

WOOF

79th Worldcon
December 2021



WOOF 46

The 2021 distribution of the **Worldcon Order of Faneditors**
DisCon III edition, collated during the final week of December

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Nineteen Seventy-Six

by Rich Lynch

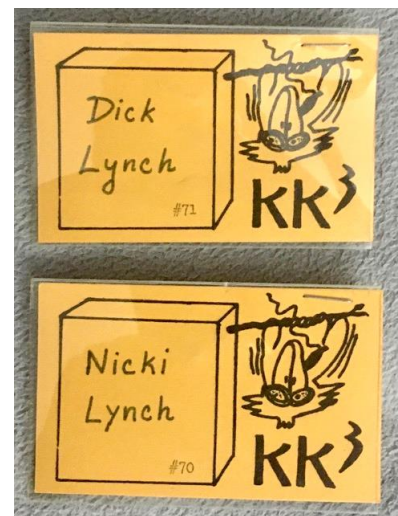
I remember the year 1976 while not exactly like the back of my hand, as the saying goes, but still well enough where I can write a short essay about it. It was the year that I became a science fiction fan.

Before that I and my wife Nicki could probably more accurately be described as science fiction enthusiasts. I'm not going to speak for her, but my love of the genre dates back to the late 1950s when the TV shows *The Twilight Zone* and *Men Into Space* captured my imagination. And soon after that, thanks to the small library in the village where I lived, I discovered science fiction in the written word – the very first science fiction book I read was Arthur C. Clarke's *Islands in the Sky*. By the time I had reached high school and after that college, I had been mentally devouring all the science fiction that I could borrow or buy and my interests had gravitated (no pun intended) toward 'hard' science fiction – the stuff written by such luminaries as Clarke, Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, Larry Niven, Hal Clement, and (in the early part of her career) Andre Norton to name just a few.

I was also starting to collect science fiction digest magazines by then, though I didn't get serious about it until I had started my professional career in the early 1970s. There was a used bookstore in Chattanooga, where Nicki and I had relocated after the end of my college days, which had an awesome stock of back issue science fiction magazines going way back into the 1950s. And I also hit the literary jackpot when I bought, at an estate sale, a veritable treasure trove of even older science fiction digests including issues of *Astounding* from the 1940s and the very first issues of *Galaxy* and *F&SF*. There were some incredibly good covers for these issues, and the artists became familiar names to me. So it came as a pleasant surprise, in the Spring of 1975, when I read in the new issue of *Analog* that one of them – Frank Kelly Freas – was going to be the Guest of Honor at a science fiction convention in Nashville called 'Kubla Khan'. And I also saw that the convention's Toastmaster was Andrew Offutt, whose story "Population Implosion" had very much impressed me when I had read it a few months earlier. Nicki was similarly intrigued so we decided to attend.

That didn't make us science fiction fans, though. Nicki and I kept mostly to ourselves and went to much of the programming, but we didn't even once visit the convention's hospitality suite. At that point we were still on the outside looking in, as far as organized fandom went back then. In the end, it was an interesting enough event where we didn't rule out going to another such convention. Which, I guess, we might or might not have done depending on how life was treating us. But fate, of sorts, intervened first. His name was Irvin Koch.

Irvin also lived in Chattanooga, and when he saw that we did too he told us that he was in the process of forming a fan club. Which was actually going to be a fan community, as he told us he was also going to start a new science fiction convention in Chattanooga. That very first Chattacon was held on the first weekend of January in 1976 and except for the brutal winter storm that blew through town on the convention's final day it turned out to be relatively ordinary



our name badges from Kubla Khan

as science fiction conventions go. It *did* have a lot of camaraderie, though. Nicki and I attended in part because it was a local event, and in doing so met many other science fiction fans from the mid-South – people who became close friends over the years after that.

At that point, I guess it's fair to say that Nicki and I had crossed the threshold from being science fiction readers/enthusiasts to science fiction fans. A bit later that year Irvin organized the Chattanooga Science Fiction Association (CSFA) and about a year or so after that the fledgling organization acquired a clubzine/newszine – *Chat*, the idea for which coming from Nicki but edited and published by both of us. It was the first fanzine we had ever published.

Nicki and I were aware of Worldcons back then, even though we wouldn't have the wherewithal to attend one until 1978. The one in 1975 was in Australia, which was a total non-starter for us. But the 1976 one was in Kansas City, which was most definitely drivable. Many, many times in the years since then I have regretted that we just weren't able to attend it. By not doing so, we missed our one and only chance to meet the convention's Guest of Honor, Robert A. Heinlein. And, as I found out a few years later, we also missed out on observing the very first collation of the Worldcon Order of Faneditors (WOOF).

I'm reasonably sure that at least a few copies of that first WOOF distribution exist somewhere. But I don't have access to one or know of anybody who does, and readily available historical information is sketchy at best. I *do* know that the idea for WOOF was conceived by L.A. acti-fan Bruce Pelz, who later became one of my best friends. But Bruce died in 2002, and I had never thought to mine his memory about it to gather more information. Back then there were other fan history-related activities that I was involved in which had no connection to WOOF.

So here we are, 45 years later, keeping the WOOF tradition alive. Nowadays, printed fanzines are well on their way to becoming extinct so WOOF has changed over to become a digital-only publication. That happened for the first time in 2020, brought on in large part by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, and it will be that way again this year. And you know, that's just fine – bringing 50 copies of a fanzine to a faraway convention is both arduous and expensive (in terms of printing costs), and in the end we have a publication that only relatively very few people will get to see and read. The digital-only WOOFs will be available online (at **efanzines.com**), and anybody who has even a passing interest will be able to access them.

A lot of changes have occurred since 1976. Irvin Koch is unfortunately no longer with us, and neither are many other fan friends from the 1970s. All those science fiction magazines were donated to a Florida science fiction club just before Nicki and I moved to Maryland in 1988. I don't have an exact count, but I'm pretty sure we've attended a couple hundred science fiction conventions since that first Chattacon, including more than thirty Worldcons. And although I haven't been keeping count, I've been editor/publisher or co-editor/co-publisher of probably at least 500 fanzines and apa distributions since that first issue of *Chat*. This 2021 edition of WOOF is just the latest in a long line. I hope you'll find something of interest in it. ☀

**REPORT
FROM
HOOPLER
#143.729
FOR WOOF 2021**

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(my other E-mail rhill@siue.edu is also good). Virtually collated at the “hybrid” Worldcon #79 in Washington, DC. Also for APA-L #2953 or -54 of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society. This year’s *WOOF* is also #46, numbered as if there had been were year since *WOOF* #1 in 1976 (there were actually 4 exceptions). Thanks to Rich Lynch for handling *WOOF* this year, and as always to John Hertz for having kept *WOOF* from fading into oblivion.

As those of you who have read *RFH* in the past will recall, I retired a little over 11 years ago from teaching physics at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, and was oscillating between Edwardsville (IL) and Altadena (CA) until the pandemic started. Since then I have spent the whole time in Altadena, making 2020 and 2021 the first calendar years that I’ve done this since 1967.

As a result, I think I have resolved a long-standing quandary of whether to settle down in Illinois or California or continue to oscillate. Although I do have some very good friends in Illinois, many others are no longer around, and the university has changed a lot due to the pandemic along with friends retiring. Having spent some decades in the midwest, I wouldn’t mind a change to back in my original territory where I have other good friends and activities. I’ve also find “moving” back and forth a headache, and kept losing things not remembering which state they are in.

Thanks to the vaccine (with which I and most of my friends are now triply dosed), things have opened up somewhat. In particular, I have gone back to working at the archives of the Southern California (formerly Orange Empire) Railway Museum, scanning and cataloging some of the many slides that I have been donated to the museum. The photos I’ve been working on are mostly of the Red Cars (Pacific Electric Ry.) and Yellow Cars (Los Angeles Ry.) that ran in the LA area up into the 1960’s; the museum has a few of these cars which visitors can ride.

Folk dancing has still been mostly virtual. It’s hard to imagine virtual dancing, but virtual concerts of folk music (I’m listening to one as I write this) and virtual dance demonstrations with cultural background have been meaningful and fun. The HP calculator users’ group did had a *real* meeting in Nashville, TN at the beginning of October that I managed to fly to, always a fun event.

In the New Toy Department: At the beginning of July, I acquired a new iPhone 12 Mini. These smartphones are truly a marvel of technology, and I figured it was time to take the plunge. (Translation: My LG Revere flip phone that I had enjoyed for 9 years was no longer being supported by Verizon.) This device has significantly changed my life; besides phone calling and text messaging (which I’d done before), I’ve enjoyed being able to just about anything from anywhere. It takes very good photos, making it usually not necessary to lug my DSLR around. It has 256 GB of storage space, more than most of my “regular” computers, and with the appropriate apps can deal with MS Word and Excel

files (I put my computerized diary/appointment calendar onto it). For the phone name I decided on “Orac4”, after the computer Orac in the British TV program *Blake’s 7*, which had the ability to connect to and manipulate other computers (Oracs 1, 2, and 3 are my previous computers).

And no, I don’t use Facebook, Twitter, or other social media. Keeping up with E-mail is enough for me....

COMMENTS ON WOOF #45 (2020)

I hate to (but am going to anyway) overuse the word “interesting” (they told me not to do that in school), but that describes well a lot of the contributions to last year’s *WOOF*, particularly those on the international and historical aspects of fandom. Such things are certainly appropriate for a world-oriented APA assembled just once a year.

John Thiel (The Cosmic Mind): Well, I guess there’s no problem about calling the zine cover page 1 and having the zine title on page 8. ☺

Guy Lillian III (Three-Eyed Frog): Congratulations on putting together yet another digital issue of *WOOF*! A significant achievement especially considering the troubled times with an all-virtual worldcon. As you pointed out, this format makes it more possible for *WOOF* to be a truly global effort. It is also convenient for those (like me) who don’t get to worldcons much. ♦ And thanks for your efforts in trying to locate copies of *WOOF* #6 (Denver 1981) and #30 (Anaheim 2006) for me! (There, now I’ve said it — what would *RFH* be without mentioning this?) ♦ Unfortunately, your listing of past issues of *WOOF* got partly garbled in formatting. I’ll post a fixed-up and updated list in an upcoming *WOOF* as soon as I find a few issues that somehow got away from my collection but which I have somewhere.

Rich Lynch (My Back Pages 24): Interesting collection of stories!

Ahrvid Engholm (Intermission #99): Interesting narrative on Swedish fandom.

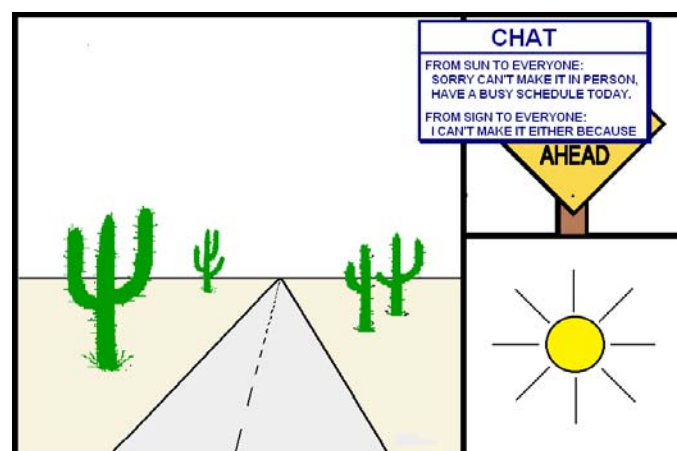
Andy Hooper (Sykora’s Worldcon): And an interesting article on William Sykora and his contemporaries and 1930’s fandom.

Many more zines are certainly worthy of comments as well, but in the interest of space and time I’ll have to stop here.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Last year I presented a “Virtual Road Thingie” for the virtual *WOOF* at a virtual Worldcon, so for this year it’s appropriate to have.....

A HYBRID ROAD THINGIE



CAPTAIN FLASHBACK

A fanzine composed for the 2021 distribution of the Worldcon Order of Faneditors, by Andy Hooper, with proofreading and support from Carrie Root, residing at 11032 30th Ave. NE Seattle, WA 98125. E-mail Andy at fanmailaph@aol.com, and you may reach Carrie at carrieroot49@yahoo.com. This is a Drag Bunt Press Production, completed on 12/28/2021.

CAPTAIN FLASHBACK is devoted to old fanzines, garage bands, hard-boiled detective pictures, and other fascinating phenomena of the 20th Century. All material by Andy Hooper unless indicated. A new issue is published at eFanzines.com every month, can you believe it?

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Incomplete and Unclaimed Film Noir

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Vonda McIntyre: An Introduction by Jane Hawkins
From the Program Book for V-Con 9, May, 1981



Nycontention:

Notes on an Ongoing History of the 1939 World Convention

Hello again, **WOOF** readers! Welcome to a special issue of **CAPTAIN FLASHBACK**, composed especially for inclusion in the 2021 distribution of the **WORLDCON ORDER OF FANEDITORS**, which is itself also colloquially known as “The Worst Idea Bruce Pelz Ever Had.” Although I have not been to a World Convention since 2015, its history, traditions and evolving practices still fascinate me. I continue to work on a serialized history of its first iteration in the far-off year of 1939; the most recent chapter, “Sykora’s Worldcon,” was published in **LITTLEBROOK** #11, edited by Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins, and now available at eFanzines.com. An earlier version of that piece, as well as the previous 4 chapters, all first appeared in previous distys of **WOOF**.

I’ve also composed a parallel project, “The Biographical Directory of the 1939 Worldcon” which attempts to at least identify every person known to have been present at the convention. The first half of that list can be found in issue #26 of **CHUNGA**, which I edited in partnership with carl juarez and the late Randy Byers, and which is also posted at eFanzines.com. The second half is completed and will be published in issue #27 in 2022.

The two projects were originally conceived as different books, but I’ve come around to the notion that they complement each other too well to be separated. The chapters published in **WOOF**, save for the first, “A Tuesday in July,” have looked at the Nycon through the experience of a specific fan or pro. “Bradbury’s Worldcon” starts a sequence that includes “Campbell’s Worldcon,” “Weisinger’s Worldcon” and “Sykora’s Worldcon.” I enjoyed researching and writing all of them immensely and I’m eager

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Issue #37.5, December 28th, 2021

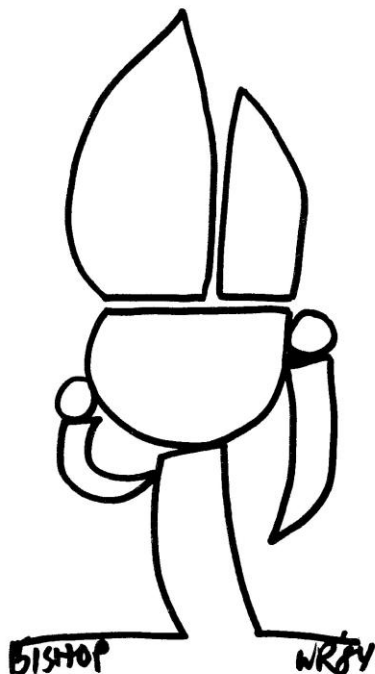
Nycontention:

[Continued from Page 1]

Notes on an Ongoing History of the 1939 World Convention

to continue the work, even if I am still not entirely sure where I'll finish.

And this where you might possibly come in, dear reader of **WOOF**: The next installment of the story is going to be about the fans known as "The Futurians." And particularly the half-dozen among their number who were barred from attending the convention, through the pronouncements of Sam Moskowitz and Will Sykora, and the strong biceps of Jimmy Taurasi. My intended title is "Wollheim's Worldcon," although one might call it Michel's Worldcon or give it to Kornbluth or Pohl just as easily. Neither they nor Doc Lowndes nor Jack Gillespie actually attended the programmed events at Caravan Hall at all, most of them lingering at the automat across the street while Dave Kyle brought bulletins from inside the room.



So what do I want from you? I'm looking for memories of Donald A. Wollheim of all kinds – things related to his fannish youth, the Futurian Society, **FAPA** and other pastimes, and memories of his long subsequent life and career in the science fiction field. The other five excludes and other members of the Futurians are also of interest, and to be fair, my problem may be in deciding what to leave out. But any kind of personal interaction with Don or his family if of interest to me.

Each chapter ends up being a kind of potted biography of the subject as well as a consideration of their path to the 1939 convention. It is difficult to imagine that the Nycon would ever have occurred if not for the ambitions of Don Wollheim. But it is equally hard to imagine it being the same gathering of present and future professionals had Wollheim been its chair. People still have very strong opinions about the Exclusion Act, 82 years after the fact, and I'd be happy to hear those too. Fandom is still reacting to the event; our current push for inclusion and diversity reflects contemporary culture, but also excites a basic fannish impulse toward fairness that gathered strength after the events of July, 1939.

My ambition is to publish **WOLLHEIM'S WORLDCON** for the next iteration of **WOOF** in August, 2022, so correspondence on this subject will be welcome through May of this coming year. I can always be reached by email at fanmailaph@aol.com, an address so old it worked on Mo Udall's Presidential campaign in 1976. You can also write me for .pdf copies of the previous chapters, although I would direct you to **LITTLEBROOK #11** for the latest feature. The 8th edition of the convention to be held in Chicago seems like a suitable setting for Worldcon nostalgia. With any luck, the second half of the "Biographical Directory" will be out by then as well.

Celluloid Fantasia

Lost in Outer Darkness: Incomplete and Unclaimed *Film Noir*

With relatively few opportunities to actually go out to the movies, Carrie and I have spent a lot of the past two years watching older cinema on several cable TV networks. I'm still a faithful viewer of Svengoolie's Saturday night monster movies on the MeTV Network, but Carrie has embraced Eddie Mueller, the host of "Noir Alley" on Turner Classic Movies. While film noir had not previously been to Carrie's taste, Eddie's careful curation and introduction to the movies gives her a lot more to work with. Plus, he wears such wonderful suits.

As founder and President of the Film Noir Foundation, Mueller has done a great deal to preserve little-known examples of the genre. Institute members have paid to restore and remaster little-known or lost works, such as the Argentine films *Los Tallos Amargos* (*The Bitter Stalks*, 1956) and *La Bestia Debe Morir* (*The Beast Must Die*, 1952), as well as nearly lost American works like *Too Late For Tears* (1949), with Dan Duryea and Lizbeth Scott.

Although the Foundation has remastered, restored or underwritten new prints of more than 50 films, there are some which remain lost, at least for the moment. Some titles are no more than rumors, projects left incomplete, or cannibalized or retitled to create other features. Others are still waiting to be discovered in private collections, or National archives, such as the more complete version of the Marx Brothers comedy *A Night at the Opera*, which was discovered in the Hungarian Cinema archives a decade ago.

Here then is a list of some of the most tantalizing examples of lost and little-known hard-boiled detective and crime cinema. If you have information on the whereabouts of these movies, please contact a local cinephile.

The Cleveland Creeper (Republic Pictures 1942): Wildly uneven comedy-drama starring Arthur Kennedy as a crusading columnist and

Edward Everett Horton as G-Man Edmund Ritter, nicknamed "Eliot Mess" by Secretary Paula DeCardo. Inspired the actual Cleveland torso murders, the perpetrator is a wealthy local banker, played by John Hoyt. One big band nightclub sequence features drummer Viola Smith and the Coquettes, an all-female orchestra. Distribution was halted by a threat of litigation from the real Eliot Ness, and only a limited number of prints were made, none of which are now known. Two stills from *Screen Pictures* magazine are the only known evidence that the film was actually shot.

Dial D for Deposition (Monogram Pictures, 1947) An unfinished legal drama originally intended for Edward G. Robinson. The movie was rewritten for comedian Leo Gorcey, who was eager to shed his youthful image as leader of the Bowery Boys. The production fell apart when Gorcey was accused of carrying on an affair with his first wife Marvis, not long after being charged with firing a gun at his estranged second wife Evalene Bankston in his Van Nuys home. Marvis had by then remarried, and was now the wife of Groucho Marx. Studio Executives were pressured by Groucho's brother Zeppo, a powerful talent agent and an alleged former car thief, and the project was cancelled, sending Gorcey back to the Bowery.

Love, Loot and a Malamute (Valley Forge Pictures, 1959): A "screwball" comedy originally intended as a vehicle for director Preston Biden, the script was purchased by director Irving Yeaworth Jr., and shot after the surprise success of his 1958 debut *The Blob*. Several members of that film's cast were involved, including Stephen Chase and Vince Barbi. The project was abandoned because the principal animal actor, a dog named "Buford," drooled so persistently that no take could be completed without a pool of saliva gathering on the set.

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The serial version of *Starship Troopers* was cut by 51%, not 26%. But still there isn't much plot.

There's nothing specifically wrong with Donald Sutherland's performance as Homer Simpson. It's just awful.

Celluloid Fantasia

[Continued from Page 3]

Lost in Outer Darkness: Incomplete and Unclaimed *Film Noir*

Kiss Me, Danger (Universal Pictures, 1945): By 1945, British American-Actress Evelyn Ankers was a veteran of more than 40 pictures. She played a series of parts opposite Lon Chaney Jr. and Basil Rathbone and had been impressive in *Jungle Woman* and *Weird Woman*, 2 of the 8 pictures she made in 1944. **Kiss Me, Danger** was supposed to be a starring vehicle for Ankers, with a story that closely resembles Robert Bloch's premise for *Psycho*: Ankers is a bank employee who absconds with a deposit bag containing \$14,000 in cash. But instead of meeting Anthony Perkins, she encounters a con man who offers to get her and the money into Mexico. Naturally, he steals the money, but Ankers pursues him through several memorable locations in Los Angeles and San Diego. At the film's climax, she stands by impassively as he chokes to death from nicotine poisoning and escapes with the money. Several scenes were shot before the

studio realized the story would never be approved by industry censors and pulled Ankers off the film to make *The Frozen Ghost* with Lon Chaney.

The mystery of the production is this: Who was expected to play the con man opposite Ankers? Production notes indicate George Macready, Miles Mander, Alan North and J. Carroll Naish were all in the cast, but only Ankers is identified with her character.

The Simpering Kind (RKO Pictures 1945): The sort of human darkness that gives *film noir* its name is not restricted to the gritty streets of American cities, and the plots of American criminals. While reeling from the enormous loss of cash represented by Orson Welles' productions of *Citizen Kane* and *The Magnificent Ambersons*, RKO producers were under enormous pressure to bring projects in on time and under budget. A psychological thriller taking place in a limited number of interior sets seemed like the perfect answer. Herbert Marshall was cast as the English schoolmaster overwhelmed with jealousy toward a younger and more popular instructor. Peter Ustinov, at that time better known as a screenwriter, was cast as Marshall's antagonist and Googie Withers was Ustinov's love interest, Miss Emily Pleats. The project was abandoned when MGM demanded Marshall fulfill a prior commitment and cast him in *Andy Hardy's Blonde Trouble*.

Dead Man in the Gutter (Republic Pictures 1946): Set against the glamorous world of professional bowling, *Dead Man in the Gutter* stars William Wright as detective Nick Boxtop, Janis Carter as the mysterious bowling tycoon Mrs. Roslyn Paige, and Allan Jones as Ray Pocket, an up-and-coming young bowler/singer accused of murdering a rival. Professional bowlers Ned Day, Joe Norris and Marion Ladewig all appear as themselves. No complete prints of the movie are known to exist, although an audio recording of Jones singing "My Balls Belong in Brooklyn" can be



heard playing on a bowling alley television in the "Love and the Perfect Game" episode of *Love American Style* (1971), starring Allan Melvin, Ruth Buzzi and John Hoyt.

Dynamo Dame (aka *The Dish Ran Away With The Goon*, aka *The Warbler and the Wheelman*, aka *Highway to Peril*, aka *High Octane Heartbreak*) (M-G-M Pictures 1959): Two years after she became a household name for her performance in *High School Confidential*, Mamie van Doren (born Joan Lucille Olander) starred opposite Lee van Cleef and Van Heflin in a brooding melodrama loosely based on Jim Thompson's novel *The Getaway*. The film was shown to audiences in 1959 and elicited unintended laughter and undisguised contempt. An effort was made to salvage the movie by shooting additional scenes with van Doren and actor John Lee Erwin, best known for his work as the voice of Morris the Cat in commercials for Little Friskies cat food. The climax of the film, in which a smiling van Doren walks away from a burning Hudson Hornet with van Cleef's money packed in Erwin's guitar case, has been called a classic image of neo-noir, even though no one has seen the film since 1970. Shot on a mysteriously fugitive film stock, no complete print is known, and surviving sequences are almost devoid of color, like an episode of *Battlestar Galactica 2.0*.

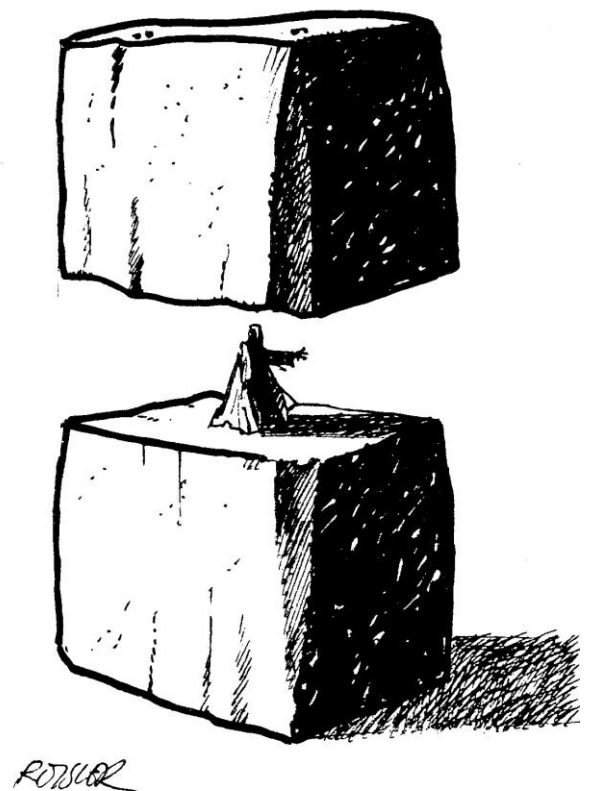
The Pulaski Kid (Columbia Pictures, 1951) Now known entirely from script drafts and pre-production concept drawings, *The Pulaski Kid* would have starred Audie Murphy as a young San Francisco firefighter who becomes an unwilling detective when his captain (possibly played by Edmund O'Brien, Keenan Wynn or John Hoyt) is brutally murdered. Script drafts were created by Raymond Chandler, Carson McCullers, Leigh Brackett, Carl Foreman, Ben Hecht, John Steinbeck, Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin, with the final product rewritten by director Herman Mankiewicz.

Scheduling conflicts inspired Mankiewicz to make *The Barefoot Contessa* before *Kid*

Pulaski. After collecting his screenwriting Oscar for *Contessa*, Mankiewicz was ready to make the picture; but Murphy was committed to make *Ride Clear of Diablo*, *Drums Across the River* and *Destry* before he would be available once more. Over the next ten years, the picture was offered to James Dean, Jeffery Hunter, Troy Donahue and Will Hutchins. But the cost – and danger – of the special fire effects called for in the script kept the movie forever on paper.

In 1996, John Stamos starred in a pilot for Warner Television titled *Johnny Pilates*, about a firefighter who taught aerobic exercise and solved mysteries on the side. Screenwriter Earl Mac Rauch quietly acknowledged that he was inspired by Hollywood tales of *The Pulaski Kid*.

(For Stu Shiffman)



It makes one want to, excuse the expression, grok all over it.

Dear Ricky Teenage: As you can see, I am every inch a lady.

I REMEMBER ENTROPY DEPARTMENT (A Reprint Column)

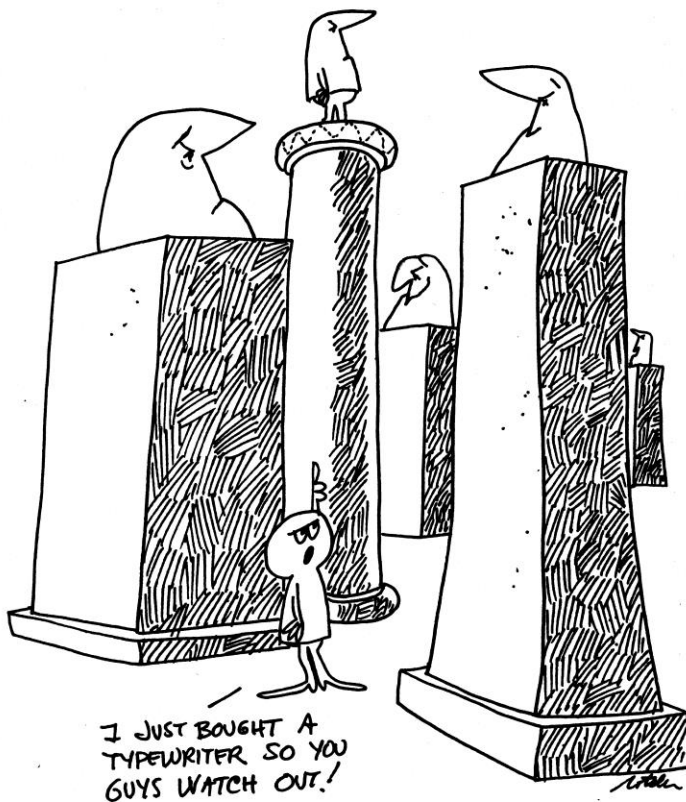
I met **Jane Hawkins** and **Vonda McIntyre** (1948-2019) at my first convention in 1978. Wiscon 2 brought two Northwest residents to Madison as Guests of Honor, Vonda and **Susan Wood** (1948-1980). A number of fans came from Seattle by car to attend the convention as well, including Jane, Denys Howard, Jerry Kaufman, Ole Kvern, Loren MacGregor and Jessica Amanda Salmonson. I have seldom thought about this, but the fact that those faces started becoming familiar to me on my first weekend in active fandom probably contributed to my desire to move to Seattle, realized a mere 14 years later. Vonda's fiction, which often felt like it took place in a version of Puget Sound, even when set on another world, may have had some effect on me too. Vonda's close pal **Ursula Le**

Guin (1929-2018) deserves some credit for that as well.

Of course, Jane's commitment to Wiscon brought her back to Madison many times, so she became a friend long before we moved to Seattle. When Carrie Root and I moved to Seattle in 1992, we spent our first week here in the basement of Glenn Hackney and Kate Schaeffer's house, a block down the street from Vonda and Jane. The monthly "Vanguard" party they hosted the weekend after we arrived was our first chance to introduce ourselves to our new fandom. For the first ten years we lived here, Jane and Vonda's basement was the center of fandom to me.

After living in the modest literary scene of a Midwestern University town, Seattle seemed to have a remarkable number of professional writers and editors in residence, from F. M. Busby and Gordon Eklund to Megan Lindholm and Joanna Russ. Octavia Butler moved to town not too long after us, but she was also familiar from her frozen weekend at an early Wiscon. Many of them were even money to appear at Jane Hawkins' Thanksgiving dinner gatherings, where guests were sometimes reluctant to stop talking long enough to eat.

The social code of Seattle fandom called on its members to treat our sundry SF pros and major Microsoft and Wizards of the Coast stockholders on the same footing as those who worked in bookstores and for the City Department of Transportation. But these informal rules were definitely suspended at regional conventions, where every Guest and Special Guest was given a weekend full of heartfelt praise, intelligent criticism and unalloyed affection by fans of the Northwest. Southern fans are rightly regarded as having the strongest regional identity in North American fandom, but the potlatch spirit of Northwest fans has always impressed me as a very capable counterpoint.



And so, when we lost Vonda in 2019, it was very much like the end of an era in our precinct of Seattle fandom (We're not the part that bids for World Conventions). At the time of Vonda's death, her friend Jane had already been arguing at differing degrees of intensity with her own cancer for a number of years. Now, a little under two years later, Jane has decided to stop pursuing further treatment. She's preparing to go on her own terms now, just one more act in a long series that has elicited my admiration over the past 44 years.

She asked me to take custody of her extensive collection of fanzines, convention program books and other fannish ephemera. So far, this has involved 9 Xerox paper boxes very full of material, with more to come, and I have only begun to investigate their contents.

But in one of the first boxes I opened, I found the program book for V-Con 6, held in Vancouver in May, 1981. And folded up with the program was the manuscript of Jane's introduction of Vonda, who was one of the convention's Guests of Honor. Reading it, I could hear Jane's voice very vividly in my head and it struck me how much she managed to tell the reader about herself, while she was also introducing them to the affable and generous Vonda N. McIntyre.

And I thought **WOOF** correspondents might enjoy reading it. Thanks to Carrie Root, who re-typed this with reference to the corrected version published in the Program Book, as well as Jane's manuscript.

VONDA N. MCINTYRE
by Jane Hawkins

(Originally published in the Program Book
for V-Con 6, May 1981)

A convention has a Guest of Honor largely to give convention attendees an opportunity to meet that person. Yet, it is difficult to talk with people when you know little about them, and they know nothing

about you. This introduction is aimed at giving you some information about Vonda N. McIntyre's background and interests, in order to make it easier to talk with her. I hope that you will. She is smart, interesting, and a fine human being. She is also not one of those (thankfully rare) writers who think humiliating fans is good clean fun.

Vonda lived in various places on the East Coast and in The Netherlands until she was twelve, when her family moved to the Seattle area. She became involved with science fiction fandom in the late sixties. Her first big convention was Baycon, in 1968. She had a regular column in The Cry of the Nameless (a reincarnated version of the Hugo-winning fanzine) and began seriously writing science fiction during this period.

The summer after Vonda got her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Washington, she attended a Clarion writer's workshop. As with many writers, Clarion was a major turning point in Vonda's career. She had been accepted into the PhD program in genetics, but also continued writing science fiction, sold her first stories, and ran three Clarion West workshops. She finally decided that she was, as she puts it, "the world's worst grad student," and quit to write science fiction full-time.

Most of the next two years Vonda lived in a cabin in the woods of Oregon and wrote steadily. She won a Nebula for "Of Mist and Grass and Sand," finished The Exile Waiting, and wrote the first draft of Dreamsnake. In 1976 she moved back to Seattle, where she has lived ever since. Dreamsnake won both the Nebula and the

Still driving that incredible zucchini?

A fascinating bunch of stuff it was, and I read it with a slow and majestic shaking of the head.

Hugo in 1979. Recently published works are Fireflood, a short story collection, and The Entropy Effect, a Star Trek novel that just came out.

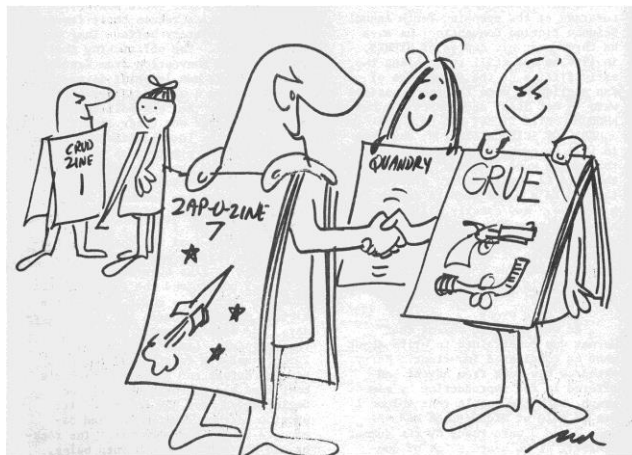
This quick biography doesn't help you much in actually talking with Vonda. The first problem is getting started. I strongly advise against prostrating yourself at her feet, even though I admire her writing enough to have been tempted to do so. Vonda doesn't believe that writers are superior beings and becomes rapidly uncomfortable when treated that way. You might wish to have someone introduce you (I hereby volunteer, if you can find me), but that truly is not necessary.

Find a time when she isn't in an obviously private conversation and isn't already beset by five or six people and introduce yourself. Opening lines such as "I enjoy your writing," possibly followed by "Will you sign my book" are old standbys and perfectly good.

However, to actually have a chat, you need a topic for conversation. Vonda has a variety of interests, so you probably share at least a few. Two obvious topics are writing and science fiction. Are there some

remarks you would like to make about her writing? Do you have a question concerning a story? Would you like to know what she is reading or what she thinks of a particular book? Go ahead. Don't worry that she'll be rude or sneering if you say something she disagrees with, because she is not that kind of person. Other interests of hers are gardening, genetics, feminism, needlepoint, crocheting, horses, children's literature, home computers, SF and hoor movies, and trying not to get too far behind on reading New Scientist magazine. Do you know about raising vegetables and spices in slightly sandy soil that doesn't get a lot of light? What about a good, esoteric genetics joke? Do you have any experience with microprocessors that can run MP/M and do word processing? What about a program that produces needlepoint designs? Have you seen Billy the Kid Meets Dracula, or – conceivably – a movie that is even worse?

Or, if none of those are appealing, try her on whatever interests you. My list doesn't begin to cover everything she enjoys talking about, so don't hold yourself to it. Just enjoy the chat.





Remembering Joe Moudry (1947-2021)

Joe told daughter Leigh Harwell it was the best birthday he ever had.

And it was a grand occasion for most of us, too. But even with the Stage 4 cancer diagnosis we did not think for a moment that a Sunday afternoon luncheon in Hoover, Ala., at Taste of Thailand restaurant near the end of the September would be the last time we ever saw our friend. The end on Saturday, October 16 was sudden and totally unexpected.

On Friday night, Oct. 15, Leigh said Joe was lucid and conversational with the hospice nurse. Indeed, he handled all of the paperwork himself. She called him when she got home. He

Remembering Joe Moudry, a publication for the 344th Mailing of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance. Produced by Bill Plott, 190 Crestview Circle, Montevallo, AL 355115, wjplott@aol.com,. 205-908-8703. Banshee Press Publication No. 100.

put his phone on speaker and she followed him discoursing on removing the bottle cap and taking his pre-bed pain medication. They talked for a while, and then he said he was ready to go to sleep. He had his pillows and cats arranged suitably. They exchanged declarations of love.

After two attempts to reach him on Saturday morning, Leigh quickly loaded daughters Charlotte and Evelyn in the car and headed fearfully from Trussville to Hoover. At the townhouse, she hustled the girls into the TV room and went to check on Joe. He was on his side appearing to be asleep. And indeed he was, but it was the long sleep.

It was as peaceful a passage as one could have without friends and family present.

Fortunately for Leigh, longtime friend from UAB Mike Oakes, who had been in Oxford, was only about an hour from Birmingham, with his girlfriend. Alarmed by the initial report that Joe was in hospice, Mike and Patrice decided to go to Birmingham on Saturday morning. They were just minutes away when Leigh reached him with news of Joe's death. A godsend. Patrice entertained Joe's granddaughters while Mike assisted Leigh with contacting hospice and the funeral home.

She related all of this to me on Saturday afternoon.



Birthdaying with the grandkids. From left, Charlotte, Evelyn, Joe and Kaylen.

If it was the best birthday ever, Joe would have been equally pleased at Leigh's organization of his memorial service: Halloween afternoon.

"He always loved everything spooky," she said. "I think he would love the idea of having his memorial service on Halloween. It was his favorite holiday."

Indeed.

The service was at Trinity Episcopal Church in Bessemer, Ala. The minister, Rev. Dr. Ruth LaMonte, had baptized the grandchildren and possibly been pastor to Joe's mother, Evelyn,

who is credited with gifting him with a love of reading. The homily contained lot about Joe that was not commonly known. For example, he was an acolyte as teenager and once considered the priesthood. I learned at the birthday party and again this day that he was a spelunker. He had been a trumpet player in the University of Alabama's Million Dollar Band under Col. Carlton Butler. Joe had told me some great stories about the band at football games. Like at LSU where Butler told them to lock arms as they left the buses and go straight to their on-ground destination. And at Georgia Tech where drunk frat boys tried to toss empty whisky bottles into the tubas as if they were basketball goals.

After his service in the Peace Corps he was a psychologist at Bryce Hospital for a time, then gravitated to the Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library at UA. He eventually earned a master's degree in library science and was mentored by the great Glenn House, who developed the book arts program at UA. Like George Inzer, another mutual connection. Glenn and his family were good friends of mine.

I was among those who spoke and recounted how our friendship grew from George Inzer's funeral. Rev. LaMonte concluded with a reading of T.S. Eliot's poem, "McCavvity the Mystery Cat." Joe would have loved that, also.

Leigh, who had done a marvelous job with her brother Ben's memorial service last spring and Joe's surprise birthday party, scored again with this one. I'm not sure how she selected Trinity Episcopal Church but it dates to 1887, surviving in a neighborhood that is predominantly black now. It has been five years since they had a pastor. Services are now conducted by rotating priests. Donald Jay Howton, administrator and local newspaper columnist, said a good Sunday turnout these days is about 15 people. "But we won't close. We will still be here if there are only five of us," he said.

Perhaps there is something almost fannish in that – a small apa hanging on in changing world.

I can't believe I only really knew Joe Moudry for eight years. It was like Nancy said, "I feel like we've known Joe forever." She and/or Atticus occasionally joined us for the monthly luncheons. I think Joe enjoyed their company as much as mine, especially Atticus.

I first met Joe around 1975 when he accompanied Meade Frierson to my house in Tuscaloosa to buy my modest collection of science fiction fanzines, books and magazines. The only things I remember in particular were a copy the Arkham House edition of Ray Bradbury's *Dark Carnival*, given to me by Al Andrews, and the *Stf & Fantasy Song Book* collection of filk songs. I did not see Joe again until 2013.

Around 1982 George Inzer joined the faculty at the University of Montevallo. He contacted me and told me he was involved in fandom, which I had been out of for years. We sat around my kitchen table one night looking at photos of fans and authors that I somehow had held onto over the years. It was a pleasant evening and George became a friend, but it did not motivate me to look into returning to fandom.

I left UM in 1990. I think George left sometime about then, also. He went to Tuscaloosa to work on a master's degree, later moved back to Birmingham near his parents. He died there on July 12, 2013.

I do not recall if it was an email or a phone call, but Joe contacted me, suggesting we

share a ride to North Birmingham for George's funeral service. He and George had been friends in a once thriving Birmingham fan group. So, our connection was more through a mutual friend rather than each other. We met at Taste of Thailand in Hoover on July 18 and a friendship was born. The conversation on that ride to and from the funeral revealed many common interests. Despite the sadness of the occasion, we quickly developed a rapport that needed to continue.

Thus came our monthly luncheons at Taste of Thailand, Joe's favorite restaurant. I had returned to fandom the previous summer after attending DeepSouthCon50 in Huntsville, Ala. I had rejoined SFPA shortly after the con. The conversation that brought us together also spurred Joe into returning to SFPA, a move that further strengthened our friendship.

The luncheon sessions were filled with SF and fannish talk. I had been away for so very long. Joe did much to bring me up to date on fannish happenings, not so much on current fiction as he was so focused on his love of Lovecraft, Philip K. Dick, and *Weird Tales*. Still, he introduced me to Joe Lansdale, Harry Turtledove, C. J. Cherryh, and a few others. He brought me into fictionmags.com, an online chat group composed largely of writers, authors and collectors. It has become one of the most rewarding things in my internet experience.

The luncheon sessions soon acquired a traditional ending. Our "dessert" was a trip to 2nd & Charles about a mile away. 2nd & Charles is a used (mostly) media store affiliated with Books-A-Million. It is a warehouse-like building filled with books, comics, DVDs, vinyl, and spin-off merchandise from all things of fannish interest.

I do not remember the first time I took Atticus to 2nd & Charles, but it immediately became his favorite store. It fit perfectly with the occasions he joined the luncheon. He and Joe were simpatico immediately. They would sometimes have detailed discussions on esoteric aspects of Harry Potter while I ate my basil chicken and sipped a beer. Joe loved hanging out with Atticus. And he and Nancy could have some conversations about jazz and music where I was also an outsider. No matter.

Through the luncheons I came to know several of Joe's former colleagues at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. Most notably was Mike Oakes, whose cosplay effort earned him the nickname of "the Klingon." They were longtime friends and Mike has been like an uncle to Leigh. He helped her move and provided needed friendship on other occasions such as the sad event above. I also met Clay Boyce, another UAB staffer, who is very active in community theater. He and Atticus got to talk plays a time or two. And A.J. Wright, another retired UAB librarian whose "Alabama Yesterrdays" blog contains tons of fascinating information of Alabama history, pulp writers and other pop culture goodies.

In addition to 2nd & Charles, the luncheons usually featured a private media exchange. I gave Joe copies of *Alter-Ego* and *Comics Revue* that I had finished reading. He brought books sometimes and DVDs almost every time. Joe was convinced that Blue-Ray was of such a superior quality that he was always upgrading his film collection and passing ordinary DVDs on to me or Mike. We were grateful and not nearly as discriminating.

Some of those disks proved timely this year. Among them a copy of *Nasferatu*. Joe's generosity with DVDs affected Atticus just as much as they did me. In the late fall of last year, an episode of *Gravity Falls* contained a reference to *Nasferatu*. Atticus said he

wanted to watch the disk that Joe had given us. Then, he paused and said he wanted to wait until Halloween. He did not forget. On the first of October, as we were digging out the Halloween decorations, he proclaimed October to be Spooky Month and it would begin with *Nasferatu*.

It was followed by all of the classic 1930s black and white horror films. We watched *Frankenstein*, *The Wolfman*, *Dracula* and *The Invisible Man*. At Atticus's urging I ordered *Son of Frankenstein* because he said we needed that for the "canon." Joe was in our thoughts with film.

For the record, Atticus did not find *Nasferatu* as scary as he anticipated. I found the creature quite chilling myself. When I told Joe what was going on, he was delighted, not only for Spooky Month itself but also because he provided most of the disks that would be viewed.

That was part of my last conversation with Joe. It came on October 7. He seemed at peace and mentioned several things about the disposal of his collection, some of which might involve my assistance. Of course, I told him he need do nothing more than ask. As with my friend Chuck Bethea two years ago, the final conversation was fun and enjoyable, like old times, like nothing was going to change. What more could we want?

Damn COVID-19 for stealing a year and a half of those wonderful monthly get-togethers. Mike Oakes has suggested that we continue to have them, and I'm all for it. We can toast Joe, talk science fiction movies, and go to 2nd & Charles if work schedules for Mike and others permit.

But alas, it will not fill that void left by Joe's passing. I will so miss not being able to get him on the phone after I've read a book or watched a movie with Atticus, things Joe always enjoyed discussing.

R.I.P., my friend.



At Ben's memorial service, me with Joe and Mike Oakes.

INTERMISSION #116

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA & other socially isolated.. Follow @SFJournalen sf/f/h&fandom newstweets. Trying to scale down we go directly to our traditional Xmas/New Year story, adding just some sf/fan history and MCs. After Delta, the Typo viruss is here, spreadng faast änd Being VErRy dångerous!! Dec '21. Any comments?

Our 2021/22 Xmas/New Year Story: All About BABA!

Here at *Strolling Bones* magazine we get many questions about a certain somewhat disreputable band: BABA. We usually ignore those letters, on advice from our legal department as well as the fire safety inspector. But after losing a late night bet, on our recent wet and wild Christmas party - *that quart of gin simply evaporated!* - this reporter is forced to stitch together a few words on the subject.

After all, BABA has recently released the Christmas single "Worthless Junk", haunting the charts from Wellington to Murmansk (but perhaps only there). And these by now 70-plussers in early fall shocked everyone by turning out a new album: *Violation*. ("The title is because we used a lot of violins," the press release says.) It's their first studio album after being mercifully silent for 40 years. Chinese threats, war refugees, new Putin pranks, hacker attacks, inflation, this bloody virus, politicians forcing injectables into folks...*and now this!*

But disasters are easier to live through if you know the background. So let's have a look at the rather unique melody quartet of *Anna-Magnetha Forcefield*, *Afrida Underskirt*, *Bosse Carlsson* and *Birger Kanelbulle*, better known by their first name initials AABB...BAAB, ABAB...no: BABA!

Their manager Stig "Sticky" Fingersson first considered using the initials of their surnames, but abandoned it as his dog had enjoyed himself with the applicable letters of his scrabble set. So BABA it was. That there already was a company named BABA, a firm producing condoms, was a potential problem. But "Sticky" contacted them and got permission to use the name, as long as "you won't blame us for any offspring turning up as a result of your tours!". They also sent him a jumbo package of their products to be sure.

When they put the band on hold in 1982 they were the second biggest selling group in history, surpassed only by the legendary Rutles. Critics agree: few has sold out as much as BABA!

All four had already begun their careers when they first met in the 1960s, as they happened to be stuck together in an escalator for hours during a blackout. Birger was a star in the folk band Hotwithnanny Swingers and Bosse was fingering the keyboard in (and the groupies of) the rock group Hip Czars. Afrida had won first prize in a national talent competition, being on the biggest TV channel, the biggest show, with the biggest jerk hosting. Anna M was already a recording artist with several list hits, for instance "I'm so Blonde and in Love", "Blonde Dreams of Love" and "Blonde is Love".

When the dog began to howl in harmony when they tested their voices "Sticky" saw the potential (as well as dollar signs). It was the same dog who earlier saved the group with its scrabble gobbling. BABA's first attempt at stardom, "Knock, Knock", became a minor hit in Europe but failed to take them to the Eurovision Schlager Contest.

But raiding the garage sale of a local theatre company, leftovers from staging "Madame Butterfly", they found the fabrics for renewed attacks. With musical ambitions high as the soles of their boots, they wrote another entry and finally they made it. It was a very memorable evening there in Brighton (or was it Bognor?) in 1974 (hm, 1973 perhaps?) as the foursome entered the stage and sang:

*Mein Gott! At Stalingrad Hitler was defeated
Jawohl! And now my love life is completed
The history book on the shelf
Is always repeating itself*



Their first hit was on this album.

The bewildered BBC commentator, noting that the conductor was dressed like herr H, was drenched by the roaring from the audience.

This forced the European Broadcasting Union to upgrade their 1891 telegraph line to Stockholm to a TV link, as the competition by BABA's win next year would be held there in Switzerland or wherever it was. It wasn't uncontroversial. All universities had at the time given in to French postmodern philosophers who hated everything, said nothing was true and that the music industry was evil capitalist colonialism. The local Palestine scarves were overjoyed: in BABA they finally had an enemy they could trust! They arranged their own Counter Festival where they sang about "doing the immoral schlager festival". This practically saved the alternative music and kitchenware movement, as nobody there could play (or cook for that matter), but in the huge hullabaloo nobody noticed.

But BABA actually had to struggle after their Eurovision win. Many saw them as a one hit wonder. Their next single "OK, OK, OK, OK, OK" barely went OK on the charts. Birger and Bosse decided they must do something. They disappeared to a Stockholm island, Långholmen, from which they reappeared after three months (with good behaviour) having a string of new songs. Particularly successful was the tune "Holy Cow":

*I've been milked by you, you take all my dough
This must come to an end, but I just don't know how
Look at my purse, how much I ever earn
You must reimburse, all the money lost
All the cash that's been flying off
and I hear the teller ring
One more look but there ain't anything
Holy cow, here we go again
Moo moo, don't make it persist, you
Holy cow, you are insane
Moo moo, see the bank blacklist you*

And "Mayday" that then followed was by the fans seen as a call for help:

*So when you're near me, darling, can't you hear me? Mayday!
The cash you gave me, nothing else can save me, Mayday!
If we go broke all we've done will go up in smoke!
Buy this song, hear our plea, no joke!*

Slowly they would win the audience over, even if most critics said they'd rather consume rotten snails while having their feet in a bucket of ice than hearing one more BABA song.

The next album, *Deprival*, had a string of hits, like "When I snogged the teacher" and the classic which landed them their first US #1, "Bouncing Teen":

*Monday morning with a throbbing head
You wonder who's beside in bed
Where am I, what happened last night?
Taking just one drink
A few more in a blink
Soon you are in a stink
The night is late and the DJ's high
from a bit of rock meth
Everything goes sour
You're in the mood for a bounce
And when you get the chance
You are the bouncing teen
A sight to be seen
Young and lewd
Bouncing teen
Feel the beat from the...oh yeah!*

Not to forget their catchy "Dollar, Dollar, Dollar":

*I work all night, I work the street
and smile to every man I meet*



BABA's backup band taking a break in the tradition of their heathen and feared forefathers. Skål!

*Ain't it sad?
And still there never seems to be
much of greenbacks left for me
That's too bad
In my dreams I have a plan
If I can dupe a wealthy man
I wouldn't have to whore at all
Let's fool around and make a score*

The Australians are as we all know totally nuts, so of course they embraced this Swiss or whatever - who cares! - quartet wholeheartedly. There's only one way to get even lower, and that is to go way, way Down Under. And why not make a film at the same time?

The script was written on the backside of the airline safety instructions during the flight. It involved the group desperately trying to book an interview with a TV station, or radio...or a newspaper, how about a local paper, well, the school rag...

As they landed there must have been some mix-up: somebody had actually booked them limousines from the airport. You see, far away as they are, the Aussies hadn't grasped exactly what BABA was. Or was it that they as descendants of exiled convicts felt a certain kinship? Thousands of innocent young Matildas lined the streets, with their for obvious reasons worried mothers,

All the concerts were sold out before anyone had realised what was going on. It is claimed that a BABA TV show had even more viewers than the Moon landing! It may be because the Moon is just a sterile piece of barren rock, or that the rating company got a thick envelope from "Sticky". From this came the album *The Ransom* with one of their least unpopular songs, "Thank you for the Money":

*I'm rather special, in fact I've become billionaire
What I sell you just pay up, that's all I care
I have a talent, I'm so full of greed
Shiploads of bucks is being my creed
I'm so wealthy and proud
I'm not plain or one in the crowd
So I say
Thank you for the money, the sums I'm earning
Now for even more I'm yearning
Who can live without it? I ask in all honesty
What would life be?
Without a buck or a quid, what are we?
So I say thank you for the money
For giving it to me*



Their next album, *Coucher Avec Moi*, dragged them up from the gutters even outside Kangaroo land, which smashers like "Does Your Pusher Know?" and "Chick I Cheat Her".

And they even seemed to claim having been abducted by aliens as they sang "I Have Been Beamed":

*I have been beamed, to outer space
They took me up, among the stars
When you see the wonder of a skiffy tale
You will see the future on enormous scale
I believe in UFOs
Flying saucers everywhere I see
I believe in UFOs
Small green men reaching to my knee
Across the space, I have been beamed*

Linguists aired angry protests about the album that then came, named *Super Duper*: "How on Earth can you rhyme 'last show' with 'Glasgow'," they objected. The question remained unanswered. Bosse and Birger just muttered something about that they like scotch a lot and must have had some at the time. That album had one of their greatest tracks ever, a song which seems to illustrate martial problems (though Birger denies it and says he will sue). As you may know, but we forgot to mention,

Bosse had been first engaged and then married to Afrida - to solve a complicated question of alimony - and Birger was married to Anna M. But for tax reasons they had now divorced! Or did the fact that the jumbo pack of condoms was suddenly empty have with it all to do?

Anyway, with a voice full of sadness and disappointment Anna Magnetha now sang "The Wiener Is Too Small":

*I was in your bed
Thinking I belonged there
Figured you're awake
But you were a fake
Building up a hope
Taking off my thong there
My mouth began to drool
But I was a fool
I had thrown the clothes
Is this the way it goes?
The facts are laying bare
You're pathetic down there
The wiener is too small
and hardly stands at all*

It was now obvious they were running low on steam. Surrounded by fans, and creditors, they did their last album, or their last for a long time: *Trespassers*.

After that Anna M developed a fear of flying and didn't get around much. Afrida met a prince to marry (she did indeed dupe a wealthy man!) to become a princess and moved into a huge castle, negotiating with Disney to sell them the rights to her fairy tale, to sort of distract from fact that her father may have been one of those there in Stalingrad way back.

Birger and Bosse spent merry nights on local sex clubs together with stoned British airship musicians, after which the government were forced to ban such clubs. Then the pair relocated to the little town Duvemåla (the name means "pigeon painting" for some reason) and sat there playing chess. Birger soon went into business deals, making gold into sand and having doubts about any God but Mercury, the god of merchants. Bosse started a folk band in which he played the accordion, as he found it hard to understand what all the knobs on a synthesizer did.

But in the long run they couldn't escape their reputation. The record company released a new collection, *BABA Fool's Gold*, which renewed the unhealthy interest in the group. The naughty Australians shot films with BABA songs. (The reason being it was the only music rights they could afford under their shoestring budgets.) And someone thought there was some green stuff to be harvested by doing a musical, inexplicably based on "Holy Cow".

This show for reasons no one understood began to graze the stages all over the world. And it too became not one but two films: "Holy Cow!" and "Holy Cow! Here We Go Again!" BABA's reputation or rather notoriety grew back. It could be due to that their old critics had become senile or simply had died off.

But why didn't BABA return to the studio or the road? Rumours had it that they were offered a billion dollars to do a new world-wide tour. (Unclear if it was US or Zimbabwean dollars.) Other rumours said they were offered *two* Billion dollars to stop even thinking of any tour forever.

But one day they met a producer who had an interesting idea:

"Why don't you go on tour without having to travel?" he suggested.

"But how do you do that?" Birger asked.

"I want to know. What's the name of the game?" Bosse inquired.

"Do you remember what you did on the Australian concert tour?" the producer said. "The girls, and those ropes..."

"Hey!" Birger said. "I though we were alone on the hotel room!"

"No I mean, on stage. That song: I'm a..."

"...I'm a marionette!" Bosse said. "Yes of course!"

"You can do a tour as - marionette dolls!"

They had already dismissed doing a tour as computer generated, virtual avatars. They thought it would only be the Gates to lots of trouble and Jobs they didn't want to involve themselves in. But with marionettes all you needed were some ropes and guys with strong arms.

So they began to prepare their marionette show, which is to open in an especially built arena in London, *BABA Violation*, next summer. But to get the reluctant audience to fall for it, shouldn't they have a couple of new songs?

And in his wastebasket among discarded shopping lists, Bosse Carlsson found a few sheets of musical notes. He couldn't read music, but her cleaning lady could and helped him out humming with her Hoover. This way the thing grew into the whole new album that we have seen now!

Violation, as it was named, has been the best selling album of the 21th Century - in the 78rpm version. And it has been nominated to a Granny (not to be confused with the Grammy) in the category Long Play Records That Took Very Long. Critics applaud this their last album, as long as they can guarantee it really is the last they hear of BABA. On their new album we for instance hear the story of BABA itself in the song "Don't Run Me Down":

*A while ago, I heard the sound of police sirens
Now it's quiet, so I guess they failed to find their man*

*Avoiding them is getting harder by the hour
My mood is going down, I'm on the run
I realise my thirst, so down the throat I pour
As I search for my coming goal
The lights are off, it's time to go
It's time at last to try to pick the lock
I believe it would be fair to say I was bewildered
As the door showed not even to be locked
As so it should, I would*



This is what BABA's coming marionette show will look like.

The album also has their Christmas song "Worthless Junk" and as a surprise hat tip to Irish folk music, "When You Drank With Me":

*I can remember when you drank your Guinness
And you told me "Give me another one!"
I never saw that you could hold your liquor
Glasses went by, you were still not done
Was it good for you this darkish brew?
We got the answer as up it all you threw!
You're just here for the beverage, that's all, or could it be
You miss the good old times when you drank with me*

Now we all wonder how this will end? Will the planning commission revoke the approval for the BABA Marionette show, or will an arsonist make it there first? Will the prosecutor finally find something tangible on "Sticky"? What does the United Nations Human Rights Commission say?

The worst are the fans of the band! Will this highly disorderly, loud-mouthed and rowdy crowd find their way to the show? When they get as bombed as Dresden they are truly scary and dangerous!

Those feared savages we call the...*BABArrians*!

Fandom's Shangri-LA...

Earlier I wrote at length about Francis Towner Laney's famous or notorious memoirs from the 1940's Los Angeles Fandom, *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* But to get a second opinion on that legendary period, download the British fan historian Rob Hansen's *Bixelstrasse - The SF Fan Community of 1940s Los Angeles*:

<https://taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Bixel> *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* Is also available on this site for the free TAFF E-books, as well as more Hansen fan history books and lots of other fanhistory titles - a gold mine for any trufan! *Bixelstrasse* is a wider view on the tight-knit fannish community around the Los Angeles Science Fantasy

BIXELSTRASSE
The SF Fan Community
of 1940s Los Angeles



edited by
ROB HANSEN

Society in the 1940's.

It collects texts on what fans of the era had to say about their fannish life, from fanzines, reports, letters and other sources. The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society began in 1934 as the Los Angeles Science Fantasy League, then a chapter of the *Wonder Stories* SF League. It still exists and is by now the oldest continuously active sf club. In the 1940s they had a clubhouse on South Bixel Street (WWII made that "Strasse", German for street), which became the centre of vibrant activities. Fans were there almost 24/7 using typewriters and mimeographs, reading the pulps of the club library, chatting, feuding, partying... Close to the clubhouse fans lived in "Slan Shacks" of Tendril Towers and Morojo's big flat.

I've always been interested in fannish communities, like LASFS New York Futurians also of the 1940s, 1950s Irish Fandom, the Epicentre and The Flat in 1940s London. (And I like to add the stormy life around the SFSF clubhouse in Stockholm 1977-1981, though we weren't as advanced...). Bixelstrasse housed legends like Forry Ackerman, Morojo, Walt Daugherty, Francis T Laney, Charles Burbee and many others. This book is a cornerstone of the bookshelves of any fan history library! You get fascinating 550+ pages, which must have been a real Daugherty Project that really happened to research and collect. If you are the least bit into fan history, get it! Let me briefly mention some of episodes, among many more:

✂ Many meetings, held every Thursday, are described through excerpts of the official protocols. As I understood those were written after each meeting and read on the next. After that it would be official business (as electing a new officer when an old resigned, which they often did...) followed by a lecture by a guest speaker or a member. Last there'd be a lively discussion about anything, some fuss, fans trying to exclude each other, alliances... Meetings were numbered, and in the book, which ends around 1950, they reach near meeting #500. Normal attendance was from a dozen to ca 30.

✂ We have the Tendril Towers, a nearby apartment house (you rented by the week, \$1/w) where many fans lived. The landlady like them, perhaps because she was a card-carrying communist and liked odd people... A handful of the fen were even recruited to the commie party, which I interpret more like a folly by naïve youth who is easy prey to utopian silliness (they probably changed their mind later, hearing of Stalin's terror, mass murder, oppression). BTW, member Sam Russell was in the 1950's revealed as writing reports to the FBI about those commies! Tendrilians were also claimed to be homosexuals, though in that regard we hear some exaggerations by Laney.

✂ We have several descriptions of the interior of the Bixelstrasse clubhouse but not many photos. It was ca 6x9 metres in size, with three bookshelves (holding books and mags), a couch, mimeographs, typewriters, a radio, original pulp magazine art on the walls, a rug on the floor, 20 folding metal chairs, a WC in the back and the LASFS coat of arms painted on the window facing the street. We read how it was repainted once, with a brown floor, light green walls and a light blue ceiling, from earlier have had a grey floor and cream coloured walls with a blue rim.

✂ Oh Ghod! The notorious Claude Degler spent some time there writing cruddy flyers and fanzines for his Cosmic Circle. It caused a lot of controversies, but it seems Forry and Morojo tolerated him.

✂ We read about the first time Forrest Ackerman got pissed, drinking like a sponge on a party in the Fran Shack. (Forry usually didn't touch the stuff! It might have been caused by 4SJ and Morojo breaking up.) That was FT Laney's home, which also was the base for the Outsiders, a break-away



40's LA fandom: A) Worldcon '46, Westercon '48, B) W Daugherty, C) FT Laney's "Fran Shack", D) LASFS Bixelstrasse clubhouse, E) LASFS' 1st clubhouse 1941-43 F) Clifton's cafe for LASFS meetings 1934-41, G) Morojo's flat & Slan Shack, H) Tendril Towers, I) Park w minigolf, fen hang-around, J) Sharkey's bar, dito

from LASFS group that existed for a while.

🔪 The Battle Creek Slan Shack fans rode in their car halfway across the continent to reach LASFAS where they were to establish themselves. But they had a lot of trouble, having - if I counted correctly - four flat tires on the way. But fans will always find a way to get through...

🔪 The atomic bombs dropped in August 1945 were of course debated heavily. And LASFAS actually organised Atomicon January 10, 1946 to discuss the subject. They also collected money to Einstein's campaign to keep atomic power away from the military. (The Astounding/Cartmill atomic incident isn't mentioned. I don't think it was known at the time.)

🔪 Ackerman in early 1947 tried to get 20th Century Fox to pay for using the club house in a film. They refused, saying they already had permission from the landlord. Anyway, it could be the 1947 film "The Homestretch" with is from 20th Century. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0039471/?ref_=nm_film_act_79 Forry was by the way often an extra in many films, sometimes together with other LA fen. (Movies of the era are worth researching!)



Russ Hodgkins and Walt doing some amateur publishing

🔪 In the late 1940's L Ron Hubbard became a regular at the clubhouse for a while. It seems he actually became quite popular, always having an entertaining - but perhaps not truthful - story to tell. Many sf writers, and also artists, frequented the club and several LASFAS members would have stories professionally published (eg E E Evans). Aside from Hubbard you could find Ross Rocklynn there, A E Van Vogt, E Mayne Hull, a young Ray Bradbury, Edmond Hamilton, and many others.

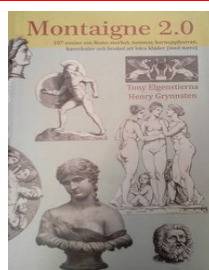
🔪 The feuds were many, but perhaps not as serious as Laney described them - in the form of "WWII becoming an anti-climax"... A curious one was about the club deciding not to send their fanzine *Shangri-L'Affaires* to the *Amazing Stories* fandom column, as the magazine was full of the silly "Shaver Mystery". It was the whacky theory that ancient aliens lived underground, from where they controlled mankind, which some took seriously (perhaps also editor Ray Palmer!). One wonders if Hubbard got some ideas from it. The clubzine editor at the time, Charles Burbee, saw no point in boycotting *Amazing* and resigned over this affair.

🔪 Another famous fanzine of the LASFS crowd was *Voice of the Imagi-Nation*, 50 issues 1939-1947 ("Imagi-Nation" being a typical Ackerman wordplay), which began as the letter column of their original clubzine *Imagination*. The LoCol then broke free under editorship of Forry and Morajo, with the principle that every received letter (738 through the years) would be published verbatim...

🔪 When dissatisfied with LASFS, members would break off into their own clubs or groups, not without some bickering, though most didn't last long. Some of the defectors are the Knaves, the Insurgents, the Outsiders or the short lived Futurian Society of LA. The Outlanders were a group of suburban fans who lived too far from Bixelstrasse to hang around, and thus had their own meetings.

🔪 Other activities of the club would be beach parties, parties for Halloween or other holidays, group visits to plays or movies. Forry eg organised for the club to see his favourite, "Metropolis", and he was overjoyed by at an occasion meeting the great Fritz Lang. In a long report he describes how he almost stalked Lang before finally making contact. Forry could be quite insistent...

🔪 In the end we get a long list of known members and Bixelstrasse visitors, a LASFS filksong and



Wanting to make this issue slightly shorter, just a little plug for a book I'll return to in a later ish. Henry Grynnssten, known from EAPA, and Tony Elgenstierna, a long-time fan, do a new take on the classic essays by Michel de Montaigne. Their own new 107 essays follow the subjects of Montaigne, in *Montaigne 2.0* (in Swedish, publisher Björkmans). The essays are everything from fun and odd to thoughtful and quite clever. See: <https://www.bokus.com/bok/9789187167058/montaigne-20-107-essaer-om-roms-storhet-tummarbarnuppfostran-och-bruket-att-bara-klader-med-mera/> and an interview with Elgenstierna here <https://unt.se/artikel/lz28pypl> Buy it or suggest to your local library that they acquire a copy!

a guide to the shifting, confusing "cliques" of the club. LASFAS moved from Bixelstrasse in April 1949, to West Ingram Street (and today it's 6012 Tyrone Avenue). The reason was increased rent (from ca \$30/month) and also that Walt Daugherty who had shared some of the cost moved his printshop away, so it became too expensive.

I'd better stop here, though I should get back to Bixelstrasse in a future ish. But this is the type of topic university scholars in 30-40 years will study and write learned papers on and have conferences about. Sf fans were and are quite a special group, talking about space and the future, having a rather interesting social structures and traditions and printing a steady stream of their own magazines. In younger days I invented a "Bachelor of Fanology" degree for myself.

But tell you what! In the future you will be able to study for and earn a B.F.



Mel Brown outside the clubhouse. Note the LASFAS coat of arms on the window.

History Corner

Time to whip up more dust from the newspaper vaults of the Royal Library, out of my fanarcheological digging in 2020, when the library opened the archive on-line a couple of months (as corona compensation, when physical access was limited). I'll translate and summarise. First a real oldie, talking about life from outer space but without knowing it being the probably first mention in Swedish press of HG Wells' War of the Worlds, "Bacteria of Space" in Aftonbladet, February 27 1903:

Världsrymdens bakterier. I en fängslande bok, »Världarnas krig», skildras, skriver en tysk tidning, huru en annan planets överlägsna invånare besluta att tillintetgöra jordens befolkning, men hindras i utförandet af sin afsikt genom de mikrober, som de under vägen stöta på.

Nu har en vetenskapligt bildad man framkastat den frågan, om det icke synes tämligen sannolikt, att i hela världsrymden förekomma bakterier, hvilka då och då komma in i vår atmosfär och sålunda smitta vår planet. På detta sätt skulle ursprunget till en hel del nya sjukdomar och möjligen också till många andra gåtfulla företeelser få sin förklaring.

Detta förefaller vid första ögonkastet som en äkta amerikansk idé och är det också så till vida, som den verkligen formulerats af en amerikan. Men likväl är den ej så alldeles ny. Den, som först gifvit uttryck åt ifrågasättande teori, är en man, som allt fortfarande anses såsom en af naturvetenskapernas främsta mästare, sir William Thomson (lord Kelvin). Denne uppställde den teorien, att lifvet nått fram till vårt jordklot genom meteoriter. Han antog, att frön, som drejvo omkring inom någon eller någon annan planets atmosfär, så småningom kunde komma upp i allt högre regioner, där enligt vår vetenskap mäktiga luftströmningar äro rådande, hvarpå de kommit utom tyngdkraftens område och vandrat ut i världsrymden, för att slutligen dragas intill någon annan himlakropp och där finna betingelser för en ny utveckling. Vid bedömandet af denna intressanta teori är det genom fysikens senaste framsteg konstaterade faktum af stor vikt, hvilket ger vid handen, att icke ens den allra starkaste artificiella köld kan utrota bakterier.

Det tyckes alltså, slutar den ovan nämnda tidningen, icke omöjligt, att nya smittor från kunnat tillföras jorden och sprida förut okända sjukdomar bland dess invånare.

In a captivating book, War of the Worlds, a German paper writes how the superior beings of another planet decide to obliterate the people of Earth, but are stopped by the microbes they encounter. Now a scientifically minded man has suggested if it isn't quite probable that the whole of space could have bacteria which now and then enters out atmosphere and thus contaminate our planet. This would explain the origin of many deceases and other mysterious phenomenons. At first this would seem like a real American idea and it is in a way, suggested by an American, but still it isn't new. The first to suggest this theory is one still considered as one of the most prominent in science, Sir William Thomson (lord Kelvin). He had the theory that life had come to Earth on meteorites. He assumed that the seeds floating around in our or other planets' atmospheres would after a while reach high, where to our knowledge mighty air currents are, coming outside gravity and wandering into space, to finally be attracted to another heavenly body and there create foundations for new development. To asses this interesting theory it's according to the latest known facts of physics important knowing that not even the strongest artificial freeze can extinguish bacteria. It thus isn't impossible, the paper says, that new seeds make come to Earth and spread hitherto unknown diseases among its population.

How about if this was the story of a certain virus called corona... This article seems unaware of that *War of the Worlds* is a novel by HG Wells, but then the first Swedish translation of it didn't come until 1906. The theory about life spreading through seeds drifting in space is known as the panspermia hypothesis. Another proponent of it was the Swedish Nobel chemist Svante Arrhenius, talking about it in 1903 - maybe he got it from this article? See

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

From drifting space seeds to space travel. One of those popularising sf over here, and also an expert on Harry Martinson and *Aniara*, was professor of mathematics Tord Hall. He wrote books on *Aniara* and sf, many articles, held lectures (I heard him guesting the SFSF club). Here's an early farsighted article, "Interplanetary Traffic", Svenska Dagbladet, April 21 1953, talking about the Arthur C Clarke book *The Exploration of Space*:

If Mankind's known history was compressed into one hour we've only been able to fly the last second. We can therefore count on that our abilities in the future will evolve even more...Logically next step is that we'll fly outside the air, ie in space. /Legend of Icarus mentioned./ Already at 20 km altitude the pressure is 1/20th compared to sea level, and this alone is enough to exclude now known aircraft from the really high altitudes, which seems to be reserved for the rockets not fully researched. ... Arthur C Clarke chairman of the British Interplanetary Society talks about this research in a both entertaining and easy to grasp way in his book The exploration of Space. It must be stressed he doesn't write so called science fiction but is based how writing exclusively on recognised scientific facts and theories. They are also more than enough for quite astounding projects. Against doubters Clarke notes that almost all rocket experts, lead by the German V" designers Dr Sönger and professor von Braun, enthusiastically promotes astronautics. /Clarke calls doubts on the feasibility of space flight "intellectual arrogance"! And we learn that astronautics will develop even more. The biggest obstacle is to reach escape speed./ After that the traveller may rest, free from earthly worries, since our planet can no longer catch him again. An everyday analogy of this is the cyclist who on flat ground can accumulate such a speed that he can climb a very steep hill to reach a flat plateau. The escape speed from Earth is 11.2 km/s and is still to much for our technology - in 1950 the record for rockets was only 2 km/s. But it isn't necessary to reach the magic limit at once. If a rocket reaches 8 km/s horizontally at such an altitude in

Tord Hall:

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Interplanetarisk trafik

Om människoläktets kända historia droges ihop till en timme, så skulle vi ha kunnat flyga endast under den allra sista sekunden. Man kan därför räkna med att denna nya färdighet i framtiden skall utvecklas ännu mycket mer. Vi är redan här i luften, och detta i långt högre grad än någon sin föregångare. Nästa steg blir, rent logiskt sett, att vi flyger utanför luften, d.v.s. i världsrymden. Sagan om Daedalus och Icarus visar, att denna tanke är mycket gammal, fast det bör tilläggas, att man ändå till för ca 100 år sedan inte skilde på de båda av flygning, eftersom jordatmosfären antogs ricka genom världsrummet. Så är ju inte fallet — redan på två mils höjd är luftens täthet reducerad till ungefär en tjugondel av sitt värde vid havsytan — och detta faktum ensamt räcker för att utesluta nu gängse flygplanstyper från de verkliga storhöjderna, som tycks vara reserverade för den ännu föga experimenterade raketen.

Rymdflygningen eller astronautik

ARTHUR C. CLARKE: The Exploration of Space. London 1952.

liken ställs alltså från början inför helt nya problem. Arthur C. Clarke, ordförande i Britiska interplanetariska sällskapet, berättar om detta forskningsfält på ett för alla både roande och tillförlitligt sätt i sin bok The Exploration of Space. Det bör understrykas, att Clarke inte skriver i den s. k. Science Fiction-genren utan baserar sin framställning uteslutande på erkända vetenskapliga fakta och teorier. Dessa är f. ö. och för sig mer än tillräckliga för att ge stoff åt de mest häpnadsväckande projekt.

Gentemot tvivelarna framhåller Clarke bl. a., att så gott som alla raketexperter, med de tyska V-2-konstruktörerna Dr Sönger och professor von Braun i spetsen, är entusiastiska förespråkare för astronautik. "Med sådana vittnesbörd inför ögonen", utbrister den 'eljest fridsamme författaren', "måste de påstående om rymdflygningens omöjlighet, som ännu ibland göres av experter inom andra vetenskapsgrenar, anses som nästan ofattbara exempel på intellektuell arrogans".

Imman vi går vidare bör kanske påpekas, att Clarke genom sin framställning av astronautikens nu

varande mål och metoder ej levererar de slutliga utan givetvis endast de möjliga lösningarna. "Om dessa ej kommer att accepteras, beror det på att någonting bättre har dykt upp under den mellanliggande tiden".

Hur skall då rymdflygning egentligen gå till? Det första och svåraste hindret reses av tyngdkraften, och det enda praktiska sättet att komma ut ur jordens gravitationsfält består i en kort, ursinnig rusing mot lufttomma höjder ända tills "the velocity of escape", som kanske kan översättas med "flykthastigheten", uppnåtts. Sedan må resenärerna själva vila ut ett slag, fria från i varje fall jordiska bekymmer, ty vår planet kan i fortsättningen aldrig av egen kraft infånga dem igen. En allmoglig analogi till detta eskapistiska händelseförlopp är cyklisten, som på jämn mark bygger upp så stor hastighet, att han kan ta sig uppför en mycket brant backe till en plan högslätt.

Flykthastigheten från jorden utgör 11,2 km/sek. och är ännu så länge alldeles för hög för våra tekniska resurser — år 1950 var rekordet för raketer endast något mer än 2 km/sek. Det är emellertid inte nödvändigt att genast komma ända fram till den magiska gränsen. Om en raket uppnår 8 km/sek. under horisontell flykt på en sådan höjd

i atmosfären, att man kan bortse från luftmotståndet, kommer centrifugalkraften och gravitationen att upphäva varandra. Befriad från sin tyngd skall då raketen likt en so-dykt upp under den mellanliggande tiden.

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the atmosphere that air resistance is negligible the centrifugal force and gravity will cancel themselves out. Free of weight the rocket will circle Earth like a second moon about every ca 90 minutes. This speed seems not impossible to reach within the next 10 years by constructing multi-stage rockets, which means that several rockets are connected in a series: when the first has burnt out it is dropped and the remaining system starts with the speed of the old, etc. As an example of a multi-stage rocket we have eg the German wartime project A9/A10. The rockets originally only equipped with scientific instruments will then have crews, with the fantastic task of building the first "space station" ca 1000 km above Earth. /Clarke doesn't go into details. Experiments are military secrets. But.../ He emphasise the science and technology benefits: meteorology gets a superb weather station, astronomy an observatory free from atmospheric distortions, the nuclear scientist an ideal laboratory to study cosmic radiation, radio and TV engineers elegant solutions to many of the difficult technical and commercial problems on Earth, etc. The space base will be a platform of astronautics towards the planetary system. Because it is here the real space rockets will start after they have in parts been brought there by other vehicles and been assembled in the free space in comfortable freedom from weight. (Every object floats free where it is dropped.) The rocket begins its flight with 8 km/s and therefore only needs to add 3.2 km/s compared to its base to reach escape velocity. While the rockets that will penetrate the atmosphere must be streamlined due to air resistance (the prototype ought to be the German V2) that spaceship that now flies in vacuum gets more free contours. Equipped with detection sprouts like radar antennas and other devices to communicate with Earth a spaceship may perhaps more resemble a giant, metallic beetle. Among the many and very instructive illustrations in the book there is a colour plate giving this impression. The first moon rockets will probably be unmanned. Instead they'll have rich scientific equipment, especially radar and TV. If such a rocket is launched the right way it can be made circling the Moon as a satellite and send pictures and data, not only from the near side but also from the far side, that no human eye yet has seen. Another

Tord Hall

(RETRYCK FÖRBJUDS)

alternative is to aim the rocket so that it takes a tour around the Moon and then returns to Earth about a week after the start. After the conditions of a voyage thus has been explored the first manned rocket could be on its adventurous way. The commander on this first spaceship to the Moon will only have to take a fraction of the risks of Columbus when he - with relatively less knowledge and equipment took off for a journey where he knew neither the course, goal or the dangers en route. /The Moon lacks air and soil but has the same elements as Earth. But a base may produce oxygen and fuel to be self-sufficient. A central base on the moon would benefit further trips in the solar system due to its low escape velocity. / To get to Venus only 3.1 km/s is needed due to the weaker gravity, while a trip from Earth would need 11.6 km/s. Comparing this figure and the mentioned start speed from Earth to the Moon, 11.2 km/s, shows a surprisingly little difference, and this throws a clear light on the most difficult and costly problem of astronautics: to break through the gravity field of the starting point. Out in space you can travel practically free. The closest coming goals for interplanetary traffic are of course Mars and Venus. The first would be to prefer, as we there can repeat the Moon base in a much bigger scale, under better conditions. Together with an utopian colour picture of a city on Mars Clarke tells about the problems and work that may occupy future pioneers. The outer planets will hardly invite colonisation. One of the Saturn Moons, Titan, is strange not only because it is a giant, but because it has an atmosphere of methane, which from what we can judge should be an excellent fuel for atomic powered rockets. It's possible that Titan will be a service station for exploring the outer parts of the planetary system. /Clarke then talks about economics. Space stations are expensive but won't cost more than a minor war. But we could end up in a war anyway. / Because space stations a few 1000 km above Earth will probably be excellent strategic bases, from which rockets can be launched to any place on Earth.

Odyssé

är fortfarande den enda verkligt stimulerande avantgardistiska tidskriften i landet. Nr 6-7 är dock långtifrån dess framgångsrikaste chock: det är förtungt av en besynnerlig artikel om science fiction av Lönnerstrand. Stilistiskt förefaller den dikterad av en ryndhund.

Lönnerstrand bidrar också med tre dikter, språkligt uppfinningsrika och av en viss rytmsk suggestion. Dock kan han knappast i något avseende måta sig med Odyssés lyriska galjonsfigur, Öyvind Fahlström, vilkens i tidigare nummer offentliggjorda poesi ibland når överraskande och hisnande effekter — som om orden brast under en och man hjälplöst föll genom galenskapen.

Per Lindström, Lukianos från Samosata och Cyrano de Bergerac (originalen) bidrar i övrigt med underhållande och föredömligt kvällande berättelser.

LARS FORSELL

AFAIK this article was spot on, except that space bases (stations) took longer than envisioned to build, while manned trips came faster - in a decade!

Now a little note on skiffy in cultural light.

Lars Forsell, a heavyweight and later Academy member covers sf in the culture magazine "Odyssé", in Dagens Nyheter, December 13, 1954, which is...:

...still the only stimulating avant garde magazine in the country. But No 6-7 is far from its most successful shock: it is laden with a strange article about sf by Lönnerstrand. Stylistically it seems written by a space dog. /The Space Dog was Sture Lönnerstrands prize winning sf novel! Lönnerstrand also contributes three poems, linguistically

inventive and with a certain rhythmic suggestiveness. But he can hardly measure up to Odyssé's poetic frontman Öyvind Fahlström ... Per Lindström, Lucian of Samosata and Cyrano de Bergerac (the original) else contributes with entertaining and exemplary strangling tales.

From mentioned content we see there was a lot of skiffy in that issue! Our genre had a certain cultural status in 1954. Aside from a poet, Sture Lönnerstrand was one of the first sf prophets in our country, and the mentioned Per Lindström an early sf author and publisher of the mimeoed literary magazine *Pan* (1953-54). Another early sf propagator at the time was Lennart Sörensen, who wrote many articles about sf, including here, taking a look south on "Niels E Nielsen - Denmark's only sf author", in *Aftonbladet* August 5, 1957:

While we in Sweden now have begun organise sf clubs and publish stencilled sf magazines of more or less acceptable contents, Denmark is as yet strangely lightly infiltrated by this genre, which has been such a success in the USA in later years. But there is a Danish author who does sf, namely Niels E Nielsen, born in 1924. Aside some articles, short stories and novels in traditional style he has through publisher Hasselbalch come out with three sf novels: It's Reported from Sahara (1953), Smith of Luck (1953) and Tree of

Niels E. Nielsen — Danmarks ende science fiction-författare

MEDAN DET I SVERIGE numera har börjat organiseras sf-klubbar och utges ständelade sf-tidningar av mer eller mindre acceptabelt innehåll är Danmark än så länge märkvärdigt litet infiltrerat av denna litteraturart, som blivit en sådan framgång i USA de senaste åren. Dock finns det en dansk författare som sysslar med sf, nämligen Niels E. Nielsen, som är född 1924. Förutom diverse artiklar, noveller och romaner i traditionell stil har han på Hasselbalchs förlag publicerat tre sf-romaner: "Det meldes fra Sahara" 1953, "Lykkens smed" (1953) och "Kundskabens træ" (1955).

Den första av dessa romaner laborerar med tidsbegreppet och skildrar hur mänskligheten nästan fullständigt tillintetgörs av ett slags kräftsjukdom, den s.k. "vita Döden". Den innehåller ganska mycket osmält läststoff, och utbroderingen av det i och för sig intressanta ämnet är en smula omogen. Betydligt mogenare och stilistiskt sett vida överlägsen "Det meldes fra Sahara" är "Lykkens smed", som berättar om några marsianers konfrontation med jordisk byråkrati. Den växlar mellan burlesk och tragik och dess sens moral är att mänskligheten än så länge befinner sig på ett föga utvecklat stadium.

Bäst av Nielsens romaner är otvivelaktigt hans senaste, "Kundskabens træ", den fascinerande och gripande historien om hur ett atomkrig framsläpper vildriga mutationsformer. Det är en mardrömsartad, skräckslagen vision av vad som kan hända oss, vi som experimenterar och leker med saker som vi ännu inte behärskar. Av Nielsens sf-noveller finns det skäl att nämna två som varit publicerade i den svenska månadstidningen *Häpna*: "Purpur-natten" och "Aftonbesök". Den förra, som i inledningen lätt erinrar om Bradbury's "Mars is Heaven", är i likhet med "Kundskabens træ" en predikan för upphörandet av atom- och välbombsexperimenten innan det är för sent; den senare är en bitter

anklagelse mot människorna, det djurslakte som — vara omständigheterna hur gynnsamma som helst — aldrig kan hålla fred. Ett genomgående drag i Nielsens författarskap är hans sympati för marsianerna, dessa kultiverade, intelligenta pacifister. Det låter kanske en smula egendomligt och fordrar en förklaring: allt det som Nielsen högaktar i människokaraktären har han projicerat på sina marsianer och alla de mänskliga karaktärsdrag han avskyr saknar hans marsianer. Det är ett nästan banalt enkelt sätt att illustrera sina teser men oenkligen verkningsfullt. Nielsen rubricerades vid ett tillfälle av Roland Adlerberth som "Nordens i särklass finaste sf-författare". Det är inga överord; Nielsen är djupt engagerad i sitt ämne och medveten om ansvaret att skriva sf. "Science fiction" har från första ögonblicket varit djupt allvar för mig" skrev han i det brev som upplästes vid sf-kongressen i Lund i fjol. Han koncentrerar alltid sin blick på mänskligheten, han vill skriva om "människor som kan gråta och le, förskräckas och missa sig" och inte om "känslösa stjärnvandrare som aldrig, aldrig blir förkylda eller faller i förundran över skapelsens ofattbara mångfald", för att citera ett annat avsnitt ur det nämnda brevet.

Eftersom svensken i gemen har en egenartad förskräckelse för danska apråk får man hoppas att åtminstone "Kundskabens træ" inom en inte alltför avlägsen framtid blir översatt till svenska. Nielsen är en författare som det finns all anledning att hålla ögonen på; med det utgångsläge han nu har förefaller det möjligt, gränsande till troligt att han kommer att kunna skapa genial sf i stil med Orwells "1984".

LENNART SÖRENSEN.



Knowledge (1955). /Titles translated. Note on headline: the other Danish sf author Niels Meyn had died a few months earlier, so Nielsen may have been alone in sf at this time.../ *The first of these novels experiments with the concept of time and describes how humanity is almost completely wiped out by a sort of cancer, the so called "white death".* /Interesting but a bit immature. More mature and stylistic is.../ *Smith of Luck*, telling about some Martians' encounter with Earth's bureaucracy. It moves between the burlesque and tragic, with the moral that humanity as yet is on a low stage of development. The best of Nielsen's novels is his latest, *Tree of Knowledge*, a fascinating and touching story of how an atomic war creates disgusting mutations. It's a nightmare vision of terror of what could happen to us, we who experiment and play with things we yet lack control over. Of Nielsen's sf stories there's reason to mention two which have been published in the Swedish monthly *Häpna!*: "*Night of Purple*" and "*Evening Visit*". The first which initially slightly resembles Bradbury's "*Mars is Heaven*" is like *Tree of Knowledge* preaching for a stop to experiments with atomic and hydrogen bombs before it's too late. The latter is a bitter accusation against the humans, the branch of animals - despite very favourable conditions - that can't keep the peace. A constant tendency in Nielsen's writing is his sympathy for Martians, these cultivated, intelligent pacifists. It may sound a bit strange and needs explaining: everything Nielsen admires in the human characters he is projected on his Martians and everything in humans he hates the Martians lack. It's a banal way to illustrate your message but without doubt effective. Nielsen was once proclaimed by Roland Adlerberth as the "without comparison finest Nordic sf author". It's no exaggeration; Nielsen is deeply engaged in his topic and conscious about the responsibility when writing sf. "Sf has from the beginning been deeply serious for me" he wrote in a letter which was read at the sf convention in Lund last year. His gaze is concentrated on the human, he wants to write about "people who can cry and smile, be scared and make mistakes" and not about "soulless star wanderers who never catch a cold or are overwhelmed by the sense of wonder over the incredible diversity of creation", to quote another part of the mentioned letter. Since the Swede in general has a strange fright for the Danish language we may hope that at least *Tree of Knowledge* in a not too far off future will be translated to Swedish. Nielsen is a writer it's every reason to keep an eye on. With the starting point he now has it seems possible, bordering the probable that he'll be able to create genius sf like Orwell's 1984.

That novel wasn't translated, but a later one, *The Rulers*, 1976, about artificial slave people rebelling. See the Danish wiki piece: https://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niels_E._Nielsen In reality, with just a little extra effort Swedes should be able to read Danish. Hearing it spoken may be another matter, but Danish text should be relatively easy. But people are lazy. Nielsen (1924-1993) appeared quite often in *Häpnä!*, submitting stories in Danish

and getting their first, original publication in translation to Swedish.

Sven Christer Swahn, sf author with tight fannish connections, had a series of sf articles in 1981. January 31 that year he covered fandom and tuckerisms or faaan fiction, in Göteborgs-Tidningen, "*Playful, harmless, nonsense*" (I cut away the headline and most of L Ron's beautiful face to save space, and below skip the in-text section headlines):

A thing worth saying about sf: it's a playful genre...It happens that sf writers appears in the novels and stories by others...to place a colleague as manic mass murderer from the satellite Sodom can't hurt. Sometimes I think that it's the playfulness of sf that makes it mature. As I already said it's not unreasonable to think of sf fandom as topic for a novel and looking around you see so much is

Det är en sak som förtjänar sägas om sf: det är en lekfull litteraturgenre. Man byter ogenrat idéer och vet att man har lov att låna och bygga vidare. I bästa fall kan sf-magasinen likna ett fortsatt och stimulerande meningsutbyte.

Det händer också att sf-författare dyker upp som personer i varandras romaner och noveller, bland annat för att författare alltid är på jakt efter bra personnamn, och om man samtidigt kan placera in en kollega som manisk massmördare från satelliten Sodom skadar det ju inte. Ibland är jag böjd att tro att det är det lekfulla draget i sf som är genrens verkliga mögenhetsförklaring.

• DET JAG REDAN sagt visar att det inte vore orimligt att tänka sig sf-fandom som romanämne, och ser man sig om finns det redan så mycket skrivet att man kunde tala om en hel subgenre. Många sådana romaner är måttligt roande.

Den fandomroman som kunde slå ut alla andra är en, som den också i Sverige välkände sf-författaren Philip José

SCIENCE
FICTION

Farmer gav muntligt sammandrag av på en sf-kongress i Köpenhamn för två år sedan. Jag hoppas han ger sig tid att skriva ner den en vacker dag. Det var härresande förvecklingar.

Dantes Inferno

Annars är min favorit i denna sällsamma litteraturart den korta upptakten till Larry Nivens och Jerry Pournelles "Inferno", där sf-författaren Carpenter på en sf-con beslutar sig för att upprepa det dumma vadet i Tolstojns Krig och fred, sitta i fönstret och tömma en pava. Han gör så, och alla sf-fans hurrar, men till sin grämlse märker han att de redan glömt bort honom eftersom Asimov kommit in i rummet.

Det är inte Carpenters bedrift som applåderas. Full och rasande stupar han ner i mörkret. "Jag tror inte en käft såg när jag föll". Han vaknar i Dantes inferno.

Fandom på svenska

• PÅ SVENSKA finns det väl inga romaner om sf-fandom? Ropa inte höj förrän ni är över bäcken. Jag citerar ur en nyskriven svensk roman:

"... som sagt morron efter första nattens. Hela hotelet som ett enda ostädad roomparty. Över-
terade fans distribuerade till fel
hotellrums fel sängar. Kall rök töl
som en aladd. Falsk morron, äk-
ta morron; dag redan och oöbegrä-
ligt nytra steg över trottoarerna
omkring. En af-författare som

långsamt och smärtsamt bullar
huvet mot väggen när han minns
att han har berättat hela intrigen
i en påbörjad sfroman för för-
tjust lyssnande kolleger och andra
demoner. Men medan sf-barnen
högljutt ropar på nya rullar i
filmsalongen sumlar sej redan
Mottram och kommitterade och
förbereder nästa steg i framtids-
spelet."

Så nog finns det fandomromaner på svenska också. En annan sak är att jag kanske aldrig bryr mig om att publicera den som ovanstående rader hämtats från, "Sf-galaxen". Jag har inte råd med böternas

Skämt åsido är det klart att en rörelse som sf-fandom, hur rand- eller frinze betonas den är, kan spegla samhället stort, rentav erbjuda särskilt tacksamma möjligheter, erbjuda ett pilotexperiment för det framväxande samhället i stort med grupperingar, konfrontationer, klassmönster, ekonomiska villkor.

Sherlock Holmes

• **PARALLELER?** Givetvis har deckargenren sina möten, kongresser och belöningar på samma sätt som i Holmesianerna har sitt att sköta. "Var Sherlock Holmes kvinna?" etc i det oändliga. Dagens deckarförfattare har dock inte samma önskan att leksa och att bevaka och kluter sin sammanhang. Ligger dock i sakens natur att deckarfans måste vara, hur ska jag säga, dels lite normalare, dels lite mer torligt utstydda.

• **SF-FANS** diskuterar rymden in i toto och bortom alla dimensioner medan deckarläsarna följt av Peter Weyers kommentarer, jag iakttaga hellre bland helgerna stjärnvandrar än i trossen till The Baker Street Irregulars.

Vill man leta efter det direkt våldiga, det annars harmlösa nonsens som sf-fandoms inre värld bjuder på, kan man ju inte förneka att några av de gruppen som bröt sig ut från sf-fandoms koder, bildade kultliknande enheter där det sjuka inslaget kan bli mer markant.



Lafayette Ron Hubbard, scientologikyrkans ledare. En gång en habil sf-författare. Mot slutet av fyrtiotalet fällde han sin odödliga replik: "Jag är trött på att skriva sf för en penning ordet. Nu ska jag bli rik på en ny sorts religion."

• **EN MÖNSTERGILL** framställning finns i Evans' *Cults of Unreason* från 1973. Han är experimentellpsykolog, när boken skrevs knuten som sekreterare till Brain Research Foundation. I tur och ordning går han igenom Hubbard och scientologerna. UFO-religioner, "österländska" vishetsläror. Det ögonblick lekmomentet faller bort blir det hela olustigt.

Evans belyser initierat hur medvetet inte minst UFO-troende pusslar med skenfakta och halvsanningar. Sif brukar i allmänhet två sina händer och avsvära all släktskap med kulterna, men det är hårt jobb.

Allt sif-kongresser avhandlar flygande tefat och gröna mån är något som resten av mänskligheten vet, och då är det fräckt att komma och påstå motsat-

Shaverianism

• DET HELA komplicerades av att en del av de här förestelserna onögen har ursprungskontakter med s-fgen och s-fs-fandom. Jag kan t ex nämna en rörelse som Evans inte tar upp, Shaverismen.

Shaver var en man som under andra världskriget fick telepatisk kontakt med en underjordisk grotta. Han tappade Manfred i golvet av häpnad. (Han satt nämligen och liste lord Byron när kontakten skedde).

Shaver fick på dolda tankevägar besked om att en gudomlig ras behövde honom, ibland besökte oss igen och höll ett öga på utvecklingen, och att de efterlämnat hemlighetsfulla inrättningar – klippböcker, kallade Shaver dem – där man kunde hitta bevis på deras existens. Deras maskinerier fanns fortfarande kvar i underjordiska grotor.

Scientologie

Shaver fick en tid tjära friskt i sf-tidskriften *Amazon* men förlorade kontakt med sf-fandom och fortsatte mera på egen hand tillsammans med id-sf-faren Roy Palmer. Shaver och hans "rock-books": där någonstans kunde sedan von Däniken haka på tjugo år senare

när Shaver redan var gammal och glömd. Han dog 1975.

• INGEN SF-LASARE kan heller förneka att Lafayette Ron Hubbard (född 1911) startade som sf-författare och faktiskt åstadkom några riktigt bra historier innan han mot slutet av 40-talet föllde sin odödliga replik: "Jag ska göra en förmögenhet på en sorts ny religion, jag är trött på att skriva sf för en penny ordet."

Maniska metafysiker

Hubbard gick sina egna vägar. Andra sf-författare var mer intresserade av metafysik än av pengar och några av de mest maniska sf-metafysikerna möter vi nästa gång: Dick, Sheckley, Vonnegut och andra. Under tiden lägger vi på en lämplig skiva:

"Har ni glömt Haldanes lag? frågade han. Universum är inte bara konfigurer än vi föreställer oss, det är konfigurer än vi KAN förstå oss. Det är Haldanes lag. Det är ganska givet. Själfandom utvecklas till en internationell organisation, som det har skett här på jorden, då måste det finnas andra världar med minst lika många beboare som denna. Grunden till det stora rymspelet ... Det är en gylljälk sak, bröder, att det finns en sandom i skyn, en sfpublik som spränger alla jordiska gränser. Där, i oavgränsade rum, varar det som i ett stort intebara som kött och blod utan upphylla till berättelser och sagorösen, porträtterade av sf-författare med fjälliga scensar eller egonen på skaff, penier som i intebara rum. Det är en gylljälk sak - utan att veta om det."

På det viset är vi inte bara objekt för våra egna fattiga förmågor, insättningar i vår brist här på en bristfällig jord. Vi rör oss fritt i världrymden tack vare helt andra solars och rasers skapande fantasier. Vi behöver egentligen inte färdas genom världrymden, vi finns där redan, det finns pocketböcker om oss på planeter som ligger miljoner ljusår från vår egen anspråkslösa hemvärld..."

Sven Christer Swahn

Tidigare artiklar i serien införda den 10, 14, 18 och 25 januari. Nästa kommer den 9 februari.

written that you could talk about a sub-genre...the fandom novel to beat everyone else is one that the well known sf author Philip José Farmer gave an oral summary of on an sf con in Copenhagen two years ago. I hope he'll take the time to write it down one day. It had hair rising complications. Else my favourite of this strange genre is the short intro to Larry Niven's and Jerry Pournelle's *Inferno*, where the sf author Carpenter on an sf con decides to repeat the stupid bet in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, about sitting by the windows emptying a bottle. He does and all the sf fans cheer, but is annoyed noting everyone has forgotten him as Asimov enters the room. The applause aren't for his achievement. Drunken and angry he falls down into the darkness. "I don't think a saw me falling". He wakes up in Dante's *Inferno*. But they can't be any stories about fandom in Swedish? Don't be so sure.

I quote from a newly published Swedish novel: "As said, the morning after the first con night. The whole hotel as one big untidy roomparty. Unsorted fans distributed to the wrong beds in the wrong hotel rooms. Cold smoke compact as aspic. False morning, real morning; already day and incomprehensibly sober steps on the pavements around. An sf author who slowly and painfully bangs his head against the wall when he remembers he has revealed the whole plot of an sf novel he has begun for colleagues and other demons happily listening. While the sf kids loudly yells for new reels in the movie saloon, Mottram /a character?/ and the committee already prepares the next step in the game of the future." So there are fandom novels in Swedish too. Another thing is that I may never care to publish what the previous quote came from, *The SF Galaxy*, I couldn't afford paying damages. But joking aside, of course a movement like sf fandom, despite being in the fringe, can mirror the larger society, even offer good possibilities, a pilot example for the emerging society in general with groupings, confrontations, class patters, economics. Parallels? Crime fiction of course also has its meetings, conventions and awards in the same way as sf. Holmesians have things to do. "Was Sherlock Holmes a woman?" etc in eternity. Today's crime writers have economics and other interest to guard and gang together. But in the nature of things crime fiction fans must be, how to say it, a bit more normal and also a bit more meagre. Sf fans discuss space and beyond all dimensions while crime readers debate about Peter Wimsey's ancestors. I'm rather discovered among crazy star wanderers than in the rear guard of the Baker Street Irregulars. If you're looking for the risky in the otherwise harmless nonsense that the inner world of sf fandom offers, you can't deny than some of the groups that broke away from the codes of sf fandom formed cult like entities where the crazy contents become more noticeable. /The book *Cults of Unreason* mentioned, discussing scientology, UFOs, Eastern teaching. It.../ illuminates on how especially UFO believers consciously juggle with faike facts and half truths. Sf usually washes its hands and rejects any connection to such cults, but its a difficult job. It is complicated by that some of these things without doubt have their origin in sf and sf fandom. I can eg mention a movement Evans doesn't mention, Shaverism. Shaver was a man who during WWII made telepathic contact with a cave /...and/ through hidden mental routes learnt that a divine race had lived on Earth, sometimes visited us again and kept an eye on the development, and that they left behind secretive engravings - scrapbooks he called them - where you could find evidence of their existence. Their machinery is still around in underground caves. Shaver roamed free in the sf magazine *Amazing* but lost contact with sf fandom and continued more separately together with the ex-fan Ray Palmer. Shaver and his "rock books" - there somewhere *Däniken* was able to hook ond 20 years later when Shaver was old and forgotten. He died in 1975. No sf lover can deny that Lafayette Ron Hubbard (born 1911) began as sf author and and in fact created some really good yarns before he in the late 1940's said his immortal line: "I'll make a fortune from a new kind of religion, I'm tired writing sf for a penny per word." Hubbard followed his own path. Other sf authors were more interested in metaphysics than money and we'll met some of the most manic sf metaphysics next time: Dick, Sheckley, Vonnegut. /in a coming article/ While waiting we start a suitable record: "Have you forgotten Haldane's law?, he asked. The universe isn't only stranger than vi imagine, it is stranger than we CAN imagine. That's Haldane's law., It is rather obvious that if fandom develops into an international organisation, as we have seen here on Earth,there must exist other worlds with fan movements at last as powerful. That's the basis for the big space game...it's obvious, brothers, that there is a fandom in the sky, an sf audience that crosses all earthly limits. There in faraway worlds, we people walked around not only as flesh and blood, bur raised to tales and legends. Portrayed by sf authors with tails full of scales or eyes on shafts, geniuses we don't know but who already know us – without we knowing. In that way we're not only objects of our own poor abilities, locked into what we lack here on a deficit Earth. We move freely in space thanks to the creative imagination of other suns and races. Inreality we don't need to travel through space, we are already there, there are paperback books about us on planets millions of light years from our own insignificant homeworld..."

SF Galaxen was later published in the *Nova SF* mag. Another mag with rockets and rayguns was of course *Häpna!* so let's finish with a little story about the other brother Kindberg behind it. (KG was covered in an earlier issue.) While editor Kjell Ekström did text editing, translations and such, the technical production of the magazine was the responsibility of brother Kurt Kindberg at their printshop down south in Jönköping. It has been said that Kurt had an unfortunate traffic accident in the mid 1960's, and it was the injuries he obtained that made it impossible for him to continue - and that was



Kurt Kindberg
direktör
Stockholm, 65 år

why *Häpna!* folded, early 1966. He later moved to Stockholm (to get better treatment?) and took a big stock of every issue with him that he sold cheaply (ca € 0.5/issue) through small adverts. I answered one of those ordering all issued I lacked, a huge bundle! It resulted in a phone call home for me, from Kurt! I lived with my mother (& brother) but there weren't too many Engholms and he had my address so he could easily look up (08) 388019. "Since it was a heavy package, collect it in person and save the postage..." he suggested. I got an address near Skanstull (southern downtown) and met a person at the door to some sort of office facility. I'm almost certain it was the person of the picture here, which is from a small Happy Birthday note in Dagens Nyheter, June 6 1984: "*Kurt Kindberg, CEO, Stockholm, 65 years*". It was around the year 1980 and at the time I didn't know much about their magazine, otherwise I would have taken the opportunity to interview him a bit about the inner workings of *Häpna!* Sadly I missed that, but I did get that huge collection of the magazine, and now had it complete. AFAIK you could buy a full set of *Häpna!* for a very reasonable sum well into the 1990s. BTW, I have also met KG Kindberg, on a minicon in the early 1990s.

Mailing Comments

Garth Spencer: Will those missed contributions appear later? 🚫 It seems difficult to get people interested in joining APAs. People writes on Twitter, Facebook etc today, instead in the form of little fanzines - but we need fanzines! They used to be the backbone of fandom, our "Internet on paper" powered by mimeographs and typewriters. 🚫 Yes, Intermission is a lot of work, but I will *try* to scale back. The issues became at least 1/3rd thicker in the spring 2020, as I got the newspaper archive clips to cover, and at the same time began writing about this virus shite. 🚫 About languages... First a definition: *primitive = low level of abstraction, it takes more effort to express some things*. Take computer languages, there're definitely more primitive ones. The most primitive is to feed in 0s and 1s directly, as with the console switches on the Altair 8080. Then follows assembler on a higher level, where codes represents 0/1 switches. And from there you rise in abstraction level to C, BASIC... Things like spreadsheets or "game engines" are on an even higher level of abstraction. Since computer languages have different levels, the same should go for human languages. There *are* languages that are more primitive. Take for instance colours. There are languages with only words for dark and bright. If you mean green you have to take a linguistic detour, saying something like "looking like a leaf". (The third colour languages add tend to be red.) Of course all languages can describe the same things, but with less abstraction you have to struggle to say some things and the description won't be as efficient. That's the same as being more primitive. 🚫 On Alberta and the bloody virus, tough "restrictions" have shown to be inefficient. Lockdowns may help marginally, but people huddling together at home may also infect each other. Masks tend to infect hands as you touch it and you don't bother with distancing. Vaccines make the real difference! 🚫 Careful! Make the slightest hint that you find Marilyn Monroes or Betty Pages a sight for sore eyes and you are "sexist"!

Henry Grynsten: You made a convincing argument that Mozart wasn't such a Wunderkind music history made him, with a PR dad, getting "help" with and "borrowing" compositions, etc. Your interview with the music historians is here interesting, but I don't have anything to add. 🚫 Asimov had interesting ideas on robots, psycho history and science and was right concentrating on that, and if characters of fiction are deemed "shallow" is secondary. Since humans aren't telepathic and can go into the mind of others, *fictional persons will always be different aspects of the author him/herself* - it's the only thing possible. But the very narrow exploration of just one (1) person isn't very interesting. Use your characters the way they're needed for the story, but don't treat them as any thing special beyond that. They are only the author in shifting disguise. Ingmar Bergman is a clear example. In Bergman scripts the major characters are the same neurotic Bergman himself, just facets of one and the same man. 🚫 I'm not sure that Finns have the highest dementia rate. Could be that Finland's medical system is better in picking up and diagnosing it. Finland also has a high life expectancy and dementia is connected to age. - your coffee/alzheimer statistics table is also a good one for lifespan! And could using saunas be a possible dementia factor? Sitting in a steaming hot hut, then to throw yourselves into ice-cold water can't be healthy! 🚫 As for conscious robots, I wouldn't call it "slavery" to have organisms with built-in urges. If you give a robot the urge to eg follow the Asimovian Laws the robot will do *what it wants*. It *wants* to not harm humans or through inaction...etc. We humans also have built in urges. We have the urge to eat, to find mates, to protect ourselves. I would define slavery as using force to make someone do what they *don't want*. Another point: I think machines can be very flexible and useful without consciousness. Dogs may be very useful but aren't conscious in any human sense. 🚫 "Equality" is worse for everyone as it denies we all are different individuals with shifting interests. Forcing everyone to be the same ignores individuality and means oppression: you must use pressure to squeeze everyone into the same mould. Sherry-picking Piketty has fingers are all red from his heavy picking. A source among many: <https://www.svd.se/thomas-piketty-trivs-bast-hemma> (sorry, in Swedish). He eg make faulty use of income before taxes, ignores benefits, treats investment and housing the same, ignores pensions, slashes incentive for growth, draws conclusions about the future confessing he has no idea of the outcome. Just some. Mr Norberg has covered the merry cherry party more detailed elsewhere, and he's not alone in critique of this berry farmer. You ask: "What if some people get 100 dollars a day for food and all expenses, and some get 1 dollar a day" Me: the worst off should of course be helped! You mention education levels, but that's not the

same as wealth. I'm all for improving education levels for all, but "equality" paid by high taxes *wrecks education!* Get more education to be high-paid and you'll be thanked by higher taxes. The payout from years and years of studying is slashed. Higher taxes for more "equality" counteracts education. In Sweden we now have a shortage of civil engineers. The tough (lots of math and equations!) typically 5-years long engineer training attracts fewer. (BTW, I generally think studies should be more math and science, less social science.) The best for everyone in the real world is economic growth, which the poor benefit most from. The plan saying "If you produce more we'll take the surplus, and if you produce less we give you extra" *can't possibly stimulate a growing economy!* "Redistribution" also *requires more bureaucracy*, which eats and kills resources. You need forms and paper clips to check everyone to see who gets what. I'm not against taxation, just think it should be lower but enough to pay for services like education, health, rule of law etc. (Majority of Swedish taxes today goes to "redistribution" in the shape of benefits. You can cut in that and keep services.) The ideal tax level seems to be ca 30% of GDP, which we had when the economy grew most, before the 1970s - when that level rose, growth dropped. Mexico's real problem is corruption, crime and poverty (1/8th GDP/c off the US). That tempts many to make fast bucks in the drug trade, creating insecurity and corruption. We see now with the pandemic, how the top-down governed society "equality" requires, lessens trust. Politicians who now are bossing people around with lockdowns, forced vaccinations, mask mandates etc have caused huge demonstrations, from Australia to Switzerland. Polarisation of society has to a substantial degree come from stupidity like postmodernism, at the universities from the 1970s and on. Students are fed corny ideas like "there are no truths", "you're guilty of forefathers' sins", "anything goes" etc - gender studies, race theory, identity politics and everything. The brainwashed will of course become activists. Forced "equality" and "diversity" means quotas - it gives uniformity and *decreases* free choice. It discriminates all who are "included" out. Your 7 year old OECD paper means education, not wealth issues, is possible growth obstacles ("main mechanism through which inequality affects growth is by undermining education opportunities for children"). As said I'm all for good education for all, but trying to do that by *generally* flattening things is off target and inefficient. But schools are often run the wrong way, and *that can be fixed*. Give pupils more facts, less opinions, give them grades and feedback, no "you are good as you are", give them challenges and structures.

John Thiel: From where is that Disney photo? A film set? 🚫 I too wonder where fandom is heading. Have no good answer. 🚫 To me it seems politics is creeping more into sf lately: Political Correctness, the fight around the Hugos, LGBTQ alphabet, etc. We note that *all person-Hugos 2021 went to women*. Feminism is "inclusive in a very odd way... 🚫 You mention some books I'd better check, could be interesting.

William McCabe: This new Omicron variant luckily seems to be very, very mild. At the time of writing only one (1) is said to have died in the UK, but five consecutive sources I checked refused to mention age or any pre-existing conditions, so presumably the patient died *with* and not from the virus and was 80+ years. Generally, hardly anyone is hospitalised by Omicron. Lockdowns ruin Xmas, making even more companies go

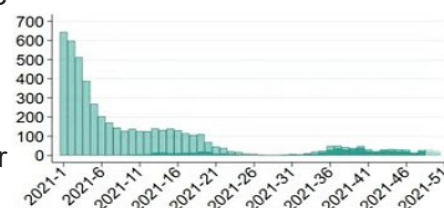


bust during their most important sales season. 10 000 UK pubs are said to be near bankruptcy. It's crazy for what is mild flu! 🚫 Yes, *Playboy* paid way better than other mags, but that was when they used to sell 7 million copies!. Now they have lost almost all to 'net porn and has now also gone all digital.

Roger Sjölander: Nice to see a contribution finally! Fanned often find crazy zine titles, but Bunkum would be a good name for a fanzine. Bosh too, a nickname for Bob Shaw. Zymurgy would also be appropriate. Rust works too - we oldfans are a bit rusty. You're good with finding fanzine names! 🚫 I haven't counted how many books I have read (these days I read some on my small E-book reader), but I guess it's 1-2/week. If we say 1.5/week it'd be 75 this year. I seldom reread books, a waste of time and I'd just be irritated by knowing how it ends. But I have read Asimov's original *Foundation* trilogy twice, and Tolkien's *LOTR* trice. 🚫 You too like Lars "LON" Olsson! A genius, he is! See "Blixt Gordon" ill! 🚫 No, I don't know any skiffy about divorce. But <https://www.quotev.com/stories/c/Science-Fiction/Marriage+And+Divorce> is supposed to be list - thanks

Ungle Google! - though haven't read any of it. 🚫 Maybe you could give us some memories on Stockholm fandom in the late 1970s, early 1980s, from the very special SFSF clubhouse years? You were there!

Finally: Swedish curves continue to be low. Infections go up as we know the Omicron variant spreads more easily, but ICU cases are few as well as deaths - it even drops, as this bug is very *mild*! Vaccinations in Sweden go well, lighter "restrictions" have given herd immunity from natural infections. We should question politicians pushing hard-line measures. Scientists say the very, very mild Omicron may give universal herd immunity, killing of Delta with a light flu... Yet we hear of "lockdowns" and panic from medically illiterate, opportunistic polittrucks. They want to seem "in charge" but damage economy, other healthcare, schools, society, trust, civil rights and much more, for the mild flu of Omicron! Go suck an egg!



Swe Public Health Agency, virus deaths Dec 22. Low and dropping!

--Ahrvid E, your local leditor

W.O.O.F. II

Prepared for the 2022 Mailing of the World Order of Fandom



“Man, We Harvesting Them Golden Apples, What Y’all Talking About?”

Edited and Published by John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904, at Press 250/Easy Press, and the email address is kinethiel@mymetronet.net . Done as a courtesy to the World Order of Fandom. You'll hear me shortly forthwith.

EDITOR SPEAKS



Looking It All Over

This was intended to be the Bruce Pelz appreciation issue, but it occurred to me that there had to be a group effort behind calling it that, so I'll just signify that the originator of WOOF did a remarkable job when he originated it, but leave out all the relevant remarks. He did several other remarkable jobs, too, but WOOF is the one we're looking at.

Where did all the onetime great fan sites go to? I suggest that they matured into the net magazines we see without telling anyone they were doing this, leaving their varied memberships behind. That's one way to do business, but they're still hard to find. (The sites, the magazines.)

In the mailing in which I had the first issue of this made-to-order zine, I had a sort of perzine appearance to things, although I didn't reveal any personal facts about myself. It was only like one of those in the sense that I was the only one in the issue, which is as it may be, but I had to come across as an editor, and a person

is not an editor if he is the only writer in the issue. I refer to myself here as an editor, and so I have to have something by other people in it, or I just wouldn't be what I said I was. Think if you pick up a hitch-hiker and he says, "This is what I like, making time and driving a Chevy Four, it's what I'm on the road to be doing", and you're the one who is driving. Or if you're driving some other vehicle than the vehicle he is in, and are just looking at him in another traveling vehicle, you hear the remark and you think, "WHAT? HE's the one who's driving! That guy doesn't get any driving awards just because he is in a car!" You might want to stop somewhere along the highway and get over it. (Sit still and shudder, calm your wrath.) You can see from this why I do not like to misrepresent myself. And so I have Selected Contents by others, and have corrected any grammatical mistakes that might be in them, and can forward the issue to them (without priorly discussing it, which is something an editor should do, but at least I'll be discussing it after having placed the material, if I do discuss it; most of my writers do things that can't be discussed. But that is the principle.) An editor also deals with feedback, but I haven't usually gotten any of that.

So, editor now, as I have pointed out. I haven't added the other stuff yet, but if I don't add it, I'll have to edit what I've said.

These woof productions are only occasional, note I'm a seasoned vet after one prior inclusion, and it would seem that an editor should come up with something extra special to package into one, or to have packaged into one, and I do that with photos which may interest or amuse people, and which they don't often see in fanzines, and after that I've got a joyous product which is a one-er as befits something that is that much a rarity in terms of occurrence. We have in fact a covering set of holidays which have just occurred, and I have signified the New Years one in this issue, pairing my ish with a major although yearly occurrence, the entrance of a New Year. Here I speak optimism; I'm expecting the new year to be a better one than the one just past, which I see no reason to speak about in terms of what were the faults of that year. It had everybody going by in the streets looking like phantoms, I'll just say that about it. Not that I'm putting down phantoms; they've come back from the dead.

This is a good time for looking it all over, and I've titled my editorial accordingly, but just looking it over doesn't have any real idea in mind or anything to be said that the editor would like to put across to the many who see the mailing. That's all right with me, because I've noticed that if one has a premise, it begets argument. And I like to do better than argue.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF THE MODERN AGE



“Who Digs Los Angeles Is Los Angeles”



“Lights! Action! Cameras! Phillies Lights, That Is”



“Bought ‘Em At Goodreads Bookstore”



“Just Kidding, Plenty Cosplay Going On”



“Well, Was Going Through The Rapture Worth It?”

I'd like at this point to say that I was charmed to be asked once again to contribute to the WOOF mailing; it made things brighten up for me to be asked. I hope people liked my first fanzine done for the WOOF mailing, and I hope they will like this one, which is more mature than the first fanzine I did for the mailing. Do you know why it is more mature? Because at that time I was a novice to the mailing, and had not yet had the necessary experience to become mature in the ways of it (you may note that I said "more mature"; I was not suggesting I was a complete infant in terms of what I was undertaking.) Having been mature enough otherwise, there was a certain amount of maturity to what I contributed, but I was not in a familiar place, and had not yet learned certain essentials, as you may say, did not have real insight into what was happening here, the secrets of the thing, as it were. And so I learned by experience gained at the "site" and through review when the mailing finally reached me. I could look at the zines and compare them with my own, and you will see by reading this issue of my zine that I have done so, and received some benefit by conducting this comparison, done not in print but when I was alone and looking it over. Then if asked again I would have something to show. I passed through the first experience and now have some foothold. I am old enough as a person, but have grown in fandom (again; there have been other such experiences, such as when I was accepted into APA-H). Do I like this "birth and rebirth" in fandom? Yes, I do. It's a sort of rite of renewal, which has little major effect in my life, but is well worth while to me anyway. I can tell some friends about the experience, and I know they will understand how it was for me and how it is now (in that then, when I have told these friends about it, and it will be just so for the future, with reference to this mailing.)

Interesting comment, of some note: In reading Lord of the Rings, I encountered a character named Tom Bombadil. I found this to compare with something in A TREASURY OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE involving Compair Bouki and the Monkeys. When Compair Bouki was acquiring control over the monkeys, he had a chant that went "Sam Bobel, Sam Bobel Tam; Sam Bobel, Sam Bobel Dam." As Tolkien referred sometimes to earlier lore, as with Treebeard referencing Bluebeard and Blackbeard, it may be that the author had read this treasury and took that into the making of the name for the character Tom Bombadil.

You read it here. Oh, you know that?

THE RUINS OF MARS by Will Mayo

Mayo on Bradbury

Once, long ago, I had a vision of an advanced civilization on Mars, filled with golden palaces and towers that reached to the sky and lovemaking among the gardens. I saw how this civilization destroyed itself and all life on its home planet with a variety of nuclear and chemical explosions and speculation filled with bombast. I wanted to write down this vision but I did not have the words. This was in the 1970s.

Today, I have the words. Today, I tell how Mars, through its pride and its vanity, destroyed itself billions of years ago, leading to a rotten core and an escaping atmosphere. I write down these words of pleasure in the rivers and lakes and the strange lives, so like ours in so many ways, that flourished there. And I tell how greed ultimately destroyed this planet. As it will ultimately destroy us.

Yes, I write. As the Earth crumbles around me and friends and family and strangers are a rare sight. My glass is full. And then is empty. I know only my own ruins.

HAZING by Will Mayo

Mayo on Dan Brown

There was this secret organization, known as much for its kindness to the poor as its secret handshakes, that was widespread and very powerful during the early years of the last century. All that got word of it wanted to join its ranks and join in all its good works. It had that kind of aura about it that attracted people from throughout the land. There was, however, one catch. In order to join this powerful, stable and valid organization, all prospective members had to, with no warning given, spend 24 hours in a locked room with a human skeleton. If they emerged from that room with their senses intact, they were then welcome to be part of all the club's affairs. But all of them, male as well as female, young as well as old, had to go through that trial with the room containing the dead. It was their own rite of passage.

The years have now passed. The halls of this once powerful group lie all in ruins, its members having dwindled to a handful that linger on in my nation's nursing homes. Many still have their senses intact and all remember that long ago, awful day with the dead. Yes, they may remember it but will only whisper it among themselves.

And the question remains whether those human remains used in those rites of passage were always obtained in the usual normal and legal ways that bodies are given in this world. Or was there ever some foul play at work here?

The clock ticks on. The years continue to pass. And the remaining members of this once powerful organization continue to grow old.

But no one says a word. No, not one.

Jezebella by Gerald Heyder

*She walks through the air slightly above the ground
as she traverses the Curseville moor in the desolate reaches
of the Oakwood Province. A beauty she is, a delight, in virgin white
gown, her renown*

established throughout the rural sylvan countryside.

Many have seen her, none have known her for a hundred years.

*Legend claimed she was maimed by a dastardly fate that came
to be her state of affairs, she was marooned to the vast Curseville moor
and there she roams amongst the wood and stones, and buried bones
of village graveyards, on moonlit nights.*

*I am going to seek her out, I will be a whisper not a shout
I will see her stunning beauty face to face, she's satin and lace in a burlap world.*

*There she is, not but three yards from me, I am frozen as a statue
she ventures to me and with arms open wide she envelopes me inside her embrace,
we are face to face.*

*"Come with me," she invites purposefully, I obey and we stray a path to the sea.
Her soft lips entwine with mine as we sup the wine of ecstasy neath a golden moon
that all too soon disappears and the night is black as an ace of spades as we wade
into the icy cold sea; she bids me be in a briny world of waves that behaves
not to my liking that I voice to her.*

*"You are safe with me here, have no fear, I love you dearly,
I am your Jezebella, I can be your umbrella of passion and delight through this night*

*and beyond!" She presses her heavenly body tightly to mine as we drink the loving cup of
wine that is only bestowed upon star crossed lovers through eternity.*

We slip below the surface and a realm of oblivion takes us deep into another world.

Our souls are a woven tapestry tightly knit into each other.

We become one in a liquid universe as we vanish into nowhere.

*Jezabella is written in the stars as she adds me to her harem of mortal lovers
in her immortal world.*

*Such is the mystery of the vanished
(banished?) lost souls in eternity!*

*"I fell in love with a ghost
but the most I got was not
a world of mortal bliss
just an imaginary kiss
and that's all there is,
fantasy is a bummer!"*

I think we might all want to give Gerald a big hand on that effort, in other words applaud him for what he has contrived, or clap our hands as is the custom in some places, though as we are in scattered places it might be a trace solipsistic to actually do this, so let's make it an imaginary burst of applause just as he says his poem is, essentially—imaginary. If it described an actuality applause would not be in place. But it is a real service the poem gives us by bringing back Jezabel, I think he had in mind, from two thousand years and more of "rest", showing a potency that transcends the ages and that he shares poetically with the readers of his poem. But, again, "Imaginary Lovers"...do recollect the warning that song gives. (Reading it might be worth deciphering the handwriting.)

THE SCIENCE FICTION CULTURE SERIES by Jeffrey Redmond

A brief description of a culture in space



The Culture Series is a science fiction series written by Scottish author Iain M. Banks and released from 1987 through 2012. The stories center on The Culture, a utopian, post-scarcity space society of humanoid aliens, and advanced super-intelligent artificial intelligences living in socialist habitats spread across the Milky Way Galaxy. The main theme of the novels is the dilemmas that an idealistic more advanced civilization faces in dealing with smaller, less advanced civilizations that do not share its ideals, and whose behavior it sometimes finds repulsive. In some of the stories action takes place mainly in non-Culture environments, and the leading characters are often on the fringes of (or non-members of) the Culture, sometimes acting as agents of Culture (knowing and unknowing) in its plans to civilize the Galaxy.

The Culture is a society formed by various humanoid species and artificial intelligences about nine thousand years before the events of novels in the series. Since the majority of its biological population can have almost anything they want without the need to work, there is little need for laws or enforcement, and the culture is described by Banks as space socialism. It features a post-scarcity economy where technology is advanced to such a degree that all production is automated. Its members live mainly in spaceships and other off-planet constructs, because its founders wished to avoid the centralized political and corporate power structures that planet-based economies foster. Most of the planning and administration is done by Minds, very advanced AIs.

Although the Culture has more advanced technology and a more powerful economy than the vast majority of known civilizations, it is just one of the “involved” civilizations that take an active part in galactic affairs. The much older Homomda are slightly more advanced at the time of *CONSIDER PHLEBAS*. This is, however, set several centuries before the other books, and Culture technology and marital power continues to advance in the interim.

The Morthanveld have a much larger population and economy, but are hampered by a more restrictive attitude to the role of AI in their society. The capabilities of all such societies are vastly exceeded by those of the Elder civilizations (semi-retired from Galactic politics but who remain supremely potent) and the Sublimed, entities which have abandoned their material form for existence in form of non-corporeal, multi-dimensional energy beings, but these generally refrain from intervention in the material world.

Some other civilizations hold less favorable views of the Culture. At the time of their war with the Culture, the Idirans and some of their allies regarded the control that the Minds exercised over the Culture as a form of idolatry. The Homomda regard the Culture as idealistic and hyper-active. Some members of the Culture have seceded to form related civilizations, known collectively as the Ulterior. These include the Peace Faction, the AhForgetit Tendency and the Zetetic Elench. Others simply drop out temporarily or permanently.

Editor’s note: As the series of books about the Culture has nine books and one short story collection, and was written over a twenty-five year span, one can imagine that the writer, once he had settled on writing the books, would spend a year or more contemplating what he had written and discussing it with other people and then write another, having gathered his further material also during the periods of time between books, and would sit down to his task fully prepared to add another volume to his series of advancements or explications of his original first work. Thereby we see a man who has devoted twenty-five years of his life to these works on a set theme and original creation of world-building. I would assume that he was deeply involved in the themes upon which he was writing and that things in the realms he created had as much significance to him as things in the world in which he lived, in Scotland, which residency added, I think, even more of an exotic tinge to his works.



Yes, yes, we look forward to many new things in the year to come.
Hoping all had happy holidays, I end this zine on this note.

Hail and farewell to 2021 ... from SFPA's own

SHAKESPEARE CONTENDER

**Guy H, Lillian III, 1390 Holly Avenue, Merritt Island
FL 32852, GHLIII@yahoo.com, GHLIII Press Pub
#1313. For the Southern Fandom Press Alliance and
for the Worldcon Order of FanEds, December 2021.**

This title may be a big brag from a bozo who wrote *one story* in 2021, but hey, Shakespeare never had a LOC in *Detective Comics*. Forsooth and bare bodkins!

That one story was “The Candlestick Maker”, the first draft of which I ran in *Spiritus Mundi* a few months ago. I wish I had waited, since I improved the story the second time I slogged through it and have been tweaking it ever since.

Maybe I'll run the latest version in *Challenger* #43, a zine I've been talking up all year, and which represents the major SFnal frustration of 2021. No kidding; I have Theodore Sturgeon's entire fictional *oeuvre* enshelved within reach of my left hand, articles on and speeches by the great man in a drawer by my right, and interviews, TV shows, radio shows, printed book reviews and lots of Jay Kay Klein photos electronically etched into the computer in front of my eyes. But I need time to read it all and to collect material from those who've pledged articles and memories. For the first time, I shall leave a year of the GHLIII Press with one of its numbers unfinished. Remember where you were when you heard the news.

This disappointment ranks second among fannish gloom only to our general isolation, alleviated by a December visit to Nawlins and old friends there. For SFPA, I will write up our journey – part deliriously happy, part crushingly sad, part physically and emotionally exhausting. WOOF can live without it. But the *Challenger* frustration stands well above the fact that we didn't make it to the Worldcon. I didn't need the Worldcon in 2021. DisCon III insulted and injured our SFPA Sista Toni Weisskopf and allowed a calumny against the preeminent creator in our field to befoul the Hugo awards. I planned to be on a ZOOM panel talking up fanzines with Cheryl Morgan, but that's it.

It's not that I've lacked for free time. Since no adjunct work opened up at Eastern Florida State in 2021, thanks to our pal, the mutating virus, I've devoted the days' long hours to naps. 2021 has been the year of screwy sleep rhythm. Bed at 11:30. Light sleep till 1. Up till 3. Sometimes 4. A few times all damn night. Daytime, off-and-on groggy collapse. Only when a welcome nighttime cool settled over mid-Florida did I find a sane slumber schedule. And then of course it got warm again.

To otherwise fill my waking hours, I've read, watched TV and a few movies, sold a few books (*eBaying at the moon*, you could say), critiqued some of Joe Green's manuscripts, and done a little writing – see above. Add the usual fanzines. *Challenger* may be running late, but in this past year I've kept up my personal string of at least one fanzine each month. Counting the ephemeral *Chall* #43, I've added 20 pubs to the GHLIII Press log:



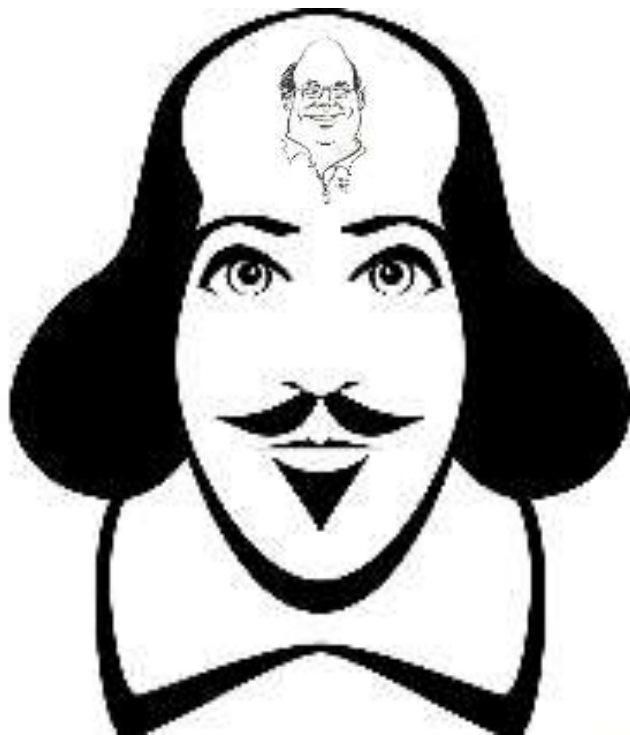
six *Spiritus Mundis* for SFPA, three *Zine Dumps*, my well-received “zine about zines,” eight issues of *Spartacus*, my generally-distributed opinion rag, plus another mc-zine and this whatever-it-is. Not impressive? Hey, Shakespeare never wrote a mailing comment in his life!

Nor did he ever come up with **THE YEAR IN REVIEW!**

Several classy SF and fantasy novels passed before my eyes in 2021 -- *The Only Good Indians* and *Piranesi* were outstanding; the latter won my Hugo vote in a year when “No Award” dominated my ballot. I read as much Theodore Sturgeon as I could. As you see above, I have much more on hand. In the visual arts, I often bathed in brilliance -- *A Quiet Place II*, *Last Night in Soho*, Kenneth Branagh’s Roma-esque *Belfast*, the exquisite Jane Campion film *The Power of the Dog*, the new (and far superior) *Dune*. On streaming television, I loved the extraordinary Broadway musical *Come from Away*, Steve Martin Short’s clever *Only Murders in the Building* and the horror serieseseses *The Squid Game* and *The Haunting of Hill House*. Topping the works was Oscar Isaac and *CHASTAIN*’s *Americanized Scenes from a Marriage*. Their finest acting ever. Goddess Jessica is collecting award nominations for both *Scenes* and *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*; she merits the lot. I don’t recall being afflicted with any real stinkers on streaming or in theaters this past year; Dwayne Johnson’s goofy *Jungle Cruise* and *Red Notice* were stupid, but inoffensive fun. If a show on Netflix turns out to be a barfer, I just get up and leave.

On network TV, watching the big-money winners line up on *Jeopardy* has been a mild hoot. I’ve tolerated and occasionally enjoyed *Yellowjackets*, *Big Sky*, *Dexter* (not network, but great stuff), *The Rookie*, the ridiculous *La Brea*, and, at the top of the series TV list, *Law & Order:SVU*. They often screw up the legal stuff on that show but its dramatic value is the highest on the box.

From our backyard in 2021, Rosy and I watched a dozen or more rocket launches from Canaveral. Following this theme, I enjoyed the nonsensical stunts of the competing billionaires sending themselves and rich celebrities to the edge of space: an obvious waste of resources, but William Shatner’s silent “Wow!” on viewing the Earth from beyond the wild blue was too cool to miss. Alas, no one in 2021 braved the twin threats of COVID-19 and my conversation to see a launch for themselves.



All, though, was eclipsed by the show of shows from D.C. on January 6. Bam! Instant buzzkill. At the moment, with none of the truly destructive and violent incidents on camera, I got a loony kick out of the mayhem – but the more we’ve seen, the more we’ve learned, the worse things look. We have a decent President in America now, dedicated to solving the nation’s problems, but less than a fourth into his term polls say the people are turning on him. Yeats wrote ashamedly about condemning “the people,” but I can’t share his regret – not when dealing with Trump, his troops, and the media vipers who champion their villainy. It’s going to be a rough 2022.

Nevertheless, old man in early dotage or not, I have resolutions for 2022: to work on my public defender memoir, the Sturgeon *Challenger*, and my grossness. I’ve decided to seek physical therapy – building strength and attitude for our April in Paris ... and London, and Edinburgh. And though a recent trip to Barnes & Noble convinced both Rosy and me that every human being who

has ever lived, plus several kangaroos, has written a book, I must continue writing. There’s this old high school revenge story that keeps *needling* me ... And thereby hangs a tale!

Askew #35

December 2021



No, no, NO! I said
“askew,” not “a screw”!
Sheesh...!



SPECIAL PUBLICATION FOR WOOF 2021

Finally! It’s another issue of the personalzine perpetrated by John Purcell.

Contact information: John A. Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845

Via email: askance73@gmail.com Contents © 2021 by John A. Purcell

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Art credits: all nicked from the aethernet and/or Word stock images, which does make my life easier. If anybody out there reading this feels artistic enough to draw little filler pieces, feel free to do so and send them my way. I definitely would be most appreciative.

=====

This fanzine was begun the first week of October. It is now one week before Christmas as I return to it. Fall Semester 2021 was horrendously busy for practically everyone at Blinn College as enrollments jumped due to classes going back to the traditional face-to-face format, in addition to the plethora of learning modalities now available thanks to the coronavirus pandemic – which is still going strong, if you haven’t been paying attention. All I can say is that I wish things were much more “normal” than they claim to be already.

There are so many things that can and likely will go wrong in the months ahead. Case in point: the current omicron variant is now making its way around the world, especially here in the United States where still too many people who should know better are not vaccinated. Part of me expects mask mandates to be reinstated in various states for various companies and institutions, such as nursing homes, clinics, and hospitals. Eventually Covid-19 will mutate itself into an endemic status, meaning it can be managed via an annual vaccination shot much as people willingly get their flu shots and other required inoculations for enrolling children in school or entering the military. That sort of thing.

For Valerie and I, we are intently monitoring travel restrictions and other indicators regarding getting up to Vancouver, British Columbia next March for Corflu Pangloss. At the moment our plans are on hold: our hotel reservation is made, but not plane reservations because this situation is in such great flux. Stay tuned, gang, for further developments.

Music, Music, Music!

To follow up on this topic I broached last issue, the demo I recorded at the end of May 2021 is currently in the planning stages for a remix that will entail some additional tracks being laid down to augment the original masters. This will probably require at least six hours down in the Red Barn Studio in Navasota,

Texas, which doesn't bother me at all mainly since I would like to record another song or two. Meanwhile back at the homestead, I downloaded Audacity (recording software recommended by Bill Mills out in Las Vegas) so that I can do some recording and mixing of tracks in the comfort of my own home, taking as much time as I want and saving money in the process. It's a win-win for the home team.

The other good news is that here in SouthCentralEastern Texas local music venues have slowly begun reopening, despite the onslaught of the Delta variant making Covid-19 infection numbers rise again last fall, and now venues have begun hosting open mic nights again. So far the only one on the docket for me is held on Wednesday nights from 9 to 11 PM at the 101 Club on Texas Avenue in Bryan, Texas, a short ten minute or so drive from home. The earliest open mic night started up at the end of August, and the Singer-Songwriter night (usually Thursday evenings) at the Village Inn Café in downtown Bryan has restarted as well. By the end of October 2021, other venues reopened with live music, too. I have since learned of quite a few other local venues with open-mic nights. This has been like watching a slow avalanche: it is happening, just be careful because if you're not you could get buried.

Face it. I wouldn't mind digging out from underneath a wealth of potential venues to play. The more one plays, the better one gets. At least that's the theory.

All Fandom has Plunged into Another Holy War

Again. This time it's about what happened over the site selection of the 2023 Worldcon at the just concluded (as I type this paragraph at noonish on Sunday, December 19, 2021) DisCon III. Sure, there are the typical gnashings of teeth and dentures being thrown at each other over the Hugo Awards, which is an annual hissy fit: at least, that is how I see them. At any rate, if you haven't heard already the 81st World SF Convention shall be held in Chengdu, China in mid-August of 2023, largely as the result of a swarm of mail-in ballots over the last few months. The runner-up Winnipeg bid fell far short with 807 votes; Chengdu received 2006 votes. Even though the Memphis bid was withdrawn a few months ago, it still received 7 votes, and there were 18 other write-in votes for assorted silly bids. I was disturbed by the lack of any Minneapolis in 73 votes, but I digress. My preference was originally Memphis, then shifted to Winnipeg because I know people there and they have a good solid fannish history going up there. The fact that Chengdu won with a large voting block does not surprise me. Over the past decade or so I have been impressed by the science fiction coming from China, and it keeps growing every year. There is obviously a huge sf fan base in Chengdu – and elsewhere in China – so I wish them good luck in getting their Worldcon up and running.

Apparently, the proverbial fecal matter hit the spinning air circulation system at the WSFS Business Meeting regarding the language in the site selection voting procedures. Okay. I am no parliamentarian nor a big fan of Worldcon running, let alone their rules and regulations, so this kind of thing goes flying over my head. Plus, I have no idea what transpired there, so everything I hear about what the Winnipeg people did and said comes to me at least thirdhand. In addition, I am well aware of the Chinese government's terrible treatment of the Uighur among many other humanitarian issues that the Beijing regime is responsible for over the years. The science fiction fan community in Chengdu will have a difficult tightrope to walk as it prepares for the 2023 Worldcon. I won't be going, that's for sure, but I do wish them all the luck in the world to pull it off and make their convention as successful as possible.

Meanwhile, the foofaraw over the site-selection voting and the politicizing about it is not something I wish to get into. I shall leave that to the fannish feud experts.

Recently Read Books

The last nine months have been a reading extravaganza for me. Herein are mini-reviews on the books I have read since the start of the school year (end of August 2021), in addition to the science fiction and mystery magazine subscriptions I receive. If I feel up to it, the next issue will likely tackle some of those.

***Riders to the Stars*, novelization by Curt Siodmak of the 1953 Ivan Tors movie of the same title. Ballantine Books, 1954. 166 pp.**

This book was a fun read, although it did not make me want to re-watch the movie this was based upon. Frankly, I read this so long ago that I barely remember the plot, and right now I have no desire to get up and find the book to see what the back cover blurb says. Let me just say this was an okay story thanks to Curt Siodmak, who scripted many a 1950s skiffy movie.

***The Girl in the Golden Atom*, by Ray Cummings: first published in 1919 as a short story in *Argosy* that was expanded into a full-length novel published in 1923. [Project Gutenberg, read on Nook]**

I have a lot of old science fiction, fantasy, and mystery books on my Nook, and this is one of them. Again, very dated sf, and quite sexist, but the concept of worlds hidden within worlds – that atoms themselves are comprised of even smaller structures – is well explored and even fun. Lots of extemporization with massive info dumps on the reader, but I can see why this story is considered an early pulp classic.



***The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O.*, by Neil Stephenson & Nicole Galland. William Morrow (2017), 742 pp.**

Okay. This is a massive book, but it is massively fun and hard to put down. This is a grand bit of adventure spread out across a millennium as characters plunge back and forth through historical eras in an effort to save magic. I highly recommend it.

***The Compleat Enchanter*, by L. Sprague de Camp & Fletcher Pratt. Ballantine/Del Rey (1976), 420 pp.**

More classic fantasy by probably the best collaborative pair of authors I have ever read. These misadventures of Harold Shea, a unwilling time-traveling “wizard,” are fun, energetic, and a must-read for any science fiction and fantasy fan. Yep. Highly recommended.

***The Trial of Terra*, by Jack Williamson. Ace Books (1962), 159 pp.**

Jack Williamson was the first real science fiction author I read when I was 12 or 13 years old. Whenever I want a good, solid space opera to entertain me, he is one of my go-to writers. This particular book is not one of his best, but it’s still enjoyable. I love the concept of humanity being judged as being worthy of joining galactic civilization. Space Opera at its best and worst between covers.

***Honeymoon in Space*, by George Chetwynd Griffith, first published in 1901 in *Pearson's Magazine* as *Stories of Other Worlds*, [Project Gutenberg, read on Nook]**

Another Nook text, and while this does have some merit – the unique propulsion system and description of the spaceship is worth it – the vast majority of this overly religious polemic is overwhelming, especially in the last three chapters. Not exactly recommended except for its historical place in scientific romances that were popular in the late 19th and very early 20th centuries.

***The Stars are Ours!* by Andre Norton. Ace Books (1963), 183 pp.**

Many sf fans credit the works of Alice Mary Norton (1912-2005) as their introduction into science fiction. Norton's fiction is fast-paced with strong protagonists and thrilling adventures as they wriggle out of various tight spots, and *The Stars are Ours!* is one of her best. This is the story of Dard Norris and how Earth of the year 2500 AD hates science and enslaves scientists, and Norris unwillingly becomes a key figure in the fight for the future of humanity's freedom.

***Gulliver of Mars*, by Edwin L. Arnold. (1905), 161 pp. [Project Gutenberg, read on Nook]**

Another romantic fantasy from the turn of the century (1890-1910), this book is often credited with inspiring Edgar Rice Burroughs to write his Barsoom stories of Mars. The parallels are many: *Gulliver of Mars* reads very quickly, has a love interest for our intrepid hero from Earth, with lots of adventure and exploration of the unique civilizations on Mars. Definitely worth reading for its historical importance in science fiction literature.

***I Speak for Earth*, by Keith Woodcott (John Brunner). Ace Books (1961), 120 pp**

I speak for readers: don't bother! An early John Brunner effort that is Ace Doubled with the Ray Cummings' 1932 classic *Wandl, the Invader* (first published in *Astounding Science Fiction*), *I Speak for Earth* is interesting possibly only for its exploration of creating a multiple identity individual who is essentially an emissary to a galactic civilization – gee, that sounds familiar – to see if humanity can join in the fun.

***Trouble With Lichen*, by John Wyndham. Ballantine (1960), 160 pp.**

So you want to live a nice long life? Maintain your beauty for a couple centuries in the process? Not a problem. Use this cosmetic cream. However, immortality has its limitations, and John Wyndham – one of many pseudonyms of John Wyndham Parkes Lucas Beynon Harris (1903 – 1969) – explores very thoroughly how people would react in terms of science, religion, business, politics, and power. I have always liked Wyndham's fiction, and do recommend this book.

***The Best from Fantasy and Science Fiction, Sixth Series*, edited by Anthony Boucher. Ace Books (1957). 254 pp.**

A great collection of short stories and a handful of poems first published in the pages of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction in 1955 and 1956. Some authors in this anthology are Frederik Pohl, Ward Moore, Poul Anderson (two stories from him!), Cyril Kornbluth, Ray Bradbury, Theodore Sturgeon, Avram Davidson, and some hack named C. S. Lewis. There are other stories by Mildred Clingerman, Jay Williams, Charles Fortenay, Rachel Maddux, and Ron Smith. Not a clunker in the bunch.

Skewed Results

Letters, I get letters! It makes me want to wag my tail...

*MAIL!!! *ahem*My apologies. It is time to see what struck reader's attention in the previous issue. Topics in the 34th issue covered politics (again), books, music making, and a wee bit about the NHL playoffs.*

Ray Palm
Boxholder
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17 July 2021

You said you think we're screwed when it comes to politics, repulsive stupid Republicans, and lame too-polite Democrats. You wanted someone to convince you otherwise. Sorry, I can't.

I know Trumpian Repuglicans are and can be stupid but this incident wins hands down. Congressman Louie Gohmert doesn't believe climate change is man-made, it's just the forces of nature at work. During a subcommittee hearing he asked the associate deputy chief for the National Forest System if climate change could be fixed by altering the orbit of the moon or the Earth's orbit around the sun. (<https://bit.ly/3krbo8S>) I didn't know the Forest Service was part of the Space Force. *{Crazy Louie seems to think so.}*

Previously Gohmert claimed he got Covid 19 from wearing a mask. The GOP is the anti-science party. Gohmert and his ilk should've been alive during the Dark Ages. Then again, with the last president we were plunged into a dark age and are struggling to get out of it.



Good luck with your music endeavor. I have no musical ability and I admire people who can be creative through song.

Among the books you reviewed was *Swords & Deviltry* by Fritz Leiber, one of my favorites. I have to dig out my copy that's buried somewhere since I moved after being stuck in the same dump for 25 years.

Take care and don't wear a mask or you'll get Covid

19! And remember Rush Limbaugh said there were 18 other Covids before this latest one.

Ray Palm

{Thank you, Ray. In fact, even though I am fully vaccinated and now boosted, I still wear a mask in public. Oh, and did you see that Ted Nugent also ranted about how we never heard of the earlier 18 versions of Covid? The stupid, it hurts.}

Lloyd Penney
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Etobicoke, ON
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21 July 2021

Askew 34 is at the top of the list, and I seem able to stay about 15 zines behind, that's my pace, so here goes with a fast loc.

I really shouldn't pay too much attention to American politics, seeing we have enough Canadian politics to put up with, but it seems that right-wing parties are able to bypass logic completely. The Republican Party, and some in our own Conservative Party, are completely anti-vaccine and anti-mask. That flies in the face of logic, my logic anyway. I see CNN wondering what the Rethugs are smoking. The value of masks and vaccines have been proven repeatedly, but do they say these things because they honestly believe them, or are they saying these things to simply disagree with the Democrats? It's a total WTF. *{American politics is definitely a full-time job, and I have read a fair amount about what the Conservative Party in Canada promotes. My thinking is that leaders on the political right are practicing hypocrisy as a daily regimen: most of America's GOP leadership is vaccinated and boosted, yet they still push against wearing masks and are anti-vax. They want it both ways to (1) stay alive and (2) stay in power. That sounds rather simplistic, I know, but it sure makes sense. It is not a WTF to me: those in power will do whatever they want and can in order to maintain their power and control.}*

Good to see that Juneteenth is a national holiday in the US...but do many Americans realize why holidays are declared, or do they think any further than, "Hey! A day off!" I see lots of complaints about June 19th and wonder of all men in the US truly were created equal. Good words, but useless if they are not put into full effect. In our own politics, we are all being made to see how not only blacks and Asians, but our indigenous people are treated terribly. So far, for not only Canadian residential schools, but American schools as well, more than 2000 unmarked graves have been found around the schools, and most of them belong to children murdered, assaulted, raped, and otherwise killed by priests and nuns over the decades, all in the name of the Lord. Most of us are sickened by this...our government is offering an apology to all our indigenous peoples, and court cases may award their descendants billions of dollars in reparations. It will be tough, seeing that billions have already been spent to get us all through this pandemic, but I think it will be worth it. It may cause such a deep debt, we might not be able to get out of it, but something must be done. It is estimated that closer to 10,000 unmarked graves may yet be found once the geophysics is done on the various properties. *{Total agreement with you. These emerging stories sicken me, too. How can human beings become better human beings unless they can honestly address their past behaviors and atrocities in order to learn from these awful, horrendous events? There is today's rhetorical question, class.}*

The local...I am hoping for some serious action soon on the part of prosecutors, rounding up at least some of the Trump family criminals, and their cronies. It will be interesting to see if the Rethugs regrow their spines and tell Trump where to go. If not, there may be two right-wing candidates in your next election, which will definitely give Biden his deserved re-election. His hard work over the past six months is visible to all. I read that Trump asked his officials their opinion about his demand that those who might testify against him be executed. Some more WTF... America, you may never know how close you came to fascism and dictatorship. ALL politicians must be held up to scrutiny, no matter how good and

competent they seem to be. I agree that while Biden would like to work with the Rethugs, they are in no way agreeable to working with him. It's all a smokescreen. *{Yup. No argument there.}*

The numbers of people catching and dying of COVID-19 seem to be way down, but rather than wait for cases to drop to close to zero, right-wing pols announce that all is now open!, and go have fun, kids! I expect that our provinces with right-wing governments will suffer through a fourth wave of COVID cases. Sure, we'd like to get out there, too, but we are savvy enough to know that we must still be careful. We've had COVID, and gotten our two shots (the second ones on July 1st, Canada Day), and even now, there is the chance we might catch the Delta variant. We must remain vigilant if we want to get through this pandemic. We must also remember that while it seems to be in remission on this continent, the pandemic is still raging elsewhere in the world...

Fred Lerner reminds me that while I have enjoyed Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials and Dust trilogies, I have yet to fill out my collection with the associated books like *Lyra's Oxford*, and I think there's a couple more. Maybe my next treat...

I think I am done for the moment, and I can stand down and relax a little. Tampa Bay teams not only won the Lombardi Trophy, but also the Stanley Cup. I am no Habs fan, but it has been a very long time since a Canadian team has won the Cup. There is always next year, and I hope the Leafs won't choke like they did this year. With the easing of border restrictions, we have tentative plans to go to Astronomicon 13 in Rochester, NY around Hallowe'en. Now to see if we can really do that or have to buckle down for another lockdown. My greetings to the family, and see you with another zine RSN.



Lloyd Penney

(Thank you for writing, Lloyd, and a happy holiday season to you and Yvonne. () As I write this, the National Hockey league is shuttering team schedules and other games around the league due to Covid Protocols. Here we go again... (*) Our current convention plans still include Corflu Pangloss in March 2022, but that may be cancelled due to Covid travel restrictions, and beyond*

that nothing else is written in stone. I would love to get to Minneapolis for Minicon over Easter Weekend – I do have an attending membership – but again, I hafta wait due to potential travel restrictions. Welcome to the new fannish normal.}

WAHF listing: Jerry Kaufman, Ulrika O'Brien. That's all, folks!

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Ed Cox Memorial Doodle Space

TAFF ANNOUNCEMENT!

Hey, kids! Guess what is happening again? Yes, you are right, Virginia: there is a TAFF 2022 race!

Current Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund administrators Geri Sullivan (North America) and Johan Anglemark (Europe) recently announced that the 2022 East to West TAFF race is now open with four candidates all lined at the starting gate. Below is what I copy-pasted from the TAFF Facebook page; simply click on the embedded links or copy-paste them into your computer/laptop/handheld browser and read the full skinny on how this works and who is all in the running.



Voting in the TAFF race is now open. It will close on April 19, 2022, after Reclamation (Eastercon) in London. You can download the fill-in form ballot here:

taff.org.uk/ballots/taff2022_US.pdf (US Letter; A4 will follow shortly).

It has the candidates' platforms, the names of their nominators, and the voting instructions. Voting is open to anyone active in fandom before April 2020 who donates at least £3 (GBP), €3 (EUR), or \$4 (USD) to TAFF. Voting is also possible online here: taff.org.uk/vote.php.

Note: When counting the votes we will not apply the "20% rule" until the candidate with the fewest votes has been eliminated and there are just three candidates left.

Competing for the honour are these four great fans: Anders Holmström (Sweden), Fia Karlsson (Sweden), Mikołaj Kowalewski (Poland), and Julie Faith McMurray (UK). One of them will make a TAFF trip to Chicon 8, the 80th World Science Fiction Convention in September 2022.



As a previous TAFF delegate and administrator, I strongly encourage everyone to get involved and vote.



A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

NPR did an in depth look at the some of best SF books in the last decade. A very well thought out list.

I went to my first con since COVID. A brief report and pictures inside.

See you next month.

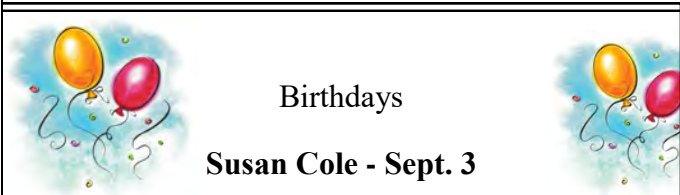
NPR: Your 50 SF and Fantasy Books of the Past Decade

This was a list composed by a panel of judges. The judges were Amal El-Mohtar, Ann Leckie, Tochi Onyebuchi, and Fonda Lee.

- *The Imperial Radch Trilogy* by Ann Leckie
- *The Dead Djinn Universe* (series) by P. Djéli Clarke
- *The Age of Madness Trilogy* by Joe Abercrombie
- *The Green Bone Saga* by Fonda Lee
- *The Expanse* (series) by James S.A. Corey
- *The Deavabad Trilogy* by S.A. Chakaborty
- *Teixcalaan* (series) by Arkady Martine
- *The Thessaly Trilogy* by Jo Walton
- *Shades of Magic Trilogy* by V.E. Schwab
- *The Divine Cities Trilogy* by Robert Jackson Bennett
- *The Wormwood Trilogy* by Tade Thompson
- *Black Sun* (series) by Rebecca Roanhorse
- *Piranesi* by Susanna Clarke
- *Circe* by Madeline Miller
- *Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

- *The Paper Menagerie and Other Stories* by Ken Liu
- *Spinning Silver* by Naomi Novik
- *Exhalation: Stories* by Ted Chiang
- *Olondria* (series) by Sofia Samatar
- *Her Body and Other Parties: Stories* by Carmen Maria Machado
- *The Buried Giant* Kazuo Ishiguro
- *Radiance* by Catherine M. Valente
- *The Changeling* by Victor Lavalle
- *Wayfarers* (series) by Becky Chambers
- *Binti* (series) by Nnedi Okorafor
- *Lady Astronaut* (series) by Mary Robinette Kowal
- *Children of Time* (duology) by Adrian Tchaikovsky
- *Wayward Children* (series) by Seanan McGuire
- *The Space Between Worlds* by Micaiah Johnson
- *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* by Marlon James
- *Southern Reach* (series) by Jeff VanderMeer
- *The Echo Wife* by Sarah Gailey
- *The Locked Tomb* (series) by Tamsyn Muir
- *Remembrance of Earth's Past* (series) by Cixin Liu
- *Machineries of Empire* (series) by Yoon Ha Lee
- *The Broken Earth* (series) N.K. Jemisin
- *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel
- *This is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone

(Continued on page 2)



Birthdays

Susan Cole - Sept. 3

<p align="center">September OASFiS Calendar</p> <p>OASFiS Business Meeting Sunday, September 12, 1:30PM Meeting on Zoom, contact Juan for details. Come as we discuss <i>The Parable of the Sower</i> by Octavia Butler</p> <p>SciFi Light TBA. Check website and Facebook page.</p> <p>To contact for more info: OASFiS Business Meeting 407-823-8715</p>	<p align="center">OASFiS People</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Steve Cole</td><td>407-379-1530</td></tr> <tr> <td>Susan Cole</td><td>407-275-5211</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>sacole@mindspring.com</td></tr> <tr> <td>Arthur Dykeman</td><td>407-314-5506</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>adykeman@bellsouth.net</td></tr> <tr> <td>Steve Grant</td><td>352 241 0670</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>stevegrant@embarqmail.com</td></tr> <tr> <td>Mike Pilletere</td><td>mike-sf@webbedfeet.com</td></tr> <tr> <td>David Ratti</td><td>407-282-2468</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>dratti@eudoramail.com</td></tr> <tr> <td>Juan Sanmiguel</td><td>407-823-8715</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>sanmiguel@earthlink.net</td></tr> <tr> <td>Patricia Wheeler</td><td>pwheeler11@cfl.rr.com</td></tr> </table> <p>Any of these people can give readers information about the club and its functions. To be included in the list call Juan.</p>	Steve Cole	407-379-1530	Susan Cole	407-275-5211		sacole@mindspring.com	Arthur Dykeman	407-314-5506		adykeman@bellsouth.net	Steve Grant	352 241 0670		stevegrant@embarqmail.com	Mike Pilletere	mike-sf@webbedfeet.com	David Ratti	407-282-2468		dratti@eudoramail.com	Juan Sanmiguel	407-823-8715		sanmiguel@earthlink.net	Patricia Wheeler	pwheeler11@cfl.rr.com
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	sanmiguel@earthlink.net																										
Patricia Wheeler	pwheeler11@cfl.rr.com																										
<p>(Continued from page 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Poppy War Trilogy</i> by R.F. Kuang • <i>The Masquerade</i> (series) by Seth Dickinson • <i>An Unkindness of Ghosts</i> by Rivers Solomon • <i>The Bird King</i> by G. Willow Wilson • <i>American War</i> by Omar El Akkad • <i>Riot Baby</i> by Tochi Onyebuchi • <i>On Fragile Waves</i> by E. Lily Yu • <i>The Goblin Emperor</i> by Katherine Addison • <i>Muderbot</i> (series) by Martha Wells • <i>The Inderdependency</i> (series) by John Scalzi • <i>The Martian</i> by Andy Weir • <i>Sorcerer to the Crown</i> by Zen Cho 	<p align="center">Megacon 2021</p> <p>Megacon was moved from Memorial Day Weekend to August 12-15, 2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The con issued a mask mandate that was enforced. Attendance seemed to be the same.</p> <p>I had not attended Megacon for more than one day due to its conflict with the Orlando Fringe Festival. After seeing who was coming on the programming side, I decided to go on Fri-Sat. I bought tickets online, and it did help getting through registration a little faster. The big challenge at registration was activating the badge. One had to use their phone and go to the website and enter the numbers on the badge. It would have been easier if they had put QR print on the badge. One needed the badge activated to check in and out of the con space.</p> <p>I did not go to any of the big guest Q&As this year. I decided to go to the following program items.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Robotech</i> Panel – Larry Furry discussed the history and future of the franchise that helped raise awareness of anime in North America in the 1980s. • History of Mecha: 60s and 70s – The team from NoS Anime took a tour of anime that featured armored suits. This included <i>Tetsujin 28</i>, <i>Mazinger, Getter Robo</i>, and <i>Mobile Suit Gundam</i>. • Tales of Terror with Guest Author Owl Goingback – Owl Goingback discussed his career and work and took questions. Byron from Phantasmagoria read some of Goingback's work. • <i>Gundam Wing</i>: A Retrospective: NoS Anime looked back at this landmark series of the Gundam franchise which brought many fans into anime. • Meet the Bronze Age Batgirl: Karen Whitfield – In the late 70s to the mid-80s, Karen Whitfield appeared as Batgirl at personal appearances with Adam West and Burt Ward. She discussed her time with the Dynamic Duo. • Evangelion: You Can (Not) Reference – NoS Anime explained the meaning of the names of the 																										
<p>Letters of Comment</p> <p>1706-24 Eva Rd. Etobicoke, ONCANADA M9C 2B2 August 30, 2021</p> <p>Dear OASFiSians:</p> <p>Thank you for issue 402 of the Event Horizon, and I will try to write something of substance for you, but don't hold your breath. That's the way I have felt all summer.</p> <p>A shame to find out that Ed Meskys passed away. I always responded to the zines he sent to me, and I was only able to see him at Worldcons as well. I remember several of his guide dogs he'd bring to the cons, and I remember one or two of them were more party animals (literally) than Ed was. I know you're not supposed to pet guide dogs, but Ed didn't mind, which is why we seemed to go through so many dogs. He will be missed by so many.</p> <p>Also, my condolences to Adam-Troy Castro on the passing of wife Judy. As I get older, I find more friends are leaving us, and the pandemic only made things worse. It does hurt, and as we do get older, we realize that of those people who will pass away, we just might be among them, so keep living those days as much as you can.</p> <p align="right">(Continued on page 4)</p>	<p align="right">(Continued on page 4)</p>																										

Megacon 2021



Top: (Left to Right) Natasha Romanoff and Yelena Belova from the MCU film *Black Widow*, Captain Obi and Fire soldier from the anime *Fire Force*, Katsuki Bakugo from the anime *My Hero Academia*, Coraline from the Neil Gaiman novella and film of the same name, Hange Zoë from the anime *Attack on Titan*
Bottom: V.I.N.C.E.N.T and 2 crew members of the *Palomino* from the film *The Black Hole*, Heihei from Disney animated film *Moana*



(Continued from page 2)

Angels and other religious references in the mecha series *Neon Genesis Evangelion*.

- Gundam 101 – NoS Anime explained the basics of the Gundam series and recommended entry points for those new to Gundam.
- History of Mecha: 80s- The Japanese economic boom that led to more anime shows and Original Video Anime (OVA). This enabled the production of mecha anime like *Super Dimensional Fortress Macross* and *Votoms*. These shows left an enormous impact on mecha anime and the medium itself.
- Creating Worlds – OASIS participants William Hatfield, Jose Iriarte, and Elle E. Ire explain how to create the setting for one's story.

I also attended a tail gate party with artists Paul Vincenti, Mike Conrad, Stanley Morrison, and Graven Ravenwolf. The main reason to come was to see friends and talk about fannish things and the con served that purpose well.

Next year I might investigate doing some programming if the timing is right..

(Continued from page 2)

Agreed.

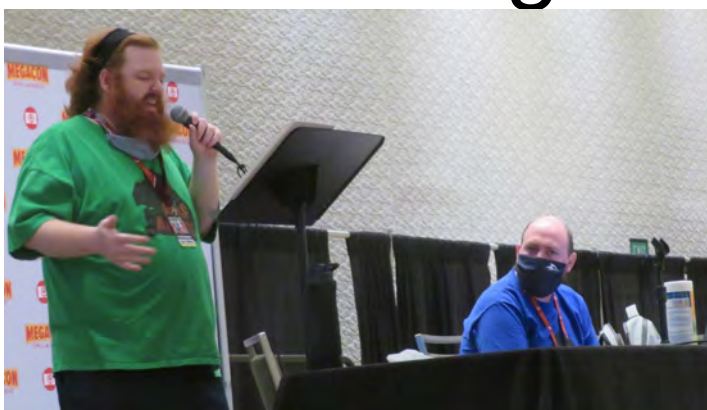
My letter of comment...just so you know, I did the final edit of the fourth and final *Captain Future* book by Allen Steele, and just found out the other day, the newest issue of *Amazing Stories*, Volume 77, No. 3, the All-Canadian issue, is now available for order from the *Amazing Stories* website. Once you're on the *Amazing Stories* website, you can see Steve Davidson's plans for the magazine, and why he is forced to make those plans.

Good to hear about Amazing Stories.

It's already a hot day, and thunderstorms are on the way, so I will get this ready to go. Thanks again for the issues sent, and please don't stop sending them.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Megacon 2021



Top: (Left to Right) NoS Anime discussing the History of Mecha, Byron of Phantasmagoria and Owl Goingback
Bottom: Elle Ire, Jose Iriarte, and Bill Hatfield



Megacon 2021

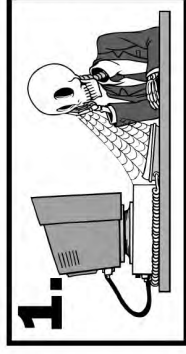


Top: (Left to Right) Temura Shigaraki and Ochaco Uraraka from the anime *My Hero Academia*, Evelyn Carnahan from *The Mummy* (1999), Commander Levi Ackerman from the anime *Attack on Titan*, Beakers from the Muppets, Sylvie, a Loki variant from the series *Loki*

Bottom: Eri from the anime *My Hero Academia*, the Martians from *Sesame Street*, Cylon Centurion from *Battlestar Galactica*, Falcon from Marvel Comics



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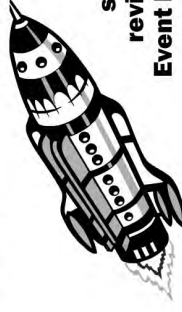


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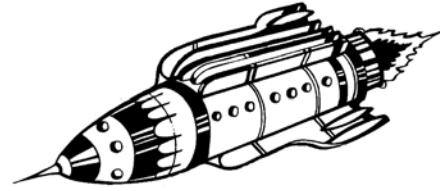


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My Back Pages 26

Rich Lynch



My Back Pages 26

articles and essays by Rich Lynch

Well, it's been a hell of a year. *Another* hell of a year, make that. This 26th installment of my personal time capsule is once again being composed in the belly of the beast, a.k.a. the fucking COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, every essay here except for one was written this year. Most of them appeared in my Southern Fandom Press Association (SFPA) publication *Variations on a Theme*, a couple are from one-off publications, and there's also one previously unpublished that I wrote specifically for this collection.

My wife Nicki and I have been pretty well beaten down by two years of this but at least there's now a glimmering of light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. Even though COVID infections are still occurring, both Nicki and I are now triply-vaxed as are an ever-increasing number of people. Social distancing as well as a mask mandate here in this part of Maryland also gave us some peace of mind throughout the past two years. But, ironically, on the one day of the year that we actually *wanted* to see plenty of masked visitors... as you'll read in the first essay, there was a disappointing turnout.

Rich Lynch
Gaithersburg, Maryland
December 2021

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Please note that 'World Science Fiction Convention', 'Worldcon', and 'Hugo Award' are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society.

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Random Thoughts on All Hallows' Eve

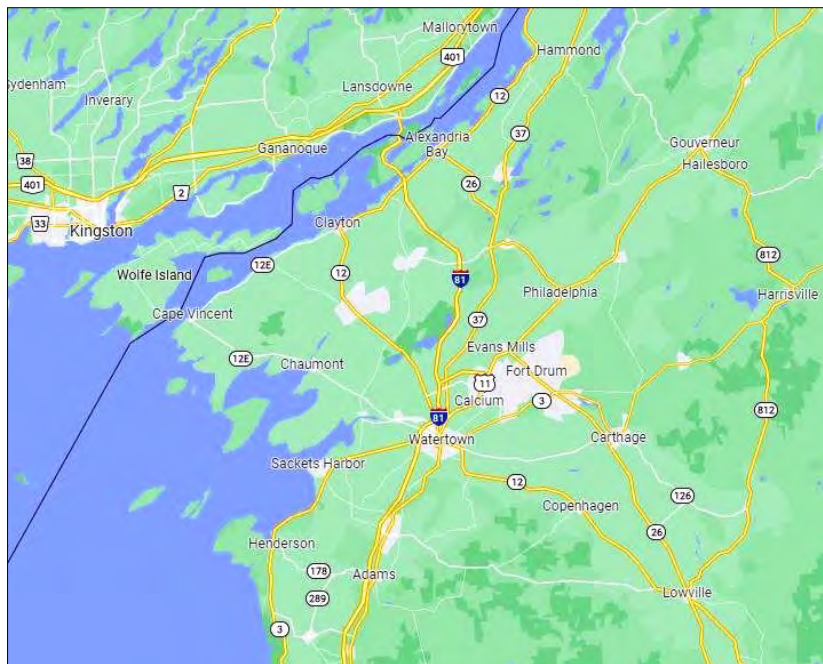
Well, here it is, nine o'clock on Halloween night, and there's been nary a trick-or-treater. Nicki and I came to the conclusion about an hour ago that there wasn't going to be any but we kept the front porch light on anyway, hoping we were wrong. And now we have all these delectable Hershey's Miniatures, two bags of them! Sweet temptations that we know we'll pretty quickly not be able to resist.

I don't remember Hershey's Miniatures even existing more than 60 years ago, back when I was as little as some of the kids who we expected would show up at our front door this evening. I was a trick-or-treater for maybe five or six years when I was a pre-teenager. My parents' house was located at the outskirts of the village up in the North Country where we lived (Chaumont, located very near Lake Ontario in northern New York State), and it was a mini-marathon of sorts to visit as many other houses as I could in the couple of hours that I was allowed to be out and about. It was a different time back then

— my mom and dad stayed home to hand out candy to other kids who came to the door while I was out roving the neighborhoods unaccompanied by any adult. Chaumont wasn't particularly hazardous to roam around in after dark and there wasn't any crime to speak of, so on Halloween night the streets were relegated to kids of all ages, dressed up in whatever costumes we could get our parents to devise. And some of them were pretty basic — I remember that more than once I donned a rugged-looking coat and hat with a Lone Ranger-type mask. I was a burglar, and gimme some candy!



Hershey's Miniatures, yum!



Chaumont (center left on the map) and the North Country

The few hours available for trick-or-treating made it challenging to visit as many houses as possible, so there was one year that I figured out in advance what an efficient route would be, as opposed to the random meandering that usually happened. It worked out so well that I made it all the way over to the other end of the village, across the bridge spanning the river at the west end of town. But it was a trek — probably two or three miles of walking around that evening and by the time I got back home I'd decided that the additional candy that I got from it was not worth the extra effort. And it hadn't helped that there was some snow on the ground.

Halloweens in Chaumont were pretty cold, usually – that rugged-looking burglar’s coat was really needed! There was one year that an early cold snap brought in several inches of lake-effect snow on the day before Halloween which made getting out and about for trick-or-treating a bit more complicated than usual. But it turned out not to be all that big a deal and I ended up with more or less the usual haul of Halloween treats. Hey, I grew up with snow, often lots of it! I thought it the most natural thing in the world to wake up on a cold December morning to discover that a foot or so of new snow was on the ground. In other years there were snowfalls as late as May. It all provided a degree of truth to the old adage that there were really only two seasons up in the North Country – Winter and July.

Chaumont was not an especially gregarious community. People had their own circles of friends and I don’t ever remember a large group of any kind gathering except for school events. So Halloween nights provided me once-a-year opportunities to visit, if only for a few brief seconds, with Chaumont residents who I never saw at any other time. One of them was a little old lady who lived by herself in an ancient-looking house across-and-down the street a ways from my parents’ house. She was a very kindly soul who, instead of candy or fruit, gave each Halloween visitor a shiny new penny. It belied the notion among a few of the kids in my grade school classes that she might be a witch and that her house could be haunted. I don’t think anybody truly believed that, but on Halloween we all were looking for stuff to be scared of.

And now, more than six decades later, another Halloween is in the books. This was the first time ever for us that there were no trick-or-treaters. If that had happened back in the early 1960s I’m guessing my parents might have idly wondered if some supernatural being had swooped into town to abscond with all the kids. But in the here and now I’m chalking it up to both the lingering bad mojo of the pandemic and the gradual aging out of children who live in the area. Mostly the latter, I think. And there’s one other thing I can mention about ghosts and the like on this All Hallow’s Eve – Nicki and I are wondering if *our* house is haunted!

Every few weeks or so our doorbell will ring...and there’s nobody at the door. It’s not some kid playing a trick and scampering off because I can view our front walk from a window before any prankster could get away unobserved. We’ve kind of concluded that there’s some sort of intermittent electronic signal that sets it off. But you know, we’re not 100% sure of that. So if there really *is* a phantom lurking within our walls, I wish it would make an appearance.

We could really use some help eating up all those Hershey’s Miniatures! 🍭

Afterword:

I apparently was nostalgic this past year about the decade-and-a-half that I lived in Chaumont because I wrote two other essays about my growing-up years there. One of them, as you will read next, is about a topic which has captivated me ever I was old enough to discover there was a big world out there: space flight. I was a child of the space age – I remember, vaguely, the evening news broadcast back in October 1957 which announced that the Soviet Union had launched a satellite into orbit. And I remember, in much greater detail, all the spaceflights of the first and second generation of American astronauts, from Alan Shepard in May 1961 (which my 6th grade class avidly followed via radio broadcast) all the way through the Apollo moon landings, the last of which happened when I was a graduate student.

It was sometime in the mid-1960s that it dawned on me that I could actually launch *my own* rockets. But just like NASA’s early launches, it turned out to be a learning process.

Rocket Boy

I saw on the mid-day news today that on this very evening (May 11th) there will be a rocket launch from NASA's Wallops Island Flight Facility that *could* be briefly observable from where I live. But I'm skeptical, to say the least. Wallops Island is a bit more than 100 miles southwest of here as the crow flies, so it seems doubtful that whatever there is to see will get high enough off the horizon where it will be visible at all.

The launch isn't going to be much by Cape Canaveral standards – it's only a relatively small sub-orbital 'sounding rocket' whose onboard experiment, according to NASA, will "study a very fundamental problem in space plasmas, namely, how are energy and momentum transported between different regions of space that are magnetically connected". What makes it a noteworthy news event is that as part of the experiment, the rocket will release barium vapor which will form two green-violet clouds that, again according to NASA, "may be visible for about 30 seconds". We shall see. Maybe.

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If it does turn out that there's something to see this evening, it'll be the first time in 55 years that I've in-person witnessed the launch of a rocket. The previous time was in the summer of 1966, and I'd been the one doing the launching. A couple of years prior to that, I had discovered (probably from an ad in a comic book) that Estes Industries of Penrose, Colorado was selling model rocket kits and components. I remember that I'd become supercharged by that revelation, so much so that I had scoured the neighborhood for odd job opportunities that in the end provided me enough money to send in an order.

The very first rocket that I built and launched was pretty puny, even by Estes standards. It was at most 7-inches tall but nevertheless I had decided to use one of the most powerful single-use rocket engines that Estes sold. In hindsight, the results were predictable – the thing took off with a loud and impressive *whoosh*, and after that...where the heck did it go?? The engine cut off after just a few seconds but by then Sky Bird 1, as I'd named it, was moving so fast and had ascended so high that I lost sight of it. There was a small parachute that was supposed to deploy, but if it did I never noticed. The rocket was gone, probably coming down somewhere way back into the wilderness of undeveloped land behind my parents' house, and I never did find it.

Even though it hadn't exactly been an auspicious start, the thrill of witnessing that fast and impressive take-off was enough to make me want to try again. So a few weeks later, after the next package from Estes had arrived in the mail, it was time for Sky Bird 2 to make its maiden flight. I had stayed up all night building and painting it, and more had gone into it than just the materials of construction. I'd learned a lot from that unfortunate first attempt, starting with the lesson that it was probably a good idea to use a much less powerful engine until I was sure that I knew what I was doing. So I used the lowest thrust one that Estes offered, and as a result the

rocket *might* have made it up as high as a couple hundred feet in altitude. But the parachute deployed exactly as planned and Sky Bird 2 floated gently and safely down to the ground. Success!

There were other Sky Birds after that, more and more ambitiously designed in terms of size and shape, and it eventually got to the point where I stopped naming them. But time was running out. By the summer of 1966, I knew that my days as a Rocket Boy were coming to an end because my parents were selling the house and we were going to move into a rental home down by the bay for my Senior year in high school. There would no longer be an open field to do launches. It was kind of a signal that it was time to move on. For my very last launch I had built a two-stage rocket – not so impressive in size and fairly conventional in terms of its shape, but it was still something I’d never tried before. And I had an observer! My mother’s oldest brother was visiting that day and, from what I saw, his enthusiasm was even greater than mine – he volunteered to be my recovery crew and even gave me a countdown for the launch.

The model took off normally and rose straight up for maybe a couple hundred feet or so before the second stage kicked in, but then there was trouble. Instead of continuing its upward flight, the thing keeled over and zoomed away horizontally, gradually approaching the ground all the while. It went directly overtop a house across the street and continued on, neatly bisecting the gap between two tall trees behind the house. And then it was gone. I remember that my uncle gave me a quizzical look and asked, “Was it supposed to do that?”

I really don’t know what happened to my model rockets after we moved. They didn’t come with me, so I can only surmise that some of them were donated to a church-run community yard sale. Others weren’t in very good shape, so I don’t doubt that they’d just been gotten rid of. After that my interest in rocketry was limited to what I saw on television, as the Space Race was capturing everyone’s imagination back then. And since then I’ve never, ever, been in the right place at the right time to personally witness another launch.

And you know what? Doesn’t look like it’s going to happen tonight, either – the clouds have been moving in all afternoon and the sky is now completely overcast. But, really, that’s okay. If I ever do get to see a big rocket leap into the sky, I want it to be much more up close and personal than from 100 miles away. Until then I’ll be content to think back about my time, so long ago, as a Rocket Boy. They’re good memories. ☀

Afterword:

It turned out that the NASA launch was scrubbed that evening because the weather was not ideal. And it was also scrubbed the evening after that, the evening after that, the evening after that, and the evening *after that* for the same reason. It was about a week before it actually did happen, but by then it had slipped below my attention and I missed it.

This ongoing personal time capsule has created plenty of opportunity for me to revisit my life as I remember it, and I’m grateful for that. No life is without angst and sorrow, and I’ve certainly had my share. But there have been far more good memories than bad, including one that happened at the 1992 Worldcon. It was there that I met, very briefly, one of the most storied fan personalities who has ever graced the science fiction genre – Walter A. Willis. Nicki and I were honored to have published, in our fanzine *Mimosa*, a series of remembrances by Walt that were, in effect, his own personal time capsule. And back in February, I compiled all of these articles under one cover. Here’s the introduction I wrote for that collection.

I Remember Him

I remember the exact moment when I met Walter Alexander Willis. It was on September 5th, 1992 at MagiCon, the 50th World Science Fiction Convention. More precisely, it was in the aftermath of the Hugo Awards ceremony that evening where *Mimosa*, the little publication I co-edited with my wife Nicki back then, had won the ‘Best Fanzine’ Hugo. All the award winners had congregated, along with the convention’s guests, in a backstage lounge area prior to us all departing for various parties and meet-ups that evening. And that’s where I found Walt. He was Magicon’s Fan Guest of Honor, and until then our convention schedules had not meshed to the point where I could have a chance to finally meet him. I recall that we sat next to each other on a couch for 10 minutes or so, though at that point I was still so stunned by winning a Hugo (and the way it happened, but let’s not go into that) that I cannot remember a single thing we talked about. One of my friends took a photo of the two of us but after all these years I can no longer locate it. And maybe that’s for the best – I remember that I had an open-mouth look on my face that made it seem like I was trying to cough up a hairball.

I also recall the moment (though not nearly so precisely) that I *first* met Walt Willis. It happened a bit more than five years earlier, when I found a postcard in our mailbox from him that commented on the second issue of *Mimosa*. Walt had the deserved reputation for being perhaps the best writer that science fiction fandom has ever produced (if that’s the right word) but he was equally adept at providing egoboo to fledgling fan publishers (as Nicki and I were back then) in the form of perceptive and usually entertaining letters of comment on fanzines he had received in the mail. The one he sent in response to *Mimosa* 2 led off with a witty remark about a Bob Tucker article in that issue but also made grand use of what very limited space was left on the card to colorfully describe “the ultimate convention hotel” that he and his friend Chuck Harris had discovered in Greenore, on the shore of the Irish Sea:

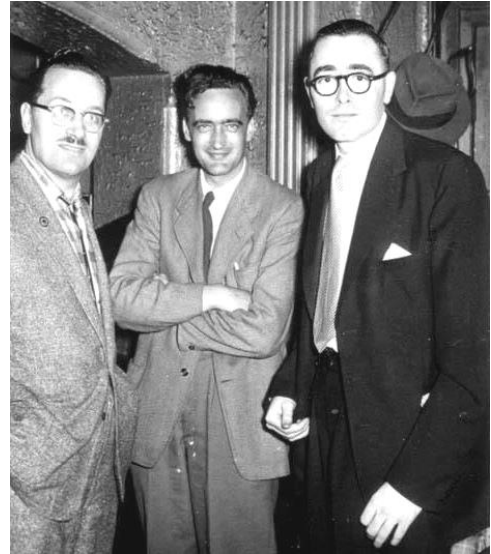
Set in beautiful countryside, it had a railway station and a boat dock actually in the hotel, but was completely deserted. It seemed it had been constructed towards the end of the great railway boom for a new Irish Sea crossing (Fleetwood/Greenore) which never took off, leaving a newly built hotel high and dry. Ireland is full of such ruined hopes.

You won’t find those words in the *Mimosa* 3 lettercol, however, because in my infinite lack of wisdom (and I hasten to add that Nicki had nothing to do with it) I had edited Walt’s postcard down to only the specific comment about the Tucker article. It was obviously the wrong thing to do and I now feel horrified about it, and I can only say that my abilities as a fanzine editor did improve over the final 27 issues of the run. I am truly grateful that Walt didn’t immediately give up on us after that slight.

But this fanzine is about Walt, not me. After publishing ten issues of *Mimosa*, Nicki and I finally felt confident enough to ask Walt to write us an essay, but what resulted was a lot more than that – instead of a single piece, Walt contributed a series of 12 historical articles which ran starting in the 11th and continuing through the 22nd issues. Two of them are reprints of sections of fabulous trip reports and other essays that Walt wrote during the 1950s but the rest are a different kind of trip report – an annotated guided tour through his correspondence files from that period. Those ten articles he titled “I Remember Me”, and they were a continuation of a series of that same title that had been collected and published 14 years earlier in the mammoth and now legendary 28th issue of the fanzine *Warhoon*, which contains more than 600 pages of vintage

Willis writings over the decades of his involvement in science fiction fandom. *Warhoon*'s editor, Richard Bergeron, had described "I Remember Me" as "... a revelation of high fannish secrets, low fannish secrets, gossip, eavesdroppings, skeletons, skeleton keys, opened letters, and glimpses into Machiavellian machinations..." and the resumption of the series in pages of *Mimosa* was more of the same. And with that, I am happy to now collect all of Walt's *Mimosa* articles under one cover for current fans and future historians to marvel over.

And marvel you will. There are many famous writers and personalities both within and outside the science fiction genre – Robert Bloch, Horace Gold, Harlan Ellison, Robert Conquest, John Brunner, Damon Knight, and Eric Frank Russell to name just a few – who appear in this continuation of "I Remember Me" via their letters to Walt and his return correspondence. The excerpt from the postcard I reprinted above is a representative sample of the quality of writing you will find in these articles. I had an enjoyable time bringing this collection together. I hope you'll have an enjoyable time reading it. ☀



Walt Willis (center) with Forrest J Ackerman (left) and James White (right) at the 1957 Worldcon

Afterword:

I wrote an editorial epilog of sorts to close out the publication, and I think it's also worth reprinting:

In the end, there's not much to say about Walt Willis that isn't a superlative. He was the most prominent member of fandom's most famous fan organization, the legendary Irish Fandom of the 1950s. Bob Shaw, another member of IF and also one of fandom's finest writers and humorists, once described Willis as "the best writer [he'd] ever known". But it was Harry Warner, Jr., in his book, *A Wealth of Fable*, who described Walt as the "best and most gifted fan of the 1950s, who also might qualify as the Number One Fan of any and all decades".

And you know what? Harry was right.

When a notable person passes on, there's usually somebody who makes what in retrospect often seems a superficial remark: "We will not see his like again." But in this case that's exactly right. We really won't. Walt was unique in fandom – an absolutely great writer, fanzine editor, correspondent, and humorist, all in one. I am very happy that I got to meet him, if only for what turned out to be a few moments. A century from now, if fandom still exists, it would be a great compliment to me for some future historian, before mentioning anything else I had done and accomplished in fandom, to write that: "I'm envious that he got to meet Walt Willis."

This past year has done a lot to reinforce a sense of mortality. Several friends from fandom have died, including three different (and unrelated) Tennessee fans all named Charlie Williams. Here's a remembrance of one of them.

Charlie

My friend Charlie Williams passed away a few days ago as I'm writing this. I'd learned, several months ago, that he'd become very ill with cancer and that his chances for survival were not good. But still...where there's life there's hope. Until there isn't.

Not long before he died, Charlie's long-time friend Rusty Burke with his wife Shelly Wischhusen visited him in hospice. He wrote that: "I was privileged to be with Charlie near the end, while Shelly and I were in Knoxville. I hope he was aware I was there, telling everyone in the room how important he was to me. He really helped set my life on the course it has taken since college days. So many memories, so many good times, such a remarkable guy."

I feel much the same way, even though I didn't meet Charlie until several years after my college days were over. I first became aware of Charlie's existence at the end of January in 1978, at the first meeting of what would be a short-lived science fiction club in Knoxville, Tennessee. Nicki and I were living in Chattanooga back then and were members of a local science fiction club there. And we were also publishing its monthly clubzine, *Chat*. We promoted the new club's meeting in our 5th issue and also made the trip up to Knoxville as a show of support. One of the things that happened there was a raffle to raise some money to help pay for the meeting room rental, and one of the items was an original piece of comic art by a local cartoonist named Charlie Williams. "Charlie Williams," I remember thinking to myself, "who the heck is he?" And then: "Damn! We need to have some of his artwork in *Chat*!"

Charlie wasn't at that meeting so the club organizer (a friend of ours) provided us his address. Nicki and I wrote him and got back what we thought was a surprisingly enthusiastic response. Plus a few cartoons, the first of which appeared in our 8th issue. I wrote a short paragraph accompanying it which introduced him to science fiction fandom:

"I would also like to take the opportunity to introduce readers of Chat to the artwork of Charlie Williams, premiering in this issue. In my opinion, Charlie is a damn fine illustrator good enough to win someday (soon!) the fan artist Hugo. Remember, you saw his work here first!"

I can't remember for sure the first time I actually met Charlie in person but I know it was in Knoxville at his place of business, East Tennessee Comics, of which he was a co-owner. He had a small studio in the back of the Quonset hut-like structure and it was clearly obvious to me that he much preferred creating inventive illustrations than dickering over the price of some back-issue comic book with a pre-teen customer. He immediately became friends with Nicki and me, and I made it a point to stop by to see him every few weeks when my job in industry (at that time) took me to the Knoxville/Oak Ridge metro area. Every time I did I usually brought back several more illustrations (and once in a while, covers) for future issues of *Chat*.



first cartoon illustration by Charlie for *Chat*



cover by Charlie for the final issue of *Chat*

It didn't take too long for Charlie to be noticed by other fan editors and soon his illustrations began to appear in many other fanzines. After *Chat* ended its run he did the very first cover for its successor, *Mimosa*, and later in the run did two others, both wraparounds. He also illustrated many of the articles that appeared in *Mimosa* over the course of its existence and even contributed a convention report, "NorthAmerican in Words and Pictures", to the second issue. He was a welcome, constant presence in *Mimosa*, the only person besides Nicki and myself who appeared in all 30 issues.

As I described earlier, I'd always thought that Charlie would win a Fan Artist Hugo. Even though, to my disappointment, that never happened, Charlie did receive well-deserved recognition by being Fan Guest of Honor at three Southern Fandom conventions during the early 1980s and receiving the Southpaw Award for Best Humorist at the 1984 DeepSouthCon. He was

hyperactive in fandom during that time and it was not unusual to cross paths with him at some of the mid-South conventions Nicki and I attended.

In the early autumn of 1988, Nicki and I moved from Tennessee to Maryland and we only rarely saw Charlie after that. We still kept in touch, though, and he always answered the call whenever we needed illustrations for *Mimosa*. And he did the same for at least one other fan publisher – after *Mimosa* ended its run he became one of Guy Lillian's "go to" illustrators for his fanzine *Challenger*.

I have lots of regrets that, during all these years I've lived in Maryland, Nicki and I didn't make more of an effort go down to Tennessee to pay him visits. I've looked, and I don't even have a photograph of the two of us together – astonishing to me, since there were so many opportunities. Instead, my memories of him will have to be enough. And you know what? He's still alive in there. Always will be. ☀

Afterword:

Back in the early 1990s, Nicki and I were passing through Knoxville on the way to a convention and stopped by Charlie's home to pick up a couple of illustrations that later on appeared in an issue of *Mimosa*. As far as I remember it was the last time I saw him in person, though there's no way I could have known that when I was there. That was by no means a unique experience – there are many friends and acquaintances who I will never see again, without me knowing it at the time, on what turned out to be the final times we crossed paths.

This kind of thing also has relevance to events as well as people, and I'm old enough now that I treasure my time at conventions and similar gatherings. But there still have been some professional meetings I've attended where I had no idea at the time that I wouldn't be attending another one. The most recent instance happened back in November 2019, at a multilateral carbon sequestration meeting in France. As you'll read next, I fully expected that there would be two more of them for me before I retired. And then the pandemic happened.

In the Land of the Impressionists

I've been to Paris enough times where I think I know my way around the city reasonably well. But even so, the city is big enough, with so many places of interest, that any trip there can, well, leave an 'impression' on you.

An example of this are the Parisian suburbs of Chatou and Rueil-Malmaison. They're just a short train ride from Paris's financial district, and the difference is enormous. Instead of tall buildings and concrete-paved plazas there are lush riverside parks.



a reproduction of Renoir's
Luncheon of the Boating Party

And there is a restaurant, the Maison Fournaise, on an island in the middle of the Seine where the famous impressionist

painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir once hung out. The interior is depicted in Renoir's painting *Luncheon of the Boating Party*. Which happens to reside in The Phillips Collection museum in Washington, D.C., about 20 miles from where I live in Maryland. My life is *filled* with synchronicity.

* * *

Paris's La Défense business and financial district, where I stayed during my early November business trip, may be



the Grande Arche building

without much in the way of green spaces but it's definitely not without things of interest, many of them more than a bit whimsical. For example, what's probably the world's largest thumb is there. It's one of the public art sculptures which populate a spacious esplanade that's dominated by one of the more iconic buildings in the city – the Grande

Arche, a hollowed-out cube 360 feet on a side which was the end-result of a design competition back in the early 1980s.

Its purpose is prosaic – it houses Government offices for the most part – but the view from the



the Maison Fournaise restaurant



giant thumb sculpture in the
La Défense esplanade



the view from atop the Grande Arche, with the Arc de Triomphe at left and Eiffel Tower at right

Secretariat, are largely administrative, which means that during the roll-ups to meetings I handle everything from developing the schedule and agendas to managing the logistics (including the website) to acting as liaison to each meeting's host organization. But during a meeting I have other responsibilities, including assisting the Chair as her right-hand man (though I prefer to sit on her left). And I also do a brief organizational status report presentation. But for *this* conference, there was one other thing I was called on to do – make an additional presentation at one of the workshops.

Not that I had wanted to. No, not at all. I'd found out a week or so before the meeting that I'd have to fill in for one of the U.S. delegates who'd be at another meeting in a different part of Europe. It was a program review, of sorts, on a topic that I had (in my opinion) insufficient knowledge – carbon capture, utilization and storage opportunities from so-called 'blue hydrogen' production (i.e., hydrogen produced from steam reforming of natural gas, which also generates substantial amounts of carbon dioxide). I had been provided the PowerPoint presentation with no additional notes to go by, so I reverted to a time-tested tactic – just wing it and hope for the best. And so I started by saying:

"Mark A***** had been originally scheduled to give this presentation but as you can see, I am not him. Mark is a lot younger than I am. I have a lot less hair than he does.

"I had an enjoyable dinner last evening with Dr. P** S***** of Equinor. As part of a broad discussion on many different topics, we tried to guess on how near, or more accurately, how far away the fabled 'Hydrogen Economy' actually is. But for me, at least, I think the term 'Hydrogen Economy' is an oversimplification. What we're really talking about is a 'Hydrogen and CO₂ Economy'. It seems likely that

roof is truly spectacular. From way up there I could easily see all the way over to the Arc de Triomphe in one direction and the Eiffel Tower in another.

But that was as close as I got to either of those iconic structures. My meeting was in Chatou, not Paris, and what free time I had was mostly spent out in the 'burbs.

* * *

This was the 32nd in a long and continuing series of multilateral meetings on the topic of carbon capture and storage that I've had a hand in planning and organizing. My duties, as the



as 'left-hand man' during the main meeting



my presentation at the workshop

‘blue hydrogen’ is going to be the primary source of hydrogen for the foreseeable future. And you can’t have ‘blue hydrogen’ without ‘blue CO₂’.

“So this presentation, and I’ll go through the slides quickly, is about how the U.S. Department of Energy has fashioned a program to bring down the cost of capturing and storing CO₂. And, as you will see, there are some definite synergies with industrial-scale hydrogen production processes.”

The presentation was pretty straightforward, as it turned out, with slides that were mostly self-explanatory. But I will admit that sometimes I know just enough to be dangerous, and I didn’t want to find out if this was one of those occasions. The audience had been very interactive for other presentations, so there was no way was I going to risk stepping in it by inadvertently giving out misinformation. So not only did I not take any questions at the end of the presentation, I thought it might be wise if I just made myself scarce for the rest of the afternoon. And with that, I decided to pay a visit to the Château de Malmaison.

* * *

It was back in 1799 that Joséphine de Beauharnaise, at the request of her husband, General Napoléon Bonaparte, purchased a decrepit estate, a few miles west of Paris, which was much in need of renovation. It encompassed a large expanse of woods and meadows, and no small expense later it had been transformed into what Joséphine considered “the most beautiful and curious garden in Europe, a model of good cultivation”. Napoléon and Joséphine lived at the estate for about ten years, after which there was a divorce and Joséphine became sole resident until her death in



the Château de Malmaison



the Gilded Room

1814. After that it became the residence or summer home of several notables, including a Queen Consort from Spain and an American philanthropist. Today it’s a national museum, of sorts, with rooms in the château restored to what they were like at the beginning of the 19th century.

Early November is not a good time to visit the gardens which surround the Château de Malmaison. There were still some flower blossoms and plenty of foliage, but it must pale in comparison to what’s there in the middle of summer. But I’d come there mostly to see the building. The interior of the château is utterly filled with opulence, and I had the good fortune of latching on to the end of an English-speaking tour which provided me some context to all that splendor. I don’t think I can decide on which room I thought the most opulent, but the Gilded Room probably comes closest. Exquisite period furniture is complemented by mahogany-paneled walls, a

fireplace mantle with decorative inlays, and gilt-framed panels where works by the prominent French painters François Gérard and Anne-Louis Girodet are on display. Truly sublime.

* * *

The final workshop of the meeting was only a half-day event, so that left time for one more walkabout in the Land of the Impressionists. Or in this case a ‘rideabout’, at least in part, as what I wanted to see was in the next town over. Saint-Germain-en-Laye is the home of another château, not quite as famous as Malmaison but still most definitely worth seeing. And it took quite an effort to get to it. Back in the

1990s, at a large convention in San Antonio, I had been ‘appointed’ by some of my friends as leader of a dinner expedition to a well-regarded Italian restaurant. It was less than a mile walk, but the heat of the day was a bit oppressive and by

the time we arrived I had gotten several snarky comments that I was leading a death march. I can say, without qualification, that if any of those friends had been with me in Saint-Germain they would have had justifiable cause to complain of a death march. It was only a bit more than a mile, but my iPhone’s GPS did not show how hilly the terrain was. By the time I finally arrived I was pretty much worn down. And then there was an added nasty surprise: the château



an obstructed view of the Château de Monte-Cristo



Roman-era mosaic tile floor at the Archeological Museum

was closed that day. It was a place that I’d really wanted to see – the Château de Monte-Cristo, home of the famous French writer Alexandre Dumas.

The best I could do was take a few photos from the street. I had hoped there might be a great view of the château through the front gate. And there would have been, if not for a large tree that blocked much of the sightline. Very disappointing.

But I didn’t come up entirely empty during my time in Saint-Germain. An intimidatingly large castle which houses the National Archeological Museum is located practically next door to the train station. Inside there were all sorts of relics, some of them dating back to the time of prehistoric cave paintings. My favorite was the large Roman-era tile floor, depicting the four seasons in finely-crafted mosaic. It was worth the trip to Saint-Germain just to see that.

* * *

If I could only have a single image to remember this trip, I think it would be the photo I took in the Parc des Impressionnistes, across the Seine from the meeting venue. This small urban green space has been in existence since 1996, and I've read that it's intended to pay tribute to all the impressionist painters of the 19th century by "offering visitors floral compositions that read like paintings" as if one were in the midst of Claude Monet's garden. At least in the warmer months of the year. But in early November all I found were the last roses of summer.

As I mentioned, this was the 32nd carbon sequestration meeting that I've had a hand in planning and organizing. There will be only two more for me. I'd decided a few months ago that I am going to retire from U.S. Government employ at the end of 2020, and I made no secret of that to other meeting attendees. So I'm going to treat these final two meetings like those last roses of summer that I happened across in the Parc des Impressionnistes – the end of what's been a flourishing and creative part of my life. It seems an apt analogy. ☀



the last roses of summer, in the
Parc des Impressionnistes

Afterword:

Well, the pandemic ended up altering my retirement plans. It caused a changeover to work-from-home which is still in effect and also cancellation of all international travel. Which is still in effect. I decided it was in my financial best interests to continue working through 2021, but that meeting in France did turn out to be the final in-person one for me – it metaphorically really *was* the last rose of summer.

As for the Renoir painting, it was about a month-and-a-half after the meeting that I got to see it at The Phillips Collection, a very fine modern art museum that occupies a three-story Georgian Revival town home near Dupont Circle in D.C. It's got a terrific collection of art ranging from Grandma Moses to Picasso, but the interior of the building and especially its wonderful oak-paneled Music Room is as much a splendor to behold as the art itself. The Renoir painting seems to be the star attraction, and on the day Nicki and I visited there was a large docent tour which was admiring the work. I guess it made an 'impression' on them too.



at The Phillips Collection with Renoir's
Luncheon of the Boating Party

It turned out to be more than a year-and-three-quarters after that before Nicki and I next saw the inside of a D.C. museum. By then we both had been multiply-vaxed and were starting to feel a bit better about being out in public. As you'll read next, the place we chose to break the intellectual drought was our favorite of the entire Smithsonian.

The Museum of Soldiers and Artisans

Well, it's not over, but Nicki and I decided in the middle of October that our Moderna double-vax was sufficient protection against the slowly ebbing COVID-19 pandemic to where we could finally take a trip farther away from home than nearby grocery stores and doctors' offices. So we decided to travel down to D.C. to visit our favorite Smithsonian museum.

And that would be the Renwick Gallery. It's actually a branch of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, its building dating back to the Civil War with first use as the headquarters office for General Montgomery Meigs. It's a gorgeous building that owes its design to the now-destroyed Tuileries Palace in Paris. The Renwick has been part of the Smithsonian since 1965 and ever since then has been host to the Museum's decorative arts and crafts collection.

Things are starting to head back toward normalcy for the Smithsonian but they aren't there yet. So only the upper floor of the Renwick was open for viewing and there mostly were items from the permanent collection that were on display. But that what we did see were truly sublime and it started with something, in these pandemic times, we could absolutely connect with.



woven face masks by First Nations artisans

meant to be worn, but still a statement of sorts that there is room for beauty in times of cold truth.

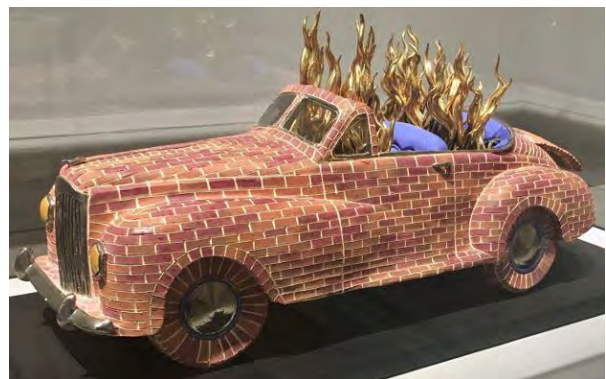
The craft works on display got a lot larger from there. And also much more disparate. Only slightly larger than the face masks was the "Convertible Car Kiln" by Patti Warashina that was constructed a half century ago from earthenware, Plexiglas, and gold & silver glaze. And at the other end of the scale, in both size and timeline, was Janet Echelman's "1.8 Renwick" which took over the entirety of the



outside the Renwick on October 14

Face masks.

There were three of them, made by expert artisan weavers from Native American tribes in Washington State, Oklahoma, and Ontario, incorporating wood strips, grasses of various kinds, bone, shell, and other materials that have been used by First Nations people throughout their histories. Obviously not



Patti Warashina's "Convertible Car Kiln"



a small part of Janet Echelman's "1.8 Renwick"

large Grand Salon room. It was constructed *in situ* using fiber and colored light, and was inspired by data collected from the 9.1 magnitude earthquake and resulting tsunami which devastated parts of Japan back in March 2011. The name of the piece comes from the 1.8 microsecond reduction of the Earth's rotation period as a result of the quake, with three-dimensional wave forms near the ceiling of the room depicted as two-dimensional topographical patterns on the floor. It's a very dynamic piece of art, as it gradually changes in both physical appearance and hue. Viewers were invited to lie down on the floor and contemplate the work, as the description of the installation stated that "the color permutations take as long to unfold as it takes to watch a sunset". Its intent seems to be to impress on us how small and insignificant we all are on the geologic scale, and it certainly did that for me.

Renwick. One of them is of such transcendental craftsmanship that you can get up to within practically a nose-length from it and still not comprehend what it really is and how it was made. It's the "Ghost Clock".

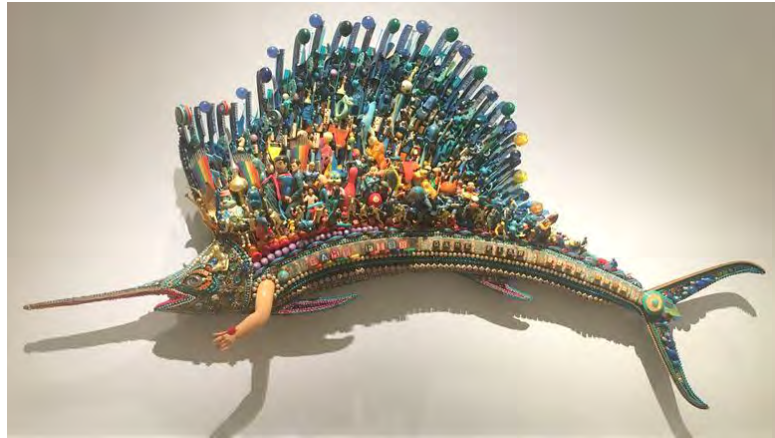
My two favorite pieces in the exhibition were things I'd seen on many previous visits to the

At first glance, from practically any distance away, it would be easy to dismiss this as just a grandfather clock cloaked in a white sheet – something totally appropriate for the upcoming All Hallows' Eve, actually – and be done with it. It's only when you get within about an arm's length that you can see that something is not quite right about the sheet – it looks very stiff as if it's been heavily starched. It's not until you read the description of the piece that realization sets in – the 'sheet' is actually made of wood. And then be dumb-struck by the further realization that the entire sculpture was carved from *a single block* of laminated mahogany, with the 'clock' stained brown and the 'sheet' bleached white. This is one of a series of 13 clock carvings that the artisan, the late Wendell Castle, finished back in the 1980s, all of them unique and delightfully strange. And also, except for this one, functional timepieces. I hope that it will be possible someday for all of them to be collected in a group exhibit so that we can be further in awe of the talent of this expert woodworker.



Wendell Castle's exquisite "Ghost Clock"

My favorite piece of all has been on prominent display in the Renwick for so long that it's now become, in effect, an iconic image of the museum – “Game Fish” by artist/craftsman Larry Fuente. It's one of the better examples of how to create a work of art from ‘found’ objects – in this case beads, buttons, poker chips, rhinestones, coins, dice, combs, a plastic doll, and ping pong balls. There's even a badminton birdie in there as well as some pieces from a miniature pinball game. All of them mostly related to different types of games and covering a fiberglass substrate formed into the shape of a marlin.

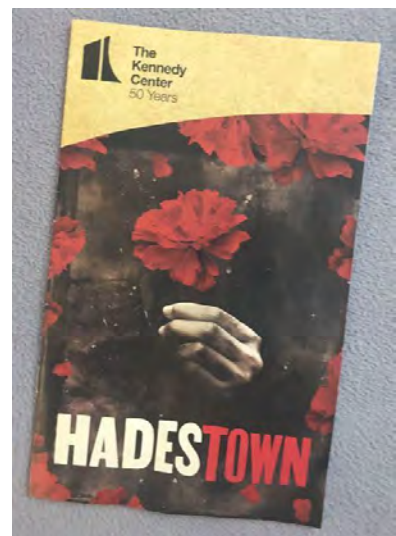


Larry Fuente's strange but wonderful “Game Fish”

I'm not sure I could tell you why it's my favorite piece in the museum. It probably has a lot to do with its delightful strangeness. But “Game Fish” is also a favorite of the Renwick itself, which describes the work as one of its “most beloved treasures”. As for me, I consider the Renwick itself as one of Washington's most beloved treasures. It was exactly the right place for Nicki and me to reacquaint ourselves with D.C. after a year-and-a-half of hunkering down against the pandemic. It certainly won't be another year-and-a-half before our next visit there. ☀

Afterword:

After having gone the better part of two years of not traveling down to Washington, it only took two weeks until our next time there. Strict protocols have been put into place for theatre shows in most parts of the country and that made us comfortable enough where we wanted to take in another performance (this time at The Kennedy Center) of what has quickly become one of our favorite musicals – *Hadestown*. I've already written about the musical, as it was one of the six shows we saw back in January 2020, the most recent time we've been to New York City. So I'll only say that the national tour version, the one that came to D.C., is really good. But the one on Broadway – the staging and the actors – is even better.



Our next trip down to Washington will happen not long after this issue is going to be published, and we'll be there to attend a convention – the 2021 World Science Fiction Convention, Discon III. But only for one day. We're both sufficiently pissed off at the convention committee for a couple of reasons such that one day's attendance seems sufficient (mostly so we can vote in site selection for the 2023 Worldcon and connect up with out-of-town friends who will be there). But because of my strong and continuing interest in the history of Worldcons, I couldn't turn down a request to write a short article for the convention's Souvenir Book about the very first Discon, which took place way back in 1963. As you will read next, that was an epic event!

The First Discon

It is my belief (and to a certain degree, my experience) that Worldcons, like many large events, are labors of love in the minds of their organizing committees. So much so that it often takes significant chunks of the lifetimes of those very dedicated people to make one happen. For instance, this gathering, the third World Science Fiction Convention ever to be held within the borders of the District of Columbia, has been in various planning stages – from original inception to final preparation – for probably the better part of a decade. But, in a much broader sense, the seeds of its creation date back a lot further than that.

Fully three-quarters of a century, in fact. It was back in 1946 that a D.C. science fiction enthusiast, Charles “Chick” Derry, began contacting fans he knew in the immediate metro area with the idea of forming a fan club. Derry eventually met another active Washington fan, Bob Pavlat, at the 1947 Worldcon in Philadelphia and together they were able to generate enough enthusiasm from five other D.C. fans to form what turned out to be a lasting organization. The result was the Washington Science Fiction Society, which changed its name a few months later to the Washington Science-Fiction Association, or WSFA.

By 1950, WSFA had grown enough that more activities were possible than just twice-a-month meetings. It held its first convention that year, a one-day event that drew about 75 fans and was successful enough that it was repeated the next year under the name of ‘Disclave’. By the early 1960s, Disclaves had become multi-day events and were starting to become multi-interest, so WSFA decided to try something *really* interesting: sponsor a World Science Fiction Convention. Its only other serious bid to host a Worldcon (for 1950) had garnered barely enough votes to finish third of the four bids considered by the business meeting of the 1949 Worldcon, but by 1962 things were different. The club had the wherewithal and active membership base to support a bid, and also an influential fan (George Scithers) to act as Chair. The bid won broad support at the Chicon III business meeting and as a result, the city of Washington was host to its first Worldcon, the ‘Discon’, over Labor Day weekend in 1963.

That first Discon was notable for many reasons, not all of which involved science fiction. Just three days prior, an event staged nearby had helped to shape the world of the 1960s – the “I Have a Dream” speech of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Lincoln Memorial, only about a mile from the Statler-Hilton Hotel where the convention was held. Discon’s Guest of Honor was someone who was as respected within the science fiction genre as Dr. King was in the world at large – Will F. Jenkins, who wrote under the pen name of Murray Leinster. He was a great choice for GoH, not only for having won a Hugo Award seven years earlier for his novelette “Exploration Team”, but for all the groundbreaking concepts he had originated and incorporated into his fiction: The first Alternate History story (“Sidewise in Time”, published in 1934). The first story that foresaw a future with extensively interlinked small computers (“A Logic Named Joe”, published in 1946). The first story to include a ‘universal translator’ device (“First Contact”, published in



Will F. Jenkins (right) at the first Discon

in 1946). The first story to include a ‘universal translator’ device (“First Contact”, published in

1945). And the first story to actually *introduce* the phrase ‘first contact’ (“Proxima Centauri”, published in 1935). At the time of Discon, Murray Leinster was also one of the oldest living science fiction writers, his first story “The Runaway Skyscraper” having been published way back in 1919. He had been rightfully described by *Time* magazine (in 1949) as “the dean of writers in the [science fiction] field”.

Leinster’s Guest of Honor speech, at the convention’s banquet luncheon, was an unscripted anecdotal remembrance of people, places, and events over the span of his long writing career. But also forward-looking: During his remarks he stated that, “I do have one hope I can talk about. It has long been my belief that science fiction is the hope of the nation.” Leinster spoke for about 45 minutes in all, and after that it was time for the Hugo Awards presentation. Discon’s Toastmaster, Isaac Asimov, had charge of the event (as he had been for several previous Worldcons) and he was humorously entertaining with many witticisms and even some back-and-forth banter with other writers who were there. At that point in his writing career, Asimov had not yet been voted a Hugo and so he used his annual Worldcon Toastmaster speaking time to make his introductory comments into an amusing faux-lament: “I have edited an anthology called *The Hugo Winners* [in which] I have bared my heart. I wrote about all the rascals who get Hugos and how they never give it to the one man, who above all others, deserves numerous Hugos – ME!”

But this time it was different. The very last award presented, one that had been kept secret by the convention committee, was a Special Award – to him! It was inscribed “For Adding Science to Science Fiction. Isaac Asimov” in honor for all of the science popularizing essays and articles he had written over the years. It only took a few seconds for Asimov to realize that his annual schtick at the Hugo Awards ceremony was finished. He turned to Scithers and exclaimed, “You killed the whole bit!”

It didn’t quite overshadow all the Hugos that had been given out prior to that, and there had been some very worthy winners. Philip K. Dick won what would be his only Hugo Award for his novel *The Man in the High Castle*. Jack Vance won in the Short Fiction category for “The Dragon Masters”. Roy Krenkel won in the Best Professional Artist category, *Fantasy & Science Fiction* won for Best Professional Magazine, and *Xero* for Best Amateur Magazine. There was also another special committee award, to P. Schuyler Miller in recognition of his many thoughtful and informative book reviews. And in a separate ceremony later that day, the venerable E.E. “Doc” Smith was honored with the inaugural First Fandom Hall of Fame Award.

There were a lot more memorable moments at that first Discon than just the awards ceremonies, of course. One of them happened right after the gavel fell at the Opening Ceremonies, when Fritz Leiber and L. Sprague de Camp yelled mock insults at each other in Old English and Persian that soon escalated into a clanging sword duel, each of them brandishing an old Argentine Navy cutlass. Which was followed by a robed wizard reading an incantation from a book of spells. Once the theatrics had concluded, Scithers introduced James Blish who gave an incisive speech about literary criticism as it pertains to science fiction and how British reviewers



Doc Smith with his First Fandom Hall of Fame Award

seemed to be much better at it. After that there were panels and lectures on topics as diverse as fiction writing, comic book art, and the mysteries of astronomy. There was also a costume ball and even a poetry slam. And that was just the first day.

There were two more days of Discon and each had a similarly eclectic mix of panels and speeches. In addition to the awards ceremonies and banquet, Day 2 was partially given over to special interest group meetings: the Burroughs Bibliophiles, the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, and the Hyborian Legion. And the third day featured an editors' panel, moderated by Fred Pohl, which had as its panelists several of the most prominent and respected science fiction editors of that time: Donald A. Wollheim, Cele Goldsmith, A.J. Budrys, and John W. Campbell, Jr. In all, the Discon program had something for everybody, all packed into one single, content-rich track of programming. Most of it was recorded on audio, and the result was a Proceedings that was put into print by Advent Publishers.

The 1963 Discon had an attendance of about 600 fans and professionals, very small by today's standards. But that provided it a degree of intimacy in terms of creating opportunities for meeting people, and those present were happy to partake. One of them was Mike Resnick who, with his wife Carol, were attending their first Worldcon. It was all gosh-wow to him, which caused him to be noticed by a much more seasoned Worldcon attendee. As Resnick later described it:

"There was a sweet old guy in a white suit who saw that we were new to all this, and moseyed over and spent half an hour with us, making us feel at home and telling us about how we were all one big family and inviting us to come to all the parties at night. Then he wandered off to accept the first-ever Hall of Fame Award from First Fandom. When they asked if he was working on anything at present, he replied that he had just delivered the manuscript to Skylark DuQuesne, and only then did we realize that he was the fabled E.E. 'Doc' Smith."

It's now been nearly 60 years since that first Discon. There probably aren't very many people left who were there, but a few of them may be attending this third edition of the convention and it wouldn't at all be surprising if there is a programming panel featuring some of those fans. Worldcons are timebinding events, where old memories become new again. That's almost certainly going to be true concerning the first Discon and it's now up to you, Discon III members, to create the memories which will begin this process all over again. Those of us attending Discon IV, whenever it is, will be looking forward to timebind with you. ☀

Afterword:

That last sentence is more of a rhetorical device than an expectation for me. Worldcons in Washington, D.C. occur so infrequently that I'm pretty doubtful that there will be another one in my lifetime. Or, for that matter, in the lifetimes of many if not most of the other Discon III attendees. And before I abandon the topic of Discon III, I saw from the full list of program items on their schedule that there will *not* be a fan history program item on the first Discon. Or any other fan history program items, for that matter. Yet another reason to be pissed off at the concom.

At any rate, next up is a milestone of sorts – the 200th essay that I've collected in this ongoing personal time capsule. It once again takes me back the small village of Chaumont and tells about what was an epic place for both entertainment and exploration.

The Quarry

It's the middle of March as I'm writing this and a few days ago the nightly news broadcast shared the results of a recent meme-like audience participation activity related to the ongoing world health crisis. The one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic is this very week, so NBC News had asked its viewers to check their mobile phone photos and send them the very last one they took prior to the plague's official onset. What came back were more than 900 images, a microcosm of a life we've all been missing as you can tell from descriptions of some of them: "The last hug with a grandparent. The last track meet before school went remote and athletics got shut down. The last church choir practice, the last meal with colleagues, the last concert." Before it all changed.

The World Health Organization had declared the coronavirus a pandemic on March 11th, but for me that didn't really become evident until a week later – by then it had become obvious that the COVID-19 was going to be bad. Very bad. The Governor of Maryland, Larry Hogan, waited until March 30th to issue a state-wide closure order but the work-from-home Agency-wide email appeared in my inbox on March 18th.

So my final pre-pandemic iPhone snap was a photo of Nicki in our kitchen on March 17th, wearing a green sweater with a shamrock pin in observance of St. Patrick's Day. It's nothing special, but she does have this wonderful, serene look on her face that hasn't appeared very often since then. Months upon months of the ongoing plague and a final chaotic year of the autocratic, corrupt Trump regime will do that to you.

I could write more about what I was doing in March a year ago but I'd rather describe what happened on a cold March afternoon a much longer time back. It was 55 years ago, in the late winter of 1966, that I took what was most likely my very last sled ride. Back then, at that time of year in the small town where I lived way up near the Canadian border, there weren't very many interesting things to do, either after school or on weekends. But it was far enough north that there was still a decent amount of snow on the ground that late into the year. And there was also a small abandoned limestone quarry not very far behind my parents' house which had a pretty good sliding hill.

That quarry wasn't especially dangerous. Heck, I didn't think it was dangerous at all and apparently neither did my parents as I was never forbidden to go back there. I and the rest of my family lived in that house for about a dozen years; I pretty much grew up with the quarry as a primary play area. When I was little it was a fabulous place for Cowboys-and-Indians, and when I entered my adolescence I discovered there were some aspects about the place that were worth further investigation. One of them was the 'rockholes'.

I don't know what their scientific description is, but that's what I and the neighbor's kids called them. They were remnants of the Glacial period which had covered that part of upper New York State with mountains of ice thousands of years ago, and when it all had receded there



Nicki on March 17, 2020

were places with flat limestone outcroppings which had deep crevasses. It was possible to climb down into them, so of course we did. You could get maybe as much as 10-15 feet down in some of them before they narrowed too much to descend any farther. There was one place where two rockholes were linked by a natural tunnel, and finding that was a true joy of discovery. But as for how deep these holes went, we never tried to find that out. All we knew was that water runoff from snow and rain went into them and they never, ever filled up. Where all that water ended up was a mystery that we never solved.

Another mystery about the quarry was why it had been dug out in the first place and, for that matter, why it had been abandoned. Back then there wasn't any lore or history about the place (none that I ever discovered, anyway) and there were many times that we had speculated wildly about its existence. I remember that our most colorful theory was that the quarry had once been a



Google Maps view of the quarry, 55 years later

graveyard of dinosaurs and that it had been excavated to uncover their fossilized bones. Never mind that there was absolutely no evidence for this whatsoever; at that point in our young lives we were letting our imaginations run amok.

As I mentioned, the quarry had a pretty good sliding hill (which was actually its back wall), and once winter rolled around and the hill got covered in snow it was the best place in the neighborhood to go sledding. There was an elevation change of only about 15 feet from the brow of the hill to the bottom where there was an extended flat run-out, and though it wasn't a sheer drop-off, it was still pretty steep. And, for the daredevil in us, about two-thirds of the way down the hill there was a flat limestone outcropping, maybe four feet wide, that extended out from the hill by about three feet. Pilot your sled off that thing and there was some modern-day X-Games-style Big Air to be had. Truly intimidating to an eight-year-old. It took me a few years to eventually work up the courage to try it and I remember that the first time I did it was terrifying. But also super-duper exciting and I didn't waste any time getting back to the top of the hill to do it again.

When I was a Junior in high school my parents had decided that they wanted to sell the house and move someplace where there was less likelihood of being snowed in during winter. Which meant that my sledding days on that hill were coming to an end, and I knew it. By then any

users of the hill had mostly transitioned over to an even more exciting downhill conveyance, the saucer sled. It was faster by a lot and didn't need as much snow as a conventional 'flexible flyer' sled did. It was on a Saturday afternoon in mid-March, when it was becoming obvious that the snow cover wouldn't last much longer, that I and a next-door neighbor friend set out to construct the ultimate saucer sled run. The land behind the hill, even though it was not steep, still had enough added elevation to it where we could make an ersatz bobsled-like course, complete with a couple of banked turns, that led inexorably to that steep drop. We were surprised how easy it was to create and somewhat chagrined that we had never thought of doing it until just then. We were each able to get in a run before it got dark, and oh yeah, it had been totally worth the effort – it was the best sled ride I'd ever taken.



a 1960s saucer sled

And also the last. I woke the next morning to find that the Spring thaw had finally arrived – warmer temperatures and an overnight rain had made the course completely unusable. I've never been on a sled of any kind since then. My parents ended up selling the house that summer and we moved to a rental down by the bay for my Senior year – plenty of good fishing there, but no sledding hills anywhere nearby. After we moved, I never went back to the quarry. It still exists, according to Google maps – it now looks to be more than a bit overgrown by trees and other stuff that wasn't there back in 1966, and with high magnification I can even see the limestone outcroppings where the rockholes are.

Nowadays there's another pretty good sliding hill not far from where Nicki and I live here in Maryland – it's at the boundary of a middle school's large athletic field and whenever it snows there's no lack of kids (and their parents) who want to get in some sledding. And every time I see that going on, my mind takes me back to 1966 and that one epic saucer sled ride. Who knew you could have so much fun in an abandoned quarry? ☀

Afterword:

It helps to have Mr. Google as a friend. Turns out that there were other quarries in or near Chaumont besides the one nearest where I lived and stone blocks from all of them were used to build homes and other structures in the county and elsewhere in New York State. The quarry near where I lived, from what I've been able to discover online, saw first use at some point in the second half of the 1800s, though I wasn't able to find out when it was abandoned. As for the rockholes, it also helps to have a geologist as a friend and he pointed me to a 1979 technical paper on the carbonate rock of the region around Chaumont that seemed to indicate the holes penetrated the entire thickness of the limestone (estimated at 30-60 feet thick) and after that any drainage water would eventually end up in an aquifer. I'm glad I didn't know that in the 1960s – childhood and adolescent musings were so much more fun back then about what could really be down there.

There's room for one more essay and it takes us back to adulthood. Back in 2015 an extraordinary and very entertaining short movie was made on the topic of one of science fiction's most common tropes. And as you'll read, *maybe just maybe* it was actually fact-based!

It's About Time

It was back in 2014 that a student filmmaker at Stephen F. Austin State University, Ricky Kennedy, created an extraordinary short movie titled *The History of Time Travel*. Exploration of “what ifs” is central to good storytelling in the science fiction genre and this little production is one of the better examples of how to do it the right way.

Back in 1939, at the urging of fellow scientists, preeminent physicists Albert Einstein and Leo Szilard sent a letter to the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, warning that Nazi Germany could be planning to develop an atomic bomb. This, as we know, led to the super-secret Manhattan Project which beat the Nazis to it. But what if there had also been a *second* letter from Einstein and Szilard to Roosevelt that warned of the Nazis’ interest in time travel? And what if that resulted in a *second* super-secret Government activity, the Indiana Project, which eventually resulted in the creation of a working time machine during the post-WWII Cold War era?



IMDB describes *The History of Time Travel* as: “A fictional documentary about the creation of the world’s first time machine, the men who created it, and the unintended ramifications it has on world events.” And there are no lack of those. What if, instead of turning the completed device over to the U.S. military, the scientist inventor instead used it to go back in time to save a family member from a deadly disease? What if the Soviets took notice and stole the machine and its plans for their own uses? What if persistent meddling in the time stream ended up drastically changing historical events? And what if it was *continuing to happen* as the documentary was being filmed?

This is a pretty slick production, especially considering it was made with what must have been a microscopic budget relative to Hollywood norms. It was structured as a series of short straight-up interview snippets – the Astrophysicist, the Philosopher, the SciFi Writer, the retired Army General, the Time Historian, the family friend – which tell the story in what starts in a straightforward manner. But then, stuff starts to happen. Little stuff at first – a coffee cup is a different color, a globe in the background shows a different hemisphere. And then, not-so-little stuff – a change in an object on one of the interviewee’s desk indicates that the entire history of the world since WWII has been tossed into the blender. This includes the personal history of the inventor and his family, which becomes wildly recursive until it reaches what seemed to me an inevitable conclusion.

All this is succinctly and ironically summed up in what one of the interviewees states near the end of the film: “*We experience time as we perceive it, but if time could be altered and was being altered would we perceive that? Would we even notice?*”

It’s the ‘noticing’ of all those subtle and not-so-subtle alterations to the timeline that, in part, makes this such an interesting production. When I watched it at the 2015 Orlando Worldcon, I found it so entertaining that it was a pleasant surprise when I discovered it had finally made its way to Orinoco Prime. And I hear it’s also going to be part of a film festival down in Douglas Commonwealth next year if the COVID-16 pandemic is finally over by then. Rumor is that President Harris is even going to see it. You should too! ☀

