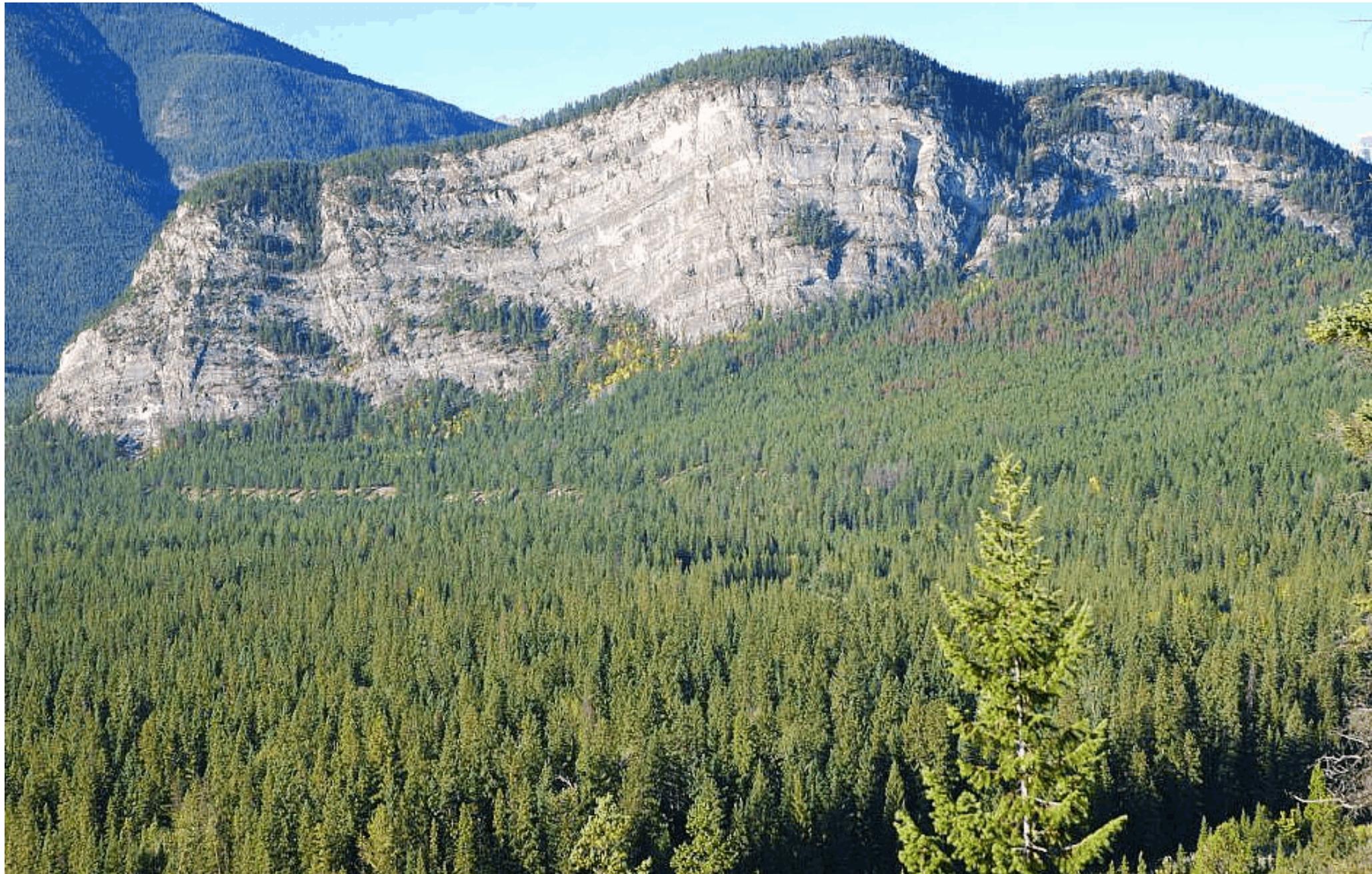


# OPUNTIA 393



## Thanksgiving 2017

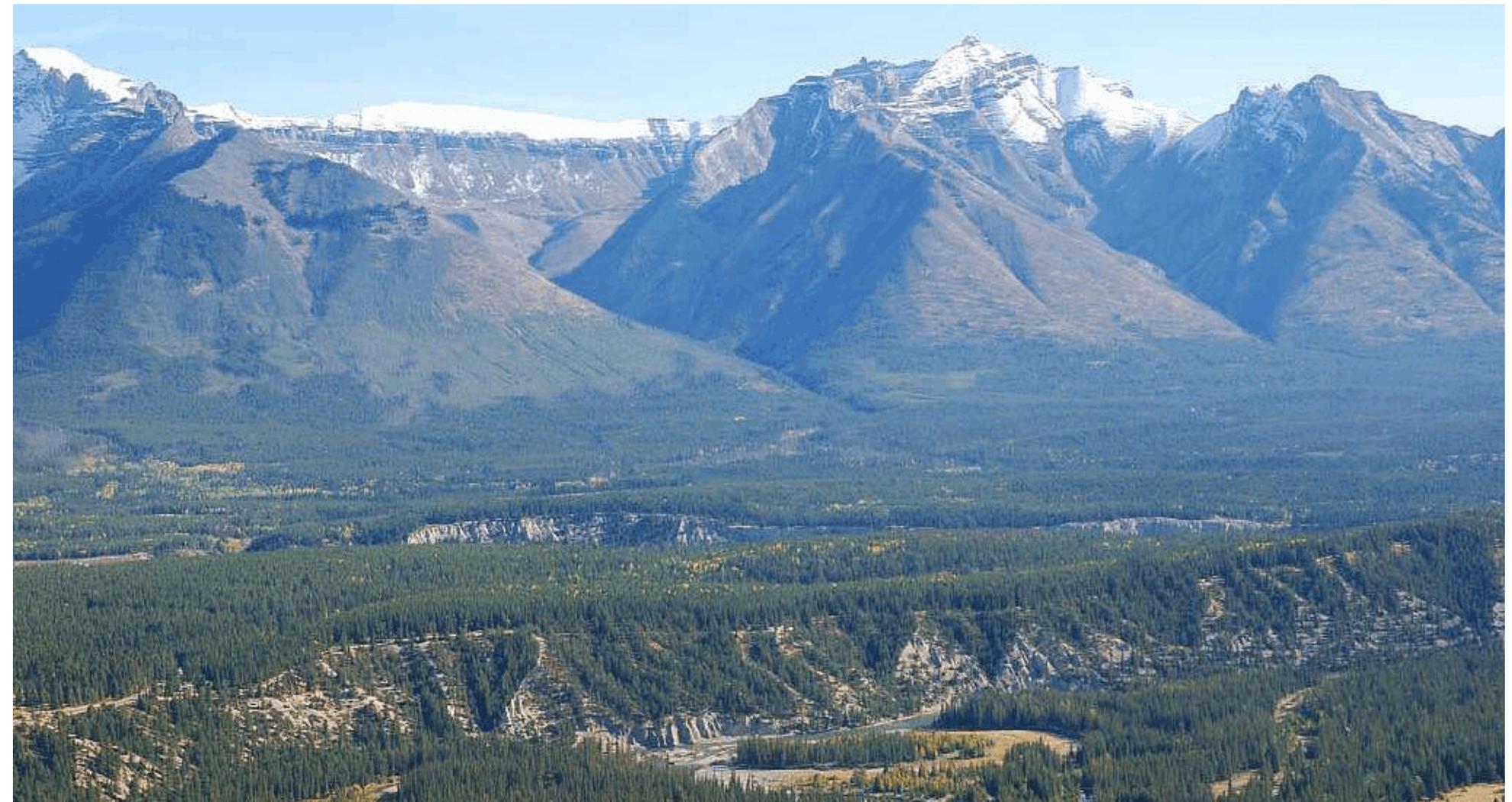
**Opuntia** is published by Dale Speirs, Calgary, Alberta. It is posted on [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com) and [www.fanac.org](http://www.fanac.org). My e-mail address is: [opuntia57@hotmail.com](mailto:opuntia57@hotmail.com) When sending me an emailed letter of comment, please include your name and town in the message.

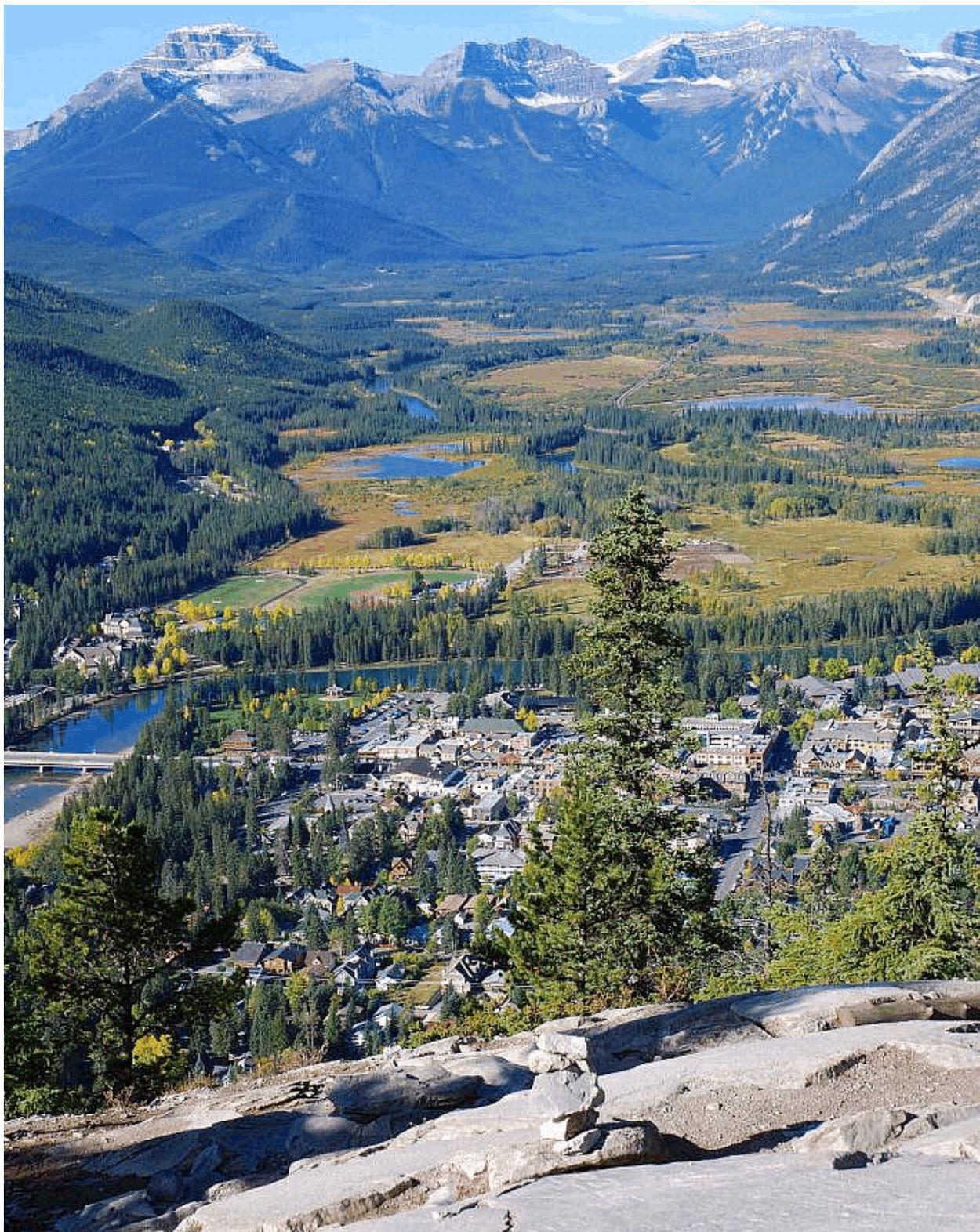
### **ROCKY MOUNTAIN WAY: TUNNEL MOUNTAIN**      2017-09-27 photos by Dale Speirs

It was frustrating to have a free pass for admission to the national parks in 2017 and then not be able to use it because of forest fire smoke blowing in from British Columbia all summer long. Finally though, we had mid-September rain that quenched the fires and I was able to get back out to Banff National Park.

Tunnel Mountain is the eastern boundary of Banff townsite, with a good trail to the summit that makes it very popular with tourists. I went in the middle of the week, one advantage of being retired, and hiked up the trail in about an hour. The cover photo was taken looking at the eastern slope of the mountain from down in the valley. The photos that follow were taken from the summit.

The photo on this page looks northeast down from the summit into the Bow River valley. The access road to Tunnel Mountain runs along the edge of the escarpment, and somewhere along the edge was where I stopped and took the cover photo. If you squint, you can see a bit of the river along the base of the escarpment.





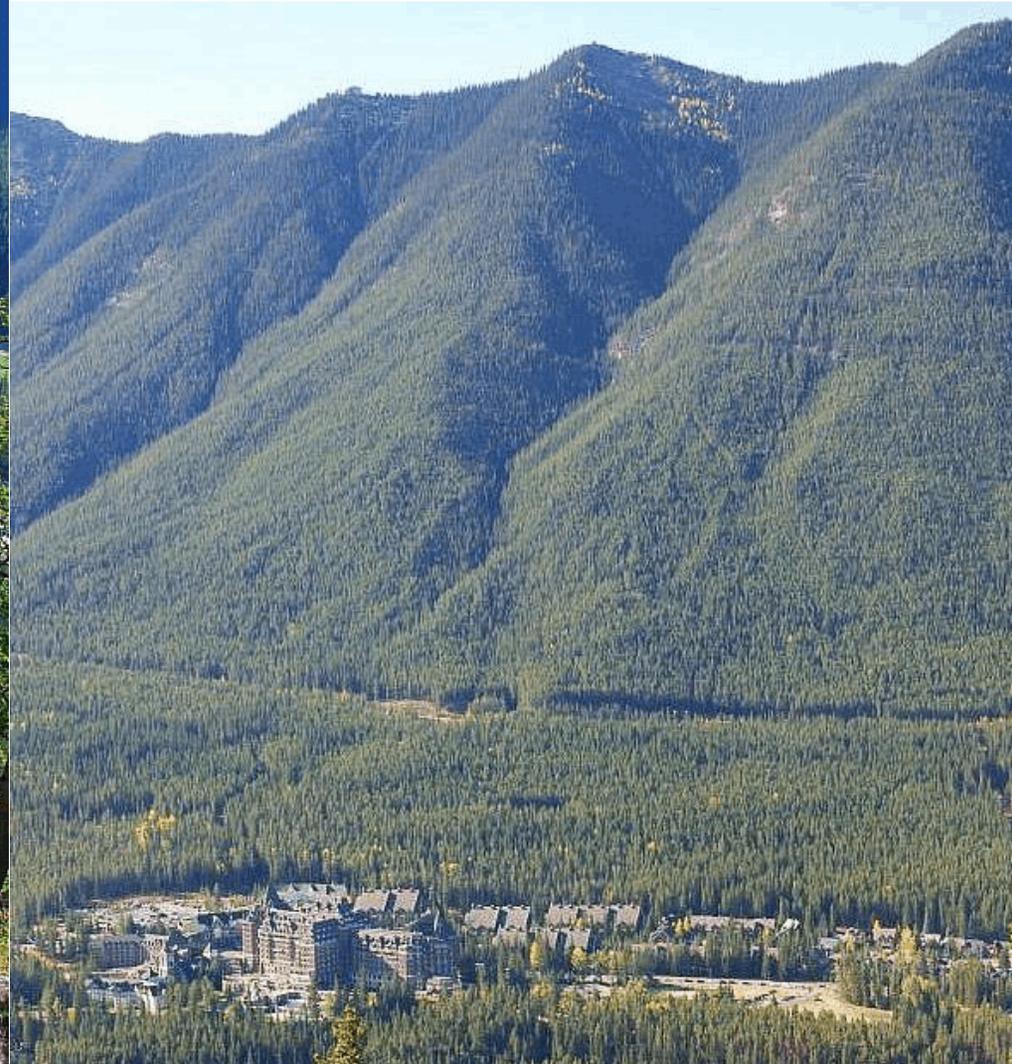
Looking west up the valley from the summit. The village of Banff is at the base of Tunnel Mountain and is bounded on two sides by a bend of the Bow River.

The photo below is a smartphone selfie, not done with my trusty digital Nikon as with all the others. I sent it from the mountaintop to family members in Calgary who still have to work for a living. One of the little joys of retirement.



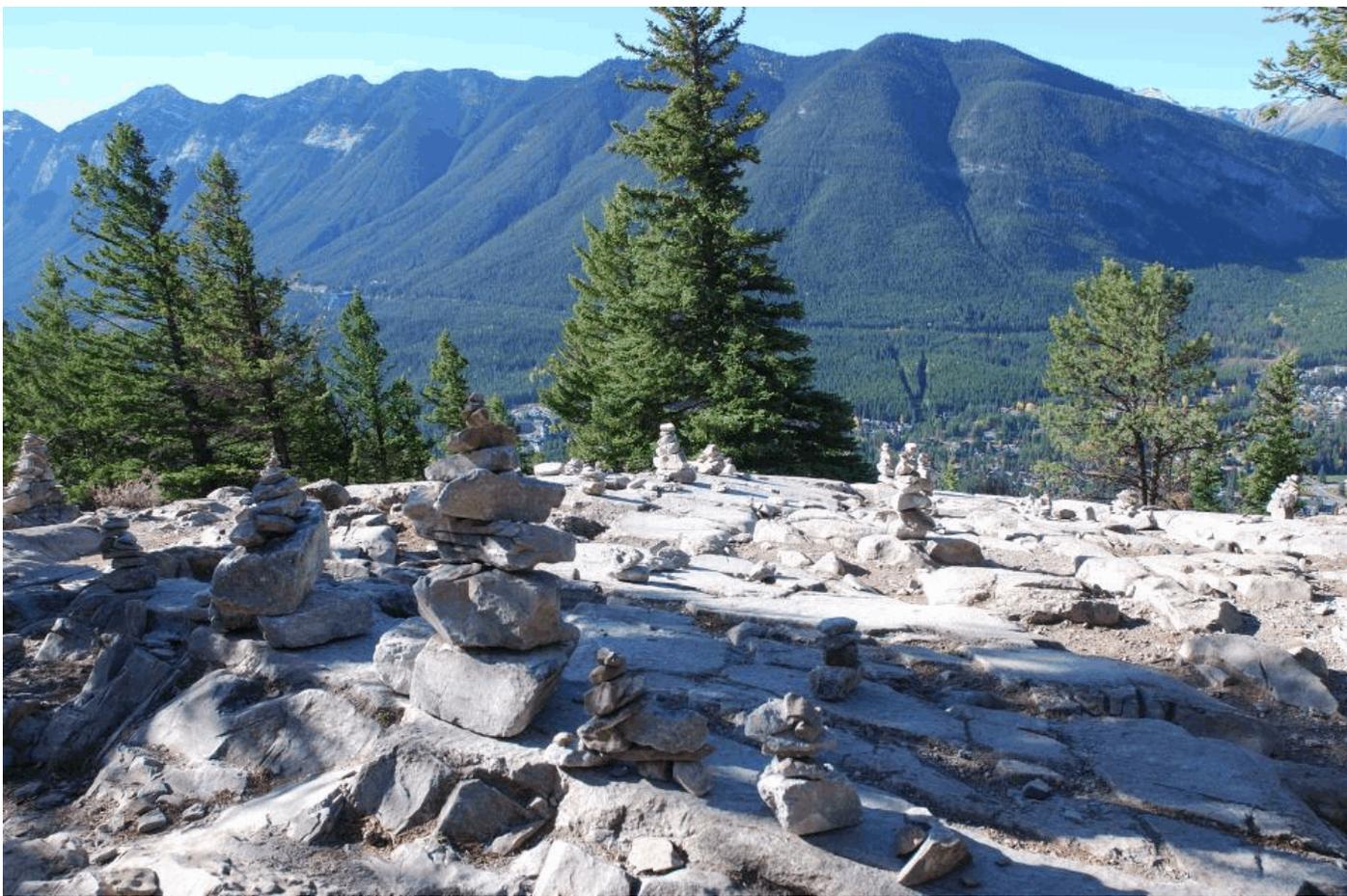
At left: Looking east down the Bow River valley.

Below: Looking southwest at the palatial Banff Springs Hotel. Rooms start at \$500 per night. I went inside once and I couldn't even afford the sandwiches in the lobby kiosk. Sulphur Mountain across the way.

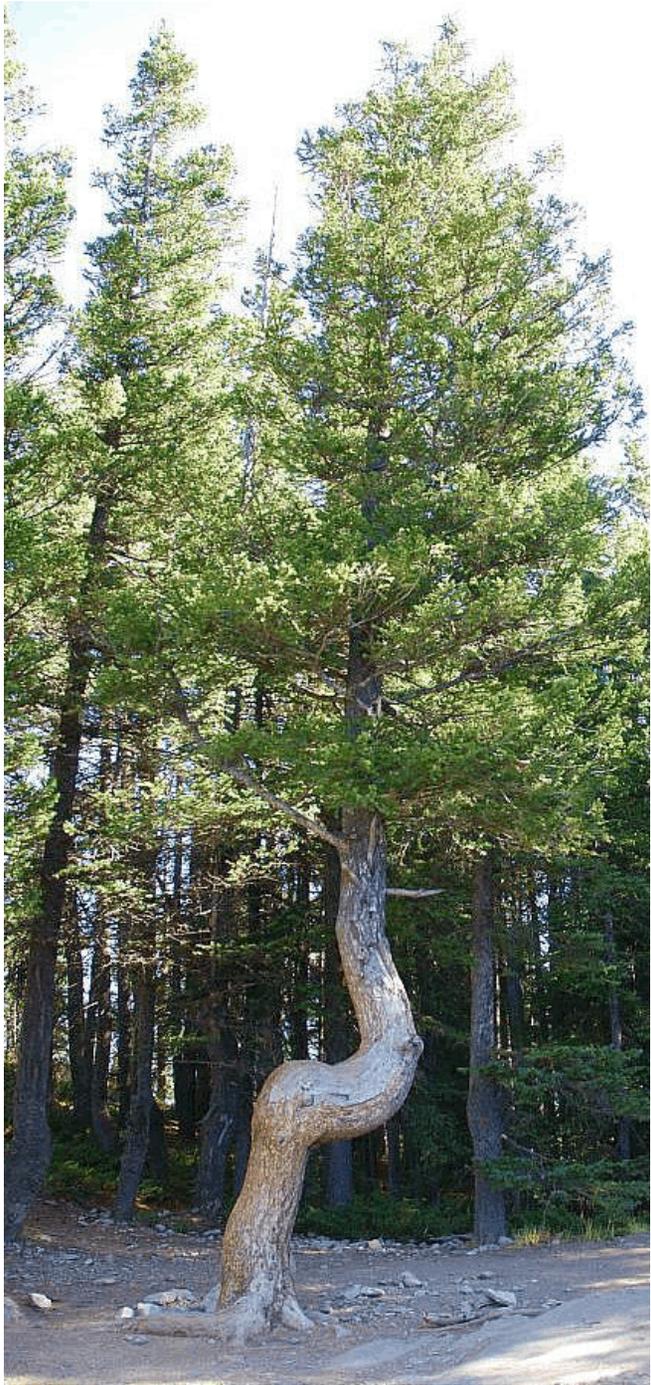


Looking northwest up the valley. Vermilion Lakes in the foreground. On the far side, the Trans-Canada Highway skirts the base of Mount Norquay.





Above: It is a Canadian tradition for many mountaineers to build inukshuks once they reach the summit. Since even on a weekday about a hundred people climb Tunnel Mountain, this gets carried to excess. I wasn't one of them.



At right: A distorted pine on the summit.



At left: Looking north along the eastern face of Tunnel Mountain. Not quite as dangerous as it seems. I held on tight to a tree and stuck my camera out with my other hand, taking a bunch of blind shots with the shutter held down and then selecting the best one.

Below: Looking north from another part of the summit at the alpine meadows of Mount Norquay and Stoney Squaw Mountain.



## BWAH HA! HA!: PART 6

by Dale Speirs

[Parts 1 to 5 appeared in OPUNTIA's #371, 372, and 378, 388, and 391.]

### I Shall Destroy The World! (Insert Bwah Ha! Ha!s As Required).

A mainstay of mad scientist fiction is the fellow who wants to destroy the world for whatever reason or often for no reason at all. Maybe it was because he was scorned by the girls in high school, or because he thinks the world would be so much nicer without all those humans annoying him.



*"Another death-ray test, Johnson—do you mind?"*

from PUNCH, 1943-04-21, page 326

THE MAN WHO ROCKED THE EARTH is a 1915 novel by Arthur Train and Robert Williams Wood, available as a free download from [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). The novel was written in late 1914 just before it became obvious that the boys wouldn't be home in time for Christmas. The War To End All Wars was about to turn the fields of France into abattoirs but neither the authors nor anyone else were aware of what the future was to bring.

A mad scientist calling himself Pax had a massive device that fires an huge beam of ionized particles (if I read the infodump correctly) into space and provided enough thrust to tilt Earth off its axis by five degrees. Earthquakes rock the planet everywhere, and tsunamis kill millions as the sudden change in rotation causes oceans to slop ashore in huge tsunamis. Barometers everywhere report sudden spikes in atmospheric pressures, and the magnetosphere of Earth twists into a new pattern.

Pax sends a message that if Europe and the Americas do not halt the war and disarm, he will do further damage. They don't and he does. He has a spaceship, called The Ring from its shape, which flies over Europe and then uses a massive particle beam to carve a valley from the Mediterranean through the Atlas Mountains into the Sahara.

Pax's home base is eventually located somewhere in Labrador. The Germans send a fleet but are easily vanquished by his particle beam. Labrador is part of Newfoundland, which was a British Dominion at the time.

It seems improbable that Britain and Canada would stand idly by and let the Huns sail through their waters. (Newfoundland was independent until 1949, when it joined the Canadian Confederation.) Britain and Canada were in the war from the start, actively fighting the Germans.

More trouble and strife result, with plenty of digressions into how the new utopia was forced into existence by Pax. The wishful thinking of the authors covers this novel like icing on a cake.

Finally an American professor manages to sneak into Labrador. He locates Pax's base just as the mad scientist is about to fire his beam again, turn Earth sideways, and re-spin it so that the North Pole will be located in Europe. This would force mass migrations like never before and mix the world's population into new nations who would live together in peace. Indeed.

As the professor watches from a distance, something goes wrong. Pax is not infallible and the Tesla tower (specifically mentioned in the text as such) his beam is emitted from goes awry. The beam supports collapse, aiming it at Pax's blockhouse adjacent to the tower, and dissolves him into his constituent atoms.

We never do get to meet Pax in the flesh. It's just as well. The novel was topical when it was published but because it was set so near in the future it was quickly rendered obsolete by events. The Germans did not see the light, not then, not in 1918, and not until 1945. At no time did any of the nations suddenly decide to beat their swords into ploughshares. The book is, however, a fascinating read.

“The Solar Magnet” by Capt. S.P. Meek (1931 October, ASTOUNDING) is an installment in a series of stories about the struggle between good and evil, between Dr Bird of the U.S. Bureau of Standards and Ivan Saranoff of the USSR.

Earth's axial tilt is off. The days are slowly getting longer in the USA by minutes per day. If it continues, the northern hemisphere will face the Sun, and the southern hemisphere will be in darkness. Bird concludes it is a plot by Saranoff to warm up Russia and make it a prosperous breadbasket.

Secret Service agent Carnes is the hero of the story. In a lengthy infodump, Bird explains to him about Earth's axial tilt, solstices and equinoxes, and how the seasons work. One would think such an infodump unnecessary for SF fans who were, after all, slans, but perhaps the author was padding the word count.

It's heigh-ho and off to Russia in a U.S. Navy cruiser, which is certainly not an inconspicuous method of sneaking up on a suspect. Once in the White Sea, they launch an amphibious airplane equipped with a superscience detector that will locate Saranoff's superscience magnet that is slowly altering Earth's tilt. The plane is also equipped with ordinary bombs because sometimes the old ways are best. In the event, they don't work because Saranoff has a ray gun that neutralizes them.

Turnabout is fairplay, and Saranoff has flak guns, which bring down Bird and Carnes. Most of the following story could come from any espionage plot. The capture, the escape, the repair of the aircraft, the last-second ambush, and off to the cruiser. The ship opens fire on Saranoff's solar magnet and takes out most of the town as well.

Since the USSR was at peace with the USA at the time, this is what might be termed actionable cause.

Be that as it may, Earth immediately tilts back to normal after the solar magnet is destroyed. Snowfall begins immediately. Nevermind the latency of weather systems. One would expect massive earthquakes and tsunamis as Earth suddenly snaps back to a 23.5° axial tilt but they don't seem to be forthcoming.

## **THE GREATEST INVENTION OF ALL: PART 2**

by Dale Speirs

[Part 1 appeared in OPUNTIA #50.1A.]

The greatest invention of humans was language, spoken and written. Many other animal species communicate by sounds, but we are the only species that can pass specific messages to generations unborn or to contemporaries far afield of our sounds. The first installment of this series discussed the alphabet. There is a huge gap between the invention of spoken languages and the adoption of alphabets. That is discussed herewith.

THE FIRST SIGNS (2016) is an investigation by Genevieve von Petzinger into symbols associated with European and Mediterranean Palaeolithic cave art. They were used for 30,000 years, but archaeologists never thought them as anything more than random marks in the art. von Petzinger set up a computer database and compiled a set of 32 symbols found on paintings, tools, figurines, and jewelry of the Palaeolithic. She was the first to realize they weren't random dabs of paint.

Based on other studies, it is generally accepted that spoken languages originated about 100,000 years ago. Alphabets are only known from less than 6,000 years ago. The modern human mind that thought as we do and not as wild animals is believed to have emerged about 40,000 years ago.

*Homo sapiens* is about 200,000 years old. The oldest known intentional human burials with grave goods is a 130,000-year-old site near Nazareth, Israel. Paint kits of ochre, ground charcoal, and bone marrow oil for application date about 100,000 years. They were not random pigments but were mixed to specific ratios to produce shades of colours.

During the last Ice Age, which ended 8,000 years ago, so much water was locked up in ice that sea levels fell. Britain was part of the mainland, and the Mediterranean was a large lake, not a sea, bordered by vast fertile plains.

Humans spreading out from Africa as the ice melted found the plains heavily stocked with large game animals such as mammoths, reindeer, aurochs, horses, bison, and deer. A well-fed people with leisure time became a cultured people. Cave art was an expression of culture. Most of the human habitations from this time are deep underwater now. The sites found today were once mountaintops.

von Petzinger compiled a database of the symbols and signs associated with cave art. She discovered they were not an endless variation of marks, but had only 32 types. They were consistent across 30,000 years, and across Europe and the Mediterranean. They appeared suddenly, with no gradual evolution. The commonality of signs suggests that humans brought them from the African shore, from areas now flooded by the melted ice sheets.

The signs had meaning, since lost in the depths of time. Those ancient humans were hunter-gatherers who had no need of permanent records. After agriculture was invented about 15,000 years ago, there was a need for writing to record who owned a field, who had paid taxes to the king, and who borrowed seed or breeding stock to be paid back after the harvest. From there, the alphabet.

von Petzinger concludes that the cave art signs were not proto-writing but a first step towards it. The Palaeolithic humans had learned to associate a symbol with an idea, and perhaps to connect several symbols together for a complex idea. For example, “aurochs are here” versus “aurochs we killed many in summer”. The next step, to connect symbols with sounds, was a long time coming, and had to await agriculture, large towns, and long-distance trade.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|     |     |     |     |
| Asterisk  | Aviform   | Circle  | Claviform   |
|    |    |    |    |
| Cordiform   | Crosshatch  | Cruciform   | Cupule  |
|    |    |    |    |
| Dot   | Finger Fluting  | Flabelliform  | Half Circle   |
|    |    |    |    |
| Line  | Negative Hand   | Open Angle  | Oval  |
|    |    |    |    |
| Pectiform   | Penniform   | Positive Hand   | Quadrangle  |
|  |  |   |   |
| Reniform  | Scalariform   | Segmented Cruciform   | Serpentiform  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Spanish Tectiform   | Spiral  | Tectiform   | Triangle  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Unciform  | W-Sign  | Y-Sign  | Zigzag  |

At right is von Petzinger’s table of signs.

## STEAMPUNK REVIEWS: PART 2

by Dale Speirs

[Part 1 appeared in OPUNTIA #364.]

I've done lots of random book reviews in past issues, but as constant readers will have noted, I've been moving to thematic reviews, which I think will be more useful for anyone wanting to check back on previous reviews. For that reason, I've also been citing issue numbers of previous reviews to make them easier to locate.

All individual titles reviewed are indexed in the OPUNTIA cumulative subject index, available as a free pdf from [www.fanac.org](http://www.fanac.org) or [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com). The themes are also separately indexed.

With alternative histories, I've done too many to go back and renumber them as part of a series. Steampunk has been included in the AH reviews, but it has evolved to the point where it is fairly a genre in its own right. I will therefore begin a new series, using the review column in #364 as the first part.

For my other prior steampunk reviews, go to the cumulative subject index under "History, alternative, steampunk" for the fiction reviews. There are additional non-fiction references under "Conventions, steampunk", "Costuming, steampunk", and "Fanhistory, Calgary, steampunk".

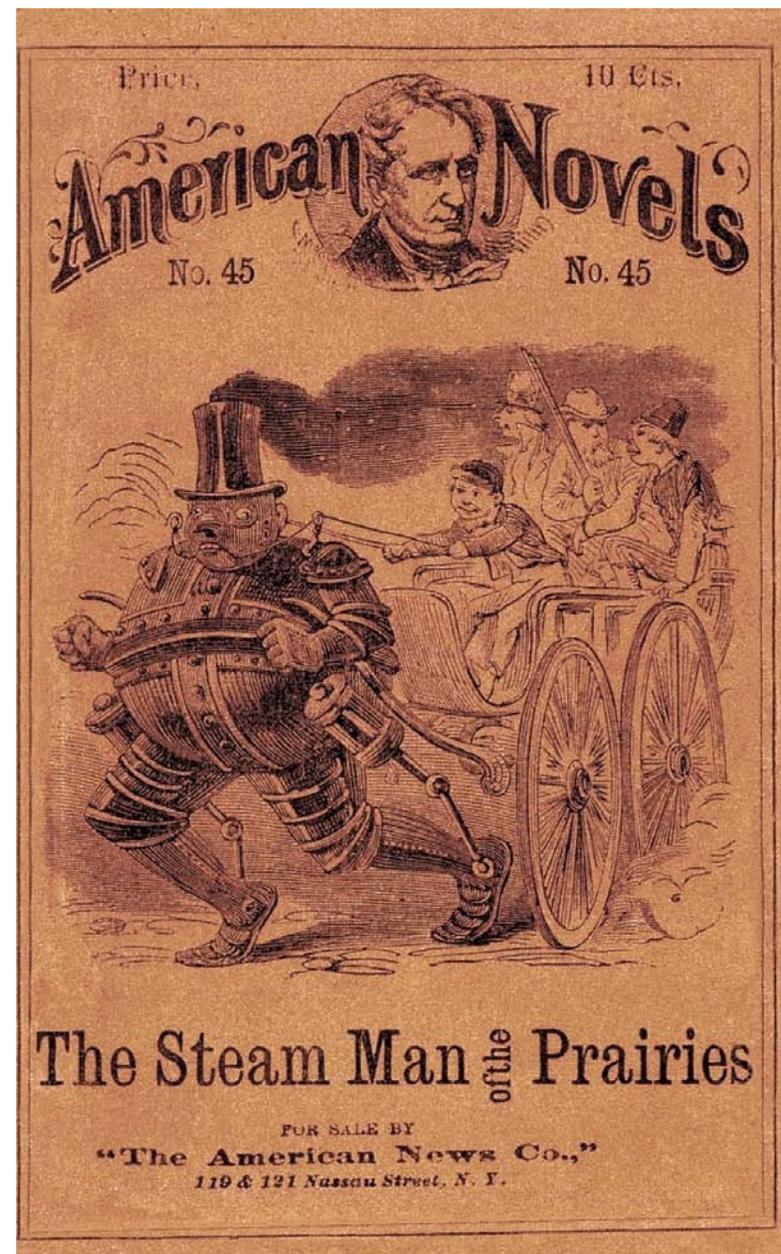
K.W. Jeter coined the word 'steampunk' in a letter to the editor in the 1987 April issue of LOCUS, the science fiction newsmagazine. He effectively created it as a self-aware genre, but its roots go back more than a century.

The genre evolved from several independent branches unaware of each other. The literary branch can be said to be the origin, but costumers and comics fans have strong branches that developed almost separately. The evolution of steampunk is more like a shrub branching out from the ground than a tree with a single trunk.

I have talked with many costumers who had no idea that there were books and short stories. They do not read printed fiction, and came into the genre via other cosplaying or renaissance fairs. Some comics fans think their branch is the origin. I don't have any contacts with anime fans but I'm sure they think the Japanese invented steampunk.

## Palaeofiction: Steam Men.

THE HUGE HUNTER, OR, THE STEAM MAN OF THE PRAIRIES by Edward S. Ellis is considered by many critics to be the first example of steampunk literature. The novel is most commonly cited by its subtitle. It was published in 1868 and went through numerous editions. (My copy of this and the other dime novels mentioned further on were free downloads from [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org))



The basic plot is about Johnny Brainerd, a teenager in the Thomas Edison mode who has invented a steam robot that pulls a carriage. He makes acquaintance with Baldy Bicknell, an old Indian fighter so-called because he had been scalped years ago, a stock Irishman named Mickey McSquizzle and a Yankee named Ethan Hopkins. Off they go for various adventures.

*The steam man was a frightful looking object, being painted of a glossy black, with a pair of white stripes down its legs, and with a face which was intended to be of a flesh color, but, which was really a fearful red.*

*To give the machinery an abundance of room, the steam man was exceedingly corpulent, swelling out to aldermanic proportions, which, after all, was little out of harmony with its immense height.*

*The wagon dragged behind was an ordinary four-wheeled vehicle, with springs, and very strong wheels, a framework being arranged, so that when necessary it could be securely covered. To guard against the danger of upsetting it was very broad, with low wheels, which it may be safely said were made to 'hum' when the gentleman got fairly under way.*

The adventures are more a description of the Wild West, as it then was in those days, and not that familiar to the readers. The Yellowstone wilderness, gold mines, Injuns, bison hunts, grizzly bears, and outlaw attacks fill in the pages. The frontier had not yet closed, and its description was as much science fictional as a steam man.

Laden with gold, the four of them return back east, but at the Missouri River they are trapped by Indians, with no possible escape. Brainerd turns the steam man into a bomb by overheating its boiler and then setting it to run into the midst of the Indians where it explodes. In the confusion, the four men escape and the story wraps up with the promise of a sequel.

*With the large amount of money realized from his western trip, Johnny Brainerd is educating himself at one of the best schools in the country. When he shall have completed his course, it is his intention to construct another steam man, capable of more wonderful performances than the first.*

FRANK READE AND HIS STEAM MAN OF THE PLAINS, written by Harry Enton, was a blatant steal from Ellis's novel. It was originally serialized in a boys magazine in 1876. Not content with that, the publisher issued a novel by

Luis Senarens in 1892, titled FRANK READE, JR AND HIS NEW STEAM MAN. It was followed later that year by FRANK READE AND HIS STEAM HORSE by the same author.

The juvenile readership had a rapid turnover, so consistency didn't really matter. Frank Reade gave way to his son Frank Reade Jr, but the latter was often referred to without the Junior, so it can be confusing sometimes. A 10-year-old boy would not be following the series when a 20-year-old man, and even five years was a long time to be a juveniles reader. The books were thick with stock ethnic stereotypes, from the begorrah Irishman to yes-massa darkies fresh off de ole plantation to women who shrieked and fainted at the slightest provocation if they were young or were frosty battleaxes if they were old.

FRANK READE, JR AND HIS NEW STEAM MAN opens as follows:  
*Frank Reade was noted the world over as a wonderful and distinguished inventor of marvelous machines in the line of steam and electricity. But he had grown old and unable to knock about the world, as he had been wont once to do. So it happened that his son, Frank Reade, Jr., a handsome and talented young man, succeeded his father as a great inventor, even excelling him in variety and complexity of invention. The son speedily outstripped his sire.*

*The great machine shops in Readestown were enlarged by young Frank, and new flying machines, electric wonders, and so forth, were brought into being. But the elder Frank would maintain that, inasmuch as electricity at the time was an undeveloped factor, his invention of the Steam Man was really the most wonderful of all.*

*"It cannot be improved upon," he declared, positively. "Not if steam is used as a motive power." Frank, Jr. laughed quietly, and patted his father on the back. "Dad," he said, with an affectionate, though bantering air, "what would you think if I should produce a most remarkable improvement upon your Steam Man?"*

*"You can't do it!" declared the senior Reade. Frank, Jr., said no more, but smiled in a significant manner. One day later, the doors of the secret draughting-room of design were tightly locked and young Frank came forth only to his meals.*

Well of course the son is better than the father, or else there wouldn't have been the new series.



To get the plot rolling, Reade Sr has an old friend named Jim Travers, who has been falsely convicted of murder in Kansas. He asks his son to take his steam man out west to investigate and clear Travers's name.

What use a steam man might have is more psychological than anything else, as Junior

recognizes: *Frank could already picture the effect of the Steam Man upon the wild savages of the plains and the outlaws of Western Kansas and Colorado.*

Artemis Cliff, Travers's nephew and sole heir, is the suspect. On arrival out on the plains, there are assorted alarms and excursions, but Junior and the new steam man will not be foiled. It all culminates in a range war to end all range wars when the battle is joined between Cliff's cowboys and the U.S. Calvary.

*He started the Steam Man at once for Ranch V. Across the prairie the machine ran rapidly, and the cavalry galloped in the rear. It was in the latter part of the day that all came out upon a rise overlooking the stockade of Ranch V. But the cowboys had got there in advance and had made ready for an attack.*

*Col. Clark was a man of immediate resources. Without hesitation or a moment's delay he threw his men forward on the charge. At almost the first attack the gate was carried and the soldiers entered the yard.*

*But step by step Artemus Cliff contested the way. His men by divisions surrendered half a dozen or more at a time. Being thus made prisoners, they were sent to the rear. In this manner the numbers of the cowboy gang were decimated.*

Cliff doesn't survive but does have time to gasp out a confession that Travers was framed for murder. That exonerates Travers, and the good guys carry the field. Junior and the steam man return to civilization, full of honours.

### **Palaeofiction: Digression.**

As with Hollywood sci-fi movies, each subsequent installment of dime novel series had to be bigger and better, with more spectacular explosions and monsters, yet not so different as to antagonize fans. Hollywood studios and New York City publishers have been criticized by many writers, myself among them, for constantly rehashing story ideas, milking every variation, and running a theme into the ground.

To be fair to them, they're in it for the money, and to make money they have to give the average fan or reader what they want. Paramount Studios learned this the hard way when they killed off Spock in one of the Star Trek movies.

This is no new thing. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle discovered this when he killed off Sherlock Holmes. Doyle thought his historical novels were his best work, but had he never written Holmes, those novels would be forgotten today. That his historical books are still read is due to the halo effect of Holmes, and even so, only read occasionally by college students desperate for a thesis topic.

The dime novels mutated through market forces into the pulp magazines, then B-movies, then television series. The format changes, and the content matches the prejudices of the public, but the stories are still about action and adventure.

In the late 1800s there were still frontiers and lost worlds, the descriptions of which padded out the word counts. They were science fictional worlds every bit as exotic as the planet Vulcan.

### **Palaeofiction: More Steam.**

The dime novelists were not slack in thinking up variations on a theme.

FRANK READE JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM MAN IN NO MAN'S LAND;  
OR, ON A MYSTERIOUS TRAIL

FRANK READE, JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM MAN IN CENTRAL  
AMERICA

FRANK READE JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM MAN IN TEXAS; OR,  
CHASING THE TRAIN ROBBERS

## FRANK READE JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM MAN IN MEXICO; OR, HOT WORK AMONG THE GREASERS

## FRANK READE JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM MAN CHASING A GANG OF RUSTLERS OR, WILD ADVENTURES IN MONTANA

Note that penultimate title. Hot work among the greasers? No political correctness would be required to delete that subtitle from a modern reprint. The ultimate use of new gadgets is not always evident. In the late 1800s, before Benz, Ford, et al, introduced the horseless carriage, the dime novel writers only thought of the steam man as a replacement for a horse, tethered between shafts and pulling a carriage. The next brave step was a steam horse.

Which brings us to FRANK READE JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM HORSE, published in late 1892. It opens with an Irishman named Patrick McSpalten visiting Reade (who is never referred to as Junior, the old man not being around) and getting a lesson about the steam horse.

*“Now, will ye be afther havin’ the extrame nateness of showin’ me how in the name of the seven wondhers of the worruld ye mane to make that conthrivance thraelv loike a harse?”*

*“Certainly,” said Frank, approaching the invention with a great deal of pardonable pride. “You can see very plainly that the machine is in every respect similar to a horse.”*

*“I moind that same.”*

*“Then I will begin with the information necessary to make you understand how the old thing works,” said Frank. “In the first place this copper belly is nothing more nor less than a well-tested, strongly-made boiler, occupying the greater part of the distance between the fore legs and hind ones; this gives room to the steam-chest proper and boiler, and they extend into the haunches. Understand?”*

*“Oh, yis, I can philosophize an’ so forth,” said McSpalten, sitting on a wooden bench and looking as wise as an owl.*

*“Then here, almost on the top of the horse’s haunches,” said Frank, “are the valves, by means of which I can at any time examine either the water or the*



*steam, and regulate accordingly. Forward of this is the place where my fire burns, the door of the furnace being in the chest, as you can see. Flues running up through the animal’s head will allow the smoke to pass out of his ears, while similar pipes will carry the steam out of the horse’s nose.”*

*“In the head,” continued Frank, “I have arranged a clock-work contrivance that will feed coils of magnesium wire as fast as it burns to the flame of a small lamp that is set between a polished reflector and the glass that forms each eye. I shall thus have a powerful light at night time, and on the level plains shall be able to see very clearly one mile ahead, if the night was just as black as a piece of coal.”*

*“Worra! worra!” gasped McSpalten. “Me head is turnin’ round. Go on, me gossoon.”*

*“Of course the power is applied by means of iron rods running down the hollow limbs, and having an upward, downward, and forward motion. By reversing steam I can make the horse back. Here, at the knees, I open these slides and*

*rake out the cinders and ashes that fall from the fire in the horse's chest. The animal's hoofs are sharp shod, so there's no danger of him slipping, either uphill or down."*

*"An' will ye be afther ridin' on the back of that crayture?"*

*"Oh no," smiled Frank, "I am making a wagon to ride in and carry my supplies for myself and the horse, and the animal will be harnessed to the truck, which will be constructed so as to stand the joltings of rapid travel. There, now, I guess you can understand the idea of the thing pretty well, can't you?"*

Various other characters, including some from previous Steam Man books are introduced, including McSpalten's cousin Barney Shea, fresh off the boat from Ireland. Off they go to the Wild West, where they meet up with Charley Gorse, who has built himself a steam man. Naturally they race them, each pulling a carriage. The steam horse takes the lead but goes out of control and crashes.

That contretemps aside, the plot then moves to the story of the nefarious Captain Jerry Prime and his gang of counterfeiters. They are producing the fake stuff out west and shipping it into the cities, and doing well. Reade and company stumble into them, and thereafter are the usual excitements and derring-do.

The fate of the counterfeiters is obvious, but will not happen until after the steam man, the steam horse, and other gadgetry have had their turns on the stage. The inevitable sequels of the steam horse include:

FRANK READE JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM HORSE IN THE NORTHWEST; OR, WILD ADVENTURES AMONG THE BLACKFEET

FRANK READE JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM HORSE; OR, THE SEARCH FOR A MILLION DOLLARS. A STORY OF WILD LIFE IN NEW MEXICO

FRANK READE JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM HORSE AMONG THE COWBOYS; OR, THE LEAGUE OF THE PLAINS,

FRANK READE JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM HORSE IN THE GREAT AMERICAN DESERT; OR, THE SANDY TRAIL OF DEATH

FRANK READE JR WITH HIS NEW STEAM HORSE AND THE MYSTERY OF THE UNDERGROUND RANCH

## ZINE LISTINGS

[I only list zines I receive from the Papernet. If the zine is posted on [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com) or [www.fanac.org](http://www.fanac.org), then I don't mention it since you can read it directly.]

[The Usual means \$5 cash (\$6 overseas) or trade for your zine. Americans: please don't send cheques for small amounts to Canada or overseas (the bank fee to cash them is usually more than the amount) or mint USA stamps (which are not valid for postage outside USA). US\$ banknotes are still acceptable around the world.]

**BANANA WINGS #67** (The Usual from Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer, 59 Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7ES, England) A fannish zine, this issue mostly looking back at various SF Worldcons. A very large section for letters of comment.

**CHRISTIAN NEW AGE QUARTERLY V23#2** (US\$5 from Catherine Groves, Box 276, Clifton, New Jersey 07015-0276) This issue begins with an essay on beliefs considered as a journey through life. Various other notes and letters of comment.

## **MILT STEVENS (1942-2017)**

I was saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Milt Stevens on October 2 from a heart attack. After serving in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War, he returned to civilian life and put in more than three decades with the LAPD.

Milt was very active in Los Angeles fandom in clubs, apas, and conventions. He chaired several conventions, including a Worldcon. He wrote letters of comment and articles for countless zines. I never met him in person but Milt was a regular correspondent to this zine, and had many letters of comment published here.

**CALGARY UTILITY BOXES**  
photos by Dale Speirs

Two sides of the same electrical box at Elbow Drive and 30 Avenue SW.

