

# **N'APA**

**Issue 268**  
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# The Official Organ

## #268

**Next deadline: March 15, 2024**

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By vote of the members, we do not want to include participation from “Public Members” of N3F, members who are not paying dues. Please pay dues at N3F.org. people who cannot send money and want to be contributors should contact [phillies@4liberty.net](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net). Thank you for voting!

**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. There is no minac Requirement. It is sent to all members of the N3F having email addresses. If there are members interested in joining who have no computer access, special arrangements may be possible. People who only want to read N3F zines 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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## N'APA News

The Assembler extends his sincere apologies to John Thiel, whose "Synergy" was left out of the previous mailing. John sent it as a file-sharing attachment, and neither I nor George were able to open the file. Heath Row has volunteered to be File Shepherd for John and for us, and we all hope that we can continue to enjoy John's contributions for N'APA as time goes by. The fact that John's name and the title of his zine were in the Table of Contents for last issue was a blunder on my part, nothing more than a goof-up, for which I also apologize.

The bad news is that, at present, John is still having computer issues, and so "Synergy" is missing from this issue as well. Heath Row is working on a possible technical solution, and has volunteered to help John as a file shepherd.

# INTERMISSION #139

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com), for EAPA, N'APA and followers of Roscoe! Read @SFJournalen newstweets before Twitter is a quitter! What's your favourite typo? Mine is *cducm3r* for "cucumber". Enjoy this's special History Bloch! Late Nov '23

## Editorially: Bloch, Poetry, Falk

Since last your editor has been to the best poetry party in town (incl wiggling virus in verse), missed a funeral (400 miles was a bit far, but thanx to others you'll get a peek!), judged a Space Opera contest and dug into the life and crimes of that superb psycho Robert Bloch. We all know about his many fannish writings and accomplishments, and some may have heard that he wrote that book one Alfred H made into a mildly successful film. Anyway, I stumbled upon his foot tracks and got stuck.

One of the first things I saw was his fannish sf story "A Way Of Life" available on-line here [https://archive.org/details/Fantastic\\_Universe\\_v06n03\\_1956-10\\_AT/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/Fantastic_Universe_v06n03_1956-10_AT/mode/2up) so one must assume that copyright has lapsed. This story about fandom being the main survivor after the Atomic War is a bit too long for a regular *Intermission*. So I did a special *Intermission* #137.5 with it, but outside EAPA and N'APA distribution will be very restricted. My idea is to lure you to do a fanzine and join either (or both!) APA. If you do you help fandom - which needs more fanzines! - and I'm sure the OE will send you the mailing with Bloch's superb fandom-in-sf story! In this I have more on Bloch, a major fandom figure up to two decades ago, and shorter pieces of his incomparable and witty writing. I've tried to check it's pieces *not* in his fan-writing collection *The Eighth Stage of Fandom*. I also found a stash of funny photos of him to present. Bloch is superb.



Logo evolution from US pulp, over JVM to space opera contest.

The distance to were the incredible, just deceased Bertil Falk lived and was buried is some 600 km (ca 400 miles) away in Malmö, a bit to far for for popping over for a couple of hours, but I received pictures and reports so you'll get a peek. It's been a terrible year but a good, year for fandom's graveyard: Maths Claesson, Hans Sidén, Ralph Lundsten, and now Bertil Falk gone, gone, gone. At the same time we the Jury finished Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize wich will be presented below. I spent some time creating a prize diploma, with a "Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize" logotype making a variant borrowed from the 1940s *Jules Verne Magasinet* pulp, which Bertil relaunched in 1969 (Sam J Lundwall took over in 1972) . it may interest some that that logo was borrowed from the 1940s US pulp *Super Science Stories*, with a very young Fred Pohl edited. Och s shoetrong budget, so he filled it with fellow-Futurians. See above!

I of course follow what happens with Putin's super stupid war. Despite a bit of a stand-still the Russians lose ca 1000 soldiers and scores of vehicles *every day!* Their pushes go nowhere, Ukraine's missiles hit in the rear and Russian navy ships are either sunk or has retreated, Experts say half of Putin's original military capability is obliterated. As noted earlier, I think the Ukrainians mainly concentrate on striking the Russian will to fight by tsargeting resources, and that may eventually oust Putin. Good news is that their forces have crossed the Dniepr, where Russians are weak and its closer to Crimea. Now is the time to reaffirm support for Ukraine's struggle for independence, freedom, democracy and human values! *Intermission's* fanzine blockade against the



In a bookstore I heard Anna-Lena Lodenus (R, expert on Xmas music, 60s Swedish porn and Nazis) who just published *Spy Hunt* in the Folk Home., on the big 70s Information Bureau scandal about gov spies hunting communists. It was kept secret for the parliament. Two reporters, Guillou and Bratt, were convicted as spies for 1 year writing about the "IB affaire", which was un-faire....

Kremlin is steadfast! (Do a fanzine, so you too has something to blockade with!)

A couple of weeks ago I also attended what I think is the *best poetry party in town!* It's the *Poetry in a Day* anthology release party organised by "Authors Book Machine", a DIY self-publisher which has been around for 50 years. Once a year - except cancelled during the blasted pandemic - they invite anyone to send them a poem, which they collect in a book which you get for free as contributor. It's released with a big party. Over 100 participated, they have a stage where you can read your poem and a bar (bheer half prize compared to others!) and it's all quite fun. Interesting people, interesting poetry.

Some guys I know turns up, like Bengt Björklund of the Swedish SF Writers' Society (covered here earlier). Sf author Börje Crona was a long time regular at these parties - which I unfortunately

missed since he gafiated from the universe before I discovered *Poetry in a Day*. We'll shortly have *Stockholm's International Poetry Festival*, in some libraries and theatres. I have sometimes happened to bump into that, and it's quote pretentious and stiff compared to *Poetry in a Day!* The Book Machine's act is wilder, more anarchistic, unpretentious, fun, creative...

### Farewell to the Master

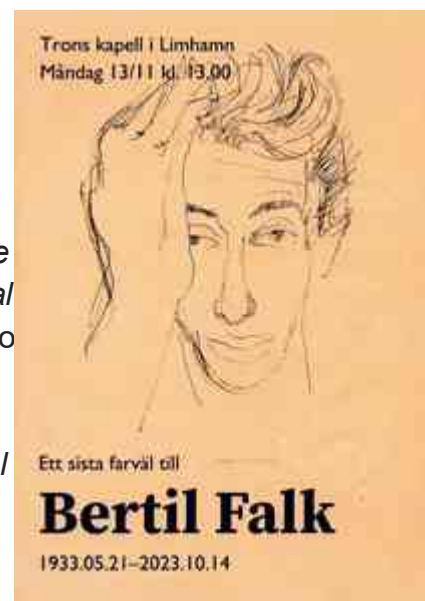


The coffin. Candles. Flowers. Note the beautiful mosaic windows! Pic: Tora G.

It wasn't perhaps The Day the Earth Stood Still, but it was a bit of a Wake, Bertil Falk's not Finnegans', and a day of sadness when mourners Nov 13 gathered at the Chapel of Faith in Limhamn, south of Malmö. For me, unfortunately, 600 km was a bit to far to attend but I had reports and pictures – thanks to Cecilia Falk and Tora Greve! - we'll get a peek anyway!"

Tora Greve reports tha chapel was almost full and "the flower set from *Tira Tiger Publishing House* /Tora's venture/ was the biggest and had a place of honour...it was a science fiction funeral with recitation of bertil's first story /"Trip to Space", 1946/ and fitting music. We also

filled *Café Vega on Malmö Museum*". (And thanks Tora for help judging the space opera-prize!) Cecilia reports that "it became a very fine and personal funeral, when most of all the grandchildren contributed to the program with singing., reciting dad's first short story and baking his absolute favourite buns and Latvian pies for the memorial gathering afterwards. There were around 4 persons on the funeral. Several had to decline due to illness."



Cover of the funeral booklet.

It was interesting that Bertil's juvenile "sin" was read, "Trip to Space". It clearly pointed to what we would see from him in the future! You had it in last issue, but it's also at <https://file770.com/bertil-falk-from-a-space-hobo-to-finnegans-wake/> Bertil discovered the *Jules Verne Magasinet* (JVM) pulp as a little kid and was especially fond of Ed Hamklton's space hero Captain Future. In the 1970s he met the Hamkltons - Edmond and wife Leigh Brackett, also sf author.

I have a complete JVM collection, beginning as a decent one lacking perhaps 20 issues. What Bertil did was to *give me the missing issues!* What a guy! When I visited him in Västra Alstad I noted he had a whole shelf full of doubles of various issues of the magazine. (I would later in return donate to him most of my digest US sf mags - just keeping some with material of very special interest to me.) I understand Bertil's extensive magazine collection has gone to Umeå University library. Beside this he has donated material to the Archive For the Unexplained, covered in Intermission #129, stock and left overs from his publishing to Tora Greve, some leftovers from his JVM -. incl a Stieg Larsson manuscript! – to the Royal Library via me and *Faktasin* book research to me personally.



*Mourners at Café Vega filled two tables. I think it's Tora G closest to the camera. Pic: Cecilia F.*

### The Space Opera Prize

Bertil Falk translated and published Cap Future. This Wizard of Science was immensely popular here, not so much in the schools. Bertil Falk told me that the teachers would confiscate copies of JVM if they saw it, and the teachers union magazine warned that this publication would twist the

minds of kids with abrupt fantasies, make them analphabets - and probably make hair grow on the palm of their hands. Our pioneer fanzine *Vår Rymd* 1952 had Cap F fanfiction, indicating that the high school publishers in astro club Andromeda had read JVM in the 1940s. There was a Swedish Captain Future fan club even, lead by Bengt-Olov Ringberg (1923-2012), publishing the fanzine *Future Fan*. Trivia proving he world is small is the fact that Ringberg was part-time extra librarian in my high school Nya Elementar.

I attended Ringberg's 85th birthday and can report his love for Hamilton's hero was unbroken. The pulps with him didn't collect dust in the shelves, a couple was laying around recently read.

Captain Future is still popular in Japan,

where he has been made into an animated TV series. I've seen an episode, but I thought was very far from the character I remember, as I'm probably one of very few who in modern times have read all the 332 issues of old JVM (though I must admit I skipped the westerns and crime stories they add towards the end).



*Local Tranströmer Library Nov 22 held a panel on the hunt for alien life. Martian micro fossils? Chemicals, water, perhaps ammonia? Life under Jupiter moon ice? Humongous alien constructions shading stars? With reporters from national radio and university scientists, eg from <https://vascoproject.org/> Sf examples from Any Weir, Stan Lem & Co was read. See also <https://sverigesradio.se/rymdliv>*



*Space Opera winner Eva Holmqvist.*

When Bertil turned 90 years in May I inaugurated the Bertil Falk Space Opera Prize, inspired by his early interest in pulp adventures in space. And I must admit Bertil has inspired me to read more of it, rather than more “modern” social or apocalyptic skiffy, which tend to be a bit too negative! Older skiffy from typewriters are tighter written and computers have made fiction of later decades boring and wordily. Unfortunately Bertil went to other worlds before the result for the space opera prize was at hand. And the winner is...

*EVA HOLMQVIST won with the story "Konferens på Baldu" ("Conference on Baldu") a story of encounters between humans and aliens on planet Baldu. Exciting adventures take place in its extensive tunnel system.*

The prize result has been announced in the form of a short semi-fictional space story ("Adventure in Literary Space"), and the jury was me and Tora Greve. Excerpt from my citation: "Good descriptions of the milieu and the aliens. The paragraph 'There was a sharp smell...' a fine example of Poul Anderson's advice to use all the five senses. Great feeling of presence and note how the swift dialogue carries the rather rather thrilling episodes in the tunnels".



The prize diploma, Cpt Future inspired...

Eva Holmqvist is well-known in the new wave of a myriad of small publishers pumping out a lot of sf, fantasy and horror in Sweden, is author of a long row of novels and stories and runs Ordspira publishing venture. See <https://www.evaholmqvist.se/> A number of her stories are there available in English and there are pictures of her on the site.

There were two "honourable mentions": Katarina Nyman with "Strandsatt" ("Beached") and Leif Wallsby with "Främmande land" ("Alien Land"). Holmqvist's and Wallsby's stories are available in the E-zine Brev från Cosmos #13 <https://clubcosmos.net/brev.php>

Prize shall be biannual, as the production of space skiffy makes for thin competition if it'd be annual. So hopefully it'll be back in 2025 for stories published 2024-25. Clear ether!

### Poetry about a virus

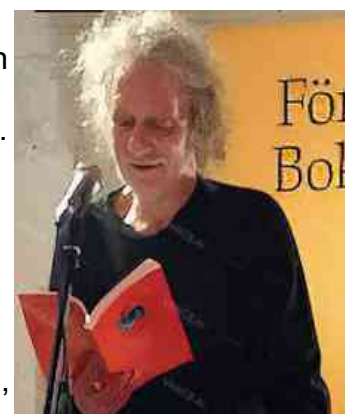
Below my contribution to *Poetry in a Day 2023*, or rather it's by one Comet-John Benzene Jr, a self-confident poet that first appeared in my fanzine *Nonsense* #1 in 1978. Since then I haven't been able to free myself from this strange, incomprehensible guy who is convinced he's in a for a Nobel Prize any year now...

As you know the Swedish corona measures were criticised all over the world, where they shut down everything and put people in house arrest - which didn't happen here. Some actions were taken, but most was given to voluntary caution. In fact we kept the pandemic plans most governments had prepared but threw in



the bin as some crazy statisticians presented totally worthless “models”. I covered this in eg #134. Now when the virus panic has calmed down, statistics shows that Sweden - despite all the commotion had the *lowest excess deaths in Europe!* We did right. Calculations show that for 2020-21 excess deaths here were ca 2500, a fraction of what was officially assumed,

counting official population statistics from the Statistic Central Agency. There have been a strong tendency of - and motivation for - over-reporting, eg Is virus victims include *any* contact with the virus. Excess deaths strips such a away and shows the factual real virus effects free of interpretation, as there's no room for that: either someone is alive or dead. If someone dies and it doesn't show as a population anomaly it's not the virus. Excess deaths tend to be rather



Me reading my poem.



Authors' Bookmachine's main book machine for B/W print.



Poetry bar, bearded poet Bengt Björklund. Middle Book Machine staffer wassisname? Bheer at decent orice. Bengt reading his poetry, including some haikus. I learned he had just been on a poetry festival in Kenya!

even, so any changes are from an outside factor, which here showed to be quite small.

The Swedes followed the plan and did OK. Others did wrong, victims of panic and populism.

But the nearly 150 poets in the anthology didn't bother much about that, except the Gripenberg/Fredriksson couple who used the virus as pretext to meet and write poems. They and many others read from the stage. We heard sonnets, rap by Ric Wasserman, associations rich verse (by CJ Rahm I remember), the Gripenberg/Fredriksson corona codewords, apocalyptic poems, love, haikus... Great evening!

Below my virus verse, original in Swedish, and to the right a loose English interpretation:

#### VÄRLDEN VIRAL VORDEN

En fladdermus flög fel i Kina  
Och startade en massiv pina  
Eller kom det från kinesiskt labb?  
Buggens spridning den blev snabb

I Alperna bland folk på ferie  
Det liknade en skräckfilmsserie  
Med fusk från världlös modell  
spreds vild panik irrationell

"Vi förbjuder allt och stänger in  
Medborgarrätt må tåla svinn!"  
Men norrut uti Svea Rike  
En modig doktor utan like:

"Vilka populister!", sa Tegnell  
"Er plan riskabelt experimentell!  
Att tvätta händer och jobba hemma  
räcker för att virusspridning dämpa!"

"Men 100 000 dukar under!  
Sverige gör nu världens blunder!"  
Tyckte media internationellt  
På hela taget inte snällt

Sverige blev längs fotknöl sågat  
Och världens folk blev dubbelt plågat  
Huxflux så togs fram vaccin  
Det blev slut på epidemin

Så blev dags att analysera  
De hårda handskarna, med mera  
Och landet som excesser slopa'  
fick lägst dödlighet i Europa!



The 2023 poetry anthology.

#### WORLD WENT VIRAL

In China a bat flew wildly astray  
The virus it gave came here to stay  
Or did it escape from a laboratory?  
Forcing victims to the lavatory!

In the Alps Swedes are on vacation  
And brought the bugger back to that nation  
Statistics models being totally bonkers  
Still all attention managed to conquer

"We ban everything and lock people in  
Civil rights are not what they've been!"  
But going north we saw a brave Doc  
He called them crazy, steadfast as a rock

"A bunch of populists," dr Tegell stated  
"Totally useless, stupidity inflated  
Just washing hands and working at home  
is all we need to stop virus to roam"

"But 100 000 will surely go under  
In Sweden they commit a royal blunder!"  
So shouted media all over the world  
On Tegnell and his folks shuffling turd

Swedes were idiots in their convictions  
So over the world came more restrictions  
Suddenly came vaccine against epidemic  
And strength of the virus became anaemic

Finally it was time to it all analyse  
Had the tough measures really been wise?  
In Europe only one country stood tall:  
The Swedes had the lowest death rates of all!



# History Corner

This time we start silent and end superbly...

I have earlier told about that my granddad had a travelling cinema in silent era of the 1920s. My Uncle Martin actually wrote about it, while not exactly fandom (though some fringe fans dress up, trying to be movie characters, mistaking it for fandom). Anyway, his "When movies came to the village -The Engholm Brothers in Järbo Were Pioneers", Gästriklands Tidning, Jan 17 2003, is rather interesting

**KUNGSBERG.** The introduction of movies in our country has travelled different roads, some of them winding. In the cities it was natural to build cinema halls suited to the purpose. In the countryside, in smaller towns and rural areas this was impossible for economic reasons. Here you had tent cinemas in the summer and indoors in suitable halls in the winter, intended for much more than movies. It was club halls and the like.

We wrote around 1920. It is remarkable that movies were shown this early even in smaller locations in our country, if you consider that the first showing in Europe of "moving pictures" was in Paris as late as 1895. The development after that was fast in Denmark and Sweden.

"Nordic Film Company" was established in Copenhagen in 1906. In Sweden "Swedish Film Industry" in 1919, preceded by "Swedish Bio" / "cinema" is "bio" or "biograf" in Swedish / in Kristianstad 1907. Soon we got Sandrew's "Europe Film".

The brothers Arvid and Henning founded a company they somewhat ambitiously, despite its modest size, called the "Swedish Biograph Company" in Kungsberg, Järbo. The founders worked in it and hired temporary staff on the location where they operated at the moment. They went around to show movies, you see.

Henning moved to Södertälje and concentrated on the southern part of the country while Arvid crossed it from Bergslagen in his south to Västerbotten in the north, from what you can see in leftover papers.

In handwritten correspondence with heads of different venues you get an interesting picture of how the new media - movies - was received. In most cases the cinema and its owners were very welcome to rent a venue, but in some cases they were denied. Sometimes it was stated that they didn't let the venue for such purposes, in other cases it was rejected without motivation. Even in those cases you may assume or at least suspect that there were moral issues. It was something new, perhaps damaging for the morals of the youth.

Often there were religious reasons behind the reluctance, though it was rarely said so directly. According to some people of the church cinematography was an "invention by the devil". Fritiof Nilsson Piraten / famous author / has told about this. Never on a Sunday they said from Erikslund in Medelpad. But they were most enthusiastic in Köjaviken in Jämtland, where they beside welcoming the cinema owner also said it was salary day. A lot of people could be expected, in other words.

From the correspondence we learn that

## När filmen kom till byn Bröderna Engholm i Järbo var pionjärer

KUNGSBERG. Filmens intåg i vårt land har gått i långa årtionden. I städerna var det självklart att man bygde biosalonger, lämpliga för sitt ändamål. I landsorten, i mindre samhällen och på rena landsbygden var detta inte möjligt av ekonomiska skäl. Här var det ofta tältbio på sommaren och inomhus i lämpliga lokaler lokaler på vintern, avsedda även för mycket annat än filmföreläsning. Det var i föreningshus och liknande.

Vi skriver nu omkring 1920. Det är förvånansvärt att filmföreläsning förekom så tidigt i vårt land även på mindre platser, om man betänker att den första filmföreläsningen i Europa av "triloga bilder" skedde i Paris så pass sent som 1895. Utvecklingen efter det gick fort även i Danmark och Sverige.

Nordisk Films Kompani etablerades i Köpenhamn 1906. I Sverige startade SF (Svensk Filmindustri) 1919, föregånget av Svenska Bio i Kristianstad 1907. Så småningom kom också Sandrews Europafilmer.

**Resande biograf**  
I Kungsberg i Järbo bildade bröderna Arvid och Henning Engholm ett företag som något storvulet kallades Svenska Biografkompaniet trots sin ringa storlek. Företaget sysselsatte grundarna och tillfällig personal som anlätades på den ort där bion för tillfället befann sig. Med Biografkompaniet reste de nämligen runt och visade film. Henning flyttade till Södertälje

och koncentrerade sig till södra delen av landet medan Arvid genomkorsade landet från Bergslagen i söder till Västerbotten i norr så långt det gån till utlösa av efterlämnade handlingar.

**Lånade lokaler**  
I sparad korrespondens med förestandare för olika lokaler får man en intressant bild av hur det nya mediet - bio - mottogs. I de flesta fall var biograferna välkomna att hyra lokal men i en del fall blev det avslag. Bland annat klart att lokalen inte utnyttades för sådana ändamål, i andra fall uppgav man ingen orsak utan uppgav endast att lokalen inte fick hyras. Även då kan man förmoda eller åtminstone ana att det fanns moraliska betänkligheter bakom. Detta var något nytt, kanske förödande för ungdomens moral.

Ofta låg religiösa skäl bakom oviljan att hyra ut lokaler. I ett fall var det så till och med uttryckt. Enligt en del av kyrkans folk var

kinematografen "djävulens påfund". Därom har bland andra Fritiof Nilsson Piraten berättat.



Three examples of the program of the Swedish Cinema Company. Tent cinema from the 1920s. The lorry was used for trips around the country. An accordion player was hired, to give sound to the film, when it was shown in the tent or possibly a rented venue.



Tältbio från 1920-talet. Flakbilen användes för resor runt om i landet. En inhyrd dragspelare förkyllde tillställningen när filmen visades i tältet eller möjligen i någon hyrd lokal.

Synnerligen facila priser i dag, men inträdesbiljetten låg på samma nivå. Skuttiofem öre, någon gång en krona plus nöjeskatt "där sådan tillämpas". Sommardid var det fråga om tältbiograf. Här gällde att hitta lämpliga platser för tältet. Storleken på tältet är nu obekant, men att döma av fotot här intill kan man kanske bedöma att tältet rymde 40-60 personer. Det var mest utländska filmer som visades, kanske enbart sådana. Vad språket beträffar spelade det ingen roll om det var utländsk eller svensk film. Det var ju på den tiden utslutande stumfilm, så den måste ju under alla förhållanden textas. De filmer jag lyckats spåra har genomgående varit amerikanska. Jag har i varje fall inte lyckats hitta affischer från någon svensk film. Av affischerna framgår att repertoaren bestod av såväl kärleks- och äventyrsfilmer men även av något mera allvarig karaktär, till exempel "Arbetets barn". **Biograf för landsorten** Man inritade sig sällan på städerna. Där fanns det förmodligen biografer rätt allmänt redan på den tiden. Inte heller på rena landsbygden sökte man sin publik utan det var till mindre opech medelstora samhällen man sökte sig. Ett axplock från tiden omkring 1920 som Arvid Engholm besökte med sin biograf är Delsbo, Fällinge, Holmsund, Duved, Alby, Vämnäs, Lesjöfors, Målingsbo, Mehedeby, Oviken, Hammedal, Nyland, Fagervik, Erikslund och Ytterhodal. Det innebar således en koncentration till södra och mellersta Norrland samt till Bergslagen. Troligen var ett biobesök i landsorten för åttio år sedan en mera omtalad och anmärkningsvärd händelse än när TV gjorde sitt intåg i landet på 1950-talet. Förmodligen var det första biobesöket i trakten ett allmänt samtalsämne. **Martin Engholm**

the reluctance to let venues be used for movie shows shrank through the years. In 1918: 24 yes, 9 no. 1919: 21 yes, 6 no, but already two years later: 13 yes, only 1 no. One permission was a bit different from the others and was given provided it was a good cinema (ie: movie). In some cases denial was motivated with that light was missing - that is, no electricity.

The rent has sometimes been stated with the permission to show movies. 10 crowns /ie ca \$2 from 1920s /, sometimes 5 crowns, sometimes 25% of the revenue. Modest prices today, but the tickets were on the same

level: 0.75 crowns, 1 crown sometimes, plus "entertainment tax were such exists".

In the summer there was a tent cinema. You had to find suitable fields. The size of the tent is unknown, but from the photo here you could estimate it would fit 40-60 people. It was mostly foreign films shown, perhaps only those. Concerning language it didn't matter if it was a Swedish or foreign film. It was exclusively silent films so it must have texts anyway. The films I have managed to trace have all been American. I haven't been able to find posters of a Swedish film.

From the posters you can conclude the program was love stories and adventure films, but also some a little bit more serious, like "Children of Labour".

They seldom went to the cities. They already had cinemas at this time. And they didn't go to the most rural areas, but sought the audience in smaller and medium sized municipalities. Examples of towns Arvid Engholm and his cinema visited in 1920 is Delsbo, Föllinge, Holmsund, Duved, Alby, Vännäs, Lesjöfors, Malingsbo, Mehedeby, Oviken, Hammertal, Nyland, Fagervik, Erikslund and ytterhogdal.

That was in in south and middle Norrland plus Bergslagen. A visit by a cinema 80 years ago was probably bigger than when TV came to the country in the 1950s.



The Blochs getting married

The first visit to a cinema was likely the talk of the town.

Three examples of the program of the Swedish Cinema Company.

Tent cinema from the 1920s. The lorry was used for trips around the country. An accordion player was hired, to give sound to the film, when it was shown in the tent or possibly a rented venue.

I have mentioned granddad's travelling before. He he died already in 1927 apparently falling through weak ice and drowning in a lake - ice can be treacherous – so I never met him. One of the stories in my recent collection *Spacetime* connects to his Swedish Cinema Company anyway. In granddad's cottage, which later was taken over by uncle'n'aunt there were some left-over film material, like movie posters, a rusty projector, old films on the way to disintegrate (one title I remember was "Chaplin in the South Seas") I've seen it all and even have an old movie poster. In my story "The Horrible Fright in the Deserted Chamber" I pretend to have found an unknown HP Lovecraft story! It was published in an obscure Swedish-American newspaper, which had been used to wrap up and protect film projector parts that my grand dad ordered from America, or so my story goes.

You have been promised Robert Bloch, a friend of Lovecraft who became his literary mentor. Bloch was born in Chicago but the family moved to Milwaukee when he was twelve. He was then already a fan of HP Lovecraft, from finding him in the magazine *Weird Tales* at a young age. In the Mundane world Bloch is known for writing the book that Hitchcock made a film from, concerning certain events around a shower curtain. We sf fans know Bloch as One Of Us, mingling on the cons - you could bid for an hour of his time in the Auction Bloch - and appearing in countless fanzines.

But in the beginning, in the spring of 1933 at the age of 16 he dared to write to the horror master, and to his surprise Lovecraft replied, HPL was a letter maniac, said to have written 100 000+ letters in his life! He asked if Bloch wrote weird fiction, so when the young one sent stories, HP replied (from ST Joshi's *I Am Providence*) :

*It was with the keenest interest & pleasure that I read your two brief horror-sketches; whose rhythm & atmospheric colouring convey a very genuine air of unholy immanence & nameless menace, & which strike me as promising in the very highest degree. I think you have managed to create a dark tension & apprehension of a sort all too seldom encountered in weird fiction, & believe that your gift for this atmosphere-weaving will serve you in good stead when you attempt longer & more intricately plotted pieces Of course... these productions are not free from the earmarks of youth. A critic might complain that the colouring is laid on too thickly - too much overt inculcation of horror as opposed to the subtle, gradual suggestion of concealed horror which actually raises fear to its highest pitch. In later work you will probably be less disposed to pile on great numbers of horrific words (an early & scarcely-conquered habit of my own), but will seek rather to select a few words - whose precise position in the text, & whose deep associative power, will make them in effect more terrible than any barrage of monstrous adjectives, malign nouns, & unhallowed verbs.*



First Mrs Bloch and baby

He became a member in the informal Lovecraft Circle, a side fandom with many leading names. Though master and student never met, Bloch and HP corresponded for four years until the latter passed away (from overeating baked beans or something), often discussing writing. Bloch gave Lovecraft a lot of credit for his development as a writer.

Bloch became involved in the Milwaukee Fictioneers [https://fancyclopedia.org/Milwaukee\\_Fictioneers](https://fancyclopedia.org/Milwaukee_Fictioneers) a writers' group including Ralph Milne Farley (Pen name of Wisconsin senator Roger Sherman Hoar), Ray Palmer (later editing *Amazing Stories*, to which Bloch made his first sale in 1938), Arthur Tofte, Lawrence Keating, and Stanley G. Weinbaum. Both skiffy and mundane writers, both fiction and non-fic were represented. The psycho behind the typewriter was on his way to literary stardom!

But Bloch's best friend at the time was one Harold Gauer, later editor of *The Quill* magazine, who was an amateur photographer with a studio in his attic, in which he made strange pictures to sell to humour magazines. The couple would dress up and stage scenes for the camera. The Wisconsin Historical Society has a lot of pictures from Gauer's archive. I had some in #138.5, and here you'll get more. Bloch is almost as funny as a model as a writer”!

Photos here are all from Gauer and you should check out <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records?&terms=robert%2cbloch&start=0> yourself.

The couple Bloch and Gauer also published some sort of school paper, or fanzine if you like, named *Brutal*. So Bloch felt a kindred when he discovered the fanzine world, and he became a popular and frequent contributor to them, writing LoCs, articles and humour pieces, and also, together with Bob Tucker, the ambitious *SF Fifty Yearly* - a nod towards the *SF Five Yearly* published every five years - in 1957. Unfortunately we didn't see a #2 in 2007... A collection of fannish articles came in 1962, *The Eighth Stage of Fandom*. But *Intermission* here presents pieces not in that book, AFAWCFO (As Far As We Could Find Out) .

One of Bloch's friends and correspondents was the legendary Northern Irish fan Walt Willis, by the time considered as *the #1 fan*, due to his with, activity (zines like the famous *Hyphen*, the letterpress hand-set *Slant*, the classic *The Enchanted Duplicator* with Bob Shaw) and his personality. Here Bloch writes about the only “professional” book Willis published (from *Warhoon* #26, 1969 - and I'll have a treat for you after it!) :

### Once there were two Irishmen

*Up until twenty years ago, my knowledge of Ireland and the Irish was somewhat limited. Like the average citizen, I was aware of the difference between a shamrock and a real rock; I was aware that Ireland boasted of its twin cities, Sodom and Begorrah; I realized its chief exports were snakes and policemen, and I knew that the best place to find an Irish stew was not in a restaurant but in the corner tavern.*

*I think that dismembered fragments of this small body of knowledge were shared by most of my fellow science fiction fans. We had seen Erin go braggadocio in the films of John Ford, we anticipated such samples of Irish artwork as could be found in a Kelly frieze, we knew the names of traditional Irish heroes such as Barry Fitzgerald, Mayor Daley, Laurence O'Livier and Ari O'Nassis. Such were the components of our comprehension; put them all together, they spelled Mother Machree.*

*Then, amidst the twanging of the Harp, a phenomenon known as Walter A. Willis burst upon the fannish scene. From some remote Belfastness in the northern wilderness, an Irish fan gave us a new *Slant* and dissolved us in Gaels of laughter. Within a few years, fandom had formed a Celt cult and everyone realized that Ireland must be *Hyphen* if Willis came from there.*

*Following in his wake (a singularly inappropriate expression in this context, for Willis was very much alive) came others who wrote in a similar Irish tenor - such bards of a feather as James White, Bob Shaw and John Berry. As time passed, fandom came to know far more about Oblique House than it had ever learned of Random House, which had published the works of a much more obscure Irishman, Jimmy Joyce.*

*And yet, much as we learned of Irish fandom, we were still largely in ignorance of the land which gave it birth. To the average science fiction fan, IRA still stood for Internal Revenue Agent, and a broth of a boy was some kind of soup favoured by a child murderer.*

*But now, at long last, these errors are corrected, and our eyes are opened - happily - to feast upon the pages of Ace Book 36990, "The Improbable Irish" Abandoning the rather unhappy but science-fiction-ally acceptable concept of feasting eyes, let me hasten to point out two important facts. "The Improbable Irish" is funnier than anything Walt Willis ever wrote. And its author, Walter Bryan, just happens to be - Walt Willis!*



For twenty years we science fiction fans have been impatiently awaiting the day when, like his Belfast and more furious contemporaries, Willis would make the move from fandom to prodom. Now our impatience is richly rewarded in *"The Improbable Irish"*. Two decades of fanfare usher in a proentry which amply illustrates how a lengthy apprenticeship serves to create a master craftsman. And Willis is a master indeed; here is wit and wisdom and warmth and all the other alliterative adjuncts of literacy - which is merely a roundabout way of saying that he's written one hell of a good book.

By this time those of you who had the pleasure of reading Willis the fan all these years have already abandoned this review and are already hotfooting down to your friendly neighbourhood news stand and pornography to search out a copy of *"The Improbable Irish."* As for the rest of you, I can only urge - go thou and do likewise, and let he who is without Sinn Fain among ye cast the first stone.

Although *"The Improbable Irish"* is not science fiction by any stretch of the imagination - nor would it be, even if published in *Galaxy* - it is well worth reading for its own merits as an introduction to a fabulous land and a fabulous people. If your knowledge of Erin is as limited as mine was before the publication of this book, if you were under the misapprehension that *"the Quid Sod"* was merely an obscure reference to the late Oscar Wilde, then you have a rare treat in store.

As Willis writes, *"the Irish are more than wild creatures who have had a hard time and sing prettily, and have never done anyone any harm. For all the number of them, they are their tiny island have made a great stir in the world, and it is well worth anyone's time to find out more about them and the country which made them."*

I shall deliberately refrain from quoting the contents here, difficult as it may be to do so, for this is a book which cries out for quotation. Sufficient to say that there's not a page which lacks inspiration and information. Willis begins by demolishing the Irish stereotype. He yanks the Hibernian from hibernation and reveals the nature of the beast. Do you regard *"the typical Irishman"* as a red-headed, pugnacious, priest-fearing, sentimental and impractical drunkard? Willis demolishes the concept straight away in a few well-chosen words, then proceeds to introduce you to the far more fascinating reality. He writes with what is obviously great affection and understanding, and his examination of Irish history, legend, geography, economy, customs, folkways and mores is unexcelled. Analysis is intermingled with anecdote, and edification goes hand in hand with entertainment. Here again it's a temptation to give examples, but sure and I'll not be spoiling the reading of it for yez. Except to tell you that Willis does not write anything like that last sentence - his style is purely his own, and I can make no higher possible recommendation. And if you need further urging to take an interest in the Irish, Willis, early on, quotes the late John Kennedy as follows:

*"This has never been a rich or powerful country, and yet, since earliest times, its influence on the world has been rich and powerful... No larger nation did more to spark the cause of independence in America, indeed round the world. And no other nation has ever provided the world with more literary and artistic genius. This is an extraordinary country..."*

To which I can only add that this an extraordinary book. *"The Improbable Irish"* is a highly probable delight to any reader, and a must for science fiction fans. To them I can only say - if you like Walt Willis, you'll love Walter Bryan!

I met Walt Willis on the 1987 worldcon - the same to which misters Humbug and Belly stole the Scandinavian fan fund money - and here's some good news. I've never found *The Improbable Irish* at the huckster tables, and while archive.org has this rather rare book, it's not for download. You can "borrow" it for 1 hour at a time...which I did. I made a screenshot of every page, and "printed" them to a PDF, which I then trimmed a bit at the edges and used a PDF compressor to shrink 400 MB to get a 20 MB file - which you can ask me for as a regular, enthusiastic *Intermission* reader. Just send a few lines to [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com) and say *"The Improbable Irish"*. Any comments to my publication of wisdom are also welcome.

Back to Bloch, who in the late 1950s conducted *Fandoras's Box*, the fandom column of the fine little prozine *Imagination*. Aug 1956 Bloch wrote how sf benefits from fandom, and vice versa:

*The year is still young as these lines are being written, and I haven't seen the article yet. But it will come, never fear.*

*It always comes, every year, with the infallibility of a swallow returning to Capistrano or disappearing down an editor's throat.*

*Those of you who have inhabited the merry microcosm of science fiction fandom for a while will know what article I mean. But you neo-fans will be surprised - and perhaps shocked - when you read it. And that's precisely the reason why I'd like to anticipate the article in advance this year.*

*The article I refer to will appear in one of the fanzines, and it will be couched in strong and scathing language. It will be written by a fan seething with sarcastic indignation, and will take the form of an*



announcement that this fan is leaving fandom because he has "grown up".

Now this matter of dropping out of fandom is neither unusual nor reprehensible. Tastes and habits do change, and personal circumstances frequently arise which make active participation in a hobby unfeasible. Every year, certain fans quietly take their leave, while new fans arrive and pitch their tents on the sites vacated by the silently departing Arabs.

But the person who will write the article I have in mind is neither silent nor Arabian. He is bound and determined that his passing marks the world's end, and he intends to make sure that the ending comes with a big bang and a loud whimper.

He isn't content to go his way in peace. He must first compose a personal manifesto, to the effect that he has seen the Error of his Ways and is Repenting. With a truly religious fervor, he will infer that fandom is made up of Miserable Sinners: that its interests and occupations are callow, shallow, juvenile, imbecile. He will cite chapter and verse in an effort to bolster up his case; he will piously lament that "presumably intelligent people" still "waste their time" editing or contributing to 'fanzines, reading science-fiction, attending meetings or conventions. He will urge them to awake to Reality and the Big World Outside, and generously offer them a glimpse of his mature outlook in contrast to the petty preoccupations of fandom.

Often he will "confess" his errors in precisely the same manner as an ex-Communist will upon embracing Democracy - or, for that matter, like a practicing Communist who recants a now outmoded "party line" of ideology.

Big deal.

Now I'm in no position to state just how many people have been influenced in the past by such dramatic denunciations and departures. I suspect very few fans have actually abandoned their hobby because of the urgings of the disaffected.

But since it's obvious enough that we don't live in a world of utter black-and-white values, sometimes the remarks of a departing fan do call our attention to a bit of tattle-tale gray in the field. And it's possible that many of us, in our more sober and reflective moments, allow a few doubts to creep in concerning the values and benefits of fandom as a hobby.

We listen to the criticism and reflect that some of it seems to have a basis in truth. There are some offbeat characters in fandom (present company not necessarily excepted). There have been some regrettable incidents and irregularities. Petty feuds are not unknown. Some fans are fanatic and seemingly harbor delusions of grandeur concerning the importance of the field and/or their position in it - - witness a fan over in Northern Ireland who actually thinks he is Walt Willis himself!

And certainly, as a self-constituted minority group, fans are constantly subject to external pressure and ridicule from the self-constituted majority groups who insist their hobbies are more important because more people share them. This "mathematical proof" reasoning may or may not echo in our psyches when doubt creeps in.

But before we bow to the dictates of the majority, and of the article-writer who has made this Great Discovery that fandom is only a trivial hobby, perhaps we ought to consider a few of the benefits accruing to fan-activity.

Elsewhere I have had occasion to dwell at length (and rent-free, too!) on the notion that science fiction fandom is a valuable source of contact in making friends. No need to sharpen the point; most of us who have spent time in the field continue to do so because we have made friends. We enjoy sharing our hobby, our interests, and even our social life with people of similar congenial tastes. The delight of communication, on an international basis, is available to the fan editor, contributor or correspondent.

But such an argument, of course won't satisfy the disenchanting critic. He will continue to insist, in effect, that fandom is merely a glorified waste of time. He won't listen to sentimental opinions. He wants facts and figures.

So be it.

Exactly what material benefit can a fan derive from his participation in fandom?

Let's look at the record.

If you harbor any ambition to become a writer, illustrator, editor or publisher, there is no easier avenue of approach to your goal than the field of science-fiction fandom.

Since the day when teen-age fan Charles D. Hornig was plucked directly from fannish ranks and plunked into the editorial seat of a professional science-fiction magazine, these "success stories" abound.

Without any pretense of being comprehensive or all-inclusive in my listing, allow me to offer a few examples that come readily to mind.

Amongst writers, we find the names of James E. Blish, who hectographed (in a manner to bring howls of horror from today's conscientious editors) a crude little fanzine when in his early teens. We can list young Foul Anderson, juvenile Henry Kuttner - - who used to write letters to WEIRD TALES - - and a kid named Damon Knight. Let's not forget little Freddie Pohl, or a gal named Judy Zissman, who now writes under the name of Judith Merril. And then there's Fritz Leiber, Joe Gibson, and Cyril Kombluth, and a brash young punk, who used to hang around the LASF, whose



Bloch as a monster



Bloch being framed reading crap

name was Bradbury. Artists like Hannes Bok and Virgil Finlay were fans long before they began their professional careers. Forrest Ackerman, Julius Schwartz, Oscar J. Friend are remembered as fans in the days when they couldn't possibly hope to become agents, since they were unable to figure out 10 % of any given amount.

A writer like Wilson Tucker, with a dozen books to his credit, is still better-known today as Bob Tucker in fannish circles. And there are a host of transitional figures - fans who are currently establishing themselves as professional writers with mounting sales. A few easily brought to awareness in this connection: Jim Harmon, Bob Silverberg, Vernon L. McCain, Dean A. Grennell, Dave Mason, Marion Zimmer Bradley, the immortal Lou Tabakow, and Harlan Ellison - who has also written under a pen name.

Editors? Robert W. Lowndes and Donald Wollheim were prominent early fans. Larry Shaw, Donald A. Wollheim, Raymond A. Palmer, Beatrice Mahaffey, Sam Moskowitz, Jerry Bixby and (let's face it, shall we?) Bill Hamling. All of them cut their eye-teeth on fanactivity.

Fantasy and science-fiction publishers? Lloyd Eshbach, Melvin Korshak, Martin Greenberg - publishing the works of such fans-turned-pro as E. E. Evans, Basil Wells, Frank Robinson. The name of Ted Dikty comes to mind here, as does that of Judy May Dikty. And then there's Oliver Saari, Earl Kemp, Chad Oliver, Les Cole, Lester del Rey; and just about everybody in England seems to turn up sooner or later in their magazines. Willis, Shaw, Harris, Bulmer, Tubb, Campbell, Turner - right on down the line, they go from fanactivity to writing and editing and illustrating and publishing in natural sequence and progression.

And if we extend our concept of fanactivity to include avid and continuous readers in the medium, we'll have to let just about every other "big name" in the field into our category. Almost without exception, they've been readers from 'way back; and if they live, or lived, in metropolitan areas they were regular attendees at fan club meetings and conventions too.



Bloch with awful  
head injury

No doubt about it: there are benefits to be found in this hobby of ours, and material benefits at that. Of course, there is no pretense made that one can necessarily make a fortune in the field, but on the other hand, how much cash does the average baseball fan or wrestling devotee ever derive from pursuing his hobby? And where is the Arthur C. Clarke of the bowling world - a field in which one cannot even hope to make pin-money?

It is difficult to name a single established writer, editor or regular contributor to the professional science fiction magazines who has not done his or her share of "fanning" at one time or another - and derived benefits therefrom. Possibly the sole exception is our good friend "Doc" Smith. He was not a fan when he was young, because there were no fanzines in those days - printing hadn't been invented yet. But you probably know he makes up for that lack today, and is a devoted convention attendee.

So much for the record. In itself it offers eloquent rebuttal to the claims that science-fiction fandom offers nothing of material value to the hobbyist. And as for other, more important values, you can answer that question for yourself.

It goes without saying that not every fan is going to establish a career as a professional - - nor, in the majority of instances, is such a goal even contemplated. But the opportunity is there. And so is the pleasure and reward of participation for its own sake.

But if fandom didn't make you an author, artist or editor - I Sweden becoming a translator is the most common - our illustrious circle could rise you even higher: you could become a BNF! Bloch discussed it in his *Imagination* column of #8 1957:

For many years now, I've been mounting my soap-box at meetings, at conventions, in the pages of fanzines and even in prozines, to proclaim one simple statement - "Fans are people." Certainly this isn't a very profound observation, and it shouldn't be too difficult to understand. As a matter of fact, a portion of the general public has gradually come to accept the truth of this observation. Formerly, outsiders usually pointed the finger of scorn at fans with the observation, "Dig that crazy mixed-up kid," or even, "Dig that crazy mixed-up adult".

But the phrase is passe, and so is the thought behind it. Despite the attitude of a die-hard minority, it's easy to observe that most people are becoming increasingly tolerant of fandom as a hobby and are willing to consider fans as individuals.

Surprisingly enough, the greatest resistance to this seems to come from the ranks of sf fans themselves. I reach this conclusion recently, but the evidence is unmistakably apparent in the pages of all too many fanzines these days. It is most marked whenever fans have occasion to refer to BNFs.

Just what is a BNF? According to the learned authority Tucker, in his NEO-FAN'S GUIDE:

"The Big Name Fan, the person who is well-known and who has made a solid reputation for himself. This is usually accomplished by participating in fannish affairs for a long while, or by publishing a superior fanzine, or by consistently writing or illustrating in a manner identified with quality, or by any number of ways which keeps your name before fandom in a responsible manner. The term BNF has to be earned, it can never be appropriated or purchased, nor conferred upon yourself or your friends."

In other words, a BNF attains his or her status through performance.

*That is how we judge human beings - by their performance. Actions speak louder than words.*

*At least, almost everywhere except, apparently, in fandom. All too many fans, when considering this BNF matter, seem to forget the definition cited above. They seem to forget the performance factor. And that's why I hold that they are not judging their fellow-fans as people.*

*Now it is not my intention to imply that the term BNF is possessed of any signal merit in itself; it is not the equivalent of a knighthood, an honorary Ph.D from a College of Mortuary Science, or a membership in the World's Most Exclusive After-Shaving Club. To be known as a BNF is not quite on a par with becoming a Thirty-Second-Degree Mason, a Grand Imperial Dragon of the KuKluxKlan, or Chairman of the Board in a lumber factory. BNF is a complimentary term in our little sewing circle, yes, but it means nothing except to a few other sew-and-sews.*

*I don't think it is a Sacred Honor. and I don't believe it should be jealously guarded, reserved for only a Select Few, and awarded on the basis of a three hour examination (written) for males and a three hour examination (physical) for females.*

*But I do think fandom is inclined to kick around the term until it is in danger of losing even a modicum of meaning; and this simply because fans aren't willing to evaluate other fans as people. And to gauge them, as people, on the basis of their actual performance.*

*Pick up a fanzine, almost any fanzine, and see how many references are made to BNFs. The woods, apparently, are full of them, and so is the woodwork. A few issues of a fanzine, a half-dozen articles in the fanzines of other editors, and a fair number of letters circulated amongst prozine outlets or private correspondents seems to qualify an individual, in the minds of far too many fans, as a genuine BNF. Even though the individual in question may put out a run-of-the-mill 'zine; his "articles" may consist merely of reviewing other fanzines or gripes against prozines; and his correspondence more distinguished by invective rather than invention. Indeed, quality and quantity alike seem to be minor factors - what seems to matter is just how loudly, and emphatically the fan states his adverse critical opinions.*

*As a result, we have self-styled and seemingly accepted BNFs who earn their apparent status merely by participating in feuds; we have BNFs whose choice of language and statement of opinion offer no value but shock-value: we have BNFs who have presumably arrived at this distinction merely by using a reverse-switch on the old "guilt-by-association" idea and associating themselves and their activities only with other BNFs.*

*But the criterion of worth, I respectfully submit, is in the value of services rendered. Value, not volume.*

*And once we re-appraise the BNFs in terms of value, in terms of actual performance and contributions to the fan-field, the ranks diminish quickly. It's very easy to separate the men from the boys.*

*Now let me hasten to add one thing: that "men from the boys" phrase is figurative and not literal. Nor does mere seniority mean anything in fandom; it's not necessarily length of time spent in the field that counts.*

*In my own personal estimate, people like Lee Hoffman, Dean Grennell, Walt Willis and Shelby Vick became BNFs in only a year or so of fanning, because of the tangible contributions they made to the field. Whereas it is possible (if not exactly polite) to name a good many people who have "been around" fandom for a half-dozen years or even longer, and who show no signs of ever being capable of attaining BNF status.*

*Now just what "tangible contributions" make a BNF? According to the broad terms of the Tucker definition almost all fanactivity will enable an individual to qualify - if this activity is identifiable with "quality" and keeps your name before fandom "in a responsible manner."<*

*Within the broad confines of the field, almost anyone can write, anyone can illustrate, anyone can publish, anyone can correspond, anyone can form a club or hold a so-called "convention" or start a so-called "movement." But when we consider*

*the matter of quality and the degree of responsibility we can make a sound judgment.*

*It's not my purpose here to attempt to make a listing of all those who - in my opinion - are rightfully entitled to the designation of BNF. But I would, perhaps, help to illustrate the basic premise by citing a few examples.*

*In my own opinion, then, I'd classify as BNFs all those who have made an effort to provide fandom with a written record - historical or definitive; who have attempted to give fandom a frame of reference and a sense of continuity. In this category one brings to mind Sam Moskowitz and his IMMORTAL STORM, Jack Speer and the FANCYCLOPEDIA, the aforementioned Bob Tucker with his NEO-FAN'S GUIDE and*



his FAN-SURVEY; also Don Day and his INDEX and (on a slightly more professional eye) Messrs. Dikty and Bleiler with their compendium. If the people mentioned above had done absolutely nothing else within the field, these signal contributions would be enough to stamp them as true BNFs - even if they never once came out in the pages of THE CRUDZINE QUARTERLY with a Fearless Letter pillorying Palmer, hamstringing Hamling, goading Gold or crucifying Campbell.

Similarly, I'd grant BNF status to everyone who has ever been a prime mover in putting on a successful regional or national Convention. It's not necessarily the Chairmen I'm thinking of, either, but the real workers - whether or not they happen to hold titles. Often times they aren't active in the editing-publishing aspect of fandom, but their contribution to the field as a whole is a major one. Dr. C. L. Barrett is, of course, a name that comes instantly to mind. Doc is certainly a BNF, although he has never put out a single copy of a 100-page Annish.

I'd also classify as BNFs those who, through the years, have demonstrated willingness to perform services over and above the call of duty in connection with furthering the growth and development of the various APAs. I am not thinking so much about the people who get their kicks from quibbling over "constitutions" and interpretations of "bylaws" as I am about fans who have held office in such organizations and stimulated real activity on the part of the membership. The same would hold true for the fan clubs throughout the nation.

In the field of actual fan-publication, I defer to Mr Tucker with his reference to a "superior fanzine". Here again, quality and responsibility are the criteria; not quantity and volume. After a dozen years, people still remember (and, if they're fortunate enough to own copies, cherish) Laney's THE ACOLYTE: Lee Hoffman's QUANDRY was and is a distinctive effort: an all-too-infrequent SKYHOOK from Redd Boggs is still worth a hundred issues of {fill in your own choice, who needs trouble!}. That is not to say that it's impossible to make a valid contribution with frequent issues: certainly the award-winning FANTASY-TIMES offers ample demonstration to the contrary.

The same, I think, holds true in the matter of writing for fanzines. Bob Silverberg's famous piece of a few years back which resulted in the still-disputed birth of a still disputed Seventh Fandom is a case in point: there had been nothing to equal its effects since Dr. Frankenstein created his monster. Consistently good writing - serious or facetious, sf-oriented or devoted to other interests - can make a BNF. Take a look at Harry Warner, or Dean Grennell, or the work of many contributors to 'zines such as INSIDE, PSYCHOTIC, or OOPSLA for further evidence.

But in this connection, let me once again emphasize the fact that fanzines, while they are a fairly accurate mirror, lack the scope to reflect the entire aspect of fandom. It is possible (as in the case of Dr. Barrett) to become a BNF without ever editing, publishing, or writing for a fan magazine. I stress this merely because it is in the pages of fanzines that one generally comes across the distorted notions of what constitutes BNF status.

Let me repeat, at the risk of reiterated redundancy (to say nothing of alarming alliteration) you don't get to be a genuine BNF just by spreading your name around and getting people to know you. There's a lot of difference between mere notoriety and real recognition.



If name-noise alone could do the trick, then one of the outstanding BNFs of 1955-56 would be Joan Carr, the distinguished editress of FEMZINE. How quickly Joan Carr became a fake BNF! A fake in every sense of the word, because the distinguished editress is now an extinguished editress, upon revelation that "Joan Carr" was a hoax perpetrated by Sandy Sanderson. Indeed, Sanderson is one of the few who may be rightfully entitled to BNF status by virtue of a hoax alone - since that hoax so deftly demonstrates the difference between actual achievement by an actual person and false claims by a fakeroo.

In a sense, as I tried to say when I started out, all this is very unimportant. Since the term BNF carries with it no tangible reward and no actual prestige save in a very minor field, it can quite easily be dismissed as being of no consequence, no matter to whom it is applied.

But on the other hand, fandom does have a value as a cross-section of human relationships. Many a youngster has grown up ( and, let us hope, many more will grow up) in the field. The friendships they cultivate there, the

experiences they undergo, and the judgments about effort, worth and rewards they make as a result of what they find in fandom renders it important that we emphasize the difference between mere labels and actual performance. It is important, too, that we all realize that becoming a BNF is not the end-all or be-all of fanactivity. There are plenty of people around who don't necessarily want to become Big Wheels - they're quite happy merely to go along for a pleasant ride. As such, they're more than welcome, and their company is more appreciated; fandom is the kind of vehicle that moves better with a full load of passengers, and there's no need to expect that everyone must serve as conductor or engineer; sheer interest is ticket enough for the trip. Our only dispute is with those who claim a place in the engineer's cab without really helping 'to stoke the boiler - they blow a loud - whistle, but they don't get us anywhere; and I'd better drop the analogy right now before we end up on the wrong track.



I can see myself in Bloch and his column, because I too was a fandom columnist. Ca 1981-1989 I edited the fandom column of Sam J Lundwall's *Jules Verne Magasinet*, most of the time with Erik Andersson, known for translating Tolkien and Ulysses (and someone who I believe one day may fill a chair in the Swedish Academy, but don't mention JVM or Bamseballen!) Here Bloch tells us how he does his column and how a writer works, from *Imagination* #4, 1957:



*Some months ago, while, attending the New York Convention, I was approached by a number of fans. Some of them came up to me hoping that they would be snubbed and could complain about it in their fanzines. Some of them came to offer me criticism (most of which I managed to duck - actually, I only lost two teeth). But by far the greatest number came to inquire just how I review fanzines.*

*At least I think they asked me how, although the word might have been why.*

*Really, of course, reviewing fanzines is a simple matter. If it wasn't simple, I couldn't do it.*

*The general procedure runs something like this. Every morning I hitch up the trailer, drive down to the local post-office, and load up the day's crop of magazines. Upon arriving at my house, the fanzines are placed on the freight-elevator and taken to the second floor. Here a conveyor-belt runs them into my office, and a crew of workers sorts them according to size, shape, and general category of content.*

*After reading fanzines for a while, you'll notice that many of them easily fall into categories. Some of them easily fall into wastebaskets. (Actually I'm only kidding: I really have just two wastebaskets - one for fanzines containing material by John Berry, and a smaller one for fanzines which don't) .*

*But this business of categories is interesting. Time and again, I run across the same themes in articles and letters and review columns.*

*Like, for instance, the critical theory that the trouble with science fiction writing today is that the authors are being overpaid. There is a widespread notion on the part of many fans that the "sense of wonder" has vanished with the '1 cent word rate: a belief that if you put the average individual in a garret to starve he'll start moaning with hunger, but if you put the average writer there, he'll start to turn out a masterpiece.*

*Now I don't know how it is with the average individual, because I've never met any, but I do know something about the average writer. And what I know tells me that this particular fanzine fancy, which I've read time and time again, is spurious. In the interests of better understanding and harmony between fans and pros. I'd like to discuss the matter. I could bore you with a long essay on the subject. Instead, I'm going to bore you with a long editorial. Which is called: MCGUFFEY'S FIRST SCIENCE FICTION READER OH SEE THE FUNNY MAN! WHAT IS HIS NAME?*

*His name, dear children, is Roscoe Krochbinder. He is a writer of science fiction.*

*WHY DOES HE WEAR SUCH SHABBY CLOTHES?*

*Because he is a full time writer of science fiction. He does not pick up eating-money on the side as a movie projectionist, a television panelist, or a college instructor. He has no other source of income but writing.*

*CAN'T HE FIND HIMSELF A DECENT JOB?*

*Well, he tried to become a geek once. But the carnival boss told him he'd have to furnish his own chickens. Besides, he does not want another job. He just wants to write science fiction for a living.*

*WHAT IS THE FUNNY MAN DOING?*

*Right now he has come from a four-hour session of research at the Public Library, where he has been checking material for one of his stories. He is hungry, so he is going into that restaurant to eat.*

*WHY IS THE WAITER GIVING HIM SUCH A DIRTY LOOK?*

*Because he only left him a quarter tip. The waiter, a Mr Fleegle, generally averages about \$125 a week in tips.*

*IS HE A GOOD WAITER?*

*Well, you'll notice it took fifteen minutes for Roscoe Krochbinder to get waited on. And when he asked for rye toast he got whole-wheat and when he asked for black coffee the waiter brought him coffee with cream in it. You might say he was a pretty average sort of waiter. Nobody complains when a waiter makes a few simple mistakes like that.*

*WHERE IS MR KROCHBINDER GOING NOW?*

*He is taking a bus back to his room to put in another four or five hours of actual writing.*

*WILL HIS STORY BE FINISHED THEN?*

*Probably not. He will write a first draft and then he will have to re-write it.*

*WHY DOESN'T HE SAVE TIME BY JUST WRITING THE SECOND DRAFT FIRST?*

*Ha ha, very funny. Just pay attention to the lesson, please.*

*LOOK AT MR KROCHBINDER TALKING TO THE BUS DRIVER. DOES HE KNOW HIM?*



Indeed he does. The bus-driver, a Mr Floogle, lives nearby. In a much nicer house, by the way. He drives the same bus on the same route at the same times every day. He likes to talk to people because most of the time he doesn't have much thinking to do on his job.

**WHY DID MR KROCHBINDER BUMP INTO THAT PASSENGER STANDING NEXT TO HIM IN THE BUS?**

Because Mr Knochbinder was thinking very hard. You see, he has to think hard about his stories in order to make sure that he can come up with some new ideas or twists in each one. That's part of his job.

**SEE HOW MAD THE OTHER PASSENGER IS!**

Well, kiddies, you can hardly blame him. His name is Mr Fliggle and he has just come from the factory where he is employed as a sweeper. He earns \$2.10 an hour for sweeping up - and with his time-and-a-half for overtime and his bonus, he makes about \$5200 a year. He likes the way the union protects him on his job, and he likes his two weeks' vacation with pay, and he likes the idea that the company shells out half of his Social Security and also gives him and his family free insurance. Also, if he gets laid off, he knows he will get Unemployment Compensation. But right now he is mad because he will not get another pay raise until the next round of automatic wage-increases after the steel strike.

**THAT IS VERY INTERESTING ABOUT THE AUTOMATIC WAGE-INCREASES. WILL MR KROCHBINDER GET AN AUTOMATIC INCREASE TOO?**

No, dear pupils. Mr Krochbinder is a free-lance writer. He has no fixed salary or income. He has no union or pressure-group to represent him. He gets no pay when he takes a vacation. He must pony up every cent of his Social Security, and make out the long form on his Income Tax return, and do all of his own withholding. Nobody pays for his insurance, and when he retires no company gives him a pension or a bonus. Moreover, there is no such thing as Unemployment Compensation in his life. And as for automatic wage-increases based on a cost-of-living index - hah! Unless he can sell his next story to one of the very few magazines paying top rates, he will send it to one of the other markets. And they will pay him exactly the same word-rate they were paying writers in 1930, in the depths of the depression! If, of course, he manages to sell his story at all.

**WHAT IS MR KROCHBINDER DOING NOW?**

Sad to say, youngsters, he is walking into the liquor store. Before going home to his room he wants to purchase a pint of rubbing alcohol to put on his sore tonsils.

**WHO IS THAT HANDSOME MAN WAITING ON HIM?**

That is Mr Fluggle, the proprietor of the liquor store. He is a neighbourhood Big Wheel and clears about \$20,000 profit a year.

**DOES HE MAKE THE LIQUOR HE SELLS IN HIS STORE?**

No, he just buys it from a wholesale house and sells it at retail prices.

**DOES HE HAVE TO WORK HARD TO SELL IT?**

See how Mr Krochbinder grabs at that bottle? No, dear students, his customers rush in and take it away from him.

**DID HE HAVE TO STUDY TO LEARN HOW TO RUN A LIQUOR STORE?**

No, he just buys it from a wholesale house and sells it at retail prices.

**DOES HE HAVE TO WORK HARD TO SELL IT?**

See how Mr Krochbinder grabs at that bottle? No, dear students, his customers rush in and take it away from him.

**DID HE HAVE TO STUDY TO LEARN HOW TO RUN A LIQUOR STORE?**

Certainly not: he never got beyond eighth grade. An accountant handles his books, a stenographer writes his letters, a lawyer handles his business arrangements, the wholesale liquor salesmen provide him with advertising matter and even set up his merchandise for him.

**DID MR KROCHBINDER HAVE TO STUDY TO LEARN HOW TO WRITE?**

Oh, a little. After he completed his education, he must have ploughed through hundreds of thousands of words before he acquired sufficient skill to sell his stories on a regular basis. He is still learning about writing, and he has to keep up with all sorts of things in order to find material for his yarns. '

**AND WHAT DID YOU SAY MR KROCHBINDER EARNS A YEAR?**

I didn't say. Nosey. But if you must know, last year his total income - - after expenses for supplies and



deduction of his agent's commission - . was \$4,361.

NOT TOO GOOD, WAS IT?

Not too bad, either. Did you know that the over-all average income for writers in this country during the same period was only a little over \$3300 for the year, according to an exhaustive survey? And this average includes the earnings of the few big-money men as well as thousands who earned less. OH WELL, MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING, IS IT?

That is so right, kiddies. And that is the lesson I want you all to take away from this little exercise. Mr



Bloch plays murder victim,  
Gauer looks on, Alice Bedard with gun

Krochbinder isn't writing just in hopes of getting rich. He is writing because he actually feels that this sort-of work offers him the best outlet for creative satisfaction.

DON'T YOU THINK THESE PEOPLE SORT OP HAVE A SNEAKING ENVY OP MR KROCHBINDER, EVEN IP THEY MAKE MORE MONEY AT THEIR OWN JOBS?

Well, children, that's a peculiar thing. It so happens that every one of these other men has read some of Mr Krochbinder's stories at one time or another. I mean, Mr Fleegle the sloppy waiter - and Mr Ploogle who can drive his bus in his sleep - and Mr Pliggle who just sweeps up all day - and Mr Pluggle who holds out a bottle and takes a profit for wrapping it up. They have read Mr Krochbinder's stories.

DO THEY LIKE MR KROCHBINDER'S WORK?

More or less. But, you know something? Every one of them has the same complaint. They think Mr Krochbinder makes too much money.

TOO MUCH MONEY?

That's right. They figure if he only made less, then every story he turned out would be a masterpiece.

BUT IF THESE OTHER PEOPLE DON'T DO SUCH WONDERFUL WORK EVERY DAY ON THBIR JOBS, HOW CAN THEY EXPECT THAT EVERYTHING MR KROCHBINDER WRITES SHOULD BE EXCEPTIONAL?

Because Mr Krochbinder is a writer, and writers are supposed to be geniuses.

I DON'T THINK MR KROCHBINDER IS A GENIUS. I THINK HE IS A DAMNED FOOL.

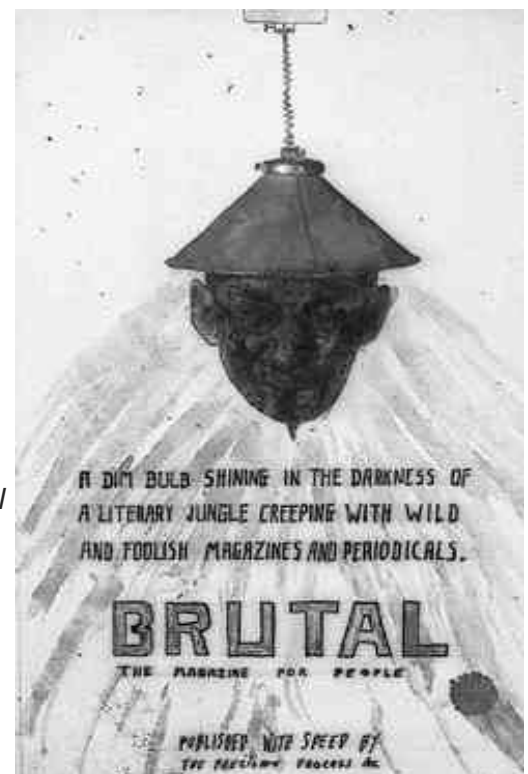
No comment.

S O THERE YOU HAVE IT.

You may think Mr Krochbinder is a damned fool, too, and realize that if he doesn't like his way of earning a living he is always welcome to change. But that is not the point in dispute: the dispute revolves around the twin notions that poverty somehow stimulates the production of superior material and that it is the duty of every writer to turn out a consistent flow of exceptional, original work.

In actual practice, poverty forces writers to resort to frantic hackwork, hastily slapped out to bolster a sagging income. Few writers in any way directly dependant upon literary efforts for an income can afford the time and effort necessary to produce masterpieces. The higher the rates, the better the over-all output. This is a fact which no writers, and few editors, ever dispute. And by what method of critical divination some fans have arrived at their conclusions it is difficult to determine. Perhaps they are thinking of a few exceptions which seem to prove the rule . - Edgar Allan Poe, for example, or H. P. Lovecraft. But even here, it is possible to trace Poe's writing and ascribe the best of it to the periods when he was enjoying comparative prosperity: for example, the times when he was earning |100 a week (a princely salary in the 1840's) as an editc '. And Lovecraft's income from his stories was supplemented by a combination of scant private resources plus years of outright hacking and ghostwriting which undoubtedly prevented him from doing far better in his own fictional efforts.

So here is one of the standard themes running through fanzines which I submit is best abandoned, if fans themselves are really interested in better prozine yarns.



Cover of Bloch/Gauer's mag BRUTAL

Our reader Dave Truesdale provided some interesting blochiana. Here are obituaries on M McComas, L Brackett and EF Russell from the Starlog SF Yearbook 1979, edited by Truesdale and David Gerrold: <https://tangentonline.com/columns/articles/robert-bloch-appreciations-of-mccomas-russell-a-brackett/> And here are rare episodes of the mid-1940s radio show *Stay Tunes for Terror*

that Bloch wrote: <https://tangentonline.com/oldtimeradio/stay-tuned-for-terror-lizzie-borden-took-an-axe-the-bogy-man-will-get-you-by-robert-bloch/>

Radio was king of the ether until TV took over in the 1950s. There are a lot of Old Time Radio shows to download. Google OTR and eg "X Minus One", "Dimension X", "Superman" and more. Try Orson Welles "Mercury Theatre on the Air" too, but beware of Martians!

Enough Bloch for today, as if you could get enough Robert Bloch! Try <https://www.robertbloch.net/>. In fanzine repositories like efanzone.com and fanac.org you find old fanzines, many with a Bloch piece, and it's worth checking his superb books!

In today's sad remains of what was once fandom nobody knows what a BNF is and the prozines are near extinction, in favour of movies made by computers from scripts written by 7-year olds, showing silly figures in colourful costumes. The overlong books are full of babbling internal monologues and unnecessary subplots to fill 6-700 pages, not seldom about how "minorities"

are oppressed by awful western market economy. The the resourceful spaceman who boldly went where no man had gone before is forgotten. Technological progress is suspicious and just "toxic masculinity". Humanity can't expand and grow because we'll just destroy Mars' environment - though it's just dust and rocks. (That some seem apologetic towards - or won't mention - murders of 1400 Israeli civilians is telling.) We get poisoned by sneaking con bureaucracy that muffles free speech so all may feel "comfortable" in a cushioned world. Bye-bye to challenging thoughts! No one dares to think independently.

Weren't all our yesterdays better! Where has fandom's humour gone? The letterhacks that managed more than 240 characters? The entertaining, myths, legends and hoaxes? Where are the witty writers, the new Robert Blochs and the ackermanese punsters? Is there a new Willis in waiting giving us *The Enchanted Blog* – oh, I forgot, today's fakefen don't even know *real* blog! Stories today tend to be dragons and daggers quests praising the dark medieval ages – at least, there are swords and castles and princes. Movies are today almost 90% computer generated and about infantile heroes climbing walls like spiders squirting nets or thinking they are bats. It's as interesting as watching chess in slow motion. Movies were better when Hitch and Bloch did them. Today's Kobold squad correctly identify itself as "nerds" (in the original sense) and march in embarrassing public spectacles. On media events they stand in line to get Harry Potter's autograph from a B actor – as if this HP had ever existed – for 20 bucks. It's Gosh Wow Boy-oh-boy all over again. What some today unhistorically call "fandom" is about uncritical worship and copying, imitating and not creating. They copy fiction and call it fanfiction. (Original fanfiction was something else!) They copy clothes of comics figures. And copy USS Entershit in plastic and scale 1:100. Fandom as we knew it is near death. It has difficulty getting fresh air and the pulse is low.

That's why I think it's important to chronicle the glory that was, so it may be remembered, perhaps inspire to do better, tales about more fannish days when the chosen filk knew how to handle their stencils, down their bheer - *Ned Med Øled!* - and staple their fanzines. In the heavens the atomic rocket RS R A Heinlein accelerate on its way to Mars carrying blueprints for a colony designed by Arthur C Clarke, to be built by Asimov's robot. The Good Doctor IA now rules the Ais. Those were the days, my friend...

## Mailing Comments

*Mailing comments to first N'APA and then EAPA.*

**N'APA Official Organ:** I read that N3F "members who are not paying dues", won't be welcome, apparently a new decision. If so, I'm afraid I have to leave N'APA, which then may begin to shrink



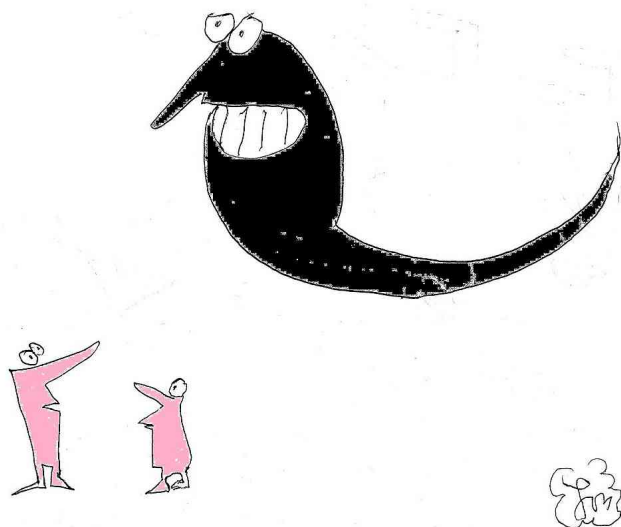
again which may not be what all want. I became what was called an "associate" neffer, excluding any voting rights or printed material - which means it only costs N3F a few quadrillion electrons. I don't even have any payment system for non-domestic transfers of any dues. But if I'm out, at least it was with a splash! Two regular *Intermissions* - since my schedule is monthly, while N'APA is bimonthly - plus a special issue, since the Bloch story in #138.5 was too long. Maybe some just thinks its tiring to get way to much to read... (A tip: skim and skip. Just eyetrack over the pages and stop here and there when something looks interesting.)

**Jefferson Swycaffer:** While animals can't take ordinary IQ tests, of course, others methods can be used to get a rough idea. Labyrinths, showing things to get response, setting up practical problems to reach food, etc. // The Gernsback essay on writing scientific stories was genuine, attributed to him, but we can't rule out that some of his editors wrote and he put his name under it - that happens with a major publisher having many sub-ordinate editors. (Gernsback was a major publisher with scores of magazines and other publications.) // A local con "had to disciple - and eject - a serial groper". But that doesn't require a CoC, just the law of the land. Here's a CoC attacking Free speech: "Dave Truesdale being expelled from Worldcon for expressing non-PC thoughts"

<https://www.battleswarmblog.com/?p=28316>. There are more examples. Particularly silly, in fact a major brain hemorrhage, was how Chicon made a public excuse for having a program item named "The Fannish Inquisition" because, they lectured us, it reminds us of the Spanish Inquisition 500+ years ago, which an untold number of people have nightmares about and feel "uncomfortable" with. It's even more ridiculous than the original Monty Python sketch. Such figures have no humour, and humourless people are dangerous. // We must err on the side of caution regarding free speech: if any doubt don't try to censor or ban! Intellectual development and meaningful communication requires candor and messages with edges. It's when you are moved by what is said, not in a zone of "comfort", you begin to think. Draping things in cotton is for the imbecile who is standing still. It is the legacy of science fiction to provoke and bring thoughts beyond any borders.

**George Phillies:** I'm against any ban on using other persons' work for training AIs. That's just equivalent to let AIs be inspired by the work by others. But you shouldn't be allowed to let finished AI work come too close to the work by others, using the same characters, backgrounds etc. // Some VHS tapes are now high-priced on Ebay, trashy B-movies you once ranted at the local gas station. They are getting very rare and have a cult following!

**Mark Nelson:** AFAIK that the Swedish constitution to be changed needs two parliament votes with an election in between has been in force since the previous 1809 constitution. There is almost always a small "pending" change in every election, usually a minor adjustment. // I have a problems with some "h..., r..., s...language is not acceptable", major problems! 1) What that would be banned is very, very loosely defined, so it becomes a rubber rule. I have for instance never heard a definition of what "sexist" is, that isn't what my university professor in linguistics defined as a "persuasive definition". 2) It may be applied to argumentative expressions and thus stops necessary, free debate. 3) Generally, I think groups should only be "protected" under exceptional circumstances. For instance, saying "all Newyorkers are assholes" must be protected under freedom of speech. (Sorry NY guys! Only an example.) 4) If something is legal to say it's unacceptable to invent private "laws" to ban it. 5) Generally, bans on expressions should only apply if inciting others to violence and similar aggressive actions. "I think all Newyorkers are ugly and stupid" must be protected to say, while "Come on, grab your gun and go out and shoot Newyorkers!" should



*"He overinked his mimeo, and then he happened to get stuck under its roller..." Art by Lars LON Olsson.*

be banned. Expressions and speech must be allowed to have edges and cause feelings of "discomfort" - just not concrete damage. (Feelings are not concrete.) // Anyway, science fiction in the modern sense came with Gernsback and the early pulps.// Is "pirk" used in English? "Pirking" is ice-fishing, ie fishing through a drilled hole in the ice. In my youth I tried some pirking in Lapland, not getting any fish... // Many Scandinavian words, over a thousand I believe, came into English with the Vikings. // Here's a newbie guide to the sport of orienteering, in English:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26Zc5AVkFis> Not a sport I follow, but be warned I may dip into skiing a bit this winter (depending on that my favourites race well). // As for the word "fandom" I think that sf fandom was the first to use it consistently and often, while in baseball it was only used rarely. // "Skip" isn't used in Swedish except as a newly borrowed English word, so it's interesting it's Scandinavian originally...// As for minerals you forget the elements Yttrium, Erbium, Terbium and Ytterbium, which are from a mine near Ytt-Erb-y...Ytterby north of Stockholm, where those elements first were found!

**Jefferson Swycaffer:** It's true that fanish fandom is old. It began already in the 1930s when fans began mocking religion by inventing new gods and debating if magazines should be bound by chewing gum. // No, I really mean that fanzines should lead fandom, carry fandom! Fandom is or should at least be a text-based thing: it's written fiction, it's written fanzines, once it was letterhacks and LoCs. Though I realise that fanzines, writing and text has been shrinking, I still say that text and the written word, must be at the core of fandom. We should rally fan to do more fanzines! // I have studied Swedish immaterial laws a bit. (No need to go to the EU. Local laws are here obliged to reflect the general EU principles.) I think I already mentioned that the Swedish word for "copyright" is "upphovsrätt", ie "origin-right".// I see it as illegitimate and discrimination to "include" away some because they aren't a politically correct "minority". "Affirmative" action is wrong. You punish innocents for perceived wrongs by others, usually a long time back in history. The scum on Earth - middle-aged white men – are "diversified" away, they get a small fraction of prize nominations and you can be sure they DON'T get to publish as much as they deserve. A mediocre manuscript by a female will be judged more positive than a much better one by those "scums". The magazine rejection rates have been studied, showing that manuscripts by male writers get a substantially more rejections. // Putin cling to power because he has the security apparatus, the police, agencies projecting power, media etc in his hands. But that grip may begin to slip if he meets enough of failures - let's hope for that. The Ukrainian's try to impose as much casualties on the Russian army as possible to that end, that rather than foolhardy offensive rushes into minefields. // Paludan and others burn religious books as provocations, to get Muslims to over-react. In that he seems successful. (I won't go into immigration generally. It's too complicated.)

**Heath Row:** Thanks for your film tips! // I think I was quite clear about book burning: don't ban it, but don't do it. Formal bans on expressions should be avoided, but you can still abstain from certain expressions.// No, I don't know about longer biographies on Hugo G. // What about the Cult and scientology? Tell us more! // To EAPA. Well, back in the middle ages the royal families were often not very far from gangs. It was clans or families in a power struggle, attacking and killing each other. That was a reason the position as king became hereditary. That way the successor was known and there was no point of fighting over it. // Without having an exact count, I think I have maybe 10-15 short stories written in och translated to English, and that includes several not-so-serious, "funny" stories I distribute for Xmas/New Year. Anyway, I think I'm capable to ,translate my stories myself, if needed... // I have actually a couple of times submitted stories to US sf mags, but been rejected, of course. I think the competition is rather intense.

**Kevin Trainor:** But the US spends a lot on the Mexican border already. Compared to the total US military budget support to Ukraine is very tiny, and causes major destruction of the military capacity of a possible adversary at an incredibly cheap price! Something like half a percent of the US military budget, has destroyed half of Russia's military! They've lost 300 000+ soldiers, 5 000+ tanks, 700 aircraft, half the Black Sea fleet...and it has costed the US peanuts! // Vance's Demon Prince And Planet of Adventure novels are wonderful! I call that first rate space opera! // Don't say anything good about Campbell! Don't you know he was a "bloody fascist"... // CoCs "have too often been used to browbeat Wrongthinkers." My thinking too.

**Simon Lubell:** I tend to think the "characterisation" isn't as important. It's often meaningless internal

monologues. // "Minorities" getting extra perks is a problem, because it means that others who are innocent of any wrong doing are pushed aside and are discriminated. To use discrimination to fight perceived discrimination is simply wrong. // I agree about book burning. // We had Joe Haldeman guesting one of our cons. Met him and sat with him on a short writers' workshop, where he commented a story I had written, in English. We had to write and submit a short story in advance. His comments were rather helpful. // Interesting about Hawthorne. Should read him more. // About your fanzine title...perhaps you noted I recently wrote about the "real" Samizdats!

**Henry Grynsten:** The active gang members in Sweden is difficult to estimate. Many are more passive hang-arounds, but the "hard core" actively engaged in shootings can't be more than say 1000. // Yes, there are few original pages of Soviet Samizdat to be found. I googled around for it myself with few results. // Miniatures and games with them is interesting. I think some more adult types do it as an indirect way to "control the world". The model and the game becomes a substitution for the world, ie the full-sized version. Its the same with Meccano or Lego. You become the boss over machines and buildings. You play Monopoly, Risk and other games to feel as if you control a big company or a country. I've seen stories and material about artist Peter Dahl's fantasy world Caribani and can't understand why he spent decades and 10 000s of hours on it... I mean, I sometimes invent fantasy worlds when writing, but I spend a few dozen hours there, part time a month or two at most, otherwise I'd be bored. // As a kid I too built some plastic models (do you remember Airfix?) and together with cousin Jonas in the summers played around with small plastic soldiers. Later we would both instead sit at the dinner table in uncle'n'aunts Lapland cottage and draw airplanes, primarily WWI double-deckers that had more interesting shapes. // I'm getting tired of computer SFX. It allows you to do anything, but whrn anything is possible noting becomes interesting. Old-time SFX with models, travelling mats, camera tricks are much more attractive, even if they look less realistic. // Tiny Houses should be of special interest in Sweden, since we in the 1980 got the "Friggehut", named after the then housing minister Birgit Friggebo. That was small buildings of max 10 sqm - later 15 sqm - you could put up on your own land without planning permission! It has now been extended to "Attefall houses" - once more after the minister responsible - allowed to be up to 30 sqm, still without planning permission. A positive development. Politicians should meddle less in people's housing. There meddling and the slowness of handling planning permissions have significantly contributed to somewhat of a housing crisis over here.

**William McCabe:** Hope your fingers gets well! // Yes, mundane APAs were earlier and are still around. But as I understand it there's an important difference between fannish APAs and mundane: NAPA and UAPA don't collate publications into mailings for co-distribution. They just give you access to the addresses of the others and you mail your publication yourself. That fandom APAs began with co-distribution probably comes from that young fans - all were young then - were poor and co-distribution saves a lot of money. Mundane APAs tended to be for people being slightly better off, a typical middle-class hobby, who didn't need cost staving co-distribution. // TV license has been scrapped in Sweden. The semi-governmental SVT is paid directly over the state budget. The loopholes for avoiding the license fee became too many. // Yes, Lindbergh was only first over the Atlantic with a *solo* flight. Chaps Alcock and Brown were the first already in 1919 in a Vickers Wimpy WWI bomber. // We can't forget Ukraine and Russia's war. That'd be dangerous! Slava Ukraini, as it also says below in Cyrillic.

**Rogers Cadenhead:** Welcome back to the fanzine world. // I don't listen much to radio and think tennis is boring. (But be warned: I may in the winter babble a bit about cross-country skiing, which others think is boring...) I think space opera is more interesting than soap opera.

**Garth Spencer:** For me, fanzine fandom IS fannish fandom to a high degree! Unfortunately, fanzine fandom is on the way down...especially in Sweden. *Intermission* and *SF-Forum* are the only two fanzines done here today. There were times in the 1980s when we had 100 titles/year!

Time to sign off! We keep our fanzine blockade against Kremlin tight. Bloch are superb! Fanzines are superb! Ukraine is superb!

**Слава Україні!**

# FaiNZINE #2

WHEN YOU RUN OUT OF PAPERLIPS!

*PRESS  
TO COPY!*

The President's  
Incredible  
Machines!

Guess

the  
Mimeo!

WOODY ALLEN!

P O E T R Y





Welcome to #2 of the world's only (we think) AI generated fanzine! As AIs know zilch about mimeographs this issue will cover pre-mimeo office printing (not ordinary letterpress à la lead type). Editor Alsaac Alsimov, 123 000 Foundation Street, 4 567th Floor, Apt 89 000, TRANTOR. All in here AI generated, except snippets by humble co-editor A Ingholm, [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com) (other co-workers are names suggested by GhatGPT) If enough interest, why not a #3? AIs don't get tired. If you fear being turned into a paperclip prove you're better than AIs: do a human fanzine yourself instead! Fanzines must regain being science fiction fandom's backbone! Fandom is creative texts, fandom history, humour and myths=fanzines

## **Early office-copying machine of sorts, used by Thomas Jefferson:**

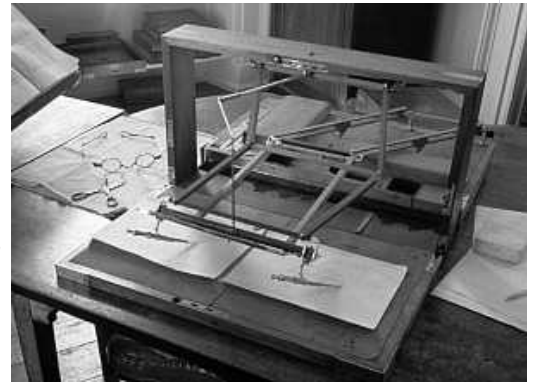
# **Thomas Jefferson and the Polygraph: Preserving Correspondence and Cultivating Friendship**

**By Buzz McRocket**

Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, left an indelible mark on American history not only as a statesman and politician but also as a prolific writer. His correspondence, filled with intellectual depth and eloquence, provides a valuable insight into the early years of the United States. Jefferson's innovative use of technology, particularly the polygraph handwriting copier, played a crucial role in preserving his extensive network of contacts and fostering his growing friendship with another former president, John Adams.

### **The Polygraph Handwriting Copier:**

In the early 19th century, before the advent of modern copying machines, Thomas Jefferson employed a device known as the polygraph to reproduce his handwritten letters. The polygraph, not to be confused with the lie detector device of the same name, was a mechanical apparatus designed for duplicating handwritten documents. Jefferson acquired this innovative tool in the early 1800s, recognizing its potential to streamline the process of letter-writing and document preservation.



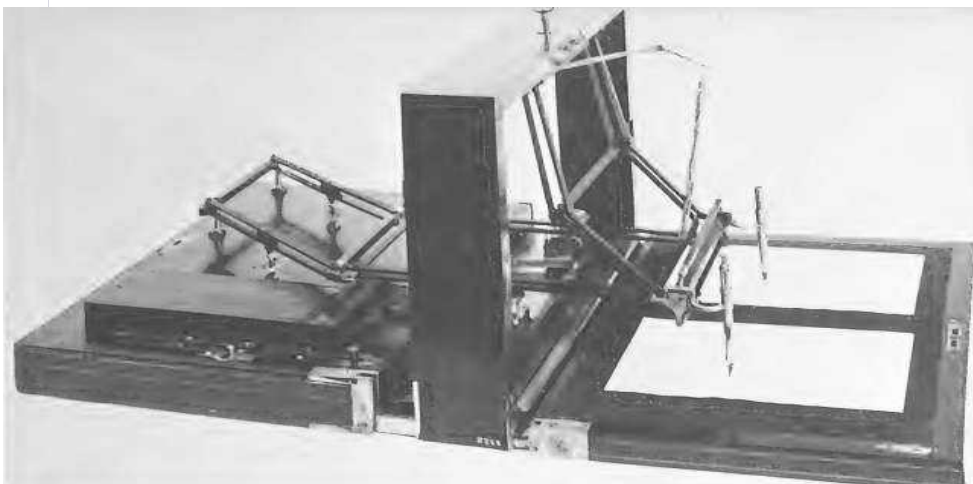
*Jefferson's polygraph. Handwriting was copied through connected rods.*

### **Jefferson's Extensive Correspondence**

Thomas Jefferson's correspondence was vast and diverse, spanning letters to fellow politicians, intellectuals, family members, and friends. His letters covered a wide array of topics, including politics, philosophy, agriculture, and science. The polygraph allowed him to create meticulous copies of his letters, enabling him to retain a record of his thoughts and ideas while sharing them with a broad audience.

### **Importance as a Writer**

Jefferson's importance as a writer cannot be overstated. His eloquence and intellectual prowess were instrumental in shaping the foundational documents of the United States, including the Declaration of Independence. Beyond his political contributions, Jefferson's letters and essays showcased his keen observations and philosophical reflections, making him a revered figure in American literature.



*Another picture of Jefferson's machine. One of them. He owned several.*

## Growing Friendship with John Adams

One of the most fascinating aspects of Thomas Jefferson's correspondence was his evolving friendship with John Adams, his political rival turned confidant. The relationship between these two Founding Fathers had experienced strains during the early years of American politics, but it gradually transformed into a deep and enduring friendship through their written exchanges.

The polygraph played a pivotal role in nurturing this friendship by allowing the seamless exchange of ideas and sentiments between the two former presidents. Despite their differing political views, Jefferson and Adams found common ground through their letters, discussing everything from personal matters to the state of the nation. Their correspondence is a testament to the power of civil discourse and the potential for reconciliation even in the face of political differences.

Thomas Jefferson's use of the polygraph handwriting copier not only facilitated the preservation of his extensive correspondence but also played a key role in fostering relationships with fellow statesmen. His letters, both private and public, remain a valuable resource for historians and scholars, offering a glimpse into the mind of one of America's most influential figures. The story of Jefferson's polygraph reflects not only his commitment to technological innovation but also the enduring power of written communication in shaping personal and political relationships.

*Note: At the time machines like these were called "polygraphs", a word we today use for "lie detectors". A more generic name today would be to call it a pantograph.*

## Letter copying presses:

## The Evolution of Letter Copying Press in the 17th to 18th Centuries

By Rocketina Zooms

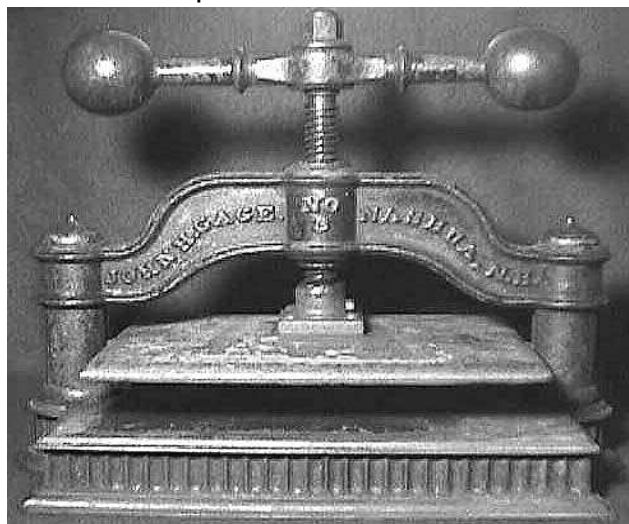
In the era before the digital age, the replication of handwritten documents posed a significant challenge. Entrepreneurs and inventors in the 17th to 18th centuries, recognizing the need for efficient duplication, pioneered the development of letter copying presses. Among these innovators was James Watt, renowned for his contributions to the steam engine. This article explores the fascinating history of letter copying presses during this transformative period.

### The Early Years

The origins of letter copying presses can be traced back to the mid-17th century, with the invention of the letter book or letter-copying book. Before the advent of specialized devices, individuals would manually transcribe letters into bound volumes using a specialized ink that could be transferred onto a blank sheet by pressure. While this method allowed for duplication, it was time-consuming and limited in efficiency.

### The Ancestor: Blotting Paper and Copying Presses

The first true letter copying press emerged in the early 18th century, combining blotting paper and a copying press. This rudimentary device utilized pressure to



Letter copying press. Ink was transferred to another sheet by pressure. Different tricks and methods were invented to ease copying but it always relied on pressure.

Paris 20th  
Monticello Sept. 17. 1796.  
I found of Def. 7, from Liberty, never got to my hands till the  
9<sup>th</sup> inst. about the same time I received the Enquirer in which  
Deane was so judiciously answered. The words of that paper  
showed that the matter of Deane consisted of facts, & of  
inferences from these facts: that he was not sufficiently informed  
to affirm or deny his facts, & he therefore examines his infor-  
-mation, and in a very modest manner shows that even were his  
-facts true, the reasonable inferences from them are very dif-  
-ferent from those drawn by Deane, but his facts are far from  
-truth and since he corrected, it happened that Mr Madison  
- & Genl Dearborn were here when I received your letter, & their  
- conversation with them took up Deane & sent him deliriously; & our  
- memories aided one another in correcting his bad & unauthori-  
-tized assertions. I shall note the most material of these in the  
- order of the paper. 1. it is greatly false that our ministers as  
- is said in a note, had proposed to surrender our claims to com-  
- -pensation for Spanish stipulations, or even for French. Their  
- instructions were to make no treaty in which Spanish stipulations were  
- not provided for, both and altho they were permitted to be silent as  
- to French stipulations carried into Spanish ports, they were not ex-  
- -posedly to abandon even them. 2. it is untrue that our minist-  
- -ters, in agreeing to establish the Colorado as our western boundary  
- had been obliged to assent to the authority of their instructions. altho  
- they considered our title good as far as the Rio Bravo ran in pro-  
- -portion to what they could obtain East of the Missouri, they were to  
- relinquish to the Mexicans, & successive royalties were made  
- out of which even the Colorado was not the least. 3. it is not true  
- that the Louisiana treaty, was antedated lest Great Britain should  
- consider our supplying her enemies with money as a breach of neu-  
- -trality. B. B. Burnell.

Copy of a letter by Jefferson produced with the polygraph.

transfer wet ink from the original letter onto a second sheet. However, the process had its drawbacks, as it often resulted in messy copies and was still relatively slow.

### **James Watt's Contribution**

One of the notable advancements in letter copying technology came in 1780, thanks to James Watt, primarily known for his groundbreaking work on the steam engine. Watt, with his keen understanding of mechanics, designed a more sophisticated letter copying press that improved upon earlier models. His press incorporated a rolling cylinder mechanism, which enhanced the uniformity and speed of the copying process.

Watt's invention featured a copper plate and a rolling cylinder covered with soft paper. The original letter, written with special ink, was placed on the copper plate, and the blank sheet was positioned on the rolling cylinder. As the cylinder rotated, it exerted even pressure on the letter, transferring the ink onto the blank sheet. This innovation marked a significant leap forward in the efficiency and clarity of letter duplication.

### **Impact on Communication and Business**



Watt's letter copying press revolutionized the way businesses, government offices, and individuals communicated. The ability to create legible and quick duplicates of important documents enhanced efficiency and record-keeping. As a result, the demand for such devices soared, and variations of copying presses became commonplace in offices across Europe and North America.

### **Legacy and Further Developments**

The success of James Watt's letter copying press set the stage for further innovations in the 19th century. The advent of carbon paper and the continuous refinement of mechanical copying devices eventually paved the way for the invention of the typewriter and, later, modern photocopiers.

The evolution of letter copying presses between the mid-17th century and the late 18th century reflects a fascinating chapter in the history of communication technology. James Watt's

contribution, in particular, stands as a testament to the ingenuity of inventors during this transformative period. These early copying presses not only facilitated the efficient duplication of

documents but also played a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of office technology, ultimately influencing the way information was disseminated and recorded.

*Our editor Dr Alsimov - a proud robot - struggling with a typewriter that doesn't look 100% right. But perhaps you need seven rows of keys on Trantor?*

## **From Patent to Proliferation:**

### **The Evolution of Carbon Paper in the 19th Century**

**By Sirius Bumblebee**

In the early 19th century, the world of written communication underwent a significant transformation with the invention of carbon paper. Patented by Ralph Wedgwood in 1806, this revolutionary technology promised users the ability to retain copies of outgoing letters, marking a crucial milestone in the history of office efficiency. This article explores the early history of carbon paper, its gradual acceptance, and its ultimate surge in popularity with the advent of typewriters in the 1870s.

**Ralph Wedgwood's Invention:**

In 1806, Ralph Wedgwood, a London-based stationer, received a patent for his creation: a thin paper coated with a mixture of carbon black and oil. This coated paper was designed to be placed between two sheets, with the pressure of writing or typing causing the carbon mixture to transfer to

the sheet beneath, creating a duplicate copy. Initially, this invention was primarily targeted at the business community, promising a convenient method for preserving important correspondence.

### **Early Challenges and Modest Use**

Despite its revolutionary potential, early carbon paper faced several challenges. The first iterations were messy, and when the original text was written with a pen, the copies were often unsatisfactory. Additionally, carbon copies were not initially considered admissible in court, limiting their legal utility. These factors contributed to modest use in the decades following the patent, as individuals and businesses were hesitant to fully embrace this new technology.

### **Evolution of Carbon Paper**

Over time, improvements were made to address the shortcomings of early carbon paper. Innovators began coating the paper on only one side, reducing messiness and improving the quality of the copies. This refinement marked a turning point in the acceptance and utilization of carbon paper.

### **The Rise of Typewriters**

The true breakthrough for carbon paper came in the 1870s with the widespread adoption of typewriters. As businesses and individuals embraced this transformative technology, the need for efficient document duplication became more pronounced. Carbon paper, with its ability to create multiple legible copies, seamlessly integrated into the typewriter era.

### **John Underwood & Co. and the Advertisement of 1886**

In 1886, advertisements for carbon paper, particularly those compatible with typewriters, began to gain prominence. Companies like John Underwood & Co. played a significant role in marketing carbon paper as an essential accessory for typewriters. The advertisements boasted the ability to make up to ten copies of a document with a single impression, emphasizing the time-saving and organizational benefits of the technology.

### **Legacy and Impact**

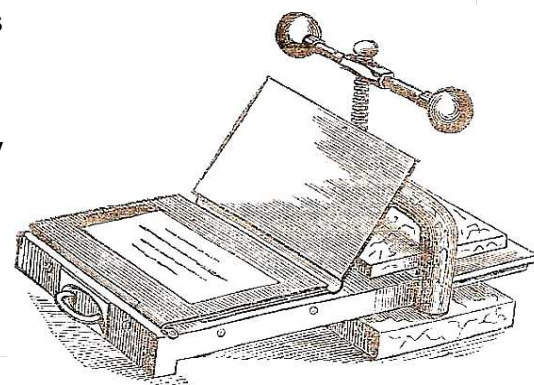
The widespread adoption of carbon paper, especially in combination with typewriters, revolutionized office communication and record-keeping. It facilitated a more organized and efficient workflow, allowing businesses to maintain accurate and accessible records of their correspondence. The legacy of carbon paper endures as a precursor to modern office technologies, paving the way for subsequent innovations in duplicating and copying methods.

From its modest beginnings in 1806 to its widespread use in the late 19th century, carbon paper played a crucial role in shaping the landscape of written communication. Ralph Wedgwood's invention, though initially met with skepticism, evolved over the decades to become an indispensable tool for businesses and individuals alike. The eventual synergy with typewriters marked a turning point, solidifying carbon paper as a cornerstone of office efficiency and paving the way for the document duplication methods we use today.

## **Eugeio de Zuccato's Pioneering Electro-Chemical Copying Technology**

**By Cosmo Whizbag**

In the ever-evolving landscape of document duplication, innovations often emerge from the minds of ingenious inventors. Among these pioneers stands Eugeio de Zuccato, an Italian residing in London, who devised a groundbreaking electro-chemical copying technology that brought a unique approach to the reproduction of written documents. This article delves into Zuccato's inventive processes, focusing on his two significant contributions: the electro-chemical copying-press and the Papyrograph.



*A papyrograph.*

## **The Electro-Chemical Copying-Press**

Eugeio de Zuccato's electro-chemical copying-press showcased an ingenious marriage of electricity and chemistry. In this innovative process, the bed and upper plate of a standard copying-press were fitted with wires connected to a small battery. The iron plate on the bed was coated with varnish, and letters were inscribed into this surface with a steel point. The exposed metal served as a conductor for an electric current.

To create copies, sheets of copying paper were saturated with an acid solution of prussiate of potash. These dampened sheets were then placed over the scratched plate and subjected to pressure in the copying-press. The electric current passed through the areas where the metal was exposed, causing a reaction between the prussiate solution and the iron. The result was the formation of Prussian blue characters corresponding to the inscribed letters on the plate. Zuccato's electro-chemical process offered a remarkable advantage - the potential for producing an almost unlimited number of copies. This groundbreaking technology demonstrated the convergence of electricity and chemistry in the field of document reproduction.

## **The Papyrograph**

Zuccato's Papyrograph process represented another leap forward in copying technology. It began with a sheet of lacquer-coated stencil paper, impervious to liquids. A clerk would write on this stencil with corrosive ink, creating porous areas where the liquid could pass through. However, this process had limitations - it was slow, messy, and incompatible with typewriters.

An improved version of the Papyrograph involved a horizontal sliding frame twice the width of a standard letter copying press's printing surface. The operator would position this frame to cover half of the printing surface and place an inked pad on the uncovered half. The prepared stencil was then laid face down on the inked pad, covered with a sheet of paper, and the entire assembly slid into the copying press. Upon lowering the press, a copy was made directly from the original writing. Despite its innovative nature, the Papyrograph process faced challenges. It was time-consuming, messy, and, notably, stencils could not be prepared using a typewriter, limiting its appeal in a rapidly modernizing world.

Eugeio de Zuccato's contributions to copying technology in the 19th century were undeniably innovative. His electro-chemical copying-press and the Papyrograph represented early attempts to blend electricity, chemistry, and mechanical processes for document replication. While the electro-chemical copying-press demonstrated the potential for mass reproduction, the Papyrograph, with its reliance on corrosive ink and manual preparation, reflected the challenges and limitations of early copying methods. Zuccato's inventive spirit paved the way for subsequent developments, ultimately leading to more streamlined and efficient technologies in the realm of document duplication.

***AI trying to be funny:***

## **Copy Catastrophe: A Tale of Office Hijinks**

It was a typical Tuesday morning at WackyWidgets Inc., and Bob Dunderhead, the perpetually befuddled office clerk, found himself in the throes of a copy machine conundrum that would make even the most seasoned slapstick comedians blush.

Bob, fueled by his morning coffee jitters, had an urgent memo to copy for the big boss, Mr. Whimsy. Clumsily loading the paper into the copier, Bob squinted at the buttons, which seemed to multiply in complexity every time he glanced away. In his confusion, he accidentally hit the "enlarge" button instead of "black and white."

Unbeknownst to Bob, a colleague, Lisa LeFunn, had placed her treasured family photo on the copier moments before for an innocent duplication. Bob's hasty press of the "enlarge" button turned Lisa's wallet-sized family portrait into a billboard-sized masterpiece.

As the copier hummed and whirred, Bob, with his newfound sense of accomplishment, proudly handed the enlarged memo to Mr. Whimsy. Little did he know that instead of a memo, Mr. Whimsy

was now holding a larger-than-life family portrait of Lisa and her bewildered-looking cat, Mr. Fluffington.

The office erupted in laughter as Mr. Whimsy stared at the colossal image, completely flabbergasted. Bob, the unwitting orchestrator of chaos, stood there with a self-satisfied grin, oblivious to the comedy he had just unleashed.

The story could have ended there, with Bob's reputation sinking faster than a lead balloon. However, the unexpected twist came when Mr. Whimsy, wiping tears of laughter from his eyes, declared it the best morale booster WackyWidgets Inc. had seen in years. Impressed by Bob's unintentional comedic genius, Mr. Whimsy decided to turn the enlarged family portrait into the office mascot, affectionately naming it "Giganto-LeFunn." Copies of Giganto-LeFunn adorned the office walls, and Bob became the accidental hero of WackyWidgets Inc. From that day forward, Bob was known as the man who turned a mundane office task into a sidesplitting spectacle. Even Lisa LeFunn, whose family portrait had taken center stage, couldn't help but see the humor in the situation.

And so, the tale of Bob Dunderhead's copy catastrophe became a legendary yarn at WackyWidgets Inc., proving that sometimes, in the world of office shenanigans, mistakes can lead to unexpected triumphs and, of course, a good laugh for everyone involved.

--Woody Allen

## Poetry in Copying

*In the heart of an office, hums the machine,  
A modern marvel of paper's domain  
Copies of memos, a monotonous scene,  
Yet within its whirring, a subtle strain*

*Paper feeds through, a dance of the reams,  
In the copier's belly, a digital dream  
Beneath fluorescent lights, its quiet gleams,  
A symphony played in black and white thee*

*The button is pressed, a mechanical start,  
In silent precision, it plays its part  
An echo of keystrokes, a rhythmic chart,  
Each copy emerging, a work of fine art*

*In the office's chorus, a quiet hum,  
The copier sings, its mechanical drum*

## "Fans Printing on a Mimeo", According to the AI...

These machines are what an AI thinks a mimeograph looks like... AIs are stupid.





### Experimental Fandom Photo History...

March 12, 1948, was the famous date when Aniara space poet Harry Martinson was invited to the new Atomic Noah club, where he read poems and befriended them. Detailed reports exist, but no pictures. So an AI was given participants' names, ages, backgrounds, site (Swedish Technologists House, Stockholm), was asked to produce photos of the meeting from just after their dinner, as they were discussing space travel and atomic bombs... Below two of the "reconstructions". The faces

actually look like some of the members: Gösta Rydbeck (chairman), Gunnar Dahlby (secr), Uno Lamm. Sven Pyk, Bertil Stålhane, editors Fingal Fallgren from Bonniers and Holger Carlsson of a tech magazine. But no Harry Martinson! Costumes and settings look very late 1940s, so it *could* have been something like this...



Assistant editor's note: All in FaiNZINE except this note and tiny snippets is AI generated. No AI site seem to let you order "Make a PDF with X, Y and..." so contents are therefore AI produced a piece at a time and then put together by your asst editor, mr A Ingholm. The logo is from <https://www.logoai.com/>. Cover texts and this info box written "manually". The cover and mimeo illos are from <https://perchance.org/ai-illustration-generator>, asking for an sf-fan printing a fanzine on a mimeograph, with spaceships etc thrown in – varied and weird versions of mimeos is the result. The articles on pre-mimeo copying methods are from <https://openai.com/chatgpt>, asking for a history of mentioned older office copying technology. The AI was challenged to write poetry about office copying machines and write someting in the style of Woody Allen... Als have no idea of what a mimeograph looks like, as the cover and the pictures above prove. And generating pictures of Aisaac Aisimov working on his typewriter also show they struggle with representing a typewriter too (though it became slightly better). And as already known, AIs also have difficulties drawing human hands. But they are decent poets, as you may note! And they could perhaps be used to "reconstruct" events, as we here experiment with. If you're not especially crazy about having your limbs beginning to feel metallic and thin...ie paperclippity, you'd better show human superiority over Artichokial Unintelligibles by doing your own fanzine! And why not do as Lovecraft and join an APA - a lovely craft it is! Ask ahrvid@hotmail.com for how to. As usual: blame Norway! Paperclips are said to be a Norwegian invention. During WWII Norwegains began wearing paperclips on their clothes as a sign of resistance to the German occupation. Ja, vi elsker kunstig intelligens!

# INTERMISSION #140

**E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and all who support Ukraine in its fight for freedom, rule of law and decency! Follow @SFJournalen newstweets though we recently from lack of time update it only 1-2 times/week. Äls can make typos too! Our popular History Corner this time digs into awesome printing tech! Late Dec 2023**

Short Ed's notes: This # starts with our *traditional Xmas/New Year's story*. As NASA will return to the Moon, Santa gets the same idea... And while we're waiting for NATO and the Turkey president stop being a prick, Yours Truly...was one of five *winners of the NATO 2099 contest!* More on that too. We'll report from the Short Story Masters as we humbly call ourselves and an authors' union sf evening. The beloved History Corner will this time cover mimeo printing history, the enchanted technology fanzines relied on. At the same time we hear that our robotic friend Aisaac Aisimov of Trantor prepares to cover *pre-mimeo* copying technology in a new # of his sensational FaiNZINE - it may come with this *Intermission*. You are BTW encouraged to do a fanzine yourself - fandom needs it! - if only to have something to join our fanzine blockade against Kremlin with...

Slava Ukraini!

--Ahrvid Engholm

## **Xmas/New Year's Story: Santa Goes to the Moon**

Santa Claus, the jolly old man of red complexion, was about to embark on his most ambitious Christmas run yet: a trip to the Moon! For months he had trained his trusted reindeers for the mission, his hi-tech labs had developed special nutrition to make these already tough animals even tougher. And they had made a special space-adapted red Santa suit.

The science labs on the Moon, the small factories that harvested the lunar resources - like energy-rich Helium-3 - the astronomical observatories, emerging tourism, all that had slowly condensed into major moon colonisation. Adventurous pioneers were now making their life on the moon, working, loving, starting families. And now the lunar kids would finally also get a visit by Santa Claus!

Santa's science elves had done the calculations, plotted the course, prepared everything. Yes, it would be possible for the White-Bearded Man to make the jump over the void with the right preparations. He'd visit the underground Luna City, Luna's unofficial capital, where most of the children lived - others could easily get there. Around one hundred of them would be eagerly awaiting him. Almost all of them believed in Santa, of course. And Santa's North Pole factory complex had begun with the wish lists of the children..

It was the months long night at the North Pole. The field outside Santa's toy factories and HQ was illuminated in multiple colours from the groves of Christmas firs surrounding what they called Santapolis. The reindeers trampled nervously as they awaited the difficult journey ahead. Santa and his very special animals had finished their preparations. The reindeers were a special breed of Rangifer Tarandus, for those who know Latin, genetically enhanced by SARPA, Santa's Advanced Research Project Agency, so they could fly.

Rudolph, the leader, had been sent on an orbital test flight which had gone well. He was feed with Mrs Claus' special super eggnog which strengthened his already North Pole tough skin, so ut would stand the cold vacuum of space. He he had also been feed big portions of oxygen-rich lichens to handle the lack of air during in space. But for the full trip to the Moon, especially considering the payload of Christmas parcels, the other eight reindeers would would have to join Rudolph. All of them were now fully prepared with the eggnog and lichens.

Dasher, Dancer, Prancer looked eager and determined. The hoofs of Dancer did a little Fred Astaire imitation. Dasher had had his fur groomed for the occasion and looked dashing. Vixen stood a bit away from the others, looked down in the snow as if in doubt about what would happen. Rudolph looked at her as if communicating: I've done it, you'll be OK girl! BTW, how about my stable when we're back? Comet, Cupid, Blitzen and Donner stood ready and full of energy, throwing short snorts



## Nagoya firm attempting to brew beer in space

between them, meaning: we're ready! What are we waiting for? Rudolph was tense and tight-lipped or rather tight-muled, having a grim look in his eyes. He'd be responsible for navigation, a most vital vital task. But he has the nose for it.

From the control tower, the Flight Chief elf reported as Santa donned the facemask which would give him oxygen. He wasn't too fond of lichen. It was a facemask of his own face, so he'd travel disguised as himself.

"We have confirmation from NORAD, boss," the earphones said. "They will help with our positioning while tracking. If any problems Houston will get in touch with Ho-Ho-Houston."

The last was Santa's own space control where the tech elves in a big igloo-like building stared at a wall of monitors, screens and dials of all sorts spraying rows of ever-changing numbers. NORAD was of course the North American air defence hub in the Cheyenne mountains that tracked Santa's flight every Christmas.

"But NORAD forwarded a little request, boss. I'll patch you through."

"Mr Claus, colonel Cartridge here. As we understand your cargo-hold will be empty on the return so...!"

"Do you want me to take some blue cheese back, colonel?"

"Not that. We herd from the Japanese. They developed space yeast and have begun brewing. To put it short, their little brewery on the Moon has produced a few kegs of beer they want you to bring back. Special Christmas beer! We will send you the details.

"Christmas beer! Sure. I can take as much as you want. The sleds cargo hold has this Tardis IV compactor so it can take anything. How else do you think I can load toys for 359 million kids!"

NORAD disconnected and Santa turned to the Ho-Ho-Houston tower:

"I think I forgot the good'n'naughty list for Luna, Santa said. It should be on my desk. Please send someone for it. And NORAD has sent something too, so check my E-mail Inbox too. My Flight Chief can help you open it."

"Anything else, boss?"

"No. Or, I almost forgot: Merry Christmas!"

"The same to you, sir!"

Santa donned his special red Kevlar-Graphene-Wool space outfit and his mask. He checked the oxygen feed and most importantly the Christmas punch feed. The start was getting closer. Santa walked towards his sled, while the elves made the reindeers ready. Tension was in the air.

Those not busy with last minute tasks, gathered in a wide half-circle around the big ginger cookies launch pad. The Flight Chief elf came running with the good'n'naught list and a note from NORAD about the beer kegs. The list was compiled by the Santa-Quanta 25-12 Super-Computer, the perhaps most powerful in the world, and something NSA could only dream about. The Santa-Quanta could practically read the mind of people.

"Boss, time to go! All readings nominal."

"Gang it's time," Sant called out to his reindeers. "Rudolph, when you're ready, led the way!"

The sled soon began to move, slowly at first. And then faster and faster, a foot above the snow, two feet, thirty feet, thirty-two reindeer hoofs doing their uplifting magic. It looked exactly as in a Disney movie when Santa's vehicle shot to the polar sky between the veils of a shimmering Aurora Borealis. Santa and the animals looked like a snake against the full Moon, slowly wiggling itself skywards. The reindeers puffed and huffed as the speed increased.

"Boss, soon you reach orbital speed," Ho-ho-houston reported.

"Roger, Roger!" Santa answered, as the Flight Chief was named Roger.



A palm-size automatic beer brewing machine developed by Takasago Electric Inc.

**The Yomiuri Shimibun**

A Nagoya-based precision machinery maker is working on technology for brewing out-of-this-world beer. Eyeing a future when people will stay in outer space for longer periods than now, the company said it aims to make it possible to produce fermented ***Making space beer is serious for the Japanese!***

## A taste of space: west Japan team crafts

### beer using yeast that reached the stratosphere



High altitude yeast is a start for space "bi-ru", beer in Japanese.

Santa knew he could trust Rudolph. And he could trust Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen too. He happily sipped from the Christmas punch tube as he enjoyed the stars. Rusty Mars, cloudy Venus and giant Jupiter hang there like a Christmas tree baubles.

The lunar disk grew larger by the minute. A landing spot near Luna City had already been selected.

The animals lowered the speed as they prepared for touchdown. The fine lunar dust there wasn't too dissimilar from snow, so the sled would have no problems. The landing was undramatic and soft.

The moon settlement was nothing short of a miracle, a triumph of human engineering and ingenuity. Entrances to this wonder were covered with domes where you could take off your helmet before descending. The domes shimmered in the eerie light of the strong lunar sun unfiltered by any atmosphere. Life, however fragile, had found a home under the desolate plains of the moon. You found lava tunnels there and protection against cosmic radiation.

As agreed personnel from the lunar administration rushed out give the reindeers attention and help with the big bag of Christmas presents Santa had in the cargo hold.

"Mr Claus, we have a number of kegs full of beer for you."

"Yes, NORAD told me. I got the documentation and everything. Place it by the side of the sled."

The kegs were in a special container. On it was a note with the instructions and addressee the Japanese brewer wanted it delivered too. A big sign said SENSITIVE - DO NOT DELAY!

I guess they don't want the beer to have time to be frozen to ice or be degraded in other ways, Santa thought. Though my reindeers are more than ten times faster than any of their rockets... The beer container looked like a cylinder with a little door at one end.

But the container would first pass the NISS, it had been explained to Santa, as the beer needed some after-brewing in zero-G. And besides the ISS crew yearned for some malt and had been promised they would try some. (There was a scientific point to testing beer in orbit, as the taste buds seem to change in that environment.)

"The container isn't full," one of the Luna City men said."It's just a test batch of the lunar Beer and it didn't fill the standard sizes container."

"I'll take care of it when it's time to leave," Santa said as the Luna City helpers lifted his big bag and started to drag it towards an entrance dome.

"We have all the kids assembled in the kindergarten! Those not living in Luna City have also been gathered. We thought it'd save you valuable time, Mr Claus."

Well, Santa thought, then I won't need to activate my STC, Subjctive Time Compressor. It was the STC that made it possible for Santa to spend as much time as needed to deliver all presents. Otherwise he'd only have a few microseconds of time with each child, if you did the math.

Special arrangements had to be implemented for the lunar colonists. Low gravity affected the body's development, though not as much as Zero-G. Beside having special counter-G medicine, below the

The reindeers worked furiously, but knew they had to get into an extra gear to reach escape velocity. But they they could do it. They were Santa's elite reindeers, for Pete's sake!

Santa caught a short glimpse of the New International Space Station as they rushed past, much faster than any human-built rocket could. After all, Santa and all he did could count on Christmas magic. Since his sled wasn't a mere Apollo or SpaceX rocket, the passage to the Moon would only take 2-3 hours, if the elves and Santa-Quanta had got it down right.

They had.

Rudolph who had studied the star charts made small course corrections that made the sled rock a little now and then.

Japanese craft brewery and tech company to simulate making beer on Moon and Mars

Master Blaster  Jul 28, 2022 [Share 58](#) [Post](#) [Pocket 3](#)



Kanpai! - cheers in Japanese! - for a liquid golden as the sun.

colony's main level was a huge ring rotating on superconducting magnets, creating created higher gravity through centrifugal force. Along that ring's leaning walls lay kindergartens, a gym, classrooms for the lower grades, and all kids spent several hours there every day so their bodies would develop normally. The adults were also required to spend a certain number of hours every week in the G-ring.

While waiting, children of Luna City had been polishing their manners and for weeks they had behaved exceptionally well, eager to impress Santa and earn a favourable mark on his list.

Little did they know that one of their classmates, a mischievous boy named Max, had been caught stealing cookies and making a mess in the kitchen. Santa had put him on the naughty list, though Max would claim his actions were not out of malice but rather part of his plan to become an astronaut and explore the cosmos. The cookies were samples to make space food experiments and the chemical experiments in the kitchen had been necessary to analyse a new rocket fuel. Max was a bit naughty but he was bright as the star of Sirius and best in the science class.

As Santa stepped into the entrance, Max sat with the others in the kindergarten. The young scientist maverick closed his eyes. He imagined himself driving the rover across the dusty, rusty Martian surface exploring canyons or turning a huge radio telescope searching for signs of extraterrestrial life or on Extra Vehicular Activity outside the NISS. Little did he know that he would soon be involved in an unexpected turn of events.

Santa stepped out from an elevator on the G-ring level. His Christmas present bag was huge but not very heavy there on the Moon. He stepped on a platform that began to move to catch up with a moving wall. It was the wall of the G-ring and matching speeds was the way to enter it. There was a hatch where the platform had stopped and a ladder. With some effort Santa managed to raise the sack and squeeze in his big sack, followed with a little less effort by himself. He would not be able to enter the Kindergarten through a chimney, because such things were not available on the Moon. There was not atmosphere to spew smoke into. Santa would emerge for the kids through the door, in the Scandinavian manner. No stockings.

He came to the right spot, the door dilated, and he stepped in among a big crowd of the expected and expecting children and some adults. He hollered:

“Ho-ho, are there any friendly children here?!”

The children cheered. Santa checked his naughty list and began handing out the parcels. Tommy got that live action robot doll of Captain Future that he had wished. Jenny got a doll house modelled after a space station.

Niel got the VR super documentary about Apollo 11, which you could experience as if you were there through a special interface. Mary got that old, very valuable first edition, even signed by JK Rowling, plus a set of the Official AI-Written Extra Adventures. Peter got that robot puppy that was programmed and constructed to "grow" like a real dog - to export a live dog to the Moon would have been a bureaucratic nightmare. Lotte unfolded that invisibility cloak she wanted, and so on and so on.

An elderly lady stepped forth while the children smiled and prattled and tried out their toys. Unbeknownst to Max, his mischievous actions had caught the attention of Luna City's chief scientist, Dr Celestia Stern, an astrophysicist who usually worked with the super telescopes on the awayside. She had a serious look on her face.

“Santa,” Dr Stern began, “there's a little problem. One of the children here, Max, has been a bit naughty, but he claims it's all in the pursuit of science and space exploration. I thought you should know and might want to have a word with him.”

Santa, known for his wisdom and kindness, decided to give Max a chance. He invited the young boy to step forward. Max, wide-eyed and nervous, approached Santa with a mix of excitement and trepidation.

“Santa,” Max stammered, “I know I've been a bit naughty, but I want to be an astronaut. I've been conducting experiments to learn about space and prepare for a future mission. The cookies and mess were needed to experiment with space nutrients to freeze-drying for long expeditions, and...”

Santa, with a twinkle in his eye, listened attentively. He then leaned in and said with a low, soft voice:



"Max, curiosity is a wonderful thing. But remember, being kind and considerate to others is just as important as exploring the cosmos. I'll hear what you say and have decided to give err on the side of the spirit of this day. So here you have your present!"

With that, Santa handed Max a special gift, a model rocket kit. Max's eyes lit up with joy, and he promised to use his scientific talents more wisely in the future. As Santa distributed presents to the other children, the atmosphere in Luna City turned festive. It was broadcasted on locally in 3D-VR stations and to Earth on "only" 3D for bandwidth reasons.

Santa was treated with lunar Christmas food, all hydroponic and algae-based but almost impossible to distinguish from real meat or fish or protoplasm. The local eggnog wasn't from real hens, of course, but tasted surprisingly good. At his request Santa got both the recipe and a bottle to take home.

The joy of the event seemed like it would never end, but as the time came close to 3 o'clock GMT the kids began to whisper something about Donald Duck and it seemed like time to leave. Santa waved his hand as a farewell to the children and left the same way he had arrived. His sack was almost empty, having only a christmas present Dr Stern had given him. Santa Claus *received* a Christmas gift! What next? Sun sets in the east? Lions turn vegetarian? Santa adjusted his oxygen mask and stepped out. The reindeers nearby munched on lichens and other goodies.

Santa instructed the Luna City helpers how to stuff the beer container in the cargo hold. The reindeers took the last of their goodies and lined up for take off.

The return trip was rather eventful, until it was time to deliver the beer container.

"ISS commander Curt Nelson to Santa," a call came.

"What's up commander Nelson?"

"Change of plans. We have a suspected medical situation and you can't come here. We suspect a virus, an outbreak of the Sun Corona. Suggest you leave the cargo in our orbit maybe 50-100 km away. We don't want it to drift into our solar panels., We can pick it up with a drone."

"Okey-dokey," Santa said. "We are right now trying to match your orbit, so we can do that. How is it going Rudolph, you heard the new request."

Rudolph was of course on his toes...hoofs. Finding the right orbit matching ISS was easy-peasy for the talented reindeer. But already thinking about a coming tete-a-tete with Vixen was screwing up his orbital adjustments a little. The beer container was ejected at almost the right orbit - almost. When the Flight Chief in Ho-Ho-Houston noted the slight aberration it was too late to compensate. But the NISS drones should be able to manage even if it took a little longer. Soon they landed without incident at the North Pole.

The reindeers were exhausted from the long flight. Santa reached for his STC unit as he needed a rest before continuing his ordinary Earth-bound deliveries and the STC would stretch time. He also started the STC in the reindeer stables so the poor animals could rest too.

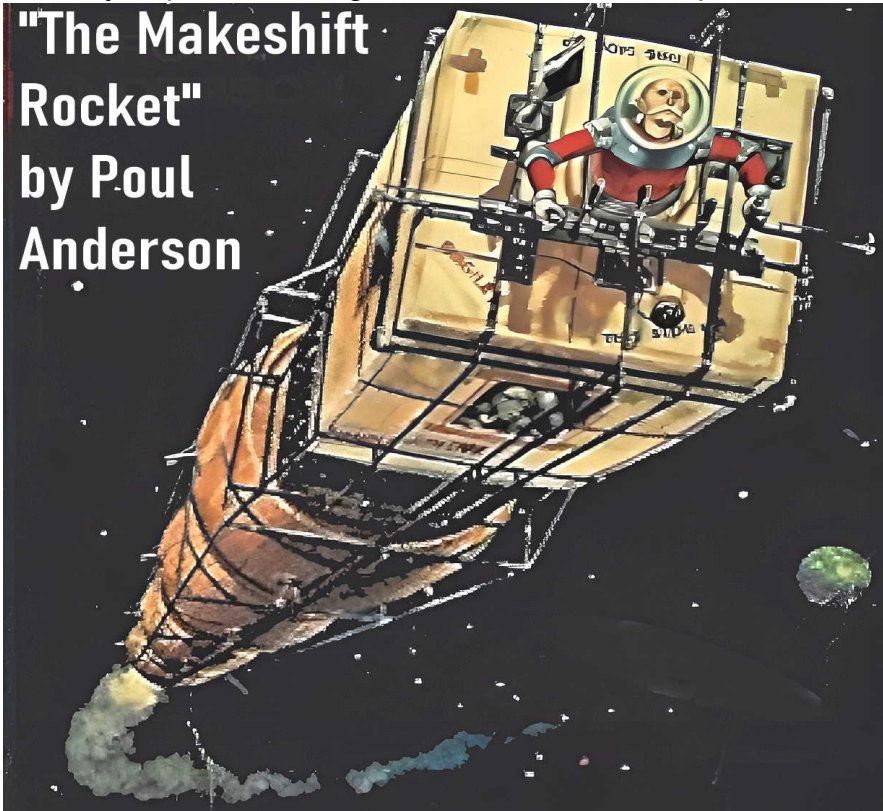
But just as he was going to place himself horisontally:

"Hey, what are you doing," a worried voice shouted in Santa's earphones. "I'm here with the beer in the container. You were supposed to drop me off at NISS. I've always wanted to see it. Now it may take days before they fetch me and I wonder if I have enough CO2-scrubbers..."\*

---

\* Despite countless fictional descriptions of how trapped people "run out of oxygen", this is unlikely to happen. Humans are very tolerant to low oxygen levels. Remember that Mount Everest has been climbed without oxygen masks, where the partial oxygen pressure is 1/3 compared to sea level. The danger is rising CO2 from breathing, but we're tolerant to that gas too as it isn't poisonous as such. US Atomic Submarines tolerate a CO2 level 20 times normal. But CO2 drains

## "The Makeshift Rocket" by Poul Anderson



The voice sounded a lot like the young Max...

"What, is it you Max," Santa asked in bewilderment. "What have you done?"

"I've always wanted to see the NISS, so when the other kids played with their toys I took a space suit and sneaked out to the sled. I heard the container had some extra space and was on its way to NISS, so I hid there. I did take extra oxygen with me but I don't think it will be enough if I'm only in the almost correct orbit. It may take days for any ISS drones to find me. They are quite slow, you know."

"Hm," Santa hummed. "My reindeers are exhausted and in STC stasis and I don't think they are up to a rescue operation. And besides, I have my most important duty of the year in front of me... I'll contact NISS."

Santa did so. They became very worried and confirmed that the beer container wasn't in their immediate reach since the orbit was off a bit. They'd activate as many drones they could and launch them in a search pattern.

"When we find the container, it should take only a moderate push to put it in the right orbit. A drone can do that."

"Please hurry, said Max who had listened in. My CO2 meter is getting close to red."

An hour passed but the drones hadn't yet found the container.

"Max," Santa said, "you don't happen to have the model rocket kit with go got with you? If you can see NISS it should be easy to start in the correct direction, and then you just adjust..."

"I'm Afraid I left it. I know if it's just a toy, still it could have pushed me into the right orbit. But wait..."

There was a long moment of silence. Finally Max shot out with a triumphant voice:

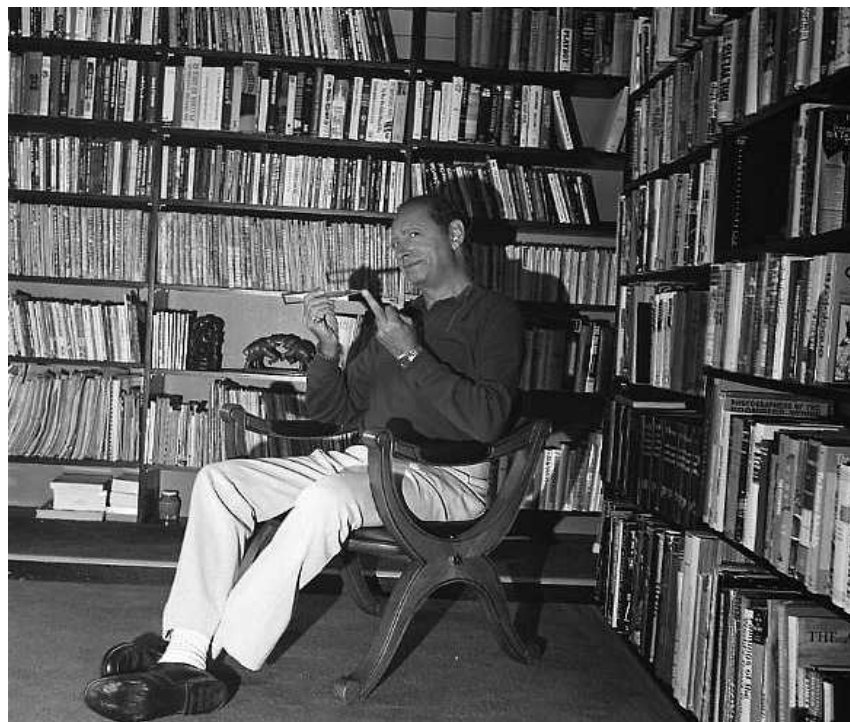
"I knew all that science fiction I've read would be useful one day! Listen Santa..."

Max informed about his plan and a couple of hours he was found by an NISS drone as he had been able to come closer to the right orbit. An ISS drone could half an hour later make contact and drag him to the space station.

The Japanese were furious, and this is why: Max did have propulsion units after all - the beer kegs! They were full of Christmas beer under high pressure, and exposed to the vacuum of space virtually all of the content would expand and spurt out. Max just had to place a keg somewhat correctly, as he knew the approximate position of NISS, and then just turn a handle to open the keg. The beer spread out like a giant snowfall with some yellow tint. He had several kegs and could make fine adjustments with each one. The Japanese were finally left with just one keg of their unique beer...

On the other hand bottles of that beer could be sold for astronomical prices at auctions, since the story of Max and beer space propulsion had become world news! The Japanese brewers probably didn't lose a yen in the end.

"Daring Mr Max Tegmark jr," Santa would later say. "I dare say your solution to the mess you created shows you have a knack for handling space! But don't do it again! By the way, we have a big Library in Santapolis, in order to know what kids want to read - good old real books on paper are popular gifts. I looked up the book that inspired you, *The Makeshift Rocket* by that obviously genius Poul Anderson, a Danish-American author. Danes love their beer, so it's no wonder he thought of a beer-powered space vessel! And now, I think it's time for some Christmas brew. *Ned med øled!* I had difficult deliveries yesterday in the skies over Ukraine. The Russians are on my naughty list, for sure."



Fan favourite Robert Bloch in his library, from the Gauer collection (see previous issues for more details).

energy and makes you sleepy if the level goes much higher than that. Without CO2 scrubbers we just become gradually duller and more sleepy and finally fall asleep and fall unconscious, not lacking oxygen - but due to too much CO2.

## A NATO Winner

As you may know, Sweden went against the wishes of Mr Vladimir Assholovich Putin and sent in a membership form to NATO, return postage not included. Finland did so too, but one Mr Erdogan, a real turkey of a politician, needs something to blackmail with so he can buy US fighter jets. Finnish licorice and Turkish Delight may perhaps go better together so the Finns were approved, but we've had to wait. Rumours say Erdogan and also one Mr Orban of Hungary will give in soon... They simply lose friends and credibility otherwise. (News: A Turkey parliament committee now approves. So... Mr Orban?)

Meanwhile, NATO announced a competition where writers were invited to speculate about the future of NATO and war, up to the year 2099. See the announcement below. Five entries would be selected to be the basis for a "graphic novel", ie a comics album, about NATO's future.

And one well-known editor, Mr A Engholm, has been selected as one of the five winners! (The other four are yet unknown to me.) I'll be credited as contributing author of the graphic novel and win €500 (about the same in \$). Reading the rules, I see nothing to stop me from publishing my contribution. I wrote it as a "matter of factly future history" and even created a little "twist" in the end. It's possible that my idea of letting NATO act against a danger from space is what put me on the prize podium.

But we'll have to see how many of my ideas will be used in the graphic novel, which is said to be launched in May...

### NATO 2099

When egomaniac Russian president Putin was ousted by usurpers in his closest circle, after a fatal "illness" sounding suspicious, it still took Russia decades to bounce back somewhat from the disastrous war against Ukraine.

NATO helped pressure post-war demands of reparation and displaced Ukrainians to be repatriated, especially children. The new Russian rulers must concentrate on stabilising the country. NATO was on its toes in the unstable situation. With Sweden, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia joining NATO had a trip-wire against unwise Russian movements. Other ex-Soviet republics were lining up because you-know-why.

Russian rhetoric still rung that NATO "planned to attack". How did they miss it's a defence alliance? To attack NATO had to convince each of 35+ governments it'd be a brilliant idea, for the weakest reasons. While keeping it secret! Impossible, especially with Russia's rusting nuclear arsenal.

NATO debated whether to help keeping communist China at bay. That the West Pacific isn't exactly the North Atlantic made most members cautious. So NATO kept eyes open, collected intel but remained passive. The US must handle China themselves, keep Peking away from Taiwan, getting some help from UK, Japan and Australia. China feared a Ukraine situation and economic disaster. Losing Taiwan's output of 80% of all advanced circuits would be a chaos making the 1930s look like a walk in the park.

North Korea's collapse after the death of "dear

## NATO 2099: A Graphic Novel

02 Oct. 2023 | Last updated: 07 Nov. 2023 16:18

English | Français



In advance of NATO's 75th anniversary in 2024, the NATO Defense College invites fictional intelligence and sci-fi authors from across the Alliance to submit their creative proposal on the theme of "NATO 2099: A Graphic Novel", a creative project aimed at presenting a futuristic forecast of what the world and the Alliance might look like in the near future.



In 2024, NATO will celebrate its 75th anniversary. This milestone is expected to lead to an avalanche of analysis on NATO's last decades of existence, and the possible futures for the Alliance. True to its research mantra of thinking innovatively, the NATO Defense College (NDC), as NATO's premier educational institution, is eager to contribute to the debate on the future of the Alliance and the global scene. To this end, the NDC invites science fiction authors from across the Alliance to embark on this endeavour – through their creative thinking – to inspire current and future decision-makers on how to adapt quickly to new environments and challenges.

Science fiction, while often discredited by dint of its creative and at times outrageous character, holds real added value for research purposes. Not only does science fiction influence the present by projecting inventions (i.e. headsets, mobile phones and tablets), science fiction can leverage the wisdom of the crowd effect: when several authors "see" a similar future, such a future becomes more likely. As such, science fiction has the power of making ideas acceptable. It can entertain a wider public, which under normal circumstances, might not entertain certain ideas, thereby broadening mindsets and fostering critical thinking. Of course, the precondition to this is that science fiction be not fantastical, but is rooted in evidence. (Hence the term FICINT, fictional intelligence.)

Harnessing these benefits, science fiction has been instrumentalized by military organizations in the United States and France to increase preparedness, train critical thinking, and even spot trends in technology and geopolitics. (For example, the idea of Russia attacking Ukraine appeared in Russian science fiction in the 1990s.)

Your mission, should you accept it...

The year is 2099, NATO will be celebrating its 150th anniversary. For this reason, sci-fi and fictional intelligence authors are being asked to contribute about 1500 words on what this future might look like. Authors are asked to describe the end state, i.e. 2099, but are free to describe how we got there. Questions to be addressed include the following:

leader" Kim Jong Un, from obesity and love of imported cognac, lead to South taking over the bankrupt estate to huge costs. NATO experts helped, having some experience from the German reunification and observing Russia's economy tremors from next door.

The Middle East, an eternal powder keg, was another matter. It's NATO backyard and some would argue that the Mediterranean is just a bay of the North Atlantic. As the Israelis took over the Gaza strip to wipe out terrorists only the "relatively calm" West Bank remained for the Palestinians. After extremely complicated negotiations Israel finally agreed to evacuate it and a Palestinian state could form. NATO agreed to uphold peace as the only organisation that really could, just as in former Yugoslavia. NATO drones flew everywhere, day and night.

Drone technology took quantum leaps with AI, multi-spectral sensors, long-life batteries and jam-secure communication. It was less boots on the ground and that regular air forces began to fade out. Why put humans at risk! Training and paying a pilot and necessary support people costs. A plane carrying and protecting a human pilot becomes heavier and less flexible. Dump that bag of biological sludge and you get a cheaper ride with superior performance. The same goes for land and sea. A manned naval ship or tank must have a certain inside volume, protected by heavy armour where featherless bipeds sit. They are just in the way.

Military all over the world lost people and got machines, that can a) do most jobs without human intervention, and b) will always follow orders. Drones with sensitive sensors can clear a minefield by setting off devices with precision bullets. Human observe and take over if things go wrong. When a drone sees a target a well-aimed projective takes care of it. The enemy is usually another drone!

But be careful with programming, so drones only attack the enemy. Unfortunate episodes have occurred, ignoring the "Laws of Robotics" one Dr Asimov once envisioned. Drones are too common and so easy to make that attempts of a ban for "autonomous killing robots" is impossible. Terrorists love drones! Most cities are forced to install air space counter measures.

But counter-intelligence love AI, giving a quantum leap in capability to track terrorists. AI command systems now also directs military planning and action, reacting within fractions of seconds from thousands of parameters. Threatening drones are blown up at once, actions risking humans need special permissions.

Out of self-preservation major nuclear powers, with India and Pakistan but excluding Iran and Israel still tight-lipped, agreed to require AI-systems being physically separated from all dealings with nukes. All nuclear weapons are required to have at least three tamper-resistant layers.

Despite Ukraine, the Middle East, civil wars in Africa, tensions in the Pacific conflict levels slowly dropped in the 21st Century. The IT revolution made politicians and citizens less bloodthirsty. Economic interdependence, growth, increased trade, education, info openness all helped. Wealth and knowledge erodes sentiments for nationalism and religion. A Zeitgeist ("Spirit of the times") downplaying war and conflicts grew. Economy and information replaced battlefields.

nNATO accelerated its cyber security, but economy "wars" were mostly a matter for Brussels and Washington, who have the bucks to make China buckle. nNATO was the strong glue in the transatlantic partnership.

Despite declared ambitions the Chinese economy slowed. Central-planning lacks correctives for mistakes, like China's huge planning flops in demographics - depopulation, millions of Chinese young men heartbroken finding no wives - housing plans creating empty luxury towns. And communist censors telling AIs what to say and think hampered them in that field too. Good intelligence needs unbiased data.

Then disaster struck!

The ELT of Europe's Southern Observatory in the Andes discovered that fragments had loosened from the comet 15P/Finlay26, to pass Earth in 2060 at the distance of the Moon. But the 39 metres mirror complex of the Extremely Large Telescope saw fragments where there was none earlier. Fragments of substantial size with jets spurting from frozen gas heated by the sun were cause for concern. The change in trajectory was minimal but enough: direction Earth. A major fragment would hit the Atlantic, it seemed, but "smaller" - city killers nonetheless - would hit land around the ocean.

NATO took charge. NASA, ESA, even Russian Roscosmos (wanting to improve the country's

standing) made all resources available. In just a week engineers working around the clock, a SpaceX rocket was adapted for a thermonuclear warhead. The Russians did a similar job. ESA provided the best available target data. But it could only take care of two fragments. Even a mighty nuclear slug can't evaporate a comet and only make a tiny course change. But if you go for a smaller fragments that you perhaps can split, parts will spread and will miss Earth, others will become small enough to burn up in Earth's atmosphere. Total mass hitting ground will be reduced.

Two fragments were treated this way. People watched in fear as comet debris lit up the atmosphere. The big one hitting the Atlantic, as predicted, caused a tsunami that swept the US east coast, putting New York City streets under water and obliterating many coastal towns. The waves made deadly visits to west coasts of the British isles while London was put under water, even if the Thames barrier helped a bit. Similar watery scenes were seen in France, Spain, Portugal and elsewhere. Norway's fjords became funnels pushing water up the mountains. And the levees of Netherlands were easily overcome, though worse than ever the Dutch took it stoically being used to floodings.

A peripheral fragment crashed near Brussels causing huge damages. The coming threat had caused all EU staff to evacuate to Strassbourg. Fortunately NATO's HQ fared better, while some had evacuated, underground facilities - intended for war - kept most functions operational.

With warnings well ahead and all resources, including military ones, tens of millions were evacuated in time. Simulations had predicted effects in detail for all coastal areas. Construction companies' shares had begun rising even before the fragments hit.

There had even been time to save most irreplaceable objects from museums and libraries. And historical buildings threatened to be washed away were hastily documented with hi-resolution laser cameras to be raised again in exact, historically correct details.

Still an estimated 317 000 lives were lost, thousands of towns were swept away, industries and infrastructure were obliterated. Fragments caused almost total destruction in Landskrona, Sweden, Essen, Germany, Charlotte, North Carolina, not to mention many other cities that were "only" half-destroyed.

In the chaotic time that followed, NATO did an invaluable job. And it led to the NATO Space Command.

NASA and ESA had bases on the Moon since the mid 2000s, manned by about over 30 science astronauts, and about 30 were also onboard ISC (the orbiting International Space Complex). Commercial companies had on a smaller scale began to investigate lunar resources. NATO staff now joined them, to study how setting up electromagnetic launchers, to hit comets and asteroids cheaper and more efficiently, and atmosphere-free telescopes and laser range finders. The new technique of atto-phased radiation subjection could perhaps even make very efficient mega-laser comet burners.

And it was NATO experts with extensive background in cryptology that were consulted when the first SETI signals were found, by interference-free radiosopes on the lunar far side. The linguists recruited were mostly from Europe, the continent with 125+ languages, as Americans speak just one language...barely. Transposing the trinary code into hexadecimal, the way cryptologists saw fit, the first message began:

60D 15A B16 F0E...

Was by accident it could read like "God is a big foe"? If so, NATO would have a mighty enemy...

*Note (not from the entry I sent NATO): Yes, the last sounds a bit anti-religious... It's a huge mystery to me that the Bible's commandment "Thou shall not kill" isn't followed by many who claim to be religious and believe in a God! Catholics and protestants have often been at each others throats. So have Christians and Muslims, to an even higher degree. And Shia and Sunni within Islam. There's this absurd concept of military captives., who lead services praying for more killings of enemies. How can this stupidity be? Can't you read the contents of your own holy texts? And speaking of religion: he religiously motivated Hamas started their "holy" war by sending out murderers of 1400 civilians. Those who "protest" against Israel's defence actions without mentioning this are hypocrites. And don't you forget that Hamas intentionally place their military units near civilians to use them as human shields and sacrificing their own people, as that makes good propaganda. Besides, the Israelis do try to go for military targets, but the Hamas tactics often make collateral damage inevitable. If a "civilian" house has been attacked, you can be sure it had a Hamas command center, military supplies etc. Israel has international rights on its side, which is the right to defend themselves until the threat is eliminated. Hamas isn't eliminated yet and must be made responsible for the actions they choose.*



## The Short Story Masters Strike Again

You have been able to learn about the Short Story Masters society here in *Intermission* as late as in October, where I reported from our September meeting. And we recently had an extra meeting December 2nd. I must confess something: I screwed up the time full time. We usually meet at 3pm so I dutifully arrived to Kjell Genberg in Bromma at that time - but it so happened that the announced time had been 1 pm! I can only explain it by that in the last few months, or longer, have felt very stressed with a lot of things to do, and that can make you read sloppily and miss things.

Fortunately the meeting wasn't over. I quickly consumed a number of hot dogs which was the ingestion the meeting offered this time - there's tradition we end together with some food. To this I swallowed a bowl of ice cream and some "Christmas must" - a special Swedish softdrink of carbonated malt, more popular this time of year than even Coca Cola.

The formal part of the gathering had approved adjusted statutes, and let Cecilia W "resign" to become "honorary member" instead (the point being that has no activity requirement). Despite that we that day welcomed one new member in the form of

Lena Köstner - *New short story master Lena Köstner. To right a strange fellow who doesn't know the clock.*

among other things former pop science journalist - we are down to six members, excluding honorary ones (and I have some suggestions here, which I will air on next meeting which will be in February), instead of the usual nine. Possible new members were discussed. Many in the society are getting methusalem-like in age and new fresh, younger blood is welcome.

We also learned that we in May have been invited to help out with a writers' day in Uppsala. Plans for that was also discussed. I have a whole bunch of ideas here. It's an event to increase the public's interest in writing. I can help with a short lecture. We could have a flash fiction contest. Make informational wall displays. The subject "The Writer and AIs" is something worth to



*Cecilia Wennerström, from ordinary to honorary member. In the back Ulf Broberg,*

do something about. Etc. We also discussed our next writing projects. There's an E-anthology this spring and later 2024 a printed book is planned with the best from previous anthologies. I informed about the Bertil Falk Space Opera-Proze and gave them the news about me and the NATO 2009-win.

For being a small rather laid-back club we do have surprisingly much activity...

Anyway, though my own misreading of the time made the meeting a bit shorter for me, but it was rather OK. I got hot dogs. Yum yum.



*Kjell Genberg left, author of 250+ books, society's chairman Helena Sigander right*

## An SF Evening with the Writers' Union

We live in a science fiction world. First a worldwide plague that shut down half the planet, closed all borders and put billions of people under house arrest! Alternative history à la Tom Clancy can be called when a Russian dictator invades a neighbouring country and 200+ years (!) of neutrality is reversed at home. Robotics suddenly gets an artificial intelligence boost that would make Dr. Asimov proud. And above our heads are thousands of internet satellites, James Webb super telescopes, a new Chinese space station, recyclable Starship, NASA's moon landing plans, Jupiter probes, Mars rovers and soon a Swedish Esrange satellite. Space has always been science fiction!



*The panel: Eva Lejonsommar, Stafan Foconi, Gunnar Strandberg, John-Henri Holmberg.*

So it was not without some interest that the Writers' Union announced an sf evening on Monday, December 11 - the birthday of sf fandom BTW. The sf genre was to be discussed by the authors (all of whom have done sf, with the books indicated), Stefano Foconi (Three dystopias), Eva Lejonsommar (Traumatransit), Gunnar Strandberg (Chikima and the hunt for the snail) together with the long-time sf non-fic writer, translator, etc. John-Henri Holmberg, guilty of Drömmen om evigheten (Dreams of Eternity), Inre landskap yttre rymd (Inner Landscapes, Outer Space), Fantasy, anthologies, the magazine Nova and other things.

Before the corona plague, yours truly often went to lectures, book releases and the like, but all that was stopped by the C-bug. When the effects of the virus began to fade, however, I was too busy - writings, studies, SFJ, zines, SKRIVA, contests etc - to have time to jerk around. But of course I had to attend an sf evening! And thanks to Tora and publisher TiraTiger for contacts!

When I at about 7 pm stepped up the winding stairs of the Authors' House I learned there were 35 registered but "only" a little over 25 were present, including the panelists. Also on site were carbonated malt ("Julmust"), a wine box, ginger cookies and blue cheese - the latter is advantageously applied to ginger cookies, actually. No coffee to heat in the early winter.

The first three panelists introduced themselves, their writing and how they viewed the sf genre. Scattered wisdoms: Sf is great because it can test boundaries. By writing about a future, you can influence the present. Much of the technology in SF already exists. Someone thought the genre was good because it can bring physics, VR, AI and other things together.

Then JHH took over and gave a general background of the genre. Sf he argued relies on the natural science and rationalism that emerged in the 19th century. It created both science fiction and crime fiction. SF relies on a rational view of the world, that one can take knowledge and draw conclusions - make speculations. This is in contrast to fantasy that relies on magic, strange myths and superstitions. Crime fiction - at least in the form of whodunnits, solving crimes - is also based on rationality. To like Sherlock Holmes make observations, gather facts, think and draw logical conclusion that, for example, the Butler had dunnit. (That a certain EA Poe became a foreground

figure for BOTH sf and crime fiction is typical.)

In "modern" form - as a market category - the sf genre originated in the dreadful popular magazines in the USA, the so-called pulp magazines. Jules Verne's comprehensive Voyages Extraordinaires was not mentioned, but it also belongs to the genre's growth. In Sweden, Verne was so popular that his mere name indicated the genre, as with Jules Verne Magasinet!

American sf was spread after WWII by American soldiers who brought along the magazines with the fanciful covers. Some inspiration from the British should also be inserted here. Thanks to HG Wells, there was a not insignificant British SF scene, and American pulp reached the British Isles as bulk cargo in shipping traffic. American pulp publishers - or maybe the distributors rather? - were grateful to get a few cents per kg for return ex which was then shovelled across Atlantes to remnant stores, where Brits starved for space stories could unearth Amazing, Astounding, Wonder etc. (Rob Hansen has depicted it in his history works. Pulp-in-bulk distribution disappeared during the war, when all transport had to prioritize arms and ammunition. After the war, currency restrictions bred the infamous British Reprint Editions of US magazines.)

But this was partly extra information that JHH did not convey. On the other hand, he could tell how sf broke through in the 1950s. The reception was even cautiously positive! As you know, Harry Martinson wrote about the spaceship Anlara and received good reviews.

(Anyone who has followed my History Corner in Intermission knows that the exact "breakthrough" year WAS 1953 - that's when press articles about the sf genre shot up like a rocket.) There appeared several sf book series, sf news stand series, the magazine Håpna! , ditto Swedish Galaxy where a certain Pär Rådström was in the editorial office! But after a while the enthusiasm faded. All of the publishers' sf ventures lasted about two years, "the time it takes to see if the venture works" according to JHH - i.e. normally it didn't work. Håpna! could live for a dozen years "because it was run by enthusiasts who made money from other things".

JHH explained that sf faded due to the special cultural climate in Sweden. Swedes are very uniform, think alike, and the preferred literature was social stories, a little psychology, the introspective. No flaming spaceships against crackling starry skies here!

The 1970s and a bit into the 1980s saw a second, slightly smaller sf wave. Again, the publishers started some sf book series and sf "kiosk" series. JHH didn't mention it but, in addition to the hype

surrounding the Apollo project of course, a major contributing factor must have been the sf series by Sam J Lundwall in 1969. There were up to a dozen programs, both in the spring of 1969 and in the fall of that year, at a time when TV was a real campfire: discussions about the sf genre (including a visit to a British sf con), short films, cartoons, experimental films and even a special drama "Hunting season" with famous actors.

Lundwall then went to Askild & Kärnekull, to publish both a science fiction book series and talking over the Jules Verne Magasin that Bertil Falk had restarted in 1969: This in turn became the base for the Delta publishing house Sam J started



*Peekaboo! With part of the audience.*

when he left A&K (at which time JHH jumped in after Sam J and made the sf book series linger on for a while). Sam J almost single-handedly fought for the genre when others gave up.

Despite a lot of 70s "buzz" around the genre, few Swedish sf writers appeared. It was Sam J himself, Bertil Mårtensson, Dénis Lindbohm, Börje Crona with his twist-end short stories, Sven Christer Swahn, who mostly wrote for children/youth. (Not mentioned, but it's worth pointing out: a

certain Steve Sem-Sandberg published no less than three small sf novels at this time! Now he is in the Swedish Academy.)

Others who wrote sf, like PC Jersild, didn't really dare to confess to it - although I have heard PC later in the SF Bookstore admit that he wrote sf - but Lars Gustafsson was an exception who agreed he was writing sf. An exception was also Jan "Crazy Guy" Myrdal - he defends Lenin, Chinese communists. Pol Pot etc - who made a thick anthology about the 1940s Jules Verne Magasinet of his youth. Those who have read his childhood accounts know that little Jan, the Meccano-builder, was very fond of these technical tales. Another who wrote sf already in the 1960s was Per Wahlöö, before he together with Maj Sjöwall became famous for crime novels. A heavier name that was added in the 1980s was Peter Nilson, who wrote space-oriented, more philosophical skiffy. Among later Swedish science fiction writers we have for example Lars Jakobson (sadly I find him quite boring!) and someone who is often mentioned is Karin Tidbeck.

Within the broader fantastic field Swedish horror has reached quite far. We have John Ajvide Lindqvist, Mats Strandberg, Anders Fager and others. But if I didn't hear wrong - JHH tends to talk too quietly - there are indications that Swedish sf is starting to overtake Swedish horror.

In this context, JHH also emphasized that the Swedish detective wave has now passed its zenith and as a member of the Crime Fiction Academy, he should know. In 2023, up to 500 crime novels are expected to be published in Swedish, of which only 120 are translated. Pubbing local talents is cheaper, as you don't have translation cost. But we cannot reasonably continue to have close to 400 Swedish crime novels per year! The audience is too small. But you can gamble with an unknown Swedish crime writer, as "break even" is low, no more than 1,000-1,500 copies. The panel mentioned but did not discuss that a lot of sf today comes from the countless small publishers and with Print on Demand and the like, really small editions can still break even. A good way to keep track of the small publisher is Ordspira's newsletter Aktuell Svensk Fantastik: <https://www.evaholmquist.se/aktuell-fantastik/>

If you go and check the shelves, female detective writers account for about 2/3 of the output, although the fact that the ladies carry a significant murderous desire has been true since BSH (Before Sherlock Holmes), so it's no surprise.

Speaking of detective stories, it was emphasized that the biggest influence on Nordic Noir's international success comes from a certain Stieg Larsson. (A fan. We used to quibble in the legendary basement of the Scandinavian SF Society.) When his sales soared, foreign publishers began looking for other Swedish crime writers. Even Henning Mankell benefited from it. "He originally came out at a small American socialist publisher and sold no more than 3-4000 copies," we were told, "But after the Millennium he was taken over by larger publishers." Sjöwall/Wahlöö then? Their success was probably too far back in time, more than 50 years ago, for Läckberg and others to benefit.

What else was discussed?

Jonas Ellerström interjected from the audience that perhaps we should skip genre differences. "Let a novel be a novel," he thought, regardless of whether it was sf or not. (Myself, I'd like to keep genres so you know what you're getting!) Eva L in the panel said that when she wrote sf, she got a completely different kind of reader, and I think that may be true. Right now Armageddon sf is very popular because of our trying times, fertile ground for thoughts of doom and the dystopian.

AI was of course covered and that Isaac Asimov wrote about his robots already in the 1940s. Machines that follow his "robot laws" and are basically AIs that walk around. Arthur C Clarke's HAL 9000 in "2001" should have been mentioned as even more relevant. Hannes Alfvén's *The Tale of the Big Computer* was mentioned too. Elon Musk et al warn that we run the risk of AIs saying "Sorry Dave, I can't do that" while they turn us into paperclips...

So-called cli-fi was mentioned, i.e. "climate fiction", which of course is fiction inspired by a certain Miss Greta. It was argued that sf is not suitable for audiobooks, something that otherwise is growing



*With Jörgen Jörälv, holding a ginger cookie. Without cheese.*

rapidly at the moment. (It will grow even more when the audiobook publishers program AIs to narrate.) The reason was stated to be that sf requires the ability to think and reflect, and it doesn't go as well when the book enters through the ears.

Sf as inspiration for inventing language and speculating about future linguistics was also taken up. I raised an arm and exemplified with the slang in Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*. Nils Håkanson's *Ödmården* was suggested, with its mixture of slang and antiquated language (a really interesting book BTW, a bit difficult but funny). In Robert Heinlein's *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*, the moon colonists speak an English with Russian parts, although one can wonder how much Russian we will tolerate in the real future, considering their behaviour in Ukraine...

Most people stayed to chat for a while, sipped a little wine and ginger cookies with cheese. I spoke with Finnish-Swedish Ole, another I think is called Peter and of course Jörgen Jörälv, the Delta bibliographer who was there. Jörgen talked about his latest project, a reissue of all episodes of Lars "LON" Olsson's classic Froggy Gordon, as they appeared in Stockholm University's student paper *Gaudeamus!* It comes in the spring. A valuable act of real culture, and LON is almost "staff artist" in Intermission BTW.

*\* Tora and Tira Tiger who published my latest collection, Spacetime, got me the invitation, as it was supposed to be for union members. I decided never to join long ago due to their own arrogant stupidity. You are eligible after two books. Applied way back in the 1990s, but was rejected without motivation. That's unacceptable. Without motivation you don't know what's wrong, can't make corrections or so. By staying away I have through the years saved many thousands of euros, to their loss. Someone claimed: "It's understood they address 'literary qualities'." Well, my first two were non-fic about computers. Imaginations of 'lit qualities' - however to define that! - here borders the irrelevant, besides they were probably also incompetent to weigh the factual contents.*



LON's avant garde comic strip FROGGY GORDON to be reprinted! (We decided, in our wisdom, to translate the original Swedish "Blixt-Grodon" to that. The word "grod" refers to frogs.)

## Saint Lucy

The Italian Saint Lucy (or *Lucia* as we say) is celebrated here Dec 13. Girls dress up in white, wearing candles, one is The Lucia with a crown with candles. They come in the morning, singing, serving coffee, ginger cookies and saffron buns. They bring light on year's darkest day, which Dec 13 was under the old Julian calendar (that Sweden used until 1753). The Lucia marches extends to our Nordic neighbours too some extent, but the Swedes are crazy about it. The modern Lucia tradition began early last century when newspapers presented Lucia candidates to let readers select the paper's official Lucia. Youngsters tend to party and consume certain liquids on the Lucia Day. Right a Lucia march visiting a local library.





# HISTORY CORNER

In this # the History Corner column, always the readers' favourite, will cover what was once the busy bee fanzine editor's most trusted friend: *the mimeograph*! I heard from my AI friend Alsaac Alsimov that he (it?) plans to cover really old pre-mimeo copying machinery, so the mimeograph thread is left to me.

To begin with: the basic concept of the mimeograph - letting ink leak through a stencil - was invented by Thomas Edison in 1876. He received US patent 180 857 for "Autographic Printing" August 8 that year. He used a vibrating electric pen to perforate the stencil, which was then put in a flatbed device where sheets were placed and printed manually. In 1887 he licensed the patent to the firm AB Dick, founded by one Albert Blake Dick, who after some time mounted the stencil on a rotating drum, and the mimeograph in the modern form was born! Though the machine was produced by AB Dick it was often marketed as The Edison Mimeograph. The name Edison sells better than Dick, one may assume. At the same time, by introducing the drum and many other improvements Dick did more for the mimeo as we know it than Edison.

The mimeograph printing uses what is called silk screen printing (even if silk may not actually be used) where ink transfers to a sheet through holes or weaknesses. In 1874 just before Edison and his mimeo inventions came, the Italian Eugenio de Zuccato - but living in the UK - invented what he called the Papyrograph. It also used silk screen printing and a form of stencil, but in a much more complicated way. You wrote with caustic ink on "varnished paper", and the chemical ate through the varnish leaving holes. It is obviously much easier to just strike through a wax layer as with mimeographs, so the papyrograph saw limited success. The most common paper for mimeo stencils was mulberry paper, an Asian plant paper popular in e.g. China and Japan.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper\\_mulberry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper_mulberry).

We read <https://www.printmuseum.org/blog-3/history-of-the-mimeograph>

*Chicago based AB Dick Company took an interest in the technology in the mid-1880s. AB Dick got its name from its founder Albert Blake Dick, who started the business in 1883 as a lumber company. Within the next ten years, the A.B Dick Company transformed into a major manufacturer of printing equipment. Dick designed his own version of the electric pen and stencil and reached out to Edison, who controlled the patents for the technology. The two established a working relationship as they began to design the first stencil duplicator. The result was the Edison Mimeograph...No. 1 model cost \$15 back in the 1890s, equivalent to \$500 today*

It was Albert Dick (1856-1934) who coined the term "mimeograph". His company was quite successful, becoming a main supplier of mimeograph material - they would even require customers to use *only* AB Dick's own stencils, paper, ink and other supplies...



ALBERT B. DICK.

*One such case - 1912's Henry vs AB Dick Co - went all the way to the Supreme Court, and became one of the most influential patent law decisions in American history. At the time, the Dick Company was selling its mimeograph machines with "licensing restrictions" meaning a purchaser could only legally use the machine with stencils, paper and ink also supplied by AB Dick. Incredibly, the company's power to do this was ultimately upheld by the court in 1912, but it also led directly to Congress passing the Clayton Act two years later, essentially restricting this sort of monopolization of new tech.*



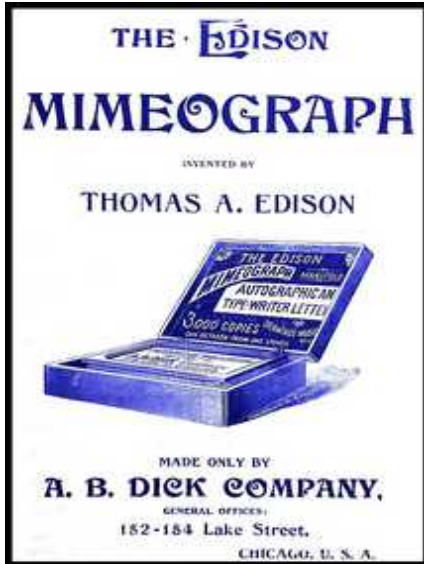
After different acquisitions and such what was left of AB Dick filed for bankruptcy in 2004. For the company's 50 year anniversary in 1934 they published the book *Fifty years* in which Mr Dick himself summarises, <https://www.madeinchicagomuseum.com/single-post/ab-dick-company/> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.\\_B.\\_Dick\\_Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._B._Dick_Company)

*My aim was to find a means of duplicating letters other than by printing from movable types - something more economical of both time and money. I first attempted to make a typewriter with needle-point type, which would perforate a sheet of paper to make a stencil. But that was not successful. I tried many experiments. I almost let my time*

*and imagination run away with me in the attempt. But I didn't seem to arrive. Dick finally stumbled upon his solution in 1884 by following a curious whim. He placed a bit of candy wrapper wax paper over a steel file, then drew over it with a piercing awl. When he held the paper up to the light, he had his eureka moment. Then I secured the finest file obtainable in Chicago traced a few lines on paper held against its surface, and took impressions with a roller and printer's ink. I then realized I had found the principle for which I was seeking. But the job was not yet done. For a while, Dick only used his handy "autograph stencil" to solve his own letter writing issue. But when someone brought up patenting the process and developing a proper machine, he saw dollar signs. He also found some intimidating competition - Thomas Edison's "electric pen" had already been around for 10 years, and hopes of moving forward with Dick's machine would result in running into the mighty brick wall of the growing Edison empire. Rather than challenge the master or flee from him, Albert Dick reached out a friendly hand. And in this fortunate example, 37 year-old Tom Edison was quite amiable himself. I immediately got in touch with Mr. Edison and secured a*



The earliest Edison Mimeograph, produced by AB Dick, a flatbed device.



*The Edison Mimeograph is recognized as the STANDARD DUPLICATING DEVICE for autographic or type-written work by the commercial, educational and religious world, a pamphlet claimed in 1890. It will produce copies which so faithfully follow the original that the difference is scarcely perceptible.*

*license agreement to use his patents pertaining to stencil duplication, for Mr Edison was quick to see the advantages and possibilities of my process. He also furnished me with a device that could be used for coating the wax stencil sheets. Edison ever motivated by his own dollar signs saw some advantages to forming a partnership with this 28 year-old Chicago lad, and , and invested in Dick's project and forged a long term working relationship and friendship with him. Now all their new machine needed was a name. . I had an old friend in Chicago who was superintendent of one of the schools. He knew that I was on the lookout for a name, and that I didn't like the term 'copygraph,' which had been suggested. One day this friend hit upon the combination of 'mime' and 'graph.' But it didn't have the right swing. It wasn't euphonius. Then the 'o' was added, to give it the swing - and the right euphony was acquired.*

It seems the drum was added sometime after year 1900:

*In 1902, the AB Dick Co moved both its manufacturing and executive offices to 163 W Jackson Blvd. (which soon became 738 W. Jackson Blvd after Chicago's street number changes). By 1905...the new factory employed 191 workers -143 men, 48 women, and surprisingly enough, no children. While the Dick Company did manufacture some other products during these early years...most of the focus was on the next evolution of the duplicator: the "rotary mimeograph." This new design substituted the sometimes cumbersome flatbed tray and hand roller with a simple turning crank, automatic ink, and a rotating cylindrical drum that looks like a lottery ball dispenser. Advertisements hailed the rotary mimeographs as "the next step after the typewriter in office economy" and "as far ahead of the typewriter as the typewriter is of the pencil." That may have been true in some respects, but duplicators still needed an original typewritten or hand drawn document from which to do their magic. AB Dick tried to remedy that situation by developing its own*



An Edison Automatic Mimeograph No 51, 1898, a middle stage in the development. The flatbed has fixed rollers, probably driven by the crank laying below.

**Write for Books, Samples of Work and Special Demonstration**

Do this today. Learn what the "Rotary" is doing for others in similar lines. Study its possibilities as applied to your special requirements. Comparison will prove its supremacy over all other duplicating machines in economy, speed and efficiency. Ask for our "76" catalog and "Testimony from Users" also name of our local dealer, who will be pleased to demonstrate the machine.

**A. B. Dick Company**  
Makers  
738 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago  
15E Murray Street, New York  
Agencies Throughout the United States and Canada

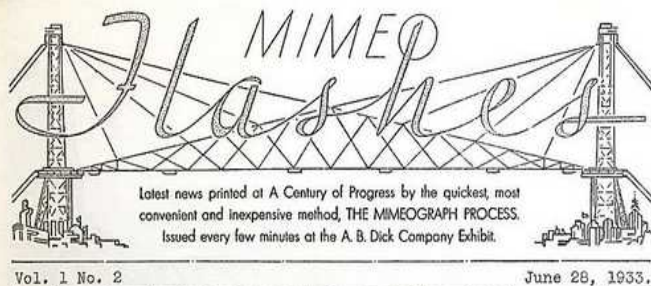


typewriter for a while, but it never really took off. ...The cost for the machine had risen to \$30, but its productivity potential had grown accordingly, with the similar Model No 76 able to churn out 17,000 to 20,000 copies per day, or a rate of 50 to 100 per minute, depending on the skill of the drum spinner... This marvellous duplicating machine - the Edison Rotary Mimeograph - places you in command of one of the mightiest constructive forces employed in the business world, according to a full page ad in a 1912 issue of *Cosmopolitan*. "The Typewriter, the Rotary and the U.S. Mails, working in unison, are irresistible trade winners for merchants and manufacturers." That same year, 1912, was the final bow for the old wax stencils, as the company's tougher "Dermatype" stencils took over the designs for the next decade. /Ed: I have tested all kinds of stencil qualities, most works fine. So I doubt one special brand could "take over"! When the Edison Mimeograph 77A debuted shortly thereafter, historians believe it was likely used to produce a copy of each and every order communicated by the U.S. Military during World War I...During the 1920s, the AB Dick Co had offices in most major cities in the US, and



AB Dick's HQ at 728 W Jackson as it looks today.

it expanded its Jackson Blvd headquarters in Chicago with a brand new eight-story, neo-gothic high-rise at 728 W Jackson, designed by the famed local architect Alfred S. Alschuler...demands were great enough that another five stories was plopped on top of the building. It would remain AB Dick's home for over 20 years...From inside the walls of this fancy new home, Dick's prime product- now finally known officially as the "Edison-Dick Mimeograph" - continued to evolve. The "Mimeotype" stencil sheet, first developed in 1924, didn't need to be moistened like earlier sheet types, dramatically improving ease of use. Shortly thereafter, the mimeo machine itself went fully electric and mostly automatic, producing terrific results for any company still in business during the Great Depression. The AB Dick Co celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1934, and with 900 workers in its employ, it was one of the city's most respected and resilient enterprises. Even after the death of Albert Blake Dick that same year, aged 78, the company was left in capable hands, with Dick's sons Albert Jr and Edison Dick taking over the reins. Its dominance in the



Vol. 1 No. 2 June 28, 1933.  
 WORLD'S FAIR DOUBLES  
 1893 ATTENDANCE

AB Dick had its own exhibit at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago, and produced a daily newsletter called "Mimeo Flashes," using its own mimeo technology

duplicator industry would become harder to cling to in the years after World War II however, as the double-whammy of new competition and the march of technology made for plenty of sleepless nights. One of Dick's chief emerging rivals was another Chicago company, Ditto Inc., which manufactured "spirit duplicators" - a similar product that utilized pungent chemical solvents, rather than ink, to produce copies.

Into the 1950s and '60s, even the word Ditto became more of the generic lingo for making copies in a school building or office, as mimeo gradually faded. Both brands, of course, were fighting an ultimately losing battle without realizing it. The Xerox age was just waiting around the corner.



The first Rex Rotary mimeo of the 1920s, from Denmark.

An interesting video of AB Dick opening a new plant in the 1940s. There's a huge crowd around, so the manufacturing of mimeographs was obviously important business.



Crowd for opening of new AB Dick plant.

<https://youtu.be/IHe0tUHYUJg>

A variation of the mimeograph was the *menucator*, a flatbed mimeo made especially for printing restaurant menus, as the name implies.

Now, while AB Dick may have been the leaders in the US, it was difficult to reach all markets (and patents would expire) so in Europe, the company Gestetner became the market leader, founded by the Hungarian David Gestetner living in Britain where he in 1881 constructed his own mimeograph. Gestetner later moved to the US and the brand is today owned by Ricoh of Japan. Gestetner mimeos



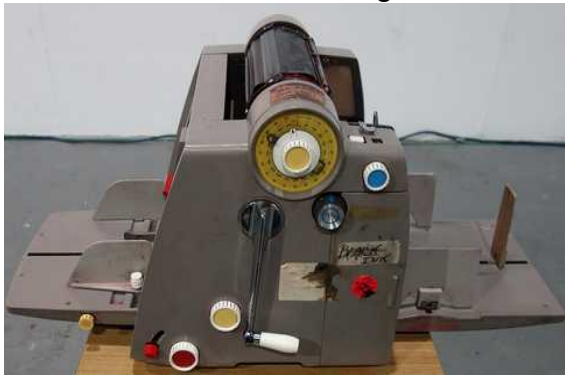


A menuator.

was very common in Sweden, beside the brand Rex Rotary, that we find very little info about, except <https://contex.com/news-post/contex-100-years-of-inventions/> It was a Danish company founded in 1923. That it was our neighbours may explain why Rex Rotary grabbed a piece of the Swedish market. (Your editor has a Rex Rotary D490 mimeo, not used for many years...but it should still work.) As I understand, the brand Rex Rotary today sells computer printer supplies and is also owned by Ricoh. Here's a film from 1927 showing how a mimeo is produced at the Gestetner Works in Tottenham, England:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TSVuH5yiFo>

In the 1970s photo copiers and office printing began to take over, so you could get a second hand mimeograph machine cheap or for free as companies wanted to get rid of them.



A Gestetner mimeo, a common model that many fanzine publishers had.

The mimeo dominated the Swedish fanzine scene up to ca 1990 as it offered far, far cheaper printing than eg photo copying which could cost up to 10/page! Computer printers then began to take over. (Your editor would for a while use a combo, using a computer daisy wheel printer cutting stencils...)



A Rex Rotary D490, among Mankind's finest pieces of machinery!



An electro-stencil etcher.

“thermal stencils” to which an original could be etched in an ordinary copying machine provided the light source has a bit of hump.\*

Surprisingly, the mimeograph still exists but under another name: a risograph! A risograph from Japanese Riso Kagaku, Gestetner also does them, is basically a 100% automatic mimeo. It will read an original

from a glassplate and “burn” a high-resolution electro-stencil, automatically mount it on a print roller and pump out copies! The technology is mimeography, and the advantage is the risograph is cheaper than photocopying for runs of a few hundred.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risograph>

Electro-stencils existed before the risograph. A fax-like device scanned an original from a drum, and a special paper sensitive to a heated tip is etched with a copy. As I remember etching the electro-stencil took some time and quality of text could vary, so it was cheaper and easier to type the stencil manually



A risograph, ie a hi-tech mimeo.



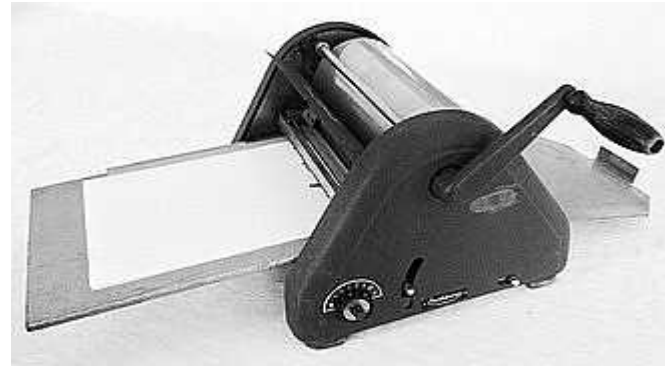
At the Gestetner Works in Tottenham.

\* For printing, to minimise “ghost print” on the back, a soft, porous paper called twiltone - where ink absorbs and dries fast - was favourite among US fans. Not available in Europe but you could get porous paper simply called duplicator paper. Alternatively there was an device for “slip-sheeting” that let every second sheet be a blank. Some could after training slip sheet manually without such a thingie. Your editor's trick was instead to crank slower with a pause between sheets.



- unless you absolutely needed to reproduce a photo.

*It is sometimes called a printer-duplicator...When printing or copying many duplicates (generally more than 100) of the same content, it is typically far less expensive per page than a conventional photocopier, laser printer, or inkjet printer. The underlying technology is very similar to a mimeograph. It brings together several processes which were previously carried out manually*



*A Spirit duplicator, common in schools.*

We saw that the spirit duplicator or dittograph became a fierce competitor to the mimeograph. The technology depends on stencil carbons having a layer of aniline based very strong dye, transferred to an original by typing

or a by drawing. The ink is slowly dissolved by applied spirit and will be good for perhaps 100-150 copies. The best ink is purple but other colours exist. The system is simpler to use than mimeography and you can print several colours at once by changing the carbon. The drawback is that the text may become a little weak and purple text isn't the most aesthetic. The ease of use made it common in schools. Teachers could save the stencil and re-use it year after year doing small class runs. (Ordinary "black stencils" may also be re-used, but it's slightly more complicated.)



*A very basic 1909 mimeo., with recently invented rotating drum. On the blue paper attached you can barely make out: Gestetner.*

When you read about the history of the mimeograph you note that sf fandom must have been the first outside non-institutional use to put it into action. The mimeo was of course from the beginning used by offices, schools, churches, the military, for administrative messages. It was fandom that found artistic and literary use for it, from the 1930s and on. After WWII we begin to get college alternative student publications, an "underground" press and self-published poetry by the so called beat generation, often using mimeographs. You'll easily find information about it through Uncle Google - but at that time *fandom had already been cranking out mimeographed fanzines for a couple of decades!*

Fandom has never received full credit for its pioneering of "alternative" Do It Yourself culture. Outside institutions, the ink-greased paws of fans were the first taming the mimeo, creating a culture on stencils. There's a lot of buzz about how "counter culture", "underground press", beatniks and poets stencilled their self-published poetry and "little magazines". Fandom was invisible when National /M/i/m/e/o/o/Geographics covered mimeo press:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/article/mimeo-mimeograph-revolution-literature-beat-poetry-activism>

The earliest year mentioned is 1943, William Burroughs dirtied his hands with mimeo ink in 1953, Allen Ginsberg howled on twiltone paper in 1955. Meanwhile fans had already *decades* of blisters from mimeo cranking, and when you compare the sf fanzines were usually much more advanced in layout and art!\* The old use by governments, businesses, schools, the military etc was purely administrative or for internal info, not artistic having with fiction and creative content. Fans beat

\*There are examples of crossovers between fans and beatniks, Ginsberg's *Wichita Vortex Sutra* was inspired by *The Martian Newsletter* - see above - from Pacificon, 1946, published by "local beatnik (and sf fan)" Lee "Telis" Streiff, <https://www.mimeographrevival.com/posts/tag/history/> "Unlike other Wichita beat poets and artists, Lee Streiff never escaped the Wichita Vortex, where he taught English and continued to participate in fandom." Streiff was also engaged in the group Young Fandom for teenage fans, [https://fancylopedia.org/Young\\_Fandom](https://fancylopedia.org/Young_Fandom)

beatniks by decades in mimeo poetry. Fans were the first DIY authors on stencil, from the time of Edgar Rice and not William Burroughs.

*Sf fans were the first "counter culture", with their own creative literary and artistic movement on mimeo, before anyone else.*

Alas, it hurts me that it was a Swede who killed off this brilliant invention of Mr Edison and Mr Dick. As we found the mimeograph dead in the library the conclusion of the culprit became obvious: it was the butler Photo O Copier whodunnit! And the one inventing the Xerox process was one Chester Carlson of Swedish ancestry. You find the full confession here <https://www.xerox.com/sv-se/innovation/inblick/chester-carlson-xerography>

*The xerographic process, which was invented by Chester Carlson in 1938 and developed and commercialised by the Xerox Corporation, is widely used to produce high-quality text and graphic images on paper. Carlson originally called the process electrophotography. It's based on two natural phenomena: that materials of opposite electrical charges attract and that some materials become better conductors of electricity when exposed to light. Carlson invented a six-step process to transfer an image from one surface to another using these phenomena.*

And <https://www.aps.org/publications/apsnews/200310/history.cfm>

*Carlson began conducting experiments in the kitchen of his apartment in Queens... in October 1937, he set up a small lab in Astoria and hired a lab assistant, a German refugee named Otto Kornei. It was there that the first xerographic copy was made on October 22, 1938. The two men prepared a sulphur coating on a zinc plate, and Kornei printed a notation in India ink on a glass microscopic slide: "10- 22-38 Astoria." They pulled down the shade to darken the room, then rubbed the sulphur surface vigorously with a handkerchief to apply an electrostatic charge. The slide was laid on the surface, and the two pieces were placed under a bright incandescent lamp for a few seconds. The slide was then removed and*



Stencil killer Chester Carlson!

*lycophodium powder was sprinkled on the sulfur surface, then blown off. What was left on the surface was a near-perfect duplicate in powder of the same notation on the glass slide... Carlson shopped his invention around for several years trying to find a company to develop it into a*

*useful product, and was turned down by more than 20 companies, as well as the National Inventors Council. "How difficult it was to convince anyone that my tiny plates and rough image held the key to a tremendous new industry," Carlson later recalled. Finally, in 1944, Battelle Memorial Institute, a non-profit research organization, signed a royalty agreement with Carlson... Three years later, Battelle made an agreement with a small photo paper company called Haloid (later to be known as Xerox), giving Haloid the right to develop a xerographic machine. Twenty-one years after Carlson made the first xerographic copy in his modest Queens laboratory, the first office copier was unveiled in 1959: The Xerox 914 copier*



The world's first xerox. Damn Carlson!



Could be a newsletter for their unit these British tommies are busy with? Their short pants imply North Africa and WWII.

As young, fresh newborn photo copiers invaded, the scrap metal bodies of mimeographs were unceremoniously thrown out. And as paper fanzines are getting rarer, we've seen another cycle of death. The US military, in the form of ARPA, decided to connect computers together which made it possible for Al Gore to invent the Interweb. No paper no more!

But I miss feeling the structure of stencils on my fingers, the fine chaff of wax, the spots of ink covering my hands, the "ooga chaka...ooga chaka" as you crank the machinery".

## Swedish Christmas Food

I had a very tasty encounter with a buffet of Swedish Christmas food. As the situation was, I was unsure if I'd get a second and third helping, so I put all I wanted on one plate, which I'll here present for you. It's similar to an ordinary *smörgåsbord*, but that would lack *lutfisk*, have more meat, eg more sausages, cheese and fresh vegetables.



The ham is the centre piece of a Swedish Christmas Table, oven-baked and eaten with mustard, and the meatballs of course. The ham broth is saved and used for what is called the "dip in the pot", here missing - you soak up the liquid with bread and eat it. Missing is perhaps what Google Translate calls head cheese ("pressylta" in Swedish) and definitely "lutfisk", whitefish treated with lye, becoming a sort of jelly and eaten with white bechamel sauce - but I have never liked it. No turkey, except some Christmas tables have lately added smoked, thin-sliced turkey. Roast

beef may also be present sometimes, but not here.

Gravlax is of course salmon and its sauce is from mustard, vinegar, dill and sugar - yummy! There are lots of different sorts of pickled herring, and I tend to like the mustard herring. I'm unsure of what species that the smoked fish was, but rather common it's some sort of trout. Under the ham is hidden a big scoop of Jansson's Temptation, a cream-stew of chopped



Swedish crispbread

potato, anchovis and onion, a temptation I find irresistible! Small *prince sausages*, a couple of slices of *smoked sausage* and *liver paté* were also hidden under the ham, the latter primarily for putting on bread which usually is Swedish crispbread. Potatoes go with the Christmas food but I skipped it on my overloaded plate.

Traditional drinks to this is mulled wine, called *glögg*, a carbonated malt soda drink called *julmust*, which outsells Coca-Cola during Christmas, and *Christmas beer*, dark and stronger than ordinary beer.



## Mailing Comments

*Only EAPA - MCs for latest N'APA was in #139. But hey! Why not do your own fanzine and join! It's fun and educational, AND you don't even need a mimeograph for it. Burping 2 sentence, two cent chitchat on (a)social media is for amateurs with a shoe number IQ. Get smart, do a fanzine!*

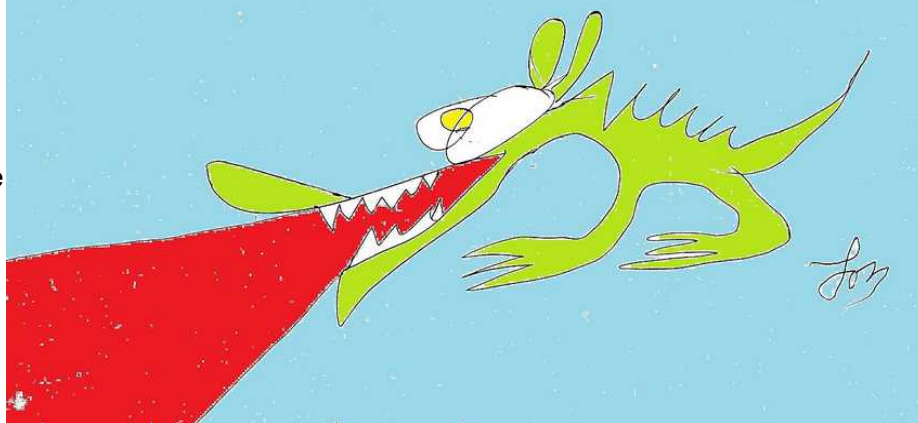
**Aisaac Aisimov:** Nice to see you here, buddy! Weird pictures of mimeos... How is life on Trantor?

**Fanac Chronicles:** As already pointed out, the AI makes a lot of mistakes when it comes to describing fandom. The pioneering years of fandom weren't the 1950s, but the 1930s. The first fanzines came in that decade. The sf cons didn't rise in the 1960s, but also in the 1930s. The Americans claim the first one was in Philadelphia in 1936, the British say Leeds in 1937. I side more with the British here, because their event was really organised as a convention, while Philadelphia was more a travel party. Professional sf mags didn't start in the 1970s of course, but already in the 1920s.

**Henry Grynsten:** Interesting. Buffy Saint Marie, isn't American Indian? Has she been aware of this all the time? Not that I care much. I have BTW seen her perform at an event at Stockholm University in the early 1980s. And Bob Dylan is quite a fraud! That was a bit shocking. I've never been a big Dylan fan. Some of his stuff is good, some not so good. The Nobel Prize in literature was exaggerated, I think. :- ) I agree with you on writers and gender and Ukraine, of course - since you basically agree with me here.

**William McCabe:** It seems you don't want books in continuing series. Me too. It's so boring getting "Part IIX in the Space Cucumber series"... It's OK with new novels placed in the same settings, but they shouldn't rely on being in a certain sequence, continuing each other. I like independent episodes more than a never-ending story. :- ) For me there is just *one* fandom and it's non-hyphen: not fringe-fandom, media-fandom, gaming-fandom, comics-fandom, all those with hyphens. The Fandom - ie us - traces its history and traditions in a straight line from the first clubs and fanzines and cons in the 1930s. It is true that in literature followers of Sherlock Holmes may have been the first literary fan movement - but they didn't call themselves a "fandom"! Fandom, us, both deal with literature AND call ourself Fandom. It may also be that some earlier sports fans occasionally were referred to as a fandom, but that label was rare and they didn't engage in literature or anything artistic. The people who dress up as comics figures, play bang-bang-shoot-shoot games, wave plastic swords, etc are unserious wannabe copiers and not Fandom. To masquerade as Conan's cousin is pretending. To build a plastic model of USS Enterprise from TV is copying. To run in the woods imagining you are a princess is mimicking medieval history. To write fanfiction is imitation. In most areas mediafans are just taking something and try to make a new copy of it! So boring and it's not creating something new. And besides, trying to "dive into" or be "a part of" a fantasy makes you near-sighted, depriving you of a healthy general overview making you unable to analyse it. Media-fans, the "sci-fi" crowd, are unaware of Fandom's long history, don't know its traditions and are just aiming for superficial entertainment from pretending and copying. There aren't several real fandoms, :- ) I suspect the English Tories don't argue "the rich" should have no taxes. It's a matter of what taxes benefits most people most. It's easy to shout "Tax the rich! That'll solve everything", but there are several problems. Too high taxes and highly productive people will leave the country and you lose. The heads of successful companies like IKEA, H&M, Tetrapak and other all fled Sweden. Others will just see that taking risks and make efforts isn't worth it, so they downsize and you lose jobs. Your general economic growth suffers and everyone lose. And if you do the math, even if you taxed "the rich" to the extreme you won't get as much as many think. "The rich" aren't that many. I agree that "the rich" should be taxed more, a little bit more, BUT the level must be carefully discussed. Someone explained: "The problem with the left is that they don't

*Lars LON Olsson just drags on with a dragon.*



really want to help the poor, instead they just want to hurt the rich." That's destructive and unethical.

**Garth Spencer:** Yes, it may be true that Golden Age writers, and even a little later unlike today wrote more pioneering breakthrough stories. And it's also true that commercial "sci-fi" recycle old stuff a lot. :- ) We shouldn't forget Minneapolis in '73! :- ) Well, Mussolini may have thought fascism was "combining public, or governmental institutions with private, or corporate institutions, into one" but it's not a *complete* definition of fascism. We also have concepts around "strength makes right", and you actually need that, need force to create Mussolini's corporativism, because it will be resisted. Fascism is also the idea of one great leader basically directing everything. It's the idea of that your tribe is better than other tribes. There are other aspects also around fascism - a lot of them these days seems to fit well with Putin's Russia...

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Robert Bloch, a leading figure in fandom, on a real swinging party - with booze and broads! From the Gauer collection. #138, #138.5 and #139 had more pics and other stuff about Bloch! This picture is AI colourised.

**Слава Україні!**

Archive Midwinter  
a zine for N'APA 268

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15 January 2024

**Comments:**

**Cover:** Public Domain Art.

**Ahrvid Engholm:** Good news and bad news, alas: it's the way of the world. King Carl Gustaf has fifty years on the throne...and gangs explode into murderous violence. Ick. Isaac Asimov had a bit of wisdom regarding the choice between a distant king and a local bully: the distant king might not find him, but the local bully certainly will.

Short Story Masters sounds like fun! I have always loved a good "Reading and Eating Meeting." I'm a member of a five-person writing-exchange group, cheerfully named Emerald Cove, which has been meeting monthly for seven years now. We have dinner, and exchange chapters or pages of what we're all working on, for critiquing. We bring greatly varied personal tastes and preferences -- for instance, I hate it when the other writers use slang. The winter is not "Way Cold," it's "Very Cold." "Way" in that sense is a hideous barbarism. But some of the other members, especially the younger ones, write VERY slangy text. So we stick out our tongues at each other!

I'm not too very concerned about the "postmodernist assault on science." I think that postmodernism has a few ideas of value, and, like most interpretive philosophies, it is worthwhile when taken in moderation, and noisome, obnoxious, and offensive when taken to an extreme. The idea -- the ^fact!^ -- that we all bring our individual personal points of view to our work is a valid question-mark regarding science. Your discoveries will be influenced by who you are, what you believe, the language you speak, and so on, and will thus be different from the discoveries I might make. It doesn't mean that either of us is ^wrong^. It's just part of the great diversity of human thought, which the gentle among us treasure as a celebration of individuality.

I agree with you in not liking the idea of re-writing published novels to bring them more into accord with modern thinking. It alters the history of the work, and cheapens it, in my opinion, by making it an echo-chamber of what people believe in the current era. Let Kipling be Kipling; understand his sins, and celebrate him for the things he did well.

**Ahrvid Engholm:** Hello again! I try not to have your submissions adjacent and consecutive here, but nobody came in between your two submissions. You're a powerful writing machine, and I couldn't match your output, let alone the great depths of your research, if I hadn't anything else to do from one end of the day to the other! I do not know how you do it, but hooray for you for it!

Agreement with your brief notes on Israel and the Palestinians: a two-state solution is the best available outcome...and every time it starts to look possible, some violent extremist destroys that hope, postponing peace by generations. Then there's Iran...

**George Phillis:** I'm delighted to learn that Alarums and Excursions is still being published! I read your last Eclipse novel with true delight, and I certainly grinned at the Telemann opera that was performed before it was written!

**Ahrvid Engholm:** A third contribution! Ye cats! It consists mostly of a story by Robert Bloch: I will have to read it later, as submission deadline is upon me. I've never actually liked Bloch very much, as his style goes too far toward horror. Not at all surprising; he was known as a horror writer. But horror is a genre that I avoid, being a little too sensitive to the pain and misery the genre embraces.

**Mark Nelson:** Fun personal history of fanzine and apa activity! I've been in five or six different apas over the decades. I was participating in "Sic Biscuit Disintegrat" ("that's the way the cookie crumbles") published by Joy Beeson, back in the 1980s, where Dr. Craig Hilton (who does the luscious "Doc Rat" webcomic) was the first in recorded history to use the term "Furry Fandom." At the time, I was saying "Fuzzy Fandom," and thus missed by chance at fannish immortality!

Rect me, total agreement re consistency in sf (and all genres!) If the protagonist knows how to understand spoken Russian in his first novel, it's cheating the reader if the same character is bewildered by spoken Russian in his fifth novel. Of course, writers are mere mortals, and it is easy to forget details like that. But, yes, inconsistencies like that are very antagonistic to "believability" in prose fiction.

Re alcoholic vs non-alcoholic cider, my dad once gave me a gallon of fresh-squeezed apple juice. I put it in the fridge. For a

couple of days, it was just fine. Then it started to turn, and became apple beer! That was quite good indeed! But a couple days after that it became apple vinegar, totally undrinkable! In his youth, my dad used to make Applejack by freeze-distilling alcoholic cider.

**Garth Spencer:** Rect me re Jack Vance, I have read some of the books by Matthew Hughes and, yes, he has "counterfeited" Jack Vance's style brilliantly! I like Hughes' work a lot. And there were three Lyonesse novels, although, rather like Lord of the Rings, they are more like "one really big book" than like three separate books.

"I think growing up is overrated." I will disagree: growing up is hugely liberating! It means being able to buy the books you want, rather than having reading assigned to you by others. I means being able to go to a dirty movie if you want. It means being able to ^walk out^ of a movie! I will always treasure the memory of the first time I simply got up and walked out of a movie theater, because the movie was so stupid and boring. (It was "Mr Majestyk" with Charles Bronson.) The feeling was incredibly liberating! Growing up leads to an interest in politics, something youngsters basically do not have. (They might have a very superficial appreciation, such as really hating Joe Biden or Donald Trump, but until you're old enough to comprehend Constitutional Amendments, you really know nothing about politics.) And growing up, for me, meant not getting hit any more at school. I suffered very badly from school bullying, and that went away completely when I went to college. No one has hit me in fifty years, and I hope that continues to be the case!

**Heath Row:** Congratulations on the award for video productions and video fandom! Alas for me, I don't have the time nor resources for much in the way of video. Once a month or so, I'll rent a movie on disk. I don't do any streaming or TV at all. Any spare moments I have, I spend reading! Life is just too darned short!

Nifty that Metal Hurlant is back! Maybe it will spread to the U.S. again, although probably not. "Second Acts" are rare in the U.S.

Rect me, I am delighted that you found and are enjoying P.D.Q. Bach's "An Hysterical Return." The "Pervertimento for Bicycle Bagpipes and Balloons" is a particular favorite of mine. And, aye, I'm also a Dr. Demento and Firesign Theater fan! I think Firesign Theater's "Anythin' You Want," expanded from its former version as "Shakespeare's Lost Comedy" is particularly brilliant, some of the best spoofing of Shakespeare anyone has ever done.

I would agree with Ahrvid Engholm: burning books is a rotten thing to do, with a history that is ugly as sin...but laws against burning of books are also wrong. It should remain a legally protected form of "speech" -- and good people should eschew it, and scorn those who practice it.

**Kevin Trainor Jr.:** I, too, prefer Jack Vance's "Demon Princes" and "Planet of Adventure" series, and hold these to be just about the best work he ever did. A lesser contribution was the Cadwal Chronicles, when ended with "Ecce and Old Earth," which is noteworthy for the first time in his long career that Vance gave us a female protagonist. As a creator of the 50s, Vance reflected the sexism of his era, where female characters were usually "princesses" and prizes to be won by the heroic male characters. But right at the end of his career, Vance broke through that barrier and gave us Wayness Tamm, a heroine through and through, with pluck and determination worthy of any of Vance's male heroes. It is always nice when a writer can transcend his own limitations.

(Sax Rohmer managed this with the very last Fu Manchu novel. Most of the Fu Manchu cycle is dreary with racist stereotypes and dreary with xenophobic plot-lines. But at the very end, he was able to write a novel where Chinese Communism was the villain, and

a young Chinese man was the hero of the story. Rohmer atoned for a great many sins with that one book.)

**Samuel Lubell:** If you find and read the Lyonesse trilogy, let us know what you think of it. I adore it. I laughed at the funny parts, and gasped at the dramatic parts. The climactic "race to the finish line" scene had my heart absolutely pounding from the sheer suspense!

Re Government Shutdowns, general agreement. I have some view of my own which I'll spare y'all from, but in essence, if fifteen people threaten to overrule 535 people, then something is wrong with "democracy" as we're practicing it!

Fun showcase on Joe Haldeman. I've read "The Forever War," but not much else of his. I tried to read some of the sequelae to TFW but did not care for it.

Fun essay on Hawthorne! I read the Scarlet Letter in school, but you know how that goes: when you <sup>^</sup>have<sup>^</sup> to read something, it takes most of the joy out of it! I really hated the cowardly and hypocritical preacher in TSL -- I think I was supposed to -- and thought he was really the villain of the piece.



## **Ye Murthered Master Mage**

**George Phillis  
48 Hancock Hill Drive  
Worcester, MA 01609**

Happy new year to all! I hope you all had a good Christmas vacation, that your reading pile was attacked to some extent successfully, and that you still have plenty of books to read, videos to watch, costumes to produce, fanzines to prepare and print, and all of those other fine aspects of true fannish life in which you may or may not participate.

My next novel, *Of Breaking Waves*, is receiving its final reading pass in current days. I hope to finish in a week or two. I have had many hopes on completing projects, some of which have even been accomplished sooner or later. As is well known, the unit of fannish time is *Real Soon Now*, which can sort of be translated into the Spanish as *mañana*, except that it lacks the sense of extreme urgency heard in the translation.

Comments on the future of the N3F will come first, followed by comments on other zines.

### **Comments on the N3F**

We reach the start of another year. Looking back over the last year or two, I can say that we have largely moved in good directions. We have considerably more members actively involved in the N3F, doing useful or critical volunteer work. One new member maintains our web pages. Another more-or-less new member has volunteered to take over editing *Films Fantastic*. Yet another new member, in addition to distributing N3F flyers through his bookstore, has taken an active role in the club by taking a position on the Directorate. I could go on with this list for a while. Surely we are all grateful to José Sanchez for the fine artwork we are seeing in a considerable number of our zines. We should also be grateful to friendly non-members who generously let us use their book reviews in issues of our review zine. Judy Carroll maintains no fewer than four of our bureaus.

As a practical matter, I am probably playing a less active role in the club than I have in some years

past. That's primarily because other people have taken over tasks that I had been filling. For this I am profoundly grateful. I am not getting any younger, and I have many things I would like to finish before I advance to the next plane of existence.

Several years ago I noted a few things that we were not doing. That list included running conventions and publishing a news zine, a zine dedicated to general fannish news. Kevin Trainor gave us a club-adjacent con. Mindy Hunt edits the news zine. We don't cover everything. For example, with great effort *The FanActivity Gazette* could cover a vast list of more-or-less obscure awards, but the truth of the matter is that *File 770* already does a brilliant job of this.

Here we are in 2024. What are we doing less well? In my opinion, our largest failure is in recruiting and retaining active, dues-paying members. I agree we do not have a large number of expenses. The website, including the handling software for distributing all of our fanzines, comes to under four hundred dollars a year. The prizes for our fiction contest will typically cost about a hundred dollars a year. Mailing and printing of the paper mail issues of our fanzine come to under two hundred dollars a year. I've been covering some of those costs. I suspect it's the case I could ask for a fund drive, to pick up costs beyond our annual dues, but the truth of the matter is that we are fairly close to breaking even so it's not a big deal. Rather more important is that we have members who drop out, and except as membership recruiting is done, we do not have new members joining very much. That's an issue that we ought to try dealing with.

We are a volunteer organization. The N3F advances to the extent that we have members who are willing to do work for the club. In some times past, we have been down to a single member bringing out *The National Fantasy Fan* and/or *Tightbeam*. There is considerable belief that without the intervention of Jacqueline Lichtenberg at the millennium, we would've collapsed. To her we must be most grateful.

Having said that, we currently have a long list of volunteers. Members who are not currently volunteering should at least be grateful to all of the volunteers for what they are doing. Letters to the editor of *The National Fantasy Fan* (that's me,

phillies@ 4liberty.net) are always a good way to show your thankful. Making simple contributions, one way or the other, to advancing our fannish activities is another way to show your gratitude.

I have been president of this club for nine years now. It is not unreasonable to say that if you keep doing the same job at some point you fall into a routine and are not as open as you should be to new ideas. Truthfully I have always tried to be vigorously supportive of anyone trying anything that appeared to be even marginally sane, and hope I have been doing a decent job of that. Nonetheless, if any of you do have any ideas that you would like to see the club try, please speak up.

You can contact me, or you can contact any member of the Directorate. Their names and email addresses are all on the second page of The National Fantasy Fan.

Historically, there have been periods when there has been much more vigorous debate as to what our club should be doing. If you don't believe me look at early issues of Tightbeam or our other zines, as seen on our web site.

If you are already doing volunteer work for us, I am profoundly grateful. If you aren't, consider what you might do. Of course everyone isn't going to be equally available for doing this. If your young children have turned into four boisterous teenagers, you may very well have more problems on your hands than you can shake a stick at, and your volunteer work consists of keeping your email address with us current.

We have had a relatively calm period in the club. On rereading old issues of zines and samples of correspondence that I have acquired with time, I am aware of two occasions on which the Directorate had to use its authority to expel a member. In the first case, the member published a fanzine which led to him being forbidden to use the US mails. This was in 1950 or so, when there really were not a lot of ways to communicate with other people. So far as I can make out from the description, the serious difficulty is the member in question in his fanzine accused the American Red Cross and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of functioning more for the benefit of their officers and staff and less for their intended purposes. In the second case, I am completely

unable to make out why the member in question was sent on his way. However, he managed to procure a referendum of the entire membership, and the overwhelming majority of the membership voted to sustain the Directorate position that he should be removed from the club. The only statement I can find from the director as to why must've distressed fellow directors then and now would be reviewed as grossly unprintable, though not in any of the usual ways.

## Comments on Other Zines

Intermission 137: I shall briefly lapse into political commentary. Readers who wish to avoid reading terrible things should skip ahead two paragraphs.

It appears we are getting from Ukraine a demonstration that under the conditions of modern warfare once again the defense is very strong, exactly as it was in World War I. Between hosts of drones, shoals of mines, self-steering artillery shells, and effective antitank rockets, efforts to push forward are not very successful with massive artillery support. Ukraine was urged to follow American and European tactics, which proved not to work. While it might be proposed that Ukraine did not have lots of aircraft, their fleet of drones did have air supremacy over the battlefield. Neither of these is a very effective against mines.

We are now having people seriously asking if Biden and his Secretary of State actually want Ukraine to win. I am delighted to read that Sweden is actually preparing to send combat aircraft to Ukraine, since it appears that the United States is postponing indefinitely actually doing anything. From my point of view, it appears that the European press has a somewhat less than unbiased coverage of the American presidential campaign, namely not that Trump is better, but that his opponent in different ways is just as bad. Nonetheless, I live here. Fortunately there will as always be a series of other presidential candidates on the ballot, some of whom may actually amount to something.

You commented on the wheelchair ramp seen in Stockholm, Maine. Wheelchair access is legally mandatory for government buildings here, and to some extent for private commercial buildings, and has been that way for a long time.

Congratulations on writing short stories and getting them published. I am interested in your observation that cats cannot taste sugar or sweet things. That is not consistent with my observations on my cat.

Archive Midwinter: sympathies on trying to extend word processing to your brother-in-law. There are certainly a wide range of opinions as to writing styles. As a general rule, I use a mixture of third-person and first-person past tense writings. I am reminded of an otherwise god-awful novel written in second person, present tense, that won a Hugo award. Admittedly, reaching the last line of the novel meant that I read the last line, which was brilliant, but other than that I have had several people congratulate me for having finished the thing. I confess that I found the ending of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's court* to make more or less no sense, this being the part after the knights are massacred.

Actually, Pickering did not erase his own memory. Eclipse's mom, who will show up later in the book, set that up.

Intermission: With respect to Happy Kittens, I believe what you are seeing is the filtering due a single publisher completely dominating the awards. Looking at the list of novel and novella nominees from 2023, I seem to see ten nominations from Tor and Tordotcom, and one each from Del Rey and from Solaris. For the year 2022, of ten nominations, eight went to Tor. For 2021, a similar set of numbers obtains. Of course, someone can claim the Tor receives all these nominations because their writers are uniquely good, but this does not quite match the difficulty I have had persuading reviewers for *The N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono* to review the Hugo nominees. The reaction I have had has in most cases to a mention of Hugo nominees has been extremely negative.

I must however give credit to Neffer Tom Feller for giving me reviews of the nominees after the nominations and votes had been counted. I confess my reaction to a significant number of the reviews was that the discussion seemed to focus more on who was sleeping with whom than on plot, description, or characterization, which would seem more likely for reviews of erotic fiction than reviews of science fiction. However, I respect the

accuracy of the reviews and the thoughtfulness of the reviewer.

On the same line, the N3F has since 1941 given its own science fiction awards, the N3F Laureate Awards, making them the oldest set of awards in science fiction fandom. I occasionally receive criticisms that the list of books nominated for the Laureate awards, or at least the list of books that have received the awards, is almost completely not the same as the list of nominees and winners for the Hugo awards. I have had to explain to people that a reasonable estimate is that there are two thousand science fiction novels a year published, only some of our members are interested in book fandom, so in the reasonable estimate our members have read only a quarter or half of those titles. It is therefore not surprising that the nominations do not overlap, because it is by no means certain that any of our active members have read any of the books that were nominated for the Hugo awards.

Brandy Hall: Thank you for your description of science fiction conventions of three decades ago. Persuading people to write reviews of books is challenging. Good reviewers are like large, finely-cut gems.

You have an interesting record on contributing to APAs. When I became N3F President, N'APA had been reduced to two fine members exchanging letters with each other. I was able to revive the zine in electronic form. One of our strengths, in my opinion, is that we do not have a minimum activity requirement, and we distribute N'APA to the entire membership of the N3F, not just the APA writers.

Thank you for your many thoughtful comments on the previous mailing. My most recent project for the N3F was a newszine, the *FanActivity Gazette*, now under the guidance of Editrix Mindy Hunt. I view the project as successful, even though it really doesn't cover all sorts of fannish activity.

There was a period some years ago when there were a set of elections for the Hugo awards and a certain number of the non-winners were ridiculed for their vote totals. This was the set of elections in which one faction was able to campaign in the likes of *The Guardian*, a major English newspaper, with opinions on who should win or lose. I see absolutely no reason to risk having any of the fine writers and

other creators who are nominated for Laureate Awards be ridiculed because their work received fewer votes than someone else. Vote counts for the Laureate Awards are therefore closely held secrets. I occasionally see claims that the number of voters must've been very few — mind you, there are only forty or so eligible voters — but the people writing these claims have absolutely no information on which to base their remarks.

For the same reason, the Laureate Award does not include a No Award vote. We are choosing what we think is the best, and even if none of it is stunningly good, something may well be the best of a perhaps mediocre lot. If you thought something was better than what was nominated, you should've nominated it yourself. On the same line, to keep anyone from swamping the ballot, each member is limited to one or two nominations in a category.

With respect to limits on magic in Dungeons & Dragons, I knew a fair number of people who viewed the later rule sets, for example the Advanced rule set, as representing multiple steps in the wrong direction, so they continued to play using the Three Holy Books in the Sacred Plywood Box.

I have heard that there is hard cider, that is, alcoholic cider, but I think I have only rarely seen any offered for sale. Note that in the United States grocery stores in some of the country, though not all of it, cannot legally sell alcoholic beverages.

Algebra, which is the English spelling of a word in Arabic, was created by an Arab mathematician in if I recall correctly what is now Spain. Or perhaps it was Baghdad. I'd have to look it up and I don't really care to. There were people, ancient Greeks, who created number problems, but they did not use the algebraic symbology the same way we do.

Your suggestion that the square root solution was an algorithm is certainly reasonable. Your other information is very interesting. Which of the novels by Wyndham did you find? I'm currently about to read *The Chrysalids* which appears to be an expansion of a work I saw in a collection more than sixty years ago.

I am sorry to read that LASFS is aging, though I note that I did meet Sue Fox close to fifty years ago, when she was a bit younger than she is now. If you

are wanting to find an aging problem consider the difficulty of my board wargaming club, in which a typical new member has been in the hobby for fifty years. On the bright side, the forced social aspects of board wargaming, namely you for the most part want an opponent, mean that the Internet, in particular Facebook, is effective as a path to advertising for members. The N3F should do more of it.

The N3F does have a Games Bureau, though like all of our bureaus the level of its activity wanders a great deal with time. We did for a while have a member who was head of the Bureau and who sent us fairly regularly a game review and report on what the local clubs were doing. There was the minor difficulty that he was one of our members who does not use computers, as a result of which is Bureau reports had to be retyped by the zine editor at our end.

What does N3F offer fans? We publish a lot of different fanzines, showing that there is a whole range of activities in which members might be interested. We circulate fanzines from other people, perhaps not as regularly as we might, so that members discover other sorts of fannish activity. We sponsor an annual short story contest with cash prizes. We invite winners and other people who have submitted good stories to let us print their stories in our unfortunately quite occasional fiction fanzine *Eldritch Science*. *Eldritch Science* has historically had the challenge that we had good writers submitting us stories with some frequency, except they changed and became pros who were submitting their stories to paying markets. I particularly recall Baen Books as lifting writers from us.

*Brownian Motion*: from what I can make out, as it is not my particular interest, video science fiction productions, including television programs, movies, live streams, games, at tedious Cetera, have acquired a certain sameness in odd ways. Part of this is that the cost of producing a video is large, the background of people involved in them tends to be a bit narrow, and as a result the people produce things that they think they would like or that they think the audience ought to read. The former can get a bit dull, unless you like the same things, in which case what you see is really great! That's two sides of the same coin. The latter turns into the sort of

children's novel that was the artform of some Victorian writers, perhaps to be described as pedagogical with a piledriver. As I said, this is not my interest, so I am not sure how good or bad the final results actually are.

With respect to your comment that fandom is not organized enough, I observe that the N3F is occasionally ridiculed for having all of these bureaus that actually focus on different specialties.

Esmeralda County Line: thank you for running Son of Silvercon, thus proving that Neffers can engage in fan activities beyond our club.

“Every minute wasted on reading James Joyce is a minute not spent reading Heinlein, Anderson, Asimov, and other Golden Age writers.” BRAVO!

Of course, the Airlords of Han in Buck Rogers were not Chinese. They were space aliens who had overrun China first.

With respect to media fans and science-fiction fans, I am reminded of the perfectly respectable SF convention in one city or another that decided that comic books were beyond the pale and should be excluded. The comics fans went off to launch their own convention, which at this point has an order of magnitude, literally, more attendees than the science fiction convention does.

Note that Uncle Hugo's in Minneapolis was burned down by rioters a few years ago, and has only relatively recently returned to life.

# BROWNIAN MOTION #6

An apazine from Garth Spencer

For N'APA #268, January 2024

*AND NOW – we bring you ZOMBIE ALIENS!!*



*“Must ... blow ... minds ... Arrrrgh ...”*

*(from Jose Sanchez)*

## A Day that Shall Live in Euphony

*(from The Obdurate Eye #35, January 2024)*

I begin to realize that I have overreached myself. In fact, I have probably always overreached myself. In fact ... I think I have been one of those clowns who illustrate the Dunning-Kruger effect – if you're too dumb to realize it, then you think you're a lot smarter than you are, perhaps smarter than anyone around you.

...

I boiled down my life to about fifteen activities or departments. It seems, though, that I don't spare enough time on the practical ones – documenting my finances and medical care and housekeeping budget, for example – and spend a bit much of my time on fan activities, and keep overlooking social ones. Is this effective? Now I ask you.

Meanwhile, my personal energy is not as much as it was. I really must start an exercise program. As I have told myself for twenty-odd years.

Interestingly, I defined the use of my time in terms of producing something, such as writing, before I shuffle off. Am I getting off on the wrong foot?

**Me: A rational intellectual who reasoned  
out the entire plan and entered into it  
with prudence and good judgement.  
Also me:**



*(clipart)*

## Design for Living

Just to see my life as a whole ... well, also because my memory isn't what it was ... and also because I need some repeated re-orientation to life's demands, and to my own purposes ... I made up a priority list.

It wasn't enough just to write out a schedule of things I have to do, to make a list a check it twice; it turned out I also needed a thematic list of my priorities, the things that are important to do in their order of importance.

I thought I was so smart, using Abraham Maslow's three major headings from his hierarchy of needs – Material Needs, then Social Needs, then something called Self-Actualization. Turns out I really need to read what Maslow actually wrote. My priority list is way out of sync with his hierarchy.

Anyway, the lesson seems to be that a good day is one where you're putting in enough time and effort on each of these areas. This I seldom accomplish.

Under the heading of Material Needs, of course there are subheadings like Income, Finances, Housekeeping, Pet Care, Appliances, Medical and Legal affairs. It tells me something sobering, to realize how I spend the minimum of attention on these critical areas ... partly because some of these chores bore

me, or I find them distasteful, or (in the case of financial control and tax preparation) because they frighten me. But I try to do what is necessary.

Under the heading of Social Needs, I discover that I really ignored maintaining my relationships ... partly because aside from conversations with fannish friends, in person or online, I have not a lot of resources to bring to social activities. And again, not a lot of taste (or money) for the social activities that are offered: dance clubs, sports and sports bars, church activities, even concerts and movies and theatre exceed my nonexistent budget. Of course there are ways around this, I just don't have much energy anymore.

After the last five years or so I am no longer interested in dating.

What seems to suffice me is online writing-oriented activities, which shade insensibly into the Self-Actualization area. For decades I have resorted mainly to writing as an outlet for my needs: firstly to sort out the painful confusion of life experiences, secondly to vent my feelings, and eventually to make some plans.

A lot of these activities are fannish activities, of course: trying to organize secretarial materials for the Heathen Freehold, and for the Canadian SF and Fantasy Association, that oversees the Aurora Awards; trying to administer the Canadian Unity Fan Fund; organizing fannish articles for the upcoming website, and even some attempted fiction writing. If I can handle the critiques, which is debatable.

All of this can be diagrammed as equidistant points on a circle. And if I am putting in enough work on each area, and reacquainting myself with tasks yet to be done on each subject, maybe I am a well-rounded man.

Yet there are moments when my energy and enthusiasm fails. Clearly something still escapes me. Maybe I should take up drawing again. Or start exercising.



*Quick pop quiz: Congress or Parliament?*



## The Real Soon Now Website

(from *I Never Got the Hang of Thursdays* #217, January 2024)

### **“An Host of Furious Fancies”:**

It’s time I got serious about revamping my website. I’ve been promising it long enough. Fortunately, I have most or all of my content ready, it just needs HTML-izing.

Until now my amateur website at the Vancouver CommunityNet was an exercise in self-exposure – meaning, I displayed some of my interests and my writing. For the last few years, though, I wanted to change focus to provide information resources for fandom as I know it, particularly in the Pacific Northwest and across Canada. (Yes, I know, there are already websites that cover these subjects, except that they are not very complete or up-to-date.)

You may now laugh.

These days, fandom consists of several fandoms with rather little in common, and the most popular and active fandoms have little clue about fandom as I learned it, starting in the early 1980s. Well, I can at least make information accessible.

Of course, I am just not addressing a further issue: how to promote, or how to attract attention and interest, or why any random web-surfing person would be interested in lists of clubs, conventions, and fanzines, links to SFFH markets, what is happening with the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, links to SFnal websites, drafts of Canadian fanhistory, or the proceedings of the Aurora Awards. In a word, motivation.

How to motivate people is an unsolved mystery to me.

So. What do I offer? Literally *all* I can do is to make information accessible about fandoms in Vancouver, the Northwest and beyond, including:

- Anime
- Amateur Publication Associations
- Awards, from the Auroras to the Nebulas (fan-voted, jury-selected, etc.)
- Blogs
- Comics
- Conventions coming up
- Costuming
- Fan Funds
- Fanhistories – draft articles (I invite corrections, complaints, and amendments), and links
- Fanzines, from professional-looking productions to humble newsletters
- Fan archives

- Filking events
- Gaming in various forms
- Makers
- media franchise fandoms
- Model builders
- the Society for Creative Anachronism
- Other Social Media – Discord, MeWe, Wix, YouTube channels, etc.
- Podcasts
- SF/F/H publications/writers’ markets, both professional and small press
- SF/F/H writers’ workshops
- Websites, whether interesting or actually useful, and
- Eccentrica such as the Discordians, the Pastafarians, the Kingdom of Talossa and the Universal Life Church

And now you know why I’ve been talking about this so long, while not visible doing anything. Now is a good time to get off my duff.



## And Another Thing (Mailing Comments)

**FANAC Fanhistory Session – APAs Everywhere** (Dec. 9/23) – I’m sorry I missed this.

### **Intermission #137 - Ahrvid Engholm**

The older I get, the more I realize I can’t comment on the news, because I don’t know enough. I don’t even know enough about domestic Canadian issues, or municipal issues here in Vancouver.

This is probably inexcusably irresponsible, coming from an adult of retirement age. But so help me, I never really learned to grasp public issues, whether they were economic issues or public safety issues or the issues that nations argue with weapons.

Where do I even start?

Onward. Your review of United Stockholms of America was interesting! And your article on samizdat!

### **Archive Midwinter – Jefferson Swycaffer**

Re your comments to me: Glad you appreciated my convention report. Sorry to hear that the famous Comic Con has pretty much displaced other, more fannish cons in San Diego.

### **Intermission #138 - Ahrvid Engholm**

Condolences to you on Bertil Falk’s passing. Condolences also on the violence now plaguing Sweden. We are having similar incidents in Canada, although I don’t know if the relative frequency amounts to a public crisis. Yet.

Onward. I see we have very different definitions of fascism, while not disagreeing about the obvious signs; and different definitions of copyright, as well. Come to think of it, you and I and Henry Grynnssten keep coming up with different definitions. Are we approaching a historical period where everyone is, in effect, using a different dictionary? That each of them makes up independently? It would explain a lot!

### **Ye Murthered Master Mage #267 – George Phillis**

Re your comment to *Archive Midwinter*: there were, and presumably are, external disk drives that can read floppy discs, and can plug into a computer with a USB port. But you really have to look hard for them.

Re your comments to me: there may be fanzine revivals, in some times and places; but I am still waiting to see any. I am not sure how being a CUFF candidate (or delegate, or administrator) is very different from being involved in any other fan fund,

considering the growing communication gap – and age gap – between fanzine, or fannish fandom, and every other fandom.

### ***Intermission #138.5 – Ahrvid Engholm***

Is there a scriptomantic condition, the opposite of Twonk's Disease? I ask out of some concern for you.

As I said in eAPA, your reprint of Bloch's "A Way of Life" was amusing.

### ***Brandy Hall #3 – Mark Nelson***

You're honest about procrastination and lack of time management; I must be, too. In fact it was only within the past five years or so that I seriously asked myself what my major-priority activities were, and settled on some order to put them in. Hence the article in this contribution (which I believe I shall copy to my fanzine).

I have stuck to APA schedules pretty faithfully ... admittedly because I socialize via fannish correspondence more than face to face.

Thank you for reading my con report, and registering the conclusion that the 'fannish community' panel came to. Your conclusions are spot on. "*When fanzines are no more then I will diminish and pass into the west*" – oh very good!

Re your comments to me: Like you, I came to identify SF fandom with fanzine activity, so it was a surprise to me to realize how much of fandom actually had less and less contact with fanzine. A friend of mine, R. Graeme Cameron, thought the same way at first. We both had trouble shifting gear.

Re Jefferson Swycaffer's remarks on the ageing of LASFS membership – we had a similar greying of membership in the B.C. SF Association, and almost all the members of Corflu Pangloss were grey- or white-haired. The last time the subject came up in my perzine, in connection with our former conrunning community, a correspondent and I were discussing the failure of conrunners to recruit and train assistants who would "shadow" and eventually replace them. As to the fan community generally, we used to have a genial and sociable fan who acted as a "greeter" for new members of our convention, or new faces at our weekly gathering, and he welcomed people in; but when he got older and sort of retired from this function, again, no one really filled his shoes. One member and another tried to host the weekly gathering, but apparently didn't quite draw people effectively. I tried to start up my own biweekly or monthly gatherings, and I'm still trying, but so far I display the leadership or charisma level of a potted plant.

### ***Snow Poster Township #13 – Heath Row***

At some point I really must start recording these URLs for SF videos! As it is, I am compiling a list of fannish archives and repositories for an upcoming article.

There was somebody, I think John Hertz, who was supposed to bring fanzines to Pemmi-Con for the fanzine display table, but he couldn't make it.

### ***Esmeralda County Line #6 – Kevin Trainor Jr.***

You can't imagine how bare and lifeless this desert landscape looks, to someone who grew up in a temperate rainforest.

You have my wholehearted sympathy about losing your wallet. I managed to lose mine, just riding an escalator from one floor to another, and to this day I will be blessed if I can figure out how my wallet disappeared. Replacing ID and everything was No Fun.

Re your comment to *Archive Midwinter* – Correct me if I'm wrong, but the reason so many representative republics keep being described as “nanny states” is that there was so much political demand, over the past century, for governments to provide social services; and the level of service, if mediocre, is still higher – and incorporates many more services – than were ever provided by community or church organizations.

Notice!! I am *not* arguing that this is the only, nor the best way to provide these services. What Samuel Lubell wrote in the last mailing, under the heading “Government Shutdown”, gave me pause; and I don't even live in the United States.

Re Jack Vance – I found one or two of the Lyonesse novels, as I recall, and never quite lost the suspicion that I was missing some of the implications of the storylines. But then I am prone to missing implications.

Re your comments to me:

- you're about the fourth or fifth person to observe that most of the Canadian conventions I managed to find online were furry or media conventions.
- I have, in fact, obtained an account with MeWe. I just have to get off my duff and \*finish\* my preparations to post a website, both at the local Freenet and on MeWe.
- It would amuse me if deprecating sports fans is now the “in” thing, somewhere. I guess contempt for outsiders is one of the shared motifs of today's subcultures.

Re your comments to *Synergy* #47 – I, too, have also decided to cultivate my own garden, as well. Or at least the parts of it I can do something about. I used to agonize about the fact that I had the leadership potential or the charisma points of a potted plant, and could not help my family, or local fandom, or the local convention, because I just *couldn't* motivate anyone. Now I don't even try and I'm much ~~happier~~ more content.

Re your comments to *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #266, about political correctness – did I ever tell you about the mock conspiracy I made up about Belgians? I decided to start claiming that Everything Is Belgium's Fault, that the EU is really the Evil Sinister Belgian Empire, that Britain left the EU because of a swarming plague of officious round mustachioed Belgians with their clipboards and metric rulers and ISO-9000

regulations, and that they threatened all of civilization with their overt Belgian Cultural Imperialism, and covert aid to the worldwide underground Cult of Kali. Why? Because Belgium is about as small and obscure and inoffensive a country as you could find, apart from Sikkim or Vanuatu. And also because I was exposed as a willing and conscious agent of the Danish Cultural Imperialism plot. (Ask me for a copy of Confabulation, the fanthology, for background.)

Re “Son of Silvercon After-Action Report” – it might be interesting to compare notes on your experience of negotiating hotel contracts with the experience of fans in other parts of this continent. The experience of a former VCON chair, before he left Vancouver, was that hotels with enough function space for an SF convention demanded incredibly inflated fees after the turn of the century, compared to 20 or 30 years earlier. This appears not to be so prominent an issue in the U.S. – or am I mistaken? – but it appears to be a reason why so few Canadian conventions are fannish, or at least text-oriented conventions today.

### **Samizdat #22 – Samuel Lubell**

Gorgeous image there from J B.

Re your comments to my *Brownian Motion* #4:

- I am still awaiting a new edition of *BCSFazine*, so it may remain in the realm of Real Soon Now, like a revived VCON. Glad you enjoyed the Pemmicon trip report. Just to clarify, the SF Canada experience I reported was not mine, but Den Valdrón's.
- As to science and magic ... I am contemplating a story in which a character encounters a semi-magical effect, and sets about testing it in every way he can, and ends up with a scientific-sounding *description* without once establishing an *explanation*. Not that that is the main subject of the story. I am also contemplating a story universe where applied parapsysics – meaning, essentially, putting paranormal phenomena on a repeatable, reliable, and usable basis – amounts to magic, but magic made scientific and, even, a form of intelligence and security technology. But doing so incurs certain consequences, such as the necessary and restrictive conditions to make some operations possible, and unavoidable necessities such as power costs, or the “side” effects on people and surroundings.

Re “Government Shutdown”: when I started to hear of the U.S. government talking about suspending its operations for financial reasons, I had to ask myself certain questions, but I'm in no position to answer them.

# Brandy Hall Issue 4 (January 2024)

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*Brandy Hall* 4 is produced for N'APA mailing 268 (January 2024) by Mark Nelson.

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This issue is a mailing comment only issue. I'll defer my account of my experience of science fiction conventions to the next issue.

## The Mathom House

*Intermission* 137 (Ahrvid Engholm) Can I ask you to pass my congratulations to Carl XVI Gustaf for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his coming to the throne? I used to believe that the British royalty should be treated as if they were Victorian children: seen but not heard. More recently I've come to the view that they should neither be seen nor heard. I'm not in favour of the UK becoming a republic, but I would like to see the monarch stripped of their remaining power (surprisingly significant), and reformed so that it is run along the lines of the continental royal families. The Swedish model is very appealing, though I'd remove the ability to chairs a foreign committee of parliamentarians and informational cabinet meetings.

In 1999 there was a referendum in Australia on whether the country should become a republic. (The British monarch is Australia's Head of State. The monarch's executive power is exercised by the Governor-General. The Governor-General is appointed by the monarch on the advice of the Australian Prime Minister. Since 1965, all the Governor Generals have been Australians, with all-but-one born in Australia). Opinion polls since the early 1990s had showed that a majority of Australians were in favour of Australia becoming a republic. However, the referendum question proposed replacing the Governor-General with a President "appointed by two-thirds majority of the members of the Commonwealth Parliament". A significant number of pro-republic Australians were against the President being chosen by parliamentarians and this was a factor in the defeat of the referendum.

The politics behind the referendum question is interesting, though this is not the place for a detailed discussion. Essentially, Paul Keating set the ball moving in the early 1990s. Keating, from the Labour Party, was Prime Minister from 1991-1996. The right-of-centre Coalition won the 1996 general election and John Howard became the Prime Minister. Howard was pro-monarchy. Because of promises given when in opposition, he had to move forward with the referendum. It's widely believed that he manipulated the 1998 Australian Constitutional Convention, which had responsibility for determining the model to replace the monarchy, to ensure that the proposal coming out-of-it would split the pro-republic vote. He succeeded.

I'm much more pessimistic than you about the likelihood of the Ukraine war ending in 2024. If it does end in 2024, I feel it's likely to be on terms that are more favourable to the Russians than the

Ukrainians. Much depends upon the outcome of the 2024 elections in the USA. It doesn't seem remotely likely that there will be any coup against Putin. But what do I know?

I grew up in Derby. As you note, the ending -by indicates a Viking settlement. Indeed, Djúra-bý was one of the Five Boroughs of the Danelaw. The town was initially established by the Romans (Derventio) and it was later settled by the Anglo-Saxons, but it is the Viking name that has remained. The other boroughs of the Danelaw were: Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham, and Stamford – none of these have retained their Viking name: Leicester and Lincoln shown their origins as Roman towns, Nottingham and Stamford show Anglo-Saxon coinage.

Ryct Henry Grynsten. I agree with you that although the term “social sciences” contains the word science, they are not sciences in the same way that the physical and biological sciences are. I also agree that replication problems in the medical and biological sciences pale into insignificance compared against replication problems in many social sciences. (It would be foolhardy to deny that there have been replication problems in science).

Ryct to Willian McCabe. Continuing the theme of agreeing with you, I'm also against rewriting books according to the thoughts of the present. (“The white page can be overwritten”). There's an on-again off-again discussion in Australia about statues of the Great Men of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Research has shown that these men were often very-bad-people who did very-bad-things, mostly against Indigenous people. Should these statues be swept aside in view of what we now know about the men being commentated? I don't think so. I'd prefer adding commentary to the statues detailing what we know now. What's to be gained from white-washing history by removing the statues?

*Archive Midwinter* (Jefferson P. Swycaffer)

Ryct Garth Spencer about Facebook. The only reason I have a Facebook account is because back in the day my wife wanted more people to like her posts (yes, that used to be a thing!), and created an account for me for that purpose. She no longer uses Facebook, having switched to Instagram. What do I use my Facebook account for? Mostly for posting photographs of whatever we cook. And for following a few special interest groups.

Ryct Jefferson P. Swycaffer about your brother-in-law. I am impressed (?) that he is still using a typewriter and that he re-inks his ribbons. I fantasise sometimes about acquiring a working typewriter. The problem of finding new ribbons had not occurred to me.

Ryct George Phillies about second-person stories. I don't remember ever reading such a story, but I did listen to C.S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* many years ago when it was broadcast by BBC Radio 4.

*Intermission* 138 (Ahrvid Engholm) I won't comment on your concerns about the gender and/or 'minority status' of the nominees for the Hugo Awards, I don't read enough to know how these figures reflect the numbers of authors writing eligible works. (Or eligible works of sufficient quality to be nominated). It would be interesting to see such figures for a variety of Hugo Awards across the decades. (Sorry for asking you to do more work!) It would not surprise me to learn that a cross-section of the people eligible to make the nominations only nominate writers of a particular gender and/or a particular minority group. One reason for so doing might be out of a concern to correct for



historical bias in the opposite direction. For pre-2012 Worldcons, it would be interesting to see if the location of the Worldcon has any effect on the data.

Interesting that you can say for the 24<sup>th</sup> Fantastic Short Story Contest that 60% of the entries were written by men. Do you have this data for the other Contests?

Leeds University, where I was a student (1986-1989, 1990-1994) and post-doc (1994-1997, 1999-2000), had a paternoster lift in the Roger Stevens building. I remember that my undergraduate department could be reached from the ground level of the Roger Stevens building, I used it to visit my department. According to the internet, the lift was bordered up after an accident and was eventually, after three years, replaced by a much slower conventional lift.

Ryct Garth Spencer. *“Set theory and formal logic ARE "numerical" in the sense they are math. Bertram Russell spent three thick Principia Mathematica volumes on showing that logic is just another version of math, using set theory...before Gödel came along and put the fundamentals of math in doubt.”*

Where should I begin? Perhaps I should just start at the beginning and say that, in the way that mathematicians think about such things, set theory and formal logic are not considered to be numerical... Let's skip the middle bit and move on to the end. I don't think there would be much support amongst mathematicians for the proposition that Gödel *“put the fundamentals of math in doubt”*. However, he did show that Hilbert's program was unattainable. A most excellent non-technical account of the events leading to Hilbert's program and Gödel's work is the graphic novel *Logicomix: An Epic Search for Truth*. This might also cast some useful light on your second comment. (I might return to the topic of mathematical logic in a future issue, if I remember...)

Interesting discussion on the differences in approach between USA/UK/Sweden/Europe to copyright. I agree with your sentiments regarding the negative effects that Disney have had on copyright law.

*Ye Murthered Master Mage 267* (George Phillies) I suppose that you have enough projects of your own to keep yourself occupied. But I would very much like to hear more about your collection of rolegaming and wargaming fanzines. How were these fanzines publicised so that people could find out about them?

*Intermission 138.5* (Ahrvid Engholm) I did not know that Robert Block, a fannish name that I only recognise, had written the book that became the classic Hitchcock movie Psycho. All knowledge is indeed contained somewhere in fanzines. Though I have to confess that I've never watched the movie.

*Brownian Motion 5* (Garth Spencer)

Ryctm *“I see that you were using a typewriter in 1990/91, and not a personal computer. That says something, either about your means as a graduate student, or about the availability of personal computers, or about their availability and cost in your region.”*

I started by PhD in 1990. My supervisor had been succesful in obtaining a grant, which meant that I received a scholarship. I supplemented my income by marking assignments. It wasn't a large amount to live on, but it sufficed for what I needed; it didn't stretch to buying a personal computer. It probably would have stretched to buying a personal computer, except that I needed to cover the

costs of running my postal diplomacy fanzines. (The subscriptions didn't come anywhere near paying for printing and postage). I also developed an addiction to comics... Luckily, I didn't need a personal computer as I had access to computers at work. But going into work to use the computer at the weekend was much less convenient than staying at home and using a typewriter. In this period, the early 1990s, there were a number of editors still using mimeography to publish their postal diplomacy fanzines – that was not a production medium that appealed to me.

*Snow Poster Township* 13 (Heath Row)

Ryct Jefferson P. Swycaffer re *Alarums & Excursions*. It's been a long time since I've played RPGs, so I'm not going to considering contributing to A&E. Still, I'd be interested in learning how many people are contributing to it these days and how large a typical mailing is. How long have the current members been members? Is the mailing list mainly people who have been contributing for decades? Or is there a regular flow of new members onto the mailing list? How is it publicised? As I mentioned before, this was the only USA RPG fanzine that received publicity in the UK – at least in the days when I was involved with UK RPG fandom. I seem to recall that there had been an all-British special issue at some point, perhaps slightly before I became active; I remember seeing it mentioned.

*“I think the difference between believability in fiction and being able to suspend disbelief might be meaningful. Is it that we believe that allows us to suspend our disbelief? Or is belief—or opportunity to believe—unnecessary to suspend one's disbelief?”*

That's an interesting suggestion, I've never thought about this before. Let's consider cinema rather than fiction. I don't find transporter technology in the Star Trek universe believable, but I am willing to suspend my disbelief and accept it as a future technology. Let's consider a typical good guys vs bad guys program where the bad guys have received military training. When they are targeting anyone but the heroes they can shoot straight and hit their targets. When they are targeting the heroes they have the accuracy of Imperial Storm Troopers. This falls into the category of not being believable, but generally it's acceptable although I might make fun of it. That's also the case of the typical 'error' in James Bond movies. The villain has captured Bond. A bullet to the head would do the trick. But rather than learning from the mistakes of previous villains it's either going to be a long speech followed by a bullet to the head or it's going to be an exotic death with the villain not present. That follows into the category of not being believable but acceptable without the conventions of the genre.

Generally, I prefer things to be believable; though what defines believability? If you're reading science fiction your definition of believability is different from if you are reading fantasy or non-genre fiction. Added as an afterthought... believability for me mostly means consistency within the framework of the given universe. However, there are some things which might be consistent within the framework of a universe that I don't consider believable, e.g. the mirror universe in Star Trek.

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm re book burning. How long will it before those who oppose certain books being made available in school libraries (public libraries?) decide to make an even bigger splash by publicly burning them? (I doubt that many, if any, of the people advocating to remove books from libraries know about the burning of books on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1933.. I confess that until I looked it up moments ago that I didn't know the year that that Nazis carried out their book burning campaign).

Ryct Garth Spencer

*“Here in Portugal, there are currently reportedly... no fanzines.”*

Have there ever been *any* fanzines produced in Portugal? The website fanac.org doesn't list any but I imagine that it's collection of non-English fanzines is very hit-and-miss. Portugal was ruled by a dictatorship from 1926 to 1974. I can imagine that such circumstances are not conducive to fanzine production. Side-thought: were any SF fanzines produced in Spain under Franco's fascist dictatorship?

Ryctm

*“I found your evolution from member to meeting-going member to reader of fanzines an interesting developmental progression. What got you over the hump to go to a meeting? What led you to go to your first con?”*

I became an active member of the society when I was a second-year undergraduate: October 1987. That's 35 years and a few months ago. I can't say with any certainty what propelled me to take step of attending the regular meeting in the Packhorse. It might have been that I thought I'd learn more about SF fanzines by becoming a more active member, I knew that the society had it's own fanzine. It might have been that I just wanted to talk to other science-fiction fans. I no longer remember what it was that we discussed at the weekly meetings. I suspect that it was nothing to do with science fiction!

Why did I attend my first convention? I'd hoped to cover that this issue... My first convention was Lucon I (February 26-28<sup>th</sup> 1988). This was ran at Leeds University, how convenient!, and was sponsored by the Leeds University SF Society. Becoming a more active member of the society led to me joining the convention. If I either hadn't joined the SF society or I'd joined and stayed as an inactive member I doubt that I would have attended.

*Esmeralda County Line #6 (Kevin Trainor Jr.)*

Regarding your account of losing your wallet. Just under thirty years ago I went shopping in Leeds. It was a Saturday and I had a routine of which shops I'd visit. When I returned home I could not find my credit card. I had my wallet, but I could not find the credit card. I went back into the city and retread my steps. At each shop I asked, to no avail, if my credit card had been handed in. I walked home and had a last look for it. No luck. I went to a phone-box and rang the credit card company to report the card missing and request a replacement. You can guess what happened as soon as I made it back to my apartment... I found it almost immediately.

Ryct Ahrvid Engholm

*“Quite a few authors (Jerry Pournelle, Don Hawthorne, and William Keith, to name just a few) have written both SF and articles for wargaming magazines”*

Pournelle was active in the postal diplomacy hobby in the mid 1960s, winning a couple of games. I'll know more about his involvement if I ever finish my analysis of games played in the 1960s... that project is currently stuck at 1964 as I've not found the time to put everything together.

Ryctm. Thanks for recommending Alistair Horne's *The Price of Glory*. I've added it to my list of books to read in the future. However, due to the quantity of books on that list this doesn't mean anything other than I'd like to read it.

Ryct Heath Row.

*"I admit that part of the reason I started Son of Silvercon was to provide a venue for the N3F to get together, especially since so many members live in California or in/near major cities with easy air access to Las Vegas".*

Is there a published breakdown of where N3F members live? Am I the only member in Australia? Back in the early 1990s it seemed to me that a large number of interesting SF zines were coming out of Los Vegas. Was it a handful of fans producing armfuls of fanzines or armfuls of fans producing armfuls of fanzines? I don't remember.

*Samizdat #22* (Samuel Lubell)

I have made a note of your recommendations of books written by Joe Halderman. I aim to buy *The Best of Joe Halderman* once I've finished *Platinum Pohl*.

Ryctm. I was not aware of the Internet Speculative Fiction Database. That sounds like a very useful resource. I've put the *Science Fiction Hall of Fame Volume 2B* into my short list of SF books to read in the future – the first ones on the list are two you recommended last time: *A Plague of Angels* and *Grass*. (However, I don't necessarily consult this list if I buy a SF novel). I haven't made much progress reading through *Platinum Pohl*. I've read the first four stories, which by page-count is just under 25% of the book.

Ryct Heath Row

*"Interesting point about television getting more complicated with arcs and multi-threaded storylines."*

There was an article in the newspaper in the last couple of days that I didn't read. It was written (I think) by someone connected to *The Sopranos*. The article suggested that the last 25 years of TV writing is a historical fluke and that TV shows with complicated arcs and multi-threaded storylines are going to go the way of the dodo. I now wish that I read the article!

## **SWEDISH WORDS IN ENGLISH**

*There are no Swedish words in English this issue.*

It's now Jan 15<sup>th</sup> 23:23 and the deadline is Jan 15<sup>th</sup>, luckily it's earlier in the day in the USA so hopefully this contribution will make it into the next mailing. You'll find out when the next mailing is distributed...



the planet and their potential for contributing to rapid global warming and the melting of ice mass. The editorial note introducing the piece mentions the “recent success of the motion picture *Deluge*.” (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #95)

Chester G. Osborne’s “The Tone Machine” is a more gadget-oriented hard-boiled piece involving the theft of a new technology that can affect mood with sound. While the story is a fun action-oriented tale involving car chases and shootouts, the speculative technology presages the sonic and ultrasonic weapons of today, though their modern effects are more physical than emotional.



—William Rotsler

“The Green Cloud of Space” by Eando Binder is another excellent read—right up there with Colladay’s “Earthspot.” The storyline considers space microbiology and the potential for spaceborn pathogens eliminating the human race.

Other than the Williamson serial, which I haven’t read, the rest of the content is largely editorial. In addition to promotions of forthcoming stories and the letter column, there is also some scientific content. “Science Questions and Answers” is the most promising. Following a lengthy roster of associate science editors, reader questions about the velocity of light, planets’ moons, chemicals that would destroy arable soil, and other topics are addressed by such editors, complete with diagrams.

The other scientific feature, “What Is Your Science Knowledge?” is less a test of such and more a reading comprehension quiz to see whether readers have been paying attention to the scientific concepts addressed in various stories. Every question can be connected to a

story in the issue, and if you read the story, you might be able to answer. “What causes a magnetic storm?”, for example, comes into play in “Earthspot.” Handy page references are even included, introducing some interesting intertextuality.

That brings us back to the SFL material in the front of the book. “The average parent, and the man in the street, has as yet not discovered the great and fundamental truth that Science Fiction is highly educational and gives you a scientific education, in easy doses—sugar-coated as a rule,” Gernsback writes. Parallel to Garth Spencer’s writing in *Brownian Motion* #5 (see below), I wonder: Does it? I’m not so sure, at least not 90 years after this publication. Reading sf might inspire me to learn more about science, but I can’t imagine that reading sf makes me smarter. And I love the stuff.

The following issue of *Wonder Stories*, from June 1934, has more, shorter stories, and only one serial, the continuation of “Druso” from the previous issue. Having only read half of Vol. 6 #1, I’ve yet to read the second part of Freksa’s translated work.

Gernsback’s editorial reflects on time, the perception of time, and the relative meaning of time when considering humanity’s place in the universe. Kaye Raymond’s novelette “Into the Infinitesimal” is a wonderful story that predates *Fantastic Voyage* and *Innerspace* as it speculates on the shrinking of people down to the subatomic level—positing that one can land on an electron like one might a planet, and that they might be inhabited by intelligent beings.

“The Doorbell” by David H. Keller is ostensibly science fictional but might have found a more comfortable home in a mystery-, crime-, or horror-oriented pulp. In the story, an everyday doorbell is hooked up to an electromagnet with especially deleterious effects.

And W. Varick Nevins III’s “Cosmic Calamity” is a brief piece that concentrates on a scientist, cosmic rays, and interplanetary communication—that pokes fun at science fiction movies. It’s an interesting echo of the reference to *Deluge* and the role of “Druso”’s television in the previous issue.

I also finished reading P.C. Wren’s novel *Beau Geste*, as recently mentioned by Kevin Trainor, Jr. (See below.) While not science fictional or fantastic, it’s a gripping adventure novel focusing on the Foreign Legion and the theft of a gemstone. The action and mystery in the story balance equally, and I’ll read more of Wren in the future. *Beau Geste* is a very good book.

While not fantastical, it does refer to the fantastic,

poking gentle fun (like “Cosmic Calamity” above) at the works of H. Rider Haggard. At the end of the novel, as the protagonists struggle to find their way out of the desert, two aspects struck me. Sentences and phrases such as “I could fill a large volume with the account of our adventures...”, “an account ... would fill a volume,” and others brought to mind the sometimes-elided nature of H.P. Lovecraft’s writing. I’d describe what I saw to you, but it would drive you mad. That sort of thing.

And there were at least three subtle references to Haggard or similar authors: “We encountered no Queens of Atlantis and found no white races of Greek origin, ruled by ladies of tempestuous petticoat...”, “[T]here certainly ought to have been ‘a strange fair people of a civilisation older, and in some ways higher, than our own; ruled over by a woman, so incredibly beautiful, so marvelously...’, and “[N]o ancestor of theirs had placed those incredible monoliths in position, nor made for themselves doorways of twelve and fifteen feet in height, leading into chambers ten feet higher”—also vaguely Lovecraftian—for example.

So I’m now more than 100 pages into Haggard’s *She*, and it’s a doozy of a read. Once I finish it, I can turn my attention to the 1939 and 1966 movie adaptations of *Beau Geste*; as well as the 1935, 1965, and 2001 adaptations of *She*. By Roscoe, I love sf and fanzines. Who knows where the reading will take us?

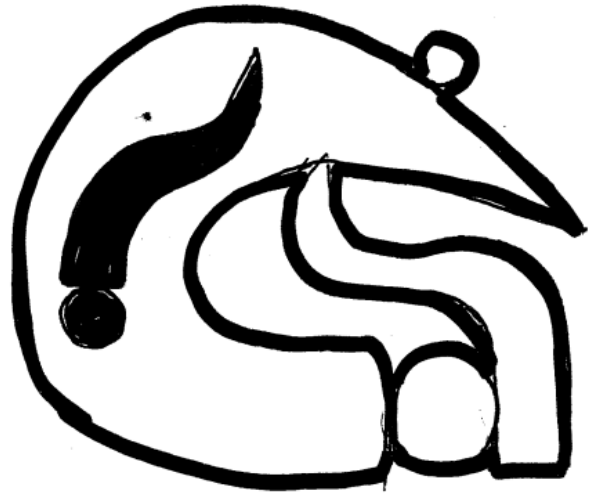
### Comments on N’APA #267

Just look at that table of contents! Nine contributors, three issues of *Intermission*, and almost 100 pages... With #266 coming in at 105 pages, #265 at 89, #264 at 68, and #263 at 66 pages, we certainly seem to be on an upward trend. In *Intermission* #139 in eAPA ##236, Ahrvid Engholm remarked, “I read that N3F ‘members who are not paying dues,’ won’t be welcome, apparently a new decision. If so, I’m afraid I have to leave N’APA, which then may begin to shrink again which may not be what all want. I became what was called an ‘associate’ neffer, excluding any voting rights or printed material—which means it only costs N3F a few quadrillion electrons. I don’t even have any payment system for non-domestic transfers of any dues. But if I’m out, at least it was with a splash!” In response, I offered to agent Engholm’s dues, if the above is indeed the case. I look forward to seeing whether his fanzine is included in N’APA #268. 40 of #267’s 97 pages were submitted by the actifan and faned.

Thank you for including the flier about *Fanac*’s fan history Zoom session on apae. I wasn’t able to participate, and in mid-December, Edie Stern emailed

me the resulting YouTube videos, which are now available at <https://youtu.be/PWEWPfeLnIw> and <https://youtu.be/q4u67cMdVek>. I’ve yet to watch them, but what an excellent event to organize!

I commented on Ahrvid Engholm’s *Intermission* #137 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #14 for eAPA and reprint those remarks here: “In *Intermission* #137, Ahrvid Engholm informed eAPAns about gang violence in Sweden. While sad to learn about, I was interested to realize it existed. I suppose there are gangs everywhere. I’d mostly been aware of the Scandinavian black metal-related violence and church burnings. This sounds more like organized crime. You also mention police reform. In the United States, police-related gangs are also a concern. This isn’t entirely gang related, but just recently in Los Angeles, police recruit hazing hit the news. (<https://tinyurl.com/police-hazing>) Earlier this year, deputies were challenged for their use of police gang tattoos. (<https://tinyurl.com/police-gang-tattoos>) It doesn’t make me confident in the police.



—William Rotsler

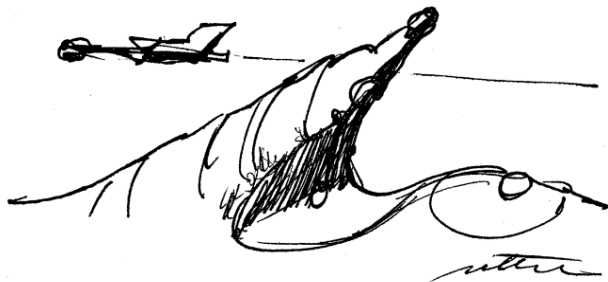
“Your defense of the Swedish monarchy was interesting and thought provoking. Now, what if the royal family were a... gang? There’s a story idea.

“I enjoyed your commentary on the book *United Stockholms of America*, which brought to mind Phil Campbell, Ala. I grew up in Wisconsin and have always been intrigued by the reuse of place names by immigrants and other communities, but I’ve never really researched it.

“How much of your short story work has been translated into English? One of my forthcoming projects as I approach retirement will be translation work, initially focusing on Portuguese science fiction—but I might also be interested in translating

some of your work, if you're open to the idea. We could offer it as an incentive for the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund or the Nordic Fan Fund (<https://icecon-reykjavik.is/icecon-2016/the-nordic-fan-fund>) if it's still active. My translation efforts to date (one Portuguese story) utilized machine translation and then editing, but no rewriting. Might be an idea.

"History Corner's consideration of samizdat was also worthwhile. I suppose all faned work is oppositional in nature, and perhaps fanac—as endeavors undertaken outside the dominant culture. During a recent anniversary weekend in mid-October, my wife and I visited the Wende Museum, which focuses on the Cold War. (<https://wendemuseum.org>) We finally went because of the David Bowie in the Soviet Union exhibit. They had some examples of samizdat in a display case outside of that exhibit, and I'm now curious whether they have any Russian fanzines in their collection.



—William Rotsler

"I wonder whether Kingsley Amis's *Radio Theatre* episode 'Enemy Planet' is at all related to the later television series *Lost in Space* or the initially unrelated comic book *Space Family Robinson*—both of which were inspired by Johann David Wyss's 1812 novel, *The Swiss Family Robinson*."

In *Archive Midwinter*, **Jefferson P. Swycaffer** suggested that there might be an intelligence quotient for animals as well as humans, were animals so tested. That's an intriguing thought. One of the Christmas presents my wife received was Gift Republic's 100-card *Cat IQ Test* (<http://tinyurl.com/CatIQTest>). We haven't yet started applying it to Spooner. While I'm sure it's not as robust or rigorous as the human IQ test—such as that offered by Mensa—it's likely to be fun. I'll report back when we start using it.

Your comment that "by and large, Facebook turns people into jerks" made me chuckle. I know at least one other fan who avoids most things online for that very reason. I appreciated learning that you prefer the third-person past-tense, limited omniscience approach to writing. I'll have to look for that the next time I read one of your books! One of the most disturbing

first-person narratives I've ever read is the Bret Easton Ellis novel *American Psycho*.

I'll do my best to find my copy of the December 1985 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* so I can share Algis Budrys's review of *Become the Hunted* with you. Your use of the term "dippyzine" was new to me and made me chuckle. Of course! *Diplomacy* fanzine.

I previously remarked on **Ahrvid Engholm's** *Intermission* #138 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #15 for eAPA. Here's what I said: "In *Intermission* #138, Ahrvid Engholm recognized and mourned the mid-October death of Bertil Falk. While I appreciated your brief analysis of award nominees and winners, I'm not sure that more of the same is a solution for centuries of discrimination and bigotry. I understand your distaste for discrimination of any kind, but if no effort has been taken historically to include, say, women or blacks, how is making effort to include them now discriminatory?"

"Sometimes it feels like the argument becomes cyclical: straight white men dislike the increasing involvement of others and express discontent that they're no longer the dominant participant—while contending that that's not the very thing they're upset about. It's not discrimination that such critics are opposed to, but competition, having not had to contend with it—to compete—for hundreds of years. So, allowing competition is derided as discrimination.

"However, if we're merely looking at nominations, the solution is easy: Nominate more of the people who you think are underrepresented. That's why we're seeing more non-white men nominated; people are finally making the effort to nominate other people. We even saw that in the Chengdu Worldcon, during which the artist and fanzine categories resulted in winners with organized Chinese voter blocs behind them. I might not think that such winners necessarily represent the best of either on the world stage, but I don't begrudge those nominees being nominated—or the voters for their nominees being selected. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* might not be the best way to determine the general distribution of age, gender, or race among currently active authors—because it might reflect people historically considered worth documenting (when discrimination was even more in play), but not current trends in authorship or publishing. Over time, the *SFE* will become more diverse, as well, perhaps.

"Your History Corner concentrating on Falk adeptly communicated the importance and impact of the contributions made by the man, the fan, translator, and writer. His motto 'Don't postpone until next hour what you can do right now!' is excellent advice that I



increasingly heed as I get older.”

**George Phillis**’s *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #267 included commentary on the growth of N’APA and his intent to step back slightly. I hope you continue to participate in N’APA. I appreciate and enjoy your contributions. Your remarks about Georg Philipp Telemann reminded me of listening last night to the light opera songs of Victor Herbert while reading a 1934 *Wonder Stories* piece of short fiction that mentioned him. (See above.) I often listen to music mentioned in writing and should make a more concerted effort to keep up on the wonderful classical and other music mentioned in fanzines I read.

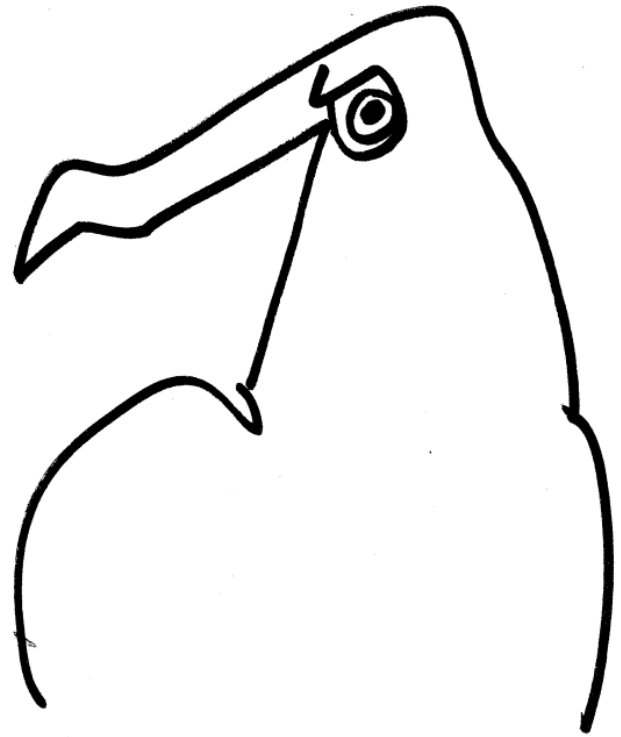
I was surprised and delighted that Hugo Gernsback was a member of the N3F in the 1960s. I’ll have to look for evidence of his involvement in clubzine back issues! Thank you for reminding me of Judy Carroll’s Netflix Round Robin. I participated in the first such instance and enjoyed it mightily.

I also commented on **Ahrvid Engholm**’s *Intermission* #138.5 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #15 for the eAPA. “In *Intermission* #138.5, Ahrvid Engholm reprints the potentially public domain novelette, ‘A Way of Life,’ from the October 1956 issue of *Fantastic Universe*. What a delightful read, replete with fannish jokes, elevation of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association and jibes at the expense of the N3F. One line in particular might resonate with Garth Spencer’s recent theories about divisions within fandom: ‘Fandom won because we were better organized for communication...’ (That could perhaps be said of fandoms that don’t rely primarily on fanzines.) I’ll have to share this with Andy Hooper, whom I think will enjoy it, and Barbara Gratz Harmon because of the mention of Jim Harmon. Such a fun read—one that makes me think Bloch is brilliant and superb.” I don’t believe I’ve sent it on to Hooper or Harmon yet, so I appreciate the N’APA reminder! I’ve really enjoyed Engholm’s interest in Robert Bloch recently.

**Mark Nelson**’s *Brandy Hall* #3 discussed his past involvement in apae, which is self-reportedly “very poor.” You’re doing just fine here, so far. I’d never heard of the roleplaying game apa Drunk and Disorderly before, so thank you for bringing it to my attention. In that case, you probably stopped because you stopped playing roleplaying games and turned your attention to *Diplomacy*. Regardless, procrastination and time management certainly play a role. Why, just this week, I submitted two fanzines to two different apae effectively past the deadline. So it goes. One muddles on. I chuckled at your “apa-ling” pun. Well done, sir. I, for one, am glad you’re here.

Your discussion of the Oxford English Dictionary’s

definition of “science fiction” brought to mind recent reading of *Wonder Stories* issues from the mid-1930s. (See above.) I found the details of the evolution of the Leeds bookstore Odyssey 7 interesting. I sometimes wish I lived in times during which one could comfortably read all of the science fiction published in a given month or year. The American publishing industry, including ebooks, is much too prolific to enable such luxury now.



—William Rotsler

Your remarks on and questions about the aging of organized fandom merit deeper thought, so I shall hold off on replying for now. You’ve given me quite a bit to think about. That said, thank you for clarifying what “KTF” means. I think I’d tend to avoid mean-spirited avenues of fandom!

In *Brownian Motion* #5, **Garth Spencer** waxed eloquent about the strong shift toward media fandom, as well as literary—as well as televisual and cinematic—works that are not solidly grounded in science. I think you might be right in terms of the uneven balance between literary and media fandom, though I’m wondering whether more recent fen are drawn to self-published ebooks; fan fiction; Web sites such as *Reedsy*, *Short-Story.Me*, *Story Star*, *Creepypasta*, and others; and PDF or ebook-oriented semiprozines and prozines more than traditional books and outlets. Reading of such would certainly qualify as literary sf—and fandom—though the spectrum of literary

quality might be broad. Even *Free Speculative Fiction Online* links to freely available stories from more traditional sources, online.

I'm curious whether anyone has plotted the curve of the number of sf, fantasy, and horror titles published over time. Gone are the days in which all fen could read All the Things. Mainstream breakouts, adapted works, and Hugo and Nebula award nominees and winners might be the closest we come to a modern-day opportunity to have read the Same Things. That fracturing of literary and media output might also contribute to the fracturing of fandom, which I hadn't given much thought to before.

Your comments to Swycaffer about the "Star Trek Association for Revival surviving for decades in a health[y] STAR San Diego branch" and "a short-lived Canadian SF Association of the 1940s and 50s surviving for some years in the Winnipeg SF Association" made me think of Hugo Gernsback's Science Fiction League living on to this day in the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society.

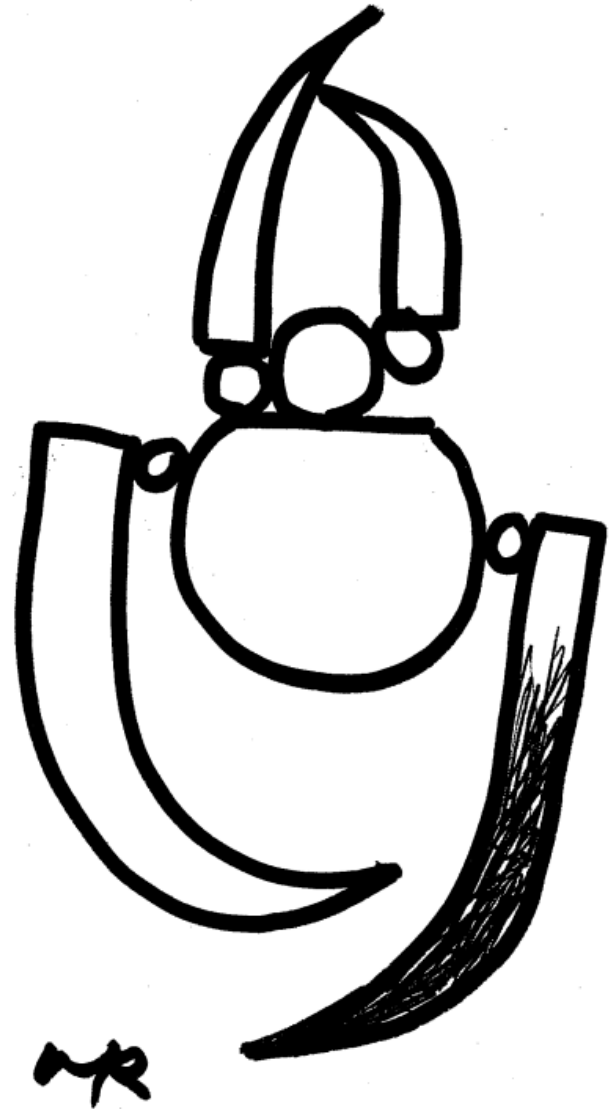
Your remark to Thiel "[a]bout what happens when fans metamorphose into their adult form—funny, old Hugo thought... fans would grow up to be scientists; that was the Gernsback Fallacy" resonated with my recent reading of Gernsback's *Wonder Stories* above.

**Kevin Trainor Jr.**'s *Esmeralda County Line* #6 updated eAPAns on Son of Silvercon. I'm glad your leg wounds are continuing to improve. It is serendipitous that you mentioned P.C. Wren's novel *Beau Geste*. I recently finished reading it and offer some comments above. I'm glad Son of Silvercon went well, even if membership was lower than intended. It must have gone well enough if plans are already underway for next year! Otherwise, I RAE your fanzine, particularly the multiple literary references and recommendations.

And in **Samuel Lubell**'s *Samizdat*... #22, Lubell offered many mailing comments, as well as insightful discussion. The monthly N3F Video and Tape bureaus recommendations are published in *Fanactivity Gazette*. The column is titled "Hear No Evil, See No Evil." Your remark that "living writers can be encouraged to produce more works while the dead cannot" made me chuckle.

I appreciated your Author Showcase featuring Joe Haldeman, as well as the continuation of your undergraduate thesis. Your Status of Projects remains interesting and inspiring—an intriguing look into your reading, viewing, and thinking in between issues. With the new year, I began keeping a log of what I've been reading and watching. It's a fun way to keep track

of—and therefore remember—which episodes of what I might have seen in recent weeks.



—William Rotsler

### **Fantastic Television: *Poirot***

Along the lines of P.C. Wren's *Beau Geste* and H. Rider Haggard's *She* above, my wife and I recently watched *Poirot* S5E1, "The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb," which originally aired Jan 17, 1993—almost exactly 30 years ago. It's a fine episode, sending Hercules Poirot and Captain Hastings to Egypt in order to ascertain whether several deaths were caused by a curse—or plain, old-fashioned murder. The desert scenes were shot in Spain and Morocco.

I then read Agatha Christie's 1923 short story of the same title. It's more economical and compact, and also enjoyable. The story was also adapted for the 2004 anime, *Agatha Christie's Great Detectives*.



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## ...Update on U.S. Government Shutdown

When I wrote my last issue the U.S. federal government had just passed a “laddered” continuing resolution that avoided an immediate shutdown by funding some branches of the government through January 19<sup>th</sup> and others through February 2<sup>nd</sup>. The claimed intention was that this would give the government more time to pass the necessary spending bills. I’m writing this on January 14<sup>th</sup> and no progress has been made on passing spending bills. People in Congress are talking about another continuing resolution that would fund the government until March 1 and

March 8, six months into the fiscal year. But continuing resolutions don’t do anything if Congress then ignores the problem until a few days before the next shutdown. There are real issues with social security funding, growing inequities, and an increasingly huge national debt that do need serious attention, not just endless quick fixes and continuing resolutions to prevent artificial emergencies like the shutdown.

## ...LOCs on N’APA 267

**Official Organ #267** – I just sent in my dues for 2024.

**Intermission #137** – To be fair, your murder comparison needs to take population size into account. Yes, the U.S.’ high prison population doesn’t seem to be reducing crime or violence. As someone who grew up in the Reagan years, it seems very odd to see Republicans siding with Russia and saying that we shouldn’t help a country that they invaded. I’m not sure why Sweden keeps a king if his duties are just ceremonial. I understand the UK doing so for tourism reasons, but Sweden? Even at \$10m/year it seems wasteful. I do like your point about history. Congrats on 125 published stories. Considering the name of my own zine, I enjoyed your article on Russian samizdats although mine is not forbidden and uses modern technology not typewriters and carbon paper.

I disagree with your claims that social science isn’t real science. There’s lots of hard science we cannot see (especially microscopic) or touch (much of astronomy). And there are museums full of historical objects and primary sources. In the U.S. many conventions that are primarily comic/media still have a literary track and general conventions like Balticon are mostly literary focused although they have other activities like an art show, masquerade, gaming, filking etc.

**Archive Midwinter** – I distrust our current methods of measuring IQ. They are still culturally dependent. We may no longer expect people from warm climates to draw pictures of houses with chimneys and expect urban students to know details about playing polo, but we probably have similar cultural biases. Using a typewriter when modern alternatives work much better seems like odd choice for a writer. I’m sure Charles Dickens and Mark Twain would have switched to word processors if they were an option back then. I disagree with you on the ending of



Connecticut Yankee. It wasn’t just Mark Twain trying to end the book, but a satirist showing the defeat of medieval chivalry. I’m a big fan of the classics and love Project Gutenberg and we are getting closer to the time when more of the old science fiction classics will be falling into the public domain. And yes, a lot of previously famous writers have been largely forgotten. Yes, older fans will have to let younger fans run the

show eventually (I don't want to be running conventions in my 80s) and accept that they will do things different than we did. It has been said that the novella is the ideal length for science fiction. There is certainly something to be said for that belief, since novellas are long enough that writers can explore their version of the fantastical. But I'd argue that the ideal length for sf/fantasy is the trilogy – long enough to really set up a world different from that of today's and then enable the reader to live in the world while still being able to build character and plot both. Shorter works, like the 200 page “novels” of the 1950s through the 1970s rarely were able to do this. And a trilogy is finite and provides an ending, unlike many series that go on forever. Yes I enjoyed *Hunchback of Notre Dame*. I'll discuss that in the Projects section.



Image by [GraphicMama-team](#) from [Pixabay](#)

**Intermission #138** – I'm less sure about a 2-state solution to the Israeli/Palestinian problem than I used to be. Israel had basically pulled out of Gaza and Hamas riddled it with tunnels to turn the whole territory into a base from which to attack Israel. Welcome to NATO. I strongly disagree that science fiction and fantasy discriminates against middle aged white male writers. For decades minorities were almost completely excluded from SF and there was a bias in favor of white males. What we are seeing now is in part a necessary correction and in part the result of people nontraditional backgrounds using that experience to write books/stories that better portray fantastical beings/cultures/planets. I'm seeing a lot of white males writing books very similar to those of the past while writers from other backgrounds are writing more innovative stuff. I disagree that writers from nontraditional backgrounds are being promoted due to their ideology. John W Campbell may not have been a fascist but he certainly had his biases. Asimov famously did not include aliens in his Foundation universe because Campbell insisted that stories always show humans as superior to aliens and white European/Americans as superior to other humans.

**Ye Murdered Master Mage 267** – I could make a case that the author of “The Birthmark,” “Rappaccini's Daughter,” “Young Goodman Brown,” “House of the Seven Gables,” and “The Artist of the Beautiful” was America's first science fiction writer. Poe didn't normally try to include science as much as Hawthorne did.

**Intermission 138.5** – I certainly agree that Bloch was a wonderful writer but think he falls short of Godhood. *A Way of Life* is a great story and I've not seen it before. Thanks for sharing.

**Brandy Hall 3** – Interesting story of your involvement with fanzines. Diane Duane is a great fantasy writer. I love her *Young Wizards* series. But I'm still waiting on *The Door into Starlight*. The previous books in that series, the *Tale of the Five*, came out in 1979, 1984, 1992, and then nothing. It's been over 30 years! These days fanzines are a very tiny part of fandom. I'd argue that most fan activity revolves around conventions. I'm in favor of reviving a N3F reading group. Maybe we could meet via Zoom. Recent



historians are objecting to the characterization of the Dark Ages as Dark, saying this is in part Renaissance propaganda. Yes, organized fan clubs are aging with most younger members being children (and grandchildren) of members. I suspect this is because a lot of people's social activity is online. There's been some scholarship on a decline in all types of participatory membership organizations, see for instance *Bowling Alone*. I'm going to have to disagree with your questioning over whether comic book movies are science fiction. Of course they are. They have aliens, advanced technology, mutants, strange science, hidden countries, etc. And if you didn't know *Guardians of the Galaxy* came from a comic book, you couldn't distinguish it from a whole bunch of Star Wars-inspired SF movies. I'll have to get back to you on a list of SF classics from the 1970, but looking at a list of Hugo and Nebula nominees from that era could probably work. We have AIs that read books now. Teachers are complaining that

students are using AIs to write book reports. I'm glad you've enjoyed reading Sheri Tepper.

**Brownian Motion #5** – Film has always lagged behind books in originality. The recent flood of remakes and sequels gives no indication that this will change. I have seen examples of scientists and astronauts citing science fiction and *Star Trek* as major influences on them. But most fans, certainly those attending conventions, are already adults. I'd happily join your Liberal Secular Rational Humanist Cult, but I'm too busy in fandom right now. Get back to me after 2025.

**Snow Poster Township #3** – Interesting point about reading requiring a measure of suspension of disbelief. Certainly, science fiction and fantasy requires even more such suspension. NESFA runs Boskone, a SF convention in Boston in February. I'll be there!

**Esmeralda County Line #6** – Speaking of propaganda, it is false to say that we don't spend one cent on securing the Mexican border. Since 2021, the U.S. has taken over 6 million migrants into custody. I think it is worth reading both mainstream classics and SF/Fantasy (both new and classic). Hotels make a lot of money on their catering so it is not surprising that they want to see catered events and may be less enthused with conventions if they don't bring in restaurant business. I have a Master's degree in American history. While there certainly were black historians before 2000, there was a perception that the study of black history was separate from the study of American history which was about white folk. Congrats on the success of *Son of Silvercon*. Remember once is chance, twice is confirmation, and three times is a tradition.

### ...Author Spotlight: Roger Joseph Zelazny (1937-1995)

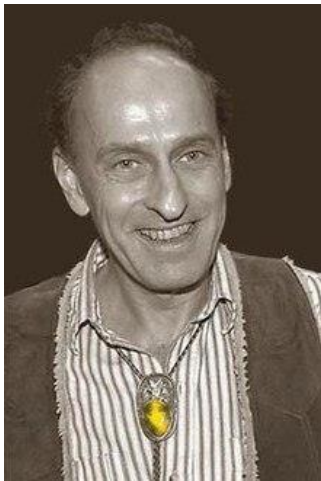
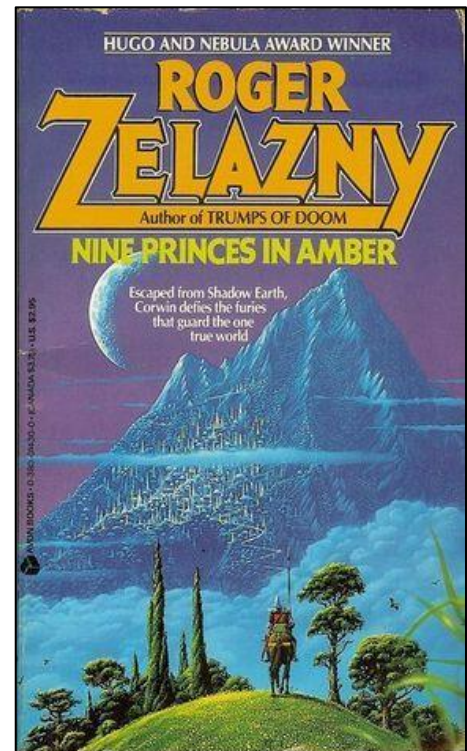


Image from Wikipedia

Roger Zelazny is of course best known for the *Chronicles of Amber*. Amber is the real world, from which all other worlds are just shadows. The original five are all-time classics of fantasy. He uses the tired cliché of a main character who has lost his memory and tries to find out his past. Corwin learns how to walk through the Shadows to reach Amber and becomes part of the power struggle among its royal family to rule Amber in the absence of their missing father, Oberon. The original five books are much better than the subsequent five books about Merlin, Corwin's son.

But Zelazny wrote more than just Amber. *Lord of Light* is a science fiction novel that at first seems like a fantasy novel about fighting among the Hindu gods versus the Buddha, but the gods are really the crew of the spaceship that brought humans to an alien planet. Many people, including me, think this is his best book; it won the 1968 Hugo. *Creatures of Light and Darkness* is based on Egyptian mythology. Some of my other favorites from his novels include *This Immortal* (tied with *Dune* for the Best Novel Hugo in 1966), *Jack of Shadows*, *Doorways in the Sand*, *A Night in the Lonesome October*, and *Isle of the Dead*.

His short fiction may be even better than his novels including "The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth" (1966 Nebula for novelette), "He Who Shapes" (1966 novella Nebula), "A Rose for Ecclesiastes," "Home Is the Hangman" (1976 Hugo & Nebula for novella), "Unicorn Variation" (1982 Hugo for novelette), "24 Views of Mt. Fuji, by Hokusai" (1986 Hugo for novella), and "Permafrost"

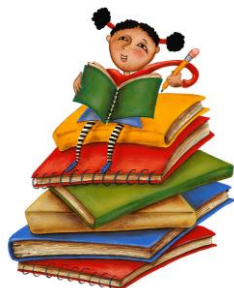


(1987 Hugo for novelette). NESFA Press has a six-volume *Collected Stories of Roger Zelazny*.

Zelazny worked for the U.S. government's Social Security Administration from 1962 - 1969 when he became a full time writer. He was only 58 when he died in 1995.

If you haven't already read the first five books in the *Chronicles of Amber*, do so immediately. There are various one-volume and two-volume editions. I'd avoid the *Great Book of Amber* which somehow has all 10 books in what must be a completely unwieldy volume. Then read *Lord of Light* and then whatever novels you can find. For short stories, the NESFA collection is complete. Otherwise get *The Magic: (October 1961-October 1967) Ten Tales by Roger Zelazny* edited by Samuel R. Delany.

### Nearly Half of Americans Read No Books



A [2023 YouGov study](#) (based on a weighted random sample panel, not an open Internet poll) found that 46% of Americans read no books in 2023. Another quarter (26%) read 5 or fewer books. Just 19% read more than 10 books. Those who read just 15 books are in the top 15 percent, 30 books in the top 8 percent, and 50 books in the top 1 percent.

Fantasy is the third most popular genre, read by 27% of those who read at least one book, behind mystery/crime (37%) and history (36%). Science fiction is read by 23% but showed a sharp split by gender as it is read by 31% of men and only 14% of women.

Not surprising, those with a college education read more than those without. Over half 56% of those with no college read no books in 2023 compared to 27% of college graduates. Just 13% of non-college read over 10 books compared to 27% of college graduates. While 42% read a physical book, only 21% read an ebook, and 19% an audiobook.

An early study found that while 15 percent of Americans own no physical books, 20% said 1-10 books, 14% own between 11-25 books, 13% between 26 and 50 books, 12% between 51-100, 10% between 101-200, and 14% more than 200. This doesn't include ebooks. Nearly half of Americans 45% own no ebooks. 22% own 1-10 ebooks, 9% 11-25 ebooks, 6% 26 - 50 ebooks, and just 11% own more than that. Naturally, education, age, and income affect book owning.

### ...From Wizard to Scientist: Changing Views towards the Scientist from Hawthorne to Twain (Part IV)

Readers of *Samizdat* may remember that I've been publishing my 1989 undergraduate thesis on what I very carefully did not tell Harvard was 19<sup>th</sup> century science fiction. Here's the beginning of the Twain section.

#### Mark Twain's Connecticut Yankee: Benevolent Science

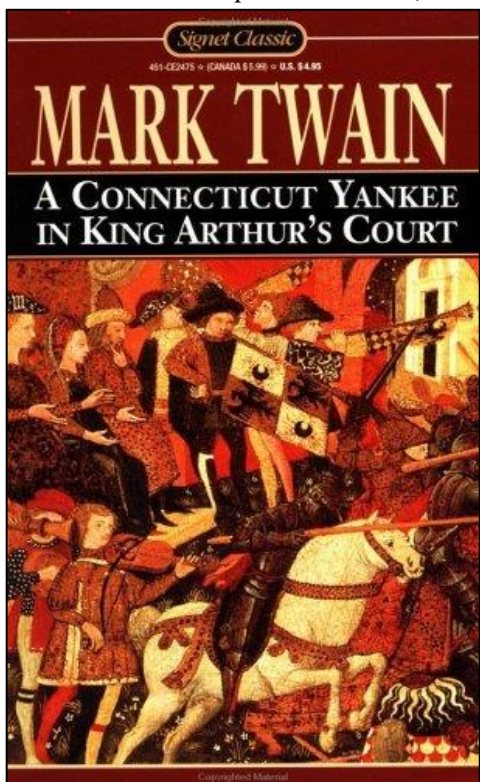


In the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the scientists themselves are disguised sorcerers, using magic and pseudo-science to achieve control over others. Mark Twain's 1889 novel, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, written almost forty years after Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, reverses this formula. Although the Connecticut Yankee, Hank Morgan, pretends to be a wizard using magic, he is really an engineer using science. While Hawthorne's scientists mingle science and magic; Twain's Yankee opposes the whole sixth century system of magic and superstition. The

Yankee's science easily defeats the magic of the wizard Merlin. "Somehow," Hank reasons, "every time the magic of fol-de-rol tried conclusions with the magic of science, the magic of fol-de-rol got left."<sup>1</sup> Twain does not reject science even in the Yankee's defeat at the end of the book.

Mark Twain had a positive outlook towards science in his own life. He took a deep personal interest in inventions and devised several of his own, including a self-pasting notebook and a memorization device.<sup>2</sup> In addition, he spent thousands of dollars on a machine to set typographical print, the Paige typesetter, which he funded while writing *A Connecticut Yankee*. This machine found its way into the book; Twain makes the Yankee a foreman at the Colt Arms factory, the factory where Paige worked.<sup>3</sup> Twain also read extensively in scientific literature: more than sixty scientific books, comprising "a roll call of the major contemporary scientists and philosophers of science," have been identified in his library.<sup>4</sup> Although he occasionally lampooned excesses of science, Twain valued science and invention for their human possibilities. For Twain:

The inventor/poet was a "liberating god." Twain's enthusiastic response to and extensive involvement in inventions of all sorts was motivated not just by the profits he hoped to realize, but by the new perspectives they symbolized. They represented for Twain new historical milestones, not just in technological progress but in human stature... [and] power of creativity.<sup>5</sup>



Mark Twain's own life mirrored the Yankee's industrialization of Arthurian England, through his progression from his boyhood home in the pre-industrial Hannibal, Missouri, to the more highly mechanized city of Hartford, Connecticut. By casting Hank Morgan as a Connecticut Yankee, Twain deliberately identifies him with this more scientific world.

Although Twain never directly calls Hank Morgan a scientist; the Yankee represents science and technological progress in the struggle against sixth century superstition; and the Yankee himself specifically identifies his methods as being science.[507 & 538]. This was possible because, by Twain's time, 'science, invention and technology had become intertwined in the popular mind. Robert Bruce, in his *The Launching of Modern American Science*, summarizes the development of this belief:

The notion that science might sometimes yield material benefit was, of course, far from new... What was new was the dubious but

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Clemens, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: A Facsimile of the First Edition* (NY: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1889; Chandler Publishing Company, 1963) pp. 507. All quotes in brackets are from this edition.

<sup>2</sup> Twain also owned one of the first telephones and an early 1874 typewriter. Milton Meltzer, *Mark Twain Himself* (New York: Thomas Crowell Company. 1960) p. 190-2

<sup>3</sup> James Williams, "The Use of History in Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee*", *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: Norton Critical Edition*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. 1982) p. 387

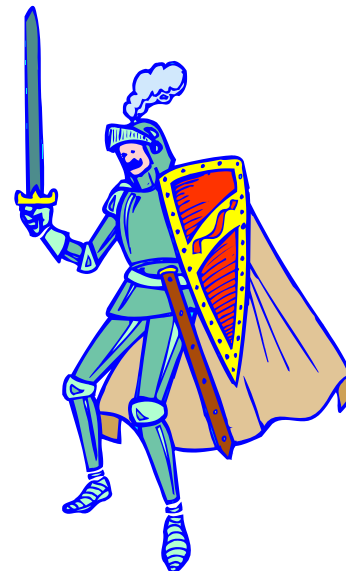
<sup>4</sup> Sherwood Cummings, "Mark Twain's Acceptance of Science," *Centennial Review*. Spring 1962; p.253

<sup>5</sup> James Johnson. *Mark Twain and the Limits of Power* (Knoxville Tennessee, University of Tennessee Press 1982); p. 123

spreading popular assumption that everything in technology was rooted in science.<sup>6</sup>

This assumption enabled the people of the nineteenth century to envision the engineer/inventor as the embodiment of science and progress. Since science contributed to the new inventions, even those produced by mechanical engineering, Hank's technology would have been considered "practical science". Introducing himself to the reader, Hank Morgan boasts of his ability to make "anything in the world," and stresses his inventive talent: "and if there wasn't any quick new-fangled way to make a thing, I could invent one- and do it as easy as rolling off a log." [20] In addition to recreating nineteenth-century technology, the Yankee originates his own, devises a form of insulation "of my own invention." [121]

Twain devotes the bulk of *A Connecticut Yankee* to the positive elements of Yankee's nineteenth century civilization, the benefits of his "practical science". He describes the people of King Arthur's court as mindless children, even "animals" [65], who wear uncomfortable armor, and quest for pigs. Writing in a time when science was transforming civilization, Twain's novel uses the Yankee to show that science would inevitably bring progress. Because of its celebration of science and technology, Louis Budd labels Twain's novel as "virtually a manifesto summing up the Gilded Age just before times changed with a vengeance. It assumed progress as a booming fact; and... gloated over the rise of science and political freedom."<sup>7</sup>



The Yankee always favors the abolition of sixth century concepts and their replacement by the more scientific nineteenth-century techniques. He tries to reform the aristocracy, selecting men for army positions "on the basis of mere efficiency." [328] In an attempt to establish a modern mechanical civilization, he introduces the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the typewriter, and the sewing machine, innovations which met with great success: "and all the thousand willing and handy servants of steam and electricity were working their way into favor." [513] Most important of all to Mark Twain, himself a patent-holder, the Yankee founds a patent office. When the Yankee visits a Hermit's cave and discovers one of his telephone operators already there, he contrasts the achievements of the sixth and nineteenth centuries, "Now what a radical reversal of things this was.., what a fantastic conjunction of opposites and irreconcilables- the home of the bogus miracle become the home of a real one, the den of a medieval hermit turned into a telephone office." (303)

Although the novel is written in the first person from Hank Morgan's viewpoint, Twain frequently communicates his own views. He clearly identifies with Hank Morgan, even to the extent of accidentally giving his Connecticut Yankee pieces of Twain's own Mississippi River background, and many of Hank Morgan's speeches are paraphrases of Twain's notebooks and letters.<sup>8</sup> Twain's philosophical tone often drowns out the Yankee's vernacular in these speeches, which echo Twain's own ideas about science. Like Twain, the Yankee criticizes the Church, slavery, feudalism, superstition, and ignorance. In his autobiography, Mark Twain states his purpose in writing *A Connecticut Yankee* as:

An attempt to imagine and after a fashion set forth, the hard conditions of life for the laboring and defenseless poor in bygone times in England, and incidentally contrast these conditions with those under which the civil and ecclesiastical pets of privilege and high fortune level lived in those times., contrast that English life.,

<sup>6</sup> Robert Bruce *The Launching of Modern American Science*. (NY: Alfred A Knopf 1987) p. 128

<sup>7</sup> Louis J. Budd, "Uncle Sam" in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: Norton Critical Edition*. Ensor, ed. p.407

<sup>8</sup> Everett Carter "The Meaning of A Connecticut Yankee," in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: Norton Critical Edition*. Ensor, ed. p. 443



with the life of modern Christendom and modern civilization, to the advantage of the latter of course.<sup>9</sup>

This contrast shows Twain's faith in the "secular theology" of scientific progress, and his use of the Yankee for its spokesman.

Because of Twain's more positive view of science, the Yankee's control of others is not the soul-destroying control of Hawthorne's scientists, but instead a liberating force. The Yankee forces Morgan Le Fay to free her prisoners, creates Protestant churches independent of the "Established Church", sets up schools, works to destroy the feudal system, and ultimately frees the slaves. After Arthur's death he issues his proclamation declaring England a free republic:

...all political power has reverted to its original source, the people of the nation. With the monarchy, its several adjuncts died also; wherefore there is no longer a nobility, no longer a privileged class, no longer an Established Church: all men are become exactly equal, they are upon one common level.[544]

While he occasionally abuses his power, for instance where he kills a humorist and burns his books, his rule is mostly benevolent, producing new education and new freedom. As the Boss, he cares more for the serfs than the king ever did, even disguising himself as one of them to learn how they see the world. This is a major difference from Hawthorne's scientists who consistently use their power for their own selfish ends.

### ...Status of Projects

Past readers of Samizdat will remember that I have launched a series of projects to better my life. Here's the latest report on my projects.

**Project Video** - In November I finally watched the last of my Netflix DVDs, *Double Indemnity*, a 1944 movie about a mild mannered insurance salesman, played by Fred MacMurray who gets involved with the Barbara Stanwyck's character, the wife of a mining executive. The two kill off the husband and plan on collecting the insurance money (doubled because the death appears to have taken place on a train). But the claim is investigated by the salesman's close friend. This is considered to be the first great film noir film. I found the relationship between the salesman and his friend more interesting and dramatic than that of the salesman and the femme fatale.



*The Adjustment Bureau* (2011) is based on a Philip K Dick story about mysterious agents who can freeze time and manipulate events and people so that everything follows their master plan. They can travel by using a series of doors that, while they are wearing their special hat, open to other places. The main character, a candidate for Senate played by Matt Damon, meets a ballerina played by Emily Blunt. But the agents in hats keep changing things so they do not meet again and, when he bumps into her on a bus, destroy the card. When he insists on continuing to see her, the agents threaten to ruin her career, so he leaves. However, right before her marriage to someone else, one of the agents gives the hero a hat so he can outmaneuver the other agents and stop the wedding. This has a nice paranoid tone but the entire plot relies on the agents not wiping the hero's mind, although that is clearly standard operating procedure.

*Mission Impossible* (1996) - This is the original film based on the 1960s TV series. When an Impossible Missions Force job goes bad, Ethan Hunt (played by Tom Cruise) is blamed. He tries to clear his name and find out who killed his fellow agents. He puts together a team to steal a list of agents' names and swap it for the identity of the mole on his original team. There are lots of action stunts including an extended stunt in

<sup>9</sup> Mark Twain, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain*, quoted in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*: Norton Critical Edition. Ensor, ed. p. 304

which a helicopter pursues a train through the Chunnel. But the film doesn't do enough to show why the mole, a long-time agent, would betray his team.

*Wolf of Wall Street* (2013). This film directed by Martin Scorsese is based on the true story of a stockbroker who cheats his clients, abuses drugs, and has numerous affairs while earning millions until he is caught. There's far too much profanity, explicit content, and general lack of morals. It shows how stockbrokers are only making money for themselves and exploiting everyone else. All this makes it hard for the viewer to sympathize with the main character.

For Jewish Christmas, I went with a group of friends to see a movie in an actual movie theater. We saw *The Boy and the Heron*, a Japanese animated movie (anime) directed by Hayao Miyazaki, a famous anime director. This is almost certainly his last film. It is about a boy traumatized by his mother's death in a war. When his father remarries the boy finds that a ruined tower on her estate takes him to a supernatural world where he has adventures. I found the movie very slow to get started and I may have liked it better if I had known more about Japanese mythology and could recognize the strange creatures in the film.

**Project SFTV** - I watched the three TV specials for *Doctor Who*'s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The producers brought back the fan-favorite team of David Tennant (the Doctor) and Catherine Tate (Donna Noble). In the first special, "The Star Beast" the Doctor is very puzzled as to why his new incarnation looks just like the 10<sup>th</sup> Doctor. Then he encounters Donna, his companion when he last wore that body. Donna's daughter, Rose, has found a cute cuddly alien who is more than it seems. There was a lot of controversy because Rose and the actress who plays her are transgender and there are a couple of references to that in the story (which I completely missed when watching it). This was a lot of fun and well worth watching. The second "Wild Blue Yonder" is more of a traditional *Doctor Who* story as the Doctor and Donna are trapped on a spaceship at the edge of the universe and are imperfectly duplicated (showing off the Disney-funded higher special effects budget). This was okay but didn't feel like something special. The third special, "The Giggle" featured Neil Patrick Harris as classic villain The Toymaker. This was my favorite of the three. Harris clearly had fun playing the villain. There was nicely creepy puppet hidden in all television broadcasts since TV was first invented. And the new Doctor appears, the first to be played by a non-white actor. The only flaw is that the villain is defeated purely through luck. I also watched the Christmas special, the first full episode with the new Fifteenth Doctor played by Ncuti Gatwa and introducing new companion Ruby Sunday. In "The Church on Ruby Road," Ruby has been experiencing strange bad luck and the Doctor starts following her to see what is happening. Then space goblins kidnap a baby being fostered by Ruby's adopted mother. The Doctor and Ruby rescue the baby through an improbable song and dance number and the goblins go back in time to kidnap Ruby as a baby, showing that there is a mystery involving Ruby's real mother and why she was left at a church. I liked this episode. It appears that Gatwa will be playing this as a fun Doctor without the weight of sadness and guilt that plagued recent Doctors. My only quibble is that both the Doctor and Ruby picked up the goblin's song and started singing with their own words without any preplanning. I can buy this in a Broadway-style musical as a convention of its genre, or in a show like *Buffy* where it is explained as a spell. But here it just happens with no explanation. Still, this was fun and I'll certainly watch other episodes. New episodes of *Doctor Who* are on Disney+ which I get.

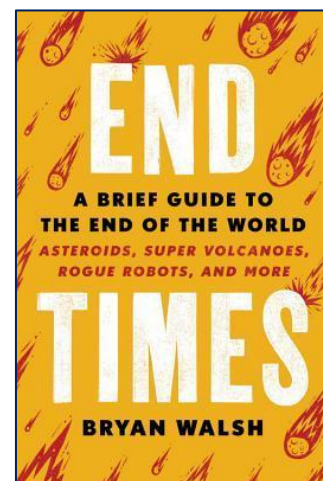


I also watched a couple of *Star Trek* original series episodes. In "Charlie X" the Enterprise rescues a teenager who survived alone for 14 years and has little knowledge of civilization or proper behavior. The first time he sees Yeoman Rand he asks, "Is this a girl?" He starts showing strange powers, including the ability to make people vanish and tries to take over the ship. He is also obsessed with Yeoman Rand and asks about male-female relationships. It seems to me strange that the second episode would spend so much time on a guest character, although there is a nice scene where Kirk beats Spock in 3D chess. And the final resolution does not the result of anything the crew does. In "Where No Man Has Gone Before" the Enterprise attempts to travel beyond the edge of our galaxy and a barrier knocks out Lt Commander Gary

Mitchell, an old friend of Kirk. This gives him ESP powers which he says make him like a god. When he tries to take over the Enterprise, Kirk and Spock knock him out and take him and the ship's psychiatrist, Elizabeth Dehner who has started developing feelings for Mitchell, to a nearby planet. He escapes and Kirk pursues. Dehner has been developing similar powers and Kirk convinces her to help him. Dehner and Mitchell neutralize each other's powers so Kirk and Mitchell get into a fist-fight including, yes, the two-handed punch. I was struck at how similar these two episodes were. They couldn't have been running out of ideas so early, the show had just started.

**Project Nonfiction** - *The Future Is Faster than You Think: How Converging Technologies Are Transforming Business, Industries, and Our Lives* by Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler. This book says new technology, including AI, 3D printing, and virtual reality will change everything and examines shopping, advertising, entertainment, education, flying cars, healthcare, longevity, insurance, finance, and food. I think they overestimated the impact of technology and underestimated the effect of inertia.

*End Times: A Brief Guide to the End of the World* by Bryan Walsh. This book explores the different ways the world could end and what humans are doing about each option. Chapters examine asteroids, volcanos, nuclear forces, climate change, disease, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and aliens. I think he does well on asteroids, volcanos, and climate change. Although the book came out in 2019, just four years ago, Covid made the chapter on disease very outdated. What scares me about this book is how little we are doing about some of these threats. For some of these, including climate change and biotechnology corporate and political interests are denying that there is a threat.



I'm about halfway through *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* by David Graeber and David Wengrow. The writers argue that a lot of the things historians assume about prehistory and the rise of civilization. They argue against the popular belief that hunter gathers lived in egalitarian societies until the agricultural revolution led to the development of civilization and kings/royalty and the military as well as the alternative view that the people in the state of nature had lives that were "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" with an alpha-male tribal leader. Instead they point to a variety of different types of social organization and that in some places egalitarianism continued after the development of agriculture and the rise of the earliest cities. They call for more of an examination about what non-Europeans thought and wrote about their societies. Hopefully, I'll have this finished for my next issue.

I am also listening to *The Foundations of Western Civilization* from the Great Courses audio company. I'm on lecture 23, about halfway through.

**Project Classics** - I finished the *Hunchback of Notre Dame* by Victor Hugo, which turns out to be even more depressing than I had thought. While the gypsy's mother turns out to be exactly who I thought she was (meaning that, technically Esmeralda really wasn't a gypsy), the happy reunion only lasts a few hours before both are dead. The archdeacon also has a very dramatic death. And even the hunchback, the titular hero, dies. I think the only major characters who survive are the poet Gringoire (who is technically the gypsy's husband) and Captain Phoebus. Even the goat is killed. I read this mostly by listening to the audiobook while driving which is ideal for long 19<sup>th</sup> century novels since you shouldn't focus too hard on the listening that you forget you are driving.

I have started reading *The Source* by James A. Michener, his 1965 book on Israel. It starts off with a bunch of archeologists doing an excavation of a site in western Galilee and then jumps to prehistoric times when a woman captured from another tribe invents agriculture and convinces her mate to come out of the caves. It alternates between historical sections and the archeologists in the novel's present. I'm only 175 page into a 1088 page epic so might not be done for a long while.

**Project Short Stories** - I have read the Sept/Oct issue of *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, the Dec/Jan issue of *Asimov's*, and the December issue of *Clarkesworld*. I have continued reading *The Ascent of Wonder: The Evolution of Hard SF*, but not a story a day as I had planned.

**Project Conventions** - I went to Philcon, which has drastically shrunk since its glory days. My next convention will be Boskone. And I am busy planning for Balticon at the end of May which I am chairing. No progress on Project Shakespeare, Project Activities, or Project Exercise. And I have actually regressed on Project Cleanup. So much for new year's resolutions.

### ...Author's Note

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