

The Stf Amateur
Or: *Amateur Stf*
August 2023

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Telegraphs & Tar Pits #72

July 5, 2023

Telegraphs & Tar Pits is an apazine published by Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA 90230; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. It is prepared for contributors to APA-L, members of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, and select others. A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.

Lunch at the Magic Castle

Friday morning, I met fellow LASFSan Kevin Segall for lunch at the Magic Castle (<http://www.magiccastle.com>). Every week Friday, there's a members lunch, and Segall's an associate member who's taken the Castle's first two classes. At one time, he organized an amateur magician's society with several friends.

Initially, Google Maps had routed me up and over through the Valley, but it was actually easier to take the 10 to Fairfax Avenue up to Hollywood Boulevard. It was wonderful driving along Fairfax and through our first neighborhood in Los Angeles. The jacaranda trees were in full bloom on Fairfax near Venice Boulevard as well as near Hollywood, and I enjoyed driving through Little Ethiopia, past the Farmer's Market, through Fairfax proper past Canter's Deli, and along Hollywood to the Castle.



A private club, the Magic Castle is the clubhouse of the Academy of Magical Arts, accessible only to members and their guests. Originally the 1909 home of a lawyer, banker, and real estate investor, the building was eventually purchased and refurbished as an elegant private clubhouse for magicians, opening in 1963. Milt Larsen, one of the founders, died May 28.

Arriving before 11 a.m., Segall and I had time to catch up and talk a little bit before entering the Castle.

Once inside, we looked around a little, exploring some of the location's historic elements. It was good to return. It's been years since I last visited—2018, when my son participated in the junior program—and we've counted a couple of friends among the membership, including David J. Watkins.

In conversation, we learned that we know several people in common, from various aspects of fandom and adjacent interests: science fiction, self-publishing, comic books, roleplaying games, and art. We also both belong to several of the same organizations—including the LASFS.

The members lunch is served buffet style—rather than the evening dinner menu and table service—and the spread was impressive: small potatoes and artichoke hearts, asparagus, tofu steaks, salad, and an ample selection of cookies, Rice Krispie treats, and brownies. We each had an Arnold Palmer.

After lunch, we caught the 12 p.m. close-up performance by Justin Purcell, who usually performs at the Chicago Magic Lounge (<https://www.chicagomagiclounge.com>). After claiming our seats, we ran into Craig Miller and Genny Dazzo. Once seated, I was chosen as one of the stage volunteers and participated in a number of close-up tricks involving silver dollar coins, leather tubes, cork, and playing cards. Purcell also utilized a statuette of the goddess of magic and a wooden ring. He performed at the Castle evenings through July 2.

Following the performance, we explored more of the historic offerings of the location before stopping by the gift shop and parting ways to head home. Whenever I visit the Magic Castle, I feel similar to the way I feel at the Museum of Jurassic Technology (<http://mjt.org>)—on the border of the real and unreal worlds, at the edge of understanding how things work and a strong sense of wonder, and on the cusp of becoming something more than I already am. The Magic Castle, like the Museum of Jurassic Technology, rests on the verge of the numinous.

A Cover Artist Speaks!

In response to Lee Gold's feedback to cover artist Taral Wayne in *Leeway* dated June 1 in APA-L #3025, Wayne replied:

[N]o, there isn't [a backstory]. Although I had a Vaughn Bode drawing in mind.

A new fanzine published by Wayne, *Dark Toys* #75, is now available.

From the Reading Pile: Short Stories

This week, I finished reading Isaac Asimov's *The Early Asimov, Volume 1* (T&T #59). "The Weapon Too

Dreadful to Use” first appeared in the May 1939 issue of *Amazing Stories*. The story focuses on the human colonization of Venus, which puts the Venusians on the back foot. The Venusian friend of an empathetic human discovers a hidden room in the ruins of an ancient city—which contains a mythical weapon, thought long lost. When the human colonization and mistreatment doesn’t relent, the Venusians use that weapon, and it is indeed too dreadful to use. As experienced previously, Asimov’s commentary on each story is as interesting—and sometimes more so—than the fiction itself. This piece’s end notes include discussion of some feedback the author received from Frederik Pohl.

“Black Friar of the Flame” from the spring 1942 *Planet Stories* was actively rewritten to remove religious content—despite its title. The story involves a religious schism and growing rebellion on the planet Earth, the origin point of the human race “thousands and thousands of years ago.” Reportedly, it was Asimov’s first attempt at future history, and similar to the previous story, it focuses on a social movement or rebellion. Asimov suggests that if you have to rewrite a story four times, like he did this one, sometimes it might be better just to move on to the next story.

Having gotten involved in the Futurians, Asimov’s friendship with Pohl continued to develop. Pohl briefly served as his agent and then editor.

“Half-Breed” from the February 1940 issue of *Astonishing Stories* concentrates on the challenges facing the children of humans and Martians, who are generally institutionalized and mistreated. A scientist rescues a Tweenie, as they are called, and enlists him as an assistant, resulting in all sorts of wonderful inventions—and a mass migration. The invention aspect reminded me of Theodore Sturgeon’s story “Microcosmic God,” which I also recently read.

Finally, “The Secret Sense” from the March 1941 *Cosmic Stories* will appeal to readers who also enjoy music. Reminiscent of H.P. Lovecraft’s writing speculating on the role of the pineal gland, the story speculates on a form of music or art that only Martians can fully experience or enjoy given the makeup of their brain. A demanding human seeks to experience that music himself.

I really enjoyed this collection. Though early writing, I found it warmer than some of Asimov’s later fiction—and particularly appreciated the focus on inter-species relationships and communication, as well as the social sf and political aspects. If you enjoy Asimov’s work and haven’t read his earliest stories, they are absolutely wonderful and worth exploring.

I also recently read the April 1938 issue of *Thrilling Wonder Stories* (Vol. 11 #2), one of perhaps a dozen pulps I own in hard copy. Even though I’ve amassed quite a number of digest prozines over the years, I’ve always held off on beginning to collect actual pulp magazines because they take up so much room—even though I adore them. This issue is in pretty rough shape, with cover edges and spine taped with cellophane tape, and quite a bit of edging and flaking. I read it carefully, my abdomen often littered with paper flakes, and enjoyed it thoroughly.

The front-of-book feature “The Story Behind the Story” reminded me of the editorial notes offered by Asimov in his collection above. The editors include commentary and correspondence from the issue’s authors concentrating on the ideas behind their writing. Arthur S. Eddington offers a scientific article on calculating the eclipses of the sun, J.B. Walter debuts a roundup of “Scientifacts,” and Jack Binder illustrates a two-page spread considering “If the Oceans Dried!” A “Science Questions and Answers” column addresses reader queries about earthquakes, neon signs, evolution, the sea, and “atom smashers.”

Henry Kuttner’s novelette “Hollywood on the Moon” focuses on the risks inherent in such a film production, as well as on fictional shoots on the moon and Ganymede, a stowaway, alien life forms, differences in gravity, and other topics. It’s a good story—and as commercial space travel continues apace, I’m sure the military and entertainment industries won’t be far behind. (Already, we’re seeing pornographic applications of virtual reality and generative artificial intelligence.)

“The Infinite Enemy” by Jack Williamson posits an inverse universe inhabited by an almost-fractal creature composed of cubes. “Each cubic life-cell of the invader, when grown, could send out seven new filaments, from seven corners, to start new ones,” Williamson writes. Another creature, Mock-sun, is discovered, and the explorers figure out how to deal with the competition between the two.

In “Easy Money” by Edmond Hamilton, a professional boxer is sent to another dimension by a scientist to determine whether people can be transmitted successfully. There, he finds a strictly controlled society in which people’s emotions are modulated. His presence proves disruptive.

“Roamer of the Stars” by Clyde Wilson features invaders in search of a needed element. The story includes quite a bit of exposition on how the alien ships are powered. Manly Wade Wellman’s “Glimpse” is an excellent story combining deep-sea robot exploration and a lost-world scenario witnessed by such robots.

John Russell Fearn's "Lords of 9016" offers a tale of insect conquest from an underground world, almost combining themes from other stories in the issue. This is one of the more compelling pieces, particularly its portrayal of the destruction caused on the surface during the initial collapse.

"The Dark Age" by Clark Ashton Smith reminded me gently of L. Ron Hubbard's *Battlefield Earth* because of its focus on primitive men discovering and gaining access to long-lost higher technology tended to by a higher race of men. In Will Garth's "Rays of Blindness," a blind man realizes how to stop vision loss experienced by the majority of humanity.

But the highlight of the issue is the Science Fiction League news at the end of the edition. After a list of the executive directors—including Forrest J Ackerman—and commentary on science and the future and a scientific contest, readers are encouraged to join the league, "an international organization composed of the world's most enthusiastic followers of science fiction..."

Chapter news and activity reports focus on the Los Angeles and Queens chapters, publishing minutes from Dec. 2, 1937, and Nov. 7, 1937, meetings. At the LA meeting, Ray Bradbury was present, Ackerman encouraged members to contribute to *Imagination!*, and a member reported on a talk given at a local library. The Queens chapter was at the time working on a bibliography of "extant amateur magazines." There's also a listing of new members and a coupon application for membership. The issue ends with a letter column, "The Reader Speaks," which features 10 letters, including correspondent contact information.

Vintage SF Subscription Services

If you are looking for an ongoing source of high-quality book and short story recommendations—but no longer find the Science Fiction Book Club (<https://www.sfbc.com>) sufficient—I can recommend a couple of new subscription sources for vintage sf.

Whileaway Books (<https://whileawaybooks.com>) in Roseburg, Oregon, offers a Two Random Paperbacks Subscription service for \$10 plus about \$5 postage and handling. Two frequencies are offered: biweekly or monthly. I subscribed in June, and my first two paperbacks were Theodore Sturgeon's collection *Caviar* and I believe Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Darkover Landfall*. It was an auspicious first package, and I emailed the proprietor expressing my delight. "I always like hearing that someone's subscription books happen to align with their taste," she replied.

The price works out to a little more per title than

you might pay in your general used bookstore, but the curation and selection aspect is appealing. We'll see what future packets contain as they arrive.

Chris Korczak, Bookseller (<https://www.rpgrprpg.com>), offers a similar service, for paperbacks, as well as for prozines. His Random Sci Fi or Fantasy Book Subscription serves up one or two paperbacks per package for roughly \$13 postpaid, sent weekly, biweekly, monthly, or bimonthly. Korczak's Sci Fi and Fantasy Pulp/Magazine Subscription offers two issues per package for \$14.50 postpaid either weekly, biweekly, monthly, or bimonthly. These prices seem a little higher, particularly for a one-book packet, but we'll see how it shakes out over time.

In my first book packet, I received three books, to my surprise: Poul Anderson's *New America*, Keith Laumer's *Retief and the Warlords*, and Anne McCaffrey's *Dragonsong*, which I've already read previously. Regardless, it's a good lot, and I look forward to reading them. In the first package of prozines, I received the December 1983 issue of *Analog*, which includes a novella by Timothy Zahn, a Larry Niven serial, a Spider Robinson short story, and a Jerry Pournelle column. I also received the May 1996 edition of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, featuring work by Nancy Springer, Charles de Lint, and Janet Asimov. Thinking I might have subscribed to *F&SF* around that time, I checked my shelves in the library, but those issues start in 2001. I also checked my spreadsheet and haven't listed those yet, so they seem new to me.

You might not need such things—you might already have plenty—but I'm intrigued by both services. It's a great way to sell a back stock of used books blind and to augment online sales and foot traffic in a store. It's also a fun method to explore older writing without going out of your way to find it. Korczak also offers two subscription services focusing on roleplaying games, either a random RPG book or "old-school" magazine, for gamers among our readers.

Comments on APA-L #3026

In *Leeway* for June 29, Lee Gold expanded on why she doesn't plan to release PDF versions of her various apae and fanzines to the wild after death. Clearly, we can all do what we like with what we have and have made, and collectively created apae and fanzines must consider the rights of other contributors. It makes sense to me that Gold would allow the continued selling of her back stock of hard copies—but perhaps not burden her husband with ongoing sales of soft copies. It's not for me to say. If I have any interest, it's in the possible archiving of at least one complete run in one form or another so

they're not all "lost" to individual owners or private collections. I think the collective body of work is worth preserving in terms of a historical record.

You can obtain a USPS rate change cheat sheet at <https://tinyurl.com/USPS-July2023-CheatSheet> and a summary of the changes at <https://tinyurl.com/USPS-July2023-Summary>. One-ounce postage increases to \$0.66, postcards increase to \$0.51, one-ounce international increases to \$1.50, and the additional ounce stamp remains the same at \$0.24. The large envelope rates suggest that flats might not be as simple as they've been recently—\$1.35 vs. two first-class stamps (\$1.32), which might mean I need to stock up on incremental value stamps again. It's been nice being able to use two first-class stamps for flats and a postcard stamp for two additional ounces. The new rates will require calculating more based on value than on stamp count, which has been pretty slick.

During a LASFS meeting, Chris Marble also commented that Don Fitch continues to receive and read APA-L, and that it might be one of his remaining points of contact with the outside world. Hello, Don. I hope you enjoy the book by Lois McMaster Bujold—which one are you reading?

When Jonah saw the new Spider-Man movie, it was in English with Japanese subtitles.

Barbara Gratz Harmon's *Reflections from a Fish Bowl* #42 updated ellers on a recent film shoot in her neighborhood that utilized her driveway. She mentioned the Museum of Western Film History (<https://museumofwesternfilmhistory.org>) in Lone Pine, which is a wonderful facility. My, wife, son and I went to Lone Pine in 2018 and had a wonderful weekend. I hope to return some time for the film festival, which runs Oct. 5-8 this year.

Thank you for hosting Marty Cantor's memorial gathering. Even though you felt under the weather, I'm glad we were all able to make it happen—as well as the concert. Was the \$700 quote just for the backyard? I didn't even finish the back completely, and there's still the side entrance and front. I'm glad your energy is returning.

In *Vanamonde* #1550, **John Hertz** recounted a conversation with a waitress about *Animal Farm*, allegory, and local opportunities for sf fen. I've been to that House of Pies, mere steps from Skylight Books, but didn't realize that it was on Forrest J Ackerman Square. (<https://www.lfia.org/forrest-j-ackerman-square-dedicated>) Virginia Postrel's *The Fabric of Civilization* sounds fascinating.

Going to the post office Friday, I also saw some jacarandas in bloom by Sony Studios and along Braddock Drive on the way home. As a youth, I loved the song "A Whale of a Tale." At one time, I could

play it on the piano and enjoyed singing along. It's a grand song.

I'll share your feedback with Taral Wayne. Thank you for the reminder to include a previous response from him in this ish! We are considering a secondary home in Portugal. Until my son graduates from college, we plan to stay in the Los Angeles area so he only has to come home to one location—his mom lives in Orange County—but once he starts his career, we'll be more free geographically.

Matthew Mitchell's *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #17 detailed the contents of his backpack. Your list actually seems quite reasonable! Ever since Ting deployed microtrenched fiber in our neighborhood, they regularly go door to door trying to sell their Internet fiber services to area residents. We currently receive TV and Net services from Spectrum, and while the service isn't amazing, we're not looking to switch. The case to do so just isn't compelling enough to warrant the effort. The last time a salesman stopped by, he asked whether our hesitancy was because of the price or because of the technology. After he left, I asked my wife if we were destined to always be visited by Ting salespeople just because they lay down microtrenches. I guess it makes sense; their potential clients live along the streets along with they lay trenches.

I'll look for Angus McKie's *So Beautiful and So Dangerous*. I have many issues of *Heavy Metal* and will look for his work more generally. This particular title might have been published as a standalone graphic novel—by *Heavy Metal*—in 1979.

In *Late Breaking Gnus* Vol. 2 #17, **Joe Zeff** offered brief comments, mostly focusing on Native American trade and transportation technology.

And **Nola Frame-Gray's** bacover wasn't submitted as such, per se, but was included in a notecard enclosed with a recent mailing to top off her APA-L balance for printing and mailing. I thought it was worth including as a bacover regardless. One clarification, however: The money ellers send me isn't to fund my services, but to fund the materials used for their printing and mailing. I am not compensated for this labor of love outside of sheer and utter enjoyment.

Last September, while working at his desk in Philadelphia, Samuel R. Delany experienced a mysterious episode that he calls "the big drop." His vision faded for about three minutes, and he felt his body plunge, as if the floor had fallen away. . . . The only evidence of a neurological event was a test result indicating that he had lost fifteen per cent of his capacity to form new memories—and a realization, in the following weeks, that he was unable to finish his novel in progress, *This Short Day of Frost and Sun*.

—*The New Yorker*, July 3, 2023

Faculae & Filigree #21

July 9, 2023

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Estate of the Union Address

In late June, Nick Smith informed me that he'd received a copy of Marty Cantor's will from the county. It states generally to follow the instructions in the trust, with Smith as executor instead of as trustee.

Since then, Smith has also received the keys to Cantor's apartment and storage space. While the county still has some financial and legal papers, Smith asked me to help him sort through Cantor's apazines and fanzines to box them up. We're making plans to meet within the next few weeks to start doing so.

I reached out to our Little Sin Ghod and Counter of Legumes to see what he might need from Cantor's records and files to continue running LASFAPA, such as any financial records for contributors (i.e. balance amounts), apa documentation, and any available balance funds for the apa.

If it's out of place for me to share such news, I apologize. Given that Smith's also active in LASFAPA, any news or information he shares is closer to the source.

Fantastic Television: *Travelers*

S2E6: "U235"

The episode opens with a philosophical discussion about whether people should make their own decisions, or rely on the Director for salvation. The conversation also addresses whether the actions undertaken by the team under the Director's guidance are any better than those undertaken by the now-ill Jenny and other members of the Faction. Both are supposedly working for the betterment of humankind. Their methods are what differs.

The team doesn't buy that line of reasoning, and Philip asks Jenny why she tried to kill herself—whether it was because of guilt. It was not; it was because she wanted to avoid the intensity of the late-stage virus. Having brought her back to consciousness, Philip assures her that she'll now suffer just like the other infected people.

Grace, who is also ill, takes center stage in a way this episode. She informs the team that there was a

backup plan for the Director should it be powered down. At the location of the domed base that collapsed, north across the Canadian border, there should be a store of Uranium that can be used to bring the artificial intelligence back online. So the team attempts to gain entrance to a military base nearby in an effort to procure a decommissioned warhead.

She also uses a lengthy restroom break to program the nanites, administering them to Jenny while Marcy is out of the room. Unfortunately, that doesn't work as well as intended, and the trust between Grace and Marcy continues to erode. At one point, Grace says something to Marcy to the effect of, "Just admit it: You hate me."

David volunteers at a soup line to help the needy homeless people he cares for, experiencing the death of one. There are rumors of looting, of violence in the streets. And the television news continues to advise people to stay home. Jeff and Carly's son is ill. Grant's wife is sick, particularly at risk given her pregnancy. And team members other than Grant and Carly exhibit symptoms, as well.

Arriving at the future base in Canada—the show is now clearly located in Washington—Grant, Philip, and Carly encounter Forbes, who's there to stop their efforts. But the warhead they're bringing is a decoy, and Trevor powers up the actual energy source. That brings the Director back online. Almost immediately, an antidote formula is transmitted for production and distribution, and the Faction members are taken over, displaced by other travelers.

The episode resolves a little tidily for my tastes, ending a threat that could have lasted much longer. We have a bunch of new travelers on hand, loyal to the Director, and it's not yet known how many of the Faction remain. (Forbes indicates that the Director might not know all of their TELLs.)

The team members make the rounds to administer the antidote to their loved ones, and the episode ends with the arrival of a messenger. Why this messenger is more momentous than any other, meriting an episode ending, we shall find out.

S2E7: "17 Minutes"

This is going to be perhaps my shortest write-up, because the episode is absolutely amazing and I don't want to give too much away. Regardless, it's one of the most interesting takes on *Groundhog Day's* approach to time travel that I've ever encountered. It's never entirely clear that the team will eventually get it right, and that makes for some serious edge-of-the-seat television. The stakes are that high.

Along the way, we get parallel meditations on the importance of love, a gentle quip about how old

Trevor is, friendly jousting among the teammates, and a strategic use of sign language.

The result is one of my favorite episodes in the two seasons so far—if not my favorite episode. That I really didn't want things to go off the rails as much as they could have suggests I'm now attached to and invested in these characters. Otherwise, the iterative time travel plot line wouldn't work as well as it does.

S2E8: “Traveler 0027”

I neglected to mention another important aspect of Episode 7, “17 Minutes.” The iterative nature and the forested setting of the episode gives more room than usual for the sound design and score or soundtrack by Adam Lastiwka. The music's been building in importance—or perhaps in my awareness—over the last few episodes, and I'm now considering his music of primary importance in the show.

Lastiwka himself made an edited compilation of the score and sound cues from Season 1, Episode 2 available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Euealh3TO4I>. And if you're interested, original series soundtrack recordings are available for Season 1 and Season 2 via Apple Music, Spotify, and perhaps other streaming services. The music holds up well on its own, for sure.

This episode also showcases Lastiwka's sound design and scoring. (It helps that I've watched the last two using headphones rather than over room speakers; the sound is all right there!) The episode is a relatively self-contained outing in which Grace, the Traveler 0027 of the title, is brought to trial for resetting the Director, interrupting the traveler program, and otherwise interfering with the grand plan. Her trial takes place in a church, which seems fitting given the reverence some travelers hold for the Director.

During the trial, it comes to light that Grace might have taken more than memories from Marcy when she overwrote her to reset the Director. That process might have removed emotions and qualities such as empathy—which would certainly affect her relationship with David. The revelation becomes important once the tribunal makes its decision known—one of the tribunal members offers to restore Marcy's host memories, developed during her first overwriting.

Also in the episode, Blair reaches out to David on her birthday, Trevor and Grace share an interesting moment over French cuisine, and Grant and Kat show signs of reconciliation. One of the most impressive and effective scenes is the one in which the Director confers directly with Grace during her expected sentencing. The series of terminal patients offering single sentences of the Director's direct expression

and conversation was very well done. I believe it was our first direct exposure to the AI as a personality.

On the LASFAPA Deities

In *Wurlitzer*, our apa's Apocrypha lists Harry Andruschak as a **deity** in recognition of his serving as Official Editor of LASFAPA #1-8. Born Oct. 4, 1945, Andruschak, who was sometimes called Andy, became active as a fan in the 1970s.

An avid apahack, he founded the monthly LAPA and LASFAPA and was a member of Alarums & Excursions, APA 45, Elanor, the Fantasy Amateur Press Association (for which he also served as OE), Scapa Flow, the Southern Fandom Press Alliance, and the Spectator Amateur Press Society. In 1980, he wrote *The Seniority of the Fannish Apas*—which doesn't seem to be available in scanned form.

His apazine and fanzine titles included *Bah! Humbug!*, *Cheery Idiots of the Gods*, *Intermediate Vector Bosons*, *Last of the Spirit Duplicators*, *The Owlet* and *The Owlet Hoots*, *South of the Moon*, and *WOOF Contributions Might Be a Nice Thing for You to Do*—which was published in 1994. His *South of the Moon* was an apae directory that inspired Eric L. Watts's *New Moon Directory*, which in turn inspired my *Blue Moon Special*. Last published in 2009, it's high time I issue another edition.

Andruschak also wrote letters of comment to *Matrix*, *Procrastination*, *Riverside Quarterly*, *Science Fiction Review*, *Torus*, and other fanzines. He went to cons, at least the ninth annual Fantasy Faire in 1979 and Westercon 35 in 1982. And in 1980, he served on the directorate of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. (I currently do so.)

Reportedly, Andruschak had an abrasive personality and was one of very few fen kicked out of the LASFS. *Fancylopedia 3* remarks that his expulsion resulted from his objections to the disposal of club mimeographs. Once a patron saint, he is associated with patron saint Beverly Kanter (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #37). My profile of her in that issue, citing issues of *De Profundis*, refers to him several times:

“Kanter ... kept Dr. Shack the Quack busy for some time, and induced him to give the club money.”

“Beverly was a former photographer's model and the former consort of former Patron Saint Harry Andruschak.”

“Joe [Zeff] mentioned that Beverly had said that if she and Harry ever broke up, they would have trouble divvying up their belongings, because they bought so much for each other. Harry Andruschak contributed the

money for her sainthood, in keeping with their relationship.”

In *Toony Loons* #691 included in APA-L #2993, Joe Zeff added some context: “Andruschak had resigned from LASFS on the advice of his [Alcoholics Anonymous] adviser, as part of a successful campaign to replace Andy’s addiction to alcohol with an addiction to AA meetings. When he did, he demanded that the money he’d donated to the club be returned, but of course, Elayne [Pelz] rejected the idea. We did, however, stop honoring his saint’s night at his request.”

He also participated in APA-L, at least contributing apazines titled *The Owlet Hoots* and *Three Years Sober* to APA-L #1141 and *Ignoramus Multi-Medius* and *Meat Market, Part II* to #1147 in 1987. In *Three Years Sober*, he commented on his sobriety date—March 17, 1984, the anniversary of the *Vanguard One* launch—and some of the challenges he’d faced over the last few years. That issue seems to have been cross-published in LASFAPA, as well. His delightfully diary-like apazines combine personal news, reading notes, and mailing comments. An *Ansible* news item—and his letters of comment—suggest that he might have been active in the LASFS into the mid-1990s.

As a recovering alcoholic myself, I can empathize with his finding sobriety. It isn’t easy, but ideally, it gets easier.

Comments on LASFAPA #557

Boy, did this deadline sneak up on me! It’s almost as though I’d forgotten LASFAPA were monthly or something.

Thank you, **Kay McCutcheon**, for the delightful cover artwork. It printed pretty well, and having lived in Brooklyn, I appreciated the banner reference to Betty Smith’s novel.

I can hardly believe I secured my first Stevie, though it was a three-way tie. I’ll take the win, as they say. Well, golly gee.

In *That Flagon Last Night* #248, **Alva Svoboda** pledged to contribute at least a page—a laudable goal! I appreciate your description of Marty Cantor: “unfailingly polite and responding to my natter as if it had substance.” That’s part of why we’re here, and part of the deal.

Your description of Ken Liu’s *The Speaking Bones* sounds promising. I’ll have to check out *The Grace of Kings*. My wife, who enjoys listening to podcasts and BBC broadcasts online, recently began listening to audio fiction. I’ve never really enjoyed it, preferring old-time radio and audio drama along the lines of *The*

Fourth Tower of Inverness by the ZBS Foundation or the *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* radio series. She described frustration listening to audio fiction. When you read, you can skim over the parts that don’t work well, but recorded, every word and sentence is given equal delivery weight, she says. I don’t know.

Mileage clearly varies because plenty of people love listening to audio books. I think that I’d feel the same way I feel about being offered videos to watch to learn about something rather than text to read—I’d rather go at my own pace rather than that of the video production or narrator. Mostly, however, I think it’s that I don’t have long commutes during which I want to listen to such things in the car. My tastes might change as my professional life slows down.

David Schlosser’s *Fool’s Mate* #560 updated apans on printing errors, cover art, and the weather. I hope your friend continues to do well, and that contact continues. Isolation is dangerous. Is radiant flooring heated flooring? I’ve never lived anywhere with that.

I might have to return to Nick Smith’s comment on standup comedy, but in recent years, I think we’ve seen a shift to longer-form staged comedy more along the lines of Spalding Gray’s monologues. Performers such as Mike Daisey, Mike Birbiglia, and perhaps Hannah Gadsby aren’t really doing traditional standup, though it is comedy.

Now, as proud as I am of having earned my first Stevie, I in no way intend to inspire or deserve an award in my name. I decided against changing the size of my typeface or formatting this issue, but I might still experiment with that. 11 point isn’t that far off from 12 point.

In terms of old-time radio shows, how you acquire them depends on how you feel about copyright. Or whether you prioritize the copyright of repackaging—often with new liner notes and historical essays—over the original copyright. You can download most everything freely online (<https://www.oldtimeradiodownloads.com>, <https://archive.org/details/oldtimeradio>, and <https://www.otrcat.com> will meet most of your needs), or buy DVDs or thumb drives full of MP3s from sources via eBay. You can also buy repackaged recordings on CD via Radio Spirits and other sources.

In *Planet Outlaws* #27, **John DiChing** commented on the flowers of Los Angeles. In APA-L, Lee Gold, John Hertz, and I have been sharing stories of flowering jacaranda trees seen, and Gold recently emailed me to report that the gold medallion trees are finally in bloom along 23rd Street just south of Pico Boulevard in Santa Monica. More of the gold medallion trees will be in bloom next week, she says.

While I’ve never gone to the Los Angeles Vintage

Paperback Collectors Show, I can appreciate the sentiment you expressed. There was a time at which my head would have exploded attending such a show, and I'd drop serious ducats to return home burdened by books. Now I try to avoid bookstores. I have so many books at home, so many of them unread. As I continue cataloging the books on hand, I find so many I want to read—and will read—that I know I don't need to obtain more. Regardless, I still somehow continue to do so, though at a much slower pace than before. My goal is to stop buying books, comics, magazines, and records entirely—relying on digital sources online if there's something I really need to explore that I don't already have.

I enjoyed your sf nostalgia and don't think you said anything overly offensive or contentious. I'll have to look for William Tenn's "The Monsters." That story's theme reminded me of Mack Reynolds's "Husbands, Care and Feeding of" from the 1954 edition of *Science Fiction or Science Fiction Stories (Telegraphs & Tar Pits #71)*, as well as Ray Bradbury's "Marionettes, Inc." (*T&T #23* and *Snow Poster Township #5*).

Alva Svoboda's *That Flagon Last Night #249* reported on recent travels to Hawaii. I've never been, but my wife has, and my parents went twice—once with my sister. Someday I hope to go, perhaps to meet John Redden from *Alarums & Excursions* on his home turf. Your description of Ruthanna Emrys's *A Half-Built Garden* sounds intriguing. I generally appreciate the taste of Cory Doctorow, who's an acquaintance of mine. Malka Older's *The Mimicking of Known Successes* also sounds interesting.

In *Rosemary's Return*, **Alan Winston** updated LASFAPans on a recent board meeting and election, COVID-19-related protocols, and related matters. He also reported on several musical theater and other performances. Your descriptions of the various shows, musical group member interactions, and other performer details made for entertaining reading.

My wife and I recently went to the movie theater to see Wes Anderson's new movie *Asteroid City*. It's an excellent movie that showcases all of Anderson's characteristic filmmaker interests. It's also about the theater and includes several scenes focusing on playwright-actor, director-actor, and cast member relationship dynamics. And it's a science fiction movie to boot.

When we returned home after a dinner of dumplings, we then watched Jordan Peele's 2022 movie *Nope*. The two make for an excellent double feature, and I'd recommend watching them in that order: *Asteroid City*, then *Nope*. Peele's movie, too, is a science fiction movie, and he does really interesting things with sf concepts of UFOs and alien biology.

Special effects wise, the movie does more with fabric in terms of practical effects than I think I've seen in other movies. His portrayal of alien life was inventive in a way similar to that of *Cloverfield*, though perhaps more subtle and restrained.

Thank you for your kind words about my book, movie, and other commentary. Who knows, perhaps we'll inspire each other to read or see something based on a mention in LASFAPA!

And **Janice Morningstar's** *The Title Goes Here* dated June 16, 2023, reported on beginning to take Ozempic. I'm sorry to hear about the healthcare scheduling challenges resulting in weight gain and the need to change medications. The nausea and food aversion you're experiencing sounds challenging, and I hope it evens out—and allows for the knee replacement surgery!

The connection between your last name and Chip's first name just occurred to me. Chip Morningstar? I'm familiar with his name and work dating back to perhaps Electric Communities and Communities.com from my days working for *Online Access* and *Fast Company* magazines. For many years, I swam in the sea of online community development—The Well, Howard Rheingold's Electric Minds, and other projects. I don't know that I ever interviewed or spoke with Chip, but I might have. What a delightfully small world, and what fun to have my early career overlap with my late-career fanac!

Safe travels to Bergen and Pemmi-Con. Elayne Pelz from the LASFS will be there, Robbie Bourget is co-chair, C.D. Carson from APA-L is serving as Head of Static Exhibits, and an apae friend Garth Spencer will attend as a Canadian Unity Fan Fund recipient. You'll be in good company, and now I wish I'd made plans to participate even more! Winnipeg is lovely.

"Science fiction has always dealt with worst-case scenarios when imagining our possible futures, and the climate has often formed the backdrop of the human struggles.

Some of the biggest names writing in the genre have tackled the climate crisis and its apocalyptic or dystopian consequences—Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, Bruce Sterling's *Heavy Weather*.

But a new generation of writers now believes it is impossible to write "near future" sci-fi without putting the climate emergency at the forefront of their speculative fiction. For many, this is because they are living through the crisis and can imagine all too easily what may happen if real-life behaviour doesn't change."

—*The Guardian*, July 9, 2023



Snow Poster Township #11

July 10, 2023

Snow Poster Township is an apazine published by Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. Banner artwork by Henry Chamberlain. *Snow Poster Township* is prepared for contributors to N'APA, members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and select others. (Previously, it was prepared for FAPA. My previous N'APA apazine was titled *Snow Poster City*, and this effectively combines both.) A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.

N3F Tape and Video Bureaus Report

The N3F Tape and Video bureaus continue to offer a frequent schedule of media programming for members. Participation remains low, with one to three people per event, more often than not myself and Janine Follett, who found the activities via Facebook.

The Tape Bureau has had two listening sessions since the last distribution. On May 18, 2023, we listened to two episodes of *X Minus One*. "Marionettes Inc." (<https://youtu.be/dwkIwoMt4rk>) originally aired Dec. 21, 1955, and was based on a Ray Bradbury short story published in the March 1949 issue of *Startling Stories*. We also listened to "The Sense of Wonder," (<https://youtu.be/v4EmpW-DyE>) which aired April 24, 1956, based on the Milton Lesser story appearing in the September 1951 issue of *Galaxy*.

June 15, we listened to two episodes of *2000 Plus*: "When Worlds Met," (<https://youtu.be/BDxVhMCRYeg>) which aired May 3, 1950; and "The Robot Killer," (<https://youtu.be/L1EDCwU7sII>) originally airing Aug. 30, 1950.

The Video Bureau held five events, screening two programs of short films and three feature films. On

June 2, we featured the animation and special effects work of fan favorite Mike Jittlov. Items included:

- *The Wizard of Speed and Time* (short), <https://youtu.be/GoLhLn9hVKE>
- *The Collector*, https://youtu.be/_HBa58vtRbg
- *The Interview* and *Swing Shift*, <https://youtu.be/frvNT8sBFrI>
- Demo Reel, <https://youtu.be/kz46izozLFU>
- *Animato—Fashionation*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Brj3vX2Hiuk>
- KCBS feature, <https://youtu.be/3UXxfY-ZCOM>
- *The Adventures of Lat and Long*, <https://youtu.be/KwmQZqmLZbY>
- Demo Reel 2, <https://youtu.be/fbp7F-bYZqs>
- *Major Effects*, <https://youtu.be/boQQmV32-n4>
- *U.S. Art: The Gift of Ourselves*, https://youtu.be/_vQqAOdb8do

On July 7, we offered a program of undead-related Super 8 reels produced by Americom, Castle, Columbia, and Ken Films. That program featured:

- *Scared Stiff* (Ken Films), <https://youtu.be/b8qJayZJ8S8>
- *Master of Terror* (Ken Films), <https://youtu.be/RQ6vXvbAZ8o>
- *Master of Horror* (Ken Films), <https://youtu.be/qb9sSjFkNV4>
- *The Three Stooges: We Want Our Mummy* (Columbia Films), <https://youtu.be/h9bhUXjN7JA>
- *The Mummy* (Castle Films), <https://youtu.be/Bq-FcY97IAY>
- *Mummy's Ghost* (Castle Films), <https://youtu.be/QbzdyMCM7WU>
- *The Undead* (Ken Films), <https://youtu.be/e8l2iiuhCBc>
- *Horror of Dracula* (Americom), <https://youtu.be/MYLTu4TEm0k>
- *Doom of Dracula* (Castle Films), <https://youtu.be/Y30wu-rgbK8>
- *House of Dracula* (Castle Films), <https://youtu.be/x2Chx2vzXoI>
- *The Vampire and the Ballerina* (Ken Films), <https://youtu.be/Y0mj-zuS1KE>

Feature film screenings included *Things to Come* (1936) on May 13 (<https://youtu.be/atwfwWEKz00U>), *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) on June 10 (<https://youtu.be/Gpn49rUuOGU>), and *Lost Continent* (1951) on July 8 (<https://youtu.be/-iGUAJBiqmk>).

We've currently scheduled programming through September. I'll most likely continue to the end of the year, but if participation doesn't pick up, the series

will most likely not continue. I enjoy listening and watching even when it's just me, but I can do that on my own time—and do.

From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

Caviar by Theodore Sturgeon (Del Rey, 1955)

I received this paperback collection not long ago from Whileaway Books (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #72) and began reading it immediately. The slim volume collects eight short stories, all but one which had been published previously. That first story, “Bright Segment,” ranks among the most interesting stories I’ve ever read and is utterly and sadly horrifying. Without giving too much away, let’s just say that it’s a very human horror tale about finding meaning and purpose in one’s life, and the drastic measures one might take to hold onto that once found.

“Microcosmic God” first appeared in the April 1941 issue of *Astounding*. An inventive mad scientist tale, it focuses on one possible source of innovation and tests the limits of accelerated evolution, greed, and faith. Those first two stories are stellar and the collection is worth reading based on their merit alone.

“Ghost of a Chance” originally ran in the Spring 1951 edition of *Suspense Magazine*, a retitling of “The Green-Eyed Monster” (*Unknown Worlds*, June 1943). A man falls in love with a woman harassed by a jealous ghost. “Prodigy,” from the April 1949 *Astounding*, plays with readers’ assumptions, shades of *The Twilight Zone* episode “It’s a Good Life,” based on a 1953 short story by Jerome Bixby.

“Medusa” stems from the February 1942 *Astounding* and combines a couple of wonderful ideas. What if only one member of a spaceship crew were sane? What if a conscious planet could drive people who are near it insane? The build up is a delight. “Blabbermouth,” which first appeared in *Amazing Stories*’ February 1947 issue, takes a look at poltergeist phenomenon, involving a radio broadcaster turned gossip columnist. In this story, as in “Ghost of a Chance” above, Sturgeon’s portrayal of a couple’s relationship is excellent.

“Shadow, Shadow on the Wall...” originally appeared in the February 1951 edition of *Imagination*. Equal parts domestic horror story portraying a frustrated stepmother and supernatural thriller, I’m surprised that this wasn’t adapted for radio or television.

And “Twink,” the least strong piece in the book, was first published in the August 1955 issue of *Galaxy*. I found it somewhat confusing, and the ending didn’t warrant the lack of clarity. All in all, however, this is an especially strong collection, offering a handful of absolute need to reads.

Comments on N’APA #264

I previously included mailing comments for **Ahrvid Engholm**’s *Intermission* #131 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #9. Quoting that apac: “In *Intermission* #131, ... Engholm expressed his frustration having to recreate the issue from scratch after a technical error of some sort. ##### # #####’# ##### # #####, # ### ##### # #####, as it were. (“While I haven’t experienced that myself, I can totally empathize,” lest I forget what those jokey hash marks represent.) And, ouch! What a pain in the arse.

“Thank you for your report on Sweden’s Short Film Festival. It’s been a while since I’ve gone to a film festival—my wife’s work is occasionally screened at such—but I agree: The short films programs can be fascinating. In ... *De Profundis* #586, the Condensed Cream of Menace of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society includes remarks from Damon Brown, who reported on the outcome of the Filmapalooza 2023 International Film Festival in Los Angeles this past march. The winner of the fest’s 48 Hour Film Project this year was *The Death Rattle*. Its trailer is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ1NJGak-R8>.

“At the end of last year, I started following the annual Saturn Awards (<https://www.saturnawards.org>) sponsored by the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films. It’s not a festival per se, but can still indicate movies and television shows you might not want to miss.

“The shorts you detail all sound fantastic. I recently saw a 1993 Norwegian short titled *Snorr* that was written and directed by Roar Uthaug, who went on to direct the 2022 *Troll*. It’s a relatively silly 30-minute film exploring what might occur if mucus is irradiated.

“I read and enjoyed History Corner, particularly the segment focusing on Sam J. Lundwall and radical sf, perhaps a piece to return to! Your comment to Garth Spencer made me chuckle. When he goes to the North American Science Fiction Convention in July, he should wear a pair of handcuffs on one wrist! He might make some... interesting friends.”

In *Archive Midwinter* dated April 16, 2023, **Jefferson Swycaffer** offered some ideas on how to “deal with different fandoms.” I’m not sure we’re talking about skateboarding fandom, per se, when we discuss adjacent but disconnected fandoms. It might actually be helpful to develop a list, perhaps including animation and cartoons, anime and manga, comic books, cosplay, fanfiction, filk singing, old-time radio, Regency and other dancing, roleplaying and miniature war games, scale modeling, toy collecting, UFOs (to

Garth Spencer's point), and video games—among others. (Most of those have an existing sf, fantasy, or horror aspect, or show up at cons.) That's just off the top of my head. For the purposes of this exercise, I'm considering *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Doctor Who*, *Harry Potter*, Rocky Horror, *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and similar interests as already falling under the umbrella of literature and media fandom. (One can certainly have a rewarding experience as a fan without ever venturing past the boundaries of those immediate interests!) What else would we consider as adjacent to sf, fantasy, and horror fandom?

In 2020, Wisconsin Public Radio aired a segment titled "Not Fan Enough for Fandom? Maybe You're an Adjacent Fan," which considered this question. (<https://www.wpr.org/not-fan-enough-fandom-maybe-youre-adjacent-fan>) It seems to draw on Keidra Chaney's "Confessions of an Adjacent Geek" piece in *Uncanny Magazine* #31 (<https://www.uncannymagazine.com/article/confessions-of-an-adjacent-geek>), which might also aid discussion. Many explorations of adjacent fandoms focus on the diversity and inclusion aspects (gender, race, and sexual preference). More work might be welcome focusing on adjacency more generally, as well.

Your remark that you often consider what Donald Franson would do with the short story contest reminded me of *Doctor Who*'s Season 13, episodes 2-3, in which Yaz has "WWTDD" written on her palm. Perhaps you could consider a handwritten tattoo of WWDFD?

Thank you for the information about your involvement in fandom at UCSD. I've come across references to the Star Trek Association for Revival previously (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #46 and *The N3F Review of Books*' May 2022 issue). According to Joan Marie Verba's *Boldly Writing: A Trekker Fan and Zine History, 1967-1987*, STAR didn't last long. "[T]he Star Trek Association for Revival (STAR) published the first issue of its newsletter, *Star-Borne* (S-B), in May 1972," she wrote.

"The last known issue of *Star-Borne* (Vol. 2, No. 13), came out in June [1974]. ... [T]he editors inserted the following statement: 'We're trying to keep S-B on a bi-monthly schedule, but at times, it's impossible. And for those who were aware of what is going on, you know why we're lucky to have even this one out.' After this, the Star Trek Association for Revival slowly faded into fan history. On the other hand, the Star Trek Welcommittee was still going strong."

I really enjoyed Alexei Panshin's *Star Well* (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #46) and look forward to reading more by him. I'll also have to check out Walter Jon Williams's Drake Maijstral novels.

Garth Spencer, who heads to Pemmi-Con soon as the Canadian Unity Fan Fund delegate, returns to our pages with *Brownian Motion* #2. I appreciated your background on CUFF and Pemmi-Con, as well as the *Fanac* news.

Even though the United States might not have an explicit caste system, you're right to point out that the class system is important, as is race. And in some immigrant communities, caste can still come into play. For example, where I work, Indian expatriates are often employed on various visas. *The New Yorker* published an article about some caste bias issues there (<https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/googles-caste-bias-problem>), as did *The Washington Post* (<https://tinyurl.com/caste-WaPo>) and *The Hindu* (<https://tinyurl.com/caste-TH>).

You wondered whether anybody in the N3F is archiving fan-made audio and video productions. The current iteration of the N3F Tape and Video bureaus—me—is not, though in the past, members maintained a collection of reel-to-reel tapes that could be lent out. I do not know what happened to those materials, though I imagine they went with the member-volunteer. The Eaton Collection of Science Fiction & Fantasy at University of California, Riverside includes "film and visual materials, including 500 shooting scripts from science fiction films." (<https://tinyurl.com/Eaton-Collection>) And the Science Fiction Oral History Association (SFOHA) "is a non-profit organization that maintains an archive of audio and video recordings related to science fiction and fantasy." (<https://www.sfoha.org>)

Bowling Green State University offers several filk music archives (<https://tinyurl.com/BGSU-filk>). Additional audio and video material is available via the Internet Archive (samples at <https://archive.org/details/FirstWorldFantasyConvention1975> and https://archive.org/details/vts011_20200129), but you have to look for them. I'm sure Jim Freund has maintained an archive of his *Hour of the Wolf* radio broadcasts (<https://www.hourwolf.com/hotw>) and perhaps *The New York Review of Science Fiction* Readings. And Sound Photosynthesis offers some con recordings for sale. (http://photosynthesis.com/Science_Fiction.html) But I'm unaware of a large-scale, centralized collection of recordings of readings, panel discussions, and other related audio content. Collecting a directory to available resources might be a fun project.

I'll check out the Canadian fan films you mention to consider for a future Video Bureau screening, if they're available on YouTube.

I also previously commented on **Ahrvid Engholm**'s *Intermission* #132 in *The Explosion*

Containment Umbrella #9: “In *Intermission* #132, Ahrvid Engholm made a joke about the phrase, ‘take a leak,’ which made me grin. While I find the Eurovision Song Contest interesting, I admit not following it again this year. (I also didn’t watch the coronation in England.)

“History Corner’s mention of Hugo Gernsback’s annual *Forecast* intrigued me. I see that Internet Archive offers 1954-1957. The Hugo Gernsback Papers at Syracuse University include 15 years of *Forecast* in their special collections. I also read and enjoyed the material on Luncon, not to be confused with Lunacon in New York. I’ll have to look for *A Bunch of Amateurs*.

“As a side note, a friend of mine, Molly Wright Steenson, was recently named president of the American Swedish Institute (<https://asimn.org>) in Minnesota. I’ll see what she thinks of your documentation of Swedish fandom history! There might be a future collaboration waiting to happen there.”

In *Synergy* #45 (May 2023), **John Thiel** commented on synergy. How has synergy “been a hot controversy arising in science fiction circles”? You suggest that “[i]n instinct, empathy, and other things which are not visible or of interest to science, but are a part of the makeup of men and women, the spiritual side, and beyond that, merging with others, to have a closer feel and intimacy with them, and greater knowledge of others” ... “has little to do with science fiction. . . .” Is that the root of the purported controversy?

I guess I can see that in terms of some fen’s distaste for diversity and inclusion, which I personally support. In many of the divisions and debates in the United States in recent years, I’ve seen libraries, public schools, urban areas, and other large groupings of people come under fire. My theory is that it’s because such settings are engines for empathy—perhaps sites for synergy. Locations that can help us grok each other in the Heinleinian sense. All three locations offer people the opportunity to gain exposure to people unlike them, to learn about them, and perhaps to *like* them. Protectionist efforts to maintain the focus on the home, private schools, churches, and smaller communities—not allowing outside contact or influence—seems to work toward the opposite, to support an insular focus at the expense of grokking the other, however they might be defined. Personally, I want to grok the other.

Where did you suggest I take over the N3F’s fanzine reviews? I don’t know that I saw the suggestion, and I certainly didn’t mean to ignore it. Given my other fanac, I’m not sure I could commit to

a fanzine review column, though it is up my alley. I even have a good title for it, “Fanimestations,” riffing off a column in the 1951 fanzine *Fan-Fare* (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #71). I’ll give it some thought, because it would provide a service to Neffers.

What do you mean by “mainstream science fiction”? While I admit to reading mostly older writing, I don’t think I’m reading anyone who’s too obscure. I’m sorry you didn’t enjoy C.M. Kornbluth’s “The Marching Morons.” (*SPT* #9) I’m glad you sought it out, however. I think the story touches on a challenging topic, for sure, and I found it worth thinking about. I have also enjoyed the fiction of Dan Brown. I’m kind of a sucker for conspiracy theories; I find them fascinating but don’t tend to fall for them, though I’ve developed a few of my own.

Samuel Lubell’s *Samizdat* #19 opened by commenting on the offense taken at the Fannish Inquisition. How was Dis ’n Dat offensive? The use of dialect? The counterpoint you offer—that a Christian worship service wasn’t seen as similarly exclusionary or offensive—seems to bear out my contention above.

Your comments on the fracturing of fandom resonated with me, and the discussion above: “The anime cons, comic book (really media) conventions, and various conventions based on TV shows and movies greatly outnumber the traditional sf/fantasy literature conventions,” you wrote. “But growth and change are part of life and SF fans above everyone else should be welcoming them.” And them, us. I think part of the challenge is that we still see ourselves as the dominant culture, and we might not be. Are we seeking our place among broader fandom while we grouse that they’re not part of *our* fandom?

I was intrigued by the Washington Science Fiction Association’s discussions of sf magazines such as *Asimov’s*, *F&SF*, *Clarkesworld*, and *Lightspeed*. The N3F has tried book discussions in the past, but members weren’t very interested. I’d still like to return to the idea, and perhaps the prozines are an avenue worth exploring. We could even consider selecting just a few stories to concentrate on.

Thank you for your brief profile of Frederik Pohl. I can heartily recommend *The Space Merchants* (*N3F Review of Books*, November 2022). Your panel ideas for Balticon all look wonderful. Good luck with the programming! As always, I enjoyed and appreciated your Status of Projects, though I’ve yet to document mine programmatically.

And in *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #264, **George Phillis** shared this year’s Laureate Award nominations. Otherwise, read and enjoyed!

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #73

July 10, 2023

Telegraphs & Tar Pits is an apazine published by Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA 90230; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. It is prepared for contributors to APA-L, members of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, and select others. A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.

A Letter of Comment

Your apazine packages are so generous I don't know how to respond to them in a timely fashion, except to respond only to the latest one under a given title.

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #68: From your review of classic SF short stories, such as "All You Zombies—" and "Volpla," I am reminded of the bias that ~~Golden Age~~ science fiction was originally about exploring original, new ideas about how reality might be bent into creative origami shapes by the future, or at least by our imaginations. Given the first publication dates, these stories broke new ground; somehow I don't have the sense that contemporary SF have been doing that, not so much. Or maybe I'm just not 13 anymore, and no longer discovering a new exercise for imagination every day.

Still, your movie and television reviews are eye openers. Kirk Douglas in a musical Jekyll and Hyde movie? The band Kiss in monster movies? Truly, all knowledge is contained in fanzines.

Snow Poster Township #10: I gather that Facebook deleted N3F and LASFS event listings for unstated "community standards" violations. Again. This has become a familiar refrain; so has their refusal to answer queries as to what standards were violated. I am glad that N3F and LASFS have workarounds to tell members when videos and audio/radio shows will be played. Maybe local fan groups could revive the same activity.

It is time, and past time, that some enterprising fans established a viable alternative to existing social media. But the costs and labour to do so are prohibitive. We are forced to make shifts like Discord, Mammoth, and others that don't quite fill the bill.

De Profundis #586: I see that you were confirmed as editor for January through June of 2023; will you continue as editor from July onwards?

It's good to see that LASFS members pay close and continuous attention to issues affecting Loscon. I was a little surprised that LASFS appears to be both the social club and the body directing Loscon policy—more often I have seen fan communities having two

different bodies, handling social meetings versus convention policy.

Faculae & Filigree #20: Little by little, I am catching up on the recent history. Belatedly, I learn from you of Marty Cantor's passing, and David Schlosser taking over LASFAPA. I enjoyed *Holier Than Thou*, and the *Neofan's Guide*, and sporadic news from LA fandom.

(And I had just been preparing my APA list for posting online. Would you be kind enough to give David Schlosser my email, and a request for his description of LASFAPA with contact information? My information on the APA came from Marty Cantor.)

—Garth Spencer

Thank you very much for your letter of comment. Such submission earns you sacred and appreciated entrance to the hallowed halls of the T&T Letterhack society, for which I shall send you a card soon. You are the third such recipient, and you are in good company indeed. (Rather than running excerpts of your LOC in each respective apazine or LASFSzine, I include it in full here because you led with T&T. Besides, I consider this my primary apazine, though all I do is really just a perzine broken up into pieces under unique titles. Some day, it'll become a distributed genzine.)

It's interesting that you open your letter questioning whether current sf continues the tradition of breaking new ground as done in the past. I explored this slightly in an LOC to Taral Wayne's Dark Toys #75 just this week. Do you read contemporary sf? I don't enough to hazard a speculation, focusing instead on reading books I've already accumulated and foundational older writing. But I'd venture that newcomers to the genre—new fen—might very well feel a similar sense of wonder when encountering contemporary work even if longer-time, older readers do not. If Wayne publishes my LOC, I'd welcome your response and reaction.

Indeed, Facebook deleted the Audio and Video bureau event listings citing community standards, didn't respond to my request for clarification so I knew what I'd done wrong and could correct my behavior, and then deleted more. I was re-elected scribe of the LASFS for the remainder of 2023, so De Profundis and Menace of the LASFS shall continue under my editorship. (You also have an LOC in De Profundis #587, as well.)

Not all LASFS club members are con goers, or con runners, though many of the actifen in the group either volunteer or show up in programming. Many of the con runners, while they might be club members, aren't

necessarily active in the club otherwise. It seems to work well enough.

Thank you, also, for your kind words about Marty Cantor, recognizing his death. I will miss him sorely and think about him every time I engage in apac, whether I apahack, letterhack, or collate APA-L. I am thinking about him now.

Kudos on nearing completion of your apae directory! I have emailed you David Schlosser's email address so you can contact him directly. I have told him to expect such outreach. Say, in 2024, perhaps you and I co-edit the next Blue Moon Special!

From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

The Maude Reed Tale by Norah Lofts (Dell, 1974)
This is neither an sf or fantasy book, though it is adjacent. Before young adult fiction was a defined thing with its own acronym, YA, Dell's Laurel-Leaf imprint specialized in children's and juvenile fiction. Also in 1974, the imprint published Farley Mowat's *The Boat Who Wouldn't Float* and Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston's *Farewell to Manzanar*. The imprint also published multiple genre titles over the years, including sf anthologies edited by Robert Silverberg and Cordelia Titcomb Smith, Robert A. Heinlein's *Starman Jones*, and Jay Williams's *The Hero from Otherwhere*.

This novel sits somewhere in the middle. Set in 15th century England, *The Maude Reed Tale* is the story of a young woman sent away from her shepherding wool merchant family to Beauclaire Castle, where she's expected to learn womanly skills such as needlework, customs, and manners. She is not an entirely willing pupil and falls in with a group of friends, boys who are destined to become pages, squires, and knights.

Lofts's portrayal of traditional family structures, gender roles, and feudal society is interesting and informative, and the way the story unfolds is intriguing. A young woman's heart is broken when her love accepts another arranged marriage to gain social standing. And the protagonist leaves the castle to head home alone after encountering her lutist brother, in turn meeting a bandit and a group of goosewomen.

Once home, Reed learns that her mother and grandfather are being taken advantage of by a young man who has designs on their property. The rest of the novel is a gaslighting-style mystery in which the plot is uncovered and addressed.

This isn't usually my kind of book, being a juvenile (I tend not to read YA), but I found the idea of a novel set in the 15th century interesting, and the book read well over several sittings. The cover art is delightfully romantic and winsome, depicting a young woman on

horseback and the high castle in the distance. The end result told a tale far more interesting.

Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

Asteroid City (2023)

Wes Anderson's most recent movie is his usual dollhouse of a picture and incorporates multiple topics and themes that his work usually explores—while drawing on the ensemble cast his work has attracted. It's also a science fiction movie, which might be a first for him. (I'd consider *Fantastic Mr. Fox* and *Isle of Dogs* fantasy movies, but *Asteroid City* is briefly science fictional.)

For the most part, it's a mundane comedic drama involving the death of a mother, moving in with a grandfather, and science fair presentations at the site of an asteroid crater. The storyline concentrates on the relationships between a recently widowed photographer, his highly intelligent son, and three young daughters—as well as the friendships developing between his son and the other science fair competitors.

It's also a movie about the theater, concentrating on the movie as stage play and relationships and interactions between the playwright and lead actor, cast and crew, and other people. The line between the real and staged is thin, here.

Science-fictional elements include the science projects vying for a scholarship, including a jetpack and lunar projector. Later on, the movie becomes even more science fictional, incorporating stop-motion animation and Jeff Goldblum in a rubber suit.

Some of the filmmaking themes incorporated include highly intelligent children, the secret lives of children when away from adults, the power of imagination, yearning and loss, and communication challenges, particularly related to feelings. It's a good movie, especially if you enjoy the work of Anderson, which I do. That it has sf elements is merely a bonus.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)

In June, the National Fantasy Fan Federation's Video Bureau held an online screening of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, Robert Wiene's 1920 film about hypnosis and somnambulism. The silent movie is a great example of German Expressionist cinema, and the use of light and shadow, along with the very creative, minimalist set design makes the film absolutely stunning visually.

Conrad Veidt's role as Cesare, the somnambulist is well performed, and his makeup is excellent, resonating with the lighting and set design. And the story, while pretty straight forward for the most part, offers a surprise at the end, though it's not necessary.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is worth seeing just for the visuals alone. It's awesome. The story is also interesting, a murder mystery involving somnambulism and hypnosis. There's a body double, mob justice, and an insane asylum, which bookends the narrative. If you haven't seen this movie yet, you need to do so. Seriously. What a wonderful introduction to German Expressionism.

***Cthulhu Mansion* (1992)**

A friend and I recently watched this Spanish production directed by Juan Piquer Simón on video tape. Ostensibly inspired by the writings of H.P. Lovecraft, that inspiration seems to be limited to the use of the word "Cthulhu," which is actually the name of the mansion, and the title of a slim antique volume kept by a stage magician in a safe.

After a drug deal gone wrong, a quintet of hoodlums carjack the magician, his assistant, and daughter in order to sneak out of the carnival grounds without being caught by the police. Once at the magician's home, he tends the wounds of a hoodlum who'd been shot—the brother of the girlfriend of the leader, who is one of the most irritating hoodlums in the history of cinema.

Frank Finlay's Chandu, the magician, channels the acting of Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen, but Brad Fisher's Hawk—though he looks like Craig Sheffer's Aaron Boone from *Nightbreed* in his white T-shirt and leather jacket—is mystifying as the leader of the toughs. He's not at all convincing, neither evincing charisma or leadership, nor forceful enough physically to rationalize his position.

It's also confusing why a love triangle exists within the gang. Hawk is supposedly dating the character played by Melanie Shatner (yes, that Shatner), while hooking up with the girlfriend of a fellow thug, but not Shatner's character's brother, who'd been shot. In any event, there's an evil presence in the mansion, and most of the movie—if it's not taken up by the hoodlums hassling Chandu and his daughter—focuses on the house's slow and steady influence on its inhabitants, which, of course, ends in disaster for most.

There are three notable scenes. In one, prosthetic practical-effects hands drag a character into a refrigerator while a black cat watches. In another, Shatner's good-girl fish out of water dances seductively before stabbing viciously at her unconvincing boyfriend. And the practical effects incorporating tree branches and vines are great fun, providing one of the best visuals in the flick.

This movie might be of interest to Lovecraft suckers/completists, despite the distant lineage. It

resonates slightly with *The Funhouse* (*Brass Hat Mind* #1), *The Mutations* (*Films Fantastic* #16), and *The Evil Dead*. Any one of those movies is better than this one, though I wouldn't blame you for fast forwarding to the three scenes described above. The rest is merely window dressing.

***Lost Continent* (1951)**

The N3F's Video Bureau screened this online in early July. Bill Warren doesn't seem to think much of the flick in his writeup in *Keep Watching the Skies!*, but it's an enjoyable movie and notable for at least a few reasons. Cesar Romero and Hugh Beaumont star in two of the most notable roles, perhaps offering assistance when playing Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon or another movie actor connection games, but it is Sid Melton's friendly comedy that stood out for me.

Early in the picture, the director reuses footage from the 1950 *Rocketship X-M*, and the movie is very much an example of early rockets-meet-dinosaurs sf. A group of military representatives, joined by an expatriate Russian scientist, venture to an uncharted island to retrieve data from an experimental rocket. Climbing a mountain to a hidden, forbidden world—reportedly the home of the gods—they find said dinosaurs.

The stop-motion animation isn't that great, but it's passable and enjoyable, and the use of green-tinted film to represent the lush, naturally radioactive environs is innovative and effective. Relatively reminiscent of *The Lost World* or *King Kong*, it's a pleasant tale, not too frustrating and not too groundbreaking. Watch it for the interpersonal relationships, the stop-motion animation, and the film tinting.

***Nope* (2022)**

My wife and I watched this the evening we saw the afternoon screening of *Asteroid City*, above. And the two movies make an excellent double feature. While the Wes Anderson movie is a quiet, gentle picture with momentary sf elements, Jordan Peele's UFO-oriented horror movie is much more straight forward in its embrace of genre.

The movie is about a family of Black ranchers and a neighboring theme park run by an Asian former child actor and his family, who encounter an alien life form. One of the movie's theses is that alien life is much like a wild animal; though you might try to domesticate it, it's still a wild animal.

Peele and his crew do more with fabric-based practical effects—and sound—to portray the alien than I've experienced otherwise in film, and the result is quite compelling, reminding me of the portrayal of

aliens in *Cloverfield*, which was much less subtle. And the interstitial scenes, including the movie's beginning, which share snapshots of a horrific experience endured by the child actor and a chimpanzee cast in a sitcom are astounding. That program's title: *Gordy's Home!* Beware.

Regardless of how you feel about horror movies or the previous work of Peele, *Nope* is worth checking out. The horror elements are largely off screen, suggested, or cloaked in parachute-like fabric and sound. And Peele's approach to alien physiology, particularly movement and digestion, is intriguing.

***Robot Monster* (1953)**

Inspired by the recent local 70th anniversary screening of the movie in 3D, I watched this relatively short feature one night when I had difficulty sleeping. Widely derided, it's still a fun flick. The gorilla suit and space helmet costuming, though simplistic, is effective. And the post-apocalyptic familial adventure fighting for survival after an alien invasion is sound.

Using limited outdoor sets and scenes, tumble-down ruins, a singular cave, and radio equipment—communicating with the invasion leader via display monitor utilizing antenna and a fluorescent lightbulb—there's not a lot to the picture. People walk around a lot. They walk to the cave. They walk to the ruins. They walk away from the robot monster, who is also walking.

There's also a lot of dramatic gesturing on the part of Ro-Man. Regardless, it's perfect for a childlike view of an alien invasion informed by comic books of the time.

Comments on APA-L #3027

Thank you, **Charles Lee Jackson II**, for the July 4 holiday cover! I hope all is well in Tucson, Ariz.

In *Leeway* dated for July 6, 2023, **Lee Gold** updated ellers on the death of Tom Locke. A news brief recounting some of the details was included in *De Profundis* #587. We can always ask Gavin Claypool if the LASFS would like to obtain any of Locke's books.

If John Hertz hasn't already contacted Kristine Cherry, I'm sure she'd be able to help him. I was unaware of or forgot about your previous novels but will look for them. I was mistaken thinking the Valhalla series was your first fiction.

John Hertz's *Vanamonde* #1551 opened with a poem by Hafez. I appreciated your commentary on the legal profession. Your poem about desks was a delight.

In *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #18, **Matthew Mitchell** remarked on some family law

hijinks perpetrated over the July 4 weekend. When we still shared custody, my co-parent would occasionally pull such shenanigans when communication and resolution would be challenging, sometimes putting the decision on our child. It can be challenging.

I will share your feedback with cover artist Al Sirois. That your mother encouraged you to read *The Making of Star Trek* so you knew it Was Just a TV Show made me grin. I totally whacked those weeds, but I don't know if I want to consider it a talent. It might become a talent in demand, and I stopped mowing lawns and shoveling snow—how I first earned my baseball cards and comic books—before high school graduation.

In terms of promotion and recruitment, John Hertz has prepared a flier he plans to mail to LASFS members in the near future. I've also been giving some thought about how to best mention APA-L and LASFAPA during LASFS meetings, perhaps during Regular Announcements or Miscellaneous. Beverly Warren expressed interest in the recent past but hasn't decided to commit yet. Barbara Gratz Harmon has commented, I believe, that George Mulligan might be interested once he's back on his feet.

Barbara Gratz Harmon's *Reflections from a Fish Bowl* #43 informed us that she's "still vertical," which is heartening. Thank you for telling us more about Herb Murez. He sounds like a great man.

You're welcome for the help preparing for the memorial gathering. I am glad you were able to host in good conscience, and that you are seeking the sun daily. When you do so, do you sit in the chairs by the side door, or in back?

In *Toony Loons* #720, **Joe Zeff** warned ellers about lightning strikes. Reportedly, one should be careful if there are strikes sighted within 10 miles of you. Spooner, our cat, doesn't like fireworks, so when we returned from our friends home in Sunland—seeing multiple firework displays along the way on our drive home—he was ready to go into our bedroom and secure himself under the bed. This year didn't seem as active as past years in terms of neighborhood fireworks.

Good luck with your efforts toward healthy weight gain. I hope it contributes to increased stamina and strength.

And **Nola Frame-Gray's** bacover is a fine return to from, updating ellers on an unexpected fall and hospital visit, technological challenges, and housing difficulties. There was a full moon July 3, and the next one is Aug. 1. Your note to me was dated June 30, so you weren't too far off! I hope you've recovered from your injuries.

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #74

July 20, 2023

Telegraphs & Tar Pits is an apazine published by Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA 90230; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. It is prepared for contributors to APA-L, members of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, and select others. A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.

The Los Angeles County Fanac Guide

I'm working on a little project I'd like others' help with: *The Los Angeles County Fanac Guide*, a directory of local fannish resources. (Adjacent counties are also welcome, though the focus will largely be LA County.)

I'd like to compile a directory of local clubs and organizations, cons and events, publications, stores, historical sites, and other locations that are of fannish interest—to document local fanac sites and offer a resource to newcomers to the area.

If you'd like to contribute, I'd welcome your assistance. Feel free to check out the form at <https://tinyurl.com/LA-fanac-form> to make recommendations, and if you have a lot of them, I can send you the questions via email or otherwise—such as in the mail—for batch sending.

Help identify where the fannish activity's at. Where should people go? What would go in our Yellow Pages of fandom?

Fun with Fanzines

Last weekend, I spent five hours or so hanging out with Nick Smith at Marty Cantor's apartment going through fanzines, apae materials, and other items to help sort through his possessions. I even got to meet Jenny, the neighbor who helped Cantor with home care when things got more challenging.

While back issues of APA-L and LASFAPA are largely going to myself and David Schlosser—with one set going to the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction & Fantasy at the University of California, Riverside, Cantor's fanzine collection is going in full to Eaton. Last weekend, I packed 10 Bankers Boxes of file folders of fanzines he'd organized alphabetically by title. I got into the H's.

Once I ran out of Bankers Boxes, I started filing loose, unsorted fanzines by title, for later boxing. I also spent some time going through LASFAPA back issues, identifying box content, and assessing any remaining apae printing materials. Having just recently obtained a full set of keys, Smith has been

boxing up Cantor's books for donation to the LASFS—and Jenny helped sort clothing for donation to Goodwill, making a couple of runs in Cantor's car.

Organizing the fanzines for donation was fascinating. It was all I could do not to look at absolutely everything, but I will share some highlights of what was in Cantor's collection. Among the materials I boxed were issues of APA-H, a signed copy of Carl Brandon's *Cacher of the Rye*, *Clear Ether*, Bruce Sterling's *Cheap Truth*, *Delap's F&SF Review*, Taral Wayne's *DNQ*, multiple folders of *De Profundis*, *E-Fan Manifesto 1.0*, *The Enchanted Duplicator*, issues of *Factsheet Five* dating back to 1984, *The Fannish III* from 1960 (perhaps the oldest fanzine I noted), multiple folders of *File 770* and *Fosfax*, a one-shot titled *Harlan's Side*, *Herbapa*, *Weinstein & Glycer's Discount Hoaxerama*, and Cantor's *Holier Than Thou*, *No Award*, and DUFF report with Robbie Bourget.

Cantor actively traded with numerous sf clubs around the world, and clubzines are well represented among the materials. It also struck me that given when Cantor got involved in fandom—1975—his fanzine collection represents an era not as often focused on as the earlier days of fandom and fanzines. Cantor's materials represent the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the public introduction of the Internet, the shift online, and the dwindling number of print fanzines as more and more titles moved to PDF distribution or folded entirely. Given the presence of materials such as *E-Fan Manifesto 1.0* and *Cheap Truth*, I'm sure the move online is addressed in numerous fanzines.

I'll return this coming weekend to continue boxing and organizing materials. Cantor's fanzine collection will be a wonderful addition to Eaton.

From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

Darkover Landfall by Marion Zimmer Bradley (DAW, 1972)

Though the seventh *Darkover* novel published, *Darkover Landfall* is the first book in terms of chronology. As such, it offers readers characters' first contact with the population of the alien planet, as well as their first exposure to the planet itself. Regardless of how much of Bradley's work or *Darkover* you've read, it's a wonderful story.

The book largely concentrates on the characters' efforts to survive on a relatively hospitable planet after a crash landing. On the planet *Darkover*, or *Cottman IV*, the visiting humans encounter biting worms, psychoactive pollen, and two different species: a small furred hominids that make their homes in platforms around trees and a white elf-like people who are quite beautiful and can withstand extreme cold.

Much of the story focuses on overcoming two crises. In one, the psychoactive pollen leads to a sort of mass psychosis that either leads to violence or group sex. The latter leads to a number of unwelcome, unwanted, or otherwise problematic pairings the characters need to reconcile. And the former sometimes occurs as a result of the latter. One character in particular is especially ashamed of his behavior while under the pollen's influence.

The other challenge stems from disagreements between two factions among the crew. One would like to concentrate the group's efforts on repairing the spacecraft in order to leave the planet, continuing to its planned destination. The other wants to turn its attention and energy on colonization even if they haven't reached the intended site for colonization. That some members of that faction are also members of a low-technology commune or similar group adds an additional layer of interest and intrigue.

Themes and topics that arise in the book include appropriate technology, gender relations, the application of learned skills and expertise, authority, human sexuality, and the role of religion. It's a good introduction to the series, even if the first in chronology wasn't the first published.

From the Reading Pile: Comic Books

Nexus: As It Happened—Volume One (Rude Dude, 2009)

This compact, black-and-white collection compiles the first seven issues of Mike Baron and Steve Rude's delightful sf comic book series *Nexus*. The book contains *Nexus* #1-3 and Vol. 2 #1-4, initially published between 1981-1983. The first three issues were originally issued as black-and-white magazines, while the second volume was a color, standard comic-sized series.

Capitol Comics' first *Nexus* comics were an eye opener for me. Focusing on the adventures, political intrigues, and personal relationships of a science-fictional superhero (his powers draw on nearby suns, and there are spacecrafts and various alien races and societies), the story is by turns light-hearted and humorous, and very serious and occasionally dark.

Nexus is almost an anti-hero. He is generally pro-freedom, anti-slavery, and a proponent of universal health and wellbeing, but his powers come with a cost—and he's not afraid to make difficult choices. Besides, he's haunted by an initially mysterious past and tormented by dreams, which occasionally identify his next mission or target.

I remember reading the first three black-and-white issues with rapt attention. The third issue even included a flexi disc audio drama of the issue,

reminiscent of Power Records' book and record sets.

The tormented hero goes up against a cruel dictator, slavers, and a leader who seeks to harness the telekinetic power of disembodied heads arrayed in a sort of networked battery. Freeing them results in some wonderful panels and imagery. A visiting journalist falls in love with him, her boss arrives to brand her as a traitor and seduce *Nexus* herself, and our hero attracts a group of refugees, supporters, and other adventurers who seek to aid his cause. And near the end of the volume, there's a fascinating feline character who's formidable in combat as well as in the courtroom.

Nexus was very much a bright spot during the independent comics book of the early 1980s. Mike Baron's writing is top notch, and Steve Rude's artwork perfectly balances cartoonishness and realism in its portrayal of the comics' sf settings and action. If you've never read *Nexus*, it's worth seeking out the early material. This edition is a great first step.

Skizz (Titan, 1989)

Written by comic book mystic Alan Moore and drawn by Jim Baikie, this slim black-and-white edition collects an sf story originally serialized in *2000 AD* #308-330 in 1983. There were two later sequences by Moore and Baikie printed in 1992 and 1994-1995; this volume only contains the first serialization.

Set in Birmingham, England, the comic focuses on the arrival and experiences of an alien—an interpreter from the Tau-Ceti Imperium—on Earth, in part inspired by the movie *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. (Baikie's Introduction suggests that he and Moore started talking about the idea for the story before images of E.T. were even available.)

Most of the installments are four pages in length, but there are several longer pieces to accommodate the story's pacing. First concentrating on the alien as a primary character, the story soon develops into a tale about the human beings who gather to help him, as well as those who attempt to hunt him down for scientific research and other purposes—shades of *E.T.*

While the kangaroo-like *Skizz* is interesting himself, the human characters prove even more intriguing. Roxy is a teenage student who listens to new wave and ska music. (That leads to a clever line in which *Skizz* remarks that she taught him that the Police aren't as good as Madness.) And Cornelius Cardew, a burly pipefitter who suffered an injury at work and is now facing difficulties finding employment. They and another friend team up to help *Skizz* elude capture by the threatening Van Owen, who presumes *Skizz* is the advance agent of an invasion force.

A bit of an outlier for *2000 AD*, the comic is largely a quiet consideration of isolation, first contact, friendship, and finding family. The story's arc is very similar to that of *E.T.*, though there are notable differences. And Baikie's portrayal of the interpreter Skizz, his fever dream, and his eventual rescuers are wonderful. Otherwise, his artwork ably represents the mean streets of Birmingham.

Finally, despite Titan's current presence in British comic book and magazine publishing, I'd been unaware that it was in business almost 30 years ago. I'd also been unaware that it reprinted *2000 AD* work in such nice slim editions—the book's format might be the exact size of the original comics tabloid, resulting in a delightful reading experience. It might be worthwhile tracking down other late-'80s Titan reprint editions.

The EC Archives: Weird Fantasy—Volume 1 (Dark Horse, 2023)

These new color paperback reprint volumes issued by Dark Horse are glorious. Largely replicating the original Russ Cochran hard-cover reprints, they offer a handful of back issues in sequence, focusing on the most notable EC titles. This edition collects *Weird Fantasy* #13-17—the first five issues—and #6, initially published in 1950-1951. (Read about select issues of companion title *Weird Science* in *Snow Poster Township* #6.)

Weird Fantasy picked up its earliest issue numbers from discontinued romance comic *A Moon, A Girl... Romance* to take advantage of postal rates, but the postal service caught on, so it renumbered. Perhaps inspired by Harry Harrison and Wally Wood's interest in sf, the series drew on the artwork of those two as well as Jack Kamen, Al Feldstein, Harvey Kurtzman, and others to explore multiple sf themes.

Stories from these half-dozen issues touch on disembodied brains, time travel, lost worlds, space travel, cosmic ray bombs, a Martian invasion, robots, aliens, television, chemistry and age regression, and other topics. Narratives resonate with sf movies of the time, the writing is punchy and propelling, and the artwork is glorious.

Thankfully, the reprints reproduce issues in full, including text stories and letter columns. At \$19.99 a pop, these might be among the most affordable EC reprint volumes. Kudos to Dark Horse!

Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews
Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny (2023)

Last Friday morning, I went to a theater near the office to see *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*. I've appreciated the remarks that people have made during

LASFS meetings, and even though I haven't seen *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* yet, I consider myself a fan of the franchise. (Apparently, I own the DVD of the 2008 movie, so I can remedy that soon.)

This entry in the line of movies dating back to 1981 is surprisingly true to the first two, cementing its place in my affections. While previous outings have been slight fantasies—with most of the plotline focusing on the action, adventure, and archaeology rather than the fantastic—this instance even moves into the area of science fiction. It does so in a way that's true to the earlier movies, concentrating on the ancient archaeological potential of sf.

The movie opens with some de-aged footage of Harrison Ford portraying Jones as he goes up against the Nazis to obtain the Lance of Longinus, sought by the fuhrer, only to discover that they also have Archimedes's Antikythera, which has been separated into halves, perhaps to avoid mishaps with its storied powers and potential. So far, the movie is still relatively grounded in history and archaeology. Adolf Hitler was interested in occultism. The Holy Lance—presumably used to pierce the side of Jesus—and the Antikythera are real or near-real objects, with four known asserted versions of the first in Armenia, Krakow, Rome, and Vienna, and the latter an ancient Greek example of an analog computer retrieved from a shipwreck near Greece.

Even before the sf elements of the movie kick in, it might be an alternate history because Archimedes is asserted as the inventor of the Antikythera. In actuality, the found device was built after he was alive, and while his theories and work might have led to the development of the mechanism, he is not believed to have constructed it. Similarly, it seems that the complete Antikythera was found in 1901, so it's having been broken and secreted away could also qualify as alternate history.

The movie then moves to 1969, the dates of the Apollo 11 mission, Jones about to retire from Hunter College after 10 years of teaching. The rest of the movie is absolutely wonderful: the thieving daughter of a former colleague, a thieving child taken under her wing, reunions with old comrades, archaeological investigations, a nightclub scene, and travel in search of the other half of the Antikythera.

There are enough echoes of—and quotes from—previous movies to connect viewers to the previous, much-loved movies. And Jones is very much Jones, even at the end of his career. Regardless, the end of his career might lead to a new, even more rewarding life.

Interestingly, the de-aging in the beginning of the movie was done not with CGI, but by training an

artificial intelligence using previous Indiana Jones and Harrison Ford movies and footage that didn't make the cut for the previous films. "I don't know how they do it. But that's my actual face," Ford said in an interview quoted in *Variety*. "Then I put little dots on my face and I say the words and they make [it]. It's fantastic."

The new Indiana Jones movie is indeed that: fantastic. And if you go to see it, you'll see what makes it science fictional—beyond the alternate history aspect.

Fantastic Television: *Doctor Who* Series 13

Within the last week or so, I watched *Doctor Who* Series 13, Jodie Whittaker's final series as the Doctor, in full on DVD. Subtitled "Flux," the series originally aired in six episodes between Oct. 31 and Dec. 8, 2021. It's a rare example of a serialized story over the course of a series, an approach much more common in the earlier years of the program. Even though six new episodes feels awfully short for a series, much less the final series for a Doctor, the serial aspect works very well, and "Flux" succeeds as a whole, as well as as individual episodes. I'd welcome future serials.

There are a couple of new elements to the show in this series. Comedian John Bishop joined the show as a companion, and the series was set in his hometown of Liverpool, allowing for some wonderful scenes featuring the city and its landmarks. Another aspect is that multiple enemies from the past all coalesce in the face of a newfound threat. The Weeping Angels are instrumental throughout. Sontarans seek to align with Cybermen and Daleks to defend against the threat. And a new alien race is introduced: The Lupari, canine warriors.

Without giving too much away, the primary threat is—wait for it—the end of the world. The universe is about to end, to be replaced by another. Two very stylish but evil figures seem to be the masterminds behind the transition, and the Doctor and her companions stand up to their machinations, as well as those of the Division, which was new to me. The two masterminds utilize a kind of humanoid thumb drive to harvest the energy they need.

I also really enjoyed the aspect of the Williamson Tunnels in Liverpool, as well as the character Joseph Williamson, who was constructing them to prepare for a cataclysm. It turns out that those are real—even to the name—and that people to this day don't know why the tunnels were constructed under Liverpool. (<https://tinyurl.com/Liverpool-tunnels>)

Despite fannish debate about Whittaker's time as the Doctor, I quite enjoyed her stint on the show—and think she brought a lot of good. "Flux" was a solid

ending to her tenure, and a strong return to the serials of the past.

Comments on APA-L #3028

The black printer cartridge was running low and changed midway through the print run, so a couple of apazines were printed with less than excellent quality. For that, I apologize. I didn't think they were faded enough to warrant reprinting, however.

In *Leeway* dated for July 13, 2023, **Lee Gold** reported that several members of Alarums & Excursions have the full run of that apa in hard or soft copy. My concerns about maintaining a set for the historical record have been assuaged! I, too, hope that Samuel R. Delaney is able to continue forming new memories and writing.

It recently became warm enough in Culver City that I can no longer wear a hoodie while working in my home office. I've taken to wearing shorts and opening the windows when working from home, dressing to go into the office. I described that midweek to my wife as "putting on my costume." I've begun exercising again, returning to a bodyweight and dumb bell regimen, and have found that it's much better exercising in the yard first thing in the morning before the sun hits the grass.

John Hertz's *Vanamonde* #1552 reported on recent events in baseball. I'll share your feedback with cover artist Al Sirois.

In *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #19, **Matthew Mitchell** updated us on his workload at the office. Thank you for remarking on the recent *New York Times* article on Uri Geller. I'd missed it. (<https://tinyurl.com/Geller-NYT>) Your comment that a pickpocket is a security expert made me chuckle. I suppose she is, if she is employed to help people learn how to not be pick pocketed. There are plenty of ethical hackers whose profession it is to identify system risks and vulnerabilities.

I shall have to look for your Jewish eyes the next time we are both at a LASFS meeting via Zoom. My wife and I periodically discuss cutting back on the streaming services to which we subscribe. In recent weeks, I've been thankful for Paramount+ because I've resumed watching *Star Trek: Discovery*.

Joe Zeff's *Toony Loons* #721 informed us of a dental evaluation. I hope it went well! I'm glad your walking is improving. Holy cow, mailing comments on APA-L #3023! What a blast from the recent past. I'll send your feedback to cover artist Tiffanie Gray.

And the bacover by **Nola Frame-Gray** also reports on a colonoscopy. I particularly enjoyed your drawing of Louis as a ghost from *A Christmas Carol*.

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #75

July 25, 2023

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Fun with Fanzines (cont.)

After our first weekend working on sorting, filing, and organizing Marty Cantor's books and fanzine collection for donation to the LASFS for sale—and to the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction & Fantasy—I returned this past weekend for two more work days. Nick Smith and I had been hoping to finish in time to take the materials to the University of California, Riverside, this coming weekend. I'd obtained 20 more Bankers Boxes to fill, to do so.

Saturday, I spent six hours working with Smith to make our way through more of the accumulated fandom-related materials in Cantor's home. Because of the hot weather warnings, I took a small fan to assist the air conditioning, as well as a cool salad and bottle of water so we could pace ourselves in the heat.

Over the course of the day, breaking once to eat (and often for water), I made it through the sorted and filed fanzines in Cantor's collection. Then I turned my attention to the unsorted and unfiled materials, some of which were more recent, but perhaps dating back 15 years ago or so. Much of that was quite dusty, residing in two boxes under a table in the living room, so I was thankful that Cantor had Lava soap in his home. After about six hours, I'd reached a point at which I was sure I could finish my work the next day.

Some of the highlights I encountered while boxing the remaining collection Saturday, making it to the end of the alphabet, included a 1958 issue of *Innuendo*; multiple folders of the New England Science Fiction Association's newsletter *Instant Message*, *Lan's Lantern*, and *Mimosa*; Loompanics catalogs dating back to 1985; a 1960 edition of *Ole Chavela!*; an issue of *Oopsla!* from 1955; issues of *Other Gates*, *Other Realms*, *Outworlds*, and *Proper Boskonian*; a 1991 reprint of *Ratatask #1-47*; a 1947 issue of *Requiem*; the handbound paperback-sized *SF Echo*; editions of *Science Fiction Review*, *Shadow-FAPA*, *South of the Moon*, and *Thyme*; 1954 editions of *Skyhook* and *Spaceship*; Walt Willis's 614-page *Warhoon 28*; and *Whole Fanzine Catalog*.

After brunch Sunday with friends visiting from

northern California at Smorgasburg Los Angeles near downtown, I returned, arriving early in the afternoon for another six-hour work session—missing the Greater Angeleno Gourmet Society (GAGS) dinner, to which Smith was able to go. I spent most of the time continuing work on the unsorted and unfiled materials, moving on to the remaining apae materials and assorted items in various rooms. Smith and I listened to classical music while discussing notable items. One of the most exciting finds was a number of AZAPA, FAPA, and Minneapa mailings. I hadn't been aware of AZAPA, which was founded by Patrick Nielsen Hayden and was active from 1975-79.

Another impressive find was Cantor's collection of fanart, some of which he'd accumulated while editing and publishing *Holier Than Thou* and *No Award*, and some obtained from Bill Warren, who'd gotten it from William Rotsler. That, too, was unsorted and unfiled, pretty much just dropped in a box in the closet. I'll begin using pieces found in the assorted artwork, contacting the still-living fanartists to inquire whether I can do so with their permission.



—William Rotsler

Much of Sunday's material wasn't packed in Bankers Boxes like most of the fanzine collection—though I did fill the 20 more I'd bought—but in other boxes, obtained when Cantor bought printing paper. Once I thought I was done, I went room to room checking to make sure filing cabinets were empty and that stray fandom materials weren't hidden among other paperwork.

Smith and I had found that that was very much the case—even though the bulk of Cantor's collection was very well organized. In any given pile of paperwork,

satisfied but missing his people. And in the latter, which originally appeared in *Sweaty Palms* #2, a young man is trapped in a home he doesn't recognize. "Sometimes I wake up and all the furniture's in different places," Kruger-Howard writes. "So, in this room everything is endless in all directions. You can never find the end."

The artist's drawing style is simple and thin lined, occasionally with a sort of wash, perhaps reminiscent of cute brut art. The end result is just lovely in terms of tenor and tone, the ideas it explores, and the tidy packaging.

Unfortunately, *Goes* is out of print, but you can download a digital version at <https://www.goesbooks.com> or ask me for my copy. I'd be happy to send it to you.

The EC Archives: The Vault of Horror—Volume 1 (Dark Horse, 2021)

Similar to its companion volume focusing on *Weird Fantasy* (T&T #74), this softcover collection compiles *The Vault of Horror* #12-17, which originally appeared bimonthly between April 1950 and March 1951. R.L. Stine contributes a foreword that details his introduction to the comic at a neighborhood barbershop when he was 9 or 10 years old, recognizes its impact on his own writing, and states that "What attracted me to these comics was that they were so hilarious. Had anyone ever concocted such a mix of horror and humor before?"

Formerly titled *War Against Crime* (also available from Dark Horse), the series' first six issues featured covers by Johnny Craig and stories by Harry Harrison, Henry Kuttner, and others, as well as artwork by Craig, Al Feldstein, Harrison, Graham Ingels, Jack Kamen, Harvey Kurtzman, and Wally Wood.

Topics addressed include wax museums, werewolves, ghouls and vampires, murder, the undead, graverobbing, hunting humans, voodoo dolls, rats, haunted houses, swamp monsters, escaping from prison, and other cheery subjects—all wonderfully explored in an outre fashion.

Some of the pieces reminded of the fiction of Edgar Allan Poe and H.P. Lovecraft. Stories in this run have been identified as influenced by Michael Curtiz's movie *Mystery of the Wax Museum*, Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Body Snatcher," Richard Connell's "The Most Dangerous Game," Lovecraft's "In the Vault" and "Cool Air"—the story I remembered—Clark Ashton Smith's "The Nameless Offspring," and Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray."

One highlight of the comic is that, in the lettercol, "The Vault-Keeper's Corner," several issues recommend book selections. Those include Henry

James, *Ghostly Tales*; Edgar Allan Poe, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* and the short stories "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Gold-Bug," and "The Pit and the Pendulum;" Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; Bram Stoker, *The Jewel of Seven Stars*; Charles Lee Swem, *Werewolf*; and H.G. Wells, *Tales of the Unexpected*.

I would have liked the literary recommendations to continue, but the lettercol turned into editorial commentary as issues progressed.

Also of interest were the full-page house ads for the Association of Comics Magazine Publishers, publishers' attempt at self-regulation before the creation of the Comics Magazine Association of America and its Comics Code Authority.

Fantastic Television: Travelers **S2E9: "Update"**

This episode throws several curveballs, some of them related to the main storyline, some of them seemingly separate from our primary concerns, and some of them perhaps both. Only time will tell. The first curveball is that Philip attends an update session—the "update" of the episode title—at which he receives new future memories that he can use to better navigate time as it unfolds, as well as to finance his team. At the update session, he receives a bottle of yellow pills that he can take. Apparently, learning in this manner can open up historians to being able to see fragments of the multiverse and alternate timelines.

The second curveball is that Rick Hall and Luca are out of prison early, all charges against them dropped, as Grant soon learns. The two approach multiple members of the team, including Marcy, with whom Luca plays up the separated siblings' situation, and Trevor, who is not open to interacting with them at all. The ex-cons continue to insinuate themselves throughout the episode, welcoming a disturbed classmate of Trevor's—more on that below—as a new traveler, and causing Kathryn to have a miscarriage of sorts. It turns out that Hall's intent was to save Kathryn's life—childbirth would have killed her—and she wasn't meant to die. Protocol 4, don't you know.

Trevor is thrown his own curveball, when he learns from a classmate and fellow concussion sufferer that their football coach abused his teammates sexually. Philip informs him that it eventually becomes known publicly, and after Trevor's opportunity to confront him with the classmate (the new host, don't forget) passes, he decides to take matters into his own hands. "Release the materials," he says into his comm unit leaving the coach's office. "What does that mean?" his abuser asks—and soon finds out.

That brings us to the fourth curveball, and the one

that might—or might not—have repercussions in the future. Part of Philip’s update gave him lottery numbers that were destined to win. He gives them to Marcy and Carly so he doesn’t attract attention winning the lottery again, and when David copies Marcy’s numbers on his own ticket, he wins too. At first he feels guilt about taking money from Marcy. He debates giving his money to her before he decides to distribute it among the homeless and destitute he helps on the streets. We shall see if the impact of such large sums of money end up hurting or harming them rather than helping them—which would be a strong signal that one shouldn’t tamper with the future.

All in all, an interesting episode, though a bit of a breather or brief pause among the primary timelines underway. I expect that the multiversal aspects of Philip’s update will come into play in a meaningful way in future episodes.

Comments on APA-L #3029

In *Leeway* dated for July 20, **Lee Gold** shared some guidance on whether continuing to watch streaming services goes against—or supports—striking writers and actors. Thank you for that! I apologize for the cover magnification in last week’s distribution. That’s never happened before when I’ve created a PDF from a file, and I’ll figure out why. The experience you describe occurs for me when opening the file in Acrobat, but not in Chrome, for what that’s worth. I’ll try not to make a habit of it.

Again, your reasoning for your decision about *Alarums & Excursions* back issues is sound. Certainly, no one is cheering for your demise—back issues or otherwise. Quite the contrary. May we all live long lives! That Joanna Russ collection sounds wonderful.

If Garth Spencer doesn’t respond to your email, let me know, and I can send you the email addresses I have for him. He’s been at Pemmi-Con as the Canadian Unity Fan Fund delegate, so he might have been otherwise occupied in recent days. Thank you for the links you and Barry Gold sent me, as well as your description of the LASFS’ relationship with Loscon.

Matthew Mitchell should totally let you print his parody poem in *Xenofilkia*. Huzzah! If going to the Museum of Jurassic Technology, I recommend parking in the garage at Cardiff Avenue and Venice Boulevard (near the old Bank of America location on Culver Boulevard). It’s an inexpensive garage and a short walk to the museum.

John Hertz’s *Vanamonde* #1553 opened with an excerpt of Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lectures on Literature*. I learned last weekend that the LASFS sales books are stored in Nick Smith’s storage room. Gavin Claypool does indeed check our library catalog to consider

books for the library rather than sale. He’ll do so with Marty Cantor’s book collection, as well.

Your mention of Buster Crabbe reminded me of Buster *Keaton’s* appearance—well, the use of his footage—in an episode of *Star Trek: Discovery*. Look for it in Season 3, Episode 4, “Forget Me Not.” Matthew B. Tepper’s finding of Isaac Asimov’s “Big Game” is noteworthy!

In *Reflections from a Fish Bowl* #44, **Barbara Gratz Harmon** mentioned organizing her personal effects, inspired by Marty Cantor. That’s perhaps my biggest personal takeaway, too. Every minute I spend organizing his stuff, I pledge not to leave my own to another at the end of my life, and when I got home Sunday night, I resolved to spend similar time and attention with my own accumulated fanzines, zines, magazines, and other paperwork. Later often comes sooner than later, so why not be prepared?

Your description of Lone Pine is reminiscent of my own experience. I haven’t been there for the festival, however. I just know the hotels fill up. When we visited, we drove around the Alabama Hills ourselves. My son was concerned we were lost. I wasn’t, really.

I can attest that Harmon’s weed whacker works well. The battery lasted a good amount of time, and the blade lasts longer than those plastic strings. Her electric lawn mower also works well, though I wasn’t used to the trailing cable. You just have to be mindful of its location when mowing.

Matthew Mitchell’s *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #20 tipped hat to Robert Llewellyn and *Red Dwarf*. His memoir sounds delightful!

We didn’t use Talking Parents, but we did use OurFamilyWizard. Its documentation was certainly helpful. In such cases, how you communicate, in terms of tenor, tone, and timeliness, can be important.

In *Toony Loons* #722, **Joe Zeff** described a standing dental X-ray machine. Will wonders never cease! I’m glad that the new digital mouth frames are at least more comfortable than the metal contraptions and film we had to use in the past. Good luck with the resulting dental work. Your situation—other than insurance—sounds similar to my mother-in-law’s. We hope her series of extraction and implant procedures ends soon. May yours go well!

I’ll share your feedback with cover artist Joe Pearson. I also apologize for the somewhat light printing last distribution. Only two of my four pages were affected, and Lee Gold’s contribution escaped in slightly better shape, but next time I’ll reprint rather than try to pass it off, fingers crossed.