

The Stf Amateur

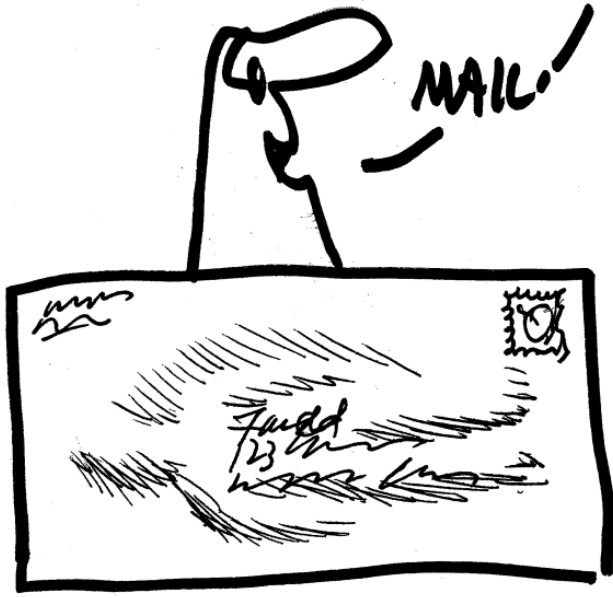


January 2024

The Stf Amateur 4
January 2024

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—William Rotsler

Season's Greetings!

You've got a fantastic cover by Alan White! I wish my [fan]zine merited cover art like that, but I don't think it does.

Seeing the late William Rotsler's line drawings makes me wonder which Rotslers I have used already, and whether it's past time to take up drawing again myself.

Your reviews of recent reading and viewing remind me that I could stand to read new e-books, and see some screen entertainment online. I can do it. I have the technology. Now I just have to get off my duff and execute...

At some point we might compare notes to update and extend, not only our lists of current APAs, but our lists of current repositories for fanzine archives.

—Garth Spencer

Isn't the cover for the November 2023 issue of *The Staff Amateur* grand? Your efforts *The Obdurate Eye* and eAPA certainly warrant Alan White cover artwork! The man has been exceptionally creative and prolific in recent months— as well as actively seeking fannish homes for his work—so I encourage you to at least ask.

White and I first exchanged emails back in 2010 when I was editing *The National Fantasy Fan* for the National Fantasy Fan Federation. He'd previously been a member, and I published his email as an LOC in *The Fan* Vol. 10 #1 (March 2010). In 2013, I was on his distribution list for *Orpheum*, for which I never expressed appreciation. (A belated thanks, Mr. White;

there were years in which I missed many emails.) We didn't really stay in touch.

When I reached out to him seeking cover art in late 2022, it took us some time—and Marty Cantor's death—to finally connect. Now that we have, I've secured permission to use work he'd previously sent Cantor for use, and I'm occasionally surprised and delighted by odd little things showing up in Facebook messages and via other means. Always a joy.

While I've been enjoying the treasure trove of William Rotsler illustrations I inherited, one of my projects for early 2024 is to go through the rest of that fanart, identify the artists, and secure additional permissions as needed so I can diversify the collected fanart I use. I'd also like to use more recent fanart from currently active fanartists. Perhaps someday this faned will be able to do All the Things. (Fanartists, please feel free to send me Any Old Thing. I shall be delighted to consider it for use, and you'll receive an ish in exchange.)

Of course, you should draw, too! I don't often, and I should draw more myself, as well. My last fanart was probably the cover to APA-L #2972 in 2022 before my time as Official Collator. In fact, hey, let's trade covers. I'll do one for one of your projects if you do one for one of mine. Let's stretch and build those muscles! (That actually makes me feel a little uncomfortable, but it'll be fun.)

I shared some initial thoughts about collaborating on an apae directory in my Dec. 3, 2023, letter. Perhaps we talk on the phone in January to further develop our thoughts. I think it'll be a worthwhile effort. Greetings of the season in return, and may 2024 bring all the best and brightest.

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #93

Dec. 7, 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.

Last Week's Senryu

Saturday is not
Thursday, but I hope that this
apa finds you well

I explained the cause of last issue's delayed emailing in *T&T* #92 and am glad to be home. It'll be nice to print, collate, and prepare mailings this week like normal. Last weekend, I experienced some of the same comfort and regularity preparing the November and December issues of *The Stf Amateur* for members of the United Fanzine Organization. If you'd like to receive a PDF of that larger fanzine—collecting all my apazines (even beyond APA-L) from a given month—let me know.

Supermarket Superheroes

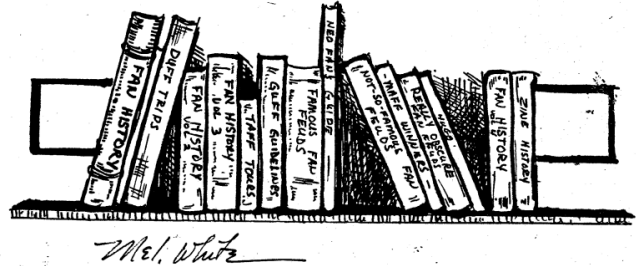
During a recent shop for groceries over the weekend, I checked out the Hot Wheels display at the end of the refrigerated section for the first time in ages. I usually only buy Hot Wheels—a small, silly purchase—when they cost \$0.99, and they are currently priced \$1.18. Yet look I did.

Pretty soon, I saw that there was a Batman line of cars among the current series. I found three of the five such cars on offer, their backing cards numbered as a subseries, making a point not to go through the entire display. Looking online, they seem to be from the 2022 and 2023 ranges of toy cars, both of which numbered 250.

The three I picked up included an unfortunately snubby Classic TV Series Batmobile (2023, Second Color, HKJ72, one of five), Batmobile (2023, HKG99, three of five), and TV Series Batmobile (2022, 2nd Color, HCW61, four of five). The 2022 line had 11 Batman-related cars, including *The Dark Knight*, Arkham Asylum, and TV series designs, as well as variant colors. The 2023 range also featured 11 such cars, including designs from *Batman Forever* (see below) and *Batman: The Animated Series*.

I'm always glad to see the Hot Wheels display, even if I don't look through it. It's not a bad way to

introduce young people in our lives to comic books and fantastic television. Especially since our Ralphs did away with its newsstand, relegating magazines to the checkout lines. During this shop, the only science fictional magazine I spotted was *Entertainment Weekly's The Ultimate Guide to The Hunger Games*.



From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

Lurid Dreams by Charles L. Harness (Avon 1990)
This was the second book I read during the flight home from Portugal and Madrid late last week. A friend had mailed it to me, asking that I send it on to another friend of his once finished. Given that I might not have even known about this paperback—or read it otherwise—I was glad to receive it. Because I really enjoyed it. (Thanks, Clark!)

The novel combines several interesting concepts, including out-of-body experiences (OBE, in the book), time travel, and alternate history. It poses the central question of what might have happened had Edgar Allan Poe become a southern soldier and, later, military leader, rather than a writer?

Why not ask the man himself? The main character is hired, effectively, by the leader of an organization seeking the revival of a strong south to do just that—to persuade Poe not to become a writer, but a soldier. The resulting narrative explores the possibilities of each of the concepts mentioned above, as well as the relationship of the protagonist and his girlfriend. He's the OBE practitioner; she's the Poe scholar.

Those who appreciate Poe's work will enjoy this book particularly. The portions in which the Poe scholar applies textual analysis to his stories in order to ascertain personal details, key dates, and other details were fascinating.

Also of interest were the quotes selected by Harness to open each chapter. Each suggests other reading that is worth pursuing and features passages by people such as Albert Einstein, William Faulkner, Horace, Virgil, Horace Walpole, and others. While the title is fun, there's little that's lurid in the book, and lurid dreams don't really come into play.

What else would you recommend by Harness?

Rocheworld by Robert L. Forward (Baen, 1990)
I also finished this book on the flight home. I'd previously read perhaps the first 100 pages before setting it down. When I returned to it, I reread the portion I'd forgotten and continued. At 470 pages, it's not an overly long novel, but a cover line claims "At last the complete story!" so I was concerned the book might be overwritten.

"Caveats," which precedes the novel's text, put me off even more:

This book is based on the original 150,000 word manuscript I wrote in 1981. A condensed version of 60,000 was serialized under the title "Rocheworld" in *Analog Science Fiction/Science Fact* in 1982. A longer version of about 100,000 words was published in hardcover... This version of 155,000 words ... combines the best features of all the prior versions...

Regardless, it's a good read, and while I think the resulting text could have been more tightly edited, there's a lot to commend. Some of the length can be attributed to the fact that the story is about a near-generation ship (a "mere" 20 years), a very long space journey. Early in the novel, a character is introduced only to be written out to be replaced. In addition to the somewhat sizable ship's crew, there are also composite personal assistants that combine hardware and software, the Christmas Bush and its imps.

Once the very long space flight is over, the crew taking a drug that lessens their intellect in order to help preserve their bodies, the reader arrives at Rocheworld. It's the whole point of the book, like Discworld, Ringworld, or Riverworld.

In this case, Rocheworld is a double planet circling Barnard's Star. Their orbit is shared, and the planets are subtly shaped like teardrops, tips 80 kilometers apart. One lobe is without water, or the local equivalent, the other primarily covered by water, or the local equivalent. And on the "Eau" lobe, alien creatures reside.

Forward's ever-extending novel considers the geology and astrophysics of such a planetary system, the discovery of and interaction with the alien creatures, and the crew's efforts to get out of a particularly challenging situation. The aliens' understanding of the relationship between the astronauts and their imps was a clever touch.

The book ends with 45 pages of explanatory notes, which are worth reading after, rather than while reading the narrative. That said, I might have benefited from the "Casting" section because the characters largely blended into each other as I read, perhaps because of their mental devolution during the

long journey.

All in all, however, while Forward's writing could have been tightened, *Rocheworld* is well worth reading and highly enjoyable. The scientific ideas explored are intriguing, and the adventure compelling. In fact, I am curious what the more economical versions are like. But there are other books to read before I seek out variant editions.



Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

While in Portugal, I recorded a number of movies and television shows once our cable was installed, so I'd always have something to watch. (Like *Alfred Hitchcock Apresenta*, as in T&T #89) One of those movies was the 1995 *Batman Forever*, produced by Tim Burton and Peter Macgregor-Scott, and directed by Joel Schumacher. While this is indeed a Batman movie, Val Kilmer's portrayal is overly muted, so much so that Batman is almost not present.

But that's okeh because the filmmakers tried to cram so much other stuff into the flick that Batman

doesn't even really matter. Similar to the 1992 *Batman Returns*, which featured Catwoman and the Penguin, and 1997's *Batman & Robin*, which includes Batgirl, Poison Ivy, and Mr. Freeze—and many other superhero movies—*Batman Forever* tries to accomplish too much in one movie.

In this flick, we have the origin story and introduction of Robin, a storyline focusing on the origin of the Riddler, and one concentrating on Two-Face. Additionally, Two-Face, portrayed by a deliciously aggressive Tommy Lee Jones, has two girlfriends representing his better and worse natures. The angelic partner, Sugar, is played by Drew Barrymore. Nicole Kidman also stars, so there's a lot going on. Kidman almost provides enough onscreen chemistry for her and Kilmer combined.

The cleanest throughline in the picture focuses on the Riddler, portrayed by Jim Carrey. The very flexible comedic actor takes strong cues from Frank John Gorshin Jr.'s TV portrayal of the quizzical villain, and his aspect of the plot is very much science fictional. Edward Nygma, a researcher working for Wayne Enterprises, has developed a device with which he can transmit TV broadcast signals directly to a viewer's brain. After his project is rejected, he kills his manager, becoming the Riddler and teaming up with Two-Face to unleash the new technology on an unsuspecting Gotham City. One side effect of the device is that it also allows the Riddler to download viewer's thoughts and memories.

That technological component provides substantive critique of mindless TV viewing. Gothamites are shown slack jawed and blank faced as the beam pours into their foreheads, and a fundraising benefit introduces the idea of using the technology for surveillance and the gathering of kompromat.

Luckily, Carrey's manic rubbery Riddler and Jones's chortlingly duplicitous Two-Face are enough to carry the movie, and the TV angle delights. The rest is just mess, an unnecessary ball of twine too tightly wound.

Watching the movie inspired me to read some recent comic book appearances of the Riddler, which brought up *The Riddler: Year One*, a six-issue mini series released between December 2022 and September 2023. Written by Paul Dano and drawn by Stevan Subic, the series is ostensibly a prelude to the 2022 movie *The Batman*. In that film, writer Dano also played Edward Nashton, an orphaned forensic accountant who identifies some criminal discrepancies and transforms into the Riddler.

Subic's artwork occasionally reminds me of the comic-cover collage work of Steve McKean, who

drew Grant Morrison's graphic novel *Batman: Arkham Asylum*. And the storyline is compelling, if a bit stretched out. Learning that the business he works for is perhaps complicit in corruption involving city leaders, Nashton connects the dots, eventually realizing that urban renewal efforts are tainted by dirty money.

Nashton sends evidence to the police, attempting to help the daughter of an immigrant. He also sinks into madness, remembering his past. We don't see Nashton as the Riddler of the movie until the final issue of the series, and there's very little sf in the comic other than his computer hacking hijinks and preternatural pattern recognition within the financial records he's researching.

This Riddler is definitely not the Riddler we generally see in Batman comics. He's also not the Riddler of Carrey in *Batman Forever* or Gorshin on TV. And there aren't that many riddles, which is disappointing. Of the more modern portrayals of the Riddler, I much preferred that in the late 2010s DC Rebirth.

Fantastic Television

Returning from Portugal, I was curious about the state of sf and related TV in the United States. I haven't written a Rabid Ears column for the National Fantasy Fan Federation as Cathode Ray since the end of 2022. Setting aside current-day programs for now, classic sf is very well represented on the air.

MeTV remains the most interesting broadcaster, particularly its Saturday night lineup. Earlier in the day, *The Wild Wild West* airs at 10 a.m. Pacific Time, with the evening kicking off at 8 p.m. with *Svengoolie*. Following that horror host movie screening, viewers are treated to *Batman*, *Star Trek*, *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*, *Lost in Space*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Land of the Giants*, *The Time Tunnel*, *The Invaders*, and *Thunderbirds*.

In recent days, I've watched an episode of *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, "The Mermaid" (S3E19), and *Land of the Giants*, "The Secret City of Limbo" (S2E18). I haven't watched many Irwin Allen TV programs, but both were quite good, and I'll return. One could do worse than only watching MeTV. Monday through Friday, *The Twilight Zone* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* end each day.

If you enjoy *Star Trek*, it's also well represented on the air. Mondays, BBC America airs a handful of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episodes starting at 11 a.m. or noon depending on the week. Tuesday morning brings *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* from 1-10 a.m. DS9 continues Wednesday mornings from 3-10 a.m. Thursdays, *Star Trek* airs from 6:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

(Another week, it might be TNG from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.) TNG returns Friday mornings from 6:30-11:30 a.m. (or 9:30 a.m. depending on the week).

There's certainly plenty to watch on TV.

Comments on APA-L #3047

Thank you, **C.D. Carson**, for the "odd photo" you took on your way to Loscon. You must have been seated in the rowdy car!

In *Leeway* dated for Nov. 30, 2023, **Lee Gold** announced the arrival of her Windows 10 computer. I can understand choosing not to go to Loscon. We can't always go to All the Things and need to choose what we do, sometimes. Had I gone, I'd have missed you!

Your quotations from John Cleveland Cotton's *Diversions of Historical Thought* and *The Noctivigations of John Cleveland Cotton* makes me wonder whether the books exist, too! Thank you for describing your—and Emily V. Wedge's—sleuthing. I've shortened the article's URL to <https://tinyurl.com/TitleTale>. I'll try to do a better job of making your URLs live links before converting to PDF for collation.

Barnard Gratz Harmon's *Reflections from a Fish Bowl* #62 indicated that her car's catalytic converter and oxygen sensors were stolen while parked at Loscon. What a horrible experience! I'm glad the car still ran. I'm also glad you reported it to the hotel. "Other than this, I had a good time at the convention." That, too, made me glad. That could have put a damper on the whole experience, for sure.

What was your hall costume? I appreciated your comments on who you saw at the con, as well as what programming you checked out. I also enjoyed how you worked conrep comments into your mailing comments. Your remarks on my ability to keep deadlines was heartening after last week's two-day delay and other looming apae deadlines. We keep on.

In *Vanamonde* #1570, **John Hertz** recognized the passing of tricks in lieu of treats. When I was younger, tricks mostly included toilet papering and eggs thrown at homes. One year when my mom worked as a substitute teacher, as memory serves, a tree in our front yard was papered and eggs thrown at the front door and windows. I helped clean the egg from the front of the house and found it quite challenging. She was concerned that the perpetrators might have been students of hers, and I remember her worrying that the event was a commentary on her teaching.

Your comment on the United Fanzine Organization makes me think that there are many kinds of fanzines, and that many groups utilize them. I'm not sure all such groups need to explicitly communicate their recognition of sf fandom's history of fanzines, of

which this particular group is actually well aware. In fact, the current issue of *Tetragrammaton Fragments* includes at least one column touching on the adjacency of comics and sf fandom—and how both groups could better engage with the other. My participation is a step in that direction, and I look forward to some fun cross-pollination.

When I asked members about the origin of the group's name, members told me that, in the early 1970s, self-published comics were often called fanzines even if they didn't include articles and other writing. That might have become less common in the late 1970s and early 1980s when small-press comics became available in comic shops. Then, the word "fanzine" was used for fanzines more along the lines of what sf fen are familiar with.

In fact, the acronym UFO originally meant United Fan Organization, but that soon changed to United Fanzine Organization, perhaps to focus more on the periodicals exchanged rather than the people participating. They were fen who created publications. Early UFO publications included Larry Johnson's fanzine *The Comet*, which we'd recognize as a fanzine, with articles on comics, Disney, pulp magazines, and TV. Contributor Dave McDonnell even included a column titled "Bradbury in Depth." You can learn more about that fanzine at <https://sites.google.com/view/larryjohnsoncomics/home/the-comet>. Another early UFO fanzine was *Unreal*, published by Rod Snyder.

I, too, have enjoyed *Reader's Digest Condensed Books*, even as an adult. For one thing, the books are more quickly read. I've often turned to them for thrillers or mainstream fiction that I might not have wanted to spend a lot of time reading otherwise. Besides, it's fascinating that they're still published (now as *Reader's Digest Select Editions*, <https://www.rd.com/article/select-editions>), though much less visibly in larger popular culture. After reading one such volume while I subscribed for a time, I sent it to my parents, who told me I didn't need to send any more. Life encompasses many activities and experiences. Some days, I prefer to participate in fanac.

Joe Zeff's *Toony Loons* #739 updated us on the weather and his new water heater. Glad the shower remains warm now! I enjoyed reading about your identification of Cherrystone Juniper. After building almost nightly fires in Portugal, we've returned to building fires in our fireplace at home after several years of not doing so. I bought some firewood at the grocery store, which we burned through over two nights and plan to get a yard cart or so from Whitt's Wood Yard (<https://whittswoodyard.com>) nearby.

Faculae & Filigree #26

Dec. 8, 2023

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



Me! White

From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

Eastern Standard Tribe by Cory Doctorow (Tor, 2004)

As mentioned in *Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #89, my experience remaining mindful of and involved in multiple time zones while in Portugal inspired me to reread Cory Doctorow's novel *Eastern Standard Tribe*. I read a free version courtesy of Project Gutenberg on my Kindle and enjoyed revisiting a work I initially read almost 20 years ago.

The basic idea of the book is that as we move online to find people with similar interests and perhaps practices, we might find ourselves shifting our circadian rhythms in order to be awake when they're awake, aware when they're aware. In effect, we stay up later to hang out on Discord because our friends are just getting up, or something like that. That leads to the formation of timezone-based tribes that begin to seek project work together, perhaps interfering in the efforts undertaken by others in other timezones, and similar camaraderie. It's as though all the Arthur Andersen suits in GMT teamed up against those in EST without the others knowing it.

That, to some extent, was how I felt when I was overseas: Eight hours ahead of my usual home, six hours ahead of my parents, and nine hours behind my son—while it was an entirely new Now where I was at the time. My back was toward the home and people I'd left behind, and I was facing my son in the future. At the same time, I was digging into the who, what, where, how, and why of Portuguese sf and fantasy—and fandom—documenting what I was learning for my apazines back home. What I didn't

experience was the solidification or shifting of loyalties, just attention and new friendships. Regardless, that loyalty was addressed in the book to comic effect.

For the most part, *Eastern Standard Tribe* is a story of corporate competition and betrayal, as allegiances shift and new partnerships develop. Doctorow also includes an interesting crowdsourcing possibility that involves music file sharing among drivers while they travel the highways and byways of a local area, and how that might be tied into the toll system.

It's a fun read, exploring several ideas, and it resonated with me in a way that it didn't when I first read it in Brooklyn. Doctorow's preliminary "A Note About This Book" offers commentary on where the book came from, who he was as a writer at the time, and the role that Creative Commons licenses have played in the distribution of his work, as well as his relationship with publishers. That, in itself, is another idea entirely.



—William Rotsler

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum (1900)

While in Portugal recently, learning about the history of sf and fantasy in that country (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #88), the influence of Jules Verne on early such

writing struck me. I realized that there are so many formative texts that I've not yet read, including so much of Verne, H.G. Wells, and other well-established and widely known fantasy series such as the writing of L. Frank Baum. Yes, I've never read *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*—or any other Baum—though I've seen the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz* many, many times. So I did.



—Alan White

It's an enjoyable book, and well worth reading if you never have. I enjoyed comparing and contrasting it to the movie, which incorporated several elements not in the original novel—such as the flying monkeys being, well, bad. That surprised me. They're downright terrifying in the movie, and much less so in the book. And I appreciated the childlike wonder evoked by the descriptions by the world, its populace, and How Things Worked.

I felt like the humbugs maintained by the Wizard to be somewhat silly and perhaps easily seen through (come on: green glasses?), and I was bemused by his political gamesmanship not wanting the people to find out, but I was distraught over the bait and switch of his offering to help Dorothy and her friends only after they perform a task for him. That task pretty much

dominates the movie, though the assassination assignment has been replaced.

But mostly, I was struck by the potential for padding that a multi-character work can bring. We have Dorothy, Toto, the Cowardly Lion, Scarecrow, and Tin Man. And it's not uncommon that when something happens, every single member of the group remarks on it. "Shall we go to the forest?" "Yes, let's!" "Yes, let's!" "Yes, let's!" "Arf!" Not much writing length is gained here in this brief review, but just imagine how that—with additional commentary and description—might play out over the course of an entire book.

Of all the characters, I might have enjoyed the Queen of the Field Mice most, which makes me think there's plenty of other small treasures to be found in Baum's subsequent works.

On the LASFAPA Deities

I wrote about the next LASFAPA deity, Michael Mason, as a patron saint in *Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #38 and will reprint that here:

"Chaz Boston Baden offers multiple photographs of Michael Mason in *Hazel's Picture Gallery* online, mostly from an estate auction, various after-meeting gatherings, and Loscon pre-convention meetings in 2003-2004. Pictures were also taken at Gallifrey One in 2000 and 2001. Mason chaired Loscon 30 in 2003 and asked Baden to serve as the con's official photographer. Baden also offers pictures from Mason's funeral in January 2005—he died at the age of 44—and posted the following entry to *LiveJournal* early that month:

"Michael Mason found dead in his apartment tonight, 04-Jan-2005. Now you know as much as I do.

"Michael was in charge of the LASFS library for many years. Not a trained librarian, he did what he could, and he had a love for the LASFS Library nonetheless. LASFS used to purchase its NESFA Press books by way of Bruce Pelz, and when Bruce died Michael Mason joined NESFA expressly to continue that arrangement. Now who will buy our books?

"Michael was a habitual Worldcon attendee, and his collection of Worldcon t-shirts was one he was proud of. He had enough to wear a clean Worldcon t-shirt every day. He chaired Loscon a year ago, and 'helped' with the Loscon program most recently.

"He was also one of the people I'd talked TAFF strategy with, and helped me convince myself I wanted to run.

"Fellow fen commented on that entry remembering time spent with Mason at SMOFcon and TorCon (perhaps TorCon 3, the 61st Worldcon, in 2003), and with the Time Meddlers in the late 1980s. Christian

McGuire posted additional information about Mason's death in his *LiveJournal* pages. (<https://tinyurl.com/5afkt9b2>) Mason had been actively involved with McGuire and Gallifrey One when it spun out of the Time Meddlers in mid-1989, and Mason is listed among other 'dearly departed Gallifrey One team members' online. According to the *Loscon 36 Program Book*, he was 'in charge of programming for Anime Los Angeles at the time of his death.'

"Mason was named a Pillar of LASFS in January 2009. He attended ConJose, the 60th Worldcon, in 2002. He served as vice-chairman of LASFS' board of directors, as librarian, worked in the office for Loscon 28 in 2001, volunteered in hospitality for Westercon 55 in 2002, and attended and volunteered in public relations for Westercon 47 in 1994. In 2004, he received the Evans-Freehafer Award retroactively.

"LASFS members at last week's meeting shared stories about Mason's cooking and time as librarian; a secret handshake shared with Matt Mitchell, who was often mistaken as his brother; and an appreciation for Christmas concerts in Vienna."

Comments on LASFAPA #562

In our official organ, *Wurlitzer*, Little Sin God David Schlosser called attention to the fabric art of Liz Copeland. Thank you for providing a URL!

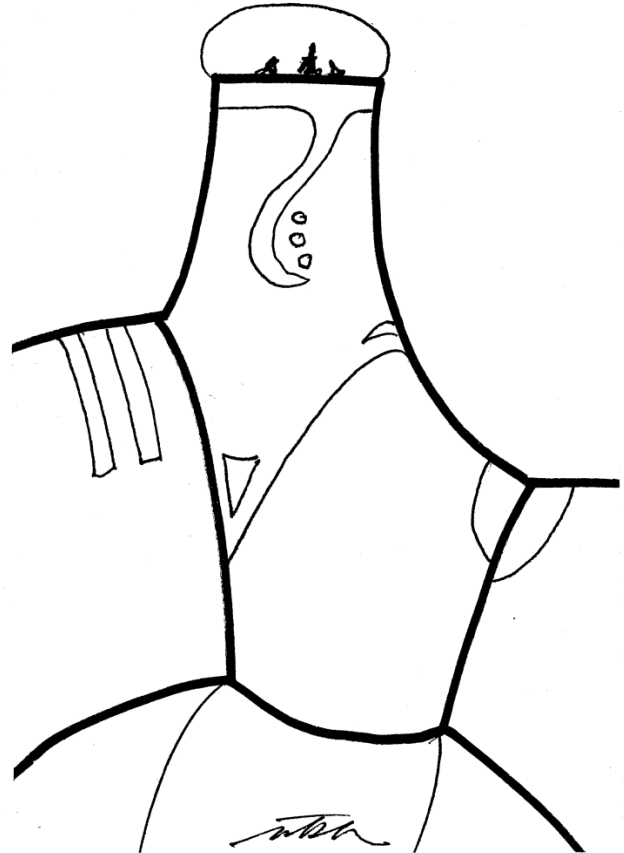
Schlosser's Fool's Mate #565 updated

LASFAPAns on his successful smuggling of the reams of paper home after the handoff from Alan Winston, who is now officially an apamule. Despite our travels to and from Portugal, via Madrid, and not masking most of the time we were there—though masking in the airports and on the plane—neither Caitlin nor I have gotten ill since our return. It's so good to be home. I'm sleeping a little better than my wife is, and I'm appreciating the slightly earlier wakeup time afforded by crossing those time zones. This morning, for example, I watched an episode of the first season of *Doctor Who* before starting my work day. Perhaps that'll stick!

From what I understand from Nick Smith, the LASFS doesn't have storage room for any more fanzines or apae collations. I don't have official word from the board not to provide such in the future, but I know we can't accommodate them in storage now. Perhaps when we have a clubhouse again. I can certainly store them for such a time, but not indefinitely. Just so we don't assume the club won't take them in the future—easy enough to say, I suppose—I'll ask the board directly for consideration so we can plan appropriately.

Thank you for explaining to me who Liz Copeland and Kay McCutcheon are—and where their artwork

comes from. I'd been presuming some of it was SFPazine covers, but not so! Such minutiae is seemingly important to me. What club are you active in locally? I know about the Bay Area Science Fiction Association up that way, but... ooh! There's a Science Fiction Club of Humboldt? Is that the one? I was unaware of it! If that is the one, does the club have a newsletter or clubzine? If so, I'd like to exchange *De Profundis* on an ongoing basis. I already send it to you, so perhaps you've been sharing it.

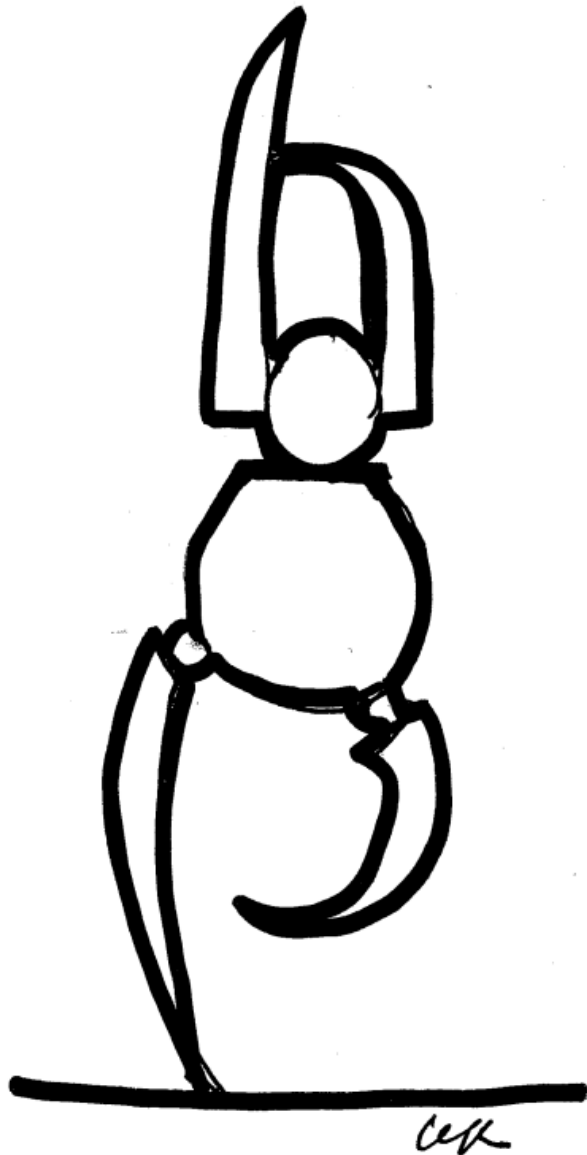


—William Rotsler

The Creator sounds interesting, and I think I've seen the trailer, when I thought the same. Larry Niven comments briefly on the movie in the forthcoming issue of *De Prof*, which I hope to finish this weekend. While I don't know a lot about the current situation in Israel, the attacks by Hamas brought sorrow, and I appreciated your commentary and thoughts. I've also been saddened by the positions taken by some leftist activists, criticizing Israel after the attacks. I'll have to reread your further explication.

Nick Smith returns with *Labyrinthine Lines*, which is indeed welcome. Your opening could have been an older poem; I was delighted when I realized it was Alan Moore. So it flabbergasted me when your Natter remarks that he merely, hardly, barely detoured or

paraphrased—or altered—an... older poem. Your recognition of the death of Carolly Hauksdottir was more expansive than the remarks made at the LASFS meeting, and I found it moving.



—William Rotsler

It amused me that you commented on the same meeting at which Niven talked about *The Creator* (see above). Your perspective that the movie combines multiple little stories is intriguing. Would you compare it to the way 2001's *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* drew on Brian Aldiss's "Supertoys Last All Summer Long" for its first act? Again, a movie incorporating multiple stories. I remember reviewers at the time saying that *A.I.* also didn't make sense, but I enjoyed it.

Have you learned any more about *Alien Apocalypse*? I'm curious about its back story—why

such a small theater? Why no listing? Perhaps it was a major market screening to qualify for award consideration? Based on your description, a Saturn Awards screening might have sufficed. I also appreciated your discussion of *The Killer* and the graphic novel that preceded it.

Your storytelling activities sound commendable and worthwhile. Your mention of the Folk Music Center in Claremont made me think you might appreciate Howard Fishman's book *To Anyone Who Ever Asks: The Life, Music, and Mystery of Connie Converse*, which my wife recently reviewed in *Ugly Things* magazine. (#64, <https://ugly-things.com>) Mythcon and "What Can You Do with a Drunken Hobbit?" are both mentioned in *File 770 #78*, available at <https://fanac.org/fanzines/File770/File77078.pdf>.

In *That Flagon Last Night* #253, **Alva Svoboda** reported getting ill upon his return from Arizona. I hope you and Jenny heal fully and quickly. Given my comments above about our travel, the closest I come to a medical appointment in the near future is going to the eye doctor tomorrow for my annual exam. I haven't updated my glasses, computer glasses, or sunglasses for the last couple of years, but last year we got our son a couple of pairs to take to college with him. We'll see how my vision is tomorrow.

You commented that John Scalzi's *Starter Villain* (I'm guessing) seemed to be written for screen adaptation. I thought somewhat the same about *The Kaiju Preservation Society*. (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #13) I'm not one to begrudge writers movie or television adaptation money, but I think that books or comic books written to be adapted read differently, somehow. They're less of what they might have been if their initial form were their intended form.

And **Alan Winston's** *Now We Are Sixty-Four* informed readers of interactions between ADHD medications and multivitamins, specifically vitamin C. I hope the adjustments you made work well. I enjoyed the phrase "sacrificed danceability for musical interestingness." Is there a good introductory recording for listeners to experience some of the music you dance to?

Congratulations on your initiation in the Odd Fellows. A friend of mine, Laurence Roberts, was an Odd Fellow in San Francisco, I think. Your reason for joining made me chuckle—a good angle to work!—but I hope you find meaning, fun, and connection in the organization, as well. I "really enjoyed our hang," too. Until the next one... or next month, I guess...

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #94

Dec. 14, 2023

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Last Week's Senryu

Better 2 p.m.

than 10 p.m. for deadlines.

The sun just setting.

It was good to get back to the weekly apa routine late last week. I went to the post office Friday morning to mail the flats—our first time in a month—and bought some stamps. They didn't have any additional ounce stamps, so I ordered some online to get organized.

Natter: The APA-L Archives

Inspired by an email exchange with Roger Hill, in which he sought the dates of—and perhaps copies of—APA-L #2987-2988, I spent some time organizing back issues to set aside for donation to the LASFS archives in the future, if the club is interested. I also set aside duplicate issues for giveaway at future cons. I was sorry not to be able to have copies on hand to offer John Hertz and Krystal Rains for the Fanzine Corner. And, I found the issues in question for Hill. He's writing a computer program that converts APA-L numbers and their dates.

As I did that organizing, it struck me that we don't have a complete set of scans. There were no PDFs of #2987-2988 to send Hill. I've now assessed where Karl Lembke's scanning ended and mine as OC began. The good news is that there's not much of a gap: #2971-2988, all in 2022. The better news is that I was easily able to locate them in the issues set aside for the LASFS.

Over the weeks to come, I'll scan the issues in the unscanned gap, applying optical character recognition so the resulting PDFs are more easily searched. Then, we'll have the entire run of APA-L dating back to 1964 scanned.

Thank you, Roger, for inspiring that effort!

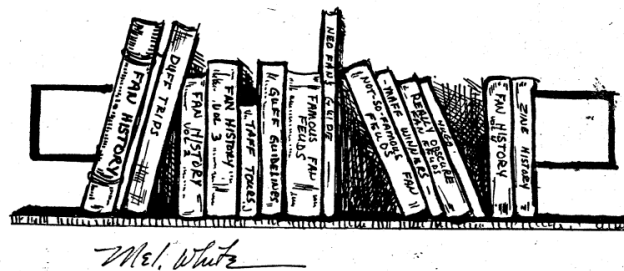
Natter: The Scribbling of a Scribe

In recent days, I've distributed *De Profundis* #592 (December 2023) and the October and November issues of *Menace of the LASFS*. I've finished editing

but haven't yet proofread the December *Menace* but should finish that by the end of the week. Then I'll be all caught up!

If you didn't receive *De Prof* or *Menace* via email—and you would like to—let me know, and I'll add you to the distribution lists.

Given my focus this week on *De Prof* and catching up on *Menace*, it'll be a shorter ish for me this week.



From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

Talk Like a Man by Nisi Shawl (PM Press, 2019)

This was part of a Radical SF StoryBundle (<https://storybundle.com>) that included 12 different sf works focusing on radical politics—or by radical authors. This book, part of PM Press' Outspoken Authors series, features the work of Nisi Shawl, who's won the Tiptree Award and been nominated for the Nebula and World Fantasy Award.

The volume, which I read as an ebook, includes four stories, an essay, an interview by Terry Bisson, a bibliography, and a profile of the author. The stories selected were previously published in *Bahamut*, *GUD*, her collection *Something More and More*, the anthology *An Alphabet of Embers*, and the journal *Extrapolation*.

This was my introduction to Shawl, and her writing focuses on youth culture and dance, psychedelic drugs, gender fluidity and lust, the magic inherent in dolls, the service elements and power dynamics of prostitution, music and death, and healthcare. While there are elements of sf in the stories, I'd largely consider them fantasy, and darn good fantasy. Shawl's writing about music and dance indicated she's had long-standing experience with both.

Her essay, "Ifa: Reverence, Science, and Social Technology," (based on a 2010 speech given at Duke University) explores the role of religion and spirituality—specifically that of the West African religion Ifa—in science fiction. And Bisson's interview with Shawl further examines the themes and topics in her writing.

Based on this book alone, I will seek out other writing by Shawl. She's thoughtful, thought provoking, and a very, very good writer.

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle (Square Fish, 2007)

Similar to my comments on L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz in Faculae & Filigree* #26, I've also never read Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, one of John Hertz's Classics of SF selections for the recent Loscon. Originally published in 1962, the book is more recent than I'd expected. I've been aware of it for my entire life.

Despite the book's presence and arguable influence, I enjoyed it, but not overly so. I appreciated that the protagonist was a young woman; that the story explored her relationship with a young man, her younger brother, and her father; and the story's theme of the power of love. I also enjoyed the triumvirate of Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which—and their interactions with Meg and Charles Wallace, as well as the alien characters Aunt Beast and the Happy Medium on the planet in Orion's Belt.

But the narrative never fully engaged me, and I felt somewhat disant as a reader. I'm sure I would've enjoyed it more if I'd read it when I was younger. The sibling and parent-child relationships, alienation at school, and first love aspects would have resonated strongly. And the theme of the dangers of conformity on Camazotz would have offered early caution, highlighting the importance of independent thought and action.

For as long as I've been aware of this book, I've considered L'Engle to be similar to C.S. Lewis, of whom I've also read perilously little. That, too, shall soon be amended.

Comments on APA-L #3048

In *Leeway* dated for Dec. 7, 2023, **Lee Gold** expressed her dismay about the stealing of parts from Barbara Gratz Harmon's car. I would guess that she'd parked in the above-ground parking area, but now I'm curious where she'd parked, too! I'm glad you missed not going to Loscon even though you'd decided not to. I missed being there, too, and enjoyed seeing members' social media posts.

I hope your new computer gradually transitions to working perfectly. I now have a replacement laptop for work but have yet to expense or return the Chromebook I bought overseas. And I've been holding off on OS updates on my personal laptop since returning home. I am so glad that Barry recovered from his heart attack 40 years ago!

Matthew Mitchell's *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #36 told ellers about the Red House in Tehachapi. The dessert at Tehacha-PIE sounds even better. Eateries to look for on my next road trip up that way! My wife recently made a loaf of cinnamon raisin

bread. I would have welcomed some apple butter!

Your update on the first two *Doctor Who* anniversary spells was welcome. I look forward to the DVDs. I, too, have been watching older episodes of *Doctor Who* on Tubi. I recently watched the seven-part "The Daleks," the second serial. Once I finish reading the novelization and a short story credited as an inspiration, I'll share my thoughts. You were, right, though: What Tubi says is the first episode is not the first episode!

I look forward to seeing you at Gallifrey One in February. I confirmed with Eylat Poliner that I'll be able to volunteer in Hospitality again this year, so if you don't see me wandering the Dealers Room thumbing through magazine boxes or in a back row of the Screening Room, look for me in the Staff Lounge. What panels did you sign up for?



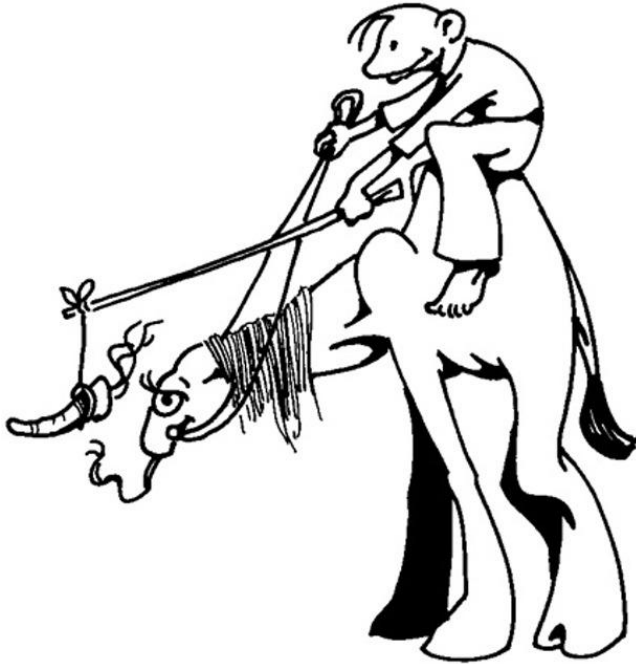
—William Rotsler

Aw, shucks. I'm phenomenal! Thanks for the kind words. I hope I remain phenomenal at home, too. Back when I regularly attended the San Diego Comic-Con to help staff the Highwater Books table, we would cram so many comics artists, self-publishers, and screen printers into a single hotel room that it astounds me to this day. Usually tabling near *Giant Robot* magazine, sharing a table with the Fort Thunder collective, and ping-ponging between there and Fantagraphics Books, we had a high old time. Dive bars; peanut butter, bread, apples, and water from a nearby Big Lots; and pizza boxes stored under the beds for the next day. I'm not sure I could do that again now, but perhaps!

In *Always Going Home* #43, **C.D. Carson**

informed others of his recent approach to APA-L contributions: cover, comments, conrep. Word heard, good sir! What do you consider the oldest and best-known beignet shop in New Orleans? I shall make note of your novel and short story mentions. I hope your neurologist appointment goes well. The end of your fanzine was poignant: "America ... loves winners, but needs losers."

preferences or priorities, I'd be sure to communicate them to Eylat Poliner. Dec. 28, there's a staff gathering to discuss what's been working well and what could work better.



—Alan White

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Barbara Gratz Harmon's *Reflections from a Fish Bowl* #64 shared her sense of violation. I hope that the various reports end soon, and that the situation resolves so you can feel more comfortable again. Thank you for describing your hall costume: Our own Black Widow! It's neat that Nola Frame-Gray drew a cartoon while at Loscon. I hope she submitted something to the conzine, as well!

And in *Toony Loons* #740, **Joe Zeff** reminded me of Pearl Harbor Day, which I wouldn't have recognized otherwise. Thank you, sir. Your podiatrist update reminded me that when I lace my shoes too tightly, the tops of my feet hurt, too, especially on airplanes. Now I try to remember to loosen my laces while on planes, as well as to wear compression socks, which can help.

While I've moved to using shaving soap in a mug and a badger shave brush, straight razors unnerve me. I look forward to reading about your experiences. In the Loscon Staff group on Facebook, there's been some talk recently of bringing back aspects of the con that have fallen by the wayside. If you have

Owing a debt to Howlett's previous book, *The Worst of Eerie Publications* for Yoe Books, the resulting book is a DayGlo exhibition catalog of horror and gore. Artwork by Burgos, Bob Powell, Chic Stone, Bill Alexander, Johnny Bruck, Fernando Fernandez, and others abounds, as Fass and Burgos sought ever-cheaper sources of artwork.

Of special interest is the work by Bruck, taken from material previously used on the covers of the *Perry Rhodan*, *der Erbe des Universums* serial novellas between the years 1962-1969. Such artwork adorned titles such as *Tales of Voodoo*, *Strange Galaxy* (a rare sf title, though the innards weren't consistently sf), *Tales from the Tomb*, *Weird*, *Weird Worlds* (another sf title), *Witches' Tales*, *Horror Tales*, and *Terror Tales*—regardless of whether the cover image was addressed inside.



—Clark Dissmeyer

While the covers are a glorious curiosity, reading this book made me want to read the actual magazines—and perhaps *Perry Rhodan* itself. Checking out *Strange Galaxy* #8 (the first issue, in 1971), readers are treated to innards including reprints

from Stanley Morse's 1953 *Weird Tales of the Future*, Fiction House's 1953 *Planet Comics*, Avon's 1952 *Strange Worlds*, and Story Comics' 1953 *Mysterious Adventures*. It might not all be sf, but it's all fine stuff.

You might not be able to judge a book—or a magazine—by its covers, but they can certainly serve as useful sign posts.

From the Reading Pile: Short Stories

I recently read the October 1972 issue of *Thrilling Science Fiction*, “a new collection of great sf stories” according to a cover line. Featuring no non-story editorial matter and a single science fact piece on space stations that I haven't read yet, the magazine doesn't even credit its editorial staff. Regardless, the stories are quite good.

Robert F. Young's “The Honeyeaters” was reprinted from the August 1964 *Amazing Stories*. A subtle and loving May-September romance, the story focuses on corporate malfeasance, mining for ice in the orbit of Saturn, and a pleasure dome resort. There's an anti-grav vest, arachnid guns, and spaceflight, which provides the resolution to part of the tale. This story was very well written, and I look forward to reading more by Young.

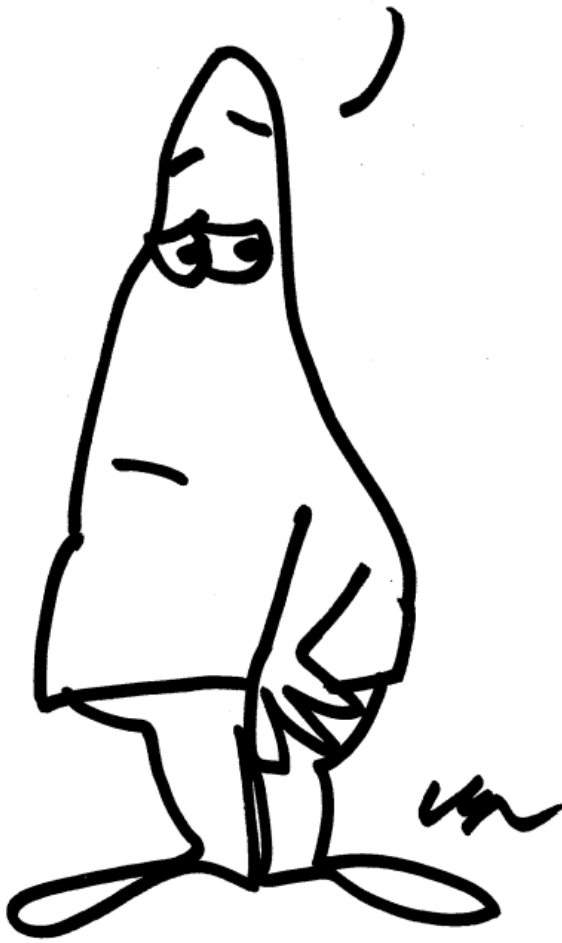
“Placement Test” by Keith Laumer initially appeared in the July 1964 *Amazing Stories*. It's a workplace drama, narrating the aftermath of a learned young scholar being “quota'd out” of the opportunity to test for a role in his chosen field. In the end, the steps he took were just what his chosen employers were looking for. Another excellent short story.

Roger Zelazny's “The Furies” (*Amazing Stories*, June 1965) teams up “a mind-picker, an interstellar policeman, a galactic geographic genius” to track down a criminal “with a metal heart.” It's a very fun chase story, and the geographic genius's ability to identify locations based on scant landmarks was fascinating. The character development of the criminal—and his relationship with a former crew member—was very well done. That the title gave away what might have been a revelation at the end was unfortunate but not overly detrimental.

And “After a Judgment Day” by Edmond Hamilton first appeared in the December 1963 *Fantastic Stories of Imagination*. The Earth uninhabitable, the remnants of humankind are on the moon. They decide to send Charlies, cybernetic organisms, to the far reaches of space carrying information about the human race before they return home.

This is an awesome selection of stories, some more widely reprinted than others. And the cover line is worth returning to. It's a “new collection” of “great ... stories”—not new stories. Sometimes, that's enough.

WHATEVER
HAPPENED TO
MINE?



—William Rotsler

From the Reading Pile: Comix Reviews

Anywhere Man Books 1-2

Rob Cooley's 16-page digest-sized self-published superhero comics appears to shine light on various aspects of an interconnected universe of heroes. This 2023 series focuses on Anywhere Man, who seems to be drawn to evil in order to vanquish it.

The character designs remind me of Erik Larsen's Savage Dragon somewhat, and the hero is reportedly inspired by the work of Jack Kirby, perhaps Captain Victory in particular. Cooley's also a fan of John Byrne, and knowing those influences, I could detect

both in his artwork—it's a pleasant blending!

I particularly enjoyed the scenes in Book One in which Anywhere Man found himself in a dimension similar to those drawn by Ditko. The issue ends posing that there's a religious or spiritual undertone to the hero: "They think of me as savior... but I am not a savior," Cooley writes. "I am but a small vessel used by the savior to deliver them from their oppressor... It is his glory... not mine."

Book Two offers a flashback that Anywhere Man recognizes as some sort of psychic attack—a mind terror courtesy of Mindscare. The villain is vanquished but pledges to return. Cooley's artwork in the second issue is slightly more simple and less detailed. Available for \$2 an issue from Rob Cooley, 7128 Munsee Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46260; cooleytoon@gmail.com.

Hologram Chapters 1-9

Though each issue is deceptively diminutive—minicomics mostly eight pages long (Chapter 7 is 16 pages)—this is one of the most compelling continuing minicomics series I've ever read. At first blush, Tom Fellrath's story seems similar to that of Peter Pan Records' 1978 *The Amazing Adventures of Holo-Man*, but the concept is where the parallels end. Instead, what we have is a surprisingly personal and intuitive take on the heroic disembodiment of man, and the price of super science.

Each panel and page is dated, counting down to the now in which the narrator is telling his tale, but the story isn't always told sequentially. That can lead to some interesting intertextual references across issues in which a pivotal moment is referred or returned to again—making it worthwhile to read the 2021-2023 series in one sitting.

Another aspect that struck me was the way in which the heroic moments, the scientific revelations, and the everyday occurrences are considered equally, with similar tone and presence. The overarching sense isn't one of adventure or superheroism—though there is that—but of sadness and loss as the titular Hologram continues to distance from his former lover or partner Maggie.

The issues featuring art by William Henry Cadell are particularly interesting visually. His semi-realistic drawing style, suggesting the outlining of photographic references, works well for the super-science angle. His portrayal of the hero reminds me of John Constantine and his trenchcoat (more likely a lab coat), or a man in a bathrobe.

Chapters 7-8 utilize Midjourney generative AI, and I found the results much less compelling. I'd rather Fellrath take on the art himself, as he does in Chapter

9. Though using Midjourney seems to enable Fellrath to increase the page count and perhaps accelerate the narrative, the AI doesn't add a lot, and Cadell's work is more impressive.

Available for \$0.50 a piece (\$1 for Chapter 7) from Tom Fellrath, Phoenix Productions, 8031 Griswold Drive, New Albany, OH 43054; <https://phoenixprods.wordpress.com>.

Horseman #5

This full-color, 40-page comic book published by Larry Johnson this fall is a wonder to behold. The titular character of these wordless comics dates back to 2016 and has appeared in more than 300 drawings since then. Some of those appear in this issue's main feature, "Light."

The wordless comics bring to mind several creators, none of whose work necessarily looks like Johnson's art. There's a dose of Jim Woodring's surreal linear narrative comics featuring Frank. The projector-headed characters remind me of Hans Rickheit somehow. The recurring winged eyeball made me nostalgic for *S.A. King's Naked Eye*. Reading the comic made me feel like I do when I read the work of Pam Bliss. And when looking for logic in the dream-like tale, I found myself seeking rules and processes like those in Larry Marder's *Tales of the Beanworld*. Definitely good company to keep, even if I'd hesitate to suggest they're influences.

What we have, then, is a surreal linear story—a fantasy—that would be dreamlike with any other protagonist. Horseman is abducted by aliens near some lighthouses before escaping into the air and then the sea, where he encounters bioluminescent fish and other creatures that share features with the previous aliens. He emerges from the water to enter a graveyard, where he meets a wraith-like form that raises the dead—soon to don their own projector heads.

Horseman absorbs the materials of a tomb in which he seeks shelter, contributing what might be the most visually stunning portion of the comic. The dancing, then toppling golem of sorts emits a number of coffins, which release spirits seeking to return to a projector-headed centaur. Those spirits reveal themselves to be little horsemen, who combine, shades of Shiva, to confront the original Horseman. He eventually returns to the lighthouses.

Beautifully serene and nonsensical, it's a wonderful read that doesn't require any rules or processes. In the end circular—or cyclical—rather than linear, the comic is also notable for Johnson's use of recurring imagery: salamanders, vertebrae-like organic shapes, Jupiter, the projector or boiling flask-like shapes,

winged eyeballs, and other motifs. There's also a lot of light throughout the comic, from lighthouses to lightning bugs.

Johnson ends the issue with a three-page lettercol, "Horseman Comments" and a 2017 oil painting. I don't profess to know what this is, but I like it. Available for \$6 postpaid from Larry Johnson, 31 Greenbrook Road, Hyde Park, MA 02136; LewBrown1@verizon.net; <https://sites.google.com/view/larryjohnsoncomics>.



—William Rotsler

The Improbable Girl and the Wonder Kitty #8

How Joe Ely Carrales III got Don Simpson to contribute not just one cover, but three, to recent issues of his comic book series (#7-9), I do not know. But they make for an excellent adornment to Carrales's work. I joined the United Fanzine Organization just in time to receive the second instance, part two of "The Druid's Secret."

The storyline is based on work Carrales originally did in 1987, long lost and documented only in a fanzine. After a somewhat lengthy introduction, the full-color comic kicks off. Given that I'm dropping in midway through a three-issue story arc of a longer

series, getting oriented was somewhat challenging—even with the introductory comments.

Our two heroes—whose superpowers rarely come into play—are working with the military, and Duke Daniel has suffered facial disfigurement and now has an “iron claw” for a hand. The Druid arrives at Organization ORKO’s headquarters in the Mediterranean, hypnotizing its leadership.

At *The Lion Gazette*, our superheroines attempt to understand visions seen by Mari Solinski (the Improbable Girl); her drawings suggest the Idrissa Stone and other artifacts key to finding “the Six.” The Druid addresses the United Nations, and Brian Amstadter’s Chief Coffee Cup makes a cameo appearance before the destruction of the port of Stenfine is discovered.

A Catholic leader shows up, and an ankh causes Solinski to channel Aristria, who shares the Druid’s back story. That dates back to Egyptian times.

There’s a lot going on—a lot—and the densely packed and darkly colored pages include a good amount of narrative text and dialogue. Some of the artwork seems computer generated—character’s faces seem to be reused multiple times—but there’s enough of interest here to dive right in.

In the back matter, “The New People’s Journal,” Carrales features news, reader feedback, and commentary. Some remarks indicate that the title is a slow burn. “Wait and see,” he writes. Similar to *Hologram* (above), the creator is exploring the process of becoming a superhero, and its impact. The issue ends with a two-page profile of Ken Bailey, creator of *The Mighty EnergyGirl*.

Available for \$10 from Carrales Studios Productions, P.O. Box 1274, Premont, TX 78375; marisolinskikitty@gmail.com.

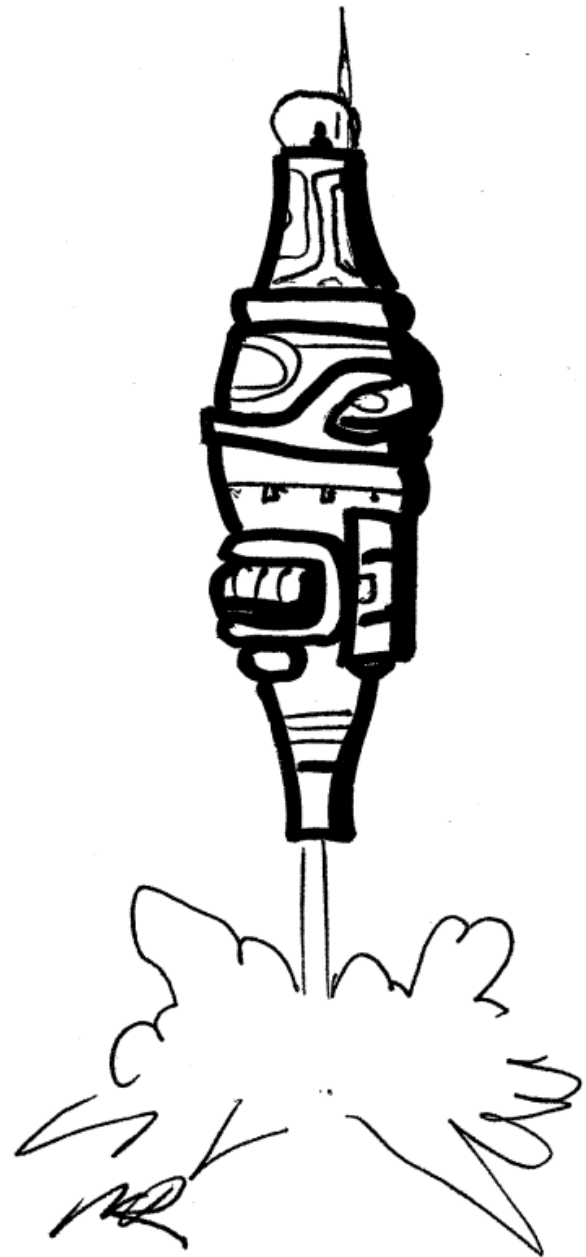
Smorgasbord #1

Larry Main’s new anthology comic is intended as a humor publication, but this 24-page December 2023 edition offers a healthy dose of the fantastic and science fictional. Floydman Sumner’s BEM-driven cover design is a delight, and Jack Bertram’s five-page “I Am a Spaceman” story also surprises. Drawn earlier this year and inspired by Basil Wolverton’s sf work (perhaps *Spacehawk*), the silly sf joke explores the idea that the moon is made out of cheese about as far as one can. And then some.

The lyrically loopy Kel Crum offers a couple of pages, and Alan Groening’s gag panels offer several examples of genre fare: vampires, a self-repairing robot, and a mad scientist. John Lambert’s and Larned Justin’s gags also touch on genre topics and themes—including a wonderful homage to *Cracked* magazine’s

Ye Hang-Ups.

But the best piece in the issue might be Simon Mackie’s mundane “When Anki Met the Beatles,” a semi-autobiographical story that details a remembered encounter between a Swedish au pair and the fab four. Available for \$2.99 (\$3.50 postpaid) from Main Enterprises, 130 Wellsville Ave., New Milford, CT 06776; mainjim23@gmail.com.



—William Rotsler

Stinger Ops #3-4

Given the recent issue numbering, this seems to be Rob Cooley’s primary title, and the nucleus of what

might be an interconnected superheroic universe. The 16-20 page black-and-white digest issues feature a law enforcement agency on the planet—or in the city—of Nineveh 7.

A singular hero stymied by the assassin duo of Shadow/Machines and frustrated by law man Cephas Stone. He arranges a trade of one of the assassins for his partner, initially thought to be dead, and learns the identity of his true enemies, who hired Shadow/Machines. Meanwhile, in the Himalayan sector, the Black Bug Society is selecting its newest supervillain, S'kayah Spinner.

In #3, readers meet Z'oni Moon, a Skrull-like businessman and beneficiary from his father's nepotism. Moon is a childhood friend of our hero Bubbles McFarland. McFarland goes up against a rampaging robot, revealed to be piloted by the son of a councilman. And Moon departs to help his friend.

I occasionally find Cooley's artwork to be a little jumbled, reminding me of the work of Jim Mahfood or David Choe—at least their more hip hop-influenced stylings. And I'd love to see more futuristic cityscapes, landscapes, and technology; Nineveh 7 has a lot to offer, and Cooley's view is relatively close. Pulling back more often would be welcome.

The issue ends with a house ad for *Machine Rager*, another Cooley title. Available for \$2 an issue from Rob Cooley, 7128 Munsee Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46260; cooleytoon@gmail.com.

Tales of the Broken B #4

Larry Johnson's 36-page full-color comic book is a western, but based on this Summer 2023 issue—and letters of comment in response to previous issues—it might very well be an sf western. A previous issue featured a mad scientist and mechanical men, and this edition focuses on a cave in which a Tyrannosaurus rex was encased in ice.

The comic book, perhaps inspired by adventure and western serials, concentrates on the staff of the Broken B ranch, which includes several different characters. They try to determine what's been killing their livestock while hosting a visiting German paleontologist who's interested in dinosaur bones.

Utilizing artwork that's less surreal and peppered with symbols than *Horseman* above, Johnson alternates between character development and dialogue, investigation, comedic distraction, and... a thawed-out T. rex, rampaging. Though Johnson's dinosaur is cartoony, it's effective, particularly the panels among the livestock, in flames—and the humorous denouement after the dinosaur falls.

Also worth mentioning are Johnson's examples of western scenery. Despite the generally cartoony fare,

his buttes and cacti are delightfully detailed, and Johnson would benefit from pulling back a little artistically, too, to offer a wider view more frequently.

The issue ends with a two-page reprint from an 1893 issue of *Every Saturday* (Watch out for women who went to Wellesley!) and a letter column. Readers who play serials- or western-inspired roleplaying games such as *Daredevils* or *Deadlands* might find this comic to be a useful source of ideas.

Available for \$6 postpaid from Larry Johnson, 31 Greenbrook Road, Hyde Park, MA 02136; LewBrown1@verizon.net; <https://sites.google.com/view/larryjohnsoncomics>.

Who Is... The Anomaly? Book One

This 2023 two-issue mini series by Rob Cooley introduces yet another hero, the Anomaly. Is he the hero? The villain? In this 12-page digest, it's unclear, but it's apparent that the narrator, wearing an "Invincible Suit," is hard pressed to defeat him. The issue includes a couple of character studies of Bandit Files and the Beast. Available for \$2 from Rob Cooley, 7128 Munsee Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46260; cooleytoon@gmail.com.



—William Rotsler

Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

Escape from New York

Inspired by reading Claude Gaillard's *After the World Ends* (see above), I watched the 1981 *Escape from New York* for the first time (I know!) this weekend while doing laundry. Co-written, co-scored, and directed by John Carpenter, the legendary movie features a cast including Adrienne Barbeau, Ernest Borgnine, Isaac Hayes, Donald Pleasence, Kurt Russell, Harry Dean Stanton, and Lee Van Cleef.

Set in the year 1997, the island of Manhattan is a high-security prison. After Air Force One crashes on the island, the president—portrayed by Pleasence—is taken prisoner by the Duke, erstwhile leader of Manhattan. (In Gaillard's parlance, the warlord of the film.) Russell's character, Snake Plissken (the lone wolf) is sent in to rescue the president. Adventure ensues.

While the movie is largely social science fiction (perhaps borderline cli-fi given the role played by fossil fuels), there are some technological innovations, including an injection of micro-explosives that can only be neutralized using X-rays or ultraviolet light, if I remember correctly, and various tracking devices.

It's not a bad movie—it's pretty darn good given Carpenter and the cast—but my expectation of what the movie was, even without having seen it previously, was pretty accurate. I'm glad I saw it, but if you haven't seen this yet, there's plenty of other outre cinema to explore.

The Wraith

Taking cues given by the Fawesome Sci-Fi channel on Roku, on which I watched *Escape from New York* (see above), I also watched *The Wraith*, a 1986 teen fantasy featuring Nick Cassavetes, Sherilyn Fenn, Clint Howard, Randy Quaid, and Charlie Sheen.

Reminding me of *Tremors* (because of the rural community), *American Graffiti* (because of the drive-in), and perhaps *Christine* (because of the role supernatural vehicles play), the flick is basically a vehicular revenge film. A teenager killed by the bully portrayed by Cassavetes returns from the dead to exact revenge on the people involved that night.

Cassavetes is surly and menacing, Quaid not too convincing as a police officer, and Howard delightfully bonkers, largely when counting down for the drag races. "If you lose, you lose your car. Agreed?"

Fenn is plummy and sultry, and it's surprising that neither she nor the brother of the boy returned from the dead recognizes him in Sheen's character. Every revenge death occurs pretty much the same way, except for, well, two: drag race, ghostly car blocking

the road, and a crash—before the car reappears.

The movie is good for folding laundry, but not much else. Regardless, a fun diversion!

Comments on APA-L #3049

In *Vanamonde* #1571, John Hertz comments on APA-L #3045. That your fanzine begins with a reference to Democritus delights me. Then we move on to European patent law and Donald Duck comic books. We're in good company here! Your remark that William Shakespeare's plays "weren't composed for timelessness" reminds me of old-time radio shows being lost and the BBC taping over *Doctor Who* serials. Or the ephemeral nature of fanzines, pulp magazines, and comic books. Even the planned obsolescence of storage media—floppy diskettes to ZIP drives to various adaptors—comes to mind. Our media output are important cultural artifacts, and we often don't think to preserve them until it's too late.

I'll share your cover art feedback with Tiffanie Gray. I recently fell out of the habit of doing this programmatically and shall resolve to return to the practice! I don't think a siesta is common practice in Portugal, though many businesses and offices do take a formal lunch hour, closing for that time period. Given the clarified entries for the horse race, if there is one, I might be even less certain. H.G. Wells's *The Invisible Man* (with the Universal movie) better known than Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* (with its presence among youth literature and movie) or Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* (with the TV show)? That's one to ponder. Another question might be whether knowledge of a media adaptation translates to knowledge of the original work. I know, I know... not your horse race.

Lee Gold's *Leeway* dated for Dec. 14, 2023, updated ellers on her new PC. I, too, hope you're able to resume printing *A&E* and *Xenofilkia* soon. A belated chag urim sameach to you and yours. I shall share your feedback with cover artist Taral Wayne. Who's Mitchell Marmel? While our eller is certainly Matthew Mitchell, it struck me that it might be fun to ghostwrite another's fanzine, perhaps for the distribution closest to April 1. What would *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* be like if this... Mitchell Marmel wrote it? I shudder to think what fun someone might poke at *T&T* in my stead.

Your story about biting your dentist's hand made me chuckle. Whether one should seek permission from an author if using a quote in another text is a good question. A cursory review of guidance suggests that permission might not be required for "short" quotes—but what determines whether a quote is short? Applying commentary or satire in the text better

approaches what might be deemed fair use. Regardless, citing the source is recommended, but I wonder whether merely naming the source, if a person's quote opening a chapter, is sufficient. I'll have to refer back to my own *Communicating Ideas*. I know I at least named the people quoted, but I don't think I offered a more detailed citation or sought permission. Harrumph.

In *Always Going Home* #44, **C.D. Carson** offers us a conrep on Loscon 49. What a glorious narrative! Even the detailed train travel leading up to your arrival was interesting. Your mention of Charles Lee Jackson III made me grin. Perhaps he's a friend of Mitchell Marmel. I actually found at least two other references to such a person in APA-L in the archives. APA-L #1642 (Oct. 31, 1996) includes an issue of *Science Fiction Fan Amature Magazine* by Timothy P. Merrigan that asks, "Is Emperor Charles A. Jackson III any relation to Emperor Charles Lee Jackson II?" And Nola Frame-Gray's *Wonderlust* in APA-L #2251 (July 3, 2008) wishes a happy birthday to Charles Lee Jackson III. I think Charlie might be amused, too. Don't worry, I'm not really poking fun at you—or Lee, above. That's two more issues OCR'd for better searching!

I'm glad you saw so many ellers, though I'm sorry that some of your display items were pilfered. I enjoyed your train travel commentary on the return trip, as well. I also enjoyed the quote from Robert Southey's *The Doctor*.

Matthew Mitchell's *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #37 updated ellers on holiday workload at the office. This week has been slow for me, except when it hasn't been. With budgets not yet being announced, it's difficult to negotiate contract renewals, and with budget cuts expected, it's an exercise in cutting—but not so much that the work is meaningless.

While I am resolved to not pay for Disney+, I am jealous of your viewings of the recent *Doctor Who* specials and the introduction of Ncuti Gatwa as the new doctor. I shall satisfy myself with *Doctor Who* magazines, past episodes, novelizations, and at some point, perhaps DVDs. I'll share your feedback with cover artist Taral Wayne.

Jean-Paul Garnier returned with *Space Cowboy's Accretion* #3. What fun to be included in Weston Ochse's novel *Dead Sky*. I just ordered it for my Kindle. What temperatures do you experience in Joshua Tree during the winter? A cursory look at the weather online suggests you might get the rain Los Angeles is experiencing now on Friday—and that your lows are in the 40s, dipping to the 30s next week.

I'm sorry to hear you contracted COVID-19 during

your travels to Texas—but glad you were well enough to attend Loscon. I've been enjoying the photographs online (<http://tinyurl.com/Loscon2023Photos>) and look forward to seeing even more. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is a very good book.

In *Toony Loons* #741, **Joe Zeff** informed us of recent snow—and ice—in Colorado. I, for one, appreciate reading about snow in southern California. We're going to Wisconsin for Christmas, and while snow isn't expected, rain is. We have rain here. We had rain in Portugal. Harrumph.

It is serendipitous indeed that you recently read E.M. Forster's "The Machine Stops." It reportedly inspired the second *Doctor Who* serial. I've watched "The Daleks," read David Whitaker's novelization—and plan to read "The Machine Stops" before reviewing the lot. I shall heed your recommendation!

And in *Vanamonde* #1572, **John Hertz** mentioned seeing a sign that read "Soon Hari." If they only knew! I enjoyed your remarks on Loscon and look forward to *Losconzine* #49. While I was saddened to miss the book discussions, I enjoyed reading Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* on my own. (*T&T* #94) Thank you for explaining why L. Sprague de Camp's Viagens Interplanetarias series might be important to Portuguese readers.



—William Rotsler

Emulators & Engines #10

Dec. 21, 2023

Emulators & Engines 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 *Alarums & Excursions* and select others. (It succeeds *Theoretically: Game* and *The Game Closet*.) A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.

Solo Game Report: *Desafios & Desgraçados, or Deeds & Doers*

After escaping from the headquarters of the thieves guild—the Velvet Blade (courtesy of <https://www.dndnames.com>)—with the organization’s membership records, defeating the Gargoyles outside, and returning to their place of lodging unwitnessed, the party was forced to hide out for nine days (one day per point of damage taken by the most injured character, by player as DM fiat) in order to recuperate.

Even though *Deeds & Doers* is rules light, I took the opportunity to focus on the party’s downtime, to flesh them out a little, and to detail their home community somewhat. I named the wizards’ books using <https://www.fantasynamengenerators.com>, selected their initial magic items using <https://donjon.bin.sh>, and identified the fighter’s weapons and armor using a discussion thread on <https://www.enworld.org> and armor using <https://www.worldanvil.com>.

I also gave some thought to how armor might work in the abstract approach to combat I’d contrived. It’ll be a damage sink, and the armor currently used by Edgar Medeiros will sink a single point of damage given its AC in another game. I’ll consider whether there’s a maximum amount of damage his armor can take before it needs to be replaced. And I returned to <https://www.kassoon.com> to generate the loot claimed in the labyrinth and elsewhere in the guild hall. (The party chose to sell a Saddle of the Cavalier in a nearby town, perhaps attracting undue attention as a future adventure hook.) Here’s what the party looks like now.

Carlos Noronha - Wizard 2

Str 9 / Dex 9 / Health 11 / Courage 11 / Learning 15 / Personality 7

Items: Spell Book: *Will of the Lost Ones*, Wand of Levitate (37/50 charges), copper coin

Injuries/Notes: Training in alchemy and herbs

Details: 30s, amber eyes, dyed hair, little person, stuffy, divorced, underweight

Spells: Illusion, enchanted sleep, “forbidden spell”

Treasure: 575cp, 232sp, 118gp, 50gp gem

Alicia “Talleesha” Hernandez - Thief 2

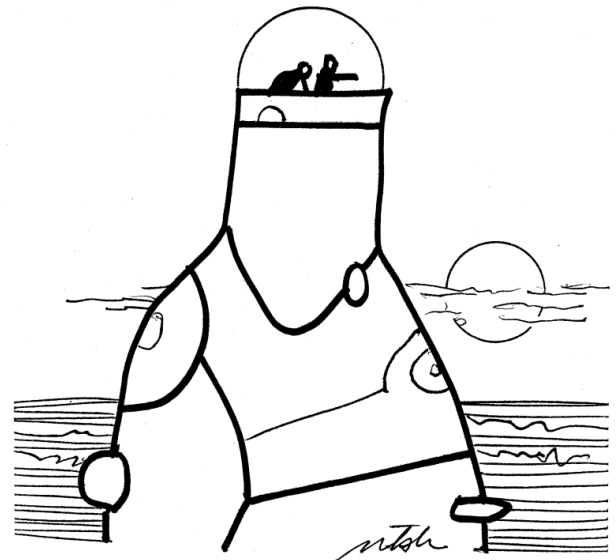
Str 8 / Dex 12 / Hlt 10 / Crg 13 / Lrn 8 / Prs 7

Items: Deadly poison, thieves tools, hidden blade, knife, Bag of Holding, Oil of Slipperiness

Injuries/Notes: Vanish in darkness, move in silence, see the hidden, scandalous past

Details: 50s, green eyes, brown hair, 6’2”, cynical, underweight

Treasure: 575cp, 232sp, 117gp, 50gp gem



—William Rotsler

Edgar Medeiros - Fighter 2

Str 11 / Dex 6 / Hlt 13 / Crg 13 / Lrn 10 / Prs 6

Items: Long bow and 20 arrows, quarterstaff, padded armor (-1 damage), old boots, Potion of Hill Giant Strength (Str 21)

Injuries/Notes: Training at arms, scars, murderous past
Details: 30s, green eyes, red hair, 5’11”, allergies, grim, overweight

Treasure: 575cp, 232sp, 117gp, 50gp gem

Gil Figueiredo - Wizard 2

Str 12 / Dex 11 / Hlt 11 / Crg 16 / Lrn 14 / Prs 10

Items: Spell Book: *Stranger of Dreams*, Wand of Summon Monster II (42/50 charges), worn clothes

Injuries/Notes: Training in alchemy and herbs

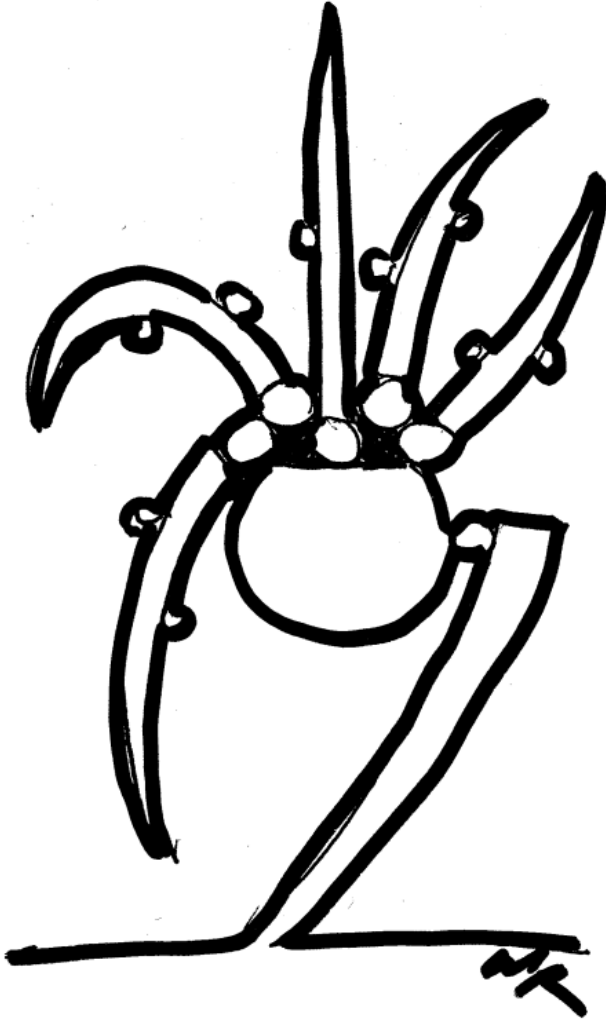
Details: Retired scholar, green eyes, dyed hair, 5’3”, loves books, lazy, divorced, athletic

Spells: Illusion, enchanted sleep, “forbidden spell”

Treasure: 575cp, 232sp, 118gp, 50gp gem

I deducted lodging costs from their funds (see below) and will figure out what the forbidden spells are, and how advancement works, in the future. *Deeds & Doers*’ guidance says “When a character, in their adventures, has reached a new level of experience,

increase their level. They may pick another item from their own list, or from any other.” For now, I decided that exacting revenge on the thieves guild was a milestone (perhaps a number of milestones per level... two for second, three for third, four for fourth, etc.), but not worth leveling up.



—William Rotsler

Now, where do they live? Where is their safehouse, home base, or lodging located? To flesh that out, I utilized Atelier Clandestin’s *Sandbox Generator*, which I found in my Google Drive searching for city generation tools. (<https://preview.drivethrurpg.com/en/product/430675/Sandbox-Generator>)

Candle Mill is a small city with a population of 1,000. The humid, open city with lots of stairs is fueled by two industries: farming crops (farms, fields) and metallurgy (forge, foundry). Given the size of the city, there are a couple each of blacksmiths, cemeteries, churches, general stores, libraries, markets, stables, and taverns operating. There’s also a construction site (of what, to be determined) and a

fighting pit.

Other buildings and locations of interest include a mausoleum, a law office, a two-bedroom apartment, the City Hall, stables, and a glassblower. Candle Mill is enclosed with stone walls and towers, with wooden doors and portcullis on the north and east. 50 guards protect the city, and there are enough supplies warehoused to last four months.

Notable NPCs include a haughty nobleman and a princess on the run. The noble makes decisions for Candle Mill. The citizenry’s disposition toward the party is neutral, but the ruler’s attitude is hostile.

Right now, a fire is raging in Candle Mill. That is where they live—and perhaps their next endeavor.

For the inn in which they’re staying, I turned to the revised edition of James Embry’s *City Builder*. (<https://preview.drivethrurpg.com/en/product/221872/City-Builder-Revised-Edition>) They’re living at the King’s Turtle, which is poor accommodations as they try to avoid the attention of the hostile nobleman and now the remainders of the thieves guild once the loss of its roster makes its impact felt. That costs each party member 2sp/day, per a subreddit guide to downtime at https://www.reddit.com/r/dndnext/comments/apblrv/nothing_to_do_a_guide_on_downtime.

I’ve also been giving thought to downtime, something I’ve neglected in most of my table and online play with others over the decades—but which I think might fulfill a fun function in solo play. So I’ve been researching various resources concentrating on downtime and am curious how you approach it, if at all. Does downtime play a role in your games?

One such resource, Courtney C. Campbell’s *On Downtime and Demesnes* (<https://preview.drivethrurpg.com/en/product/297830/On-Downtime-and-Demesnes-5th-Edition>) can immediately help personify the hostile noble. Once a supporter of the group, Sir Garfield Mortmont used to sponsor the party with goods, transport, and peasant laborers as needed. As the result of one particular expedition, because of his association with the group, the crown suspects him of involvement in a poison plot—and considers him a traitor. Mortmont blames our humble adventurers for his fall in the favor of the crown.

<https://www.chaosgen.com> informs me that this party is called the Alluring Centipede Wreckers, perhaps because of that expedition gone awry, which I might have to play retroactively as a flashback, dream, or story told. In Portuguese, that’s the Sedutores Destruidores de Centopéias, or Destruidores de Centopéias, which is quite a fine party name.

The Explosion Containment Umbrella #15

Dec. 31, 2023

The Explosion Containment Umbrella is an apa commentzine published by Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. It is prepared for contributors to eAPA 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.

Comments on eAPA #235

So glad to see Rogers Cadenhead rejoin the ranks of the eAPAns! I've enjoyed encountering you previously in various circles, perhaps through the National Fantasy Fan Federation and Alarums & Excursions, and I recall your fanzines *Three Rocks*, *Prime Material*, and *Swordsman*. I look forward to your participation here as the new year approaches!

I quite enjoyed the cover to **Henry Grynsten's** *Wild Ideas* #41. It reminded me of something readers of *Farm Pulp* might have been exposed to, as well as the worldview of the Museum of Jurassic Technology. In the issue, he expands on #40's thoughts about dolls (*ECU* #14) to consider miniatures more generally. While I enjoyed your mailing comments, the essay was great fun to read, especially because I've been thinking about TSR's wargaming magazine *Little Wars*—clearly inspired by H.G. Wells's book—in recent days, and my wife and I have been enjoying the 1929 movie *High Treason* during occasionally sleepless nights while visiting family in the midwest. That film features absolutely wonderful model work, perhaps by Filippo Guidobaldi.

My father, now in his early 80s, has been an active model railroader (HO scale) for most of his adult life—reintroduced to the hobby when I became interested in slot car racing as a child. Our first set, which combined HO trains with slot cars, was made by Tyco. He got quite involved in various aspects of the hobby, joining local clubs and offshoots of the National Model Railroad Association; helping to construct a collaborative, modular layout; becoming an expert kit basher and painter—his rust and weathering effects are glorious—even contributing to various journals, magazines, and newsletters with writing and photography. He's been able to better understand my involvement in and enthusiasm for various aspects of fandom because of his model railroading. (Fanzines are newsletters, for example.) And we've both enjoyed exploring real-world railways and public transportation, though I'm far from being a modeler or railfan, per se.

The reasons for and allure of miniaturization are thought provoking, and I'm curious how much of the drive stems from an interest in recreation or simulation, from an overarching interest in the full-scale items or objects (while being unable to access or enjoy them in life size), or from an interest in or need for control. I appreciated your remarks on changes in the treatment—and portrayal—of children throughout history. I've mostly encountered that in fine art and would like to learn more. *Bugsy Malone* is one of my wife's favorite movies.

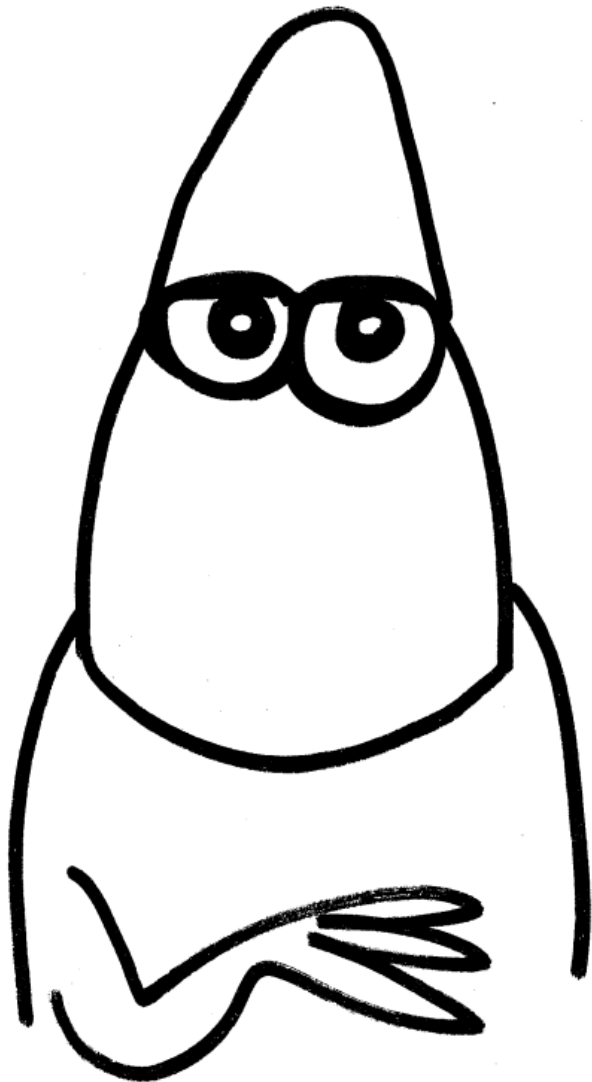


—William Rotsler

The essay also inspired further consideration of the Museum of Jurassic Technology, which includes an exhibit of trailer park dioramas—ably communicating emotions related to home, coziness, loneliness, and isolation—and the microminiatures of Hagop Sandaldjian (<http://tinyurl.com/microminiatures>) This issue's essay was very wide ranging and worth returning to as a reader. Our predilection toward miniaturization and simulation is long running, as these more manual examples attest.

In *Living Inside Number 9*, **William McCabe** let eAPAns know about his experience with paronychia. I hope that's cleared up fully by now! Do you know what caused it? Changing topics: Do you pay that licensing fee even for your personal television at home? I'm not sure how televisions in public or commercial spaces work, but we don't pay to watch TV in general (outside of cable or streaming)—and if someone else comes over to watch, there's no concern. I do know that you need to get a license in order to screen DVDs or other recorded media to larger groups

in public places (say, at a con). The last time I was involved in obtaining such a license, it granted permission to screen movies—or perhaps DVDs—produced by a number of different studios, and if a studio wasn't included, you couldn't screen their work.



—William Rotsler

Rogers Cadenhead's *Inverted Pyramid* #3 marks his return to eAPA. While I wasn't previously involved in eAPA when you were before, I, too, was deeply involved in apahacking before wandering off about a decade ago. Welcome back! Not too long ago, I subscribed to SiriusXM, primarily to listen to Rodney Bingenheimer's weekly program on the Underground Garage. I've fallen out of the habit of listening to Bingenheimer, but my wife and I occasionally fall asleep listening to the Sleep Channel or Forest Dreams. We usually wake up to 1st Wave, and after showering, I change it to Marky Ramone's

Punk Rock Blitzkrieg. I recently discovered SiriusXM's RadioClassics, which specializes in old-time radio. The channel focuses mostly on comedy and drama—with a good amount of detective and western fare—though there is some genre programming scheduled: *Suspense*, *The Mysterious Traveler*, *The Whistler*, *X Minus One*, *The Sealed Book*, *Inner Sanctum Mysteries*, and others. I'll have to see whether you can record individual shows like you can DJ-oriented programs. The shows aren't aired in thematic blocks but spread throughout the week.

In *Intermission* #138, **Ahrvid Engholm** recognized and mourned the mid-October death of Bertil Falk. While I appreciated your brief analysis of award nominees and winners, I'm not sure that more of the same is a solution for centuries of discrimination and bigotry. I understand your distaste for discrimination of any kind, but if no effort has been taken historically to include, say, women or blacks, how is making effort to include them now discriminatory?

Sometimes it feels like the argument becomes cyclical: straight white men dislike the increasing involvement of others and express discontent that they're no longer the dominant participant—while contending that that's not the very thing they're upset about. It's not discrimination that such critics are opposed to, but competition, having not had to contend with it—to compete—for hundreds of years. So, allowing competition is derided as discrimination.

However, if we're merely looking at nominations, the solution is easy: Nominate more of the people who you think are underrepresented. That's why we're seeing more non-white men nominated; people are finally making the effort to nominate other people. We even saw that in the Chengdu Worldcon, during which the artist and fanzine categories resulted in winners with organized Chinese voter blocs behind them. I might not think that such winners necessarily represent the best of either on the world stage, but I don't begrudge those nominees being nominated—or the voters for their nominees being selected. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* might not be the best way to determine the general distribution of age, gender, or race among currently active authors—because it might reflect people historically considered worth documenting (when discrimination was even more in play), but not current trends in authorship or publishing. Over time, the *SFE* will become more diverse, as well, perhaps.

Your History Corner concentrating on Falk adeptly communicated the importance and impact of the contributions made by the man, the fan, translator, and writer. His motto "Don't postpone until next hour what you can do right now!" is excellent advice that I

increasingly heed as I get older.

Garth Spencer's *I Never Got the Hang of Thursdays* #215 questioned William McCabe about chocolate elephants. Visiting my parents in the midwest for almost two weeks over Christmas and New Years, my wife and I are not eating like we usually do. Not only are we eating primarily the diet of my 80-year-old parents, one of whom can no longer eat green vegetables, we're in Wisconsin rather than California—and the range of fresh fruits and vegetables is smaller than we're used to. It's also holiday time, so chocolate candies, holiday cookies, fruit cake, and other sweet pastries are in good supply. So when I read the phrase "chocolate elephants," I thought that that sounded delicious.

Comments on eAPA #236

Is that a William Rotsler on the cover? Why, I do believe it is! In the Official Organ, Ahrvid Engholm asked about Robert Bloch's "A Way of Life" and *The Eighth Stage of Fandom: Selections from 25 Years of Fan Writing*. I have a copy of that in my home library and will see if the book refers to or includes the story once I return to California.

In *Intermission* #138.5, **Ahrvid Engholm** reprints the potentially public domain novelette, "A Way of Life," from the October 1956 issue of *Fantastic Universe*. What a delightful read, replete with fannish jokes, elevation of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association and jibes at the expense of the N3F. One line in particular might resonate with Garth Spencer's recent theories about divisions within fandom:

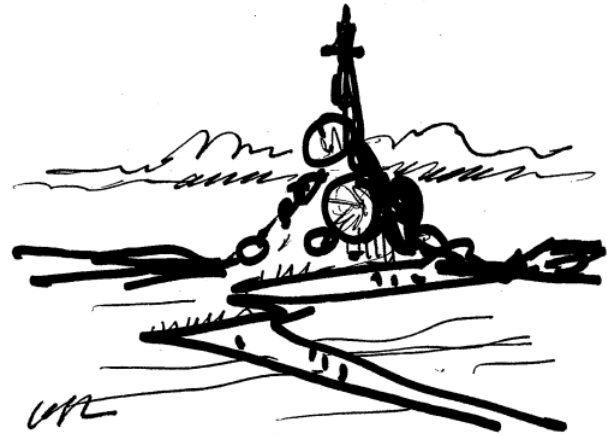
"Fandom won because we were better organized for communication... ." (That could perhaps be said of fandoms that don't rely primarily on fanzines.) I'll have to share this with Andy Hooper, whom I think will enjoy it, and Barbara Gratz Harmon because of the mention of Jim Harmon. Such a fun read—one that makes me think Bloch is brilliant and superb.

Engholm also offers *FAInzine* #1, which was presumably created using generative artificial intelligence tools. Largely a throwaway, the fanzine is a good—if jokey—example of the potential and limitations of the use of AI. Regardless, I got a kick out of it, especially Forry Hackerman's "Psycho-Fanatic Chronicles: A Hitchcockian Rollercoaster of Obsession." Engholm's endnotes were also welcome: "[D]o you think this is ... horrible? Help fandom by making a real fanzine instead!" Yes, please.

How can we possibly be so lucky as to receive a third Engholm publication in this distribution, as well? **Engholm's** *Intermission* #139 continues to cover the death of Bertil Falk and the editor's new or renewed interest in Robert Bloch. Thank you for bringing

Anna-Lena Lodenus to my attention. She seems to write about topics of interest to me!

Even though you weren't able to attend Falk's funeral, I appreciated you sharing reportage on the event. You've been writing about Falk quite a bit lately, and I say: Keep writing! I look forward to learning even more about *Jules Verne Magasinet*, *Captain Future*, *Vår Rymd*, and other related topics.



—William Rotsler

I also welcome more writing over time about Bloch. Based on my reactions to your recent issues, I just can't get enough. For example, even though I was born and raised in Wisconsin—where I currently am for the holidays—I didn't know that Bloch had spent any time in the state. Growing up, I found my way to August Derleth by way of H.P. Lovecraft, and therefore to Lovecraft fandom and Bloch, but I didn't know about Lovecraft's involvement in apae until I, too, became active in apae. Though I've participated in the National Amateur Press Association and American Amateur Press Association, I don't think I got involved in the United Amateur Press Association, in which Lovecraft had also been active, before it folded.

Bloch, Bloch, Bloch! I... must... read... more. The novelty photographs are also a delight. What fun stuff. The piece from *Imagination* #4 was crazily excellent. Mr. Engholm, if you'd like to be a dues-paying member of the N3F but cannot sort out international payments, I'd be happy to sponsor your membership. You wouldn't even owe me any money.

Your understanding of how the National Amateur Press Association works wasn't what I experienced as a member a decade-plus ago. There was a central mailer, and there were bundles. Contributions were standalone items, similar to my experience of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association (less recent) and

the Spectator Amateur Press Society (more recent), rather than collated into a single bound or stapled compilation.

Similar to Engholm's *FAInzine*, **Henry Grynnsen** contributed *Fanac Chronicles #1* using ChatGPT and Perplexity AI. Skimmed and chuckled—perhaps with an eye roll—but no comment. Turning to Bard to write a letter of comment, here's how that went:

HR: Write a letter of comment to *Fanac Chronicles #1*

Bard: Unfortunately, I can't write a letter of comment for *Fanac Chronicles #1* without any information about it! To write a meaningful and insightful response, I'd need some details about the book, such as:

Genre: Is it a fantasy, mystery, romance, or something else?

Plot: What's the main story about?

Characters: Who are the main characters and what did you think of them?

Your overall impression: Did you enjoy the book? What were your favorite and least favorite aspects?

The more details you can provide, the better I can tailor the letter to your specific thoughts and feelings about *Fanac Chronicles #1*. I'm excited to hear your opinion and help you craft a thoughtful and engaging letter!

HR: It's a science fiction fanzine published by Henry Grynnsen.

Bard: That's a great start! Now, to write a truly compelling letter of comment for *Fanac Chronicles #1*, I need some more specifics about your experience with it. Here are some questions to consider:

Content: What kind of science fiction stories did it feature? Hard sci-fi, space opera, dystopian, cyberpunk, or something else?

Quality: Did you find the stories engaging and well-written? Were there any standouts that particularly impressed you?

Art and layout: How did the fanzine look and feel? Was the artwork appealing, and was the layout easy to navigate?

Community: Did the fanzine foster a sense of community among fellow science fiction enthusiasts? Were there any interesting articles or interviews that stood out?

Overall thoughts: Did you enjoy *Fanac Chronicles #1*? Would you recommend it to other science fiction fans?

Once you have answers to these questions, I can create a letter that captures your unique perspective on the fanzine. Do you have any specific points you'd like to raise or questions you'd like to ask Henry Grynnsen? The more you tell me, the better I can craft a meaningful and personalized response.

I'm eager to hear about your thoughts on *Fanac Chronicles #1* and help you share your opinion with the world!

Why, it's almost as though I should write my own darn letter of comment! I don't think letterhacks have

anything to worry about in terms of being replaced by AI.

Reading **Grynnsen's** *Wild Ideas #42* was a much more rewarding experience; I prefer my fanzines to be written by humans! Do you really think that men are more naturally inclined to enjoy or appreciate science fiction? What do you think accounts for that, if so? You wrote, "[S]oon I will have written about everything and be able to just place references to old issues in the comments section..." Personally, I get a kick inserting references to back issues in my fanzines. My fanzines are, after all, One Big Fanzine. And perhaps, just perhaps, all of our fanzines compose One Even Bigger Fanzine. Regardless, what is that fen say about fanzines, truth, or the sum of all knowledge? It's... escaping me.



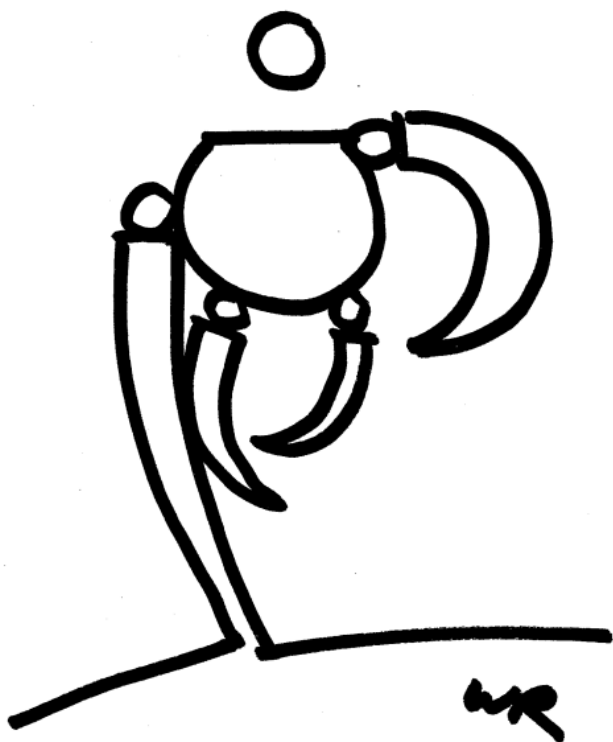
—Alan White

I was thinking about topics similar to your essay "The Man/Woman Behind the Musician" in recent weeks. Would the Church of the Subgenius have worked if begun after the advent of social media? Similarly, would Tom Waits have been as successful as a musician if we'd been able to know about every little thing about his life and family? And would Hunter S. Thompson have been able to maintain his legendary status and persona in the age of Twitter instead of fax machines?

Your exploration of musicians as actors performing roles made a useful read in parallel with *Wild Ideas*

#38 (ECU #12). I'm also vaguely remembering an earlier exchange commenting on the performative aspects of organized religion, but I can't find that right now. I'll have to spend more time with this essay given its focus on Bob Dylan. You seem to make a compelling case that he's a plagiarist.

In *Living Inside Number 9*, **William McCabe** mentioned a Facebook group he's been participating in. Do you remember what group it is? Perhaps we should all check it out and give it a goose. I'd like to learn more about your radio show. What kind of music did you play? On what did the program air: terrestrial radio or an Internet radio station? I would welcome fanzine music playlists, were they offered.



—William Rotsler

Garth Spencer's *I Never Got the Hang of Thursdays* #216 continued his consideration of organized fandom in Canada. While I was aware of the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association—I inquired about joining in February 2023, haven't heard back from anyone, but subsequently began to receive the organization's newsletter—I would not have known what the Aurora Awards were. (I also recently subscribed to *On Spec*.)

How many Canadian fen am I aware of? Off the top of my head, let's see: you, Lloyd Penney, Taral Wayne (though he wouldn't consider himself an sf fan, perhaps)... R. Graeme Cameron... Cathy Palmer-Lister... and that might be it. But does that

mean that Canadian fen aren't known outside of Canada—or aren't plentiful—or that I don't know enough Canadian fen? I'd wager the latter. (For example, someone not knowing about me doesn't mean *anything*.) Who else should I know about? Part of the challenge is that my lens is one of organized fandom. We've got the British Columbia Science Fiction Association and Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association represented, and my next question was going to be: What great Canadian fanzines should I be reading? Not Web sites, not podcasts, not Facebook groups... but fanzines. Because in my mind, the best fen are faneds.

You wrote, "I personally want to see fiction about a new wave of piracy from Haida Gwaii, featuring dirigible longships powered by cold fusion reactors and crews who scream threats in a strongly Yiddish-accented patois, but that's just me." I would read those stories. Who's writing them?

I hereby voice my support for Port Alberni in 2030 and Spuzzum in 2027. Even though I'd welcome a Westercon occurring in California, recent efforts along such lines haven't succeeded. The N3F experimented with moving to MeWe for a spell because its president was having problems accessing Facebook and some vocal members are particularly conservative politically. I didn't find MeWe any better than other social networks and—while I have an account—am not at all active there. It feels like a strange little pocket universe detached from everything else... though Canadian participation might be on the upswing.

Early in the new year, once I'm home again, I'll reach out to you about collaborating on a 2024 edition of *Blue Moon Special*. It'll be grand.

Madison, Wis., Fan Resources

Should you ever find yourself in Madison, Wis., worry not: Fandom is in full effect. Here's where to go:

Madison Science Fiction Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MADSTE>): A Facebook group for former and current fen in the Madison area.

20th Century Books (<https://southparkbooks.com>): A wonderful warren of sf, fantasy, and other books, magazines, comic books, and other ephemera.

Capital City Comics (<https://www.facebook.com/CapCityCmx>): More a museum than an active comic shop, it offers an amazing array of items, though mostly unpriced and not for immediate sale.

I'm Board! (<http://www.imboardgames.com>): The Monroe Street location is small but offers a good range of board games, card games, roleplaying games, and related materials. A lot of fun to browse.

The UFO Checklist

The United Fanzine Organization (UFO) is a group of small press creators who come together to support and encourage each other, and to promote higher standards of quality in small press. Applicants may contact (acting) Chairman: Rob Imes, 13510 Cambridge #307, Southgate, MI 48195 or you can email him at robimes@yahoo.com Check out the Official UFO Website at <https://unitedfanzineorganization.weebly.com> and the United Fanzine Organization Facebook group at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tfrags>

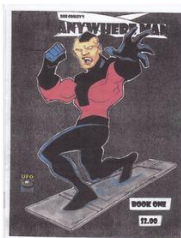


TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS (The UFO Newsletter) #273 (\$3.50 postpaid in the USA for non-members, or a 6-issue subscription for \$20) The central forum for UFO members containing columns and artwork that can't be found anywhere else. This issue published by Rob Imes, 13510 Cambridge #307, Southgate, MI 48195 and he can be reached through his email at: robimes@yahoo.com for more info.

by Megaton Man creator Don Simpson! The series also has its own Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MariSolinskiandTheWonderKitty>



OM #10 (\$4.50 postpaid from Steve Keeter, 10118 Mason Dixon Circle, Orlando, FL 32821 or via PayPal to stevekeeter@gmail.com) OM #10 is out at last, featuring color covers by John Muller and Chuck Robinson II, and 52 pages of comics ranging from the satiric (Larned Justin's "The Interplanetary Threat") to super heroes ("A Titan Amidst the Grains of Sand" by Steve Keeter, Tony Lorenz, and Tom Ahearn), to sf action ("Troubleshooter" by Roland "Tim" Timmel and the late George McVey). Also included: work by Larry Blake, David Branstetter, and the return to comics of Chuck Bunker.



ANYWHERE MAN #1 (\$2.00 postpaid from Rob Cooley, 7128 Munsee Ln., Indianapolis, IN 46260) "Welcome to the weird, the wild, and the strange! Welcome to the adventures of Anywhere Man! He will go anywhere to provide justice for those under the tyranny of evil!" The start of a new series that takes creative inspiration from Jack Kirby. Digest-size B&W zine with color cover. You can email Rob at cooleytoons@gmail.com for more info.

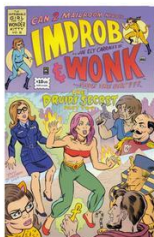


THE STF AMATEUR, October 2023 (\$6 postpaid in the United States from Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA 90230. or via PayPal to kalel@well.com or @HRow) If outside the US, inquire via kalel@well.com before ordering;



HORSEMAN #5 (\$6.00 postpaid from Larry Johnson, 31 Greenbrook Road, Hyde Park, MA 02136 or via Paypal to LewBrown1@verizon.net) Another wordless exploration of surreal worlds for the title character, offering a hallucinatory vision filled with strange and unusual creatures. Full color standard comic book size format. You can find selection of Larry's comic books at: sites.google.com/view/larryjohnsoncomics/home

postage costs will vary. Also available to view as a free PDF at <https://efanzines.com/HR/index.htm>. This fanzine collects Heath's APA member zines each month in one side-stapled publication. Each issue contains reviews, commentary and letters as part of Heath's involvement in science-fiction fandom (although the topics discussed are not limited to the SF genre).



THE IMPROBABLE GIRL AND THE WONDER KITTYS #8 (\$10 postpaid in the USA from Carrales Studios Productions, P. O. Box 1274, Premont, TX 78375 or via Paypal to jecarrales@yahoo.com) Follow the continuing adventures of two young women mailroom clerks who have acquired super powers and are helping the military to fight organized evil menaces. Full color standard comic book size format, with a front cover



STINGER OPS #3 (\$2.00 postpaid from Rob Cooley, 7128 Munsee Ln., Indianapolis, IN 46260) Bubbles McFarland hunts down the assassin Mr. Shadow (a.k.a. Carmine Dillard) who has kidnapped his detective partner. Will our hero reach him in time to save his life? Digest-size B&W zine with color cover. You can email Rob at cooleytoons@gmail.com for more info.

