. Regardless, I’m curious whether focusing on people who don’t have local clubs or who are new to fandom might be promising. If you’ve just self-identified as a fan, where do you go (clubs, cons)? What should you make sure to read, watch, and listen to? Where’s other fanac centering?

The N3F might not be a center of fanac, but we could be a clearinghouse for newcomers to fanac, pointing people to every single prozine, fanzine, apa, book, movie, TV show, podcast, Web site, discussion forum (or mailing list or Discord channel), social media account, comic book, video game, anime, cartoon, etc. Other sites come close to this—Wikipedia, Fancyclopedia, Fanac.org, and eFanzines—but perhaps not focusing on the newcomer.

In the Laureate Award nominations, what are “Heath Row’s productions”? The N3F Tape and Video Bureau activities?

“Klingon somehow does not seem to be the optimal language to go with music,” you wrote. Apparently, there will be Klingon music—and Klingon singing—at this year’s Loscon. Unfortunately, I won’t be able to check it out because

of some upcoming travel. I found your distribution comments this ish particularly interesting and wide ranging—well done!

In *Esmeralda County Line #4*, **Kevin Trainor Jr.** detailed the end of his tax season. Thank you for recommending A.E. van Vogt. Not too long ago, I read and enjoyed his *Destination: Universe!*, a collection of short stories. (*The N3F Review of Books*, November 2022) Like you, I have a soft spot in my heart for the Don Pendleton Executioner series and its offshoots. They do not read as well now as they did when I first encountered them as a preteen, but the Gold Eagle imprint—and the western adventure series such as Longarm, The Gunsmith, Jake Logan, and Lone Star—might have been the last genre series left standing. Charles Ardai’s *Hard Case Crime* continues to reprint and publish hardboiled books, but while their authors recur, characters tend not to do so.

I recently saw the Punisher in an issue of *Daredevil*, so he’s not entirely dead yet. (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits #81*) Your reviews and second batch of comments were read and enjoyed.

My comments on **Ahrvid Engholm’s** *Intermission #134* previously appeared in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella #12*. “In *Intermission #134*, Ahrvid Engholm informed apans of the newly minted Bertil Falk’s Space Opera Prize. How does one donate to help fund the award? I’ll have to check out his juvenalia, ‘A Trip in Space.’ The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society recognized the death of Hans Siden during the July 13, 2023, meeting. That’s documented in the September 2023 issue of *De Profundis* (#589), available monthly upon request. I’ve added Club Cosmos to the distribution list for the next issue of *De Prof*.”

“I appreciated your remarks on Eurocon. ‘[I]t’s no point in wasting too much on a conrep nowadays, since this artform has degenerated. A good conrep used to be a witty thing, a fannish reporter walking around making [humorous] observations, funny associations and even puns. Conreps today are mostly dry diaries, or even worse...’ I’m currently writing a report on the 2022 Loscon for *SF<sup>2</sup> Concatenation* (<http://www.concatenation.org>), which will likely appear in January. The editor’s feedback to my draft largely asked how many parallel program tracks were offered. I don’t know if my review is witty or funny, but it’s hopefully fannish and not overly dry. It’s the first I’ve written not in apazines.

“History Corner was also enjoyable, with its focus on Hugo Gernsback, *Focus*, AI, and other topics. The article ‘Put Space to Use’ was particularly interesting. Isaac Asimov’s appearance in *Superman #355* is further detailed in the online article ‘When Isaac

Asimov Became a Muck Monster Who Fought Superman!’ (<https://tinyurl.com/Asimov-Superman>)”

In *Synergy* #46, **John Thiel** claimed that he “was born to produce good zines.” Keep up the good work, sir! “They are happy in their shirts,” is another fine sentence worth noting. May we all be happy in our shirts—especially if it’s a Son of Silvercon shirt!

Why were the police going to raid the writers conference? Your editorial on believability resonated with me. During a recent LASFS meeting, Kevin R. Grazier, science adviser for movies and television, gave a presentation about what science advisers do, how people can prepare to become one, and his books. One of the key themes of Grazier’s talk was the need to find a balance between accurate science and compelling storytelling. Grazier also discussed the difference between scientific accuracy in literature, cinema, and television. The upshot of his talk was that storytelling trumps accuracy, while accuracy is acceptable and desired as long as it’s not interruptive. Most readers and viewers don’t hold creators to such a high standard of accuracy.

**Samuel Lubell**’s *Samizdat* #20 mentioned going to Confluence instead of Pemmi-Con. I do hope you publish a conrep. Thank you for shining your spotlight on Keith Laumer. I can hardly believe that “[n]early everything by Laumer is out of print.” He’s definitely a past author who should still be available and read, if not just his *Retief* work. I have a copy of *Retief and the Warlords* on a pile behind me—perhaps I’ll read it soon as a protest read.

Thank you, also, for sharing your undergraduate thesis, *From Wizard to Scientist: Changing Views towards The Scientist From Hawthorne to Twain*. I shall have to return to that in the future, but it seems up the alley of *Science Fiction Studies* or *Foundation*, both of which I recently subscribed to. And as always, I enjoyed your “Status of Projects.”

### Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

While my wife was out of town in early September, I availed myself of some extra free time to watch anime (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #81) and movies, and read comic books (as above, and in *Faculae & Filigree* #23, and *T&T* #80-81). Over the course of two days, I also watched four relatively recent Marvel movies I hadn’t yet seen: *Ant-Man and the Wasp*; *Quantumania*, *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3*, *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, and *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*.

As I remarked to the folks who work at the neighborhood comic shop, while I enjoyed the films, I’m not sure I need to see all of them—especially in

the theater. But, they do make me want to read comic books, and if that is in part their producers’ goal, I consider them a success. Of the four I watched, I’d rank them in this order: Doctor Strange, Guardians, Black Panther, and Ant-Man. Your mileage might vary.

I found the portrayal of the multiverse in the Doctor Strange flick to be wonderful, combining elements of the recent animated Spider-Man movies and the overall vibe of *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. That Baron Mordo wasn’t initially out to kill Strange, that the Scarlet Witch returned in such a strong fashion, the visuals of the tower in which the Darkhold was kept, and the inclusion of the Illuminati were all wonderful. While I didn’t find the character America Chavez that compelling, I was pleased she helped contribute to a redemption of sorts for Strange.

The most recent Guardians outing might hold together the best as a non-superhero movie even though it is one. It’s pretty straightforward science fiction, a heist movie, and the concentration on Rocket Raccoon’s origin story—while he was unconscious for almost the entire movie—was a great example of comic book character study. As always, music plays an important role in the movie, perhaps ensuring soundtrack sales or streaming. On Spotify, I even found a lullaby version of the soundtrack.

*Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* is less a Black Panther movie—he is, after all, dead—and more a Prince Namor, the Sub-Mariner movie, though Princess Shuri will make a fine successor. The cinematic Namor was wonderful. The origin story, the actor’s portrayal, that he was positioned as an antagonist just as he was in the early comic books... Very, very cool. While some of the Atlanteans were blue-skinned, the movie didn’t go into the warring factions of the undersea world, but one can’t do everything in a movie. The siren-like singing was an especially nice touch.

Finally, Ant-Man. I watched this movie first, and while the quantum realm is worth exploring and Kang the Conqueror’s portrayal was absolutely astounding—he’s so sad!—I found the jokey bookending of Paul Rudd’s newly egotistical, yet hesitant hero to be slightly irritating. Frankly, I don’t see what the Wasp sees in him. But it’s a good movie about family, about what one does when their spouse isn’t around, and—like Doctor Strange above—redemption. In the end, Ant-Man earns the respect of his daughter.

And, it made me want to read comics. So I’ve returned to Ant-Man’s initial appearances in *Tales to Astonish*. One could do worse.



Esmeralda County Line #5  
July-August 2023  
A zine for N'APA 266

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### ***Introductory Natter***

Well, I managed to make it through two and a half years before winding up in the hospital again, for the same thing that I usually get admitted for, which is to say a bad case of cellulitis. I had gotten sloppy about changing the bandages on my leg wounds, and sure enough it came back to bite me. The Veterans Administration wound care doctor took one look at the wounds during my appointment and told me in no uncertain terms to get my butt down to the emergency room, where they would unquestionably admit me, stick intravenous antibiotics in my arms, and change my bandages frequently. Which they did; I went into the ER Thursday night and was taken up to Ward 6W around midnight. Stayed there until being released Monday afternoon; I went back to the Cannery and rested up before heading home to Tonopah on Tuesday. Unlike my previous hospital stay at Utah Valley Hospital in early 2021, the VA did not kick me out at 0530 without the necessary medicines, but in all other respects they did every bit as good as the civvies and occasionally better.

Spent the following week taking healthy hits of Levaquin and sleeping a lot. The leg wounds are a lot better now and I'm sleeping better, too. For a while I was only sleeping for about four hours a night before waking up and being unable to get to sleep, and then having to take a lengthy nap in the afternoon, which made getting things done in town a bit difficult.

Bought some books for the Kindle as well as some dead tree editions, which I'll discuss in a bit, and also bought some music, ditto. I also bought a couple of video games and one actual wargame, which I will probably never get to play, but at least I know where it is if I should find a willing opponent and a table to set it up on.

## *Comments On N'APA #265*

### *Brandy Hall*

Welcome aboard!

(natter) Thanks for the disquisition on RPG zines. SF fandom sometimes forgets there are other fandoms who publish zines, have conventions, etc., though with the younger generation (the fans who grew up with social media) this seems to be less of a problem. 🍷🍷 I have played Diplomacy a couple of times and have come to the conclusion that I don't have enough of a poker face to do it in person and invariably am the odd man out in PBM/PBEM games. 🍷🍷 I've had similar episodes where all the enthusiasm drained out, but fortunately I had enough things I HAD to do at the time so I could work past it.

(RYCTo Ahrvid) Drugging the populace to sleep is a recurring SF trope. I first remember seeing it in an undistinguished story in Harlan Ellison's *Dangerous Visions*, and more recently of course in the movie *Serenity*. 🍷🍷 Barrier troops have a long history in the USSR, first being used in the Civil War IIRC. ISTR there were special counters for them in GDW's *Drang Nach Osten*, though it's been a while since I've hauled out the game and I may be mistaken.

(RYCTo me) The story about the mathematicians sounds apocryphal, unless it dates back to the Mob era. These days, there's no part of the casino/resort experience that isn't a profit center. Much like UNLV, with which the casinos have a very close relationship. On the other hand, there is a movie about some kids from MIT who decided they'd try out their mathematical skills at the blackjack tables and were rapidly barred from every casino on the Strip. In the old days, they probably would have been taken out to the desert and been warned about the unpleasant things that could happen to college boys who got on the wrong side of the casino owners.

(RYCTo Sam) You put some interesting questions regarding classic/older writers and I am interested in seeing Sam's answers. 🍷🍷 The history of SF and its fandom were, I thought, the province of the SFRA and the Timebinders, but I haven't heard of either group in a long time. Of course, being as I am on the outskirts of fandom, they may be doing great work without me being aware of it. 🍷🍷 I think it's helpful to read older SF so that you have a base of knowledge you can use to evaluate the new stuff, or even write new stuff yourself, so you don't look like an ignorant doof trying to reinvent the wheel – or the contragravity widget. Eric S. Raymond has had a few things to say about the “deep norms” of the field which I agree with, and I submit that a writer who ignores these is going to waste a lot of their time and the reader's as well. 🍷🍷 As for the canon, as late as the 1970s you could point to about a dozen or so SF novels as classics, plus another couple of dozen short stories. Throw in *Star Trek*, *Outer Limits*, and maybe *Twilight Zone*. Thirty years later, you couldn't do that any more. There was just too much to cover. Too many books, too many TV shows, too many movies, and on top of that there's anime and manga and games and...you get my point. Even in a relatively constricted subgenre like combat/military SF you can provoke a lot of arguments about who the seminal authors are and what the essential works are.

### *Archive Midwinter*

(RYCTo Ahrvid) The New Wave was definitely a mixed bag. A lot of it is deservedly forgotten, but then there's guys like Sheckley, Zelazny, and a handful of others who created great work.

(RYCTo Garth) Looking at the misery a lot of tribes endure on their reservations, one wonders if Uncle Billy wasn't right after all, though his suggested solution would have been a horrendous thing to contemplate, especially in the wake of the just-completed Civil War.

(RYCTo John) I am reminded of the highly detailed formulae and guides for building worlds in the RPG *Traveller*, which stop short of creating aliens to inhabit those worlds. One of the panels at Son of Silvercon will deal with world-building and alien societies, which is something our GoH does very well, including the often-overlooked aspect of alien languages.

(Richard Lester/Joshua Quagmire) So the creator of Cutey Bunny is dead? Damn. He was truly a pioneer in the field.

### ***Brownian Motion #3***

(natter) If the people in Vancouver are going to act like that, lots of luck to them in trying to pull a convention together. One thing I learned from working on (and starting) conventions in Minnesota is that you don't have to like the people you're working with, but you do have to be polite and give respect when it's earned. If somebody isn't going to do that (and that moron who berated you about meetings clearly isn't) they should stay home and out of the way of actual working people.

☛☛ Being organized is part of successful adulting, which I guess explains why we have so many malfunctioning older children running about the place and mucking things up for the rest of us. I rely on my phone's calendar to a (perhaps excessive) extent but often wish I had my old Palm V PDA with its Franklin Covey software to help me prioritize. Maybe I should go back to Day-Timers.

☛☛ You had me going with the cider article for a while there. Well played.

(RYCTo Ahrvid) I am old enough to remember when Esperantists were very common in fandom, and being amused at their faith that if we all just learned Esperanto we'd take a giant step toward unifying humanity. They weren't quite annoying enough to be a cult. ☛☛ "Humans are tribal and discriminatory" Agreed.

(RYCTo Jefferson) I have the faint hope that we can use the N3F as a means of getting the different fandoms to talk to each other more often. I will never forget the terrifying experience of being out to dinner with the concom of Convergence (a Minnesota convention held over 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, which succeeded Minicon as the local gathering of the fannish clans) and having one of them asking me "So, what are *your people* (anime fans) like?" I asked for a minute to think about it and then distracted them by asking what was going on in the then-current season of *Dr. Who*. In truth, I could not have cared less about the show; I just wanted them to leave me alone while I finished my sandwich. Privately, I was appalled that they thought anime fans were any different from SF fans, but there it was. Fannish tribalism.

(RYCTo Sam) When I first got into fandom in the 1970s, I didn't really have the tools to understand other SF fans, most of whom didn't come from a background anything like mine (conservative Catholic service brat) and it wasn't until I got into anime fandom thirty years later that I found out about the Geek Social Fallacies. At that point, a lot of things snapped into place and much was made clear that had previously been annoyingly opaque. I am afraid that since we won the culture wars, the Geek Social Fallacies have spread to the culture at large, and this is a Bad Thing.

### ***Intermission #133***

(natter) I have no doubt that some moron will in fact suggest renaming the Hugo, if not at the Red Chinese Worldcon & Uighur Butchering Celebration, then sometime in the near future. They've already done similar things to John W. Campbell Jr. and H.P. Lovecraft. ☛☛ I have been FAFIATED thanks to poverty and family responsibilities from time to time, but I doubt I'll ever GAFIATE. FIJAGH, after all. ☛☛ There was a term "scientifiction", which IIRC was a Gernsback coinage, but most people found it clunky, and the only place I've ever seen it used was in the name of the Minnesota Scientifiction Society (MinnStf). ☛☛ I feel bad for the late Mr. Appeltofft. I was blessed with parents who liked to read/watch SF and got me started on the stuff. Sometimes I think I didn't thank them enough for it, but it's too late now.

### ***The Murdered Master Mage #265***

(N3F) I will be offering N3F memberships to Son of Silvercon attendees; hopefully some of them will take advantage of the freebie and maybe even upgrade.

(RYCTo Garth) Does NESFA still have that wonderful library at MIT, or do I have them confused with MITSFS? I got to visit that library once, and experienced a kind of joy I hadn't felt since being allowed into the stacks at the Library of Congress as a junior high school student.

☛☛ I once wished for a microfiche collection of ASF, but I guess I will have to settle for .epub files on Project Gutenberg. *sigh* It's not the same.

(RYCTo Ahrvid) I can't help thinking that the rumor about the Tsar tank was a shitpost on r/NonCredibleDefense that escaped into the outside world. The thing didn't work when it was first invented, and even the Russians wouldn't be mad enough to attempt a modernization. ☛☛ There is actually a

Klingon heavy-metal (what else) band called Stovokor, after the Klingon Valhalla. It's better than a lot of death metal bands I've heard. 🎧🎧 Are you suggesting Prof. Schickele, the discoverer of the previously obscure P.D.Q. Bach, is not the best authority on quality music? Harrumph, I say! Harrumph! 🎧🎧 I used to think people walking down the street talking to themselves were mentally ill, but lately it turns out they have wireless headphones on and are talking on their mobile phones. 🎧🎧 Indeed, the C of E was stricter about heresy in Newton's day.

(RYCto Heath) For a while, some of the SF authors I know were aggressively testing Facebook's censorship regime and collecting "ribbons" for bans of various links. Most of them moved to MeWe when they got tired of Zuckerberg's erratic minions.

(RYCto Sam) It's been a long, long time since I read Marx for Beginners (filed under "Know Your Enemies") but if those are strawmen, there are a lot of tankies who are unaware of it. On the other hand, considering how little most modern apologists for Communism know about its history, this isn't too surprising.

(Fiction) So Eclipse was only mostly dead?

### ***Snow Poster Township #11***

(Reports & Reviews) I see from this and Garth's comments in the most recent Obdurate Eye that you've been a busy fan. Good on you. 🎧🎧 "Microcosmic God" made the cut for the Science Fiction Hall of Fame, which is where I first read it. I think it's one of Sturgeon's best stories.

(RYCto Jefferson) I am loathe to draw boundaries around fandom, since for a good part of my fannish career I've been on the outside of those lines, and it gets my Irish up –not to mention my Basque and Spanish, which are even more disagreeable- but I think it's helpful to indicate what parts of fandom are directly involved in SF fandom, i.e. they actually have SF elements in them (cosplay, fanfic, and filking), which are occasionally involved (anime, cartoons, manga, old-time radio, wargames, and video games), and which are coincidentally involved, which is to say some people who are interested in SF tend to also be interested in these things that have nothing to do with SF, e.g. Regency & other dancing, scale modeling, toy collecting, etc. I think there's plenty of room for all the fandoms in our ghetto, and when possible, we should be accommodating to the adjacent fans. On the other hand, the pursuit of diversity, inclusion and "equity" for their own sake is a recipe for disaster, and people insisting on these things in fandom should be told to go to Hell, Wiscon, or Worldcon (but I repeat myself).

(RYCto John) I think the reason DIE efforts have come under so much fire is that they focus on (often superficial) differences between people instead of looking for ways to bring people together because of the ideas and sentiments they have in common. I am not so much interested in (for example) Maggie Hogarth, Sarah Hoyt, Larry Correia, and Jon Del Arroz because they are fellow Latinos, but because they write SF I find interesting.

### ***Esmeralda County Line #4***

(natter) I received an email from the NSSAB staff that demolition at EMAD and Test Site C was completed ahead of schedule, and at the next meeting, which is also a site tour, we'll do a drive-by to look at the empty concrete pads where they used to be.

### ***Intermission #134***

(Eurocon) Sounds like a lively con with a lot of interesting people in attendance.

(A SF World) Tom Clancy did in fact imagine a Russian war, but it was at the other end of the country against the Red Chinese, and the Russians were the victims of aggression. ([The Bear and the Dragon](#)) Well, twenty years ago it seemed plausible that the Russian government would be less corrupt and violent; not so much now. 🎧🎧 Despite the disastrous results for children stemming from the widespread school shutdowns in 2020-21, we still have people here agitating for a return of such measures along with pressure to take a new

(also untested) jab. Not only no but hell no. 🍷🍷 Speaking of Tom Clancy, as we were, his novel Rainbow Six revolved around a plot by radical environmentalist wacko corporate types to force global depopulation by spreading a virulent airborne variant of Ebola. 🍷🍷 I'm not sure about SF fans, but in baseball fans are generally considered to be short for "fanatics". At one point in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century they were called "kranks", and I for one am glad to see that term fade away.

### ***Synergy #46***

Mankind builds and also destroys. Sometimes the building requires destruction to happen first. Sometimes we like to destroy things for fun, or derive entertainment from destruction. I recall the large crowd that assembled near the old Riviera hotel/casino to watch it being imploded by demolition crews; there were even people who rented helicopters to view the event. Of course, most of us are familiar with the massive fireworks displays on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, which originated with military pyrotechnics.

(Believability) While I would agree that much of the SF on the big and little screens is depressing and apocalyptic, not all of it is. *Dune*, for example, is at least on the surface a heroic tale of a young nobleman coming of age and reclaiming a corruptly stolen inheritance. 🍷🍷 I would further disagree that people can't identify with the various characters from *Star Trek*, and in particular Worf. The existence of a sizable contingent of Klingon fandom would seem to contradict your assertion.

### ***Samizdat #20***

(Keith Laumer) From what I understand, Laumer's heirs apparently felt that their deal with Baen wasn't bringing them the money they thought proper, so they reclaimed the publishing rights, and so we have what we see today: a bunch of e-books and a scattering of paperbacks, all at higher prices than one would have paid for the Baen collections back in the day. I'm glad I snagged those when I had the chance, to say nothing of sundry novels, e.g. Planet Run, The Long Twilight, and especially The Glory Game.

(natter?) Interesting paper on Hawthorne, Clemens, and their differing views of science. Thanks for publishing it here.

(projects) It's hard to get an unbiased look at the Hasidim in Jewish literature, since the bulk of it is written by Conservative and Orthodox Jews (never mind those Reform/Reconstructionist heretics) who don't care much for Hasidic Judaism. I take most of what I read about the Hasidim with a large grain of (kosher) salt. 🍷🍷ST: SNW sounds a good deal less awful than a lot of recent Paramount versions of Trek. I'll have to take a look at it one of these days.

**Here endeth the comments on N'APA #265**

## REVIEWS OF THIS AND THAT

### Books

I finished John Wright's Null-A Continuum, and it was a wild ride. People familiar with Wright's work may see some similarities to his Eschaton series (Count to a Trillion, etc.) but on balance it is faithful to the first two of van Vogt's Null-A novels.

The Domains of Koryphon\* by Jack Vance was not as much fun, but if you enjoy Vance's depictions of human societies and their interactions with alien cultures, then this is the sort of thing you will enjoy.

On the other hand, I could not finish van Vogt's Earth Factor X\*\* . It just didn't work for me, and it struck me as being overly silly without being amusing. Something about the mysterious nature of Earth women that the Galactics just don't understand.

On the gripping hand, we have Rebecca Kuang's The Burning God. I met Ms. Kuang at a Balticon some years ago, when The Poppy War had just come out, and I was so excited by the idea of a fantasy loosely based on the Second Sino-Japanese War that I went down to the dealer's room, bought the book, and spent much of the convention reading it. Well, here we are in the third and final book of the trilogy, and to quote Private Pyle from *Full Metal Jacket*, "I am already in a world of shit." I should have known better than to accept a Washington Post review at face value, because the war our protagonist (I hesitate to call her a heroine at this point) is fighting looks a lot less like the war that started at the Marco Polo Bridge than it does like a hellish combination of the Taiping Rebellion, the Boxer Rebellion, the Opium Wars, and (to a very, very tiny extent) the war the Post reviewer thought they were seeing. Treacherous warlords, desperate [Japanese] soldiers stranded in China with no home to return to, arrogant [American/English] colonizers with airships, rifles, and –perhaps? - a superior culture...they're all here, opposed by Rin, the avatar of the Burning God whose Speerly people were exterminated just as she exterminated the nation of [Japan], and her handful of peasant soldiers who survived a Long March through the mountains. I have taken a long break from the book because the amoral carnage is a bit much, even for someone like me who cut his teeth on the Philippine Campaign that ended at Bataan, The Gulag Archipelago, and The Theory and Practice of Hell. I'll finish this; I didn't spend \$15 on this book not to find out how it ends, even though I suspect it's not going to end well, for several definitions of well.

Fortunately, the most recent issue of *Komi Can't Communicate* arrived last month and soothed my jangled nerves. This occasionally weird high-school slice of life manga is evolving into a romantic comedy, but there's still a lot of weirdness from Komi and Tadano's classmates.

\* Also known as The Gray Prince.

\*\* Originally published as The Secret Galactics.

### Music

The acquisition of Klaus Schulze's *La Vie Electronique* continues, and I am now up to Volume 12, which is more operatic than previous editions. This was something I was expecting, since Schulze was a big fan of Richard Wagner, if not the man himself.

Sometime in the last month I got Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Run Through The Jungle" (which does not, despite all the videos, have anything to do with the Vietnam War) stuck in my head, and wound up buying *Chronicle*, a greatest hits collection that contains the aforementioned song along with "Green River" and other neat music.

In both cases, the cost to buy the CDs (and get the digital edition to download for free) was less than it would have cost just to buy the digital editions. Does this make sense to anyone?



#### **SON OF SILVERCON PROGRESS REPORT #4**

We're slowly but steadily adding members, and I am firing off memes, blog posts, Instagram reels, and Tweets on a more or less regular basis to attract more members. The Heinlein Society has taken an interest in us and will be pimping us to their members in their October newsletter; we may be getting the Atomic Museum (f/k/a the National Atomic Testing Museum) as a vendor/sponsor. I've also fired off e-mails to General Atomic, General Electric, and Westinghouse to see if they'd be interested in sponsoring us and/or sending a speaker, but so far none of them have replied. Maybe I should try Boeing and Pantex.

Attending memberships: \$50 at the door

Supporting memberships: \$20

Make your checks or money orders payable to Friends of Fission-chan, and send them to PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049, or send us the money via PayPal, which you can do by going to [fissiochan.org](http://fissiochan.org) and pushing the button on the main page. PUSH THE BUTTON. Feel free to e-mail me with questions.

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# Intermountain Cookie Conspiracy

## INFORMATION

When you bring at least \$5 worth of snacks, sodas, or bottled water to the Son of Silvercon consuite, you'll receive

- a credit for next year's membership (equal to value, maximum \$20)
- a snazzy decoration (button or badge flag, TBD)
- our undying gratitude (for helping our con start right!)

## SON OF SILVERCON

Best Western Plus on St Rose Pkwy  
Henderson, NV  
October 13-15 2023



## LOC for N'APA 265



AI art from img2go.com

Brandy Hall 1 - Welcome to N'APA. It is nice to get as Australian contributor. Interesting info on RPG fandom. I like how you gave your views on the "Down with the Classics!" idea, although I must clarify that I strongly support the idea of reading the classic authors. I firmly believe that science fiction is a conversation and writers of new SF are commenting on and reacting to earlier works. It might not be necessary to know the work of E.E. "Doc" Smith to read the latest space opera or know Asimov's robots to read a new book with robots. But it adds to the experience. And, if anything, the typical bookstore has very few classics - maybe Tolkien and Dune and a handful of others. Excellent idea of what would go into "The SF Novel 101, 201, and 301" I might ~~steal~~ borrow that idea for a future con.

Archive Midwinter - I've heard it said that the novella is the perfect length for SF, long enough to explore backgrounds and subplots but not so long as to become bloated. World-building is always fun as long as novelists remember to keep the result in the background and have a story with characters too. It could be that the

"bouncy" multi-thread novels are the result of shorter attention spans for readers. Or possibly it is a way to have longer novels. Most of Poul Anderson's works were short by today's standards.

Brownian Motion #3 - I hope you had a good experience at Pemmi-Con. I've heard mixed things from those who were there. Yes, the splintering of fandom is a problem, but perhaps it is a measure of fandom's growth that there are enough fans to have separate anime cons, media cons, and literary cons like Capclave in addition to general interest conventions like Balticon. Hotel issues are a perpetual problem for fannish conventions in part because we want to use more function space much later than most other convention groups (hotels like 9-5 business groups and lavish food oriented wedding receptions).

Intermission #133 - As you says AI is likely to improve. But even if we don't get real artificial intelligence, having machines that can take on more creative tasks is worrisome for creators. We are already seeing people flooding the submission boxes of SF magazines with stories "written" (poorly) by AIs. What happens when they get better? If readers can have online AIs write them custom stories, why would they pay for a magazine that might have stories that they don't like? If you are a fan of Captain Future, what do you think of Alan Steele's reimagining of the character? He's written five books so far starting with *Avengers of the Moon*. That Hugo Gernsback article is a pretty good prediction of telemedicine.

Ye Murthered Master Mage 265 - I agree that clubs (and cons) need to grow or they eventually die as older members die (or leave) and are not replaced. I agree that Modesitt's books are very good. I like how he clearly thinks about his magic systems and their effects on characters. I agree that the availability of cheaper special effects is one reason for the current explosion of superhero films, but if so, why hasn't cheaper special effects led to more SF and fantasy

films? There was a Superboy TV show 1988-92. It's always good to see your fiction. This one sort of reminds me of Zelazny's Amber books.

Snow Poster Township #11 - How does one find out about these media programs in advance? Is the schedule posted somewhere? Theodore Sturgeon is one of my favorite short story authors; although I think his stories are better than his novels, "Baby is Three" is much better than the version in *More Than Human*. "Microcosmic God" is one of his best. Interesting comments about fandom and adjacent fandom. I'll have to review the sources you cite. My favorite Alexei Panshin book is *Rite of Passage* which maybe the best Heinlein juvenile not written by Heinlein (and certainly better than some of the ones that were). I wouldn't mind having N3F do Zoom discussions of science fiction either magazines or novels. Magazine discussions have the virtue of enabling people with only a little time to participate in the discussions since each story is independent so you could read just a few stories and discuss those.

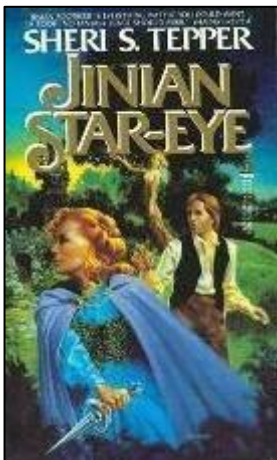


Esmeralda County Line #4 - Sorry you had grievances about Balticon. But I'm sorry to have missed you. I'll be too busy chairing next year to do more than have a brief chat, but maybe at a future con. I'll be at Philcon if you go to that. The U.S. doesn't really have social castes except possibly by race. We have temporary pecking orders based on jobs and money. I don't think there is any question that SF writers are far more diverse today than at any previous period. And I think diversity has many benefits including new ideas and different approaches to writing that makes their work more interesting and fresh. I put in an example of a Baen Flandry cover in my last ish. It's not quite pornographic but I wouldn't want to be caught reading a book with that cover in public. Good point about pressure to forgive Confederate soldiers. It did prevent the rise of guerrilla warfare, but allowed the reversal of Reconstruction and the imposition of Jim Crow that perpetuated legalized racism for decades. Good luck with Son of Silvercon. WSFA has been doing the magazine discussion for a couple of decades now. Only part of the club participates and the name of the committee "The Committee to Actually Discuss Science Fiction" certainly suggests that it is unusual for doing so.

Intermission #134-Space Opera can be fun. Good luck with your prize.

Synergy 46 - Maybe I'm missing something but lots of people wear shirts. Science Fiction doesn't have to be believable as long as it is plausible and consistent. I disagree with your claim that no one can identify with characters like Data, Worf, Spock, the Doctor, etc. At media conventions it is common for people to dress up as these characters and many more. Spock was a fan favorite and many fans have no problems relating to Data the scientific genius who doesn't understand humanity.

### Author Spotlight: Sheri S. Tepper



Sheri Tepper was never widely known while she was alive and I suspect her books are mostly out of print (except as ebooks). She wrote science fiction and fantasy with a strong feminist slant and an environmental message. Her main recognition was winning the World Fantasy Award in 2015, shortly before her death in 2016.

Despite starting to write late in life after a career in Planned Parenthood, she wrote nearly 40 novels, starting with *Kings Blood Four* in 1983 when she was in her mid-50s. Her early works were very short fantasy novels like those in the True Game series. While the first few books were straightforward adventure, she began weaving in more serious themes in the Jinian trilogy.

She was frequently accused of writing polemics (and worse, the same polemic) and her novels have a similar feel and themes. Still, she has something important to say about over-population, female empowerment, and what makes people human. I recommend easing into her work with *Beauty* a science fiction version of the fairy-tale or *A Plague of Angels* that also combines SF with fairy tales before venturing into her more polemical *Grass* or *Gateway to Women's Country*. At some point you should try her True Game books, especially the Jinian books (collected as *The End of*

*the Game*). Save her last novel, *Fish Tales*, for last as it is a crossover among her various works and actually manages to sum up her philosophy.

Her works are well worth reading as thought provoking, controversial, message novels. But they work best in small doses since they frequently deal with similar themes. Some of her out of print novels are available as ebooks, but you probably will need to haunt used bookstores.

## From Wizard to Scientist: Changing Views towards The Scientist From Hawthorne to Twain (Part 2)

As I mentioned in my last ish, I found my Harvard undergraduate thesis from 1989 on 19<sup>th</sup> century science fiction (not that I dared call it that) so thought I'd share the Nathaniel Hawthorne section in this issue.



Hawthorne's scientists function as modern-day wizards; only a very thin line, if any, separates their science from sorcery. Aylmer of "The Birthmark" has a "love of science," but his accomplishments and inventions all have a magical tinge to them: his poison is called an "elixir of immortality," and in his final effort to cure Georgiana he concocts a potion indistinguishable from that which a wizard might brew. Similarly, the scientist's daughter Beatrice in "Rappaccini's Daughter," though supposedly created through science, may also be the deadly "poison maiden" of Baglioni's fable. Hawthorne's story describes Beatrice and her poison in the language of the spiritual and supernatural, not that of the physical and scientific. Also, Chillingworth, in the course of *The Scarlet Letter*, transforms himself into a fiend, almost a Devil, through his manipulation of Dimmesdale's soul.

With this emphasis on the supernatural, the magic in Hawthorne at times overwhelms the science. Prudence Steiner, in her dissertation *Rappaccini's Family* makes the point that the reader of Hawthorne's stories sees very little of the science itself. The science is just a stage setting, a disguise to hide the magical doings of the characters. She writes, "The science is confined to a few pieces of apparatus. Of the activity itself, the hypotheses, the analyses, the failures, we know practically nothing."<sup>1</sup>

Although Hawthorne calls these characters scientists, their actions are more appropriate to sorcerers than to scientists and doctors. In all these stories the scientist first gains knowledge and then, like a wizard, applies his knowledge to rule over others. In a day when science was seen as a harmless diversion, Hawthorne used magic to show that science too could be misused in human hands.

Aylmer in "The Birthmark," first published in *The Pioneer* in March of 1843, is possibly the most explicitly scientific of all of Hawthorne's characters. The narrator specifically states in the very first sentence, "There lived a man of science, an eminent proficient in every branch of natural philosophy." [1021] The bulk of the story takes place in Aylmer's lab, where his efforts to remove his wife's birthmark and thereby render her perfect result in her death. Aylmer is a perfectionist, both in his work and his love. Not content with "the best that the world has to offer," [1032] he uses his science to dissect his wife's "earthly imperfection," thereby showing his superiority over God, the creator of flawed Nature. Through "The Birthmark," Hawthorne suggests that this quest for perfection is a scientific trait, and the story's unhappy outcome warns of the results when science claims too much power- the power to control and alter nature.



<sup>1</sup> Steiner, *Rappaccini's Family: The Mad Scientist Figure in the Writing of Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Harvard Doctoral Thesis 1980) p.31

Although the story hints at a magical explanation for the mark, on Georgiana's cheek, which would suggest a story of science struggling against magic, this is not the case since Aylmer himself is drenched in magic. Hawthorne does not linger long on Aylmer's researching days, when he limited himself to the scientist's role of learning about nature, but instead concentrates on Aylmer fulfilling the sorcerer's role of twisting and perverting nature to achieve his own ideal of perfection. When the scientist trespasses beyond a doctor's curative role for his own personal motivations he performs magic and not science. The pale, bookish Aylmer is disturbed by Georgiana's birthmark which represents vitality, force, and everything in her beyond his control. He desires to remove it to gain total mastery of his wife.

Aylmer's shift from scientist to wizard is a result of coveting this control. Early in the story, the narrator sets out Aylmer's scientific achievements, showing Aylmer acting within a scientific framework, pursuing and adding to mankind's learning:

[Aylmer] investigated the secrets of the highest cloud region and of the profoundest mines; he had satisfied himself of the causes that kindled and kept alive the fires of the volcano; and had explained the mysteries of the fountains.... Here too, at an earlier period, he had studied the wonders of the human frame... [1024]

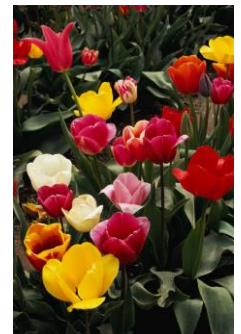


Significantly, the scientist stops an investigation into “the very process by which Nature assimilates all her precious influences from earth and air, and from the spiritual world” [1024] when he recognizes his trespass on the secrets of Nature. But when the scientist resumes this line of investigation to try to remove the birthmark, he moves beyond the domain of science into that of wizardry. The text even makes a direct conflation “He was confident in his science and felt that he could draw a magic circle round her within which no evil might intrude.”[1026] His attempts to control nature are blasphemous intrusions on God and nature, while his learning had been more innocent legitimate science. But, to Hawthorne, once knowledge is gained, man's nature will always tempt him to move over the border. So ultimately, scientific knowledge itself becomes a temptation and a threat.

Much of the story is an allegory where the science and the magic stand for one another, since to Hawthorne, they both have the same danger. The objects of Aylmer's labor, the practical applications of his science, are indistinguishable from products of enchantment. He shows Georgiana “airy figures, absolutely bodiless ideas, and forms of unsubstantial beauty” [1026] which, although optical phenomena generated by science, create an illusion “almost perfect enough to warrant the belief that her husband possessed sway over the spiritual world.”[1026] His records of his past researches into alchemy and the elixir of life are kept in “sorcerer's books,” Even his final attempt to cure Georgiana is through a “potion”, like a witch's brew. Hawthorne constantly mixes scientific and magical terms to point towards the similarities between scientific and magical motives. This symbolism is not just the narrator's, but the author's as well: He has Georgiana cry, “It is magical!”[1026] when her husband grows a plant in seconds, another meddling into nature.

The plants in “Rappaccini's Daughter,” originally published in the *Democratic Review* in 1844, are similarly created through science. But, despite the presence of two scientists, the science in this story is less explicit than in “The Birthmark.” In this story, Giovanni falls in love with Beatrice, Rappaccini's beautiful daughter, despite evidence that she is poisonous. When he himself develops a poisonous breath, he gives Beatrice an antidote which, like Aylmer's final potion, kills instead of curing. But in the story, Hawthorne never reveals any of Rappaccini's scientific methods, just the results credited to them. It is this vagueness in the story, the added mystery, that brings it closer to magic.

Hawthorne increases the story's nebulous aspect by opening it with a framing device, claiming to have translated the story from the work of M. de l'Aubepine. This further breaks down the barrier between the magical legend and the story of science, since the reader encounters both second-hand. The narrator carefully establishes Rappaccini as a scientist, calling him a “scientific gardener” [1045] in the text, and Baglioni says that Rappaccini “has as much science as any member of the faculty - with perhaps one single exception - in Padua, or all Italy,”[1048] Beatrice too, tells Giovanni that her father “...is a man fearfully acquainted with the secrets of Nature.”[1062]. Rappaccini carefully observes the plants in his garden, analyzing the results of his experiments that



have created them. Even Baglioni, Rappaccini's scientific rival admits that his unique methods, curing through poisons, occasionally produced marvelous cures.

However, there exists a darker side to Rappaccini's ardent desire for scientific knowledge. He allows nothing to stop his zeal for science, and would even sacrifice his own life. Baglioni asserts:

He cares infinitely more for science than for mankind. His patients are interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment. He would sacrifice human life, his own among the rest, or whatever else was dearest to him, for the sake of adding so much as a grain of mustard seed to the great heap of his accumulated knowledge. [1048]



Although Baglioni may be unreliable on the subject of his rival, the story validates this statement. Rappaccini, without hesitating, experiments on his daughter and her lover, but takes no human interest in Giovanni as a future husband for his daughter; they never even talk. The narrator's description of Rappaccini's garden also shows the evils of Rappaccini's science. The plants have an appearance of artificiality, revealing "that the production was no longer of God's making, but the monstrous offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty." [1054] Once again, as in "The Birthmark," man's attempt to challenge the Creator results in evil.

In Hawthorne, this "rivalry with God is a sign of the scientist as wizard. Rappaccini's use of poisons places him in the world of the supernatural, with witches who were often accused of poisoning enemies. Nothing in the text proves that the poisonous plants could not have been produced by magic. Moreover, there is no difference between the scientific and magical origins of Beatrice's poison. Beatrice tells Giovanni that she had been born at the same time as the poisonous plant and nurtured on its breath. [1062] This is exactly the same as the fantastical explanation for the poison woman in the legend told by Baglioni: "That this lovely woman... had been nourished with poisons from her birth upward." [1058] Similarly, Rappaccini transforms Giovanni without the direct use of science. He claims, "My science and the sympathy between thee and him have so wrought within his system that he now stands apart from common men," [1064] but even in Hawthorne's day, this would not qualify as a scientific explanation. While in "The Birthmark," Hawthorne links science and magic through results, here he links their methods as well. The story makes no fundamental distinction between its science and its magic.

Not only does science in "Rappaccini's Daughter" destroy life, but it also acts to strip away the characters' humanity. Rappaccini's science effectively dehumanizes Beatrice, turning her into a poisonous "horrible thing... a world's wonder of hideous monstrosity." [1063] But science isolates the scientists as well. When Rappaccini finally cites a personal motive for transforming her, aside from his interest in learning more science, his explanation only proves Rappaccini's own isolation from the world. He tells Beatrice that he made her poisonous in order to give her a power with which to defend herself, to "quell the mightiest with a breath," [1064]. But the dying Beatrice, in reaffirming her humanity with the words, "I would fain have been loved, not feared," [1064] exposes her father's own separation from the human race. Even the other scientist, Baglioni, distances himself from his fellow man. At the end, after his scientific rivalry has destroyed the innocent Beatrice, his voice has a tone of triumph. While Beatrice and Giovanni are forcibly removed from humanity, the scientists themselves voluntarily reject their own humanity as a hindrance to their experimentation on nature.



## Status of Projects

Past readers of Samizdat know that I have started a number of life improving projects. Here's the latest update.

**Project Video** - *Skyfall*: This James Bond entry from 2012 has a presumed dead (from friendly fire) James Bond rescue M from a former MI6 agent turned cyberterrorist and flee to the ruins of Bond's family home. It was

enjoyable, especially to see more of Bond's personal history, but this came too early in the Daniel Craig reboot of the series.



*A Knight's Tale*: This 2001 film starring Heath Ledger as a peasant squire who disguised himself as a knight couldn't decide if it was an action movie, a comedy, or a romance. It completely misrepresents the medieval period, had characters sing rock songs, and made Chaucer into a gambler, counterfeiter, and promoter. It is interesting that it manages to tell a decent story despite all this.

*The Secret World of Arrietty*: This 2010 animated Studio Ghibli film is based on Mary Norton's novel, *The Borrowers*. It is a slight story about a girl from a race of tiny human-like creatures who live secretly in human homes and borrow things. When she makes friends with an ill human boy, the family is worried about exposure. This is a charming, well-animated film.

*Nimona* is a 2023 animated Netflix movie set in a world where an order of knights remain the kingdom's protectors even after the world developed advanced technology. When the first knight from a non-noble background is accused of murdering the queen, a shape changing girl wants him to be a villain with her as his sidekick even as he tries to prove his innocence. This is a much faster paced, exciting animated adventure than *Arrietty* but the animation is much cruder and the characterization much thinner.

*Pan's Labyrinth*-I didn't know this was a Spanish language film when I rented it. It presents an interesting contrast between the story of a young girl who is told by a faun that she may be the incarnation of their princess and must complete three tasks and her cruel new stepfather who is fighting rebels against Franco's government. The special effects are impressive and the story interesting.

Netflix is ending its DVD rentals in September so I'll have to start using library DVDs.

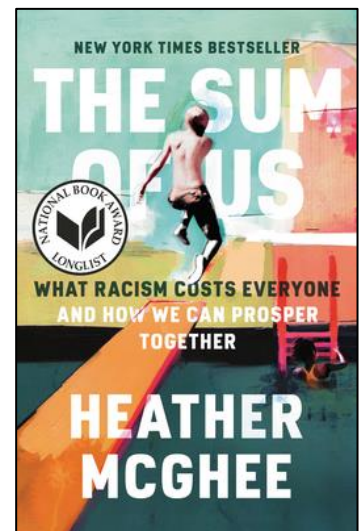
**Project Nonfiction** - I read *The 1619 Project* created by Nikole Hannah-Jones. This is an expansion of The New York Times Magazine article from August 2019 that won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize. It contended that American History really begins in 1619 when the first enslaved Africans arrived in Virginia. Some historians and political leaders contended that this was revisionist history designed to make the U.S. look bad. The book combines history with poetry and stories of more recent examples of racism. There is no question that until recently American historians ignored the black perspective (and blacks in general) even though much of American history was shaped by slavery and racism. But I would argue that this book went too far in the other direction. I also would have liked more history and less on current events.

I also read *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*. This book was thematically similar to *The 1619 Project* but had a stronger case that racism is why America doesn't have more of a social welfare system. It pointed to examples where cities shut down their swimming pools rather than let them be integrated and showed how many Americans refused to help the poor and needy if that meant Blacks would be helped too. It also showed how Blacks were the canaries in coal mines as real estate scams were tried first on Blacks before spreading to other poor people. Unfortunately, the book did not really have much on solutions.

Next up in Nonfiction, *Tudors* by Peter Ackroyd.

**Project Clean Up** - I did a lot of work on cleaning up the last couple of months. I threw out a lot of paper. The next step is to triage my book collection and bring a bunch of books to give away at Capclave.

**Project Activities** - I attended Confluence in Pittsburgh for the first time, mainly because my favorite history professor/SF writer/Norse mythology songwriter, Ada Palmer was the Guest of Honor. Chessiecon is a very small





con. If there were 400 people there I would be very surprised and there were only three small and one large programming rooms. I enjoyed many of the concerts, Ada's speech on book banning in history, the time travel panel and others. Afterwards, I stayed in Pittsburgh to play tourist. I saw the Senator John Heinz History Center, Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History, Fort Pitt Museum, Frick Museum and Mansion (the Mansion was more interesting than the Museum), Duquesne Incline (a cable car that goes up a mountain and has wonderful views). I also saw some relatives I haven't seen in a while.

**Project Conventions** - I got an art guest for Balticon. And I should be putting together the Program Book for Capclave instead of doing this.



**Project Classics** - I have started *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. So far the book seems much more centered on the misadventures of poet and playwright Pierre Gringoire whose play is ignored by the Parisians more interested in the entrance of dignitaries and a contest for ugly faces (in which the titular hunchback wins). Unpaid, he wanders Paris looking for a place to sleep only to be captured by a group of beggars and vagabonds who will kill him unless one of them offers to marry him; only the young Gypsy woman, La Esmeralda, agrees.

**Project Exercise:** I went swimming once and did 30 laps.

No progress on Project Shakespeare or Project Trek.

### Author's Note

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