

OPUNTIA 434



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ABOUT THE COVER: 8 Street SW under the railroad tracks in downtown Calgary. The transcontinental railroad is the southern boundary line of the downtown core. The other side is the Beltline district. Tens of thousands of people live on each side of the tracks in condo towers. In the absence of an oil pipeline to the Pacific coast, each day numerous kilometres-long tanker trains like this one head west along these tracks to the tidewater.

AS I STROLLED OUT ONE DAY
photos by Dale Speirs

2019-01-12

In the last issue of this zine, I remarked that January was a dull time in Calgary. I wrote too soon, for the day after I posted that issue, the Yellow Vest Convoy came through the city in support of the oil pipelines. As I strolled down the Stephen Avenue pedestrian mall where it terminates in front of City Hall, there was a crowd at the intersection. The photos sum up the event.





Justin Trudeau has made himself even more unpopular out west than his father Pierre, an achievement that took some doing. Both father and son did it by messing up petroleum policy, Pierre with his National Energy Policy, and Justin by his timidity in dealing with anti-pipeline groups funded by foreign petroleum interests.

The irony is that the Trudeau family trust fund is based on the wealth of Charles-Emile, father of Pierre, who owned a chain of service stations in eastern Canada. (Further irony: he was a Tory.)

The CALGARY HERALD published an investigative report on January 17 about how the anti-pipeline protestors are funded by American companies who want to prevent Alberta from exporting its oil and instead force it to sell the oil at a discount to them, currently about \$30 off world price. Without east or westbound pipelines to tidewater, the only other way for Alberta to ship its oil is through the USA, whose oil companies are holding it for ransom. (calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/corbella-vivian-krause-should-become-a-household-name-across-canada)



TRUDEAU IN FICTION

by Dale Speirs

By coincidence, I spotted a couple of items using characters with the name Trudeau, which is not a common name in Canada, although certainly famous because of the father and son Prime Ministers. I exclude the Doonesbury comic strip series by Garry Trudeau.

Trudeau The Good.

DEATH BY DUMPLING (2018) by Vivien Chien is the first novel in a new cozy series about Lana Lee. She was a refugee from a failed marriage and a workplace dismissal, and fled back to her ancestral homeland of Cleveland, Ohio. She now waited on tables at the family restaurant Ho-Lee Noodle House, where her mother was determined to get her another husband.

The stage having been set, the landlord Thomas Feng was sent an order of shrimp dumplings by mistake. All of the staff knew he had a shellfish allergy, so the Homicide squad were asking uncomfortable questions, not to mention arresting one of them. It was difficult for Lee to concentrate on her customers when uniforms were walking back and forth to the kitchen. She met the officer in charge, handsome young Detective Adam Trudeau.

Lee became a Miss Marple in between waitressing shifts at the restaurant. Much mention of Chinese food, so don't read this book on an empty stomach or else you'll be dialing for delivery. After sorting out various melodramas, Lee concluded with the traditional finale of cozies, the held-at-gunpoint confrontation. The killer was jealous of Feng having stolen his girlfriend decades ago and fathering an illegitimate son by her.

The threads were tied up in the final chapter but there was no recipes appendix. You'll just have to call Skip The Dishes. Lee had the promise of a budding relationship with Adam Trudeau, so he'll undoubtedly appear in the sequel.

Trudeau The Bad.

Jack Webb is remembered by posterity mainly as Sgt. Joe Friday of DRAGNET, which was an old-time radio series from 1949 to 1957, as well as a television series and movies. It set the standard for realistic police procedurals.

While doing that series, he also had a short-lived OTR show called PETE KELLY'S BLUES. It ran for three months in 1951. The series was done in the same minimalist style as DRAGNET, with snappy lines, good sound effects, and crisp action.

The difference was that the lead character, Pete Kelly, was a 1920s jazz musician who each week was caught up in nefarious affairs, mainly because of the company he kept. Webb played that role in two senses of that verb, as an actor and as a musician. In private life, Webb was an accomplished jazz player who loved the music. Each episode in this series had one or two full jazz songs, played by Webb and his band.

"Gus Trudeau" was an episode title that leaped out at me while I was scrolling the series, which is available as free mp3s from www.archive.org. The episode was written by Richard Breen and James Moser.

Gus Trudeau broke out of jail and was on the loose. Dutch Courtney was the gangster who set up Trudeau to take the fall and go in for five years. Courtney didn't long survive after Trudeau busted loose, and now both his men and the police were looking for him. Trudeau had been a cornet player in Kelly's band. Kelly had developed a reputation for helping people out of a jam, so everyone eventually converged at his nightclub, Trudeau seeking help and the rest seeking Trudeau.

Gus's sister Madge was also looking for him. She had been Courtney's girlfriend. Kelly didn't believe Gus was the murderer because he knew Gus would have planned ahead with a car and cash to skip town after the murder. The police caught the real murderer, another gangster, but the news was slow in spreading. Kelly had to rush about letting Courtney's partners know about the arrest so they would lay off Gus.

Gus did appear, and reluctantly Kelly met him with car keys and some cash. Madge also appeared, and not having heard the news, shot her own brother dead before Kelly could explain. Kelly told her about her horrible mistake, and handed her the car keys and cash. She was going to need them.

In each episode, Kelly always made a big display of not wanting to become involved and help people. He did anyway, and tried to cover up his empathy with cynical quips. The jazz music was continuous, usually in the background but twice each episode as band numbers.

THE AWL BIZ: PART 2

by Dale Speirs

[Part 1 appeared in OPUNTIA #71.1D.]

Oil seeps have been known around the world for millennia, and for many tribes made useful waterproofing, ship caulking, and lamp fuel. Drilled wells were first sunk in the Caucasian fields. In North America, the first drilled well was sunk in 1858 in southern Ontario. The following year, a well was drilled in Pennsylvania and touched off a boom in that state.

While browsing through Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org), I stumbled across RALPH GURNEY'S OIL SPECULATION by James Otis, an 1883 novel available as a free download in several formats. After three decades, the Pennsylvania oil boom was still going strong, and this book is an interesting historical document of how things were done then.

The novel begins with two chums meeting in Bradford, Pennsylvania, one of them an engineer in the oil fields. The other was not familiar with the awl biz, as my Oklahoman friends here in Calgary pronounce it, so the author immediately went into a series of infodumps. What was fascinating are the rough-and-ready methods used back then, such as blasting down through the ground instead of drilling, it being faster.

“I am locating some oil-producing lands, in a valley where game is abundant, where the fish prefer an artificial fly to a natural one, and where the moonlighter revels with his harmless-looking but decidedly dangerous nitroglycerine cartridge.”

“What do you mean by moonlighter?” asked Ralph, as he seated himself in the mud-bespattered carriage which George pointed out as his. “A moonlighter is one who shoots an oil well regardless of patent rights or those owning them, save when, by chance, he finds himself gathered in by the strong arm of the law.”

So it wasn't just the Old West that was wild. After a lecture on the history and chemistry of nitroglycerine, George took Ralph for a drive through the scenic countryside of Pennsylvania. He continued his lecture. I am not familiar with the petroleum geology of Pennsylvania but it was obviously different from Alberta, as the oil producers used a different type of production method. They

drilled until they hit sand, which clogged the drills. The accepted method was to then drop a charge of nitroglycerine down the hole and blow it out, thereby releasing the oil from beneath.

The problem was that a corporation had patented the method and enforced its patents with strong-arm men and vexatious litigation. The moonlighters may have been hired for a legitimate well, but they had to sneak in and out lest they tangle with the corporation.

By this time the conversation ceased, owing to Ralph's interest in the scenery around him, and the curious combination of oil-tanks and derricks with which the landscape was profusely dotted. From Bradford to Sawyer the road winds along at the base of the hills through a lovely valley, that seems entirely given over to machinery for the production and storage of oil.

On every hand are the tall, unsightly constructions of timber that form the derricks, looking not unlike enormous spiders, as they stand on the sides of the mountains or in the ravines, while the network of iron pipes, through which the oil is forced by steam-pumps from the wells to Jersey City, are fitting webs for such spiders.

Huge iron tanks, capable of holding from twenty to forty thousand barrels of oil, dot the valley quite as thickly as do the blots of ink on a school-boy's first composition, and form storage places for this strange product of earth, when the supply is greater than the demand.

Everyone in the field is well aware that measuring oil pumped versus oil delivered is a game of approximations. Not for nothing do both producers and pipeline operators each have their own meters on the pipelines to keep each other honest.

For that reason, I was amused to read the following in this novel: *Although Ralph would have preferred to gaze about him in silence, George told him of the Pipe-Line Company, who owned the greater portion of the huge iron receptacles for oil; who also owned the network of iron pipes, through which they forced the oil to the market at a charge of twenty-five cents per barrel. He also told him that this company connected the main line of pipes with each tank owned by the oil producers, supplying a small steam-pump at each connection, and, at stated times, drew off from private tanks the oil.*

He even went into the particulars of the work, explaining how each man could tell exactly the number of barrels the company had taken from his tank by measuring the depth of the oil before and after the drawing-off process.

That last sentence almost qualified this novel as a fantasy. To be fair, most oil companies today are reasonably honest, if only because the taxman is watching them. Especially since the Dippers brought in a carbon tax in Alberta.



Ralph found life in the Pennsylvania oil fields exciting, as well he might. Not quite a combat zone, but perhaps comparable to the coal fields during an ugly union strike. There was always someone trying to put them in jail or kill them. Notwithstanding that, they managed to get in a bit of hunting and fishing, which explains the cover on the book.

BETTY GORDON IN THE LAND OF OIL (1920) by Alice B. Emerson is another novel from www.gutenberg.org Betty Gordon and Bob Henderson are two young people bound for Flame City, Oklahoma, to stay with Gordon's uncle. On the train they saw a couple of sharp-practice men and overheard them planning how to cheat farmers out of their mineral rights.

That telegraphed the main plot of the story, but you will be pleased to learn the men get their comeuppance in the denouement and all ended well. En route to the happy ending there were various alarms and excursions. Real excursions, such as trips to the oil fields where a blowout fire was snuffed by an explosion, as is still done today.

There were pauses for lectures about drillers who ruined oil fields by pumping too fast, which collapsed the pores in the bedrock and left much oil behind. In 1920, few people understood the economics of oil, so there are frequent infodumps.

"Said Betty. "Oh, what a big derrick! How many quarts of oil does that pump in a day, Uncle Dick?"

Mr. Gordon laughed heartily. "Little Miss Tenderfoot!" he teased. "I thought you knew, goosie, that we measured oil by barrels. That well is flowing slightly over five thousand barrels a day. Altogether our wells are now yielding well over fifty thousand barrels of oil a day."

The days of 5,000 bpd wells have long since vanished. World oil production peaked in 2008, and the easy oil is gone. Now the majority of oil comes from tight shale, offshore, or tar sands, which is why we will never see \$10 per barrel oil again.

BWAH HA! HA!: PART 11

by Dale Speirs

[Parts 1 to 10 appeared in OPUNTIA's #371, 372, 378, 388, 391, 393, 397, 409, 422, and 427.]

Beam Me Up, Doctor.

Teleportation devices were nothing new by the time Gene Roddenberry used them in STAR TREK as a means of getting characters in and out of scenes quickly. The 1930 October issue of ASTOUNDING had the story “An Extra Man” by Jackson Gee about a matter transmitter invented by Christopher Drayle. It was an amusing story, although awkwardly told in flashback form as a framing device.

Drayle tried out the machine on his assistant Harry Ferrel. Like many a mad scientist, Drayle was wealthy and worked in a laboratory at his house on Long Island. He found a way of transmitting matter by radio beams to subsidiary labs in Washington and Boston. Ferrel’s wife entered the lab just in time to see her husband turned into a column of smoke and then sucked into the vacuum of the machine. She interrupted the process before Harry can be sent to Boston.

After assorted hysterics, shots fired, and a visit by the police, Drayle managed to complete the transmission of Harry, who was somewhere in limbo and not just figuratively. A mistake was made during all the excitement, and both ancillary labs received a true copy of Harry.

When the two duplicates, or perhaps an original and one duplicate, arrived back at Long Island, Mrs Ferrel was faced with a dilemma. She decided she didn’t mind having two identical husbands. The men, however, were extremely jealous of each other.

Drayle calmed everyone down by distributing cheques for \$50,000 (an incredible sum in the 1930s) if they agreed not to sue him, plus a few crumpled banknotes inside hearty handshakes with the attending police officers to have them file a no-action-taken report back at the station.

The peace didn’t last long once the menage-a-trois got back home. The two men fought to their deaths, leaving Mrs Ferrel as an extremely wealthy widow. The fight wasn’t Drayle’s fault, but the authorities decided to confiscate the machine for everyone’s peace of mind.

“Flash Crowd” (1973) by Larry Niven was a hard-SF story which considered the consequences of universal cheap teleportation booths. Step in a booth and instantly appear somewhere else.

As the title suggests, one of results was the flash crowd, or what we call today the flash mob. If something sensational happened, or even not so sensational, then crowds converged via the nearest teleportation booths. Perhaps a riot ensued, with looters and flames. Perhaps a celebrity couldn’t have a meal in a restaurant without being besieged by unruly fans.

Teleportation would destroy some industries such as urban transit, hotels, and automobile manufacturing. Deserts would be made to bloom by teleporting fresh water. Real estate values would crash, since people could live anywhere and commute to work by stepping into a booth.

What I like about Niven’s work is that he was willing to do the math. Earth spins on its axis and is moving through space. That means a teleportation device has to correct for motion, otherwise the traveler or cargo would materialize in space, mid-atmosphere, or inside bedrock. Altitude differences also mattered. Conservation of energy meant that if you beamed to a mountain top from the valley floor, you would be as hot and flushed as if you had climbed it on foot.

Niven, with or without his collaborator, the late Jerry Pournelle, was one of the best hard-SF authors in the business.

CHALLENGER UNBOUND is a 2015 anthology edited by Michael R. Brush and S.G. Mulholland. The other stories are reviewed in a different column but I moved one here because it is related to the topic of transporter beams.

“The Death Of Challenger” by Steve Lockley used the premise of a disintegrator/re-integrator machine from a previous story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (see OPUNTIA #701.B, page 12). This was a premonition of matter transmitters, although the atomized people were not moved from one place to another but simply stored in a memory bank.

Lockley considered the machine as a cure for old age and terminal disease. Challenger noted two possible uses for the disintegrator machine. One was to hold dying people in electronic storage until a cure could be found. The other was to edit their stored bodies to eliminate medical problems. Those abilities

did not exist in his day, but presumably an alternative universe was branching off where the thing could be done.

This would seem a logical use for transporter beams in Star Trek. Instead of Dr McCoy waving wands over a patient or doing surgery on them, it would be plausible to pop the patient into a transporter and dissolve tumours or create bone repairs. They missed that one.

Boris And Bela.

Universal Studios recently released 4-movie DVD packs of its older science fiction films teaming Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi. The DVDs are subtitled and are good quality transfers from the original film prints.

One of those movies is THE INVISIBLE RAY (1936), screenplay by John Colton. Karloff is Dr Janos Rukh, a mad scientist resident in a castle in the Carpathian Mountains. The establishing shot in the opening scene showed his castle has two astronomical observatories. Despite the thunder, lightning, and rain, Rukh was using his telescope, with clear skies all the way out to Andromeda Galaxy.

He welcomed a party of scientists and explorers, ready to show them his discovery. Dr Benet was among them, played by Lugosi. Other residents of the castle included his young wife Diana, young enough to be his daughter, and his mother, who could be his granny. He accidentally blinded his mother during his experiments years ago, and had become a mama’s boy consumed with guilt.

His gadget was a device that fitted onto the telescope and which could observe Andromeda close up. It was powered by an assortment of Jacob ladders, Tesla coils, spark interrupters, and whatever else the movie studio electricians had lying around the props warehouse that could produce dazzles of light.

The gadget somehow was able to view the light beam looking back at Earth from Andromeda. A neat trick if you can do it. Rukh says that “*Every sound since eternity began still vibrates, recorded somewhere in space.*” The scientific illiteracy of this remark speaks for itself.

Rukh put the display from the gadget onto a large roof screen. He stated that they are about to observe an asteroid strike Africa “*a few thousand million years ago*”.

This implied that the light beam was several gigayears old. The problem is that Andromeda is 2.54 million light years away as we measure it now. I looked up the astronomical data as it was known in 1936, and at that time with that technology, the distance had been measured at 1.5 million light years.

If the light beam was several gigayears old, it would be coming from far, far beyond Andromeda. The only events Rukh could observe on Earth with an Andromeda beam would be the Pleistocene ice ages. Nonetheless the gadget display shows an asteroid hitting Africa all those gigayears ago.

The SFX are not bad for 1936. Earth was shown as it is today, but if it was really an impact from several gigayears ago, the planet would have looked considerably different. To be fair, continental drift and plate tectonics were unknown then. The bolide impact was a puff of gunpowder smoke on the globe.

Rukh and his friends headed out to Nigeria to find the meteorite. The rationale was that it was made of Radium X, an element unknown on Earth. The financiers of the expedition spent their time hunting for sport while Rukh was searching for the meteorite. The wife of one of them bags several rhinoceros, remarking that they are such nasty-tempered beasts that it was a pleasure to dispose of them.

Rukh, to his misfortune, found the meteorite. He took a sample to power a ray gun that he brought along. It crumbled objects into dust or sludge, depending on how much moisture they contain. That night during darkness, he discovered he was glowing with an internal light. He petted his dog and it died. Thus he learned he was deadly to others.

Diana showed up at his field camp, but Rukh didn’t want her to see his condition and sent her away. Everyone else out there in the Nigerian jungle was dripping with sweat and in rumpled clothes, but her makeup and clothes were fresh as a daisy. Maybe it wasn’t her husband who was the weird one.

Benet made an antidote for Rukh after he gave him calculations to do the chemistry. The antidote must be taken at regular intervals each day. Otherwise Rukh’s condition will return and eventually kill him. Rukh said he determined the atomic structure of Radium X out at the field camp. Really? Then and now, analysis of subatomic structure is done with big-iron devices in advanced laboratories, not in a jungle camp with a few test tubes, an Erlenmeyer flask, and a Geiger counter.

Everyone else, including Diana, went to Paris, separately or in bunches. Rukh went back to his castle in the Carpathians. Using a ray gun with low power on his mother, he cured her blindness. From there, he went to Paris, where Benet had built a similar ray gun and was running a clinic to cure blindness.

Rukh faked his death, as a result of which Diana quickly remarried a handsome young supporting actor. Rukh still had the deadly touch from Radium X, so he went about killing off members of the expedition one by one, saving Diana for last. After each death, he used his ray gun to dissolve a statue on top of a cathedral across the street from his boarding house room. It was his way of keeping count and gloating.

After the third murder, Benet and the police realize Rukh didn't die. Instead of searching all of Paris, they set a trap to draw him out to a meeting of Radium X researchers. It worked to the extent that Rukh crashed the party and killed Benet. Before other murders could be committed, Rukh's mother chastised him for what he had done. He leaped out a high window and dissolved into ashes on the way down.

The movie was reasonably well plotted, and an effort made to produce a good film. This contrasts with the 1950s monster movies, which regressed into B-movies cranked out by Poverty Row studios.

How Does Your Petri Dish Grow?

Run-amok growth of laboratory specimens is a popular subject for mad scientist stories. The basic fallacy of these is that nothing can grow without a source of nutrients and waste exchange, and never as fast as depicted.

"Chicken Heart", written by Arch Oboler, was a 1937 episode of the old-time radio series LIGHTS OUT. Normally I would insert here a bracketed comment that this and hundreds of other OTR shows are available as free mp3s at www.archive.org. Unfortunately the original episode has vanished. What survives on www.archive.org is a very condensed ten-minute version from an LP record that Oboler issued in 1962, which is the one in circulation.

The short version opened full blast as the crisis became known. The chicken heart had been treated with a miracle substance and was now growing out of control, absorbing organic matter and defying the square-cube law. It was not an amorphous mass of tissue but a beating heart, whose pounding dominated the

background sounds. As the story began, the chicken heart had burst out of the laboratory and was sprawling into the corridor.

The mad scientist whose fault it was told panic-stricken officials that the chicken heart was doubling in size every thirty hours. The narrative sped up. First the building was shattered, then the heart covered the city. Army artillery failed. The scientist gave up in despair and fled with a pilot in a small aircraft.

As it flew over the chicken heart, now covering the entire state, the airplane experienced engine trouble and spiraled down into the heart. Its occupants screamed in terror as it splatted into the heart. End of story.

2000 PLUS was an early old-time radio science fiction series that ran from 1950 to 1952. The stories were set in the far future, the year 2000 plus, which is our present day. (This and other OTR series are available as free mp3s from www.otrrlibrary.org.) "The Insect" was a 1950 episode, no writer credited. It begins with Dr George Martin going off on a business trip to a university in search of funding for his experiments in gigantism.

He had, for example, produced a housefly the size of a pack of cigarettes. His laboratory was part of his house, and he asked his wife if she would feed the critters while he was away. She shuddered and refused, not wanting to go near them and not having been inside the laboratory for quite some time. Off he went then.

Bill the delivery boy from the grocery store arrived. He wanted to see the wondrous creatures, and she reluctantly let him in. They were promptly trapped by a giant winged creature which got in behind them and blocked their escape. The rest of the episode alternated between them screaming in terror and stumbling about the laboratory trying to escape, and Martin politely chatting with a university executive about possible funding.

Martin returned home to find chaos, but he opened a window and let the creature fly out. His wife had been reduced to a quivering mass. He told her and Bill that the giant creature was a moth, which has no mouthparts and was simply fluttering about trying to escape. It would only survive a few hours in the daylight.

He jovially informed her that her terror was for nothing, rather cold-blooded of him considering their emotional state. It seems to me that would be grounds for

divorce, that of mental cruelty. This explains why so few mad scientists have wives present. Of course, she hadn't yet presented him with a beautiful daughter for Bill the delivery boy to romance, but you can't have everything.

Another 1950 episode of 2000 PLUS that dealt with gigantism was "The Giant Walks", written by Julian Schneider. Dr Elsworth was the resident mad scientist, working on a formula to produce gigantism. He had produced a rat the size of a large dog, which had enhanced intelligence and speed. Next up will be a race of humans 30 feet tall, with which to rule the world, bwah ha! ha!

Using trickery, he gulled Barstow, one of his assistants, into being the first human to be treated. "*About 500 cc should do it*", says Elsworth. Must be one heck of a syringe. That is a half-litre, or about a pint for my American friends. The experiment worked. The extra mass was satisfactorily explained by large amounts of food eaten by Barstow during the slow process. One still wonders about the square-cube law, and how such a giant could walk, much less run.

Barstow's intelligence was boosted, but there was a question as to whether he will obey orders. Elsworth was already planning to produce more giants under his control, with which to rule the world. The problem was that he can't control the one he already has. Then the giant rat got loose and killed him.

It was the story of Frankenstein's monster all over again. Not the movie version that everyone knows, the big guy lurching about grunting "Aaargh!", but the original book version that few have read. The literary monster was well-spoken and athletic, but couldn't get anyone to listen to him and had to flee for his life.

Barstow had that problem. The police broadcast a warning to all cars: "*Watch out for a man 30 feet high. May be dangerous.*" They couldn't do much against him. Then the giant suddenly vanished. It was discovered that without constant growth injections, the bones of both the rat and Barstow turn into cartilage. They collapsed back down to normal size. Barstow should have been turned into a giant blob of flesh but the surplus mass was something to hide behind a curtain. He recovered to a normal life, and then burned all of Elsworth's papers, making a speech as he does so about how there are certain things man was never meant to know.

"Green Plague" was a 1952 episode of THE MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER, an old-time radio series for which all the episodes were written by Robert A. Arthur and David Kogan. The cast is a bit of a switch, as the handsome young man

was the mad scientist, while his fiancée's father, an elderly professor, was more the hero. The scientist was obsessed developing a better fertilizer for plants. He succeeded with his Formula 87, which rushed tomato seeds to fully mature fruiting plants in a day. The formula turned out to be more than a fertilizer. It mutated pollen and converted other plants into superplants. They overgrew the experimental plots and keep going, soon covering the county, then out to the world.

The story ended with the main cast screaming in terror as the growth overwhelmed them. Nobody thought to spray herbicide. They just stood there and let the greenery swamp them. If it weren't for all the innocent victims, I would have said this was another case of natural selection in action.

As someone who is a professional horticulturist with a BSc in the subject, I found the premise not believable. All that plant growth, enough to bury cities in a day, needs nutrients. No soil could support such growth, and the energetics of plants growing to maturity overnight are simply not possible with any miracle ingredient. Suspension of disbelief is all very well, but after a certain point it doesn't work.

"The Attack Of The Giant Baby" by Kit Reed (1976 January, MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SF) is a humorous parody of all those OTR shows, pulp magazines, and B-movies that featured giant somethings enlarged by chemicals or radiation.

In this instance, Dr Jonas Freiburg had to babysit his infant son Leonard while working in the laboratory. The tot picked up some spilled bacterial culture off the floor and, like any other baby, ate it. The father finished up his work and took his son to the park. The kid was growing in size, not noticeably at first but then exponentially. He reached the proportion of a house. The square-cube law apparently did not affect the kid, otherwise he would be immobile and then suffocate because his lungs couldn't move in the mass of flesh.

Jonas rushed back to the laboratory to find a cure but was unsuccessful. The baby was fed with a semitrailer load of bread. He needed a diaper change, which was dealt with by fire trucks running every hose they had. From there he crawled into the river and thence floated out to sea, bigger than an oil tanker. The final line of the story is: *Coming soon: The Attack Of The Giant Toddler.*

That would be funny, except Disney made it into a movie.

FOOD COZIES: PART 3

by Dale Speirs

[Parts 1 and 2 appeared in OPUNTIA's #432 and 433.]

Cozy mysteries are Miss Marple style novels, very popular. Most are worth reading once if you like mysteries, although it is doubtful any of them will stand the test of time. Like zines and Websites, there are numerous specialized cozies.

I have learned from experience to read these novels on a full stomach. Recipes are generally included, if not at the back of the book, then in between chapters or sometimes integrated into the text. It can be very dangerous to read these books if you have an appetite.

Chocolate.

JoAnna Carl (pseudonym of Eve K. Sandstrom) has a lengthy cozy series set in the resort town of Warner Pier, on the shores of Lake Michigan. The protagonist is Lee McKinney, who escaped the big city and now worked for her Aunt Nettie, a Dutch immigrant who owned the TenHuis Chocolate. The murder rate in the village soared after McKinney moved there. One hopes the Michigan State Police have her on a watch list.

THE CHOCOLATE MOUSE TRAP (2005) began with a thousand chocolate mice. McKinney had to tolerate an annoying party planner Julie Singletree, who kept sending inspirational emails to everyone on her list, but who also ordered chocolates by the thousands for her events and was McKinney's best customer. Singletree didn't make it past the first chapter. Someone broke into her apartment, snapped her neck, and stole her computer.

Singletree's online acquaintances were having computer problems. A burglar was breaking in and erasing the hard drives. More than that soon developed, as a second victim had her life deleted. The ending was a giveaway when the murderer sent an obvious fake email inviting McKinney to come and look at some supposed evidence in the case.

The killer was feuding with his family over what was to be done with Granny's land holdings after her death. She was still alive, but it is always wise to plan ahead, especially if you're a greedy heir who wants to get the jump on his cousins. He had inadvertently groused in an email to Singletree that he would

like to kill his grandmother. She replied by sending him an inspirational poem, and as per usual, copied it to her friends without pruning the comments thread.

McKinney and her friends automatically deleted Singletree's inspirational emails without bothering to read them, much less scroll down the comment thread. The killer couldn't know that for certain, and because his grouch was at the bottom of the scroll, he couldn't take chances.

This is one of the rare cozies that acknowledged personal computers and emails. Even now, in 2019 as I type this, few cozies use computers or smartphones as plot movers.

THE CHOCOLATE PIRATE PLOT (2010) happened during a summer in which a certain movie about pirates was a box office success. Warner Pier took it to its heart, for what better tie-in with big lake holiday excitement.

TenHuis Chocolate was selling miniature treasure chests filled with gold-foil wrapped chocolate coins. They could barely keep up with the demand. Set up in their display window was a large centerpiece, a pirate ship made of milk chocolate with sails of white chocolate. The Jolly Roger was dark chocolate with the skull and bones painted in white chocolate.

There was a band of cosplayers roaming the waters in a motorboat, boarding other boats at random and putting on a show while dressed as masked pirates. No one knew who they were, but it was all in good fun. Even more excitement develops when Marco Spear, the star of a pirate movie, came to the village to pick up a new yacht he had ordered from a local shipyard.

The fun suddenly stopped when a body washed ashore, one of the costumed pirates. Another man went missing in the water at the same time, and his girlfriend was a suspect, not necessarily as a murderer but as an accessory. The missing man may have faked his death to get away from some nasty people.

The plot complicated itself, interspersed between each chapter with one-page factoids about the history of chocolate. The pirates turned out to be a kidnapping gang, waiting for the opportunity to snatch Spear and hold him for \$20 million ransom. It all ended with the usual alarms and excursions, but justice was served. Best of all, Spear expressed his gratitude at being rescued by a standing order to ship him a pound of chocolates once a month.

THE CHOCOLATE CASTLE CLUE (2011) began with Lee McKinney Woodyard, as she now was by marriage, cleaning out a storage space. She discovered a trophy that Aunt Nettie had won in her younger days with a local singing group the Pier-O-Ettes. They had won it at the Castle Ballroom competition, the same night the owner of the dance hall was found shot dead.

The Pier-O-Ettes never performed again. The death was suicide, accident, or murder, depending on who was talking, and was never properly explained. Woodyard being who she was, she stirred up a novel's worth of action, including a present-day murder.

By an incredible coincidence, of the sort common to cozies, the Pier-O-Ettes had revived their group and were meeting at Aunt Nettie's house. Woodyard brought the trophy over and set off a chain reaction. Not her fault, of course, especially when another murder is done.

Everyone had something to hide from their past, and all were behaving suspiciously in the present. The guilty fled when no one pursued, and had little interest in chocolate trivia dispensed throughout the book.

The killer was caught. The final chapter was an elaborate recapitulation of events that resulted in the Castle Ballroom death all those years ago. The widow and the murderer were at daggers drawn ever since, blackmailing each other in a Mexican standoff. The unearthing of the trophy tripped a switch because it had been a blunt instrument back then. The rest of the story was a complicated mess. A simpler plot line would have made this a better novel.



DEATH OF A CHOCOHOLIC (2014) by Lee Hollis (pseudonym of siblings Rick Copp and Holly Simason) is a novel in a cozy series about Hayley Powell of Bar Harbor, Maine. She was a food critic for the local newspaper and a murder magnet. Her Valentine's Day date was a disaster, and she consoled herself with a box of made-to-order chocolates from chocolatier Bessie Winthrop. The plus-sized woman was found dead in her house by Powell, apparently from a heart attack.

After a pause for recipes of Mexican Beer Margaritas and Spicy Mole Sauce, the investigation began. By Powell, not the police, as the medical examiner was a twit and didn't do an autopsy. At about the same time, the crime reporter for the newspaper went on vacation. Powell was assigned his duties on top of hers. She did get extra pay, and with her record as a Marple, she certainly could do as good of a job. Much excitement ensued and many alarums, including shots fired at Powell.

Winthrop was not a nice person, and had many enemies for many reasons. The worst one, as it transpired, was an illegitimate daughter given up at birth and who had returned to seek revenge. Once things had cooled down and the murderer taken away, it was time for a Long-Day Bourbon Cocktail and Bessie's Bonbons.



DEATH IS LIKE A BOX OF CHOCOLATES (2014) by Kathy Aarons was the first novel in a food cozy series set in West Riverdale, Maryland. The village was named after the River family, still prominent and wealthy. Make a note of that, for it will matter in the second novel. Chocolates and Chapters is a combined chocolate shop and bookstore, operated by Michelle Serrano and Erica Russell respectively. Two Miss Marples for the price of one.

The village was hosting the Great Fudge Cook-Off, with Serrano helping out. Denise Coburn had a photography studio next door to the chocolate shop. She didn't make it past Chapter 4, when Serrano found her dead with a box of

chocolates and foam dribbling from her mouth. The poison wasn't good advertising for the chocolate shop, as was evident from declining sales once the word got out. Serrano was forced into the amateur detective business. Failure to find the true culprit would leave her with a dead store, not just a dead body.

And so to dragging out the stories and events the local folk preferred to stay forgotten. Coburn had taken an incriminating photo proving an adulterous affair, which cost her life. Then a second murder revealed some political connections, which soon resulted in a vacancy at the mayor's office.

The usual alarums of course, such as a hit-and-run attempt on Serrano and the standard held-at-gunpoint scenario with the murderer. She took care of that by slinging hot fudge into the killer's face. For once, a cozy heroine was able to look after herself instead of being rescued at the last second by police. There were two different murderers, which complicated the plot.

The Fudge Cook-Off was a success, and from there to the recipes appendix: Lavender Truffle and Applewood Bacon Truffle. Why anyone would ruin perfectly good bacon by embedding it into chocolate is beyond me.

TRUFFLED TO DEATH (2015) was the second novel in the series. This time around Erica Russell was the one in the spotlight. Chocolates and Chapters hosted a wine and chocolate reception for a new museum display of ancient Mayan pottery, curated by Prof. Addison Moody, an old friend of Russell.

Once again, the first victim didn't get past Chapter 4, as Moody was abruptly sent on into the next world. The antiquities were then stolen, and Russell was the lightning rod who attracted all the blame.

Moody was not without sin. He had been accused of sexual harassment by co-eds and was thought to be trafficking in antiquities. He offended the wrong people in Central America, who in turn offended each other and settled their differences in a shootout in West Riverdale.

As to why they had come to town, it was not a coincidence that many of the gunmen and smugglers had 'Rio' in their Spanish names. They were a collateral branch of the Rivers of Maryland. It happens in the best of families. The epilogue couldn't tie off all the loose threads because so many of them were dangling into Central America.

The recipes appendix began with Bourbon and Applewood Smoked Salt Truffles. None of the ingredients suggested smoked applewood but there was 1 ounce of bourbon per 15 pieces. I'm a teetotaler myself.



A different approach to chocolate Marpleing was taken by a cozy series written by Colette London (pseudonym of Lisa Plumley). It was about Hayden Mundy Moore, a freelance chocolatier who traveled from one city to the next advising client stores and chocolate manufacturers.

This gave her the advantage of spreading the murders across the world. City police would not notice one or two murders more or less in their statistics, as opposed to her decimating a rural village where even the dullest Deppity Dawg would become suspicious about an endless string of murders with the same busybody woman always discovering the body.

The first novel in this series was CRIMINAL CONNECTIONS (2015). Moore had arrived in San Francisco to provide advice to Maison Lemaitre, a chocolate-themed resort spa. One of its employees died of an apparent heart attack, but Moore wondered if there was poison or if the victim was the intended target.

The Lemaitre family were in an internal power struggle. They were also marketing some products that were outright health hazards. The murderer was finally revealed to be an industrial spy stealing secrets about the Lemaitre chocolate recipes and procedures. The chocolate business was nastier than one might think. I wonder if Purdy's ever had this sort of trouble?

DANGEROUSLY DARK (2015) was the sequel. Hayden Mundy Moore arrived in Portland, Oregon, which little knew what was to afflict it. Moore was in town for the engagement party of a friend, Carissa Jenkins. Chocolate-themed, of course.

The would-be groom Declan Murphy was going to host a Chocolate After Dark tour but he didn't make it past the first chapter. Jenkins seemed to have mixed feelings about Murphy, arising from a dispute between them about a new device to process chocolate. Murphy's financial condition was shaky, not a good way to begin a marriage.

Various alarms and excursions followed, including accidents that might not have been accidents. The excursions weren't just figurative, as the Chocolate After Dark tours brought with them some too-exciting moments, not all of them related to the chocolate samples and liqueurs.

Eventually Moore scraped up enough info to identify the murderer as someone who had done business with Murphy and not favourably. The chocolate flowed like blood, or it might have been the blood flowed like chocolate. By now the reader will begin to develop a preference for jujubes.

THE SEMI-SWEET HEREAFTER (2016) sent Hayden Mundy Moore to London, England, where her expertise as a consulting chocolatier was needed. It also helped spread the death toll.

Moore was advising chocolate shop owner Phoebe Wright, and was staying in Phoebe's guest house. Jeremy Wright, ex-husband of Phoebe, had a deal to use the kitchen for filming his cooking show. Moore found him dead there, his head bashed in with a chocolate grinder. And so the Marpleing began.

There were suspects, besides Moore herself, such as a business rival, an agent, and a recently dismissed assistant. Jeremy, as befitted the standard cozy murder victim, was not a nice man and was heartily disliked by all who knew him. He was vain, egotistical, and had a hot temper. He was one of the people where the mystery is not who killed him but how it was that he managed to live as long as he did.

Moore had to babysit Phoebe, who was an emotional mess, not just because of Jeremy's death but for a cooking demonstration she had been scheduled for on television. Phoebe was to demonstrate English cuisine (an oxymoron if ever

there was one). She wanted Moore to design chocolate versions of desserts such as Eton Mess, Victoria Sponge, and Sticky Toffee Pudding. No wonder the British lost their empire.

After all the back stories were worked out by Moore, the police stepped in with the results of their investigation, rendering hers moot. It was the widow who did it. Moore's final confrontation was not the usual held-at-gunpoint scene, for Phoebe was scarpering to a Caribbean island and had to catch her flight at Heathrow. Moore brought her down by planting items in her purse that insured airport security would detain her, by which time the police could catch up.

After that exhausting experience, it was time for the recipes appendix. Items included Double Chocolate Stout Cookies with 6 ounces of Guinness (don't eat and drive), and Strawberry Chocolate Eton Mess, which defies description.

DEAD AND GANACHE (2017) spread the horror across La Manche when Hayden Mundy Moore visited the Brittany region of France. Her mentor Philippe Vetault was celebrating the merger of his shop La Maison des Petits Bonheurs with the Poyet Chocolaterie, and the marriage of his daughter Nathalie to Fabrice Poyet, the youngest son of that house. At the same time there was a retirement party for Philippe, but alas, he did not survive to its end.

Lots of clues for the gendarmes and Miss Marple, pardon me, Moore. There had been rivalries at several levels between the suspects and the defunct. Romantic liaisons, business dealings, and social snobbery abounded. As per usual in cozies, much of the middle novel was devoted to the back stories, the only difference being that French words were sprinkled on every page.

The Vetault chocolate shop needed help, so Moore pitched in and churned out candies by the tray load. In lieu of infodumps, she explained bits of chocolate lore to anyone who wandered into the kitchen. Her chocolates were good enough that she used them as bribes for small favours during her Marpleing.

A local jam maker then became the second murder victim. From there, a rush to judgement, or at least the edge of a cliff where Moore barely survived an encounter with the murderer, who might have become Philippe's son-in-law. The wedding and the merger were called off. The recipes appendix was an assortment of chocolate pastry recipes, guaranteed to put weight on you.

THE PEPPERMINT MOCHA MURDER (2018) had Hayden Mundy Moore taking a Christmas vacation in snowy Sproutes, Massachusetts. It was the village where her agent Travis Turner grew up. He should have known better. His friend Albany Sullivan, who also grew up there, was staging a musical “Christmas In Crazytown”, based on her roman-a-clef novel about her childhood.

The murder victim was Melissa Balthasar, the producer of the musical. She died in Chapter 1 shortly after Moore arrived in Sproutes. Everyone was staying, or departed in Balthasar’s case, in the same bed-and-breakfast. There were three other women in the house who looked like Balthasar, leading to the question as to whether she was the intended target.

Moore hardly had time for a double-chocolate chocolate-chip muffin before starting her investigation. “When life hands you two options, I always say, go with chocolate.” Words to live by in thought and deed. Turner had bacon and eggs, but he was just a supporting character. Repeatedly Moore said she should really get around to reading Sullivan’s novel for clues. This leads the reader to suspect that if she had done so in Chapter 1, then the story would have concluded in Chapter 2.

The middle of the book alternates between sleuthing out the back stories and dispensing cooking tips for preparing chocolate goodies. The whole Sullivan family was either corrupt, addicted to drugs or alcohol, or up to no good. They were the very epitome of white trash.

The killer was one of them, but when he blabbed his confession, he took out the rest of his family on other charges. Imagine a cross between the Jukes and Gambino families. And so to the recipes, all of which had names beginning with Peppermint Mocha.



SEEN IN THE LITERATURE

Moysiuk, J., and J.B. Caron (2019) **Burgess Shale fossils shed light on the agnostid problem.** PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON 286B:doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2018.2314

[The Cambrian era was 542 to 488 megayears ago, when life was only in the oceans but was suddenly diversifying into a huge number of species.]

Authors’ abstract: *Agnostids (agnostinids and eodiscinids) are a widespread and biostratigraphically important group of Cambro-Ordovician euarthropods whose evolutionary affinities have been highly controversial. Their dumbbell-shaped calcified tergum was traditionally suggested to unite them with trilobites, but agnostinids have alternatively been interpreted as stem crustaceans, based on Orsten larval material from the Cambrian of Sweden.*

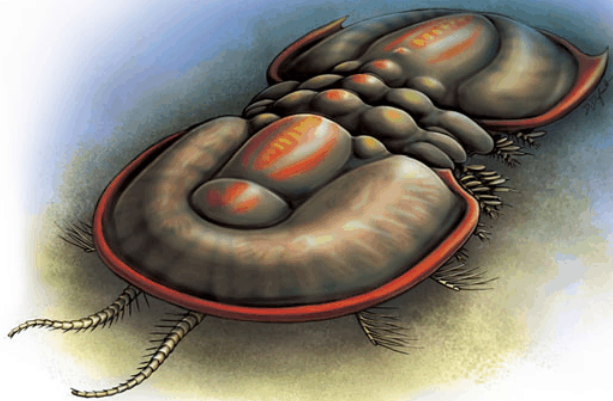
We describe exceptionally preserved soft tissues from mature individuals of the agnostinids Peronopsis and Ptychagnostus from the middle Cambrian (Wuliuan Stage) Burgess Shale (Walcott Quarry and Marble Canyon, British Columbia, Canada), facilitating the testing of alternative hypotheses.

The digestive tract includes conspicuous ramifying cephalic diverticulae. The cephalon carries one pair of elongate spinous antennules projecting to the front, two pairs of appendages with distally setose, oar-like exopods, and three pairs of presumably biramous appendages with endopods sporting club-shaped exites. The trunk bears five appendage pairs, at least the first two of which are similar to the posteriormost cephalic pairs.

The combined evidence supports a nektobenthic and detritivorous lifestyle for agnostinids. A head with six appendiferous segments contrasts strikingly with the four known in trilobites and five typical of mandibulates. Agnostinids are retrieved as the sister group to polymeroid trilobites in our phylogeny, implying that crustacean-like morphologies evolved homoplastically. This result highlights the variability in segmental composition of the arthropodan head.

In modern deep-water environments, small benthic detritivorous crustaceans, such as ostracods and copepods, are among the most abundant organisms. The similar abundance of agnostinids in relatively deep-water palaeoenvironments is consistent with a comparable mode of life. In addition to feeding on detritus, agnostinids may have taken advantage of larger food items when available.

Extensively ramifying digestive diverticulae like those in agnostinids have been associated with sporadic, opportunistic feeding habits in extant and fossil marine euarthropods, as they can serve as storage organs which enable engorgement on ephemeral food sources. This could more speculatively align with observations of agnostinids clustering around putative carcasses or moult remains of other organisms at the Burgess Shale and other sites, potentially to feed opportunistically on carrion or encrusting microbial films.



Peronopsis species
[image from the
above paper]

Mazrouei, S., et al (2019) **Earth and Moon impact flux increased at the end of the Paleozoic.** SCIENCE 363:253-257

[650 megayears ago was the Neoproterozoic era, when Earth life was still unicellular and oceanic. 290 megayears ago was the Permian era, when land life had advanced to the reptile stage.]

Authors’ abstract: *The rate at which impacts produce craters on the Moon is used to calibrate ages in planetary science. Earth should also have received similar numbers of impacts, but many craters have been hidden by erosion, ice sheets, and so on. ... the impact rate increased within the past ~500 million years, a conclusion strengthened by an analysis of known impact craters on Earth.*

Crater size distributions are the same on Earth and the Moon over this period, implying that terrestrial erosion affects all craters equally, regardless of their size.

The terrestrial impact crater record is commonly assumed to be biased, with erosion thought to eliminate older craters, even on stable terrains. Given that the same projectile population strikes Earth and the Moon, terrestrial selection effects can be quantified by using a method to date lunar craters with diameters greater than 10 kilometers and younger than 1 billion years.

We found that the impact rate increased by a factor of 2.6 about 290 million years ago. The terrestrial crater record shows similar results, suggesting that the deficit of large terrestrial craters between 300 million and 650 million years ago relative to more recent times stems from a lower impact flux, not preservation bias. The almost complete absence of terrestrial craters older than 650 million years may indicate a massive global-scale erosion event near that time.

WORLD WIDE PARTY ON JUNE 21

Founded by Benoit Girard (Quebec) and Franz Miklis (Austria) in 1994, the World Wide Party is held on June 21st every year. 2019 will be the 26th year of the WWP. Mark your calendars now!

At 21h00 local time, everyone is invited to raise a glass and toast fellow members of zinedom around the world. It is important to have it exactly at 21h00 your time. The idea is to get a wave of fellowship circling the planet. Rescheduling it to a club meeting or more convenient time negates the idea of a wave of celebration by SF fans and zinesters circling the globe.

At 21h00, face to the east and salute those who have already celebrated. Then face north, then south, and toast those in your time zone who are celebrating as you do. Finally, face west and raise a glass to those who will celebrate WWP in the next hour.

Raise a glass, publish a one-shot zine, have a party, or do a mail art project for the WWP. Let me know how you celebrated the day.

CALGARY BY NIGHT
photo by Dale Speirs

I took this photo January 16 looking south at the downtown core from the Bow River escarpment. The river is the dark brown stripe across the bottom of the photo and forms the northern border of the core. About -15°C at the time, with ice fog over the city, which is why the photo is slightly blurred.



ECLIPSE HUNTING

by Dale Speirs

[Previous OPUNTIA eclipse articles were as follow: general - #291, lunar - #16.5, #45.5, #323, solar - #19.5, #288, #388]

On January 20, from 20h00 to midnight, there was a total lunar eclipse visible from Calgary. As is typical of our locality, clouds usually move in just before any astronomical event begins, then move out after it is over. This time it was ice fog, although not as dense as in the photo on the previous page.



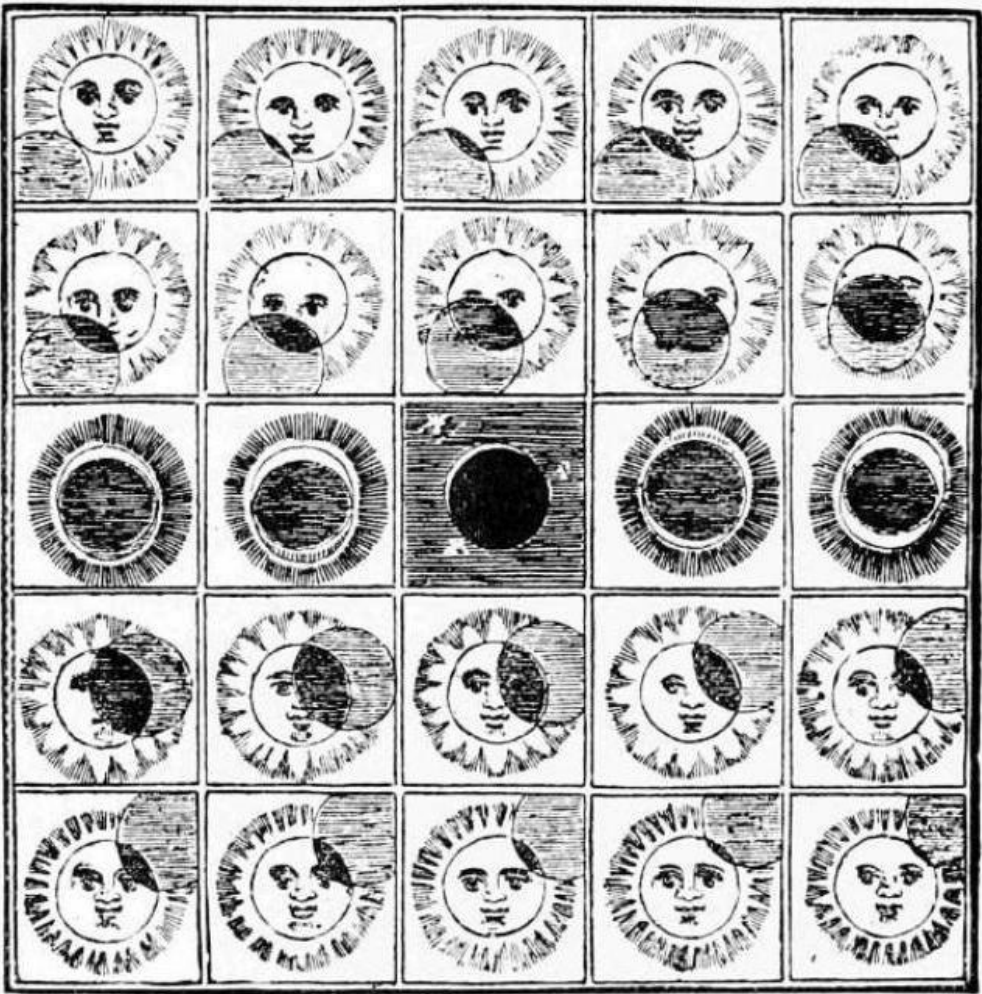
I had a good naked-eye view of the eclipse, but my photography was a failure because the ice crystals high up in the atmosphere blurred the photos during the long exposures.

This is the only halfway decent photo I got, taken at 21h33 just before totality when the bright uneclipsed area produced the diamond ring effect.

One thing that struck me as I observed the Moon during the totality was that the red “blood Moon” effect seemed to vibrate along the leading edge of the Moon. This may have been atmospheric caused by the ice fog, or perhaps it was the fluctuation of the red light through Earth’s atmosphere onto the Moon.

As I aimed my camera up high, a row of three snowshoe hares traveling abreast came hippity-hopping down the street toward my position. I didn’t notice them at first and by the time I did, they had scattered in different directions so I missed that photo as well. Just one of those nights when almost everything went wrong.

A while back I was browsing through Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org) using their random picks feature when I came across the following. I’ll wedge this in here. It was an account of a 1724 solar eclipse in England. The last paragraph is hilarious.



PARKER’S LONDON NEWS, for Monday, May 4th, 1724.

‘Of the Eclipse of the Sun which will happen in the Afternoon on Monday, the 11th of this inst. May 1724. ‘The Sun, the glorious Lamp of the Universe, being a large round Body of Light, is fixt in the Centre of the Creation; so that all parts thereof might be partakers of his vivifying Rays, which otherwise would be shut up in perpetual Darkness.

'The Earth is a dark round Ball, which turneth round on its own Axis, from West to East, once in twenty-four Hours Time, causing thereby Day and Night, also at the same Time, the Earth with the Moon, going round in its Orbit in 365 Days and some Hours, constituting thereby the true Length of our Year.'

'The Moon is likewise a round dark Ball, void of Light, and circumvolveth the Earth once a Month; so that whenever she passeth in her Orbit, in a direct line between the Sun and Earth, she Eclipses the Earth not the Sun, by depriving us of a Sight thereof; And whenever the Earth happens to be between the Sun and Moon, at such times the Earth obstructs the Light of the Sun from the Moon, and then the Moon is Eclipsed by the dark Body of the Earth.'

'Now to prevent any Consternation, which People, through Ignorance may fall under, by means of that great Eclipse which is now approaching; at which time it will be so dark, that the stars, (if the Air be clear) will be seen; and the Planets Mars, Venus, and the seldom to be seen Mercury, will appear a little above the Sun, towards the South; also Venus a little higher to the Left of Mercury, and Mars in the S.S.W. Parts of the Heavens; The several Appearances of this Eclipse will be according to the Types before inserted.'

'The beginning of this Eclipse, according to the nicest Computation of the most Judicious, will happen at 39 Minutes past 5 in the Afternoon when the Limb of the Moon will just touch the Sun's Limb ... At 44 Minutes after 5 it will be enter'd the disk, and so much darkened as the 2d Scheme. At 48 Minutes past 5 as the 3d denotes. At 53 Minutes past 5 as the 4th shews. At 58 Minutes after 5, as the 5th represents. At 3 Minutes past 6, as in the 6th Scheme. At 7 Minutes after 6, as in the 7th. At 12 Minutes past 6, as is shewn by the 8th Figure. At 17 Minutes past 6, as the 10th Figure shews. At 26 Minutes past 6, as the next succeeding Scheme denotes ...

At 31 Minutes after 6, so much of the Sun's Body will be darkened, as the 12th represents: and at 36 past 6, will be the greatest darkness, when only a small thread of Light will be seen at London, on the upper part of the Sun as the 13th Scheme informs; but to all the Southern parts of the Kingdom, it will be totally darkened.

'After this the Sun will begin to shew its Light, which will appear first on the lower part of that Glorious Body; and the darkness will gradually lessen, as the several Figures represent, till the Sun's Body be perfectly clear of the Shadow, which will be at 27 Minutes past 7 a-clock that Afternoon.'

This description is reprinted, together with the woodcut, in the same paper for May 8th, and to it is added the following:

'Directions for the better viewing the Eclipse that will happen on Monday next'; 'Take a Piece of Common window Glass and hold it over a Candle, so that the Flame of the Candle may make it black, through which look upon the Sun, and you will behold the Eclipse without Danger to the Eyes.'

Or thus

Take a Piece of thick writing Paper, and prick a hole in it with a fine Needle, through which the Eclipse may be seen.'

The same paper (May 8th, 1724) contains some advertisements about the eclipse, which seems to have been for the moment the absorbing topic, and was apparently made the vehicle for advertising the shops of different tradesmen. The notices were published ostensibly 'to lessen the consternation of ignorant people,' but it is evident the advertisers had an eye to business.

The cut and description are again reprinted in the number for May 11th, where, amongst other items of news, is the following: 'His Royal Highness went last Monday to Richmond, as did also the Right Hon. the Lord Chancellor, Judge Fortescue, and other persons of note; some of the Judges went to Hampton Court, and other gentlemen of Learning and Curiosity to more distant places, to make their Observations, as 'tis said, upon the great Eclipse of the Sun that happen'd in the Evening, and exactly answered the Calculations made of it by our Astronomers.'

In the number for May 18th are accounts of how the eclipse was observed in the country. It is stated: 'We are advised from the Isle of Wight that the Eclipse on the 11th instant, which was Total, and caused very great Consternation there lasted about a Minute and a half; but that the chief sufferers thereby were the gentry of that Island, who by the great concourse of Strangers to their Houses, had but very little French Claret left upon their hands; But the comfort is, they have frequent opportunities of running some more.'