

Safari in

Ukraine:

"GUYS! ANOTHER SUCKER!
IT'S OUR LUCKY DAY!"

"OH! SHIT!!!"

INTERMISSION #120

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and other fanalphabets!
Follow @SFJournalen's sf/f/h&fandom newstweets. Spring is here and the typos bloom.
Unfortnuttly ålso here. Sörry! But to err is hu...mour! Slava Ukraini! Late April 2022.

Editorially: Frome Russia Without Love

This fanzine of course supports the struggle of the Ukranian people. I have as you saw in #118 put Putin under fanzine blockade! That'll teach him! I've after all had Ukranian fans (Boris & Alexander with friends) on visit to Stockholm, for our Conscience 95 con. I remember watching the Stockholm Water Festival's big fireworks with them, from the penthouse flat of Peter A near Mosebacke. Sadly, there are now different fireworks over Ukraine. *Слава Україні! Glory to Ukraine! Ära till Ukraina!*

But otherwise this will be dominated by presenting the life and fanac of the fancient Swedish-Canadian fan *Nils Helmer Frome*. (No newspaper stuff this time, but still have much such left for future issues.) I covered Frome quite extensively already in #117, but also asked for more info and known material on him which I didn't have access to.

One Rob Hansen of Britain, if you have heard the name (no, not "Britain"...Hansen, the fandom historian!) remembered he had the ultimate collection of fromeriana: *Nils Helmer Frome 1918-1962*, articles about and material by Frome, including his fanzines. It's 170+ pages and edited by Frome's friend and sort of agent Sam Moskowitz. And since Hansen's research is centred on Britain (if you've heard the name) and not Canada, he offered to mail it to your humble servant. Ta, Rob! (For "thanks!" That's how the British say it. Uncle Google says is from Scandinavian "tack" with the end dropped.) And despite virus-stricken supply chains, and regular mail soon down to being delivered once per fortnight, it arrived. It took time to go through, but now it's done. So, on this Frome stuff:

1) The Frome article has been a bit complicated. I had the earlier one, to which I've added new material, cut, edited, rearranged etc. It's rather delicate and the source material isn't exactly chronological. There's a lot of info which often sort of runs a slalom race around subjects. I'll do my best. And note that it isn't "my" research, except finding a pulpmag letter and googling a little on where Frome lived. I'm a messenger, editor, to some extent an interpreter of things. My hope is it will give you a grip of this somewhat forgotten fannish pioneer. Comments welcome, and I will run LoCs if you have info to add.

2) Already the draft of the article is rather long so there'll be little space for things around Putin's insane, cowardly attack on Ukraine. But I give my thoughts on little Putin boy's all fails and wrongs. You can follow war news virtually everywhere, and what I could add would be out of date.

Now, the analysis of the tiny braincell collection of Mr Vladischmuck Genocidovich Putin...

--Ahrvid Engholm

Putin's Numerous and Massive Mistakes

He always had a knack for words, ABBA's Björn Ulvaeus, and in his intro to Swedish TV's Ukraine fundraiser he called Mr Putin an ASSHOLE ("skitstövel") for starting this war. (Watch with subtitles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxm1naVquXo>) Tens of thousands have been killed, including civilians tortured and shot with arms tied behind their backs, executed Stalin style. Bombing civilians, rape, looting are legion in the Russian legions. Abominable, gross war crimes won't even begin to describe it! Tens of millions forced to flee from their homes, scores of towns are reduced to rubble... All because Putin think it'd be a good idea to try to revive the biggest geopolitical disaster of the 20th Century, the Soviet Empire. All based on Putin delusions and Russian blunders, and among them:

➔ Putin's intelligence was rather unintelligent. His tip-top army would take Kiev in a couple of days and the Ukranians would cover the tanks with flowers. But the Ukrainian army, run by general Halftrack from Beetle Bailey (they thought), somehow forced Russians to tip-tip away. Putin was a victim of his own propaganda, as he surrounds himself with yes-sayers who don't dare to correct him.

➔ Putin's troops suffer from rock bottom fighting spirit. Many soldiers are from Russia's poorest oblasts, where young peasant boys sign up for \$400/month. They thought they were just on a manoeuvre. But when they realised they were in a full war and 10 000's in their ranks have fallen, many began to defect, give up, refuse to fight. Their morale went to the depths of the Black Sea - just as the Russian flagship, cruiser *Moscow*, BTW.



➔The Russian army has a rigid doctrine. Flung a lot of shells and move forward with armour - that today often is hit by the new *Safari hunter* generation of anti-tank weapons. And what's the point of taking a town when you have destroyed it? The operation was successful but the patient died... Command is centralised and Russia doesn't have the culture of flexible NCOs, taking initiative, having lots of tactical responsibility. A western sergeant act as the father to the boys and adapts actions to circumstances on the field. Russian NCOs are more like bullies, with the task of putting fear into the troops and strictly follow orders from above. With a centralised command generals have to move to the front to steer up things, with the result the Ukrainians have been able knock off about 10 of their top brass!

➔And they don't have enough troops. The Russians started with 200 000, of which up to a quarter now is killed, wounded or MIA. And analysts note that to successfully attack and occupy a 44 million country like Ukraine a 0.5-1m would be required. Russia overstretched from start on four fronts. They failed in Kiev, are failing in Kharkiv, are stuck in Mariupol against just a few defenders, and aren't even close to Odessa. Putin can't mobilise conscript reserves since it's not a war but a "special operation" (untrained conscripts won't be worth much anyway). Ukraine now probably numbers 400-500 000, with the territorial defence volunteers, and all of them know what they fight for.

➔The Russian Air Force hasn't exactly made Putin happy as a lark. More than 300 jets and helicopters have been shot down by Ukrainian "manpads" (MANPortableAirDefence) and longer range systems. It's reported that when the Russians air force fire missiles they fly inside Russian air space, scared to cross the border and become dead as a dodo. And aircraft are bloody expensive, mind you! But when they do dare to enter the airspace they have to fly low to hit their preferred targets (=hospitals, kindergardens,schools etc) since they lack guided smart bombs. The much smaller Ukranian air force is still active and contests the air together with missiles, of which Ukraine recently got batches of the S300 system, Starstreak from the UK, Mistrals from Norway, more US Stingers, etc. Ukraine also make good use of drones, like the Turkish Bayraktar, which is armed to take out armour. Drones should be easy to kill, but Russian troops are short on advanced manpads!

➔The Russian army fails in logistics - big time! They send long columns of trucks, which the Ukrainians see coming through drones, and probably info from Western satellites - all ripe for ambushes. The blue and yellow move with small, motivated units in a terrain they know. They call hunting the Russians to "go on safari". Corruption makes the problems worse for Russia. Field rations are often 40 years old since a middleman stole the money meant to update them. Equipment has been stolen or replaced with cheaper less useful things, like Chinese tires that go flat on heavy APCs. And supply lines always follow the big roads.They even have to, as spring has come when rain and melting snow turns the ground to mud. Ukraine officials claim that while they themselves lost 70 tanks (compared to, it's claimed, 800+ lost for Russia), they have gained 170 taken from Russia, crews who fled as they ran out of fuel. They thus have more tanks than before. Ta Ivan, terribly kind!

➔Quite counterproductive is the habit when taking a town, instead of using the momentum to push further, Russians stop to murder civilians, rape and loot! An episode from the Finnish Winter War 1939-40 is how the Finns after a skirmish were forced to leave their field kitchens behind, with the dinner boiling. The starving Red Army troops stopped their attack to fill their bellies - for hours. So the Finns could lick their wounds, regroup and counterattack, oust the Russians and retake their field kitchens. It's also counterproductive in that all atrocities undisciplined Russian troops are guilty of,

just unites the world against them! Cameras have recorded how Russians mail their loot from crowded Belarus courier offices. They are not only murderers and thieves - they are also stupid.

→ Putin also never counted on the wide sanctions against Russia. From what I understand, two thirds of Putin's war chest has been frozen abroad and Russian banks are cut off from doing business, including with the important SWIFT system. (I think that frozen Russian assets should be given to Ukraine after the war to help paying for the massive destruction Russia is guilty of. Take it all and auction off the oligarch yachts too!) Russians can't travel. Shops are empty. Hundreds of companies leave the Russian market. Russian oil and gas sales remain, mainly because Germany is so dependent of it. More than 50% of their energy comes from Russian imports, because they were Dumbkopf enough to shut down nuclear power in this program called "Energiewende". I hope Russian gas and oil will be stopped RSN with spring warmth. Less energy is used and we'll have until autumn to find other energy suppliers. (Sweden buys negligible amounts of Russian energy. We have nuclear and hydro power, growing number of wind farms and district heating that burns left-overs from the forestry industry and recycled paper and other waste.)

→ Putin underestimated his opponent, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky. He might have been a comedian and actor, but he has certainly risen to the task and got his act together. *"I need ammunition, not a ride!"* he answered when the US offered to evacuate him from Kiev. He has made many addresses to parliaments all over the world (Sweden's Riksdag too) with sharp messages to raise support for Ukraine and get weapons flowing in. Zelensky's poll popularity was stalling before the war. But now everyone supports him, also a big majority of Russian-speaking Ukrainians. It's encouraging to see someone rising with the occasion. Next *Time's* Man of the Year?

→ Something we probably will see growing is opposition within Russia. It's reported Putin's lapdog oligarchs are beginning to doubt his wisdom. Recently a couple of them were found dead, with families, claimed to be "suicide pacts". (I have doubts.) Advisors are reported being jailed. Information about the Russian fiasco is seeping into the population. Young people can use VPNs to break Putin's censorship. A Russian anchorwoman bravely protested against the war on the TV news with a banner. Jails are filling up with protesters, as even calling the war a war can give you 15 years in prison. We have the project "Call a Russian", where people who speak Russian are asked to phone up random Russian phone numbers from a database of 40 million, and inform about Putin's war. And Russian mothers and grandmothers will in increasing numbers mourn their kids being killed. Don't underestimate the grief and anger of a babushka! Putin only controls TV, but he doesn't know that traditional, linear TV is losing ground and becoming irrelevant.

→ And finally: an argument for Mr P-as-in-prick to invade was to "stop Nato expansion". But this defence organisation has now pulled together more than ever. And traditionally neutral Sweden and Finland are on their way in. Clumsy Russian threats just nudge us closer to join. Putin does not have a degree in psychology. He threatens to place nukes in the Baltic, which is pointless since he already have nukes here. Finland has decided to join and I think Sweden with 90% certainty will follow. PM Maggie Andersson has made up her mind, there's a majority in the Riksdag and polls show growing Nato support after the butchery in Bucha and Mariupol. I said I'm 50/50 in this, so whatever happens I guess I'll be half happy...

Can the shoenummer-IQ Putin survive all this? Biden is right, putrified Putin can't remain in power! The bloodshed and destruction must end. Russian troops must withdraw. We must help Ukraine with reconstruction. Let's hope for a new Russian regime, to "normalise" the country and identify and extradite war criminals. The star prize would be Putin, if he can be identified after all this botox and plastic surgery! Russia has such a sad and bloody history. Why do they do this to themselves?

What else? 35-40 000 Ukrainian refugees have come to Sweden, figures uncertain as not all have yet registered with the migration authority (it's only needed for those who want to stay beyond 3 months). There will be new Swedish weapon deliveries to Ukraine, but details are undisclosed. NATO boss Stoltenberg says Swedes and Finns would be very welcome and could join quickly. (He's Norwegian so I guess he's biased.) All because Putin wanted...eh, to "liberate Ukraine from Nazis".

History Corner: Frome Depths of Fannish History



Nils H Frome. Photo through copying machine and phone camera which affects quality. Cheek's shadows are probably from the less than ideal copying chain.

In *Intermission* #117 I wrote about the Swedish-Canadian fan Nils H Frome, active in fancient days of the 1930's and 1940's. He isn't perhaps well-known today, but he was a penpal of none other than HP Lovecraft, who also contributed to his fanzine, and he published the first Canadian zine of which copies still survive. Frome was also a friend of Sam Moskowitz who even took upon himself to act as agent for Frome's prose, poetry and artwork, and later called him "*the leading Canadian fan of the day*" and "*the first ACTIVE Canadian science fiction fan*". Other Canadian fans had written sf or collected it earlier, he notes (like eg one Chester D Cuthbert), but never entered into general fandom activities. Frome even co-wrote stories with the young James Blish, with whom he also corresponded. The *Canadian Fancyclopedia* calls Frome

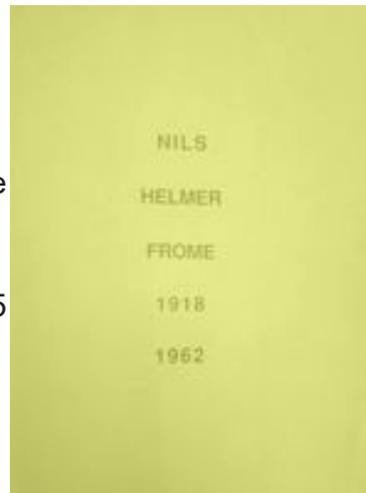
"Canada's first BNF" and fan historian Harry Warner jr added "*Frome was the first Canadian to publish a general circulation fanzine to make himself prominent*".

The earlier article presented a lot of material about and by Frome, found on this marvellous Interweb that Al Gore invented. I'll here expand upon it, but it's inevitable that stuff will be repeated. It should be noted that I'm not guilty of much original research (except for finding one of Frome's pulpmag letters - there may be more, let me know if you find some). I've just found material here and there and sorted it, added what I can and tried to bring into some sort of order.

I've relied a lot on this thick volume, *Nils Helmer Frome 1918-1962* (1989, No 5 in the Moshassuck Monograph Series, 170+ pages!) edited by Sam Moskowitz - known as SaM - where much Frome material is collected. SaM's own material is mostly reprints from the academic journal *SF Studies*, which also thought Frome was of interest, it seems. I'll call SaM's volume *NHFvol* below. The inside colophon page title of it is "Phillips Lovecraft and Nils Helmer Frome: a recollection of one of Canada's earliest science fiction fans". Luckily British fandom historian Rob Hansen happened to have it and graciously sent it too me. Glory to Rob! *Slava Robu!*

I took some time to make a "quick and dirty" PDF of SaM's *NHFvol*. I fired up my (cheap) mobile phone, which doesn't have the greatest camera in this solar system, sometimes focusing slightly bleary-eyed - and I shot the pages like a Ukranian soldier shoots tanks. Some parts are slightly blurry but it should all be readable. Download it from <https://e1.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=XZE9VzZUJ108QNEHf7O7IzHtj86yYvCurdV>

I can't cover every detail - some sources go into the smallest ones! You can't boil down an entire human life to a few pages, but if you want more you have the link to *NHFvol* above, with biographical articles, Frome's fanzines, illustrations, short stories, some correspondence, etc. It's worth finding out about Nils Helmer Frome, because though sometimes troubled he seemed to be very talented and was active for more than a decade during formative years of fandom. He was a pioneer in those very early fandom days which I at least find extremely interesting. (Note how *Intermission* earlier covered 1940s LASFS and the Swedish Atomic Noah club!) That Frome was a pal of Lovecraft and



Moskowitz says something. He is mentioned often in SaM's fanhistory *The Immortal Storm* (https://archive.org/details/The_Immortal_Storm_A_History_of_Science_Fiction_Fandom_1954_Sam_Moskowitz_siPDF) turns up in Garth Spencer's "A History of Canadian SF Fandom" (https://www.fanac.org/Fan_Histories/) and a lot in R Graeme Cameron's *The Canadian Fancyclopedia* (<https://efanzines.com/CanFan/>) (I will call it *CanFan* from now on), which is also a good source for this article.

Frome didn't have an easy life. He lacked a typewriter and was sitting there in a logging camp somewhere in the Canadian bush. He was shy and poor. Each page of his fanzine *Supramundane Stories* - the first Canadian fanzine with a known editor which also has survived! - took hours to run off on the strange multigraph machine he acquired - as wolves howled in the night, I'd like to imagine! (CanFan says, p71: "*The identity of the Vancouver fan who in 1936 produced The Canadian Science Fiction Fan, Canada's FIRST Science Fiction fanzine, remains unknown*". It came half a year before Frome's, but no copy of it is known. It's only known through a remark in a Don Wollheim fanzine, but he unfortunately didn't give the name of the editor. More also on p93 in CanFan.)

Frome described himself for SaM as blonde and six foot two inches tall (1.87m) weighing 143 pounds (65 kg - he was thus rather slim). In 1937 he wrote, to SaM (NHFvol, p8):

I'm Swedish. And part Norwegian, but I think in English, Like drawing girls. Like movies, Jean Rogers, Nan Gray, tap dancing, singing. I don't step out for the main reason I don't have the money - having no job. Have not many friends and no pals. Have movie aspirations."/SaM adds:/"His great ambition was to emigrate to the US. At least once he illegally tried to cross the border but was caught and turned back. Hollywood was his big lure, but in 1939 he was hopeful of coming to New York to live with an aunt - apparently that did not mature."

The surname "Frome", BTW, means "the pious" or "the reverent" in Swedish but without the trailing "e". SaM says in NHFvol that the surname was originally without and e. It was probably added when the family immigrated so the name wouldn't read just "From". Imagine the problems in writing addresses with the name From! Those short names are often Swedish "soldier names", hinting a Frome family ancestor was in the army of the short-lived Swedish Empire...and being lucky to survive. (Soldiers came from an allotment system, where groups of farmers were each required to recruit and pay for a soldier's uniform, weapons, and a small cottage with some land to farm.)

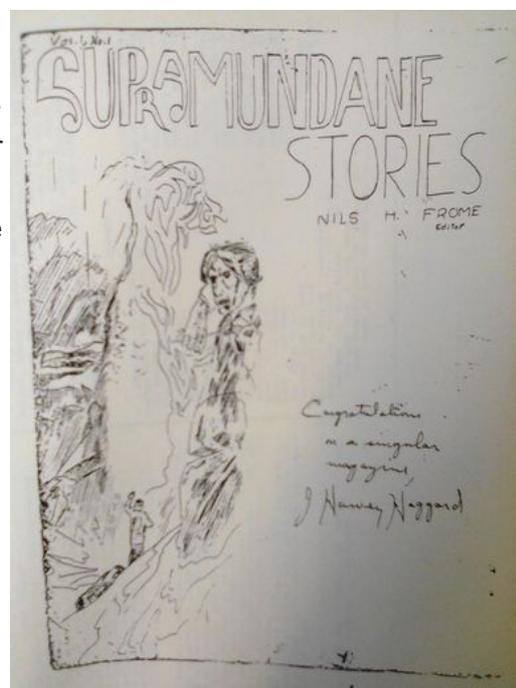
Anyway, Nils Helmer's mother died when he was a baby and we learn he was given to friends to be foster family, named surname Frome. They called him Helmer, but he'd later prefer to use the name Nils (or sometimes "Niles"). It was supposed to be temporary but four years old he refused to go back to his biological father and was instead adopted by the foster family. And at the age of six in 1924 he emigrated with them to Canada.

Evidence points to that his first language was Swedish, from growing up in a Swedish-speaking family. We see comments on that his English later "improved", so he probably spoke Swedish first.

NHFvol (p2) tells us about his family that his adoptive father died in 1959, his adoptive mother lived to the age of 92, and beside half-brother Lars he also had a half-sister from his natural father's second marriage and a full brother who drowned early in his life.

Frome's health was bad as well as his family history. He was separated from his biological parents as very young, his mother died while he was in the crib and later a brother drowned. It is said he liked his blog, but he was also creative. He constantly produced drawings and had a talent for writing, though hampered by a lack of a typewriter. CanFan says, p239,

"After high school he attended Vocational Art School in Vancouver". (Could the high school mentioned be Millstead School, that we also learn he attended?) He did get art published, but not much, so it was nothing to make a living from. The biologically orphaned Frome lived between cultures, isolated in a Canadian logging community (moving between other parts of British Columbia's wilderness), with unfulfilled ambitions and his life ended penniless in a boarding room in



Supramundane Stories #1, early 1937.

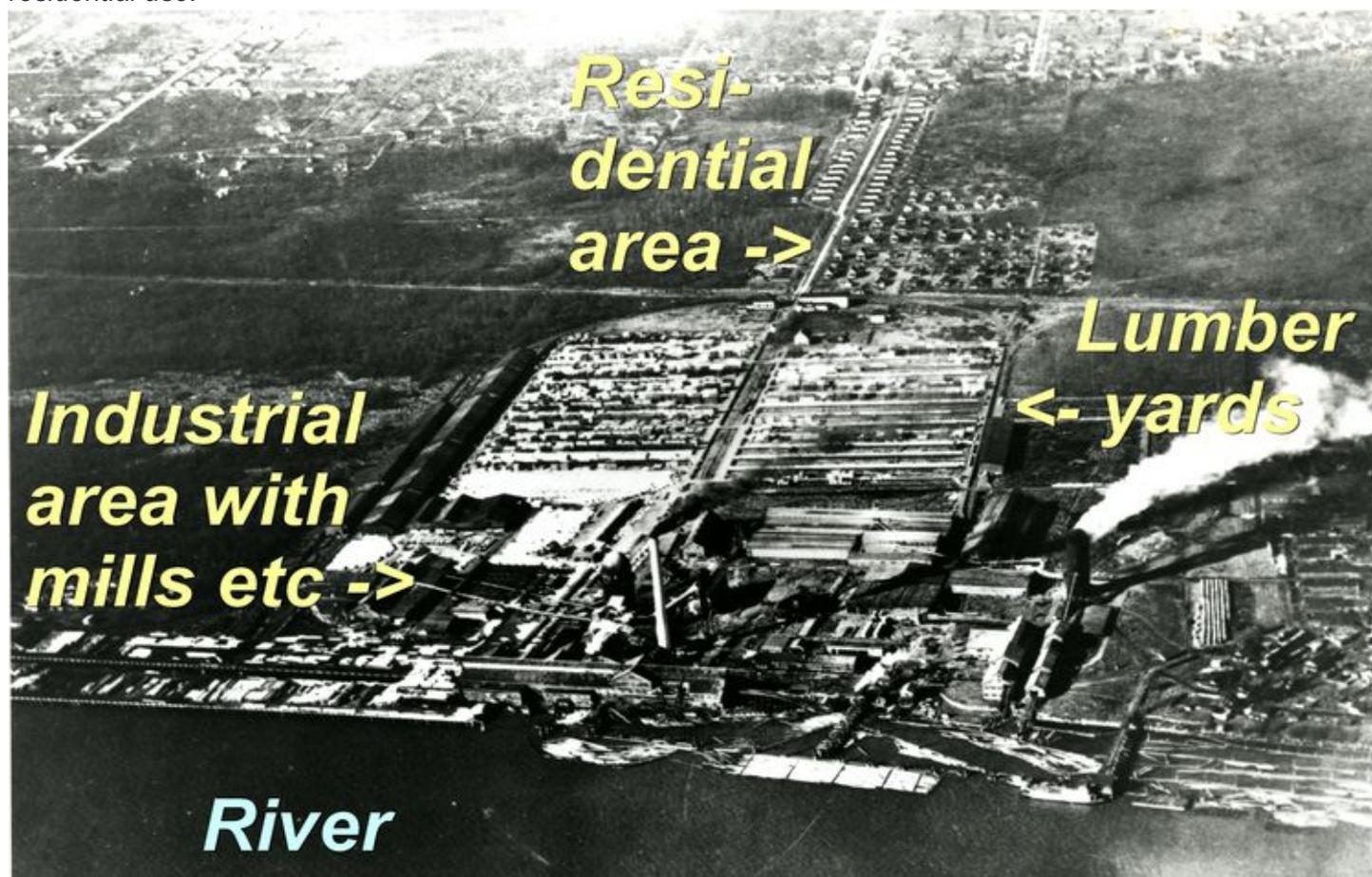
Wales, UK, beside a diary suggesting suicide. Fandom is a harsh mistress.

All this raises sympathy and one wants to know more. For me it's of course of special interest that he was a Swedish immigrant. And a friend of both Lovecraft and Moskowitz is more than a nobody. He also corresponded with a very young James Blish (13-14 years at the time) and even co-wrote stories with him. SaM writes in his own fanzine *Helios* #1 (1937) that Blish:

is also trying his hand at professional writing. His First effort "Empty City", a collaboration with Nils H Frome, has been rejected by Astounding Stories. Another, "Spacecast", is still going the rounds.

Frome was the earliest active fan in Canada, but also one of the most isolated. When he left native Sweden he came with his adoptive father Oscar Frome to Fraser Mills east of Vancouver, British Columbia, and later lived in a logging cabin together with - or having him nearby - his half-brother Lars. Wikipedia notes, about Fraser Mills:

Located on the northern shore of the Fraser River, the area was originally the site of a sawmill. The mill was known at first as the Ross McLaren Mill and opened in 1889. However, it closed soon after when co-founder James McLaren died. The site remained unused for many years until the mill was reopened as the Fraser River Sawmills... During the Great Depression many workers were laid off... The mill eventually closed in 2001. The Fraser Mills neighbourhood is located in the southwestern part of Coquitlam, and south of Maillardville neighbourhood, which was founded as a townsite for the workers at the large Lumber mill... The city has designated the area as Waterfront Village Centre and has re-zoned it to include both commercial and residential use.



Arial view of Fraser Mills from around that time.

Here's a short history of the Western Lumber Company, which was the name of the company adopted after 1910 <https://snaccooperative.org/history/71592942/10462839>

Frome was exempted from the Canadian army since his logging-related work was deemed essential for the war effort. His work was cooking for the lumberjacks. After Fraser Mills he moved around a bit to other towns or camps in the province of BC, working as a cook in what was called cook houses, but it's suggested he also did logging. Out of this he made a living until 1953 "*when serious illness forced him to withdraw from his work*" (NHFvol, p2), having what was "a bowel obstruction". Wikipedia indicates it can be a quite serious condition, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowel_obstruction - painful, impeding, often requiring an operation and having a not insignificant death rate.

From the West Coast Science Fiction Association came a mini-biography on Frome, "Nils Helmer Frome Found and Lost", published in their *WCSFzine* #5, and also in *New Canadian Fandom*, May 1983 (and in *NHFvol*, starting p28), researched and written by Michael Dann and Brenda Yvonne. They located Frome's half-brother Lars (nicknamed Louie) and his wife (Alice), who they personally interviewed. They also examined what personal papers there were from Frome, though there wasn't much left, they at least got some late drawings and photos of their half-brother Nils. A longer excerpt:

Canada's second SF fanned, first leading fan, and quite possibly, earliest fan whose name is known... "the first Canadian to publish a general circulation fanzine to make himself prominent /Harry Warner jr says/... "the leading Canadian fan of the day" /Sam Moskowitz says:/ Frome was born in Rätansbyn, Jämtland, /added missing dots to "a"/ Sweden on July 10th, 1918. After his mother died, he was given by his father to another family to raise. At the age of four, he refused to go back to living with his father! Eventually he was adopted by a foster family, who moved to Canada, ultimately settling in Fraser Mills, BC, on the North side of the Fraser River just East of New Westminster... a lone child spending most of his time collecting science fiction, reading history, drawing and writing. After high school he attended Vocational Art School in Vancouver. His first issue of SUPRAMUNDANE

STORIES came out in Oct 1936. He would have been 18 years old, a relatively mature age for a fan of that era. The point is, he was already an established fan well known North America-wide and considered Canada's leading fan. He had, for instance, been in touch with C Hamilton Bloomer, a prominent San Francisco fan, and purchased a multigraph mimeo from him. He established regular correspondence with James Blish and HP Lovecraft, among others. Sam Moskowitz began corresponding with him in 1937 and acted as an unpaid agent, distributing Frome's articles, art & fiction to numerous fanzines. After graduating from school Frome found work in various lumber camps and mills, which may explain why he stopped publishing SUPRAMUNDANE STORIES. He did, however, maintain a high level of fanac, as Moskowitz's activity on his behalf attests. This may have been in compensation for being continually trapped in a working environment where his interests in art & SF were not held in high esteem. He seems to have been unhappy with his life... had emotional problems dealing with people... seems to have resulted from his being a loner and from a creative mind that quickly became bored.... due to his above average intelligence and his inability to communicate on the more mundane level. The war must have been particularly frustrating. Being a skilled lumberjack /hinting he beside cooking also cut down trees!/, considered a strategically important job, he was not allowed to change jobs or enlist. So he spent most of the war, and some years after, in lumber camps. For a long time his address was 'Camp 5, Bloedel, BC. /Later in the 50s he'd also work and stay in Thasis and Bakerville, all in the same region/ Still, he found time to send out a stream of art, commentary, fiction & articles. One example of his fiction is 'THE MIRROR', published in CANFAN #10 in may 1946. The first paragraph reads:

"As the car gasped its last and finally expired, John Sloan cursed the fate which had stranded him there on that lonely road, with night coming on, and an uncertain storm muttering to itself in the distance. The curious mirror cast back the reflection of the figure of an old man, his ruthless countenance painted by the fire, now slack in death. He was sitting crumpled there in the midst of the house he had stolen....Alone. Throughout his drawings the eyes were somber, dark, brooding, and somehow frightening. Perhaps his inability to understand people expressed itself in the eyes of his portraits. The only portraits which did not suffer from the 'strange' eyes were those of a few relatives & close friends."

He did two issues of *Supramundane Stories* out of Fraser Mills in 1937-38, and produced an issue of *Fantasy Pictorial* for the May 1938 First National SF Convention in Newark, New Jersey. SaM added a short biography and did the printing, but Frome made the hektograph originals - he had acquired a hektograph in 1938 (*NHFvol*, p12) - and the Newark conzine was:

six pages, hektographed in purple and green, and contained seven illustrations and an untitled poem. Like other Frome publications, it was stitched on a sewing machine; we sold it for five cents.



Rätansbyn in the province of Jämtland probably had 3-500 inhabitants when Frome was born (in 2005 it was 130). His Swedish and Canadian environments were similar.

All 35 copies sold out! A second issue was less successful as Frome for that used too weak or little hekto ink, according to SaM.

In *The Golden Atom* (ed Larry Farsaci) fanzine, March 1940, Frome talks about how he became interested in science fiction, in the article "But Stars Still Shine..." (NHFvol, starting p18). SaM says:

According to that piece, the first SF that Frome remembered seeing was A Merritt's The Metal Emperor (published in 11 installments in Hugo Gernsback's Science and Invention between Oct 1927 and Aug 1928). When he first saw The Metal Emperor, or rather installments of it, Frome had not yet learned to read the English language. "All I remember of that was a couple of illustrations by /Frank R/ Paul which had an incredible effect on my imagination. Science fiction and fantasy is still the only kind of fiction that holds my interest. I can take or leave it now. There is no longer the tingling awe and wonder that had a life scarcely incidental to reality." ...The first SF story Frome remember reading was the third installment of Edward E Smith's The Spacehounds of IPC in the September 1931 issue of Amazing Stories..."Every word had magic in it, to me, then: every sentence individualized itself from the rest." The story Frome liked next to Spacehounds of IPC was, he said: "'The Ice Entity' by Clark Ashton Smith...I read it while I was still able to enjoy it with the unique relish of the formative mind...That story really struck a responsive chord with me - I suppose because it was flavored with the awe of time travel."

Sam corrects Frome on a title, which was "The Ice Demon". It's about a world slowly being covered in ice, which is being fought off with an artificial sun. Frome cites CA Smith's "The City of the Singing Flame" (*Wonder Stories*, July 1931) as another favourite, and Edmond Hamilton's "The Man Who Evolved" (*Wonder Stories*, April 1931). He also mentions "The Twin Souls", by Amelia Reynolds Long, in *Weird Tales* and "Burned Things" by Robert Sandison, from the same Magazine, December 1930. He also read Robert E Howard's "Pigeons from Hell" (*Weird Tales*, May 1938) and J E Keith's "Between Dimensions" (*Wonder Stories*, Oct 1931). Frome must have read many of these at the age of 12-13 - what has been called The Golden Age of SF! - but he may have begun even earlier (NHFvol, p21), saying in a letter to SaM:

I think I started on science fiction by a nickel kid magazine published in England about the time Amazing came out. It was titled Boys Magazine, no defunct...the first interplanetary story I ever read was in that little magazine.

If read when *Amazing* came, Frome would be around 8 years old. I wonder if English magazines were distributed in Canada, or if Frome's family had a longer stop in England on their way to jump the pond? It was rather common for North America immigrants to pass through England.

The first notice relating to Frome is from the editorial of the then 13 years old James Blish's fanzine *The Planeteer* #1 December 1935 (NHFvol, p17) where it is mentioned the fanzine would soon have a group of new artists - and among them we would see Frome. He and this later to grow up as a great sf author had obviously begun to correspond in 1935 (Frome was then 16) and as many others they probably got in touch through the lettercols of the pulps, where they also published the addresses of the letter writers.

Frome letterhacked the pulps of the days. I found this letter in *Weird Tales* in 1936 (Aug-Sep), https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Weird_Tales/Volume_28/Issue_2/The_Eyrie#Frome but the letter must have been forwarded by someone in NJ, maybe Blish or a mentioned New York aunt? Otherwise, Frome's address at this time was Box 3, Fraser Mills, BC, Canada (Box 3 again?):

Nils Helmer Frome, of East Orange, New Jersey, writes: "I halted as I sped past a magazine stand - I always do that - magazines have a fascination for me. Weird Tales wasn't the only one I looked at, but it held my gaze the longest. I lingered and languished - my purse wasn't exactly blooded. I bought it. That is the synopsis on the repeating incident that is among the most important in my years. Weird Tales has become weird again - or else my appreciation has risen. The covers of the last two issues were wonderfully weird. Great credit due to Brundage - she's really quite competent when she gets started - if she would only quit those nothing-on dames - she has no idea what a female figure looks like, even if she is a woman herself. Although I am far from an authority in that line myself, I know that a figure true to life is far from what can be effected by even a skilled guesser. And that external sadness in those eyebrows lifted in between the temples gets me with its monotony; why not a pointed pair of eyelashes, such meaning a mischievous nature; an arching pair - or a pair that swing in a curve from the temples and drop back; anything but those poor, fluttery lines Brundage favors always. Brundage must have such eyebrows - and the general contour of the faces of her bright-eyed heroines - for almost invariably an artist favors his or her type to depict. And why not put more life and horror

into the faces - a shrinking type - a staring type - a fascinated type - a shadowed full-face type - a fainting type with half-closed eyes. The hands might be bettered, too. Advise her, Editor, to watch people's hands and catch their personality - their grace.

Frome's first appearance in fanzine text should have been in C Hamilton Bloomer's fanzine *Tesseract*, May 1936 (NHFvol p8), "Notes on Writing Science Fiction" by "*Canadian author Nils H Frome...adapted by Jim Blish.*" A part two of this article came in the June issue. SaM speculates that this was written by Blish, but why then not under his own name? It is more likely (my assumption) it was notes from correspondence between Blish and Frome that Blish took upon himself to adapt into an article. Frome actively collaborated with Blish in story-writing, writing at least two short stories together making the rounds among the pulps - but being rejected. David Ketterer writes about Frome's contacts with young James Blish in *Science Fiction Studies* #35 (vol 12, Mar 1985)

*Frome seems to have dropped off the face of the Earth. /His death 1962 was widely unknown! /Colombo writes, "The last reference to him in fan literature seems to be the letter he wrote to the editor of Canadian Fandom, published in September 1947. It was sent from Camp 5, Bloedel, BC." (p155) In "A Science fiction Coming of Age," which will appear in a forthcoming collection of James Blish essays entitled *The Tale That Wags the God* (Advent, 1985?) and edited by Cy Chauvin, Blish mentions that in the 1930s, "Through my published letters, I had gotten into correspondence with another youngster named Nils Frome, of Frazer's Mills, Ontario, who did very skillful fine-line drawings with the back of an ordinary fountain pen, and who also wrote gloomily Lovecraftian stories with the front side of the pen." Blish completed one of Frome's many incomplete stories, but "the story didn't sell." Another of Blish's collaborations with Frome that Blish had submitted to *Astounding* met the same fate. "To the best of my knowledge, Nils Frome never did break into print." "Our correspondence dwindled and died. I wonder what happened to him; out of my absolute ignorance of the graphic arts. I still have the feeling that he drew very well, gluey though his prose undeniably was, but as far as the record shows, he never sold a drawing either." /Later he did./ But Blish never forgot the hapless "dud" Frome. My researches into the Blish Papers in the New Bodleian Library reveal that in at least one instance, a potentially embarrassing questionnaire that Blish filled out towards the end of his life, he used "Nilsson Frome" as a pseudonym. Frome, then, became for Blish a shield against recognition, a guarantee of nonentityship. The ploy has ultimately failed. Gradually, Frome is emerging from obscurity, and so is Canadian SF and fantasy.*

Frome corresponded with Lovecraft towards the end of HPL's life. He sent Frome two short stories, "Nyarlathotep" which he published, and the second HPL story titled "What the Moon Brings" eventually ended up in James V Taurisi's fanzine *Cosmic Tales*, April-June 1941, since Frome didn't publish a *Supramundane* #3 . In the correspondence Lovecraft even sent Frome a "*list of really solid books on the sciences you should read*" (NHFvol p83). I skip the 20+ books long list but it is astronomy, atomics, biology, chemistry, even psychology and is available in other Lovecraft literature. ST Joshi says (*I am Providence*, p1215) that HPL:

no doubt was pleased to have a correspondent in a country that still retained loyalty to the British throne, but Frome was a strange, mystical character who belived in numerology, fortunetelling, the immortality of the soul and other conceptions Lovecraft found preposterous, And yet, Frome seemed to be a man of such keen native intelligence that Lovecraft strove to instruct and aid him as best he could.

In *HP Lovecraft: Letters to Robert Bloch and others* (Hippocampus Press, 2017) we find a Lovecraft letter to William Shepherd dated (Jan 1937) mentioning "*One Nils H. Frome, of Fraser Mills, BC, seems to be full of plans for Supramundane stories*" and Jan 25 the same year he wrote about Frome to Robert Bloch:

*If you want bold & nutty scientific concepts to work on, get in touch with the kid who is about to edit *Supramundane Stories* - Nils H Frome, Box 3, Fraser Mills, B.C., Canada. Some of his vague & unformulated concepts would do credit to an Einstein or a de Sitter on the one hand, or to an asylum case on the other hand! I've been obliged to decline the honour of collaborating with this fertile young genius - but if you feel like dressing up some highly intricate concepts for *Astounding*, *Wonder*, or *Amazing*, he's your man!*

Sam notes (NHFvol, starting p8) about placing Frome material through his fanzine agency:

Frome was the most difficult because he didn't own a typewriter and all of his submissions were written in a cramped style that made Lovecraft's script look like a bad case of elephantiasis. They were written on the thinnest paper possible and on both sides (to save postage - though letters were only three cents an ounce in those years) with a generous number of corrections and revisions on the same sheet. His writing style was

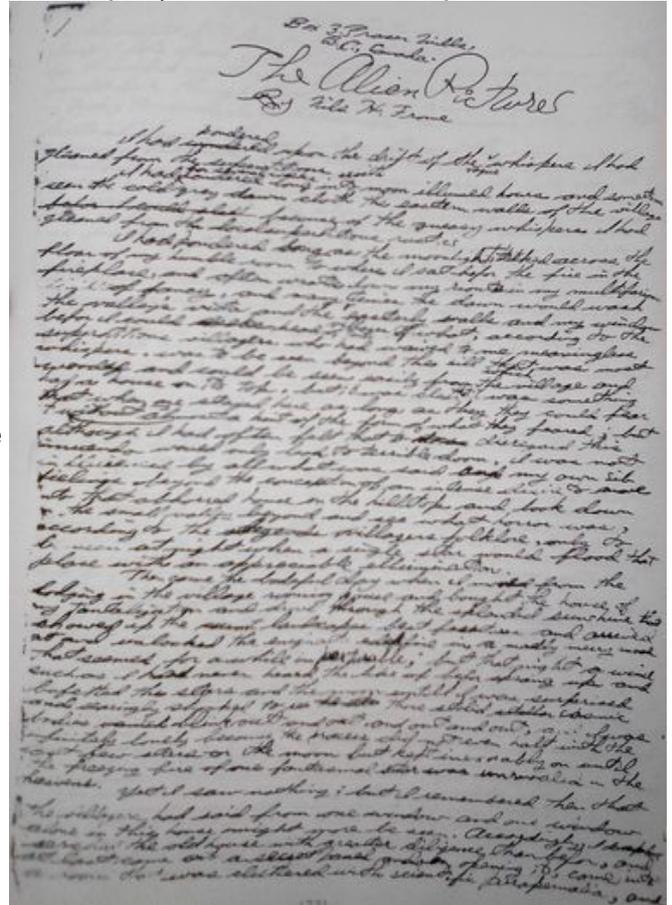
considerable above the average of the fans of the that day and his leaning was towards the Lovecraftian." /SaM had several unpublished stories by Frome, as they were in longhand probably the only copies existing - he continues: / Frome was head and shoulders above most fan (graphic) artists, and with a little training his work would have been of professional quality. His style was patterned after J Clement Coll and Austin Briggs - entirely line work with some cross-hatching in the background /SaM also published Frome artwork, eg a big piece in hekto ink in the series called "Fantasy Artists" together with a short biography. / I sold out my 35 copies and received many letters of praise.

Frome was thus quite active in fandom in the 1930s: corresponding, publishing pioneering Canadian fanzines, letterhacking the pulps, and writing and drawing for other fanzines. SaM had begun corresponding with Frome in early 1937 and mentions (NHFvol, p11) that he also corresponded with eg William H Miller, Alex Osherooff, Morris Dollens and one would presume many others - surely all editors of the fanzines he contributed to - with art, poetry, short stories, sometimes some non-fiction.

In NHFvol, starting p10, SaM makes extensive summaries of the contents of the Frome fanzines. But I leave that out. Fanzine contents are tricky to summarise and it doesn't become as interesting as the fanzine itself. It would also be a bit exhausting with all the details - SaM was a man of many details! The Frome fanzines are available in the NHFvol and you can get the PDFI made to study if you feel the urge.

Frome sometimes used the pen name Herkanos (CanFan, p264) also in his LoCs, so look out for that if you scan zines and pulps for Frome traces. And here's Taral (CanFan, p184)

Frome himself continued as an active fan into the 40s, drawing and writing for CANADIAN FANDOM. He was one of two artists" (Al Betts the other) "who alternated covers for CANFAN for all the copies I've seen of the first dozen issues. Of the two, Frome was the better, in my opinion, having a better grasp of anatomy and exhibiting better draughtsman ship... Like most fan art of the 40s, it was derivative of the pulp illustrators, and particularly of the fantasy illustrators. The style was dramatic and brooding, effects achieved by crosshatching, and the art showed good understanding of light. Of the three covers in my possession, two are dominated by huge, moody faces that have some real power as art. Generally less claustrophobic than most fantasy art of the time, and more surreal than illustrations for most adventure of SF stories, too, Frome had a real talent and may well have gone on to some professional career. Somewhere, but not in science fiction.



Manuscript page by Frome, in wobbly, small longhand. Story "The Alien Pictures" (reprinted in NHFvol too).

His own *Supramundane Stories* had an impressive roster of contributors: (NHFvol). SaM:

the second (and last) issue of his publication (1938) ran a short story by HP Lovecraft (with whom he corresponded), a poem by Clark Ashton Smith, and material by Duane W Rimel and Emil Petaja (who were a part of the Lovecraft circle)

He *"did illustrations and wrote fantasy fiction for my own fan magazine Helios"* SaM adds. Frome had contacts with Clarie Beck too and contributed to his *The Science Fiction Critic*, Fancyclopedia says,

https://fancyclopedia.org/Nils_Helmer_Frome and notes his fanzine he edited was *"the first Canadian genzine, and possibly the country's first fanzine, in the late 1930s and 1940s /he/ contributed illos to many American fanzines."*



A multigraph printing machine.

Supramundane Stories was produced on a multigraph, a piece of equipment that printed from a drum like a mimeograph except that the typewriter style letters were set a slug at a time, as with a letter press, on the drum. To do one page on the multigraph would take no less than four hours, 2 1/2 hours to set the type, 1 1/2 hour to remove and sort it to be used again (NHFvol, p105). Frome also used a hektograph from 1938, ie a device printing on a jelly bed, drawing ink from an aniline-inked original. Several pages and the cover of *Supramundane Stories #2* were fully or partly done on this hektograph. He would also use hekto ink to draw illustrations he sent to others, to be used directly, and hektography could also be used to give otherwise duplicated extra colours. Frome would also hand-draw illustrations in his fanzine, in white spaces that he left. It was a lot of work, 10-12 illustrations per copy might be needed. All extra work is probably why only two issues came.

M Dann/B Yvonne tell us about *Supramundane Stories #1*, through CanFan, p413:

70 copies of 32 pages printed on a multigraph mimeo Frome had earlier purchased from San Francisco fan C. Hamilton Bloomer (who had used it to print the first American multigraphed zine TESSERACT). A multigraph has movable type which has to be set by hand, which is very time-consuming. Any illustrations have to be hand drawn for each copy, which in the case of SUPRAMUNDANE led to an unusual situation... SUPRAMUNDANE's pages were stitched together on Frome's mother's sewing machine, which is a rather cool way to bind it. A wonder more people didn't think of that method.

#2 of the fanzine was printed in 100 copies. Moskowitz says (NHFvol)

Frome illustrated it by hand, and although he possessed no little artistic ability, he showed a disquieting dislike for uniformity by illustrating every copy of the magazine differently. For the particular fan collector it would have been necessary to obtain every copy of the periodical in existence in order to own all the variations... I kept two copies of the first and at one time I had six in the files at the same time. Why? Because every copy was different. Different illustrations, different textual arrangements, even different text...RD Swisher who did a fanzine checklist says: Probably one of the most unusual fanzines ever issued was the first issue of SUPRAMUNDANE STORIES... No two copies were identical. Each and every one contained different illustrations, articles, ads, set up of stories. Cover and illustrations done by hand. No two copies of this issue are identical. Some pages dated Oct, some Dec-Jan Frome himself wrote: The explanation to why the variety of illustrations is I got bored doing the same drawing over many, many times, almost line for line. Try it yourself. I bet it will get under your skin, too.

Frome wanted to join the then newly founded (in 1937) Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Jack Speer says in his early fandom history *Up to Now: Jack Speer* mentions in *Up To Now, 1939*, <https://efanzines.com/UpToNow/> :

Wollheim pointed out that all of the publishers of Convention /the 1937 in New Jersey/ publications were members of the FAPA. Exception was Nils Frome, Canadian, whose magazine arrived too late.

I don't know if he joined later. Since I don't have the rosters, but possibly not since he lived far away and his multigraph machine was complicated to operate.

The contents of *Supramundane #1* is mentioned in CanFan, p414:

The Cosmic Vampire' by Lionel Dilbeck, a Lovecraftian story about an airplane expedition to the North Magnetic pole which crashes in a storm. Everyone survives only to be picked off one by one by a gaseous being resembling "a huge mass of what looked to be snow-flakes...Glittering whitely and pulsating rhythmically..." which, once it envelopes a hapless human, sucks out his life force. The cover, by Frome himself, depicts an agonized man disintegrating within the embrace of 'The Cosmic Vampire' while another man flees down the snowy slope toward the wrecked aircraft." ... Frome contributed two stories. The first, 'The Thought God Calls' is under the pen name Vacton Wells. It's about the first expedition to the outer planets. Here's a sample paragraph:

"Although acerb climes sent the hull barometer down to an abnormal extreme on the dark side, and horrentious heat on that side facing Titan, mighty machines murmuring in the Planeteer's pentraillia, rapidly reined and used them; so whereas Man with his huge shortcomings should swiftly have expired, but for the

**"DO PHOTONS HAVE MASS? I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW
THEY WERE CATHOLIC!" --WOODY ALLEN**

miracle of the advent of Brain, the two who stood looking into the drusy distance, Contents of Supramundane Stories #2 mentated not too much on the possibility of anything going wrong in the three weeks old king of space, but trying to envisage the things to come." His second story, under his own name, titled 'The Flaming Sword of Yucatan', is even less accessible to the reader. You might say he attempts to out-Lovecraft Lovecraft, as per this quote: "Dawson understood. He came into reality, if the strange being and the effulgent object he held, vaguely like a sword but with an elusive, distant look that it might have been a star, was real."

Frome here also wrote a poem under the pen name Lionel N Dwight. It's titled 'All Cold', and is about the heat death of the Moon. The complete poem:

Lonely little Luna's settled to soulful wait
 Until when her fate will one day slate
 Some cosmic chaos a chance to brim her atmosphere thin
 And give her energy to energize her fires dim,
 But she cringes lest fate connive, pales lest it contrive
 To take her life.
 Her struggles strong for ages long
 Has inured her to strife,
 But the fire cooler grows in her inner great grotto
 And she does not know.

CanFan, p141, notes:

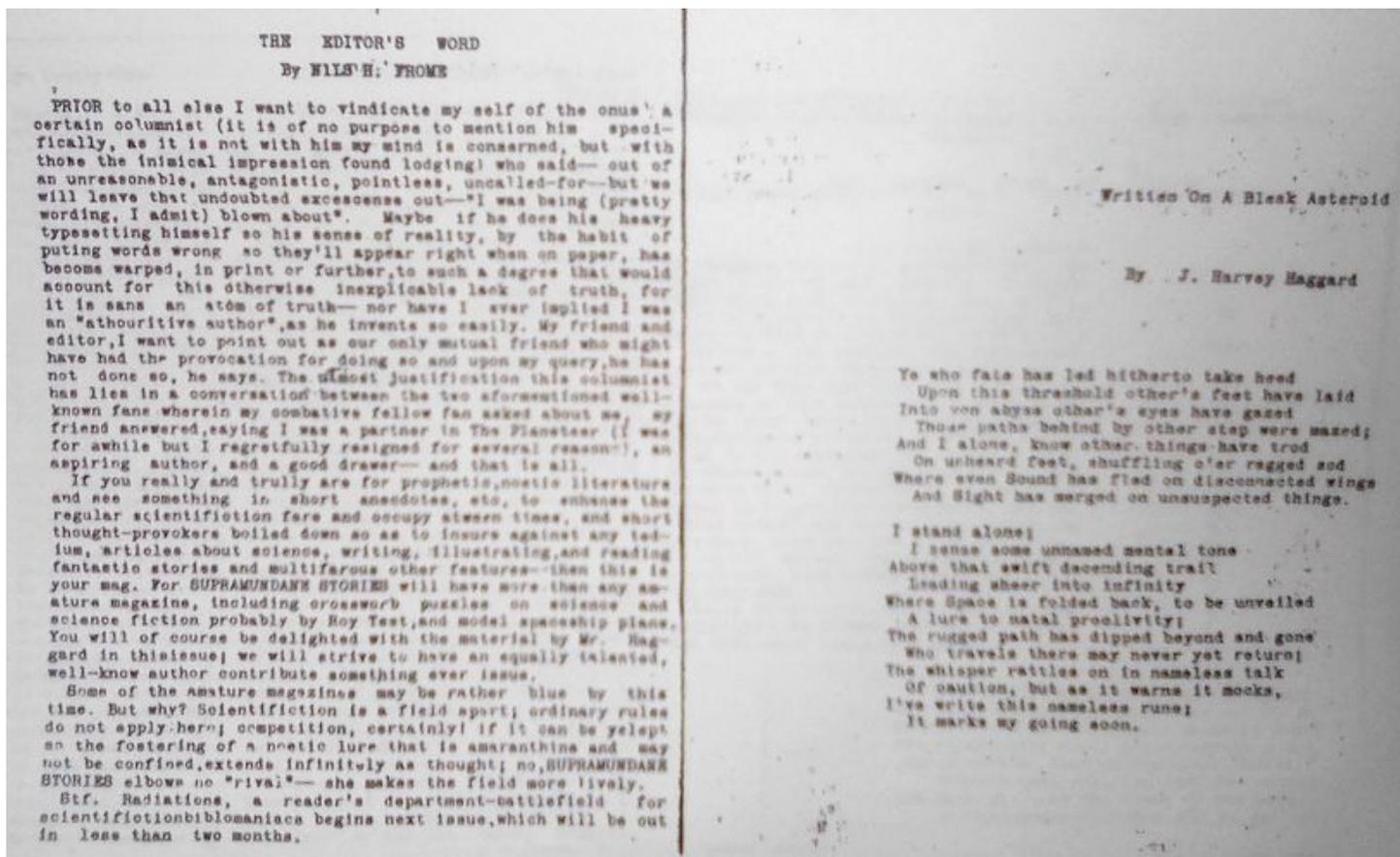
The standout item in the issue is the poem 'Written On A Bleak Asteroid' by J Harvey Haggard, a professional author and poet. whose stories had appeared periodically in WONDER STORIES & ASTOUNDING STORIES...had several poems appear under the pen name 'The Planet Prince' in WONDER STORIES... I and from NHFvol, p10/ At this stage in his life, Frome's grasp of English was good, but he tended towards an awkward syntax and a lust for run-on sentences. (He later wrote far more clearly.)

And here's an excerpt from his editorial, titled 'The Editor's Word' in which he sets forth the purpose of Supramundane Stories #1 (NHFvol, p124):

If you really and truly are for prophetic, noetic literature and see something in short anecdotes, etc, to enhance



1950s drawing. Unknown where it was used, but Frome was still into fantasy it seems.



Two pages from Supramundane Stories #1, "The Editor's Word" and J Harvey Haggard's poem mentioned. Though slow the multigraph had the advantage you could easily create straight right margins by sliding the type on the drum.

the regular scientification fare and occupy atween times, and short thought-provokers boiled down so as to insure against any tedium, articles about science, writing, illustrating, and reading fantastic stories and multifarious other features - then this is your mag. For SUPRAMUNDANE STORIES will have more than any amateur magazine, including crossword puzzles... and model spaceship plans... Scientification is a world apart; ordinary rules do not apply here; competition, certainly! If it can be yeleft so the fostering of a noetic lure that is amaranthine and may not be confined, extends infinitely as thought; no, SUPRAMUNDANE STORIES elbows no "rival" - she makes the field more lively.

Supramundane is also available here if you want to study it: <http://www.cdnsfzinearchive.org/sf-fanzines/downloadable-canadian-fanzines/macabre/supramundane-stories-1-2-1937-1938-nils-helmer-frome/>

Here's SaM's list of publications he agented Frome's work to (CanFan, p239-240):

HELIOS & FANTASY ARTISTS, ed Sam Moskowitz
THE SCIENCE FICTION SCOUT, ed Alex Osherhoff
FANTASCIENCE DIGEST, ed Robert Madle
SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTOR, ed John V Baltadonis
GOLDEN ATOM, ed Litterio Frasci
SCIENTITALES, ed John Giunta
COSMIC TALES, ed Louis Kuslan
8-BALL/CANADIAN FANDOM, ed Beak Taylor
FANFARE, ed Francis Paro
SCIENTAL, ed Bob Studley
SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES, ed Oswald Train
STUNNING SCIENTIFAN, ed JJ Fortier
SCIENTI-SNAPS, ed Walter Marconette
SCIENCE FICTION FAN, ed Olon F Wiggin
VADJONG, ed James V Tarusi
SPACEWAYS, ed Harry Warner jr
LIGHT, ed Les Crouth "#115 April 1942 for example, its cover a line drawing of four nymphs or driad".

The last two were not through SaM, who only had the service for a while. Later Frome fanzine contributions are not listed, from the 1940s when he eg did fillos and wrote fiction for Les Crouth's Ontario fanzine *Light*, and both covers and fillos for issues of Joseph 'Beak' Taylor's *Canadian Fandom*.

Walter Marconett's *Scienti-Snaps*, Feb 1939, we for instance find a short story by Frome, "The Mother" (not in the NHFvol) and you can find it too here: <https://fanac.org/fanzines/Scienti-Snaps/>

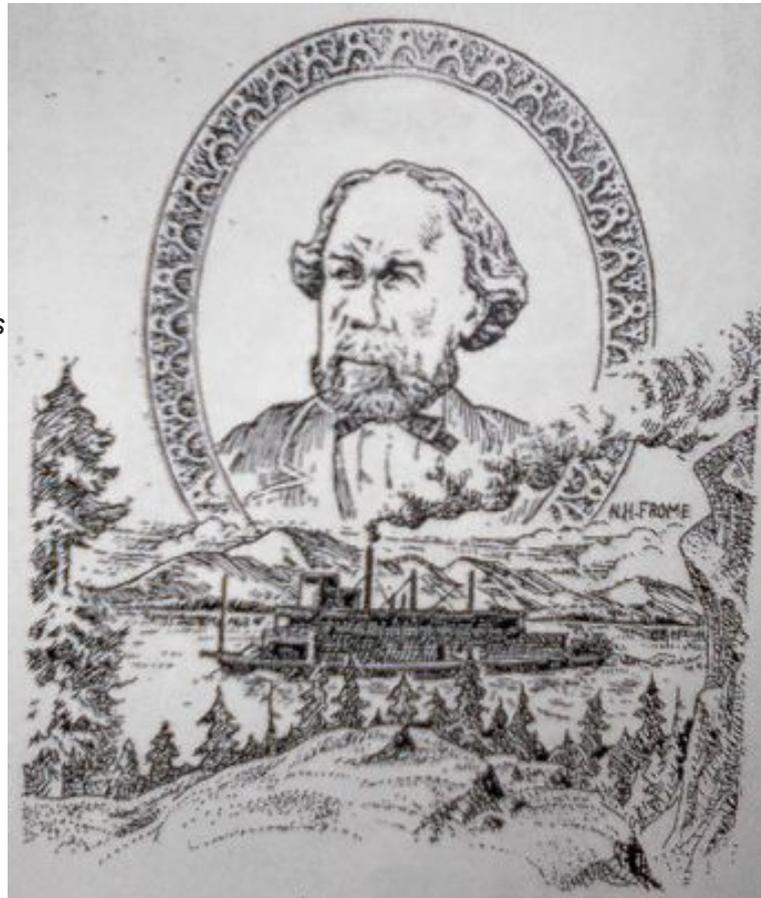
While continuing to be active until the late 1940's - being mentioned even in the early 1950s - the intro of NHFvol (p2) claims that Frome had "become disillusioned with science fiction and fandom by the forties. His sense of 'otherness' and interest in the outre had much in common with similar attitudes share by Howard Philips Lovecraft." SaM notes that Frome was getting sour on SF in 1940 (NHFvol, p22):

For the present day pulp s-f I have nothing but contempt, particularly so in the case of Ziff-Davis science fiction magazines (Amazing Stories, Fantastic Adventures). Like Lovecraft he seems to have had a strong desire for female companionship but unlike his mentor he never seem to have ventured into matrimony." His desire to meet a good girl, especially a red-haired one, is obvious from his story "The Cloud People" and in correspondence with Sam Frome talked about his admiration for actresses like Nan Grey and Jean Rogers.

In a letter to *The Golden Atom*, dated January 9, 1940, Frome says (NHFvol, p17):

No, I have no fan mags for sale. I have no fan mags, I've destroyed them all - I dislike a lot of useless paper laying around. I do have a couple or so Planeteer and some early Science Fiction Fans that somehow missed the fire, but that is all. Them you can have for as little as you care to offer.

In 1943 Frome contributed to Canadian fan Beak Taylor's hektographed fanzine *8-Ball*, February of that year, with the short story "The Box" (CanFan, p82):



Riverboat and portrait of unknown man, by Nils H Frome.

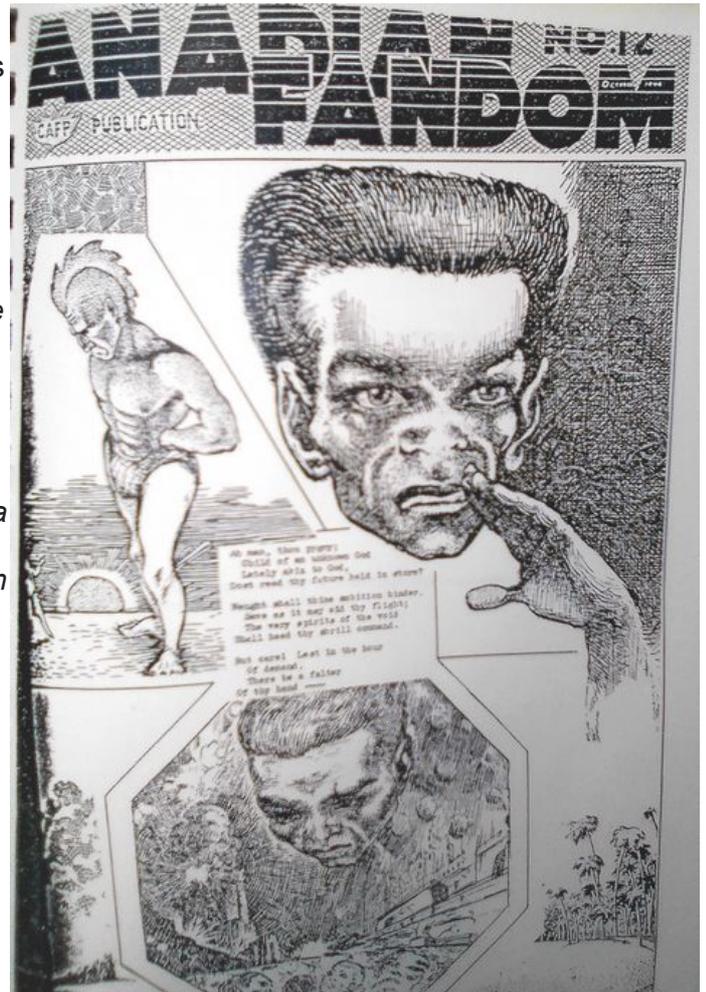
It told of a housewife who receives in the mail a little black box that carries her off to other universes. The writing would have been good for the 1930s, but already it was too weak for the '40s, when the average fan was in his 20s, not in his teens.

In the second issue Taylor reports this Frome story was poorly received. His fanzine would change name to *Canadian Fandom* with issue 4 and becoming one of the leading ones in Canada "also highly respected in the US", and Frome did the cover for its August 1944 issue "a handsome satanic face and nine naked women with butterfly wings gazing up at him. The drawing, approaching professional quality, was photo offset." He also did the cover for the issue February 1945, "a gigantic humanoid holds an earthman in the palm of his hand, while the earthman and companion are firing rifles at him." The October 1945 issue has a Frome cover "of a naked man riding a winged horse obit short of professional standards". In the same issue Frome has a short story, illustrated with an "exaggerated self-portrait", titled "The Mirror. It's a story "in which a man, without realizing it, sees his death mirrored long before it occurs." The July 1947 cover had a montage of four Frome illustrations, with a poem by him in the middle. That issue also has a letter from Frome which has been wrongly interpreted that he was then in the military, but "camp" in his address is a logging and not an army camp. (Various quotes from NHF, p13.)

According to CanFan, p85:

Joseph 'Beak' Taylor - (#12 - Jul) - "For the cover... /of Canadian Fandom/ Taylor took four Frome illustrations and arranged them in a montage with a poem by the artist at the centre which seems to relate to them." (SM) The four illustrations depict: 1) A giant with a serrated Mohawk haircut, naked but for a loincloth, staring down a sunset, 2) the head of a man with pointed ears, exaggerated cranium & intensely staring eyes, 3) an explosion (possibly atomic) bursting out of the ocean offshore of a tropical beach, & 4) a sad, almost Negroid face gazing down at a city under intense bombardment, its citizens scurrying in panic through the streets. The poem by Frome reads:

"Ah man, thou pygmy;
Child of an unknown God
Lately akin to God,
Dost read thy future held in store?
Naught shall thine ambition hinder,
Save as it may aid thy flight;
The very spirits of the void
Shall heed thy shrill command.
But care! Lest in the hour
of Demand,
There shall be a falter
Of thy hand...."



Frome cover, 1947. (A bit cropped already in NHFvol.)

Around 1985 SaM had only heard rumours that Frome had died (NHFvol, p13):

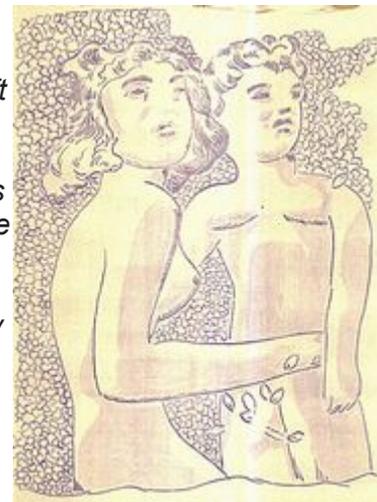
But I have no confirmation of this from any reliable source. When Frome corresponded with me, his greatest ambition in life was to get a god job, get married, and raise a family. Maybe that is just what happened to him. He was certainly a pioneer in Canadian fandom. Compared to other fans, he had an aptitude for writing fiction, but it never matured. His artwork was approaching professional quality...his taste in editorial material was in the right direction...He was flundering, mostly because he was out there in the middle of nowhere. He was generous of himself, and the lack of typewriter in his early years /hints he got one later/ hurt him gravely as far as getting more placements and recognition. Perhaps now that we are alert, we will find the rest of his story. Let us hope it is a happy one. Frome's activities shed light on other figures in the SF and fantasy field. He is unquestionably another link in the life of the elate HP Lovecraft...His relationship with James Blish is of definite interest, not all favorable to Blish. There are also letters and other personal connections with Clark Ashton Smith.

The Blish comment refers to a complicated feud with Bloomer of Tesseract, about Blish taking over

Bloomers fanzine, but not fulfilling his obligations, but it's outside the subject of Frome. There's a long letter by Moskowitz in *Science Fiction Studies*, November 1985 (NHFvol, p27), commenting and speculating on James Blish using "Nilsson Frome" as a pseudonym, and then stating:

While in the hospital Frome began to draw again, and when released made his major bid to earn a living from his drawing. This took the form of salaried work, which included design work on the restoration of the Cariboo Goldrush town of Barkerville, while working for the Department of Recreation and Conservation in British Columbia. His work was used on the cover and interiors of various regional Canadian magazines, including the Quesnel Advertiser and The North West Digest. Poor health, drinking, and failing interest resulted in his leaving his position and trying to make a living as a freelance commercial artist in southern British Columbia. He secured a motorcycle and toured the province, taking photos which he would later use as models for some illustrations. It seems he had left Fraser Mill since the next address to him goes to Bloedel and we learn he also for a time worked in Thasis, all in British Columbia that he never seemed to get very far from. He was not entirely unsuccessful with his art, doing a regular series of drawings for The British Columbian in New Westminster as well as other newspapers. He made an attempt to have some of his illustrations appear on tourist postcards. Dann and Yvonne report that the quality of the drawings they viewed was good, and his line work-outstanding. His animals were drawn with considerable appeal. Forced to finally give up his attempts to make a living as a graphic artist in British Columbia, he returned to Sweden to visit his family. (We assume this is the family of his father.)

One year later, his adopted family in British Columbia was notified that Nils Helmer Frome, who had been engaged as an oddjob man and part-time boiler operator for the Hydro Hotel in Llandudno, Caernarvonshire, Wales, was found dead there on March 27, 1962. He was not quite 44 years old and a diary indicated that he had been considering suicide for some time. His finances consisted of a three-penny piece, worth about 10 cents at that period...Had he been able to take up residence in a publishing center like New York City, he might - between magazine illustrating and the rise of the comic magazines in the '40s - have had a better chance of making a living as an illustrator. While as a fan he was an eccentric, in his widespread correspondence he was unquestionably reaching out for comradeship; and his "loner" attitude to people around him seemed more a failure to find people with similar interests than a psychological fault.



A Frome hekto illo, from Scienti-Snaps 1939.

It has been noted that the loner Frome was a typical fan, unfortunately without a fandom to join where he lived. Had there been an organised fandom around Vancouver in his days he might have had more inspiration and his life could have turned out differently. Frome was fanactive off and on until at least 1948. Maybe he felt that other sf fans were his only friends. He worked in logging camps until 1953 when bad health hit him. But CanFan says, p218, that he "was still listed in the Canadian fan directory in 1952". In 1958-59 Frome worked for the BC Department of Conservation and Recreation, to restore the town of Barkerville and open a museum there. The artistically talented Frome was eg responsible for making the museum's dioramas. He then traveled to Europe, also visiting his native Sweden, but was by then lost from fandom's radar. He was hospitalised and ill in periods and apparently had health problems. Since he committed suicide (probably) in a hotel room in Wales in 1962 and one may speculate that the reason was a combination of failing health and unfulfilled artistic ambitions. CanFan, p240, tells about his 1950s doings, illness and death:

In the summer of 1953 a nearly fatal bowel obstruction dictated a hospital stay lasting 76 days. Frome spent much of the time drawing, expanding his artistic skills. Afterwards, among other jobs all over B.C. working for various companies, he did design work for the Dept of Recreation & Conservation. Then he came back to the Lower Mainland and tried to survive as a commercial artist. Despite selling illustrations of BC "buildings, ships, trains & places" to newspapers, success eluded him. A drinking habit begun in his early twenties was now a major problem. As if desiring to begin anew and find his roots, he left for Sweden to visit his relatives circa 1960/1961. He never came back. Nils Helmer Frome was found dead in the Hydro Hotel in Llandudno, Caernarvonshire, Wales. He had been working on odd jobs and as a part-time boilerman for the hotel. His diary reveals he had considered suicide for some time. The date was the 27th of March, 1962. He was less than 44 years old. He had one three-penny piece in his possession.

A very sad end! One could make a guess that his 1953 illness and long hospitalisation left a mark on him, and with boozing and a generally bad outlook on life all that's behind that he finally ended himself. He had gafiated long before his early 1960's trip to Sweden, and I'm pretty sure there were no contacts with local Swedish fandom. I've never seen his name mentioned here before.

From p32 and on NHFvol mainly reprints several of Frome's short stories, articles, artwork, and letters to him and from him. Here's a list of that with short comments:

- "A Pessimistic Outlook - But the Stars Still Shine" (from *The Golden Atom*, March 1940): Frome comments some of the sf stories he likes best and generally about the genre.
- "The Cloud People" - adventure story in the upper atmosphere with airships and so on. (Unpublished?)
- "Spectrum Shift" (from *Helios* #5, February 1938) - short story of an interstellar spaceship, with a twist.
- "Ghoul of Selem" - lovecraftian horror story. (Unpublished?)
- "Into the Violet Flame" - space adventure story (Unpublished?)
- "The Alien Pictures" - lovecraftian horror story. (Unpublished? A facsimile of the original manuscript of this story, in longhand, is also reproduced. Frome's writing was small and rather special, "which makes H.P. Lovecraft's notes look like large-type books" and SaM notes he often used green and blue ink, *CanFan* p264.)
- "The Enigma of Thought" - article talking about intelligence. (Unpublished?)
- Letters from HP Lovecraft: Dec 19 1936 being sceptic to interplanetary travel; Jan 20 1937 more sceptic notes on interplanetary travel and against fortune telling; Feb 28 1937 long letter about the universe, science, listing science books to read.
- Letters from Frome to Claire Beck: Feb 13 1937, Apr 8 1937, Apr 30 1937, Nov 25 1937, mainly comments on Beck's fanzine and Frome's own and plans for them.
- Frome letters to Sam Moskowitz: Aug 7 1937 commenting Frome's own *Supramundane* and plans for it, incl a proposed advertising text to run in SaM's *Helios*; Dec 2 1937 commenting SaM's manuscript agency and promising material, Frome presenting himself, comments on films and film stars he likes, comments on *Helios*; Feb 1938 comments on Frome's artwork for publication on the 1938 Newark convention; July 8 1938 comments on the artwork fanzine for said convention; Nov 1938 sending a drawing and comments on artwork; Jan 25 1938 comments on a story he sent SaM and on his wish to visit New York where he has an aunt; March 1 1939 comments on which to visit New York and on stories he has sent. (The letters are certainly many more, but are those that have surfaced.)
- Brief sketches on the actors Nan Grey and Jean Rogers that Frome liked (by Kenneth W Faig Jr). Both of them appeared in sf related films, like in *Flash Gordon* serials.
- On the *Multigraph*, by Claire Beck, a description of how this printing machine worked, somewhat like a mimeograph but with type placed on the drum.
- A reprint of *Fantasy Artist* #1, ed Sam Moskowitz, with short Frome bio and one of his drawings.
- A reprint of *Fantasy Artist* #2, with further info on Frome.
- Facsimile reprint of *Supramundane Stories* #1.
- Facsimile reprint of *Supramundane Stories* #2.



Drawing by Frome. It says "Historic Centre" over the entrance, so it could be from the Barkerville restoration project 1958-59

Reprinted are also three photos of Frome (see the this article's start, another photo has him indoors sitting in an armchair, on a third he sit outdoors, all seem from the same photo session), some artwork which I don't list, it's difficult to cover in words, but some of it is reproduced with this article.

- Last is a list of publications where Frome placed artwork 1955-1960, including *The British Columbian* (at least 12 pieces of art), *The Northwest Digest*, *The Emigrant Soldier's Gazette and Cape Horn Chronicle*, *The Province*, *A History of Coquitlam and Fraser Mills* (single issues, unknown if it was one or several pieces of artwork in each), ad for Dove Moving & Storage, ad for McMan's Dairy, sketches of Holy Trinity Church from the church bulletins, ad for the Irving House, drawing of Fort Langley done as a postcard. Also listed are unpublished work: drawings for Barkerville restoration, sketch of the oldest house in Surrey, BC, drawing of Frome's niece.

The lists of material is probably far from complete. There should be much more in old fanzines (which I don't have), maybe letters in pulpmags and more art in both fanzines in non-fannish publications. If you have additional information on Nils H Frome, let me know!

Mailing Comments

Only EAPA this time (there's no new N'APA mlg). Why not do a fanzine and join? These little magazines are much better than F*cebook and should be the backbone of fandom. Doing a PDF is easy and unlike in old times E-mail postage is free. Come on! Are you a fan or a mouse? Squeak!

Henry Grynsten: A great issue, as usual. ♦♦About imagined great growth of the Soviet economy... As said, USSR statistics isn't to be trusted! There was a huge incentive for plan economy bureaucrats to report huge "progress" - if not, Gulag next! You note about the near zero starting point that "Isn't growth growth, regardless of where you start from?" The main point is, while it is growth it still isn't much success, since it's very easy - it doesn't take much success - to pick low-hanging fruits or in this case even fruits on the ground... (The "zero" from being a low-production agrarian society ravaged by wars.) ♦♦On taxes: "taxes are (mostly) put to good use" - well, my take is that taxes (at least here) are *not* mostly used for services you can argue are good (health, education, law system etc). They are *mostly* used for shuffling money from one group to another, a system which in itself also requires a money-consuming bureaucracy. We could keep the smaller, good expenses, but should limit the shuffling and bureaucracy, and if we limit the shuffling, need of bureaucracy decreases. It may be that many countries high in the taxation league are working fine (though there are other factors too, long period of peace, good education, stable politics, etc) but I believe we should compare to how much *more* successful they'd be without *wasting* money on bureaucracy and letting amateur politicians without personal responsibility driven by utopian theories handle vast amounts of money! Economic growth began to falter in Sweden in the 1970s as the tax level rose - there is a connection! It has been calculated that if we'd managed the economic growth of the 1950/60's we'd be *twice* as rich now. ♦♦"Getting every person to decide in every political question is an impossibility". Well, you can always at least get *more* people influence over *more* issues. But also, you don't have to see every question as something a bigger collective must decide over! Building roads may be a question to be raised over the individual, but many other things can be left to the private citizen. Many regulations are just there because politicians in their utopian intolerance want to force all others to be moulded along their own preferences. Housing? Why should the local council decide what house you can build? Pubs? Let the owner of the pub decide if you can dance or smoke! Why must you waste time, energy and resources on "energy declarations" or making "equality plans" for your business? If you own forest land, why should politicians decide how to take care of your property? The political-bureaucratical complex has already too much power. They track your entire life through registering your transactions electronically, your movements on CCTV (in Stockholm through the congestion charge-taxing) and when you "blip" tickets), communication is followed by FRA (auditing have found that the "restrictions" put on FRA are routinely ignored), and so on, and so on. Limit and decrease the reach of politicians and bureaucrats! And for this it is absolutely necessary to limit the money resources they have at their disposal. ♦♦As for the Piraha people in Amazonas, I don't think their life was so idyllic as claimed. From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piraha_%C3%A3_people we learn they can't make canoes, necessary for their fishing and being able to cross the river. They grow manioc on a quite small scale, and only "make a few days' worth of manioc flour at a time". They "don't store food in any quantity" and don't know any conservation methods (or rather "Piraha have ignored lessons in preserving meats by salting or smoking"). This points to a narrow and precarious food supply chain! If their canoes break, they can't make new ones to fish. They have flour for just a couple of days. They don't conserve food. If there's bad luck with hunting and gathering they are very shortly starving! This explains their average lifespan of 45 years (<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2012/mar/25/daniel-everett-human-language-piraha>) from diseases they can't treat, but I guess also from uneven nutrition. The later source also notes their alcohol problems (getting it from local traders), quarrel and violence - the author was threatened with "either an arrow or a shotgun blast to the face". It is said how the Pirahas smile all the time, but smiling often indicates insecurity, weakness. Laying on your back resting is just lack of a drive to do something to improve your life. The noble and happy savage wasn't a myth already during Rousseau's time!

Garth Spencer: I actually followed the events around the trucker protests rather closely. Read articles, saw reports on Youtube, etc. They did *not* behave like "merely hooligans" and if you saw a "confederate flag" it was from an outsider. Demonstrations will always attract odd individuals having their own agendas. The point of a demonstration is to get noticed. If it's neglectable there's no point with the demonstration. So of course you park where it's disturbing and honk your horn. Blocking a few streets in central Ottawa doesn't mean more than making it slightly more difficult to reach a few shops and offices (you may have to walk after parking a bit away...dear me!) and can't possibly be a major threat to Canada's economy or a threat at all of any significance. And the bridges blocked were cleared long before Trudeau invoked Martial law - so that was no legitimate reason. The reason Trudeau used martial law was that he was personally irritated by that great many Canadians refused to buy his narrative and be nice boys and girls and do as he said. My evaluation is that the truckers represented a *huge* number of Canadians, possibly even a majority. When the convoy started 100 000's (there are numerous videos of it) stood and cheered along the roads in bitter cold. There were sympathy actions by the farmers, by native Canadians (=indians), by churches, and as time progressed by governments in several of the provinces. It was by no way a "fringe"! Trudeau's government had pushed too hard with corona restrictions for too long, people saw how unreasonable it was and was dead tired of it. This

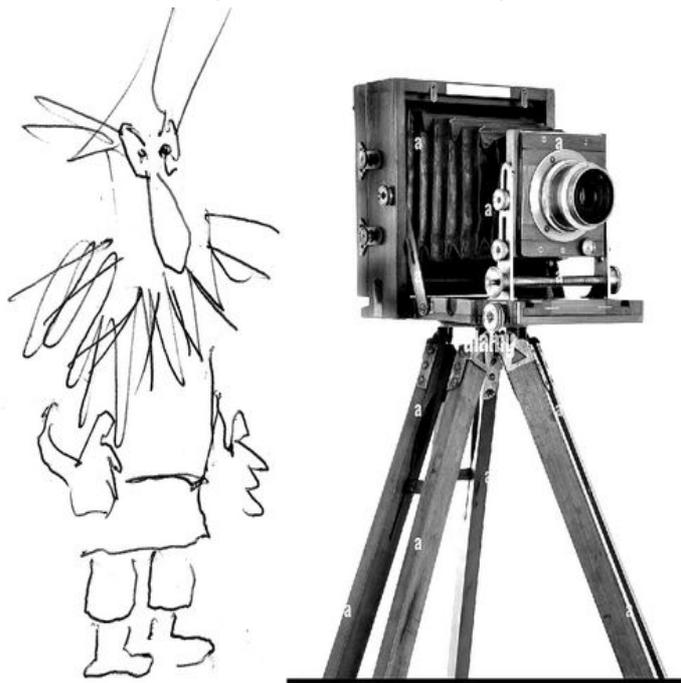
stubborn schoolboy PM should have listened to the people. And he had particularly weak case to push for forced injections and medical tracking documents under the Omicron variant, as Omicron proved to be very mild. ♦♦As for the problems for hunter-gathers, see my comments to Henry Grynsten. If you have to move all the time you have a very uncertain existence. Farmers had much more steady nutrition, while it may be true they had more disease, an effect of living more closely together which makes disease spread easier.

John Thiel: Didn't find much to comment. Nice artwork, though. Liked the airship.

William McCabe: I think much of James Bond could qualify as sf! Just think of the outrageous weapons constructed by Q and the super weapon used by Bond's enemies. Remember eg the scene when a giant laser threatens to cut Bond in half, in a 1960's film... There were no lasers of that capacity at the time and I think there still aren't, so that's a science-fiction laser. "Moonraker" is BTW definitely skiffy! ♦♦interesting about utopias and dystopias! I have read some but not all the works mentioned. ♦♦I'm aware of that Ukraine isn't in any way a perfect democracy and that they have had troubles with eg corruption. However, it is far, far better than Russia in these respects and at the time of Putin's stupid invasion they were moving in the right direction. Corruption is a legacy of communism, which as we know works so bad that the only way to get through bureaucracy or get hold of stuff was bribes. Joining the EU - which I hope Ukraine will, eventually - starts with negotiations where EU presents what reforms they want to see, for instance to fight corruption. When Romania joined the EU demanded and got that Romania must open an anti-corruption office and appoint a special anti-corruption prosecutor. And the corruption situation has gradually come more and more under control there. Something similar will be the case with Ukraine. Ordinary folks and responsible politicians truly want to get rid of corruption. You have to do what you can, though it may take years. ♦♦The Russian-speaking minority of Ukraine don't want to be Russian. They have (in peacetime) better economy, freedom and better prospects in Ukraine than in Putin's dictatorship. "Separatists" in Donbas is a small minority and basically Putin puppets.

Roger Sjölander: I was also an early reader. For me the reason was that I wanted to know what programs there were on the telly, so I learned the mysteries of letters to find out from the papers. ♦♦I remember the "If the War Comes" section of the phonebook. There's a recent new edition called "If The War of the Crisis Comes" made as a brochure distributed to all households. ♦♦As for "hen", I think it is very important *not* to accept or go along with the notion that gender is "just social construction". That would be unscientific, as the gender exists in every single cell in our bodies, in the chromosomes (ie genes). What really *is* a "social construction" or rather a psychological construction is the idea that you could be "born in the wrong sex". The human mind can construct very strange beliefs, which still doesn't make them true! Take for instance the famous Prussian general Bluecher who thought he was pregnant with an elephant (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gebhard_Leberecht_von_Bl%C3%BCcher) or the French king who believed he was made of glass (<https://daily.jstor.org/french-king-who-believed-made-glass/>) - or for that matter, the Russian guy who believes neighbouring country is run by Jewish Nazis. There are concrete danger and substantial harm in the notion of gender just being a whim. Registered "wrong gender" claims ("gender dysphoria") has increased ten-fold among Swedish teens, most certainly fueled by the topic being prominent in media and pushed by activists. This may lead to *irreversible* hormone treatment and operations, for young persons that may become damaged for life by things they later regret. We all know who insecure and lost and flip-flopping teens are. Those promoting the notion that gender is just a social construct carry a heavy burden for causing damage and suffering. And promoting a certain, invented "pronoun" to promote such ideas is a part of it. BTW, try using the *existing* neutral pronoun - *den*! It works! "Det märker den som skriver så."

Finally: Since I've written about the American Song Contest, modelled after the Eurovision Song Contest, a short note as the ASC has begun. I've seen the first shows, aired by Swedish TV. I doubt it will fly, alas, and ratings are reported (in Swedish press) to be rather low. The intensity, the wackiness from ESC isn't there. But on the other hand, I think the songs themselves and the performances are quite *good*. The finale could get a string of really good tunes. Good music, questionable TV, but if it survives to a new run in 2023 seems uncertain. The original, ESC, is BTW on soon. Favourites are...Ukraine! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiEGVYOruLk> Sweden #3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWDTThAfyW4> in the odds. ♦♦



Rysk spion med spionkamera

Russian with spy camera. Artist Lars LON Olsson.

Слава Україні!

(=Glory to Ukraine!)