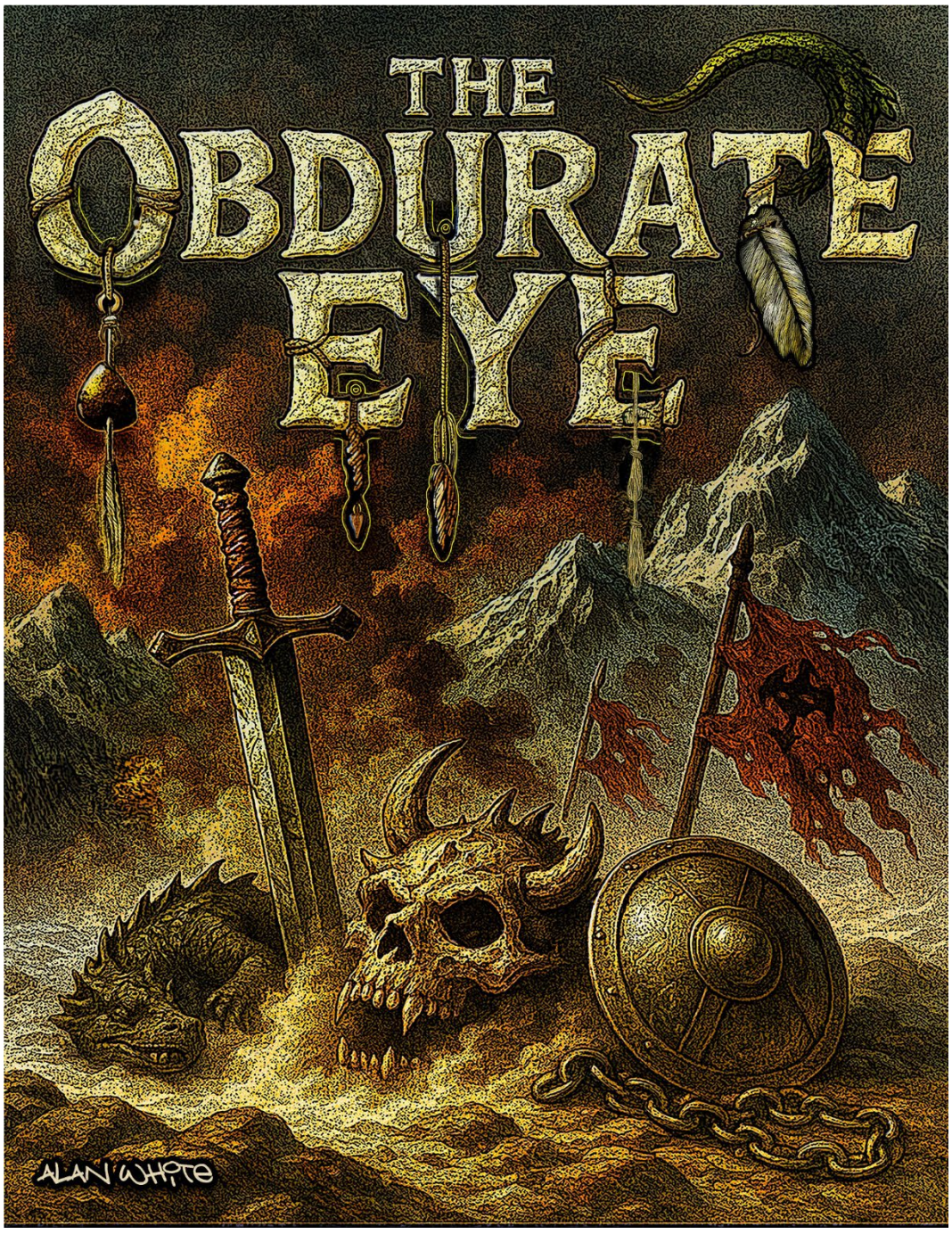


A Garth Spencer fanzine

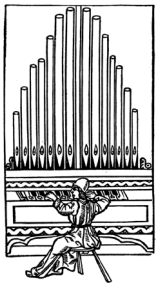
December 2025

A Merry Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Festivus and

Emperor Norton Day

to one and all!

THE OBDURATE EYE #58, December 2025, a personal zine from Garth Spencer, 6960 Damon Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5S 3H7, Email garth.van.spencer@gmail.com or hrothgarweems@gmail.com. Garth acknowledges that he does this on thē denounced territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, səlilwətaɬ, and sḵwx̱wú7mesh peoples. This zine endorses the Port Alberti in 2030 bid. (Was that for Worldcon or Westercon?)



The organ of no clique or party

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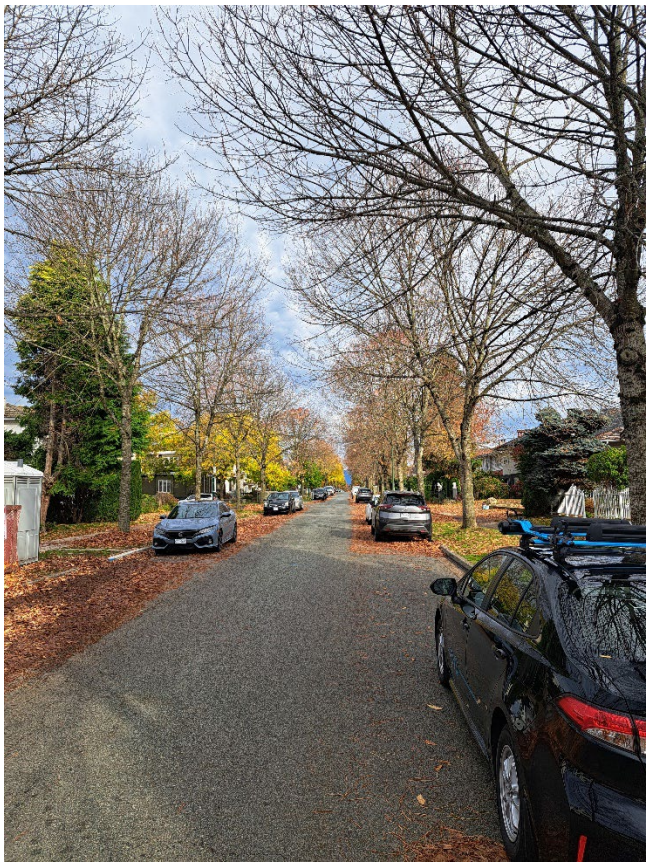
Art Credits

GARTH NEED NEW FANART!



Winter Arrives

Cheeses of Nazareth

I spend too much time alone pursuing weird thoughts. So, some years ago, in an attempt at Maslovian self-actualization, I joined the online Kingdom of Talossa. I also got an ordination in the Universal Life Church. Much more recently I decided to run in the next Talossan election. (I have not yet decided to start the Liberal Secular Rational Humanist Cult, but I'll make sure to let you know if I do.)

Probably I should back up and explain the foregoing.

There are a wide variety of virtual countries, or micronations, which exist mostly online or in the imaginations of their creators. The Kingdom of Talossa emerged from the imagination of Ben Madison, a resident of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and carries on various entertaining activities for the amusement of people who signed on with him. By now, Talossa has its own language, stamps, cuisine, national music style, and claims to scattered territories around the globe (starting with Milwaukee). Most of the Talossan news I receive, though, is administrative and political. Since October 26th, when the last legislature was prorogued, the several parties have been advocating for citizens/subjects to vote for their ticket, mostly concerned with perceived government meddling with the immigration process.

A mutual friend encouraged me to get involved. I am now running on the Independent Green/Anarcho-Surrealist ticket. Why? Because I can. My party manifesto reads:

> **"Talossa can lead the world in ecologically sustainable lifestyle and industrial practices, since our ecological impact and industries are a matter of opinion. Also, since we were all transported into a virtuality in the 1970s, Talossa can teach the world to face our virtual existence with humour every day."**

Of course, in the way I do these things, I am both my party leader and my sole candidate.

New readers of this fanzine must wonder when the wheels fell off my mental processes. Those of you who have been reading *Obdurate Eye* for a while know that alleged real-world news has become so progressively absurd that I refuse to take it seriously. I have worked out a whole worldview/belief system about this, which is as absurd and inconsistent and irrational as, I believe, our existence requires.

§

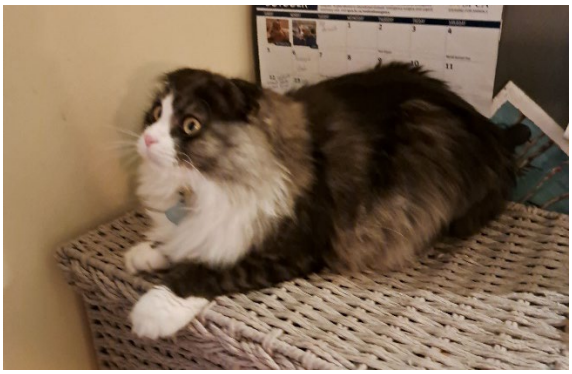
One of the reasons I haven't really bothered building up my own cult is that I've been preoccupied with the Heathen Freehold in British Columbia. This is one of several organizations in Canada (and the so-called United States) which practice and promote the belief system of pre-Christian Germanic tribes, sometimes called Asatru or Forn Sedr or Odinism or less polite things. That should give you enough keywords for a start.

Heathens like us are too independent, grass-roots, and diverse to follow cult leaders.

Members keep meeting up in person for rituals, ritual toasts with mead, and ritual potluck meals, although we tend to be a bit, um, geographically dispersed. In recent years, the Freehold has experienced the formation of an active local Freehold kindred in Surrey, the separation of a nearby kindred and the dissolution of an inactive one in the Interior of BC, and (for my duties as the Clerk) ongoing difficulties in monitoring our finances, or our membership numbers.

Well, that's no-one's particular fault. I've been having Internet connectivity issues since July 2025, and expect they will be resolved in mid-November.

If you perceive and enjoy the irony in a heathen society devoted to a late Iron Age tribal belief system conducting official business via the Internet, go ahead. I do too.



The new kitten at my brother's place

Cheesed Off

John Bartley, 9330 SW Bailey #21, Wilsonville, OR 97070, USA*, *Nov. 3, 2025

[Responding to Obdurate Eye #57] Excellent!

Portland has not burned down.

Still not detained, arrested, indicted, or deported!

Got my PDX Frog shirts for the festive fall protest season.

The Natural Gourd still have not been deployed to run amok in My Fair City.

And, I got the twenty-month old black cat LindaLinda to wear her collar, finally, so hopefully I can start walking her outside.

Compiling all the PDX Frog sign and shirt designs at https://kiloseven.blogspot.com/2025/10/ribbit.html for your dining and dancing pleasure.

If der WiFri goes on the fritz again, please call text me, so I can call back, and we can apply the appropriate color of Duck Tape to your router to ameliorate its dysfunction.

((Sounds good! For now, I got myself a portable WiFi hotspot, which should serve the house until the PHS Tech Team restores our connectivity.))

Steve Green, 33 Scott Road, Solihull, B92 7LQ, UK, necronaut13@gmail.com, Nov. 4, 2025

Fabulous cover design by Alan White; wish I still did a fanzine, so I could twist his arm for a contribution.

Regarding your disappearing files, I've recently encountered a scam whereby apparently legit drives are sold with 512Gb memories or higher but are actually 64Gb drives which have been gimmicked to give a false capacity. There's a parallel scam where refurbished drives are sold as new, often meaning they refuse overwriting almost as soon as you begin using them. I've found myself an eBay dealer who only sells sealed packs, having had to demand refunds from two others.

Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2, November 6, 2025

Thanks to the power being out in my building, I have had a very productive day loccing zines on my tablet and keyboard at home. *The Obdurate* Eye 57 is next! You have been warned!

I have done what you have done, put files on a thumb drive, but from what I have gathered, some of the fault may lie with the thumb drive. My big computer has the programming to correct some problems with thumb drives, but definitely not all problems. When they crap out, they stay that way. I have lots of gaps in my own education, and so does Yvonne, but fortunately, those gaps don't coincide, so I have learned a few things, and so has she. One thing I never learned, because I was never taught, was how to drive a car. Years of promises from my father, gone. Yvonne is our driver, and I am the navigator.

((Adopt, adapt, and improve. Motto of the Round Table.))

Not watching the news ... the more Trump is US president, the less I want to watch the news, and I am an old journalism grad. Also, I don't care to find out what tariffs are being increased yet again. (I will find out the hard way, just like most of us.)

((I am finally learning to reject what passes for reality and petition for better scriptwriting.))

Good for Edward Willett on taking up *On Spec* to keep it going. I have never been a subscriber, and I may have two or three issues, but it is a central name in the Canadian SF publishing industry, and is important. Many thanks to Edward on his last-minute save.

Newest *Amazing Stories* news ... the big book we've been working on for a year or more is finally ready to go. *The Martian Trilogy* by a lot of people, including me, is the story of another *Amazing Stories*, this one starting in the late 1920s in Black newspapers in the southern USA, with stories of exploration by men of money, science and philosophy, all Black, as they explore other worlds and interact with the alien beings they find. White explorers would interfere with the conflicts, but Black explorers would observe, and offer solutions if they are asked for them. These stories appeared in these papers under the name *Amazing Stories*, unaware of the pulp magazine that had appeared out of New York a few years earlier. This is a new chapter in the history of science fiction, rediscovered by Black scholars, and we are pleased to help present this back to SF readers and fandom.

CNN...I thought better of them when it came to coverage of activities and events that are anti-Trump. I think they are attempting to cover both sides of political activities in the US, but unfortunately, it looks more like they are vying to become the new Fox News. I'd like to be wrong in this. It goes back to my usual conclusion that I had, even back as far as journalism school, that you really cannot trust American news sources, for ratings points and money are far more important than getting the story right. I trust the CBC and BBC far more, although there is no longer any news source one can trust implicitly.

((My guess, and it is only a guess, is that television networks and newspapers and news media will be reasonably objective reporters <u>about regions and issues in other countries than their own</u>.))

I may have run out of zine, so ... many thanks for this issue, and I am sure the next issue is already being prepared. See you soon.

Leigh Edmonds, November 18, 2025

Thanks for including me on your list for *The Obdurate Eye* #57. Alan White's cover was excellent and quite startling.

I get the impression, from reading your editorial, that you are having more troubles coping with real life than I think I am. I agree that computers do strange things that I don't understand but since they are basically magical boxes (to me at least) that do magical things I'm not surprised when they don't always do what I expect. One of the problems with them is that I am supposed to think like them when using one, rather than them thinking like me. Given the way my brain works the resulting misunderstandings are understandable.

((Any two given people are likely to discover they don't think the same way. Computer designers, especially the software designers who pick terms for commands, seem to be prone not to think the same way as computer users. This really becomes obvious when a user shifts between PC, Macintosh and Linux systems. I have a theory about this, but there is not enough space in this fanzine to write it all out.))

You ask what I'm thankful for. That depends on how I'm feeling. Some days I'm not thankful for anything and on other days I'm thankful for just about everything. The weather might have something to do with this and since the weather here today is overcast and cool so I'm very thankful that people invented electricity which warms up my room a little and lights it up for me. Usually I am thankful for cats, but not when they do smelly things in the wrong places (which is rarely, I hasten to add). I'm also grateful for Shostakovich's String Quartets and the Beatles, when I remember to think about them.

I don't resent missing out on anything. I am disappointed that I am not a chess Grand Master, that I don't open the batting in the Australian XI, am not a multi-Hugo-winning author or fabulously wealthy, but that's not the same as resenting something.

The movie reviews were interesting but I don't recall seeing any of them, so I can't really comment.

As part of my new policy of partaking in as little news as possible so as to avoid getting stressed about the current unpleasantness in the United States, I don't read long pieces that bob up on Facebook. Consequently I only glanced at your reprints from Facebook. They might have a great deal of merit and I may be depriving myself by ignoring them, but the ones that I have dipped into remind me too much of all those half thought out and rambling under-graduate essays I had to read in a previous life. No thank you! Come to think of it, not having to read long boring undergraduate essays in my current life is something I am very grateful for.

((I don't believe in the news, any more than I believe in conspiracy theories or science fiction stories; I just look for metaphors of human behaviour, and laugh at the plot holes and absurd motivations. Frankly we need better story writers behind mass media news, but I've already printed my crank theory about that. It's time I generated more standup material.))

We Also Heard From: Hugh A.D. Spencer *[["Thanks Garth! Great cover art!"]]*

English versus Anglic: Lesson 4

25 Common Expressions People Use Wrong

1. **"I could care less."**
   - Correct: I couldn't care less.
   - Meaning: You do not care at all.
2. **"Literally."**
   - Often misused to mean "really."
   - Correct meaning: Something actually happened, not figuratively.
3. **"Irregardless."**
   - Correct: Regardless.
   - "Irregardless" is nonstandard.
4. **"For all intensive purposes."**
   - Correct: For all intents and purposes.
   - Meaning: In every practical sense.
5. **"Supposably."**
   - Correct: Supposedly.
   - Meaning: Believed to be true.
6. **"Mute point."**
   - Correct: Moot point.
   - Meaning: Not relevant to the current discussion.
7. **"Nip it in the butt."**
   - Correct: Nip it in the bud.
   - Meaning: Stop a problem early.
8. **"Extract revenge."**
   - Correct: Exact revenge.
   - Meaning: To get revenge.
9. **"Case and point."**
   - Correct: Case in point.
   - Meaning: A good example.
10. **"Wreck havoc."**
    - Correct: Wreak havoc.
    - Meaning: Cause chaos or damage.
11. **"One in the same."**
    - Correct: One and the same.
    - Meaning: Identical.
12. **"Should of."**
    - Correct: Should have.
    - Often misheard in speech.
13. **"Baited breath."**
    - Correct: Bated breath.
    - Meaning: Holding your breath in anticipation.
14. **"Peaked my interest."**
    - Correct: Piqued my interest.
    - Meaning: Caught or stimulated interest.
15. **"Piece of mind."**
    - Correct: Peace of mind.
    - Meaning: Calmness or reassurance.
16. **"Expresso."**
    - Correct: Espresso.
    - Meaning: Strong coffee.
17. **"Hunger pains."**
    - Correct: Hunger pangs.
    - Meaning: Sharp hunger sensations.
18. **"On accident."**
    - Standard: By accident.
    - More widely accepted in formal English.
19. **"Deep-seeded."**
    - Correct: Deep-seated.
    - Meaning: Strongly rooted.
20. **"Wet your appetite."**
    - Correct: Whet your appetite.
    - Meaning: Stimulate interest or desire.
21. **"Doggy-dog world."**
    - Correct: Dog-eat-dog world.
    - Meaning: Highly competitive environment.
22. **"Escape goat."**
    - Correct: Scapegoat.
    - Meaning: A person blamed for others' mistakes.
23. **"Taken for granite."**
    - Correct: Taken for granted.
    - Meaning: Not appreciated.
24. **"Flush out an idea."**
    - Correct: Flesh out an idea.
    - Meaning: Add details to a concept.
25. **"Play it by year."**
    - Correct: Play it by ear.
    - Meaning: Adjust as you go, without a plan.

Les Prix Fromages

***Squad Thirteen* Released in November**

"Recently, I released a horror/slasher novel called *Squad Thirteen*. It's about '90s movie slashers recruited by the military into a special task force, and sent out to deal with 'unconventional threats.' Think of it as *The Avengers* for '90s slashers. I had a book launch on November 2 … The book, *Squad Thirteen* by the way, is available on Amazon, Kobo, Barnes & Noble and many other platforms, if you're interested."

Den Valdron, Facebook, Nov. 11, 2025

Meanwhile, in Vancouver

CONnections was a 1-day event held November 15, 2025 at the BCIT Burnaby campus, BC (3700 Willingdon Avenue, Burnaby), with panels, workshops, vendors and more. CONnections is also an important fundraiser for WCSFA, a big part of their rebuilding effort towards bringing back VCON, one of Canada's oldest and longest-running fan-run conventions.

(So of course I forgot my admission receipt at home when I took the bus to BCIT. -GS)

(WCSFA Newsletter, November 2025)

2026 Calendar of Canadian SF & Fantasy Association Events:

- **January 3** – Membership payments open, Eligibility Lists open for 2026 members, Development grants (Part 1) open
- **February 21** – Eligibility Lists close
- **February 28** – Nominations open
- **March 31** – Development grants (Part 1) close. Announce May 15
- **April 4** – Nominations close
- **May 9** – Voters' package available to download (expected date)
- **May 16** – CSFFA AGM online voting open
- **May 30** – CSFFA AGM online voting close
- **May 31** – CSFFA AGM online (Sunday midday)
- **June 1** – Development grants (Part 2) open.
- **June 6** – Aurora Awards voting open
- **July 1** – New Hall of Fame inductees announced

- **July 11** – Membership payments close, Voters 'package download close
- **July 18** – Aurora Awards voting close
- **August 9** – Aurora Awards ceremony (online) – Note: This is a **Sunday**
- **Aug 31** – Development grants (Part 2) close. Announce Oct 15

New CSFFA Book Club – Retrospective Aurora Winners

"… starting in January 2026, we're inviting readers and writers, CSFFA members and speculative fiction fans, to join us in **the Aurora Awards Retrospective Book Club**. The aim of the Book Club is to read every "Best Novel" Aurora Award winner in the association's history, in time for the 50th anniversary [in 2030]. We envision the book club lasting over four years, and capping off at the proposed Edmonton Worldcon in 2030, where we hope to host some form of anniversary celebration.

"We've reached out to Aurora-winning authors and have received a really enthusiastic response, so we hope that we'll be able to feature a solid number of author events (readings, Q&As, etc.) as part of the book club. … check out the book club page of the CSFFA website [https://www.csffa.ca/book-club/] for a full schedule and more details as they become available."

Eligibility Lists Are Open for 2025 Works

"As of November 2025, our annual eligibility list submission period is underway. You can see our current list of confirmed eligible works on our public list page here. This page can be shared widely, everyone has access to it. This public page contains links to external URLs for each work, which you will find to the right of the entry marked as [info]. For works that are available to read in full online (eg. short stories in online magazines), the [info] link should direct you to that work so you can read it. For other works, the info link provides publication details, synopses, and purchase options.

"CSFFA members are encouraged to add works they are familiar with or published in 2025. In order to add works before the end of December, you must have a 2025 membership (i.e., paid the membership fee in the first half of this year). Starting in January, you will need to purchase your 2026 membership in order to access the member-only eligible work submission forms.

"If you are a publisher or a creator without a membership and would like assistance adding works to the lists, please contact us. If you only published a few works, we are more than happy to put them in for you. You must send us full details of the work and a URL where members can get more information about the work or access it in full (if such is available online).

"The eligibility lists are for works done in 2025 by Canadian citizens and permanent residents. For full details on eligibility rules, see here. and on the Aurora Award categories, here. Reminder that **no work can be nominated** unless it has been added to the eligibility lists before the nominating period begins. Nominations are made **directly from** the confirmed eligibility lists on our website, so this is a necessary first step in each year's awards process.

"For questions or comments about eligibility lists, please contact us at volunteer.csffa@gmail.com."

(CSFFA newsletter November 2025)

Jean-Louis Trudel (1967-2025)

"It is with great sadness that we announce that we have lost one of our own.

"Jean-Louis Trudel, one of the pillars of the Canadian literary community of imaginative literature, died Nov. 17 in Vilnius, Lithuania. He was in Lithuania for the month of November as a writer in residence. He was 58 years old.

"Jean-Louis was a science fiction writer, a critic, a translator, a historian, and a convention organizer. He had been involved with con organizing and the Aurora Awards since the late 1980s. For many, many years Jean-Louis was a CSFFA (Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association) board member and our liaison with Congrès Boréal (as their secretary) and the Quebec Francophone community.

"When he arrived at the Winnipeg Worldcon (1994) he found that nothing had been arranged by the convention committee to hold that year's Aurora Awards' ceremony. Jean-Louis stepped in and arranged for a location where the Aurora Awards ceremony could happen. More recently, Jean-Louis attended the Worldcon in Chicago in 2022 where he promoted a French bid for Worldcon to happen in Nice, France.

"Editions ActuSF, his French publisher, described Jean-Louis as "A leading figure in science fiction across the Atlantic (who) worked as a critic, historian, and translator." They also say that he served as vice-president, and, later, president of SF Canada, the Canadian science fiction writers' association.

"Editions ActuSF lists among his notable novels The Revenant of Fomalhaut; Tomorrow, the Stars; Supremacy; The Transfigured of Centauri; and The Messenger of Storms.

"Primarily an author of short stories, Jean-Louis's stories were published over five decades, 1984-2025. He held degrees in physics, astronomy, and the history and philosophy of science. Since 1994, he has authored (alone or in collaboration with Yves Meynard as Laurent McAllister) three science fiction novels published in France, four fiction collections, and twenty-six young adult books published in Canada.

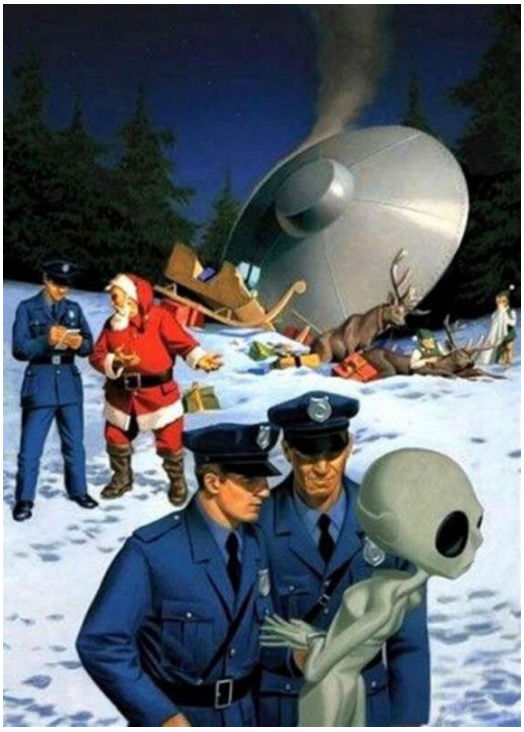
"Jean-Louis received literary distinctions, including the Grand Prix de la Science-Fiction et du Fantastique québécois in 2001. He won Prix Aurora Awards in the fan categories in 1994 and 1996. He was recognized in 1994 for Promotion of Canadian SF and in 1996 for SFSF Boréal et Prix Boréal. In 2021 Jean-Louis was inducted into the CSFFA Hall of Fame.

"Recently, in a discussion about Canadian citizenship Jean-Louis told the CSFFA board, 'I identify as a Franco-Ontarian (Canadian) with Métis ancestry, born in Toronto. My father was Franco-Manitoban, and my grandfather was born in Regina in the 19th century, back when it was still in the Northwest Territories. My mother is an immigrant from France. I now live in Québec. There's a bit of Scots in the family tree as well.

"'On the whole, I think I cover the full Canadian gamut. And, yes, via the Métis branch, my ancestors in this land go back thousands of years.'

“To see a list of Jean-Louis’s stories, longer fiction, and non-fiction, go to https://isfdb.org/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?581.”

“(WCSFA newsletter December 2025)



The Big Cheese

The Horrors of Maslow's Dark Pyramid

Den Valdron, Facebook, November 11, 2025:

Writing *Squad Thirteen* and thinking about horror set my mind to spinning, so I want to expand on a topic I discussed at the recent book launch.

I think that there may be a fundamental difference between literature, as the literary world sees it, and genre as the rest of us enjoy it – and that difference may be rooted in class distinctions.

Now, as a general rule, the literary types tend to see genre – whether it be romance, horror or whatnot – as fundamentally inferior, shallow, escapist literature without depth or significance. Okay, that’s a point of view. I’d argue it’s superficial and a bit condescending, but there you go.

Well, I’ve read a fair bit of literature. On the other side of the coin, I’d describe literature as writing about people who mostly don’t have real problems, but have a lot of feelings, and don’t really do anything. Literary folk will definitely respond to this by telling me I’m being superficial, condescending and downright mean. All the while sweating hard under their collars, because there’s more truth there than they want to admit.

But here's what I think is going on.

Ever hear of Maslow's Hierarchy? Maslow's Pyramid? Maslow was this Sociologist[1] guy, back in the 1940s who came up with a theory of human needs, or a theory of human motivation. He basically said that human needs were like a pyramid with different levels. At the bottom level were basic survival needs - food, water, shelter. Then you'd go up the pyramid, security and stability needs, then social and emotional needs, then personal needs, and then self actualization, whatever that is.

Now, what's really interesting about what Maslow said, was that you couldn't really care about what was above you in the pyramid, unless you were getting your needs met at your level or at the lower level. In a nutshell, he said that if your problem was not getting food or water, if you were starving or dehydrating it really didn't matter to you if you weren't being invited to parties or getting your degree.

You had to meet your basic needs before you could move up the pyramid. Or to put it another way, meeting your basic needs gave you the freedom to work your way up the pyramid.

So for example, it's only when you were sure of eating regularly you started to worry about shelter for the night. It's only when you secured shelter for the night that you started to want long term shelter or a nice place to stay. It's only when you don't have to worry about food and shelter that you start thinking about having friends over.

Now, it's open to criticism. If you're hungry, it's your friendships and friends that might get you fed, so you work on that. People who are working in coal mines and living hand to mouth can self actualize. But it's not a bad tool to try to work with.

Now, it strikes me that in some way, Maslow's pyramid also reflects social and economic classes and their issues. Not to put to fine a point on it, but if you're poor and homeless, then you're grinding on the bottom of the pyramid, needing food, water, safety and shelter, and that's an overwhelming priority. If you're just poor, if you're working poor, if you're working class, blue collar, white collar, management, wealthy… you're not just working your way up ecologically and socially, you're working your way up Maslow as well.

I grew up working class in a dirt poor region of Canada. I remember reading in sociological books and treatises on Canadian poverty where Campbellton was cited as the bottom of the barrel. I was shocked. Where I was from, Campbellton was the big city, where the streets were paved with gold. Okay, I exaggerate slightly, but it was definitely uphill from us. And I knew a lot of neighborhoods like Lorne or Balmoral that were a hell of a lot poorer. I struggled through University, managing and scraping. I didn't feel poor or desperate, but looking back, the margins were thin. Like a lot of students, it was hardscrabble.

I would read literature in those days, and it would leave me utterly cold: These people had no problems. They had houses, careers, three car garages, three working cars! Their fridges were stocked with food. They could go to restaurants. There was nothing wrong with their lives, they had it all. They just felt unhappy. They were angsty about things. Even when they had to struggle, it felt superficial. *The Great Gatsby*? F*** the whole lot of them.

[1] Psychologist, really. See Robert Runté's response below.

Living on peanut better, worrying about leaky ceilings, standing in bus shacks at forty below in leaky boots, safety pins holding the rip in my coat, I couldn't relate.

Instead, the books I enjoyed were genre. Science fiction about people meeting problems and solving them; adventure about fighting against the odds; romance about finding fulfillment; horror about overcoming or surviving danger.

None of that related directly to my real life of peanut butter, leaky ceilings and leakier boots. But then, *Gatsby* didn't relate to my real life either.

What these genre books did do was relate to the underlying emotional challenges of these needs. Self actualization? That was muddy and difficult, presumed luxury and privilege, and offered no clear path. The various angsty parts of existence? That was all very well, but I had problems I needed to solve right now.

Mack Bolan, Frodo, John Carter – that wasn't a blueprint, I was not going to get out through gunfire, swordplay or carrying a ring. But what they were all really about was obstacles, perseverance, accomplishment. It was about encountering problems, external problems, and coming to grips with them, or at the very least, persisting and enduring them. It was about searching for solutions, sometimes failing, often learning, and perhaps ultimately solving them.

It was about dealing with our emotional realities. Do you know how scary it is at the bottom of Maslow's pyramid? Or at the bottom of the social/economic class pyramid? One day, I got an unexpected bill for a couple of hundred dollars, and I wept. I didn't have the money. I was already up against the wall. When you're at the bottom of the pyramid, homeless, or poor, or working poor, the smallest thing is a disaster. Working poor?

You're hanging on your fingernails – you lose your shitty job, your car breaks down, the rent goes up, the kid gets sick? Any of that and you're screwed. You're living with terror. So you pick up a book about a monster threatening a family, you can understand that implicit fear, and when they overcome the monster and survive, that's gratifying.

Of course, it's not just the working poor that read horror. But we have terror and vulnerability going up the scale. You have to be pretty high up the pyramid to be free of the pervasive sense of vulnerability and how easily your life can go wrong.

Different genres appeal to different needs, different places on both the Maslow and Class pyramids. Science fiction is about externalities and problem solving. Romance is about a different set of emotional challenges, desires and insecurities, for people who are at different places in their lives.

In this sense, I can see how reading literature is meaningful for people at certain places in either the social/class pyramid and the Maslow pyramid. And reading other genres may be meaningful and important to people at other places.

Reading, I'll emphasize. Not writing. There's no shortage of poor or working class writers who achieve literary status. Bukowsky, that old booze hound, for instance. Writing can come out of anyone, anywhere. And like I said, even a coal miner can have the thoughts and aspirations of a Chekhov. Anyone, anywhere, at any social class, or economic class, or life stage can be observant and reflective and can write.

I'm talking about what a reader resonates to, what they will find meaning and satisfaction in. Nabokov's *Lolita*? Didn't get much out of it. Lovecraft's "Colour Out of

Space," living in an industrial town that was ground zero for environmental contamination, watching that contamination unwind and undo lives, watching loved ones wither from cancer – it held me like a vise the first time I read it.

Now, of course it's muddy. There are university professors walking around with holes in their shoes desperate for tenure. There are upper middle class families drowning in debt, backs to the wall. Neither pyramid is as pristine and clear cut as academics would love to have you believe.

But it seems to me that this notion of worth or literary value, and putting some things higher on the scale as 'literary' and other things lower or at the bottom of the scale as 'horror' may be a misplaced exercise, and fundamentally, a meaningful one. Simply an exercise in where the privileged at the top of the pyramid reaffirm their arbitrary privilege as good and meaningful, and the other spots on the pyramid as lesser.

I think maybe we need to look at these things in terms of who people are, where they are in their lives and what they need. I think the search for meaning is a personal one, not something for objective standards of criticism. If engineers read science fiction, and housewives read romance, maybe those genres are meaningful to persons in those places.

For myself, I think I'm a reasonably smart guy, and I like to think I'm a pretty good writer. I don't pretend to brilliance or greatness. I am what I am, and that includes quite a bit of history and scar tissue. But I like genre, I read it, I write it, it's meaningful to me and I see worth in it. So sue me.

Robert Runté responded:

Actually, Maslow came up with nothing. Rather he appropriated the teachings of the Siksika[2] (with whom he was living) and passed [them] off as his own invention. Also: he was a psychologist, not a sociologist; a sociologist might have been in less hurry to change from the Siksika's emphasis on community over the individual.

But otherwise, I generally agree with your analysis. See also Hogarth's *The Uses of Literacy*, in which he claims the invention of the pocketbook destroyed working class culture by making genre fiction cheap entertainment with which to distract workers from real learning. *(R. Runté, Nov. 11, 2025)*

MAGA Is Not About Meritocracy

I don't suppose that's shocking to anyone on the outside. But it's a MAGA thing. All this stuff about 'go woke, go broke' and 'DEI!!!!'

Can we just call bullshit now. We have watched black people be literally purged everywhere from *[the United States]* government. If your skin is not the right colour, you're out. Head of the Coast Guard, the Air force, Joint Chiefs of Staff... all out on their ass. Under the guise of getting rid of DEI, there's literally been a witch hunt against black men and women, Hispanics, LGB, trans, Asians, you name it.

[2] The Siksika Nation is a First Nation in southern Alberta, Canada, and is part of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

So they're all DEI hires, is that it? And they got replaced with … ?

Pete Hegseth, RFTJr, Linda McMahon, Cash Patel, Marco Rubio?

I'm sorry, this is cutting edge competence? Best of the Best? Alcoholic Rapist fox host, Brain worm guy, Wrestler Woman, Crazy podcaster? Jello-guy?

But even there – forget those pricks. You know what we're seeing? We're seeing the Justice Department purged, and replaced with True Believers. Like Lindsey Halligan and Todd Blanche.

The thing is with law, you get in a Courtroom, you get out in the open. There's no hiding it, there's no spin If you don't know what you're doing, it shows. Oh man, we have seen it!

Both Blanche and Halligan have gone in with stunning levels of incompetence, completely out of their depth. They used to joke that you could get a Grand Jury to indict a ham sandwich. These assholes failed at that. They got blown out of the water on Trump's twisted corrupt revenge games.

Now of course the blame game goes, the spin goes. But here's the truth. They're incompetent. But here's the thing. The reason they fell on their faces was because they made a point of getting rid of every competent person that could have saved their asses. there's always idiots at the top. But they wiped out the substrate of competence. So now you've got the entire Justice Department as a pathetic shambles.

The thing is – Justice is public. It's exposed, it's out there. We're seeing hints of this stuff everywhere. FEMA? Noehm is such a media whore that she'd exposing what a dumpster fire she's built. Same thing with Hegseth, he's like garbage Midas, turning everything he's touching to shit. McMahon is quieter, but we're hearing stuff.

Everywhere in the government, competent people are being purged, and replaced with idiots.

If MAGA really believed its shit about DEI, they'd be blowing a gasket. Isn't that the problem with DEI? The erosion of competence? Isn't MAGA about 'we don't care, white or black, it's about competence'?

But now we're finding that anyone who knows how to do their job is out the window. Competence doesn't matter at all. It was really just about getting rid of black people, and Hispanics, and Libs and basically anyone they didn't like.

It was never about competence. Just about being the right kind of white. The cross-burning kind. It was about loyalty *über alles*.

Thing is, they don't care about competence at all. They just take it for granted, the assume it.

There's a kind of arrogance at work, the arrogance of a self-appointed ruling class that looks down at the rest of us, and we're just ants. That's how the Bezos, the Musks, the Trumps think. We're just ants. One ant is the same as any other ant.

Well, if one ant is the same as any other ant, you can switch them out like Lego. So you can replace all the stubborn ants that don't kiss your ass with ants that do nothing but kiss your ass, because that's all that matters … your ego, getting your ego fed and stroked, having your near-divinity worshipped properly, as you set the sun

and the moon in their place and set the world spinning the way you think it should spin.

That's how these fuckers think. You crack open the brain of Peter Thiel, or Vladimir Putin, or Bill Gates, and there you go. I got the window into their soul for you, right here.

We're all ants, and we don't matter. These guys would rape the world land every one of us into bloody pulp, and they'd never see anything but ants.

Push come to shove, they'll pick the ants that kiss their asses and sing their praises, and get rid of the rest.

But here's the thing. We're not ants. We're the great heaving human pyramid of chained souls that they sit atop. And competence, ability, actually counts.

These pricks have crawled so far up their own asses, they just don't believe it. And that's why they're turning the world into a three ring shit show.

But remember this: They don't care. As long as they get what they want, nothing else matters. They'll happily lie and let us die while they lie. Rulers and oligarchies and elites always do.

The people with power over you deserve no respect, they deserve no deference. They are the enemy, they have always been the enemy.

As for MAGA, they're degenerate dumbasses who can't tell the difference between crap and custard. But here's the truth about MAGA, and I'm saying it again, so you'll remember: They didn't care. They didn't care about DEI or Woke or all that principled bullshit, turns out none of it mattered to them. They were just sick little racists, it was about white, the right kind of white.

Cheese Louise

A recipe from Garth Spencer

Every so often I've confused people by mentioning one of the very few dishes I have invented, which I christened "Cheese Louise."

Really, it's just a cheese omelette with diced tofu, and I continually fail to make it without breaking the omelette over the filling. Maybe I should leave it a little longer in the frying pan before serving it. Or reduce and fix the amount of diced cheese, onions, mushrooms and tofu that I add.

Generally it goes like this:

Two eggs (not three – this is a mistake!)

A little milk

Diced tofu (semi-firm)

Diced cheese (your choice – I stand by aged Cheddar, possibly Red Leicester and Feta)

Salt and spices to taste

Optional: diced French onions and mushrooms (your choice)

My rigmarole:

Into a mixing bowl, break and stir two eggs with a bit of milk. Salt if you like.

On a cutting board, dice about a half cup of semi-firm tofu; maybe some French onions and mushrooms (about a quarter cup each, I guess); and one or more kinds of cheese (see above).

Into a heated frying pan, pour the egg mixture.

As the omelette firms up, pour on your ingredients. It generally works best to put the tofu and optional ingredients on first, then the cheese (or cheeses).

While all this is going on, I usually prepare some rice with mixed vegetables. (Note: After a while, I learned that 1/3rd of a cup of rice will serve one person.)

When done, fold the omelette and serve.

Note: All the foregoing adds up to a solid meal for one.

Next issue – Bachelor Kibble!

Cahiers du Fromage

by Duncan Shields

MOVIE REVIEWS FOR NOVEMBER 7th, 2025

Movies I've seen lately:

Predator: Badlands (2025) - A rip-snortin' good time. I liked it. It delivered. Tight script, good effects, lots of action and science-fictiony hijinks. Putting a predator as the main character is a cool twist, I thought Elle Fanning was great, and Dimitrius Koloamatangi, who plays the predator under a layer of CG and motion capture, really brought the character to life. I enjoyed the story and the Predator lore additions. I give it an enthusiastic thumbs up. Also, it was extremely metal. I'm an easy mark for anything Predator related, though, especially after *Prey* and the animated *Predator: Killer of Killers* were so good. Dan Trachtenberg really seems to 'get' the franchise. Your mileage may vary but I enjoyed it a whole bunch. - currently in theaters

The Lunchbox (2013)(India) - Fantastic. A delivery mix-up starts regularly sending a home-cooked lunchbox from a lonely wife to a bitter widower which leads to a life-changing correspondence for them both. Shades of the book *Griffin and Sabine* or the movie *84 Charing Cross* with some *Big Night* and *Babette's Feast* thrown in. Very, very moving to me. A food movie AND a correspondence movie? Sign me up. I was teary-eyed in many a place. The incredible and unfortunately late Irrfan Khan does a masterclass in subtlety here. A beautiful tale of human connection. And it joins my 'perfect ending' club. Recommended. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Available for rent/purchase from Prime, Youtube, AppleTV, and GooglePlay. Also check out Video Cat on Cambie.

First Comes Courage (1943) - Another great Dorothy Arzner-directed film. A lady double agent in a Nazi-occupied Norwegian town is romancing a German officer but secretly giving info to the British. She's playing a dangerous game. The locals hate her guts, thinking she's a traitor, and the Germans are suspicious. Things come to a head in a delightful way when her old flame comes to town. Keeps you guessing. The music is a bit much sometimes but the shots, compositions, performances, script, and pacing are all tight. And the woman in the lead role (Merle Oberon) is nuanced and layered. Another win for Arzner. - streaming on YouTube

Gargoyles (1972) - A made-for-tv horror movie with practical special effects by the legendary Stan Winston. A professor researching ancient myths of evil takes his daughter into the desert to research an old man's story about gargoyles. Ruh roh! Turns out they're real! Gargoyle shenanigans ensue. Pretty great stuff if you like a little ‘70s cheese drizzled over your hot garbage with the best effects thirty dollars can buy. Which I do! Also a young Scott Glenn! Enjoyably bad. Some of that high-quality low-quality fun. - streaming on YouTube

Fortress (1992) - Kurtwood Smith, Jeffrey Combs, Loryn Locklin, Vernon Wells, a baby Clifton Collins, Jr, and the enigmatic Christopher Lambert star in this ‘90s sci-fi action silliness. It has INTESTINATORS! Heck yes! Lambert goes to a future prison after he's caught trying to illegally procreate with his wife. What a hoot. Completely 'all-in' nineties garbage. Some trippy visuals and a good amount of blood and violence. Nom nom nom. Get into my eyes. You know yourself. As fast food goes, it's top tier. But yeah, it's fast food. Guilty pleasure. - streaming on YouTube (audio's a little out of sync) and VideoDailyMotion (with an obscene amount of ads). Also try Video Cat on Cambie. I hope you can find a good copy out there somewhere. Hopefully it ends up on Tubi at some point.

Defense of the Realm (1986) - British cold war political thriller with Gabriel Byrne, Denholm Elliot, Greta Scacchi and small appearances by Bill Paterson and Robbie Coltrane. Byrne is a reporter getting in over in his head while uncovering a big story

with the help of Scacchi. Roger Deakins cinematography so it looks great. Pretty solid. Worth a watch if you like the actors and subject matter. What was scandalous back then seems a bit quaint through today's eyes, though, but that doesn't matter. A dependable, adequate film. - streaming on YouTube

Eephus (2024) - Strange, contemplative little indie small-town baseball movie. The last local baseball diamond in a tiny '90s Massachusetts town is about to be demolished to build a school. Two local teams of mostly older dudes get together to play the last game while ruminating about life and loss as the innings pass. It's got 100% on Rotten Tomatoes. No famous actors. Shades of Hal Hartley or early Wes Anderson. I did like its vibe and it does weave a spell. But maybe I needed to like baseball more. Might have been a metaphor or two that went over my head. Meditative picture. I'd recommend it to hardcore baseball fans, maybe. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on Mubi and AppleTV. Available for rent/purchase from Prime, GooglePlay and Youtube. Also try Video Cat on Cambie.

Black Sabbath (1963)(Italy) - A triptych or short horror films directed by Mario Bava and introduced by Boris Karloff. A tale of cursed jewelry, a tale of a stalker from beyond the grave, and another rendition of the Tolstoy story "The Vourdalak." I don't know. A bit turgid. It's got that 1960s *Star Trek* set design and lighting so it's colorful but it's not great. Fun, campy Halloween-season viewing but not too good. - Streaming on Plex, YouTube, and Shudder. Also try Video Cat on Cambie.

Freaky Tales (2025) - Good clean fun. Pedro Pascal, Dominique Thorne, and Ben Mendelsohn star in four somewhat-intertwined, Oakland-based, ensemble-cast tales set in 1987. Kind of a 'Pulp Fiction Lite' feel in my opinion. Whatever weaknesses it has are shored up by its commitment to the bit. Bad guys get violent comeuppance and good guys get a win. The tales aren't THAT freaky but its ambitions are high and its heart is in the right place. An easy watch. - Streaming on Crave. Available for rent/purchase from AppleTV and GooglePlay. Also try Video Cat on Cambie.

Frankenstein Unbound (1990) - How strange. Co-written and directed by Roger Corman. His final film as a director. Based on a 1973 Brian Aldiss novel, which explains some of the strangeness. John Hurt, Raoul Julia, Bridget Fonda, and small appearances by Jason Patric and Michael Hutchence from INXS. John Hurt time-travels from 2031 back to the time of Mary Shelley (Fonda) and meets the real Frankenstein (Julia). As usual, no one seems to have told Raoul Julia that he's in a B-movie. He delivers his lines with the same gravitas and seriousness as Michael Caine in *A Muppet Christmas Carol*. The movie swerves all over the road like some kind of sci-fi period drama fever dream. Lasers, monsters, time travel, hubris, purple sky rifts. Is it good? I'd have to say no. Is it enjoyably bad? Heck yes it is. For the most part. - Streaming on Youtube. Also try Video Cat on Cambie.

Check out all my reviews on https://letterboxd.com/duncanshields/films/reviews/

I Am the Cheese and the Cheese Stands Alone

Dick Cheney Is Dead. Good

(Den Valdron, Facebook, Nov. 5, 2025)

They say that when a good man passes, his good dies with him. But when an evil man goes, the evil that he did lives on and on. Well, we're all still living with Dick Cheney and we'll live with his shit for a long long time.

Allow me a brief eulogy, while the rest of the turd blossoms whitewash his career, as a businessman, politician and leader.

He started out in the 60s, eligible for the Draft in the Vietnam War. A draft he escaped through five consecutive deferments. It's good to have connections it seems. He's said publicly that he had other priorities than serving his country. Better to let poor black kids get called up in the draft.

I suppose it's not a big deal. While the previous Republican generation were notable for their military service, most of Cheney's right wing and republican buddies were happily avoiding Vietnam at all costs. They were all fans of the war, as long as other people were fighting and dying.

Finally graduating with a Masters Degree (he was serious about avoiding the draft) Dick Cheney began his career as a party-boy. No, not that kind of party. A Republican Party Boy, attending University to embark on a career in politics, and quickly going to Washington where he started out as a Republican Intern, and then went on join the Nixon Administration under Rumsfeld as a staffer, an assistant, a deputy assistant, and worked his way up as a professional party loyalist, henchman and bureaucrat. This is the Nixon Administration. This is under the detestable Rumsfeld.

Nixon gave way to Ford. Cheney stuck around making it all the way to White House Chief of Staff and ran his Presidential campaign.

Ford losing meant Cheney was out of a job. Time to go into Politics as a Republican Congressman. under Carter and Reagan He was a pretty typical rural red state douche - against the Department of Education, against a Head Start program, against MLK's holiday, for the Apartheid government in South Africa. He didn't exactly hate black people, he was just from one of those empty western states where there weren't any black people, so he couldn't see any point to them. Oh hell, who are we kidding. Of course he was a racist, but that was okay when you were a Republican back then... or today. He was also running cover for Reagan in Congress on the Iran-Contra hearings.

Anyway, Reagan came and went, it was time for him to ditch Congress and go back to work under George H. W. Bush, where he came in as Secretary of Defense.

As Sec-Def, Cheney was there for the Invasion of Panama and the Gulf War, but his real challenge was the breaking out of Peace. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, those colossal defense budgets were hard to justify. Cheney had the answer! Outsourcing. He pioneered the massive outsourcing of Pentagon monies and functions to defense contractors like Halliburton.

And coincidentally, when Bush was kicked out of the office, Cheney was out of a job. Luckily, he landed a plum position as CEO of Halliburton. That's right - zero business experience, a lifetime spent as a political hack. But somehow, he lucked into top job at

a major defense contractor, who he had coincidentally enriched, and who he would go on to enrich.

Can you say….CORRUPTION!!!!

I think you can.

All of this, of course is jut run-of-the-mill douchebaggery and assholery. Sure, he was partisan, racist, corrupt and a genuine piece of work. A man who walked through life with a permanent sneer, grabbed with both hands, and paid no attention to the rules.

But it was George W. Bush who made him what he truly was. You see, Bush appointed him to run his Vice Presidential search. Cheney searched and searched and searched and found himself! Of course, he wasn't eligible, but that was just a technicality.

Soon enough he found himself VP to a stupid, weak and cruel man. Cheney himself was stupid and cruel, so they got along like a house on fire.

First thing Cheney did was push through massive tax breaks for the wealthy, ending Bill Clinton's policies of fiscal responsibility and running up a massive deficit. A deficit he'd keep piling up year after year. Deficits, he sneered, don't matter. Reagan proved that.

But the more important thing he did, or helped to do, was drop America's pants. Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda was a priority for the Clintons. Everything the Clinton's did was anathema to the Republicans who ran on hate. So Al Qaeda and Osama were left alone and ignored, the administration had other priorities.

Well, we all saw how that fucking turned out, didn't we, boys and girls.

Yep, the Republicans have been covering their ass for 25 years on that one. The fuckers.

9/11 turned out to be pretty traumatic for Dick Cheney. Apparently, secret service grabbed him by his armpits and dragged him off through the tunnels under the white house. I don't know that he shit himself, but I wouldn't be surprised. In the hour of need, both he and Bush were terrified, on the run, and gone silent.

It was in the aftermath that Dick Cheney came into his own. Now, on the one hand, he seems to have gone a little bit nuts. There's an unhinged quality to his post-911 speeches, to the point where you'd wonder if he checked under his bed every night for Al Qaeda.

His response, like much of the rest of the Bush Crew, was reckless an unhinged. No-Fly Lists, the *PATRIOT Act*, Guantánamo Bay, an international network of Secret Torture Prisons like Bagram and Abu Ghraib, international torture, chain-link First Amendment Zones. Basically a massive assault on civil rights, and constitutional democracy.

Internationally, he half-assed America into Afghanistan, blew catching Osama bin Laden, fabricated intelligence to get America into a war with Iraq, fucked Iraq around, underwrote both Israel's war on Lebanon and Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia, undermined allies, picked fights and did all sorts of unholy shit.

There are somewhere between a half a million and a million dead people because of Dick Cheney, directly or indirectly. Because of his decisions, because of his incompetence, his corruption, his maliciousness and his coward's hysteria.

Oh and let's not forget Halliburton and other defence contractors, who were suddenly the recipients of literally trillions of dollars of "no bid" "cost plus" sweetheart defence contracts, because Dick Cheney never forgot how to be a sugar daddy.

But he never looked back, just kept on rolling, snarling and sneering at everyone, pretending he knew what he was doing, the poster boy for Dunning-Kruger incompetence. The strongman to a weakling President, both of them obstinately stupid and malicious.

This is just the highlights of the career of a man who never once, not one day in his life stood for decency, honesty, integrity, conviction. A man whose bywords were arrogance, hypocrisy and entitlement.

He's dead now. Fuck him. I'm glad. There's a million people who didn't get to live because of him. Guantánamo Bay sits there, America's permanent torture prison, a monument to Dick Cheney. Afghanistan – twenty years and hello Taliban. The Middle East, the deficit, the housing crisis all the rest of us are going to live with the legacy that piece of shit helped build.

And Meanwhile, Fanzines

The Stf Amateur 26, Nov 2025, Heath Row (new address: Rua de Gerzat 286, Taíde 4830-748, Portugal, or kalel@well.com***)***

Heath, there are too many comment hooks in this fanzine!

WCSFA Newsletter Nov 2025, Vancouver, BC. socialmedia@wcsfa.org.

“Our monthly meetups, held on the 4th Saturday of the month starting at 1 pm, are an opportunity for members of our community to meet up outside of the various events we host. We’re headed back to a tried and true location – the Sapperton District Taphouse on E. Columbia in New Westminster, BC – for good beers, great people, making connections and playing board games. Come out and have some fun!”

The Visionary, Nov. 6, 11, 19, 26, 29, 2025*,* (newsletter of the Universal Life Church), Oct. 1, 8, 15, 17, 24, 2025. Write to: Universal Life Church Ministries, 2720 1st Ave S Seattle, WA 98134, or email newsletter@themonastery.org.

The Visionary has asked “Who’s really in charge here?” (as religious rules supplant civil law in the United States.)

MT Void Nov 7, 14, 21, 2025, Evelyn Leeper ed.,
evelynchimelisleeper@gmail.com

This issue features reviews, notably a comparison of various film versions of H. Rider Haggard's adventure novel *She*.

N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono, Oct. 2025*, George Phillies ed.,* 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609, phillies@4liberty.net.

Big.

Tightbeam 374, Editors: George Phillies phillies@4liberty.net 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester, MA 01609. Jon Swartz judgeswartz@gmail.com.

SMOF News 5:10, 5:12, 5:13 from Petréa Mitchell, 548 Market Street PMB 72296, San Francisco, CA 94104, USA; Send tips, corrections, press releases, and letters of comment to: smofnews@gmx.com.

A little news and a lot of listed conventions around the world.

Impulse, Dec. 2025, the Montreal SF & Fantasy Association newsletter, Keith Braithwaite ed. mailing address: 125 Rue Léonard, Châteauguay, Québec, Canada, J6K 1N9, E-mail: Keith1958@live.ca.

Still the same, baby, baby, still the same …

CSFFA Newsletter, Nov. 2025, Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association, 1065 Henley Rd, Mississauga, ON, Canada L4Y 1C8, newsletter@csffa.ca

Aurora news! Writers' grants! And now, a retroactive book club!

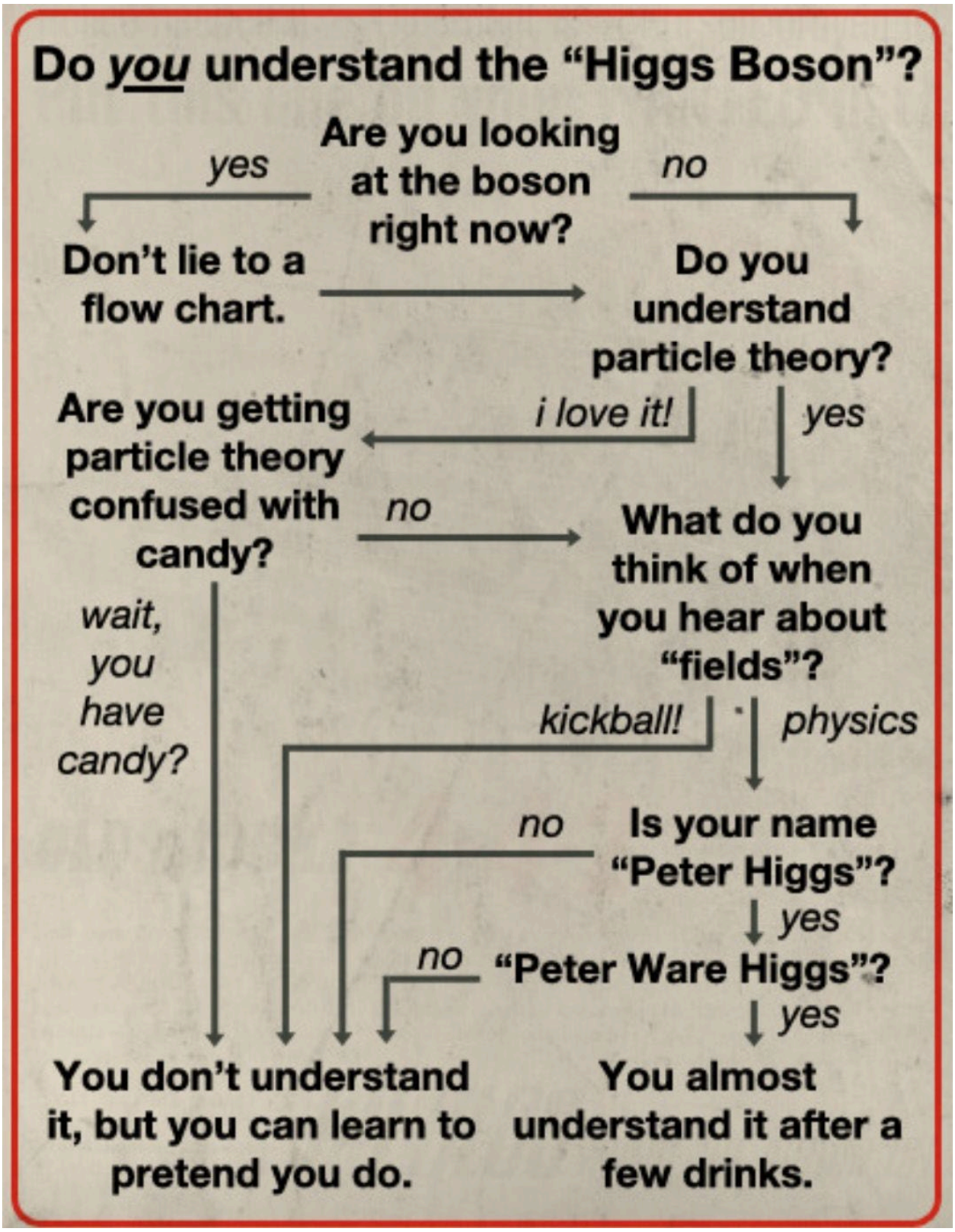
Electronic Brain #1, Jean-Paul Garnier ed., Space Cowboy Books, 61871 29 Palms Hwy., Joshua Tree, CA 92252, U.S.A., www.spacecowboybooks.com

Short stories, interviews, and reviews. In this issue: an interview with John Clute.

Captain Flashback #84, from Andy Hooper and Carrie Root, 11032 30th Ave. NE Seattle, WA 98125. E-mail Andy at fanmailaph@aol.com, and Carrie at carrieroot49@yahoo.com.

This Here … #93, Nic Farey, 2657 Rungsted Street, Las Vegas NV 89142, USA, or Email fareynic@gmail.com

Who am I to judge this person?


Do you understand the "Higgs Boson"?
Are you looking at the boson right now?
yes
no
Don't lie to a flow chart.
Do you understand particle theory?
i love it!
yes
Are you getting particle theory confused with candy?
no
What do you think of when you hear about "fields"?
wait, you have candy?
kickball!
physics
no
Is your name "Peter Higgs"?
yes
no
"Peter Ware Higgs"?
yes
You don't understand it, but you can learn to pretend you do.
You almost understand it after a few drinks.

Books Without Cheese

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Abbreviations: hc = hardcover, tp = trade (oversized) paperback, [UK ed] = British publication, [CDN ed] = Canadian publication. Default is US publication.

Other Titles: Please note that this listing is not exhaustive; we have many more (several hundred more) titles coming during this period.

December 2025 New Mystery and Crime Fiction Releases

Adler-Olsen, Jussi. LOCKED IN. [DEPARTMENT Q #10]. Dutton, 25.99 tp.

Atkins, Ace. EVERYBODY WANTS TO RULE THE WORLD. Morrow, 37.00 hc.

Beaumont, Charles. A SPY AT WAR. [OXFORD SPY RING]. Canelo, 24.95 tp.

Broadfoot, Neil. EXIT WOUNDS. Constable, 19.99 tp.

Burke, Alafair. THE NOTE. Vintage, 24.95 tp.

May has been reunited with childhood friends Lauren and Kelsey for the first time in years for a few days of sun and fun in the Hamptons. But a chance encounter with a pair of strangers leads to a drunken prank that goes horribly awry. Now May finds herself at the center of an urgent police investigation, wondering what Lauren and Kelsey are keeping from her.

Chilton, L. M. EVERYONE IN THE GROUP CHAT DIES. Scout, 26.00 tp.

Craven, M. W. NOBODY'S HERO. Flatiron, 25.99 tp.

Craven, M. W.. THE FINAL VOW. Headline, 36.00 hc.

Day, Maddie. DEADLY CRUSH. [CECE BARTON #2]. Cozies, 11.99 pb.

Doherty, Paul. BANNERS OF HELL. [HUGH CORBETT #24]. Headline, 19.99 tp.

Ellett, Heather Harper. AIN'T NOBODY, NOBODY. Datura, 24.99 tp.

Evanovich, Janet. NOW OR NEVER. [STEPHANIE PLUM #31]. Pocket, 14.99 pb.

Everett, C. B. THE OTHER PEOPLE. Atria, 26.00 tp.

Flower, Amanda. NEWLYWEDS CAN BE KNOCKED OFF. [AMISH MATCHMAKER #6]. Cozies, 11.99 pb.

Higashino, Keigo. INVISIBLE HELIX. [DETECTIVE GALILEO #5]. Minotaur, 25.00 tp.

Lovesey, Peter. AGAINST THE GRAIN. [DETECTIVE PETER DIAMOND #22]. Soho Crime, 24.95 tp.

McDermid, Val. SILENT BONES. [KAREN PIRIE]. Atlantic Crime, 43.50 hc.

McGilloway, Brian. THE INFORMANT. Constable, 28.99 tp.

Meyrick, Denzil. THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING MURDERS. Transworld, 21.99 tp.

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