

The **TF** AMATEUR

VINTAGE
SCI-FI



The Stf Amateur

November 2023

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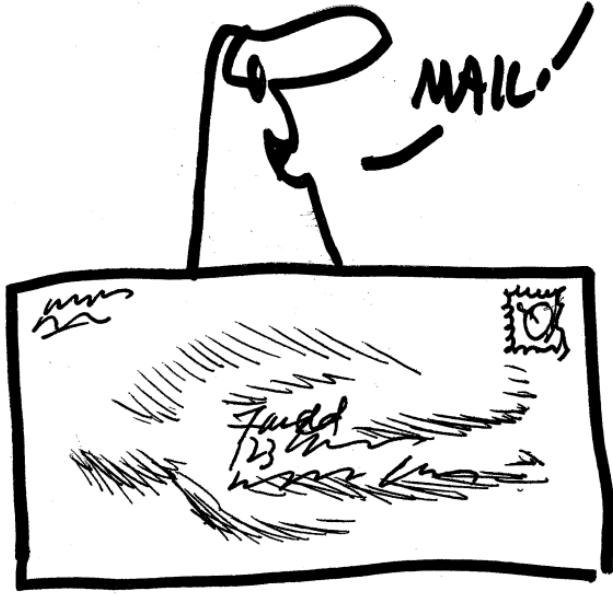
Cover Artist's Statement: Imagine, for a moment, that a person reading these words today is merely an enthusiastic novice exploring their passions. But fast forward two decades and that novice could have transformed into a seasoned expert. They might have grown into a loving parent, guiding their own children into the fascinating world of knowledge.

Now, picture those kids, teenagers of their time, browsing through dusty, time-honored bookshops. These shops proudly display vintage material, ink on paper, crafted by individuals who once devoured the pages of your fanzine with equal fervor.

And then there's the cosmic touch: Mars. While Saturn often claims the limelight, our fanzine proudly dons the red planet on its logo. Who knows what astonishing discoveries and adventures await humanity on Mars in the coming decades?

So, envision a future, precisely 20 years from this moment, unearthed from the depths of an ancient box, nestled alongside *Mars Attacks* cards and forgotten treasures. An old iPad, preserved as a time capsule, reveals the pages of our vintage fanzine, offering a glimpse into a world long past but never forgotten.—Alan White

The Stf Amateur (Or: *Amateur Stf*) is a bundlezine 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 members of the United Fanzine Organization and select others, available via *eFanzines* (<https://efanzines.com>) by the grace of Bill Burns, as well as for the Usual. Letters of comment, cover art, and spot illustrations are welcome and desired. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.



—William Rotsler

I apologize for not getting this loc into your October bundlezine!

This is a new idea, piling together one's apazines into a bundle, offering readers stories and pictures not seen in their own APAs, and from your mailing comments, a view into your other APAs. Seeing how many boxes of fannish papers the late Marty Cantor left, and how exhausted Mr. Smith and Mr. Hubbard were after moving them, was an eye-opener.

One of your apazines reminds me that LASFS and Loscon are not, in fact, run by the same officers. Well, yes, I suppose my last letter read as if I assumed that. I really meant that the same individuals as the club officers—if not the same people—had knowledge or opinions about current trends and issues in conrunning.

Maybe I should do as you did, instead of recycling much of my material each month into my apazines and personalzine. Definitely I should make a plan for my own papers, since I'm not getting any younger and I have to find, as George Carlin put it, a place for my stuff.

—Garth Spencer

Thank you for contributing the first letter of comment proper to *The Stf Amateur*! Not long ago, I finally mailed you your *T&T* Letterhack card in recognition of your previous correspondence to my APA-L fanzine *Telegraphs & Tar Pits*. (*T&T* #73) Rather than use such cards (I ordered a goodly number) only for LsOC written in response to *T&T*, or making new cards specific to *The Stf Amateur*, I suppose all

letterhacks who write in—to any of my fanzines—shall be *T&T* Letterhacks.

Hear that, gentle readers? Join the august body of *T&T* Letterhacks and send in an LOC. Perhaps it'll earn an LOC in return!

As far as the "bundlezine" approach I'm pursuing for *The Stf Amateur*, I reuse next to nothing across my various apazines—as an exercise to assert each of my fanzine contributions as all original. Not all apahacks who participate in multiple apae follow that approach and readily reuse material across apae because membership tends not to overlap. And if an apahack also publishes a genzine or perzine, it's not uncommon for reuse to occur, as well. It makes sense to economize.

Personally, I write relatively quickly and readily, so I try not to reuse material. My apazines aren't necessarily snapzines, but it's not difficult for me to publish original material in my multiple apazines, though deadlines sometimes sneak up on me. The monthly word count—and page count—occasionally surprises me.

Some gentle readers have suggested that publishing mailing—or distribution—comments for a non-apae readership is bothersome and unnecessary. In response to such folks, I suggest, you don't have to read everything in any given fanzine, and if mailing comments aren't your bag, skip 'em. Regardless, I hope that my comments on other's writing might offer helpful visibility of what's being discussed in a given apa—as you indicate—but also that my comments might be interesting on their own, as visibility of my own fannish thinking and fanac outside of the more general content.

Finally, if you'd like help finding an archival home for your papers, let me know. The University of Iowa offers a great collection of apae materials, the University of California, Riverside's Eaton Collection of Science Fiction & Fantasy contains a broader range of fanzines and ephemera, and DePaul University houses mundane fanzines. I donate to all of them.

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Telegraphs & Tar Pits #84

Oct. 5, 2023

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

Last Week's Senryu

Preparing to go
to Japan next week means a
break for APA-L

Thank you for your patience—and your fanzine submissions—while I was away. We're now back, and APA-L (and *T&T*, likewise) shall resume its regularly scheduled programming.

Trip Report: Tokyo

We skipped a weekly APA-L distribution last week because I was out of the country traveling to Japan to see my son, who's studying in Tokyo. My wife and I left Sept. 23 and returned Oct. 1. Given our United flight time, we were able to wake up at our normal time that Saturday and left for the airport around 8 a.m. Checking our bags and going through security went well, but because it's been a while since I've traveled, I had to go through the TSA Precheck several times because I hadn't emptied my pockets or removed my belt—which I for some reason thought I didn't have to do. We perused a couple of newsstands and book displays even though we'd both brought ample reading material, and enjoyed a breakfast of donuts and coffee from a tucked-away Randy's Donuts outpost, which felt rather Los Angeles. We boarded just before 11 a.m.

The flight to Japan was uneventful. I read two books, finishing Herbert W. Franke's *The Mind Net* and reading Chi Ta-Wei's *The Membranes* in their entirety; and watched two movies, *Aquaman* and *Joker*. Caitlin watched *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* and a Marc Maron comedy special. (I don't know what she read; she uses a Kindle.) Oddly, Maron also had a role in *Joker*. The meal at the end of the flight was rushed because of an early arrival.

We landed at Haneda Airport around 2:45 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 24. Going through customs and picking up our luggage—one bag filled with items for Jonah—didn't take much time. A produce- and meat-sniffing dog didn't sense a bag of peanuts and

raisins I'd forgotten was in my backpack. We took a taxi to the neighborhood in which we'd be staying, Jiyugaoka, a handful of train stops away from Shibuya City, and about a 20-minute walk from our son's apartment. We got to the hotel around 4:30 p.m.

Jonah had plans to go to the Tokyo Game Show (<https://tinyurl.com/TokyoGameShow2023>) with friends, so we settled into our room, refreshed ourselves, and headed out to explore our neighborhood in search of local currency and the handful of bookstores within walking distance. We ate dinner at Edo Sushi near the train station and returned to our room to unpack and watch local television before a relatively early bedtime given the difference in time zones.



—Heath Row

Monday, Sept. 25, we both woke around 2:30 and 4:30 a.m., eventually getting up around 5:30 a.m. to shower, dress, and procure breakfast. Meguro City starts its day late, and restaurant breakfast isn't a common part of the culture, so there was only one restaurant open at what we considered breakfast time: Latte Graphic, an Australian operation. Their breakfast options were interesting and delicious, and I enjoyed my eggs, rye toast, sausage, and bacon, as well as an artfully prepared latte, their namesake. We ate there several mornings.

We walked about 15 minutes west to nearby Nekojarashi Park. It was lovely to sit at the edge of a graveyard feeling the breeze and listening to birdsong as neighborhood school children began their days. Making our way back toward our neighborhood, we visited several Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, and bought pastries. For lunch, we had onigiri by the train station before walking to Temple University roughly an hour to the north. We took our time, stopping at additional temples, shrines, and parks along the way.

There, we met up with Jonah, as well as two of his friends from school. We figured out how to buy train tickets; we'd neglected to buy a train pass at the airport, and they no longer sell passes otherwise. Apparently, there's a global semiconductor shortage and they're planning to move to contactless charging, so passes are hard to come buy. All of our train travel ended up using single tickets per trip, or multiple tickets because the train lines don't necessarily interoperate.

Jonah took us to a neighborhood known for its vintage clothing shops, perhaps Shimokitezawa. We walked around, ate pizza at a place called The Pizza, saw a public art installation, Museum of the Moon (<https://tinyurl.com/Moon-Tokyo>), and otherwise enjoyed each other's company before heading back to our neighborhood. There, we hung out at the hotel, Hotel Pulitzer Jiyugaoka. It was a great day and really good to see him—we haven't seen him except during video calls since January!



—William Rotsler

Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

Aquaman

While on the flight to Tokyo from Los Angeles, I watched the 2018 Warner Bros. picture, *Aquaman*. When it came out, I wasn't overly interested in it, but

I'd recently read about reputed Lovecraftian influences on the more recent *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom* (perhaps *Film's* Sept. 14, 2023, article "Horror Master James Wan Says Aquaman 2 Features 'Lovecraftian' Villains"), so its precursor piqued my interest. Besides, it's been a while since I've seen a DC-related movie, and I not long ago watched a whole bunch of Marvel movies. (*Snow Poster Township* #12)

Aquaman is an enjoyable flick. The character's appearance in the 2017 *Justice League* was promising, and Jason Momoa brings a slightly dark, rough virility to a superhero who's not been portrayed as aggressively masculine in the past. At the same time, *Aquaman* is no *The Dark Knight* (the comic book, not the movie). Instead, we have DC's take on its aquatic hero—the counterpoint to Marvel's Su-Mariner, as in *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*—and an exploration of a love affair between the surface and undersea worlds, tensions between the two societies, and divisions among the seven underwater kingdoms, the seven seas. The romantic introduction is also a compelling origin story for the hero, which pretty much maps to that in the Silver Age comics.

Momoa shines as Aquaman and is joined by a quality cast including Willem Dafoe as his mentor and trainer. Like Harrison Ford in *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*, Dafoe was digitally de-aged for flashback scenes. (*T&T* #74) Dolph Lundgren's King Nereus shows some signs of the wonder that was the actor's Street Preacher in *Johnny Mnemonic*. (*T&T* #41) And Yahya Abdul-Mateen II as Black Manta falls slightly short of the villainous character's impact even as late as the New 52 and Rebirth series.

But what I found most interesting were the seven kingdoms. Like the four tribes of Wakanda, each sea is characterized by distinguishing features. The seven kingdoms that formed after Atlantis sank beneath the waves include Atlantis, Xebel, the Kingdom of the Trench, the Kingdom of the Brine, the Kingdom of the Fishermen, the Kingdom of the Deserters, and the Kingdom of the Valor. The Kingdom of the Trench is where H.P. Lovecraft's influence comes in most strongly, and its population is delightfully similar to that of Dunwich in the author's fiction. (In fact, *The Dunwich Horror*, the book itself, appears in a scene in the movie.)

The scene in which Aquaman descends into the Trench as its denizens swarm to follow him is extremely visually impressive and reason enough to watch the movie. *Aquaman* is an excellent cinematic extension of the ongoing comic book series—and a welcome infusion of new ideas and energy into the capabilities and character of a superhero you might have thought you already understood.

Joker

I also hadn't seen the 2019 *Joker* vehicle, which would have made for a wonderful movie even if entirely isolated from the rest of the Batman storyline—though the filmmakers tie it into the hero's origin story, replacing Joe Chill with an anonymous follower of the titular villain. (Or, making Chill such a follower.) Regardless, *Joker* is effective, forceful cinema and not at all a traditional superhero movie or cartoony portrayal of the villain in line with that of Cesar Romero's TV role.

Instead, the movie is a dark and somber portrayal of a failed sign spinner and clown who aspires to stand up comedy whose frustration with taking care of his mother and confusion over who his real father is—perhaps Bruce Wayne's father—lead to an accelerating descent into madness, murderous self-defense, murder itself, and class war street riots. The pivotal subway shooting resonated with a similar scene in *The Trial of the Incredible Hulk*. (*T&T* #81)

Joaquin Phoenix is absolutely riveting as the Joker, and as uncomfortable as the movie might be, it's worth watching every minute of his performance. The things that man did with posture, facial expression, and gesture were quite impressive. One scene even offered gentle echoes of Jack Nicholson's 1989 portrayal. Additionally, Robert De Niro's role as a late-night TV host is wonderful, as is the way the two characters are brought together.

I quite like the idea of standalone superhero-inspired movies that don't necessarily tie into a universe. Like Grant Morrison and Dave McKean's *Arkham Asylum: A Serious House on Serious Earth* or even perhaps *Batman: The Killing Joke*, there's a lot that can be done with the Joker. And the Joker, in turn, can do a lot. Not any of it good, but absolutely wonderful to watch unfold.

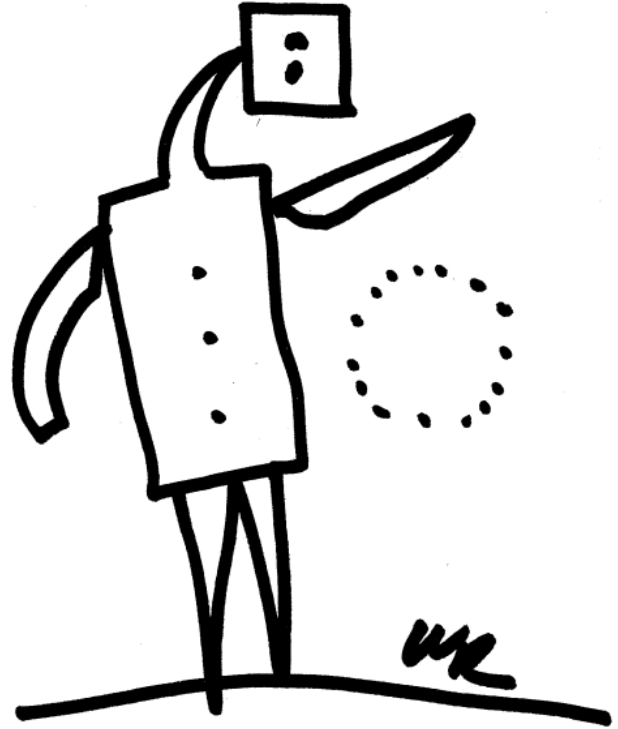
Comments on APA-L #3038

In *Leeway* dated for Sept. 21, 2023, **Lee Gold** remarked on the ongoing TV landscape changes as Disney and Charter Spectrum duke it out. I don't watch Freeform either, but losing options is always frustrating. The most genre option they seem to offer currently is the 2016 fantasy *Shadowhunters*, about a group of angel-human hybrids who hunt demons.

Your mention of apples and honey reminded me that I've been eating blueberries, shaved almonds, and honey as part of my lunch when I go into the office. This morning with an English muffin, I had blueberries with raw almonds and honey. Both are recommended, though I'm sorry you associate honey with aspirin from childhood.

I will send your question to cover artist Taral

Wayne. I'll ask Jeffrey H. Wood whether I can transcribe the comic strip text in a future issue of *T&T* so it's easier to read. The comic strip is pretty fun. For some reason, your comments on Casa de Fruta reminded me that I plan to see Alan Winston this weekend in order to hand over several reams of paper for David Schlosser to use for LASFAPA. I think the driving was the inspiration because I'll go to Altadena. Thank you for the Keith Laumer story recommendations!



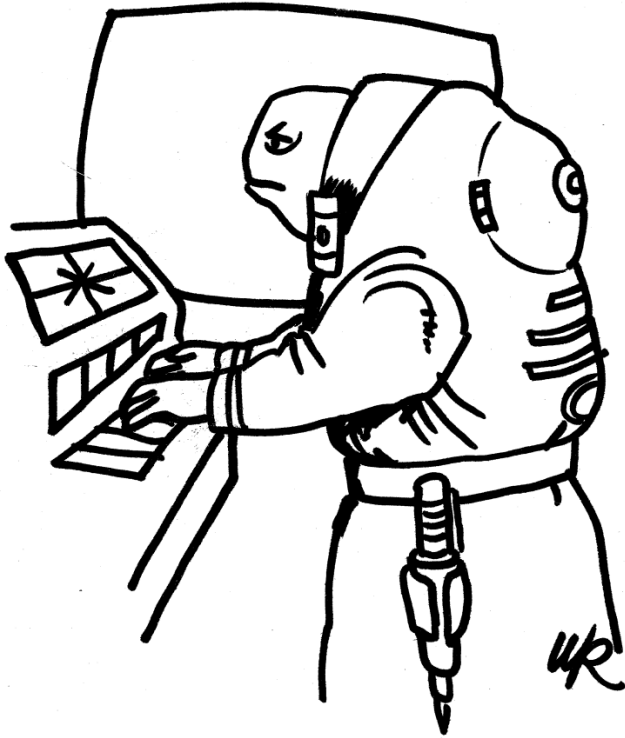
—William Rotsler

This was the first issue (#27) of **Matthew Mitchell's** *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* printed on goldenrod paper. May the paper color suit you, sir. Your being on standby all week gives me hope that my upcoming jury duty calls go well, too. I don't mind serving—it's a responsibility of citizenry—but I'd prefer a short duty because of upcoming travel at the end of the month. I'll share your feedback with Wayne and Wood, as well. We'll see if I can woo Wood back with additional contributions.

I'll also see if I can identify comics in which Daredevil and the Sub-Mariner face off. What I've been reading lately is earlier Hulk and Sub-Mariner pieces from *Tales to Astonish*. Thank you for reminding me to cancel the landline. That is, in fact, what we've decided to do now that we're back from

Japan.

In *Reflections from a Fish Bowl* #53, **Barbara Gratz Harmon** shared some frustration with hardwired smoke detectors and backup batteries. I'm glad you were able to relax enough to hack out this ish. I hope your rehearsal, performance, lesson, and report went well.



—William Rotsler

Most of the people Jeffrey H. Wood mentioned in his commentary were—or are—active in small press comics, minicomics, and perhaps the United Fanzine Organization (<https://unitedfanzineorganization.weebly.com>), an independent comics cooperative. In jokes, to be sure, but hopefully still fun and adjacent enough for our enjoyment. I recently joined, and my monthly fanzine *The Stf Amateur*, which collects all of my various apazines, is now an official member publication.

Joe Zeff's *Toony Loons* #731 updated ellers on his recent Bespoke Post orders, commenting on coffee grinders. While in Japan, while we often drank green tea or canned coffee from vending machines, every morning we also drank single-serving cups of coffee made using little pour-through bags of grounds. They seemed less wasteful than coffee pods and might be compostable. They also didn't make a bad cup of coffee, and the extendable accordion paper cup holders that dipped the teabag-like pouch in the hot water were pretty cool.

Late this week I received a replacement for my corporate mobile, which won't be supported much longer at the security level I desire. I had the previous phone for two years and think that's too short a time for obsolescence. But the new phone is slightly bigger and seems to work well so far. I'll most likely finish setting it up later this week. I only use it for work.

In *Vanamonde* #1562, **John Hertz** also remarked on Rosh Hashanah. While I've already wished Lee Gold a good and sweet year, I'd like to extend that to all ellers. I'll share your feedback with cover artist Tiffanie Gray. I agree with you. The artwork is beautiful and appropriate while not being explicitly science fictional.

Your three Classics of SF selections for Loscon 49 were posted to Facebook on Sept. 15, 2023: Isaac Asimov's *Foundation*, Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, and H.G. Wells's *The Invisible Man*. More well known than past years I've experienced, and all well chosen.

My personal conflict with hiring a housekeeper might very well be reverse snobbery. I tend to associate the practice with the wealthy and don't consider myself wealthy. It's also a more intimate relationship than hiring a gardener or handyman, so the employer-employee interaction is somewhat different, at least in my experience. I'll give the tension I feel more thought!

Now that I no longer have access to Apple Music, I'm not sure I can answer your question about the singer of "Morgenlich leuchtend." Even if I did, Apple Music's performer metadata isn't as detailed as that in liner notes, and I have never subscribed to Apple Music Classical, which might better manage classical music performance credits.

Eylat Poliner recently indicated that a fanzine corner is currently included in plans for Loscon 49. I've let her know that I won't be able to participate in the con and that you two should connect about such planning. Krystal Rains might also be a supportive LASFSan in terms of compiling another edition of *Losconzine*. I look forward to seeing what happens and wish almost every year that Loscon wasn't on Thanksgiving weekend; I'd be much more able to participate consistently.

"The best kind of science fiction is philosophy. Yes, lasers and teleporters are cool, but science fiction asks big questions. It imagines alternate worlds and exaggerated scenarios. It presents you with 'What would life be like' thought experiments. ... Isaac Asimov's rules for robots are more important than ever. Science fiction, when it's done well, stays in your head for a long time."

—Jonny Thomson, *Big Think*, Oct. 3, 2023

back to 1996. It's an interesting story, combining post-apocalyptic cli-fi and speculation on transgenderism in domes on the ocean floor in the year 2100.

At times reminding me of the fiction of Banana Yoshimoto or Sayaka Murata, it's partly a gently mundane fiction about the relationship between a young professional woman who's sought independence by opening her own salon and her mother, a very successful and publicly visible business leader. The narrative addresses their contentious relationship and a mutual friend who bridges both their worlds, and could have worked as a novel even without the sf elements.

The novel is also an sf story about gender, automated surgery, pervasive communications media, skin cancer concerns driving humanity underwater by 2060, corporate territorialism in the Pacific Ocean, laserdiscs, plastic surgery, gender reassignment, nanotech-infused skin cream, and the ability to capture others' experiences so you can experience them yourself in a virtual reality-like setting.

There are multiple pop culture references throughout the novel—from an aria by the castrato Farinelli to Jacques Derrida—and translator Ari Larissa Heinrich's accompanying essay "Promiscuous Literacy: Taipei Punk and the Queer Future of *The Membranes*" ably situates the work in a broader context internationally. A surprisingly rich read I bought on a whim seeking non-American literature. Worth seeking!

The Mind Net by Herbert W. Franke (DAW, 1974)
I read this immediately before *The Membranes*, above. Originally published in German in 1963, the novel was translated by Christine Priest and features a lovely cover by Kelly Freas, as well as interior illustrations by Jack Gaughan. Not a bad pairing!

At first seeming like a collection of short stories, or perhaps interconnected short stories, the book reveals itself to be a rather inventively constructed novel as the story proceeds. I had to refer back to previous sections to make sure character names had indeed been repeated and were the same person a couple of times, and in the end, the at times confusing structure works really well.

A spaceship well underway on a voyage encounters an unexpected planet. Once populated, its buildings are now ruins, more than two million years old. Tunneling beneath the ruins, the crew finds tissue samples that they bring back to the ship and revive.

In the next section, explorers investigate a form of quickly growing and reorganizing coral that seems to house intelligent energies. Crew members debate what

to tell their superiors about what happened, and one character is forced to make a challenging decision.

Thirdly, a political leader seeks to escape the consequences of his actions in the midst of growing civil unrest. A long-time friend must choose whether to help or hinder his former comrade.

All of this leads to a tribunal in which the actions undertaken by a character are investigated, discussed, and judged. I won't describe any more of the novel because this sets up the rest, and what's been happening is quite fascinating indeed. There's even a twist at the end that reveals another layer—all resulting in a fascinating reading experience.

At least two other books by Franke were translated into English, including *Zone Null* and *The Orchid Cage*, but most of his work ended up only in German, or in Romanian, Japanese, or Italian, in order of frequency. I will seek out other English translations of Franke's work and am so glad I came across this book. What a delightful, random find!



—William Rotsler

Screened at the Globe: A Movie Review

The Boxer's Omen

In early October, after returning from Tokyo, a friend and I watched this 1983 oddity of a Shaw Brothers production directed by Kuei Chih-Hung. Yes, it's a martial arts movie, like many Shaw Brothers flicks. It's also a fantasy-horror movie, and the two aspects don't really blend, but intersect, with each film genre taking the spotlight at different times in the movie. In some ways, it reminded me of the utterly delightful and mind bending *Hausu*, which was also invoked by *Purani Haveli*. (F&F #22)

In the martial arts portion of the flick, a Hong Kong boxer spars with a Thai boxer, who loses the match before attacking him from behind, paralyzing him. The Chinese boxer's brother, also a boxer—who envisions a ghostly image beckoning him—challenges the Thai rule breaker to another bout, in three months (or weeks, I forget) time.

While in Thailand, the injured boxer's brother has another vision, reminiscent of one in his apartment in Hong Kong, leading him to a temple. There, he learns that he's been summoned to avenge a dead abbot whose body remains supernaturally preserved, after he challenged black magicians serving the diabolical ends of a demon.

He undergoes supernatural rather than martial arts training to go up against the magician and demon—leading to a somewhat prolonged sequence of scenes that bring to mind traditional training montages but diverge intriguingly, utilizing on-film animation for special effects, including one effective scene in which text crawls over his bare back and body.

It won't surprise you that he is then attacked by—and attacks—the forces of evil. Those don't necessarily include other martial artists, but the black magician, an undead warrior, and a number of practical effects-driven creatures of different types, including puppet bats, alligators or crocodiles, and other oddities. Most of the combat involves mystical forces and posturing rather than physical combat.

Until he returns at the end of the three months, of course, to face the Thai boxer, who outclasses him in terms of bodyweight. Though he might not have been able to defeat him in terms of martial arts alone, his newly developed supernatural powers prove helpful.

The movie is somewhat slow but ably utilizes both genres quite pleasingly—if you like this kind of thing, which I do, and did.

On the LASFAPA Deities

Continuing my capsule profiles of those LASFAPAs listed in *Wurlitzer's Apocrypha*, we turn to Robbie Cantor (now, again, Robbie Bourget). I profiled her as

a patron saint of APA-L in *Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #48, which I reprint here.

“I saw Bourget, pronounced ‘Bour-zshett’— but did not meet her at the most recent Loscon[, and we've exchanged emails about Pink Floyd and prozines]. She first got involved in fandom in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, where she joined the local *Doctor Who* club and the Ottawa Science Fiction Society. She eventually moved to Los Angeles, joining LASFS and serving as its president and treasurer. Bourget also served on the LASFS board of directors for more than a decade, [recently joining the group for a board meeting,] as well as as a Councillor for the Time Meddlers of Los Angeles. In 1989, Bourget was awarded LASFS' Evans-Freehafer Award and the Time Meddlers' Watson Award.

“An active con runner, she has worked on staff for conventions including Maplecon, Corflu 9, and multiple Gallifrey Ones, Loscons, Worldcons, and Eastercons in the United Kingdom, where she's lived since 1998. She has chaired Loscon twice and co-chaired the 2009 Worldcon in Montreal. Bourget also served on Worldcon bid committees for Montreal in 2017, New Orleans in 2018, and Winnipeg in 2023. For this year's Gallifrey One, she [served] as logistics and operations director. [Bourget was co-chair of this the 2023 North American Science Fiction Convention, as well.] She's also participated in Westercon and Anime LA and served as the master-at-arms for a 1998 business meeting of the World Science Fiction Society. In 2013, she participated in a panel discussion at Smofcon 31 in Toronto: ‘What Do I Do Next?’

“As an apahack, Bourget has participated in APA-L, Gallifreyan Home Companion, LASFAPA, and WOOF. She and Marty Cantor, her husband for a decade, published *Holier Than Thou* in the 1980s. In 1985, she and Marty were awarded the Down Under Fan Fund, resulting in the publication of *Here We Go 'Round the Duffberry Bush* and *Tales of Duffbury*. Author Keith Topping acknowledged her input in his Doctor Who novel *The King of Terror* (BBC, 2000).

“As Marty said at a LASFS meeting in December 2010, he saw Bourget for the first time at the Chicago Worldcon in 1982. It was love at first sight. He flew her to Los Angeles, and she keeps coming back, a strong LA fan despite living in England.”

Comments on LASFAPA #560

In *Fool's Mate* #563, **David Schlosser** inquired about where the file copies of APA-L and LASFAPA are currently being stored. Materials gathered up until the closure of the most recent clubhouse are currently being stored in the LASFS' storage unit—or units. Back issue stock that Marty Cantor had accumulated

in his apartment, I inherited. For most of the issues of both *apae*, a copy has been donated to the University of California at Riverside's Eaton Collection of Science Fiction & Fantasy, and I plan to also donate copies from the remaining stock—but not a full run like what went to Eaton—to the University of Iowa, where I donate *apae* materials.



—William Rotsler

As far as file copies for the LASFS go, I've been told that there's no more storage room available, and I'm not sure we can continue maintaining our own archive even when we obtain a new clubhouse. So the future is uncertain. I've obtained digital copies of every APA-L distribution dating back to its origin from Eaton, thanks to Karl Lembke's heroic scanning efforts. So we have PDFs of APA-L, even if they've not all had optical character recognition applied for full text searching. I continue to upload new APA-Ls for Eaton weekly, so even if we don't maintain our own physical store, we have access to the back issues. We do not have scans of LASFAPA's run, however, so that's the more pressing archival challenge.

I cannot commit to maintaining a store of the back issues I currently have indefinitely. Schlosser has been sending me two copies monthly so I maintain a run of back issues for the LASFS, and what I'd like to do is donate those to Eaton for archiving and public access—rather than holding on to them hoping that the club eventually has more storage space or a clubhouse.

It's not a pressing need, but let's give that some thought. The LASFS might not be able to continue shelving or storing our *apae*, especially because they're now considered "unofficial" activities, though recognized and respected. We should also think about some kind of scanning effort to digitize the run of LASFAPA, which would be more useful over time.

It's interesting that you're reprinting covers from other fanzines. Where do those appear? The last couple of covers were by Kay McCutcheon. I'll have to check back issues, but who's Liz? I'll pay more attention to the art credits. You mentioned dropping off club (LASFS?) fliers at a library reading group. John Hertz recently mailed APA-L fliers to every LASFS member. This week's distribution introduced a new participant, and we received another nibble at the meeting in early October. If someone is daunted by a weekly *apa*, I'll steer them to LASFAPA.

While I saw Alan Winton in early October (as above), I wasn't able to procure the Chart beforehand. So it'll remain where it is for now. I'll confirm with Nick Smith that it's still in his storage. We will not be able to obtain any account information from Cantor's files, unfortunately, however. I think we've found all the information we're going to. Going off the March annotations as you suggested might be the best we can do. I'll see if I can dig mine up.

I can apply optical character recognition to PDFs using Acrobat, but it takes time. I try to do it when I seek out an APA-L back issue, but it's slow going.

Alan Winston's *Skeleton Gecko* updated LASFAPAns on his recent travels to Los Angeles, which he's now reprised, as well as other destinations. Your description of *Purani Haveli* (*F&F* #22)—"a baffling train wreck with wild tonal shifts"—is actually pretty apt. Cory Doctorow used to live in the Bay Area. Before that, Canada, when I first met him and hosted him in the Boston area. He now lives in the Los Angeles area. During the pandemic, my wife and I ran into his family while hiking. His wife, I believe, works for Disney. As always, I read and appreciated your reports on local theater, music, and other performances. A welcome extension of my usual fannish interests!

And in *The Title Goes Here*, Janice Morningstar continued her Pemmi-Con conrep. Like Schlosser said in his fanzine, "the journey is the whole of the journey." Your description of Robbie Bourget's reaction to your condolences on the death of Marty Cantor made me grin. Despite the loss we've experienced, that moment was pretty classic Bourget—and Cantor. I've been enjoying your Pemmi-Con reports, and we're not even at the con yet, per se! That's one good conrep.

The Brass Hat Mind #5

Oct. 9, 2023

The Brass Hat Mind 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 the Spectator Amateur Press 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.

Trip Report: Tokyo (cont.)

Previous installments of this trip report have appeared in *Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #84 and *Faculae & Filigree* #24. Sept. 26, 2023, was very much a transition day. My wife and I totally crashed during the latter part of the day in our hotel room. We just hung out after walking around a little in the morning. I stepped out briefly to buy some magazines, and we slept really well. Regardless, we still awoke at 11:30 p.m., 2:30 a.m., and 4:30—but for much less time, and much less wakeful.

The morning of Sept. 27, we got up later than we had been (6 a.m.) and didn't go to the usual breakfast place—Latte Graphic, the only breakfast joint open in the neighborhood of Jiyugaoka at 7 a.m.—as early. We took the train about five stops to the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum (<https://topmuseum.jp/en/contents/index.html>), where we perused two worthwhile exhibits: *A Genealogy of “Peep Media” and the Gaze* and *After the Landscape Theory*.

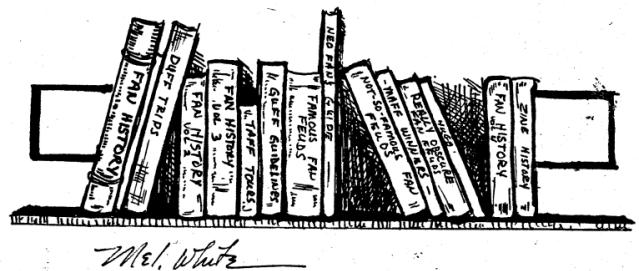
The first exhibit concentrated on the history of photography, specifically devices that made “peeping” possible and the images produced with them. Technology and media featured included the camera obscura, peep shows, the stereoscope, and the Kinetoscope. While I found the exhibit's thesis on “peeping” somewhat of a stretch—the exhibit focused neither on voyeurism nor street photography, per se—I found the combined presentation of multiple photographic technology to be intriguing and compelling.

The second exhibit focused on the landscape theory of photography as espoused by film critic and anarchist Masao Matsuda in the late 1960s, as well as its impact on photography and filmmaking in the 1970s as well as to today. In the museum gift shop, I picked up the exhibit's catalog, *After Landscape Theory*, which includes an excellent contextual essay by Tasaka Hiroko, contemporary nighttime landscape photography examples from Sasaoka Keiko and Endo Maiko, Imai Norio's late-1970s red-light and crosswalk photography (*Walking/Abenosuji* is especially interesting, combining the mapped

landscape with street-corner documentation), and Hirasawa Go's thoughtful “Rethinking Landscape Theory: For the Sake of Post-Landscape Theory.”

As a faned, I was also interested in the movement's connection to publishing such as the magazines *Gendai no me*, *Provoke*, and *Eiga Hihyo*; and experimental film, including *The Man Who Left His Will on Film*; *Go, Go Second Time Virgin*; and other works. Interestingly, the exhibit did not seem to affect or influence my photography while traveling, but I'll take another look at my snapshots.

We ate lunch at the museum cafe before walking 20 minutes to another museum, Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum (<https://www.teien-art-museum.ne.jp/en>), which included an expansive garden in which we could lounge, nap, and read while enjoying a less-built environment. We were both more energetic than yesterday—perhaps we're getting used to the jetlag!—and eventually made our way back toward our neighborhood and son, Jonah, to spend time together in the evening.



From the Reading Pile: Short Stories

As noted below, I recently read *Infinity* #1, published in Fall 1982 by B and D Publishing Company in Iowa City, Iowa. Edited by Susan Behr and Charles Freehand, it's explicitly a “professional quality” fanzine rather than a prozine per se and includes six short stories, book reviews, a UFO report, and a science column.

The fanzine's publishing model intrigues me. Not only did the publishers encourage readers to serve as subscription sales agents—sell a friend a sub for \$10 and keep \$1 for yourself—they also suggested to con committees that “*Infinity* ... is the perfect place for your program guide. Not only do fans get a program, but a number of quality short stories as well.” There aren't a lot of details offered, but it seems that the deal included a free half-page ad in the fanzine, as well as what might have been cooperative printing in which the program guide was bound inside of or around an issue of *Infinity*.

The premiere issue debuted at the 1982 Worldcon, and I'm curious if any of you ever came across it.

Regardless, the periodical—and its publishing model—doesn't seem to have been a success. ISFDb lists just two issues, this and Spring 1983. Its editors don't seem to have edited or written anything else. Personally, I miss print con programs and quite like the idea of co-op printing.

The book reviews, which are somewhat lively, address then-recent works by Wilson Tucker—spending quite a bit of time on him as a person—Kevin D. Randle and Robert Charles Cornett (who contribute a serial starting in this issue), Robert A. Heinlein—they did not like *Number of the Beast*—and movies including *Blade Runner* and *The Thing*.

Cornett's "A Truly Mechanical Man" offers a nice take on the Robotic Reveal trope, as well as a twist at the end. The author's portrayal of infidelity is oddly humorous while still sitting uncomfortably, and in the end, the cuckolding friend receives his comeuppance, in a manner of speaking.

"The Great Debate" by Holt Lawson considers the late survivors of life on Mars and what might happen if they waited for human explorers to rescue them. While the uncredited illustration—perhaps by art director Pandora?—could have portrayed the Martians better in my opinion, the story remains a quiet, serious tale—that comes at a high price.

Sara Bellam's "Time Chute" is an excellent portrayal of time travel as well as waste management. Just imagine: 200 years of garbage sent to the exact same place and time. Out of sight, out of mind, indeed!

"Like Sheep" by Katie d'Roget (as below) is the story that inspired this fanzine review. It utilizes the To Serve Man trope to a relatively suspenseful and dark effect, which is what resonated with the below discussion of "Isara's Way."

The uncredited "Rookman's Planet" is a fun feghoot that I knew was coming; I'd seen the final sentence on the two-page spread before reading. Regardless, as always, it was fun getting there—though I found this pun to be more of a stretch than many. Well, most. OK, all the feghoots I've ever read.

I haven't yet read the remaining story, serial segment, or more fact-oriented pieces, but I found *Infinity* to be an eminently readable fiction-oriented fanzine. The stories aren't crummy.

Screened at the Globe: A Movie Review

Andy Warhol's Frankenstein

After seeing *Psycho Ape!* at the Gardena Cinema (*Faculae & Filigree* #23, as below), a friend and I returned the following night to see the 1973 *Flesh for Frankenstein*, aka *Andy Warhol's Frankenstein*. I've

seen other Warhol films and haven't been that impressed, though I appreciated them as art. This might be the best "Warhol" movie I've ever seen.

Largely because it's not really a Warhol film, though his name is part of the title. Instead, it's a relatively straight-forward Hammer-style flick directed by Paul Morrissey. Starring a young Udo Kier as the titular doctor, it very much captures the tenor and tone of contemporaneous Hammer output, in part because its interiors were filmed at Cinecittà in Rome by an Italian crew.



—William Rotsler

The storyline focuses on one Baron von Frankenstein, whose experiments concentrate on creating male and female creatures composed of the body parts of the dead who can then procreate to parent a perfect Serbian race. Having created his Adam and Eve, he realizes that he's bungled—his Igor-like assistant accidentally procured the brain of the more chaste of a pair of friends rather than the randy rustic he'd been seeking.

Earning an X rating, there's plenty of nudity in the movie—primarily the Adam and Eve composites—as well as infidelity as the baron's wife seeks the company and attention of the randy rustic, whom she's taken into their home as a valet. But the most questionable scene involves the baron, played by Kier, satisfying his carnal urges in the surgical wounds of his perfectly constructed woman. That leads to the best line in the movie: "To know death, Otto, you have to fuck life... in the gall bladder!"

Also notable is the movie's use of the Space-Vision 3D process. Filmed in 3D, it utilizes such special effects somewhat sparingly but quite effectively. This might also be the best 3D movie I've ever seen. The 3D was definitely not added later as an afterthought.

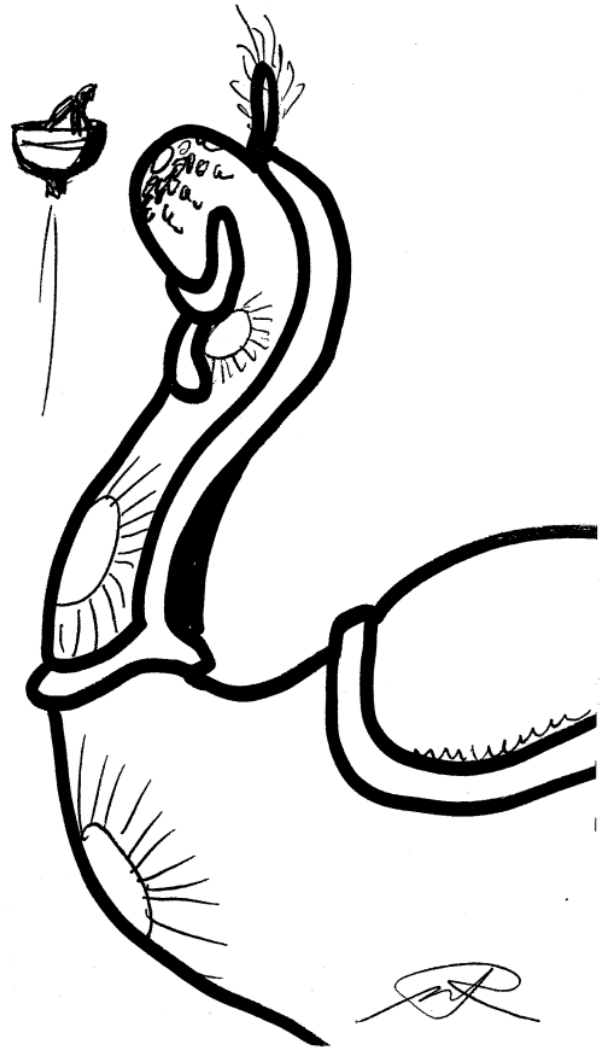
Attack of the Giant Leeches

This 1959 Roger Corman production directed by Bernard L. Kowalski isn't just your run-of-the-mill creature feature, it's also science fiction! In one brief exchange of dialog, a character speculates about what might have caused the gigantic growth of the everyday swamp leech. His surmisal? The nearby location of Cape Canaveral and its possible use of radioactive energy during launch tests.

Otherwise, it's pretty pedestrian fare, cold opening aside. The poor residents of a swamp are starting to go missing, and a local scientist and game warden team up to determine what's causing the disappearances. It turns out that giant leech creatures—portrayed by men in fabric or rubber suits—have been abducting them to warehouse them in an underwater lair in which they can feed on them at their leisure.

The bulk of the movie seems to be taken up by scenes establishing the back-country nature of the people under threat—including the delightful Yvette Vickers, a UCLA student who turned to film and TV work after being "discovered" for a shampoo commercial. Vickers is mostly noted for her role as a slatternly rival in the previous year's *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman*, and this role as a slatternly wife. The scenes featuring her character, her character's rotund dry goods shopkeeper husband—portrayed by Bruno VeSota—and her more athletic lover are well worth watching.

The leeches themselves don't get a lot of camera time at first, but when they do, they're wonderful: Full-body suits, foam rubber octopus-like suckers, and vampiric feeding mostly in the neck area. Heroic game warden Steve Benton takes his shirt off well and doesn't advocate the use of dynamite to manage fish and wildlife.



—William Rotsler

Comments on SAPS #304

In *Gyllene* #7, **Burnett R. Toskey** showed spans the results of a random scattering of wildflower seeds. That photograph is a testament to the beauty of such scattering. My wife tried to plant clover in our backyard—our front yard features local native succulents—but I mowed using a manual mower and messed that up. And I've scattered wildflower seeds in the backyard at least once, but nothing took. Maybe we need to try a bunker rather than just scattering them on the ground.

Your remark to Wally Weber about "Isara's Way" and people raised as meat animals reminded me of the recently read "Like Sheep" by Katie d'Roget in the Fall 1982 *Infinity* #1. I reviewed that fanzine above.

I quite enjoy the work of Joe Bob Briggs. His newspaper writing was collected in at least two books, and he continues to host movies on television, most recently *The Last Drive-In* program streaming on

Shudder. I used to enjoy receiving his newsletters *We Are the Weird* and *The Joe Bob Report*. He still occasionally does live performances, and I have a 1996 video tape of an older such appearance, *Dead in Concert*. A friend and I often rate movies using his rating system, or as much as we remember it: mostly bodycount and whether there's full frontal nudity.

A belated happy birthday! I recently exchanged emails with a member of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society who's months away from her 90th birthday.



—Alan White

Gordon Ecklund's *Be Bop* #126 speculated on why the musical *Li'l Abner* hasn't been revived like others from the 1950s. My take is similar to why I don't think television programs such as *The Beverly Hillbillies* or *The Dukes of Hazzard* would work as well today: I think artistic works portraying people from rural areas or the countryside as bumpkins or sources of humor would be taken as politically incorrect or insensitive, particularly in terms of their economic and education representations. I could be wrong; Jeff Foxworthy continues to traffic in redneck jokes, so maybe it'd play.

The excerpt you shared from Dorothy Sayers's *Murder Must Advertise* is an appealing case for following cricket if that's what modern sports writing is like. How poetic that writing was! I also enjoyed reading about your post-Sept. 11, 2001, travels, as

well as the writing of "A Sense of Wonder."

You also mentioned Don Fitch. He's still alive, indeed living in a Covina care facility, receives APA-L weekly but doesn't contribute, and LASFS member Chris Marble occasionally visits him. Not too long ago, Marble shared a picture of Fitch online—without his prosthetic nose—and I hesitate to include that here. A few weeks ago, Fitch's weekly APA-L mailing was returned without explanation, so I asked Marble to call to make sure everything was OK. Fitch seems to be doing relatively well for his age and situation. If any of you would like to pass on greetings to Fitch, I'd be happy to include such in any upcoming APA-L mailing. (In fact, with your permission, I could send him a photocopy of this. Let me know what you think.)

My wife is a big fan of Hilary Mantel, so I appreciated your mention of her. I'll have to spend more time with the writing of Ted Chiang and Roberto Bolano, particularly *The Spirit of Science Fiction*, which sounds wonderful.

In *I Bought New Shoes, and They Squeak!*—I got a kick out of the Harlan Ellison reference—**Leigh Edmonds** shared some thoughts and feelings about mourning the death of Valma Brown. My wife and I celebrate our 15th anniversary in mid-October. While I haven't been married long, I can only slightly imagine what losing one's spouse might feel like, and I empathize. I'm glad you've been spending time with friends and family.

I'm also glad you've returned to your history of Australian fandom. In early October, I spent time researching the history of *Worlds of If* magazine in order to write a brief history of the periodical in advance of its relaunch early next year. (<https://worldsofifmagazine.com>) I also emailed Jacqueline Lichtenberg and Larry Niven for comment on their experiences writing for the magazine. If any of you have any memories or stories to share, I'd welcome them via email for inclusion.

Which librarian did you work with at the University of California at Riverside's Eaton Collection of Science Fiction & Fantasy? They recently took in Marty Cantor's fanzine collection, which I organized, boxed, and transported to Riverside, and I'm in frequent contact with them about APA-L's archives and other LASFS matters. I'm glad they were able to help you acquire John Foyster's SAPS contributions.

It's good to hear that you'll be coming to Corflu in February. I bought a membership myself and hope to get the go-ahead to participate. Las Vegas isn't far from Los Angeles, and I've lined up a friend to stay with if my wife doesn't mind my going. It's awesome

that you'll be able to go to Eaton as part of your travels. I can understand your concerns about traveling to the United States. I wish I could comfort you, but as a citizen, I'm concerned, too.

Your comments on book design made me think of our recent time in Japan. Once I'd identified which publishers specialized in science fiction locally, I acquainted myself with their spine design so I could scan the shelves in bookstores without needing to be able to read Japanese to know a book's author or title. Based on the spine design—and either a publisher's logo or design, or a more limited set of characters—I could then pull out a book to use Google Translate on my phone to see what it was. That helped me find some interesting used and new Japanese writing, which I'll further discuss in future apazines as my triprep continues.

In early October, I went to the library to pick up a hold I'd requested while traveling—Dorothy B. Hughes's *In a Lonely Place*—and was pleased to see it was a New York Review Books edition. Their design is deliciously consistent and always worth looking for.

Your use of audio books while modeling sounds like a practical approach, though I can hardly believe that you'd not already read *Dune*. I tend to dislike audio books and have always relegated them to something you listen to while driving, though I enjoy listening to old-time radio—usually with full attention instead of reading. Meanwhile, my wife is an avid podcast listener—I also don't really enjoy podcasts, though I appreciate radio productions—and she'll often listen to something while working on something else. Recently, I think she's been enjoying BBC 4's *Uncharted with Hannah Fry*. But I'll have to reconsider audio books—or OTR, for that matter—as something I listen to while doing other things. What podcasts do you listen to?

Andrew Hooper's *Henchman* #16 marked the fourth anniversary of his involvement in SAPS. 37 years of activity in the Turbo-Charged Party Animal apa is even more impressive! Though I've hacked out my fair share of what might be considered snapzines or, by less-giving readers crudzines, I've not been involved in any apa so long. It's interesting how reading back issues seems to increase the perceived duration of one's involvement in SAPS. I feel similarly about the National Fantasy Fan Federation and the LASFS. Reading about an organization's—or apa's—history, reading past publications, and otherwise increasing one's knowledge about it and its participants helps solidify one's sense of involvement and commitment, I think.

For example, since being selected scribe for the LASFS, I've asserted myself as Scribbles, a fan name

used for that purpose. *De Profundis* and *Menace of the LASFS* are attributed to Heath “Scribbles” Row. While having breakfast with visiting LASFAPAn Alan Winston (*Faculae & Filigree* #24), I learned that former LASFS scribe Jack Harness called what he did as scribe scribbling. That straight line to history means a lot to me, and I feel like I'm continuing a long-running tradition for the club, not merely engaging in what is sometimes an irritating volunteer role. (You mean I have to go to *every* meeting?) The “warm timebinding feeling” you mention is very real.

Your remark about illustrations featuring nudity later showing up in Marty Cantor's fanzines made me chuckle. It's true. Among his effects were a relatively sizable stack of misprints I couldn't rationalize keeping as scratch paper or stationery. And some of the illustrations in the assortment of fanart I inherited, I'm not sure I can bring myself to print. Perhaps I'll share some of those with SAPS and posterity given this discussion. So thank you very much for “20,000 Leagues Under the Masthead.” What fun it is to see a William Rotsler illustration—though reversed—on p. 7 of this edition.

In *Lucubrations* #145, **Rocky Willson** mentioned that I'd sent him a letter. Did I? What was it? I don't have any file copies of correspondence to you, so I haven't written a separate letter of comment, and I promised our EOOE I wouldn't send postmailings if I miss a deadline—so I'm quite curious what that was. (I sent the Films Fantastic flier? Huh. I forget why I did that.) I, too, am a big believer in psyllium husks. Every day with lunch, when I don't eat at work, I drink a pint of water with a tablespoon of such husks. When we were traveling recently in Japan, I missed the extra fiber and was glad to return home.

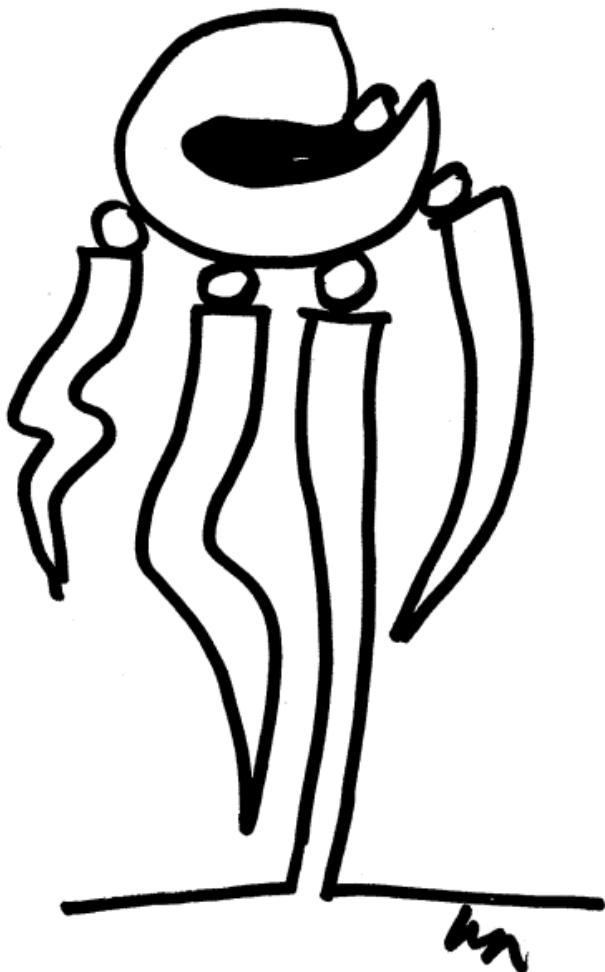
Your mention of the Crest made me think of my new favorite movie theater locally, the Gardena Cinema. (*Faculae & Filigree* #23). It's a little down-at-the-heels, will probably only last another couple of years before the family sells it and the parking lot next door—and offers some really interesting programming. It's also easier to get to than the New Beverly Cinema or Los Feliz Theatre across town given freeway driving to the South Bay.

While I forget why I sent the Films Fantastic flier to SAPS members, I've decided to move away from offering scheduled, real-time screenings and listening sessions to recommending programming monthly for members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation—and others—to explore on their own schedules. The first such recommendations appeared in *Fanactivity Gazette* Vol. 3 #4 (September 2023), and I'll submit November's video and tape bureaus recommendations within the next week or so. You can find that ish of

Fanactivity Gazette at <https://tinyurl.com/fanac-gaz-202309> if you're interested. Mindy Hunt recently took over its editorship. I'll also print the recommendations below.

I'm sorry to hear about your recent health situation. May you heal fully and quickly!

Finally, Burnett Toskey provided *Creepy* #9, reprinting *Cry of the Nameless* #9, which doesn't seem to be available on Fanac.org! While I will miss this series, I've sure enjoyed the editions I've received. I enjoyed reading about the activities and meetings of the Nameless Ones, and it inspired me to consider publishing fanzine reviews in *De Profundis* or *Menace of the LASFS* instead of just listing materials received. I'll also have to return to *Mysterious Traveler* in search of its more science fictional episodes. I'd been unaware there was also a *magazine*.



—William Rotsler

N3F Tape and Video Bureaus Recommendations

Because I have some space remaining—and so you don't need to refer to *Fanactivity Gazette* for this month's recommended listening and viewing, here's what the N3F tape and video bureaus (i.e., me) have on offer this month to replace the previous scheduled sessions. I'm sure I sent you all the Films Fantastic schedule for a reason!

First Fridays: Shorts

The Incredible Hulk At Bay!

The 1974 Power Records book and record set
<https://youtu.be/hzpJoUQR5iw>

The Incredible Hulk: "Blind Alley"

A track from the 1978 Peter Pan record
<https://youtu.be/HOZaIZbk6Cc>

The Incredible Hulk: The Rampage of the Rhino

The 1980 Parkes Run 45 accompanied with a read-along coloring book
<https://youtu.be/KqxSCPz8cWQ>

The Amazing Spider-Man: The Mark of the Man-Wolf

The 1974 Power Records book and record set
https://youtu.be/C_kulaaxqjk

The Amazing Spider-Man: The Invasion of the Dragon Men

The 1981 Peter Pan/Power Records book and record set
<https://youtu.be/Mv5d7nnrM-o>

The Amazing Spider-Man: From Beyond the Grave

The 1972 Rockomic
<https://youtu.be/V-61kPB1-mA>

Second Saturdays: Feature Films

October's movie selection is the 1971 *The Abominable Dr. Phibes*, a stylish horror fantasy featuring Vincent Price.

Runtime: ~1.5 hours

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_znqhYKGYU

Third Thursdays: Old-Time Radio

Two episodes of *The Shadow* are on offer—by request!

"The Death-House Rescue" (Sept. 26, 1937)

https://youtu.be/wMk-CA_Gi7o

"Murder by the Dead" (Oct. 17, 1937)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82DxL1sutg8>

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #85

Oct. 12, 2023

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Last Week's Senryu

A mysterious
printer problem this evening
threw me for a loop

Long story short, I figured it out and was finally able print the few remaining fanzines before collating and preparing the mailing.

Short story long, while I could print up until dinnertime and the LASFS meeting, I couldn't for the life of me print afterward. The printer just fed blank sheets through. I researched fixes online, cleaned one thing via the maintenance tools, cleaned another thing, and still bupkus. Then I read something online about not being able to print in one app, but being OK in another. So I tried printing from Chrome rather than Acrobat. Voila. The problem wasn't the printer, but the program! That was helpful.

So I could focus on Acrobat. I noticed that I couldn't Save or Save As many of the files I'd been printing, and realized the problem had started with one particular ellor's file—which was no longer accessible because I'd removed a thumb drive used to transfer the file after scanning. So I closed all the files, returned the thumb drive, and reopened the files. Voila. I could now print again, in Acrobat.

But I was worried, for sure. Consumer electronics these days are such that if we can't fix them ourselves, we often don't fix them. We just get another. This printer was too expensive to just bin, and I was already thinking through repair options. I was thrilled to be able to limit it to a software error—that I had in fact caused.

The Winnings Could Be Monstrous!

The California State Lottery currently offers Universal Monsters Scratchers tickets, perfect for the Halloween season, as well as for monster kids around the world. (<https://tinyurl.com/Universal-lottery>) There are reportedly seven designs available, including the Mummy, the Creature from the Black Lagoon, Frankenstein's monster, the Wolf Man, the Bride of

Frankenstein, Dracula, and all six featured creatures together (see below).

I'm not usually one to play the lottery, but the other day, I picked up a ticket at the neighborhood 7-Eleven to check it out. It was obvious I don't usually buy tickets because I didn't even know you had to pay cash—you can't charge lottery cards. I might consider returning for the other six just to see them, share in the season, and encourage monsters in public. Next week... we'll see how my Scratchers fared!



Trip Report: Tokyo (cont.)

Since last week, additional tripreps have appeared in *Faculae & Filigree* #24 and *Brass Hat Mind* #5, to be collected in a forthcoming issue of *The Stf Amateur*. At this point, I've exhausted the college-ruled notebook diary I maintained through Sept. 27, 2023.

Other highlights of visiting my son included seeing the Japan campus of Temple University—basically, one building—near the Sangenjaya train station, experiencing Jonah's train commute from home to school; experiencing the same from his previous dorm in the Nakahara ward of Kawasaki, Kanagawa, across the Tama River; seeing his former dorm, which is a 15-minute walk from the Musashi-Kosugi station; shopping for apartment supplies such as dishes at a nearby Nitori, which is similar to Ikea; traipsing around Ikebukuro, including a lunch of omurice; and exploring the Sunshine Aquarium in Toshima City, which was near where we stayed with friends during our first visit in 2017. We also enjoyed otherwise walking around and exploring our—and his—neighborhoods.

Almost every day, however, I also watched at least

a little television. On the first evening, Sept. 24, 2023, even though we were tired, I stayed up late enough to watch some of *Ranma ½* (<https://tvguide.myjcom.jp/program/223445>) and *Armored Trooper Votoms*. One evening while we were all hanging out, I happened upon *Blue Orchestra*. It was a kick to be able to see anime I'd only ever seen available on VHS, DVD, or streaming right there on prime time TV. The channels I lingered on most included NHK, TVK, and Tokyo MX. I didn't learn how to access the BS stations until relatively late in our time there.

For the most part, I didn't do any planned or scheduled TV watching beyond that first night. I'd merely click through the channels, which included a Chinese and Korean station, as well as BBC News, and see what was on. Given the times of day I tended to do this—in the morning before we left for the day, once back to rest in the afternoon, and perhaps before bedtime—I came across some interesting programming that is worth noting.

Wednesday morning while we were there, I watched a little of the Chinese drama *Young Master! I Will Protect You* (episode 23, "The Cannibal"). The title is machine translated, so it might not be accurate. This airing of the historical drama featured the discovery of six bodies with their hearts cut out in Nanfu. It was rumored to be the work of cannibals, but an investigation determined that it was a serial murder. The program reminded me a little bit of gaslight thrillers such as Caleb Carr's *The Alienist*, only earlier in history.

I also enjoyed watching the 2007—though the program felt like a show from the 1970s—*Toyama no Kin-san*. It actually might have been the 1973-1994 *Edo o Kiru*, which focuses on the same character. Regardless, both programs concentrate on Toyama no Kin-san, a character based on Toyama Kagemoto. He was a samurai and official of the Tokugawa shogunate during the Edo period. Leaving home as a young man, he lived among the commoners and often helped them—providing the storylines for the show.

What I remember most from watching the program several times was the dramatic reveal of his red shoulder tattoo of flowering sakura trees. The show was very much done in the style of 1970s police TV, as well as samurai or ninja cinema. It looks like one of the episodes I saw was the fourth episode of the fourth series of *Kin-san of Toyama*, "The Woman Who Believed in Fortune-Telling." I watched this more than any other program during our stay, and once I identify exactly which show it was, I'd welcome seeing more on DVD.

While I could learn a lot about what was on at any given moment by accessing the NHK, TVK, or Tokyo

MX Web sites and their programming grids, I also picked up a couple of TV-oriented magazines from neighborhood bookstores. The biweekly *TV Station*, published by Diamond Co., was perhaps the most useful. (<https://tvstation.jp>) I picked up *TV Station* #20 (Sept. 30 to Oct. 13, 2023), which meant I missed a few days of listings during our time there. Biweekly grids made for a more useful and manageable periodical, and I appreciated the magazine's more expansive focus on "Anime & Hero" programming.



—Courtesy of Amazon.com

Anime currently airing in Tokyo include *B-Project: Passion*Love Call*; *Beyblade X*; *Blue Orchestra*; *Bouken Tairiku Ania Kingdom*; *Captain Tsubasa: Junior Youth Arc*; *Chibi Maruko-chan*; *Crayon Shin-chan*; *Detective Conan*; *Doraemon*; *Duel Masters Win Duel Academy*; *Firefighter Daigo: Rescuer in Orange*; *Four Knights of the Apocalypse*; *Girlfriend*, *Girlfriend Season 2*; *Hametsu no Oukoku*; *I Shall Survive Using Potions!*; *Kibou no Chikara: Otona Precure '23*; *Ninjala*; *One Piece*; *Osama Sentai King Auger*; *Pokemon*, *Protocol: Rain*; *Puzzle*; *Run for Money: The Great Mission*; *Sazae-san*; *Shadowverse Flame: Seven Shadows-hen*; *Shangri-La Frontier*; *Soaring Sky!*; *Undead Unluck*; *Yu-Gi-Oh! Go Rush!!*; and the tokusatsu *Kamen Rider Gotchard*

and *Ultraman Blazar*. Just on TV!

I also picked up one of the monthly magazines, *Media Boy's TV Fan* (Sept. 27 to Oct. 31, 2023), which helped fill in some of the gaps. It was challenging to read both titles using Google Translate on my mobile, given their design—especially while watching TV—but I learned about several other Japanese programs that might be worth exploring.

Don't Take Time, Lovers is a new romantic comedy involving time travel. *Dino Dana* is a Canadian production about a young paleontologist recently picked up by NHK. Stations also programmed the 2015 live-action movie *Assassination Classroom*, the 1962 *King Kong vs. Godzilla*, 1975's *Terror of Mechagodzilla*, the 1995 *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah*—and domestic sf and adjacent flicks such as *Batteries Not Included*, *The Box*, *Despicable Me*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, and *Minions*.



—William Rotsler

Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

Split Second

This week's movie with a friend was the 1992 sf action movie *Split Second*, starring Rutger Hauer and Kim Cattrall. While she's largely known for her role on *Sex in the City*, I was surprised that Cattrall has

done quite a bit of genre work in addition to this movie. She appeared on the *Logan's Run* TV series, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Tucker's Witch*, *Tales of the Gold Monkey*, the 1997 *The Outer Limits*, and the miniseries *Invasion*, as well as in *Big Trouble in Little China*, *Mannequin*, and *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*.

Regardless, the spotlight is mostly held by the stony and somewhat surly Hauer, as well as a bookish sidekick played by Neil Duncan (aka Alastair Duncan). The two carry the movie, a relatively straightforward eco-horror movie. It's 1998, the ocean levels are rising, the city of London is flooded, and vicious, monstrous creatures—well, one in particular—emerge from the water to wreak havoc in the city. It leaves arcane graffiti behind, scrawled in the blood of its victims.

Hauer's appropriately named Harley Stone is a coffee-drinking, chocolate-eating, wild card of a police officer who lost his partner to such a creature. Having been injured by the beast, he can sense its presence—there's some kind of psychic connection—and thinks it has a hand in a more recent run of murders. His higher up saddles him with an expert in the occult, the more intellectual Det. Dick Durkin, who proceeds to solve the case with Stone.

Meanwhile, Stone's partner's (and his, it seems) ex—portrayed by Cattrall—re-enters his life and becomes embroiled in the fleeting encounters with the creature. The three eventually track the creature into the London Underground, where viewers finally get to see the thing. The movie ends well, but some bubbling water before the credits might suggest otherwise.

The movie was much better than I expected. Director Tony Maylam represented a near-future London that reminded me of *Blade Runner*, only with less neon and projected holograms. Ian Dury (of the Blockheads) has a small role. And the creature is straight out of *Alien*. The movie is somewhat hampered by buddy movie aspirations—*Lethal Weapon* comes to mind—and Durkin's visible transformation from scholarly nebbish to leather-clad gun toter doesn't quite convince. I'm curious: Why was I unaware of this movie when it came out?

Comments on APA-L #3039

In *Leeway* dated for Sept. 28, 2023, **Lee Gold** found some common ground with Joe Zeff in terms of observations of Earth's moon. She also updated ellers on plans for Yom Kippur. So far, I haven't had to go in for jury duty. Friday evening, I received a message indicating I didn't have to serve Monday, perhaps because of Columbus Day. Monday night, I was informed I didn't have to go in Tuesday. I was glad to

not have to go in Tuesday because I was able to soft launch a project I've been working on since February at work. Tuesday night, I learned I didn't need to go in Wednesday. Wednesday, Thursday. We'll see what Friday brings!

While growing up, the traditional side dishes on my mother's Thanksgiving table included canned cranberries, both whole and smooth—we were so amused and pleased by the ridges left by the can—green beans with slivered almonds in a cream of mushroom soup-based sauce; mashed canned sweet potatoes topped with whole, browned marshmallows; stuffing made from bagged croutons or breadcrumbs with lots of dry sage, and ready-made rolls, warmed. My mom prepared the stuffing inside the turkey, made her own gravy with giblets, juice from the bird, and flour; and she usually made pumpkin pie for dessert.

Our Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners now that I'm married are variations on those themes, but featuring fewer premade foods, more whole ingredients, no cream of mushroom soup, and no marshmallows. I like them with sweet potatoes, but they're wholly unnecessary and not at all healthy. Besides, I doubt they're historically accurate. For dessert, Caitlin usually makes a sweet potato or lemon meringue pie, both if I'm lucky.

John Hertz's *Vanamonde* #1563 opened focusing on the 10 Days of Awe and Day of Atonement. I've been enjoying the new—to my fanzines—illustrations, too. Marty Cantor's back stock of art submissions is a treasure trove. And you have an eagle eye, being able to place the previous use of Taral Wayne's cover image. When I reprint material, I don't always know its provenance, though I have the artist's permission. I'll share your feedback with Wayne and Jeffrey H Wood.

With *Space Cowboy's Accretion* #1, bookseller, editor, writer, and new LASFS member **Jean-Paul Garnier** joined us as an editor. Welcome! Garnier tells me he'll likely be able to join us monthly, so here's to a solid first issue! I look forward to his contributions helping to bring a breath of the new to the apa. As an active editor for the Science Fiction Poetry Association's journal *Star*Line* as well as his own publications, and as a podcaster, I'm sure he's got authors on his radar who are nowhere near my own.

Congratulations on receiving the recent National Fantasy Fan Federation Laureate Award! I haven't paid much attention to that process this year and look forward to see what else was recognized. The bookstore's event series sounds really interesting. What a gift to Joshua Tree! It's also wonderful to read about the cross-pollination with John Thiel's *Pablo Lennis*, one of the few print fanzines I receive in the

mail. I recently received an issue so will look for your name going forward!

We exchanged emails about your recent reading of Charles Platt; thank you for bringing him back to my attention. Again, welcome to APA-L! I look forward to the next *Accretion*.

Matthew Mitchell's *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #28 told me of his avoidance of pool halls and dark alleys. While I continued to read comic books in the 1990s, primarily 1990-1995 until my first job out of college took my attention more fully, I dabbled mostly in the independents, the emergence of Image, and Marvel—but looking back, find much of the latter two disappointing and garish. Comic book design fell to a low in the '90s and perhaps the subsequent decade, I think. Even the logo design. Now I find comics much more palatable, though the bronze age and earlier eras remain my favorites. That said, I do find the Maestro intriguing, and I have enjoyed the writing of Peter David.

Couscous is the bomb. When I was a vegetarian early in my career, chickpeas with garam masala and couscous were always a winner as a dinner. Now, I'd add spinach and onion.

In *Reflections from a Fish Bowl* #55, **Barbara Gratz Harmon** informed us that her smoke detector continued to go off for three whole days. Wow. That must have been really irritating! The quiet must be welcome. I enjoyed your memories of your first computers and software.

I didn't work at all during my time in Japan with Caitlin to see Jonah. Hopefully, my trip reports will capture some of what we did, what I learned, and what I thought about. Your mentioning the floral store in Toluca Lake that sells pumpkins reminded me of my recent drive to Altadena to hang out with LASFAPAn Alan Winston. (*Faculae & Filigree* #24) On the way, I saw an outdoors pumpkin patch complete with inflatable bounce house or somesuch.

And **Joe Zeff's** *Toony Loons* #732 updated me on changes to his insulin dosage. I'm sorry to hear about your recent technical difficulties. Given my senryu above and Barbara Gratz Harmon's smoke detector, technical difficulties seem to be in the air. I'm glad to hear there's no bone damage in your knee. I hope your heel spurs, well, heal quickly and fully.

Based on your comment to Lee Gold and her fanzine this distribution, I think you two agree more than you disagree. Your remark on your driver's license reminded me that my wife and I recently procured International Driving Permits from AAA.

Space Warp & WOOF #2023

Oct. 13, 2023

Space Warp & WOOF is a one-shot fanzine 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 participants in the Worldcon Order of Fan-Editors (WOOF), members of the 81st World Science Fiction Convention, 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.

Welcoming WorldCon

This one-shot fanzine is a contribution to the 2023 edition of WOOF, collated at the WorldCon in Chengdu, China. I debated submitting, given that I'm not attending the con—though I did join as a supporting member to participate online—and I've never actually *gone* to a WorldCon, though I participated in the 2020 ConZealand online. I even got the T-shirt, which is decidedly not virtual.

Regardless, I realized that I had a couple of pieces of writing in the works that would be published on the Web, but not in a fanzine, so I decided to document them here for other faneds, fanzine readers, and con members. I can still participate in WorldCon.

The first piece is an unedited review of the 2022 Loscon 48 written for *The Science Fact & Science Fiction Concatenation* (<http://www.concatenation.org>). That reportedly will be published in January 2024, and I offer the unedited version here. The second piece is the unedited version of a brief history of *Worlds of If* magazine (<https://worldsofifmagazine.com>) that I wrote for that periodical's Web site in advance of the magazine's relaunch next year.

My thoughts and spirit are with this year's WorldCon members and participants, even if my body isn't. Have a blast in Chengdu, and safe travels, all.

Convention Report: Loscon 48

A couple of years after I moved to Los Angeles from Brooklyn in 2009, one of my first major steps into local fandom was at the clubhouse of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, then in Van Nuys. I had previously met LASFSan John Hertz (*Vanamonde*) at a Lunacon in New York and visited the club to meet Marty Cantor, then official collator of the apae APA-L and LASFAPA, whom I'd corresponded with while compiling the apae directory *Blue Moon Special* (<https://efanzines.com/ActiveAPAs>). That experience—and my first foray into fannish apae outside of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (I'd previously been active in mundane apae.)—was entirely positive and the group very attractive in terms

of fanac. The LASFS is the world's oldest continuously active science fiction and fantasy club, meeting weekly since the club's founding in October 1934.



D. Nunez and Chris Butler, assistant art director of Griffith Observatory, hard at work in the Fanzine Corner. (Photograph courtesy of Heath Row)

As a newcomer to Los Angeles, I just couldn't make the commute to the weekly meetings work with my family and work responsibilities. Traffic in LA is a very real thing. I wasn't really able to join and begin participating in the weekly meetings until during the pandemic, when the group started meeting via Zoom—maintaining its run of uninterrupted weekly meetings. Regardless, I occasionally attended the annual Loscon and recognized friendly fan faces there.



The "Goal Setting for Writers" panel (Photograph courtesy of Eric J. Guignard)

Last fall's Loscon 48 (<https://loscon.org/48>), perhaps only my fifth Loscon, was not the first Loscon since the COVID-19 pandemic—it was the second. It was also the first con at which I volunteered, in three capacities. I spent time supporting Hospitality, mostly working in the Con Suite and helping to unload the truck to set up the con; I took a turn at staffing the club's book sales table in the Dealer's Room; and I helped run the Fanzine Corner with longtime faned Hertz, at which we offered a display of recent fanzines, hosted a local faned gathering—attracting mostly APA-L participants and alumnae—and encouraged con members to contribute to a conzine written and drawn on site during Loscon 48. That resulted in *Losconzine* #48 (<https://lasfs.org/loscon-updates/losconzine>), a 36-page fanzine containing con member artwork and writing. (I and another LASFSan, Krystal Rains, have since repeated that experiment at the 2023 AnaCon in Anaheim, Calif., resulting in *AnaConzine 2023*, available at <http://lasfs.org/uncategorized/anacon-2023-engaging-and-creative>.)



Panelists Ashish Mahabal, David Brin, Gregory Benford, and Larry Niven (Photograph courtesy of Mahabal)

Loscon's 48th year—maintaining its status as LA's longest-running fan convention—included a variety of panel discussions, presentations, readings, book discussion groups, a film festival, an impressive art show and auction, music, shopping, and other activities. Participants included area authors such as Steven Barnes, David Gerrold, and Larry Niven, who considers Loscon his home convention. Loscon 48 also recognized and celebrated a number of notable participants in the fields of sf, fantasy, horror, and fandom. Canadian fantasy author Tanya Huff was the Writer Guest of Honor. Her most recent release at the time, *Into the Broken Lands*, had been published in August 2022. She is perhaps best known for her Blood Books series, which served as the basis for the television series *Blood Ties*. The Artist Guest of Honor was Dave Kellett, creator of the Web comic series

Sheldon and Drive. He'd recently published the book *Anatomy of Dinosaurs*. "Faerie tale minstrel and storyteller of myth and magic" Alexander James Adams served as the Musical Guest of Honor. And Fan Guests of Honor included Susan Fox and Gene Turnbow, the founders of SCIFI.radio, an excellent, fannish online radio station.

While Loscon programming has occasionally been organized along explicit, dedicated tracks, this year, "there was a lot of experimenting going on," said con chairman Nick Smith. The program schedule included numerous events representing multiple themes including filk music; a film series offering an ongoing program of shorts and movies; and panel discussions focusing on sf literature, science and space exploration, writing and editing, costuming and cosplay, movies and television shows such as *Star Trek*, acting, myths and legends, sound design, illustration, speculative poetry, the future of humanity, and other topics. Other events and activities included a drum circle, an ice cream social (which is always a highlight), an art show and auction, a Regency dance, a blood drive, robotics demonstrations, readings, and midnight screenings of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*—one of the two screenings a costumed sing-along—and *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog*, which was also, naturally, a sing-along. There were also a number of lively parties on the 17th floor of the hotel.



"The Importance of Diversity in Writing" panel (Photograph courtesy of Kent Hastings)

As a volunteer with several commitments, I was hard pressed to participate in much of the programming, but I was impressed by what I was able to attend. Tom Safer's Film Room offered a stellar program of films focusing on travel of all sorts—including a 120th anniversary screening of *A*

Trip to the Moon. Hertz hosted several book discussion groups concentrating on Charles Harness’s *The Paradox Men*, Robert A. Heinlein’s *Time for the Stars*, and C.L. Moore’s *Doomsday Morning*. And the “SF Films by Quarters” panel discussion explored movies originally released in 1922, 1947, 1972, 1997, and 2022. The Fanzine Corner was a delightful success, and I was frequently surprised and impressed by the member submissions in the in basket, sometimes contributed over night. Con members hung out at the Fanzine Corner to utilize our art supplies, drawing, and writing paper, leading to wonderful company and interesting conversations. And I found a number of wonderful books and magazines in the Dealer’s Room.



Vendors in the Dealers’ Room
(Photograph courtesy of Krystal Rains and the LASFS)

One downside to the con was that we were unable to offer a gaming room because its volunteers contracted the flu—not COVID-19—just before the event. Participant feedback was largely positive. Con goer Ashish Mahabal, who appeared on several panels, including “The Three Flaws of Robotics: Artificial vs. Organic Intelligence,” posted that he “[h]ad a blast at Loscon 48,” on Facebook. Brian Fitzpatrick, a first-time participant, commented that he “loved the experience. . . . I found the conversations invigorating and educational. . . . Loscon is hands down the friendliest con I have ever attended, and I am already looking forward to next year.” Linda Robinett remarked that the filk programming was well integrated with other programming, offering daytime

activities—and that she was impressed by the hall costumes. And Michelle Deborah Weisblat-Dane, who has been participating in Loscon since she was 14 years old, indicated that it remains her favorite con.



Chris Marble and Fan Guest of Honor Gene Turnbow serve ice cream at the social (Photograph courtesy of Kent Hastings)

Elayne Pelz, who served as treasurer and led registration for Loscon 48, reported that the con did relatively well financially. With 576 members—437 paid—Loscon 48 passed on more money than other Loscons in the past, but not as much as in 2021 when it was combined with Westercon. Membership was consistent with other Loscons in the past five years or so. And the Dealer’s Room offered wares from 20 vendors.

The LASFS blood drive hosted by Dennis and Kristine Cherry during Loscon 48 was also a success. Held in conjunction with the American Red Cross, this year’s blood drive was named the Karl B. Lembke Memorial Blood Drive in memory of a LASFS member—and frequent blood donor—who died May 15, 2022. Lembke served as chairman of the LASFS board of directors for 20 years. Having joined the club in 1985, he served as scribe for many years, received the Evans-Freehafer Award for service to the LASFS in 2010, and was named a patron saint for donations to

the organization. He was also an active participant in APA-L. For Loscon, Lembke ran Hospitality for a number of years and always donated blood during the con's blood drive. In fact, he donated blood every other week—including at Loscon—donating platelets a total of 997 times, inspiring others to give blood, as well. Loscon 48's blood drive collected 25 units. 24 of those were donated by registered donors, and there was one first-time donor.

At the time of this writing, plans are well underway for Loscon 49 (<https://loscon.org/49>), scheduled to be held Nov. 24-26, 2023, at the Los Angeles Airport Marriott. With the cancellation of Westercon 75, Loscon 49 will also serve as the 2023 Westercon, fulfilling its official functions. We can perhaps expect a bit of a membership boost because of that combination!

A Brief History of *Worlds of If* Magazine

Over the course of its 20-plus year history, *Worlds of If* magazine—also referred to as *If* and *Worlds of If Science Fiction*—pretty consistently served as a healthy second to the top tier of professional science fiction magazines. Always a digest, usually bimonthly—and sometimes monthly when times were good—*Worlds of If* faced a number of challenges over the years, including several ownership changes, financial difficulties and distribution crises outside of its staff's control, a somewhat awkward relationship with *Galaxy Science Fiction* at one stage, and somewhat frequent editorial changes.

Regardless, *Worlds of If* was definitely not an also-ran, and its history is one of persistence, the ongoing pursuit of high-quality science fiction (and eventually fantasy) stories, the encouragement of new writers, and active engagement with readers and fans. Several times, it appeared as though *Worlds of If* would break out of the second tier of sf prozines to join the top tier, contending with *Astounding Science Fiction* (now *Analog*), *Galaxy*, and *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* for readers' attention—and investment. At the end of its initial existence, it had.

As the current staff of the relaunched *Worlds of If* endeavors to venerate the history of the magazine while propelling it into the 21st century, it might be useful to consider the magazine's back story. That history can be broken roughly into three periods—largely delineated by ownership and editorial changes—and one brief piece of punctuation several decades ago.

The Origin Story

Worlds of If magazine was introduced in 1952 by James L. Quinn, founder of Kingston, New

York-based Quinn Publishing Co. Quinn had previously focused on publishing paperbacks, primarily mysteries and westerns, as well as romantic adventures, through the Handi-Books imprint since 1941. In fact, in the back of the first issue, dated March 1952, more than 20 such books—including Paul W. Fairman's romantic adventure *The Heiress of Copper Butte*—are promoted in a two-page house ad. It is notable that science fiction titles are not included.

The magazine was intended to take advantage of the then-underway second boom in sf magazines and perhaps the growing interest in science fiction film. Quinn relied on Fairman, previously associated with Ziff-Davis and *Amazing Stories*, to edit *Worlds of If*. Fairman left after four poorly selling issues, returning to Ziff-Davis where he eventually edited *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic* later in the decade, and Quinn soon assumed the editing duties himself. Despite the rough beginning, the launch team's intent was laudable. In the first issue's editorial by Fairman, he wrote, “[W]e will try to maintain *If* as one of the finest books on the market. . . . [W]e will have access to the best stories, and we will get our fair share of works from the best writers.”

After Fairman's departure, Quinn himself edited the title, introducing stunning wraparound covers by artists such as Ken Fagg, until he was able to recruit Larry T. Shaw, a fan—a Futurian!—who'd already sold several stories, as associate editor in 1953. Quinn didn't really understand science fiction, but he understood publishing. Hiring an editor who knew—and loved—science fiction improved the magazine's editorial prospects substantially. Quinn also introduced a short story competition for college students who hadn't previously sold a story, attracting entries from writers including Harlan Ellison, Andrew J. Offutt, and Roger Zelazny. *Worlds of If* went monthly in 1954—a sign of the magazine's relative success as other magazines folded when the boom ended—and Offutt's first place-winning novelette, “And Gone Tomorrow,” was published in the December 1954 issue. *Worlds of If* was soon firmly ensconced in the middle tier of magazines behind *Astounding*, *F&SF*, and *Galaxy*, joining *Fantastic Universe* and *Infinity*.

As perhaps the best of the second tier, *Worlds of If* published stories by Isaac Asimov, Gordon R. Dickson, Damon Knight, Robert Silverberg, Cordwainer Smith, William Tenn, John Wyndham, and others. Quinn brought Knight in as editor in late 1958, but the American News distribution bottleneck that challenged so many magazines might have hampered growth under his watch. Knight's time in that post was short—a mere four issues (but what

great issues!). Also publishing a companion magazine titled *Strange* and launching the nonfiction periodical *Space Age*, Quinn abruptly sold the magazine to Robert Guinn of Boston-based Galaxy Publishing, eventually exiting the magazine business. As Mike Ashley noted in his book *Transformations*, Quinn's interest in science fiction lasted just seven years.

Beyond the Slush Pile

One might think that being acquired by the publisher of *Galaxy* and falling under the editorship of H.L. Gold would result in bringing *Worlds of If* firmly into the top tier of magazines. Instead, Gold, who preferred *Galaxy*, concentrated his attention and energy on the lead title, relegating the new acquisition to publish work deemed unsuitable for *Galaxy*—and to develop new writers, a practice that continued. After playing second fiddle for a few years, *Worlds of If* gained a new editor, one Frederik Pohl, in 1962. A new publisher, Sol Cohen, also joined the company, which launched another title, *Worlds of Tomorrow*—freeing Pohl to focus more intently on *Worlds of If*.

That led to the magazine's strongest period in its history. Under Pohl's fully dedicated editorship, the magazine was able to develop its own personality, no longer rely on castoffs from *Galaxy*, and otherwise assert itself as the cultural tides turned in the 1960s—leading to the advent of the New Wave. Pohl continued to focus on developing new writers, and the magazine introduced an "If First" feature in which a new author's first story was showcased. The magazine published work by E. Everett Evans, Keith Laumer (including early James Retief stories), Jack Williamson, a serial by Robert A. Heinlein, the return of A.E. van Vogt, and If Firsts by writers such as Gardner Dozois, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Larry Niven, Alexei Panshin, and Gene Wolfe.

Before his first story, "The Coldest Place," was published in the December 1964 issue of *Worlds of If*, Niven had received "lots of rejections" following the standard practice of sending manuscripts—and return envelopes—to the editorial addresses printed on the inside covers of magazines. He was drawn to *Worlds of If* because it consistently published new writers' first stories. His first story acceptance and publication had a "major impact" on his career as a writer. "I knew I'd found a career when I saw that \$25 check," Niven said. Working with Pohl as an editor also had a major impact on his career—and personal life. "Fred got first look at everything I wrote thenceforth. We became good friends. He was an usher at my wedding. He ran my novelet 'World of Ptaavs'—title by his editor Judy-Lynn Benjamin—down the street to Ballantine Books to become my first novel."

By the end of the 1960s, as perceived stylistic restrictions on the genre lessened, *Worlds of If* had absorbed *Worlds of Tomorrow*, and the periodical secured three Hugo Awards for Best Professional Magazine three years running in 1966-1968. The magazine began to challenge *F&SF* to move into the top tier. Pohl focused on publishing mature, adventure-oriented science fiction—as well as fantastic fiction—that was still accessible by younger or new readers of sf. *Worlds of If* was one of the last prozines to publish a fannish letter column, and Lin Carter's column "Our Man in Fandom" focused energetically on readers and fan activities.

In mid-1969, as magazine sf was recovering generally, Guinn sold *Galaxy* and *Worlds of If* to Universal Publishing and Distributing Corp. in New York. That leads us to the next phase in the magazine's history.

Reaching Out to Readers

Universal was founded and led by Arnold E. Abramson, who published *Family Handyman* and other hobby and sports magazines. The company had also published several lines of sleazy paperbacks in the 1950s such as the Beacon Books, Fiesta, Intimate, and Uni imprints. Its Award imprint published Nick Carter novels, gothic horror (including John Dickson Carr), as well as fantasy and science fiction such as Damon Knight's *Off Center* and an anthology edited by Robert Silverberg. With Pohl's departure (receiving ongoing credit as editor emeritus for a year), Abramson tapped Ejler Jakobsson as editor. He had previously edited radio dramas and wrote for "shudder" pulp magazines before turning to editing them. Jakobsson brought solid magazine credentials and experience, and formed a strong team around him, promoting Pohl's assistant, Judy-Lynn Benjamin (later, del Rey).

Benjamin, who eventually moved on to revitalize Ballantine Books' science fiction line, basically ran the magazine, which continued to focus on experimental fiction grounded in story. Jack Gaughan served as art director, and Gardner Dozois read his way through the slush pile. *Worlds of If*'s fiction remained slightly less sophisticated than *Galaxy*, focusing on new readers—as well as writers—in the spirit of the space opera television popular in the late 1960s. Jakobsson targeted a younger, hipper—one might say "hippier"—market.

Under his editorship, *Worlds of If* published work by Michael Bishop, Jack Dann, Philip Jose Farmer, Theodore Sturgeon, James Tiptree Jr., and other writers. Continuing its focus on experimental, original fiction, *Worlds of If* offered a strong "magazine of

alternatives.” It also continued to engage with readers, offering an ongoing letter column.

But Universal was a small company. Jakobsson was overworked—he continued to edit the Award line of books—and Gaughan was also spread thin, resigning in 1972. Jim Baen served briefly as editor—five issues—near the end of *Worlds of If*'s storyline. While editor, Baen, who went on to found Baen Books, introduced Richard E. Geis's fanzine review column, “The Alien Viewpoint.” (Geis's fanzine *The Alien Critic* won the Best Fanzine Hugo in 1974, tying with *Algol*, and in 1975.) The magazine continued to reach out to sf readers and fans until the very end.

When Universal bought *Worlds of If*, its circulation had been falling, and a 1972 subscription drive wasn't enough to shore up the periodical's finances in the face of a distribution problem and the growing economic downturn. Abramson continued to relaunch new magazines, including *Worlds of Tomorrow* and *Worlds of Fantasy* in 1970, and the company's financial problems, the oil crisis, and the eventual recession led to *Worlds of If*'s end in 1974. With the January 1975 issue, *Galaxy* absorbed *Worlds of If*.

At the time, its circulation surpassed that of the surviving *Galaxy*. *Worlds of If* had left the second tier and shall forever live on.

The First Reprise

It is important to note that this is not the first relaunch or reboot of *Worlds of If*. In 1986, the magazine was revived for a single issue. It had been acquired in 1985 by a group of investors organized by Clifford R. Hong. Published by the Hicksville, N.Y.-based STF Corp., an issue of *Worlds of If* premiered at the 44th World Science Fiction Convention, ConFederation, in Atlanta. The magazine featured a digest format, the traditional cover logo, and design consistent with previous issues. Its contents included an *If* First story by Kerry Schaefer—as well as a story by Niven.

Hong's editorial in that one 1986 issue resonates with that in the first 1952 issue. “[T]he spirit of SF remains the same,” Hong wrote. “Science fiction is a literature of ideas, constantly exploring new possibilities. Always asking, what would happen *if*?”

A second issue was edited, designed, and printed—but never distributed—because of limited finances. They couldn't pay the printer.

In the year 2023, the question asked by Hong remains as important and intriguing as ever:

What would happen *if*?

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A Note on Naming

The title of this one-shot wasn't necessarily inspired by Art Rapp's fanzine and apazine *Spacewarp*. But when I settled on the play on words for my WOOF contribution, I was sure that someone else had used a variant as a title. Indeed, Rapp had.

Interested readers can access back issues of Rapp's *Spacewarp*, including those included in the Spectator Amateur Press Society, of which I am a member, at <https://fanac.org/fanzines/Spacewarp>. They're worth reading.

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #86

Oct. 19, 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

Gainful employment
too often intrudes on the
pursuit of fanac

Natter: OC, on the Road

At the end of the month, I'll be going to Portugal for a month. We'll be overseas from Oct. 26 to Dec. 1, 2023. That means that I won't be able to print or mail APA-L during that time. I will, however, be able to collate and email PDF distributions uninterrupted.

What I propose is that I continue to collate and email PDFs—receiving everyone's contributions via email or fax—during my time traveling for those six distributions. When I return, I can print back distributions for those others who request hard copies (including Ed Buchman, Don Fitch, Roger Hill, and Charles Lee Jackson II), and resume print distribution otherwise.

Given that I leave next Thursday, I intended to give others another week's notice for discussion. But I thought we were leaving next Friday, so I didn't. My apologies. An alternative would be for someone else to volunteer to serve as OC for my time away. Let me know what you think!

The Winnings Could Be Monstrous! (cont.)

Unfortunately, my initial California State Lottery Universal Monsters Scratchers ticket (*T&T* #85) was not a winner. So I cannot report that the winnings are indeed monstrous. I can, however, report that I returned to the 7-Eleven for a few more tickets.

While I don't really need to collect the entire set, I thought it'd be fun to see what other designs I could procure. It turns out that they're not sold in a truly sequential set, but in a series of three creatures, with the six-creature design in between two sets of three. Even buying seven more tickets, I still haven't seen the Frankenstein's monster ticket.

We'll see what the new tickets yield before I buy any more. I generally think that the lottery is money unwisely spent, but I can rationalize less than \$20 for

kicks and to support monsters in public. If any of these tickets are winners, I'll see if I can snag a Frankenstein's monster, too.



—Alan White

Trip Report: Tokyo (cont.)

When we booked our room at the Hotel Pulitzer Jiyugaoka, we selected it because of its proximity to where our son lives. It's pretty much a 20-minute walk to his apartment. But we soon realized—even before arriving in Japan—that there were a good number of bookstores also within walking distance, most of them within just a few blocks.

The Fujiya Book Store (<http://www.fujiyabs.jp>) at 2 Chome-11-3 Jiyugaoka was my favorite of all the shops, and perhaps the one I frequented most often. I might not have gone every day, but almost, and each time I went, I was looking for something different. On the first visit, I checked out the manga stocked on the newsstand outside. Other days, I tried to figure out the bookshelf organization structure, exploring the magazines more generally, and perhaps inquiring about one specific magazine title—or the location of a specific publisher. And near the end of the trip, I spent time scanning the shelves for specific publishers

among the bunkobon, or small-format paperback books. It is a very good bookstore, with two stories of texts available, and a relatively comprehensive selection of magazines and manga.



—Hayakawa bunkobon at Fujiya

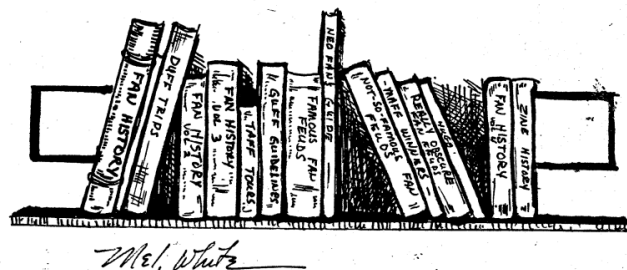
Nishimura Bunseido (<https://www.bunseido.online>) at 2 Chome-11-8 Jiyugaoka is a somewhat small used book store focusing on the arts, culture, and design. Some of their stock is displayed on tables outside the store, and on one of our first nights there, a collection of prints caught my wife’s eye. For much of our time there, I had my sights set on an inexpensive copy of the 1994 *Fangoria’s Best Horror Films* edited by Anthony Timpone, but I was hesitant to buy a book I could readily obtain back home. Regardless, I was disappointed when the book was no longer there for me to consider. Someone else had bought it! The bookseller also had a decently priced *The Best from Playboy #2* among their wares, as well as Vincent Di Fate’s *Infinite Worlds: The Fantastic Visions of Science Fiction Art*. Definitely a store worth browsing often.

The Bookoff Jiyugaoka Ekimae Store (<https://www.bookoff.co.jp/shop/shop20289.html>) was just down the block from our hotel at 2 Chome-11-23 Jiyugaoka. There are several Bookoff locations in the Los Angeles area, as well, so you can get a sense of what the used book store chain is like. The stores in Tokyo predominantly stock Japanese-language texts, and I saved this stop until late in our trip. By then, I was better acquainted with publishers and could scan the shelves for their spine designs. The day before we left, or so, I picked up several inexpensive bunkobon I wanted to explore as examples of local sf and related books. Most of what they offered from those imprints were non-Japanese authors, but I found several items of interest, regardless.



—Used Kadokawa bunkobon at Bookoff by Dan Brown, Suzanne Collins, and Neil Gaiman

Finally, Tsutaya Jiyugaoka (<https://store-tsutaya.site.jp/store/detail?storeId=2113>) was located almost directly across the street from our hotel at 2 Chome-10-8 Jiyugaoka. Selling a mix of old and used items and featuring automated checkout machines, I found the shop somewhat daunting. I mostly focused on its newsstand, exploring the selection of magazines, perhaps slightly larger than that at Fujiya. Also near the end of our trip, I bought a few magazines at Tsutaya but didn’t examine its used bunkobon. It’s definitely a store to return to.



From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

The Cabinet by Un-Su Kim (Angry Robot, 2021)

The other book I read during our recent trip to Japan was this collection of interconnected short stories or “mosaic novel” by a South Korean author. Translated by Sean Lin Halbert, the novel focuses on the contents of Cabinet 13, file folders documenting people considered “symptomers,” representing occasionally fantastic aspects of humanity and the human experience.

An underutilized employee of a company fulfilling a mysterious purpose discovers the cabinet and its files, reading through its material during his down time. That eventually attracts the attention of his manager, who begins to groom him as a successor to

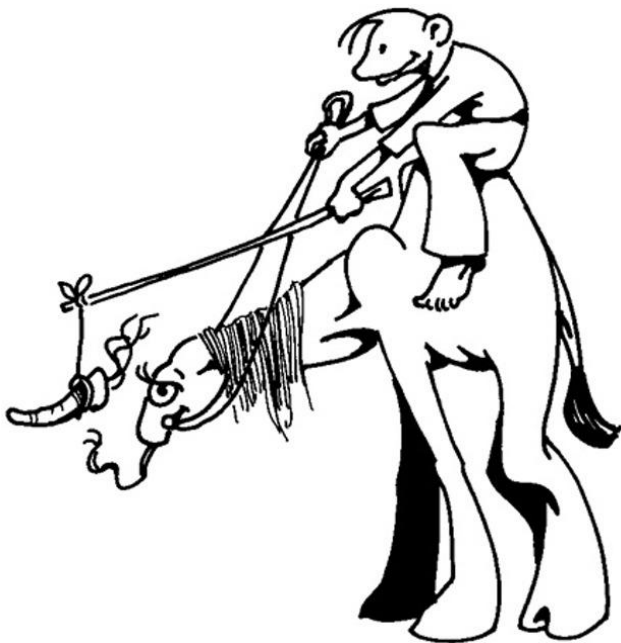
continue maintaining the files—and looking after the wellbeing of their subjects.

The people documented exhibit varying symptoms. One grows a ginkgo tree from a part of his body. Another follows his own doppelganger. A man wants to become a cat. One is a magician of sorts. And time skippers fall asleep for substantial amounts of time, only to wake and resume their lives months and sometimes years later.

A rival company or organization also learns about the cabinet and its contents—and seeks to bribe the employee in order to gain access to it. Characters speculate that they detail people affected by some form of scientific research, which has long since ended. The employee becomes friends with a coworker who is also aware of the files.

It's a very low-key, dreamy read, sometimes reminding me of the work of Haruki Murakami or Jonathan Lethem. And the idea of the book is well executed. Chapters focus on the contents of specific files—and the symptoms they document—as well as develop an overarching narrative outside of and around Cabinet 13. In the end, I wasn't sure exactly what happened—what was resolved—but it was a mystifying joy along the way.

I was left meditating on the meaning of being special. What makes the mundane aspects of life mundane? What makes us special? What happens if everyone is special in some way? Does being special become mundane? Do human beings truly desire to be special so strongly? What if the mundane is, in itself, special? Kim's novel is somewhat confusing but absolutely wonderful.



—Alan White

The Case of the Little Green Men by Mack Reynolds (Surinam Turtle, 2009)

This relatively new edition of Mack Reynolds's 1951 novel is a wonderfully amusing mystery novel that qualifies as faan fiction along the lines of Fredric Brown's *What Mad Universe* and Sharyn McCrumb's *Bimbos of the Death Sun*. The Surinam Turtle Press reissue also includes opening remarks by Emil Reynolds and an afterword by Earl Kemp. Surinam is an imprint edited by Richard A. Lupoff under the auspices of Ramble House.

A struggling private investigator is hired by several members of one of the most exclusive science fiction clubs to determine whether there is alien life on Earth. What begins as a lighthearted jape—the fen thought it'd be funny to read the detective's daily reports during a session at AnnCon, the 10th anniversary of the first World Science Fiction Convention—soon becomes a series of murder mysteries as local fen, and a visitor from the Midwest, die from what appear to be heat ray blasts.

The PI doesn't know anything about sf, so some of the book is a crash course in fandom, commenting on actual and fictional fen, authors, fanzines, and prozines—including a pretty decent rundown of the characteristics of magazines at the time. One of the victims is a fanzine publisher whose most recent issue—just recently mimeographed—is stolen before it can be distributed. That helps the detective narrow down his search, in the end aiding the police investigating the case—and perhaps improving his rocky relationship with local law enforcement.

More humorous than it is a serious mystery, the book also touches on several other themes, including gender relations among fen, the broad demographics of fandom itself, the connection between fen and pros, and the role that clubs, fanzines, and conventions played in the early 1950s.

While not sf per se—it's not even a fantasy—*The Case of the Little Green Men* remains a fun, fandom-adjacent read. Jeb Knight makes for a sympathetic protagonist, and Reynolds's portrayals of the various kinds of fen—and the other people in their lives—isn't too far off the mark even today. A very good book.

Comments on APA-L #3040

In *Leeway* dated for Oct. 12, 2023, **Lee Gold** indicated that the Space Shuttle Endeavour at the California Science Center will be reoriented to a vertical display starting at the end of the year. My wife and I went to a holiday party there in 2012, securing the following photograph.



Matthew Mitchell's *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #29 informed others of his recent birthday. Happy birthday, belatedly! I always enjoy the Olive Garden's soup, salad, and breadstick combo. I checked in every evening last week for jury duty but did not have to go to the courthouse; Thursday night, they informed me that my jury duty can be considered complete. I was surprised how much weight checking in every day brought to my work day. Even though I didn't have to go in, knowing that I might have to offered no little distraction and preoccupation all the same.

In *Reflections from a Fish Bowl* #56, **Barbara Gratz Harmon** could not resist talking about her grandson. His new fish and aquarium set up sounds excellent! I saw a copy of the book you're reading at Village Well in Culver City over the weekend. I'm not sure I'll read it or Walter Isaacson's *Elon Musk*. There are so many other business leaders Michael Lewis and Isaacson could have focused on.

Thank you, **John Hertz** for sharing the 2023 Worldcon Order of Faneditors information. I've never participated in WOOF, and I'm not going to Worldcon this week, but I realized that I've been working on a couple of pieces of writing slated for publication on the Web rather than in fanzines, so perhaps they'll make a worthwhile contribution. I suppose that means we'll soon see Roger Hill in our pages again with his annual WOOF contribution. Has it really been a year since I became OE of APA-L? Hill's previous submission appeared in APA-L #2989, dated Sept. 29, 2022. That was my first distribution as OE. My goodness, how time flies.

Additionally, cover artist Kurt Erichsen also submitted a fully laid-out version of the cover to APA-L #3040 after my self-imposed deadline for the distribution. I'll include that as a bonus pinup this week so his effort doesn't go for naught.



—William Rotsler

Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews *Kenny & Company*

While not a genre film, this 1976 coming-of-age comedy was directed by Don Coscarelli, whose next movie was *Phantasm* in 1979. Several of the cast members in this movie, including A. Michael Baldwin and Reggie Bannister, later appeared in the *Phantasm* series of movies, indicating the development of Coscarelli's ensemble cast.

Two friends growing up in a southern California suburb navigate the challenges of youth in the days leading up to Halloween. They experience bullying, the death of a pet and growing awareness of mortality, first love and perceived betrayal, and other milestone events of childhood. The Halloween scenes elicited viewer response that inspired Coscarelli to focus on horror movies, and the movie is gently humorous despite an occasionally awkward voiceover narration.

Look for adult stunt doubles in the skateboarding scenes. They're not always immediately apparent.

Emulators & Engines #8

Oct. 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.

Holiday Mainstreaming

While our local Target has stocked the *Dungeons & Dragons Starter Set* in various iterations for a while, as well as the recent *Dragonlance Destinies* novels, it's just recently that I've seen a hardcover rulebook on the shelves in the book section. When I stopped by in mid-October to pick up some vitamin supplements, I was surprised by how much is currently stocked in the book and game departments.

I can usually find the Starter Set in the game section and even saw the *Stranger Things D&D Roleplaying Game Starter Set* on shelves at one time. This time, not only was Target stocking *The Dungeons & Dragons Starter Set: Dragons of Stormwreck Isle*, they also had the *Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game Starter Set* from Magpie Games on hand.



In the game department

In the book section, where I recently saw my first hardcover rulebook, *Bigby Presents: Glory of the Giants*, Target now offers two shelf placements that could be combined to create a roleplaying game section of its own. Interspersed with classic fantasy and sf box sets, comic book-related items, and media tie ins for D&D, Star Wars, and *Stranger Things*, Target shelves multiple roleplaying game options.

Among the material featured were the *Marvel*

Multiverse Role-Playing Game; multiple *Dungeons & Dragons* items such as *Phandelver and Below: The Shattered Obelisk*, *The Practically Complete Guide to Dragons*, and Liz Marsham's *Exquisite Exandria: The Official Cookbook of Critical Role*; and Ben Egloff's *The Game Master's Book of Astonishing Random Tables*. I was delighted to see Egloff's book on hand—an unexpected item indicating a broader interest in game masters and roleplaying games.



In the book department

It was also surprising to see even more D&D-related material on the shelves—and not in this display. Target is also currently stocking the D&D *Planescape: Adventures in the Multiverse* slipcase set, as well as the coffee table book *Lore & Legends: A Visual Celebration of the Fifth Edition of the World's Greatest Roleplaying Game*.



Elsewhere in the book department

All of that was really nice to see. It represents a pretty serious mainstreaming of roleplaying games. I haven't seen a D&D- or RPG-related display like this outside of a roleplaying game store since

Waldenbooks and the occasional D&D items hidden in a KB Toys in the 1980s—or the more recent roleplaying game section near the graphic novels and manga at a Barnes & Noble. The Barnes & Noble game sections I’ve seen seem to have gotten smaller and less wide ranging over time—sparse, even—so I didn’t get the sense that manga and graphic novel customers were also picking up on the roleplaying game options.

It was also interesting to note the media tie-in games—Avatar and Marvel—which might help bring new players into roleplaying games if they’re interested in recreating the comic books they read and the cartoons and anime they watch. Tie-in games can be a good entry point for new players, who might then seek other less-restrictive play options. But I wonder: Is this bounty merely because of the upcoming holiday season? Are these items offered as gift options? Or will Target continue to stock such material on an ongoing basis?

Time will tell, I suppose—as well as whether Target customers buy the items on hand. I’ll check each time I go to Target for other shopping. This visit, *Bigby Presents: Glory of the Giants* wasn’t shelved where I’d previously seen it, and I was sure it had been fleeting. Imagine my surprise when I came across the much larger, wide-ranging display.

Trip Report: Tokyo (cont.)

Previous triprep entries can be found in *The Brass Hat Mind* #5, *Faculae & Filigree* #24, and *Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #84-87. Those will be collected in the November issue of *The Stf Amateur*. During our time in Japan to see our son, who’s going to college there, I learned about several roleplaying game-related magazines not stocked at other newsstands and bookstores and set out to learn more about the current state of such games in Japan.

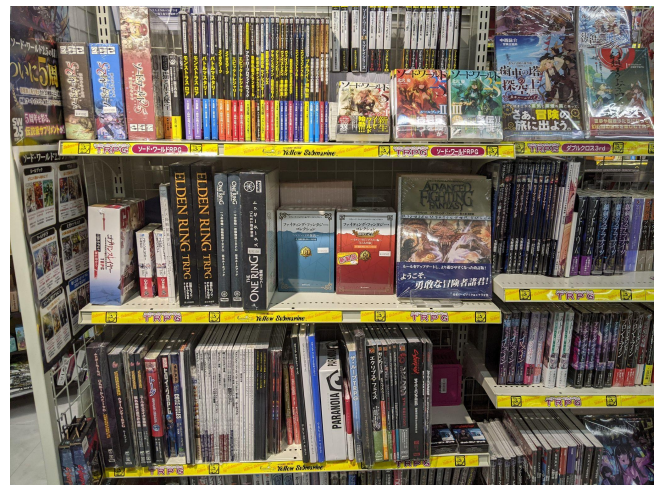
Jonah took us to what was most likely the Yellow Submarine Akihabara RPG Shop in Chiyoda City (<https://www.yellowsubmarine.co.jp>). What some might call tabletop roleplaying games are called tabletop RPGs or TRPGs in Japan. While there are some foreign games translated into Japanese—*Dungeons & Dragons*, *Pathfinder*, and *Call of Cthulhu*, intriguingly the most popular game, and others—there are also hundreds of original Japanese games that aren’t licensed translations.

One of the reasons roleplaying games became so popular in the 1980s was that they weren’t sold in boxed sets or premium hardcover formats like most rulebooks in the United States—where practically everything costs at least \$50 to get started. Instead, game-related material was published in the compact

paperback format termed bunkobon, which helped them reach a broader audience more quickly—and more affordably.



The *Call of Cthulhu* materials are at the top right



Other games available in translation include *Advanced Fighting Fantasy*, *Cyberpunk Red*, *The One Ring*, *Paranoia*, and *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*



A small assortment of Japanese roleplaying games



Older Fantasy File bunkobon still on sale

The most popular Japanese roleplaying game might be *Sword World*, which has sold more than 10 million rulebooks, novels, and replays since the late 1980s. It's gone through three editions. Several Japanese games have been translated by Kotodama Heavy Industries (<https://kotodama.itch.io>), including *Shinobigami*, a “modern ninja battle” game by Toichiro Kawashima. I've obtained a copy of that and will look into it as a play option.

Replays are also a popular aspect of Japanese tabletop games that haven't necessarily caught on domestically. Replays are basically transcriptions of game sessions combining game mechanic discussion and descriptions and dialogue representing what happens in the game. They're similar to the roleplaying examples included in the front of many roleplaying game rulebooks but can also take forms closer to our game reports in A&E, LitRPG writing, or fantasy fiction based on game play.

The most famous replay might be *Record of Lodoss War*, which began as a transcript of game sessions using *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Tunnels & Trolls*, and *RuneQuest*. Originally published in the magazine *Comptiq* in the late 1980s, the replays led to light novels, manga, anime, and video games. Various light novels and manga have been translated into English.

Because I don't read Japanese, I didn't explore the wide array of local roleplaying games—even *Sword World*—while I was there. Another reason was that they kind of all look the same—all utilizing a standard manga-style artwork that surprisingly levels the playing field visually. Even *Call of Cthulhu*-related works occasionally use manga-style artwork, which didn't resonate with me. But I did explore the

roleplaying game-related magazines currently available. They offer a solid view of the current state of tabletop games, popular titles, and the Japanese approach to roleplaying.

The primary current magazine is *Role&Roll*, published since 2003 by Arclight. Subtitled “for unplugged-gamers,” the monthly magazine features about 140-156 pages across the two issues I obtained, Vol. 224 (May 2023) and Vol. 226 (July 2023). Vol. 224 opens with a handful of pages focusing on new games, and the bulk of the content offers “RPG Support” for games such as *Yuuyake Koyake*, *Utakaze*, *Alien World Senki Chaos Flare Second Chapter*, *Shadowrun* 5th edition, *Shinobigami*, *Beginning Idol*, *Futari Sousa Buddy Suspense*, *Eclipse Phase*, *Kedamono Opera*, *Disgaea*, and other games. Much of the material is in the form of replays, but the magazine also includes maps and other content. There's a comic strip and additional articles, including a column on fantasy world development and a reader survey.



Vol. 226, then, features RPG Support for many of the same games, perhaps representing an ongoing series of replays or campaign notes. Other content includes an encyclopedia of fantasy plants, a column on medieval mercenaries for *Warhammer Fantasy*

Roleplay, and an “instant adventure.” While I can’t read either issue without the assistance of Google Translate, I wish there were an English-language periodical this wide ranging. Wait a minute, this is A&E. We’re here.

The 140-page *Gamers Field* 27th Season Vol. 6 was published in September 2023. The full-color front section focuses on the *Double Cross 3* roleplaying game, and Game Support material addresses *Double Cross 3*, offering a scenario; *Arianrhod*, *Hakoniwa Sousei*, *Konosuba: God’s Blessing on This Wonderful World!*, *Last Requiem*, and *Everyday Horror*. Additional content touches on *Monotone Museum* (which has been fantranslated), *Jaeger Sixth*, *Tokyo Nightmare*, the boardgame *Age of Galaxy*, and *Vision Connect*. Many of the games covered seem to be related to FarEast Amusement Research (aka F.E.A.R.)—and to be tabletop ports of video games in some cases.



Warlock magazine is published by Group SNE and primarily focuses its 164 pages on *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* and *Tunnels & Trolls*. The issue I picked up, Vol. 5, was published in August 2019. This issue concentrates on the Japanese translation of *Pugmire*

and is accompanied with a scenario booklet, “The Secret of King Vincent’s Tomb.” The cover promotes additional *Pugmire*-related content, including a solo adventure, a replay, and fiction; as well as an *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* solo adventure; and a *Tunnels & Trolls* solo adventure and mini-scenario.

Inside, the contents are divided into several sections that focus on the games above. *Warlock* is a much more focused periodical and seems to offer more play aids than replays.

I also procured two issues of Group SNE’s *Game Mastery* magazine, Vols. 10 and 14, both published in 2023. Because Group SNE publishes *Sword World*, the magazine includes related content, as well as—at least in the 208-page Vol. 10— material focusing on *Advanced Fighting Fantasy*, *Trail of Cthulhu*, and *Tunnels & Trolls*. Vol. 10 also includes a good amount of coverage of murder mystery games (or one specific such game), board game replays, content on *Goblin Slayer*, and columns. Vol. 14, then, at 164 pages, continues the focus on *Sword World*, *Trail of Cthulhu*, and *Forged Mystery: Red and Black*. It even came with a *Trail of Cthulhu* GM screen.

Overall, I was absolutely flabbergasted by the health and breadth of roleplaying game-related journalism in Japan. Some of the magazines focused on replays. Others felt like house organs similar to *Dragon* magazine or the latter-day *White Dwarf*. And some looked very useful as ongoing play aids for players and game masters alike. Between the range of magazines in Japan and England’s *Tabletop Gaming*, why can’t the United States support a print roleplaying game magazine?

Solo Game Report: *Tower, Toil and Trouble*

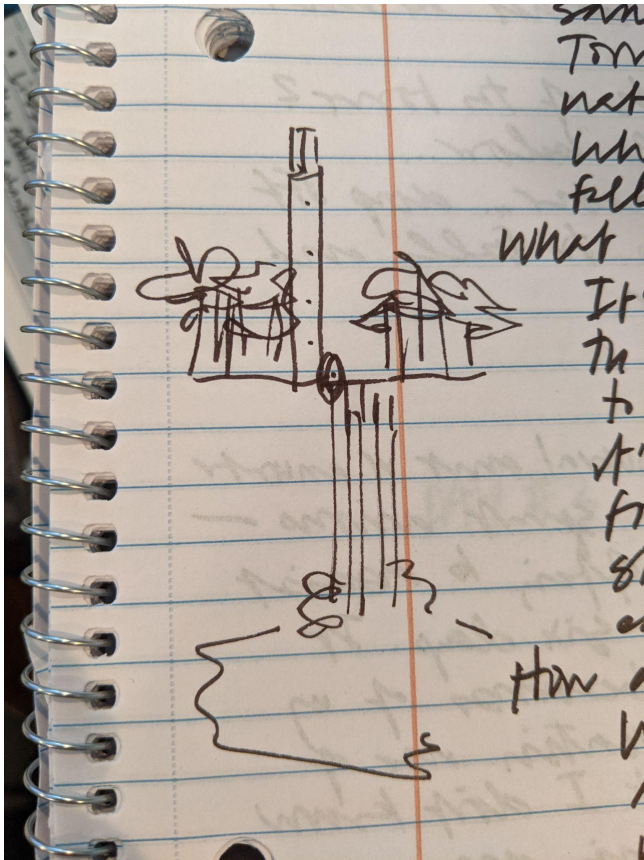
While in Japan early during our trip in late September when I was still getting over jet lag, I played a session of *Tower, Toil and Trouble*, “a solo journaling game of wizardly chores.” Written by John Lopez for the SoloRPG Patreon, the two-page brochure-based game was inspired by *One Day at a Thyme* by Jei D. Marcade. (<https://jeidmarcade.com/one-day-at-a-thyme>)

As a player, you choose a specialization and location for your tower, pursue magical toil and trouble, undertake magical research, and continue to construct your tower. The game uses standard playing cards, sometimes laying them out in tarot card-like patterns to identify relationships.

Here are the notes I took during the game session:

Arcane Specialization: Enchantment
Tower Location: Tropical Island

Exterior tower details: Located at the top of a high waterfall surrounded by lush foliage. There's a lagoon at the bottom of the waterfall. Perhaps there's a secret entrance to the tower hidden behind the waterfall, or a cave or grotto.



What makes the tower look strange? It's a light color, like tan or sandy stucco... shaped like Coit Tower. When the sun catches the waterfall, sometimes the tower looks like a pillar or geyser above the falls. Maybe it looks like a bone.

What is going on just outside the tower? It's on the banks of the river feeding the falls. There's a water wheel to power mechanisms inside. Otherwise, it's trees and rainforest or tropical forest. Not quite jungle. The tower sticks up from the trees at the edge of the falls like a flute carved from bone.

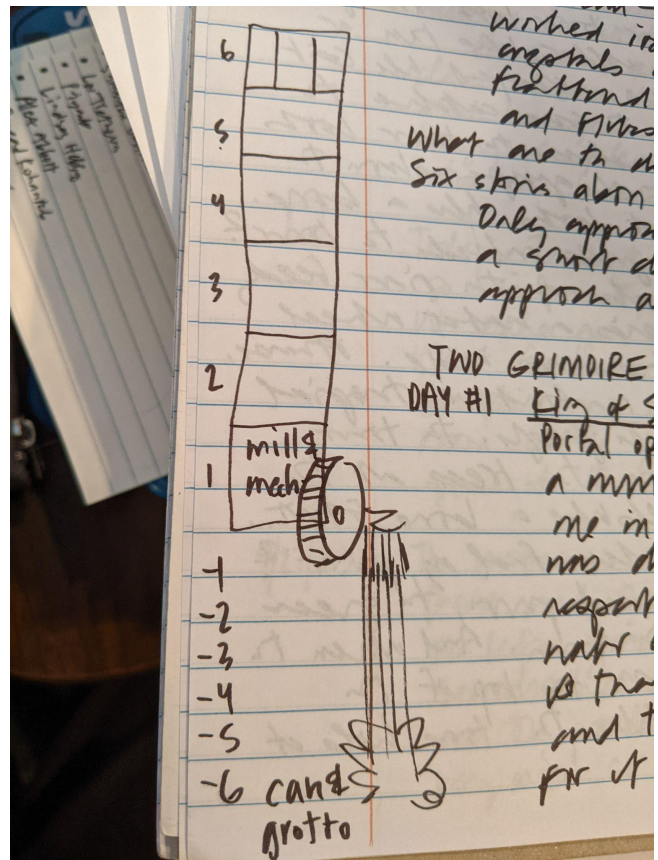
How does its location fuel its power? Water energy and power, the green of life, and the sun. And when the wind is just right, the top of the tower emits sounds like the tone hole of a flute.

Interior of the tower: The first strange thing any visitor sees is the mill wheel. The first floor of the tower is all cogs, mill stones, and mechanisms to harness the power of the water and its fall. Gnomes

work at the base of the tower to keep the wheel and mechanism working smoothly.

What magical bric a brac do I collect? We catch fish before the falls, and the nets also catch other items that drift downstream—glass polished smooth, water-shaped items. I like lenses, crystals, glass, and smooth flattened stones, as well as whistles and flutes.

What are the different parts of the tower? There are six stories above and six stories below... The only approach is by water. Visitors are dropped off a short distance from the falls and approach along the river.



Day One—Two grimoire cards: King of Spades—An unusual event or encounter. A portal opens! A water spirit arrives—a water elemental, offering to assist me in my work for six days. It was drawn to me because of my respect for and creative use of water energy. What I don't know is that it's also running away—and that someone will come looking for it at some time.

Five of Diamonds—Everyday event or encounter. In my alchemy compendium, I recognize a relationship between solids and liquids, not in terms of phases of matter (frozen liquid because of cold) but because of solids dissolved in liquids and remaining or crystallizing when the liquid evaporates. Can elementals smuggle substances dissolved in them?

Day Two—One grimoire card: Three of Spades—Everyday event or encounter. I encountered a magical race as elementals that have dissolved different substances stage a prismatic race of light and color up the waterfall. They draw attention to the tower from the jungle below because of the kaleidoscopic bursts of color and light as the elementals gambol and play.

While I only played the preparation and two days, this was perhaps the most productive solo game I've played. I can imagine using this as a game master aid to develop settings and locations, as well as NPCs and adventure hooks. The journaling itself was fun, and this could easily be fleshed out and reused later in a game session. Definitely not a throwaway experience! Preparation is play.

Comments on *Alarums & Excursions* #575

In *The Seedling* #29, **Mark Nemeth** commented on the recent AI art controversy involving *Bigby Presents: Glory of the Giants* (see above). I found your remarks interesting and thought provoking. I, too, don't think AI is the death of art, but I do want to know whether an artist used AI, and what tool. Ideally, we can know what artwork a given tool was trained on. So I think provenance is important, if we're to use such tools. But it seems clear that Ilya Shkipin is an artist on his own generally, as long as he doesn't always use AI tools. I had been unaware of this controversy, so clearly, it's good I read A&E.

I know your question about Algernon Blackwood was directed to Jerry Stratton, but I recommend *Ancient Sorceries and Other Weird Stories* and *Incredible Adventures*, which was in H.P. Lovecraft's library. Thank you for the kind words on E&E.

John Redden's comments on cats in *Reddened Stars* #32641.8bit resonated with me. In mid-October, we took Spooner into the dentist for the first time. We've been brushing his teeth regularly, but it's challenging and we haven't been doing it well enough, apparently. We didn't realize one took pets to the dentist as well as the veterinarian. Unfortunately, he had some teeth issues involving bacteria, so he went back the next day for six extractions, half his teeth. He's eight years old.

Since coming home, we've been giving him recommended medication, an antibacterial, and another that can have a sedative effect. So he's been awfully non-characteristic. We halved the dose of the sedative, and some normal behavior has returned. It's good to see him pursuing more of his usual activities, such as jumping up on us to purr and cuddle, and to sleep on our chests. Friday afternoon while writing

this, he ran to see me when I returned inside from my home office, like he normally does. We hope he heals quickly. We've outfitted him with a soft flexible cone so he can't worry his dental work, and Caitlin took him in Saturday midday to make sure all is going as it should.

Your fanzine also reminded me to send you a check for the two recent boxes of back issues. It is now prepared for mailing this weekend. Take your time with the rest. None of this is a rush. I've prepared the three boxes for mailing to the University of Iowa next week, and I just emailed Robert Dushay, cc'ing you, about your donated materials.

In *The Bibylon Free Press* dated October 2023, **Jerry Stratton's** book reviews are great fun and very much appreciated. Similarly, I appreciated **Dylan Capel's** remarks on Ann Leckie's *Provenance* in *The Silent Temple* #24.

So **Spike Y Jones's** lengthy essay on the 1999 movie *The Mummy* in *Mermecolion at a Picnic* #445 came as even more of a surprise and delight. That is some serious media sercon we're treated to in A&E! Thank you very much for sharing that reprint with us.

I seem to be keying in to book-related content this mailing, as I also quite enjoyed **Clark B. Timmins's** *QUA AE7KL* #99—congratulations on the upcoming milestone ish!—and its commentary on the first two *Dragonlance Destinies* novels and other applications of time travel in fiction and roleplaying games. I obtained Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman's *Dragons of Deceit* last year but haven't yet read it. So I'm holding off on buying this summer's *Dragons of Fate*. The connections you draw between those books and Connie Willis's *Doomday Book*, Ray Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder," and the roleplaying game *Magos del Tiempo* are intriguing.

The pictures shared by **Brian Christopher Misiaszek** in *Age of Menace* #224 brought joy to my heart. I hope that my personal library and roleplaying game collection is as well organized, accessible, and welcoming as yours is some day. Happy anniversary, belatedly, and I'm glad you got to spend time with fellow apan Peter Hildreth.

And in *Bumblng Through Dungeons* #48, **Mark A. Wilson's** description of *The Lighthouse* made me chuckle. I also appreciated the mention of <https://radiooooo.com>, the "musical time machine." As we prepare for some upcoming travel, I'll enjoy exploring the music of Portugal in the 1960s and other decades. I'll also have to share the resource with a handful of friends who actively appreciate the history of popular music.

The Explosion Containment Umbrella #14

Oct. 21, 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 #234

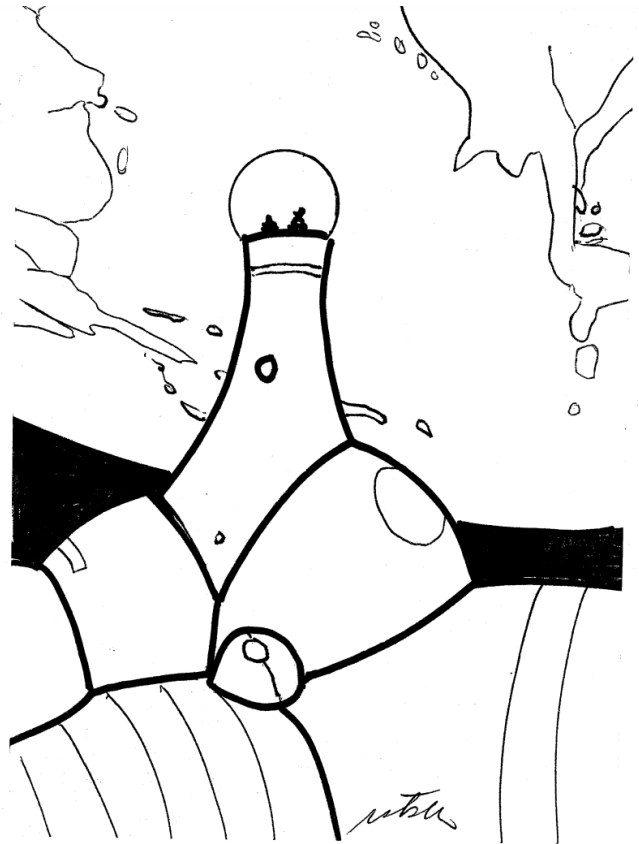
This distribution was eAPA's annual open or sample mailing, which means that non-members can access and read it without our usual very creative passwords. I'm curious how many people download and read this annish (if it's even that) to see who's involved—and what we're talking about. I'm also curious how representative the October issue tends to be as an example. As a relative newcomer, the open issue snuck up on me, and I know that I didn't do anything different than I usually do. I got a kick out of being "famous for producing half the fanzines in the Los Angeles basin." That's probably not false. It might even be more than half.

In *I Never Got the Hang of Thursdays* #214, **Garth Spencer** did the something different I didn't do and... introduced eAPA! I appreciated your brief description of apa in general and applaud the connection to our mundane predecessors. It's been interesting to me how some apa follow the mundane model and offer bundles of individual items (the Fantasy Amateur Press Association when I was a member and the Spectator Amateur Press Society more recently) or collate them into a self-contained periodical like *Alarums & Excursions*, *APA-L*, *LASFAPA*, and others—which seems to be the dominant model. The United Fanzine Organization, adjacent to us in comics fandom, adds a slightly different model: members sending each other their publications, but individually as they're published, not in bundled mailings.

I agree with you that the fracturing of fandom into its adjacent fandoms—comics, gaming, and media—has contributed to the dispersal of the critical mass of fandom. The Internet—Web sites, blogs, and social media—has supplanted fanzines as the primary mode by which fen connect and interact. And the mainstreaming of conventions has pulled newcomers away from the fan-run cons and clubs that longer-term fen have traditionally gravitated toward.

I don't know whether a Fannish Outreach Bureau is necessary, but it seems to me that the more traditional modes of fanac—clubs, fan-run cons, fanzines—could

do more to be involved in mainstream fandom. I'm not sure whether our goal is to pull fen to us, or to participate more fully in the fandom that's grown up around us.



—William Rotsler

What was the book you read about the media coverage of titled aristocrats as precursors to modern celebrities? It sounds interesting. I was just talking to my wife how we also seem to treat politicians with national visibility as celebrities rather than legislators, perhaps in part because fewer and fewer have a history of civil service or lower-level political roles. Your remark about the multiple Garth Spencers reminded me of my friend Phil Campbell, who's undertaken a project to identify others with that name—and organize occasional gatherings in Phil Campbell, Ala. You can watch a documentary, *I'm With Phil*, about the experience and effort at <https://tinyurl.com/ImWithPhil-doc>.

Ooh: Dearth Stencil! You've been faan fictioned! Thank you for combining your apa directory efforts with my 2009 *Blue Moon Special*. Perhaps we can collaborate on a new edition with more comprehensive information for a 2024 release. I still have the questionnaire form I used previously available, if we wanted to repurpose it. I'm sure some of the decade plus-old *Blue Moon Special* listings might no longer

be active.

Henry Grynsten's *Wild Ideas* #40 considered the secret power of dolls. I enjoyed "Barbie God"'s exploration of dolls and figurines as "models" of humanity. In some cases they might model an idealized, desired form (Barbie, and the baggage that brings)—or an abstract representation of human aspects (the fertility of the Venus of Willendorf). They can also be abstract placeholders for a given person, or a functioning physical proxy. Your drawing the connection between dolls and dead metaphors and the earliest meanings of representative writing is thought provoking. Maybe language is a doll.

Other examples of the Creepy Doll trope include the Annabelle movies, *The Boy*, *Dolly Dearest*, and *Pinocchio's Revenge*—though we're getting close to the Killer Toy trope, which is different. Your assertion of the Golem brings the idea back home again, from doll to religious sculpture, to a little bit of both.



—William Rotsler

William McCabe's *Living Inside Number 9* remarked that apahacking has begun to feel like drudge work. Oh, William! Fanac should never be a hassle. If it is, we're doing it wrong. I'm glad you donated your fanzine collection to the University of Liverpool. If you were to scrap *Living Inside Number 9* as it is, what would you do instead? What form would it take that you're not currently pursuing? Would you be interested in an eAPA reading group?

In *Intermission* #137, **Ahrvid Engholm** informed eAPAns about gang violence in Sweden. While sad to learn about, I was interested to realize it existed. I suppose there are gangs everywhere. I'd mostly been aware of the Scandinavian black metal-related violence and church burnings. This sounds more like organized crime. You also mention police reform. In the United States, police-related gangs are also a concern. This isn't entirely gang related, but just recently in Los Angeles, police recruit hazing hit the news. (<https://tinyurl.com/police-hazing>) Earlier this year, deputies were challenged for their use of police gang tattoos. (<https://tinyurl.com/police-gang-tattoos>) It doesn't make me confident in the police.

Your defense of the Swedish monarchy was interesting and thought provoking. Now, what if the royal family were a... gang? There's a story idea.

I enjoyed your commentary on the book *United Stockholms of America*, which brought to mind Phil Campbell, Ala. (see above) I grew up in Wisconsin and have always been intrigued by the reuse of place names by immigrants and other communities, but I've never really researched it.

How much of your short story work has been translated into English? One of my forthcoming projects as I approach retirement will be translation work, initially focusing on Portuguese science fiction—but I might also be interested in translating some of your work, if you're open to the idea. We could offer it as an incentive for the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund or the Nordic Fan Fund (<https://icecon-reykjavik.is/icecon-2016/the-nordic-fan-fund>) if it's still active. My translation efforts to date (one Portuguese story) utilized machine translation and then editing, but no rewriting. Might be an idea.

History Corner's consideration of samizdat was also worthwhile. I suppose all faned work is oppositional in nature, and perhaps fanac—as endeavors undertaken outside the dominant culture. During a recent anniversary weekend in mid-October, my wife and I visited the Wende Museum, which focuses on the Cold War. (<https://wendemuseum.org>) We finally went because of the *David Bowie in the Soviet Union* exhibit. They had some examples of samizdat in a display case outside of that exhibit, and I'm now curious whether they have any Russian fanzines in their collection.

I wonder whether Kingsley Amis's *Radio Theatre* episode "Enemy Planet" is at all related to the later television series *Lost in Space* or the initially unrelated comic book *Space Family Robinson*—both of which were inspired by Johann David Wyss's 1812 novel, *The Swiss Family Robinson*.

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #87

Oct. 25, 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

How will others like
PDF-only mailings
while I'm traveling?

Natter: OC, on the Road

It turns out that I was wrong to correct myself—and right about our scheduled departure date. I am actually able to print, collate, and mail one more distribution, this week's, before we leave for Portugal at the end of the month. We'll still return Dec. 1, 2023, resuming mailed distributions Dec. 7.

While I'm out of town, Lee Gold has volunteered to print APA-L to mail to John Hertz, and I'll email PDF distributions to participants otherwise. I've written Don Fitch to let him know what's happening and asked Chris Marble whether he can print and hand deliver distributions if he visits Fitch during the month to come.

Trip Report: Tokyo (cont.)

Upon arriving in Jiyugaoka, after checking in at the hotel, one of the first stops I made was at the outdoor newsstand at the Fujiya Book Store (T&T #86) to see the available manga. By now, manga and anime are widely known outside of Japan, but I remain in awe of its widespread public availability, appeal to all ages and genders, and impressive frequent output.

While the American comic book market focuses on monthly "floppies," graphic novels, and trade paperback collections, the closest we come to Japan's manga publishing might be the remaining weeklies in England. *Eagle* folded in the mid-1990s, but *Beano* and *Phoenix* (*The Brass Hat Mind* #2 and *Emulators & Engines* #6) remain, as does *2000 AD*. Regardless, Japanese weekly manga are altogether different, offering phonebook-sized (*Cerebus* phonebook-sized) anthologies weekly or monthly.

Previously, I've focused my manga reading on *Weekly Shonen Jump*, which combines action, comedy, and occasional fantasy; tankobon collections of individual titles; or American reprints. This trip, I

looked for more science fiction-related options. The first manga I bought was the October 2023 *Gundam Ace* (#254), a 636-page anthology featuring giant robot stories. Published by Kadokawa Shoten, the manga offers multiple storylines related to *Mobile Suit Gundam Seed Freedom*. Printed mostly in black and white with some full-color pages, the manga also includes material on various characters, anime, and models.



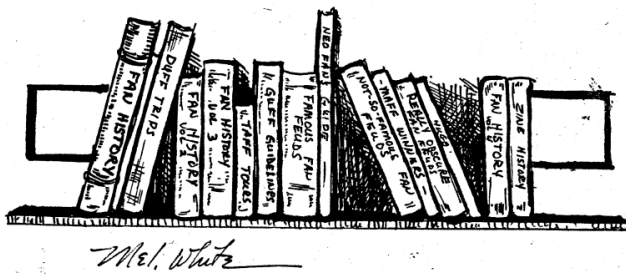
Inspired by watching *Toyama no Kin-san* or *Edo o Kiru* (T&T #85) on television, I also picked up the current issues of *Comic Ran* (#514, November 2023) and *Comic Ran Twins* (#396, October 2023). Published by Leed Publishing Co., they're both good examples of jidaigekiga, or period drama, manga. Initially a gekiga ("dramatic pictures") manga for older readers, *Comic Ran* (326 pages in the most recent issue) largely features historical action storylines involving samurai. *Comic Ran Twins* (at 312 pages) is a spin-off title also featuring period action, focusing on adaptations of novels. Both utilize the work of veteran manga artists and writers.

One evening walking home after our day out and about, I stopped by a 7-Eleven to see what manga was

stocked among its magazines. I picked up a copy of a Bessatsu Big Comic published by Shogakukan, *Tokushū Golgo 13* Series No. 221 (October 2023). Written and drawn by Takao Saito, the 308-page volume reprints stories from previous 2021 publications—all featuring the professional assassin for hire Golgo 13.

That character continues to appear regularly in Shogakukan's *Big Comic*, so I later sought out #1582 (Oct. 10, 2023). That 382-page weekly includes almost 20 different serialized stories, including chapter 635 of *Golgo 13*.

Manga in this format are pretty challenging to read using Google Translate, but I enjoy looking at them. The *Tokushū Golgo 13* collection might be the easiest to follow without translating. But the most impressive thing is what manga cost. The Gundam phonebook cost 800 yen, or about \$5. The two *Comic Ran* titles cost 520-550 yen, or \$3.50-\$3.70. *Big Comic* cost 470 yen, or just more than \$3. And the smaller-format *Golgo 13* collection cost 590 yen, or \$4. Those low prices secure readers much more comics content than we get in an America monthly floppy for \$3.99 or \$4.99—or more.



From the Reading Pile: Short Stories

While researching the history of *Worlds of If* magazine for a brief forthcoming article on that soon-to-be-relaunched magazine's Web site (<https://worldsofifmagazine.com> and unedited in *Space Warp & WOOF* #2023), I read the first issue of *Worlds of If*, dated March 1952.

Edited by Paul W. Fairman and published by James L. Quinn, the 162-page issue features a novel, a novelette, and six short stories, as well as other editorial material. That additional material includes Fairman's opening editorial positioning the new magazine, as well as a profile of Bob Tucker, then publisher of *Science Fiction News Letter*; a guest editorial by Capt. K.F. Slater about atom bombs and planet smashers; a review of the television program *Tales of Tomorrow*; Science Briefs by Charles Recour; and a letter column initially offering authors' explanations of their stories and creative processes.

Like usual, I started with the short stories. Walter Miller Jr.'s "Bitter Victory" focuses on an alien from Nu Phoenicis IV tracking a female alien on Earth. Her use of telepathic abilities frustrates him, but he eventually catches up with her. The story touches on the societal differences between pastorals and Klidders, and the hunter becomes the hunted as his prey's efforts to advance human science become clear. It's a solid story, though it could have ended quite satisfactorily at a pretty obvious breaking point.

"Black Eyes and the Daily Grind" by Milton Lesser communicates the risks of bringing an alien lifeform—an animal—back to Earth. An adopted housepet from Venus has a deleterious effect on the productivity and industry of humankind before people figure out what to do. Richard S. Shaver's "Of Stegner's Folly" concentrates on a professor's efforts to develop larger, healthier crops and animals—and other subjects.

Theodore Sturgeon makes an appearance with "Never Underestimate...", which expands on the war between the sexes. A husband's realization of the power women have over men almost upends society. "The Stowaway" by Alvin Heiner tells the tale of a ground crew member who's not assigned to go to space on a given mission—but who is destined to. His experience is not what he expected or hoped for. And Rog Phillips's "The Old Martians" considers what might remain after the end of an alien civilization, and what effect those remnants might have on future explorers or, in this case, tourists. The story resonated gently with Holt Lawson's "The Great Debate." (*The Brass Hat Mind* #5)

"The Hell Ship," the novelette by Ray Palmer, is a wonderful story that proposes the potential risks of nuclear-powered spaceships and the effects radiation leaks might have on their crews. And the novel, Howard Browne's "Twelve Times Zero," is a wonderful mystery concentrating on a locked-room killing, an unexpected witness, and an alien conspiracy. One conspirator's efforts to free an innocent man go awry, leading to further complications.

While this first issue features several stories on the somewhat long-winded side of narrative, on the whole, it's a promising selection—and were the magazine published today, I'd certainly pick up the second issue for more of the same. I haven't recently read any contemporary issues of *Amazing Stories* recently, but the authorial overlap—Browne and Lesser in the July 1952 *Amazing*—are evident.

Still, an auspicious beginning, and a periodical well worth revitalizing. I look forward to its relaunch in February 2024.



—William Rotsler

Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

Children of the Corn

This week's movie with a friend was the 1984 *Children of the Corn*, based on a short story by Stephen King and directed by Fritz Kiersch. The movie, which stars Linda Hamilton as one of the protagonists, largely focuses on three things: a couple's arrival in the small town of Gatlin, Neb.; an uprising of the children in that city, which led to the killing of all of the adults; and a grassroots religion based on He Who Walks Behind the Rows of corn that surround the farming community—a baleful presence that seems to have catalyzed the uprising and murders.

For the most part, the film is primarily a straightforward slasher movie in which young people hunt down wayward youths in the community—or seek to capture and kill the adults newly arriving in Gatlin. A gas station attendant with a limp—"the old man"—lives and works nearby. He misdirects the couple, encouraging them to go to another nearby

community instead, but attracts the ire of the children's chief enforcer, Isaac, as well.

But the best and most important part of the movie is when the local religion comes into play. The couple learns that some sort of ceremony occurs when a resident reaches their 19th birthday, religious iconography in the church incorporates corn ears and leaf blades, and He Who Walks Behind the Rows eventually makes his presence felt—and seen.

That results in an interesting mix of practical and digital effects. The former are quite intriguing and seem to involve items rolling or moving under fabric, but the digital effects are relatively awkward given the year. Regardless, I enjoyed the ominous approach and retreat of storm clouds, accomplished by speeding up and reversing film.

After watching the movie, I also read the 1977 short story, which originally appeared in *Penthouse* magazine (March 1977) and later in King's 1978 collection, *Night Shift*. Interestingly, King wrote the first draft of the screenplay, which focused more on the couple and the events that led up to the children's crusade. That screenplay was superseded by one written by George Goldsmith that was more conventional and violent in nature.

As published in *Night Shift*, King's story is extremely economical. The movie utilizes most of the scenes in the story, padding the story with additional characters (the mechanic, a young brother and sister) and scenes in order to reach its runtime of 92 minutes. The short story focuses much more on the religious and supernatural elements of the idea, and He Who Walks Behind the Rows is much more present and threatening.

One aspect of the movie that wasn't in the story that I found especially effective was the couple's inability to initially find Gatlin. Despite the gas station attendant's misdirection, they tried to follow directional signs to the community, but such signs seemed to be oriented to do anything but that. As the distance to Gatlin decreased, they realized that they weren't getting any closer and eventually drove into the cornfields.

While the video tape we watched was pretty low quality and the image occasionally staticky, seeing the expanse of corn, the wide open spaces, and the foreboding clouds in the sky also made the movie worth watching despite its more conventional approach.

Friday the 13th

When my wife and I recognized that a recent past Friday was Friday the 13th, she commented that she'd never seen the movie, so we watched it Oct. 20.

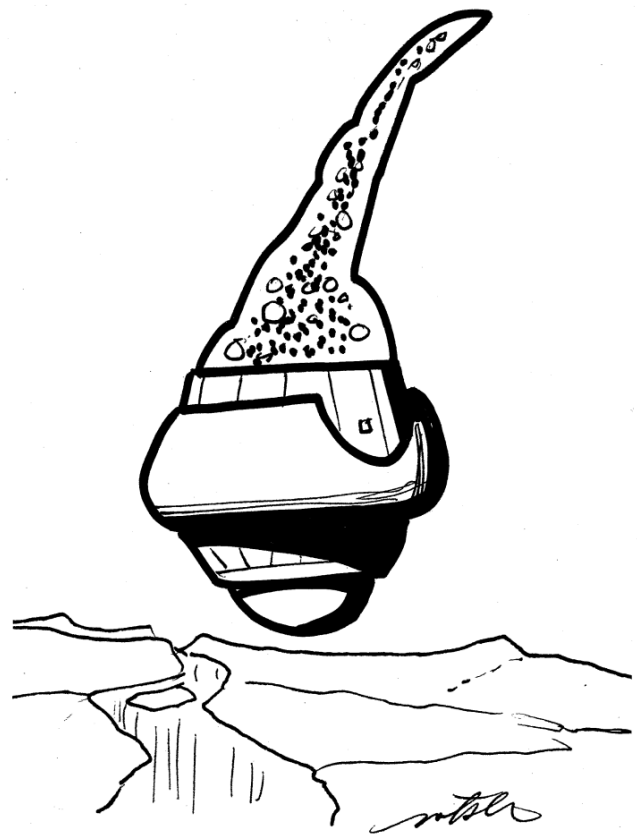
Afterward, she remarked that now that she'd seen it, she hadn't really needed to. Regardless, I find the 1980 film noteworthy and interesting. Not only did it, in combination with the much better 1978 *Halloween*, help catalyze the relatively wide range of horror franchises of the 1980s—still occasionally rebooted to this day—it features an early role by Kevin Bacon, reveals a plot twist at the end that I'd forgotten, barely includes the iconic killer Jason Voorhees, and represents a particularly cynical approach to filmmaking. Additionally, the movie is not at all fantastic, though aspects of such were introduced as the franchise progressed.

Instead, what viewers receive in *Friday the 13th* is a cast member by cast member murder spree, occasionally seen through the point of view of the killer, but not always, though the camera might act like it. Very little time is given to establishing characters, their relationships within the group, or a viewer's rapport with or empathy for them—so the killings almost don't matter. We don't know anything about the characters, and we certainly don't care about them—but we do know they're dying horribly and sequentially.

It's also an odd movie because for the most part, the remaining characters aren't even aware that something dangerous is happening. They just wonder where their friends have gone. So there's little dread or suspense among the characters—until they face the mysterious killer themselves.

Contemporary reviewers Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel took particular umbrage with the movie as the worst that film had to offer. Siskel gave away the ending's plot twist in his *Chicago Tribune* review (<https://tinyurl.com/Siskel-F13>) hoping to dissuade viewers from going. He and the genre-sympathetic Ebert grouped the flick with movies such as *The Boogeyman*, *Halloween*, *Prom Night*, *Silent Scream*, and *Spit on Your Grave* in a 1980 broadcast of their WTTW program *Sneak Previews* titled "Extreme Violence Directed at Women." (The episode is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iz2N6BMOsyQ> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPgA10E-XS0>.)

Tom Savini's practical effects are surprisingly restrained and not at all overly gory, despite the ways in which characters die. And cast member Mark Nelson, who portrayed the always-joking Ned, went on to quite an impressive acting career, including stage work, Broadway productions, and teaching at Princeton University. On the other hand, Bacon proceeded to *Footloose*, *Tremors*, and the reboot of *The Toxic Avenger*.



—William Rotsler

Comments on APA-L #3041

In *Leeway* dated for Oct. 19, 2023, **Lee Gold** updated *ellens* on progress toward the reorientation of the Space Shuttle Endeavour at the California Science Center. I remember when they transported the space shuttle across town to its current location, the transportation feat that entailed, and the people gathering along the route to watch. This is similar!

I will share your feedback with cover artist Kurt Erichsen. I hope you enjoyed his bonus pinup in last week's distribution, as well! I was unaware of *The Mainichi* being available in English in Japan during our travels! (<https://mainichi.jp/english>) Next time we return, I'll be sure to look for it, and I'll recommend it to Jonah. Near the end of our trip, we saw a copy of *The Japan Times* (<https://www.japantimes.co.jp>) but didn't buy it. We'll look for that earlier after arrival next time we visit, too.

Your mention of the *Red Balloon* television program reminded me that I have DVDs of *Super Robot: Red Baron* that I should return to. While studying Japanese to prepare for his departure, Jonah watched a program called *Old Enough!* that focused on toddlers running errands. It's reportedly the best TV show for people learning the language because of its combination of spoken and written language, and

visual cues.

Matthew Mitchells's *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #30 also commented on Erichsen's cover. Your remarks on the technology transition at *PennySaver* reminded me of my time at *The Milton Courier*, a weekly in southern Wisconsin. As an intern, I did everything there: reporting and writing, photography and film development (down in the basement with the back issues, listening to NPR on the radio or Harry Chapin on audio cassette), halftone production, ad design, page layout, and proofing. We still used waxers for the page layout. They have long since moved to desktop publishing.

When I worked at *The Daily Northwestern* during my college years, we still wrote, filed, and edited copy on VT100 green screens. I don't know what they used for design and production. My Basic Writing class in the early 1990s might have been the first to not use typewriters. I remember using floppy diskettes and dot-matrix printers.

Foldable phones are definitely a new form factor for mobiles. You can learn more about the technology that enables foldables at <https://tinyurl.com/foldables-work>, and you can see some of the currently available foldables at <https://tinyurl.com/foldables-options>. My employer makes one, the Google Pixel Fold, but I haven't played around with one yet.

Did you decide to submit a fanzine to the Worldcon Order of Fan-Editors? I did, contributing *Space Warp & WOOF* #2023, which you'll be able to see in the November issue of *The Stf Amateur*. (If you'd like to receive my monthly bundlezine collecting all my various apazines, let me know and I'll add you to the list.) Roger Hill's WOOFzine will be included in this distribution of APA-L. I look forward to seeing what else this year's WOOF comprises! Personally, while I joined as a member of the recent Worldcon in Chengdu, China, even paying to participate online, I was unable to do so because Worldcon never sent me any details on how to participate online. The email I sent to Membership seeking assistance was rejected as spam.

"Triprep" is a portmanteau of "trip report," traditionally used to identify a fannish report of participating in a convention. (See https://fancyclopedia.org/Trip_Report) I've been using it to designate a report on my travels rather than a con report, or conrep. (See https://fancyclopedia.org/Con_Report) I might not be using the fannish term totally appropriately.

In *Reflections from a Fish Bowl* #57, **Barbara Gratz Harmon** invoked Dr. Seuss in response to Erichsen's cover. What Seussian rhyme might others write to accompany it? I believe my wife recently

canceled our Disney+ account. I didn't finish watching all the Marvel and Star Wars programming I might have, and *Doctor Who* is coming to Disney+ in November, but I think I can make do with DVDs more cost effectively, if any viewing needs arise. We also plan to cancel Hulu, though we'll likely finish the third season of *Only Murders in the Building* before we do so. We've watched three of the 10 episodes so far, and it might be the best season yet. A second season of *Our Flag Means Death* has started on HBO Max, so that's next on the list.

Your large Brother printer could be renamed Oh, Brother! or Bother. At least the small Brother laser printer works well. I quite like the Canon I obtained before becoming OC of APA-L; I was glad to be able to troubleshoot the issue, which hasn't occurred again. We went to a musical performance at Beyond Baroque recently, and a viola player used a tablet for her music. Have you ever done so?

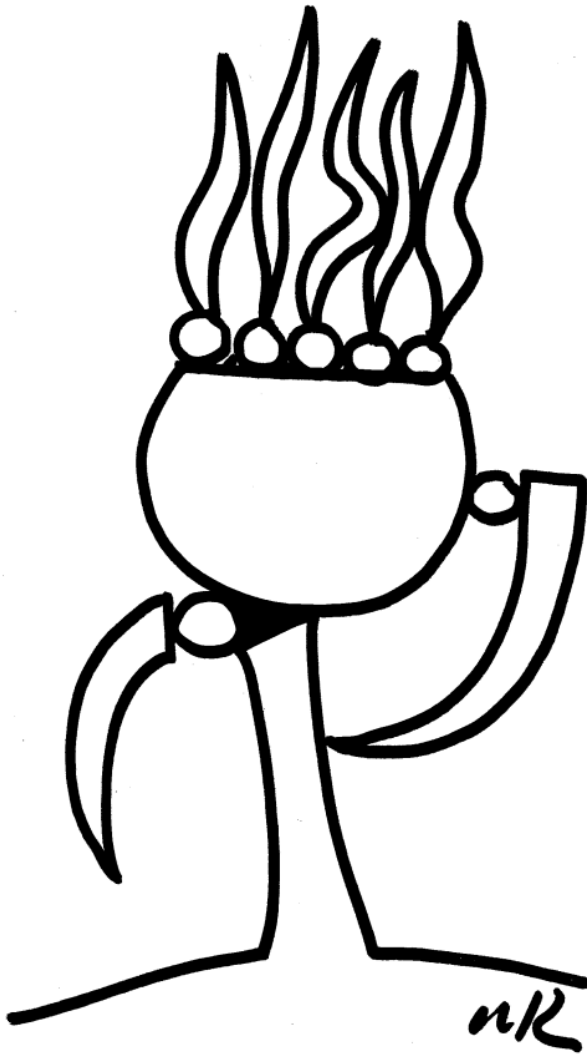


—William Rotsler

Joe Zeff's *Toony Loons* #733 shared his experience witnessing the recent eclipse, which he viewed in Mesa Verde National Park. Despite the late lunch, what a wonderful way to see the eclipse! My wife and I merely checked it out using a neighbor's eclipse glasses several times that morning. By the time I first saw it, it was about halfway along its course.

I will share your cover art feedback with Joe Pearson. Let me know if your APA-L distribution doesn't arrive soon. You are the first to weigh in with feedback that Jean-Paul Garnier could consider incorporating comments into *Space Cowboy's*

Accretion. I agree that that would be a welcome addition!



—William Rotsler

And in *Vanamonde* #1565, **John Hertz** recognized the birthday of Laura Brodian Kelly-Freas Beraha in verse. How long did you live in Chicago, and when did you move? I, too, lived in Chicago, going to college at nearby Northwestern University before living in Lake View near Irving Park Road and Ashland Avenue for about eight months after graduation before moving to the Boston area. It is, indeed, “My Kind of Town.”

I’ll also share your cover art feedback with Pearson. Indeed, the photograph was of the Museum of the Moon installation described on the subsequent page. The moon was indeed full while we were there, Sept. 29. We saw it above the Jiyugaoka train station that evening but forgot to go to the roof of our hotel, which was easily accessible, once we returned later

that evening. Regardless, what we saw was definitely impressive.

The Winnings Could Be Monstrous! (cont.)

One of the seven new Universal Monsters Scratchers tickets (*T&T* #86) was a winner. On the Wolf Man ticket, I matched one of my numbers with a Monster Number and won—a California State Lottery worth \$2! Unfortunately, the local 7-Eleven was out of the Universal Monsters Scratchers, so I accepted \$2 cash instead and didn’t buy any more lottery tickets. My interest is only in the Universal Monsters Scratchers.

Regardless, the Wolf Man tickets are hot! You might even win... another lottery ticket.

From the Reading File: Minicomics

I recently ordered a packet of minicomics from Suzanne Baumann (<https://www.fridge-mag.com>), and a couple of the items were related to science fiction and therefore worth noting here.

For Thee: The Complete Free—for Ye! Collection 1998-2006 compiles seven issues of the minicomic Baumann produces to distribute free at conventions and in other settings. The 2004 edition, “Planet Peezo,” offers an eight-page and eight-panel portrayal of two alien beings from said planet. A curious waitress inquires about their reasons for coming to Earth. She runs through the usual speculations—“to take it away from us,” “to emulate us,” “to study the ways of our people,” with a message, and to warn us—but the visitors’ reasons for being here are not what she expects. The 56-page digest—which also offers other issues—is available for \$8.

I also enjoyed Baumann’s sketchbook mini *Ball Point Bots*, one of a series that also focuses on bears, birds, blokes, and bouffants. The eight-page mini smaller than a matchbook offers as many ballpoint-sketched robots, six of which are identified. For example: Botklava-7. The minicomic is more to look at or read but was great fun all the same.

If interested, order online, or inquire via Suzanne Baumann, P.O. Box 12096, Hamtramck, MI 48212.

“[W]hat were depictions of extraterrestrials like before [*Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*’s] collective tuning of the public imagination? And what has influenced the way we view them? Generations before, the aliens of early science fiction were considerably more fantastical [than little grey men]—bloodcurdling octopus-beings, intelligent swarms of insect-creatures and monstrous reptiles.”—“The weird aliens of early science fiction,” *BBC*, Oct. 22, 2023

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 Chairman Steve Keeter/ 10118 Mason Dixon Circle/ Orlando, FL 32821 (stevekeeter@gmail.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>

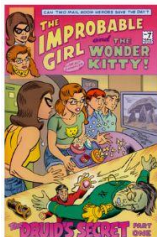


TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS! (THE UFO NEWSLETTER) (\$3.50 for non-members, or a 6-issue subscription for \$20 from UFO Chairman Steve Keeter, 10118 Mason Dixon Circle, Orlando, FL 32821. Or, PayPal to: stevekeeter@gmail.com) The Official Newsletter of the United Fanzine Organization features articles, artwork, and more from co-op members. Many of the

greats of small press have been, and are, involved in this influential group.



HOLOGRAM: COUNTING THE DAYS, BOOK ONE (\$5.00 + \$2.00 shipping to Tom Fellrath, 8031 Griswold Drive, New Albany OH 43054, or PayPal/Venmo to @tdfellrath) The first six issues of Tom Fellrath's amazing sf fantasy are represented in a beautiful package with a standout cover by Scott McClung. Tom scripts, and William Henry Caddell illustrates the gripping saga of a man who is transformed into a hologram during an unfortunate lab accident, and the effects that this has on his life as he glides through one adventure after another.



THE IMPROBABLE GIRL AND THE WONDER KITTY #7 (\$10 US, PayPal to jecarrales@yahoo.com. Check or money order may be sent to: Carrales Studios Productions P.O. Box 1274, PREMONT, TEXAS 78375-1274. Contact Marisolinskikitty@gmail.com for details or to acquire back issues. Canadians inquire before ordering.) A new story arc begins for those remarkable mail room super heroines, Mari and Nico! The discovery of a mysterious Druid's orb unleashes a terrible power upon the world, and our cast of heroes heads off to Wales to explore the mystery! But... a hideous power lies waiting, bandaged, in a hospital bed... something that could turn their world upside down!



SMALL PRESS ACTION THEATER #1 (\$5.00 postpaid, or PayPal to torcpress.com or from Joseph Morris, 4511 Crossgate Dr., Champaign, IL 61822) Joseph Morris' SMALL PRESS ACTION THEATER is an exciting anthology comic featuring some of small press's finest talents, including Jason DeGroot, Joel Cotejar, and Marc Haines. "Lightning Strikes Twice!" (featuring Bob Elinskas' Mister Midnite) is an amazing super hero action tale, brilliantly written and illustrated, and one of the best action stories you're likely to read this year! In "Not a Hoax, Not An Imaginary Tale!" Marc Haines gives us a glimpse of the funeral of the hero Dynamik, but with a strange twist. And Joseph Morris himself writes and

illustrates the weird sf tale "Phantom Frequency, Part 1." Another triumph from TORC PRESS!

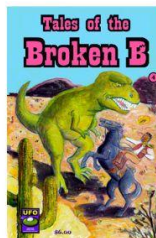


SMALL PRESS COMICS PARTY!, Fall, 2023 (\$5.00 postpaid from Joseph Morris, or PayPal to: torcpress.com) The final issue of SMALL PRESS COMICS PARTY! offers three hilarious comic strips: "The Masked Platypus in A Shocking Duel" by Joseph Morris and Terry Flippo, "Uncle Pook in Ogre Trouble" by Joseph and Larned Justin, and "Trippy Dawg in From Hugs to Eternity" written by Jason DeGroot

and drawn by Joe Morris! Featuring some of the finest and funniest talents ever assembled in a small press comic, this one is a winner!



STRANGE TIMES #3 (\$6.00 + \$2 shipping to Tom Fellrath, 8031 Griswold Drive, New Albany OH 43054, or PayPal/Venmo to @tdfellrath) The stunningly beautiful rubber stamp images of Matt Levin fill this unique full color magazine. Many of Matt's classic comics are reprinted. "Over the next 50 plus pages," writes Editor Tom Fellrath, you will enjoy a beautiful explosion of creativity. Odds are his work will be unlike any you have seen from any other creator. "This one is definitely different, and totally inspiring!"



TALES OF THE BROKEN B #4 (\$6.00 postpaid from Larry Johnson, 31 Greenbrook Rd, Hyde Park, MA 02136, or PayPal to: LewBrown1@Verizon.net) The cowboys working at the Broken B Ranch were used to the occasional wild animal in the hills and plains nearby but nothing like the prehistoric beast that suddenly started eating their cattle! Larry Johnson is writer, artist and editor of this thrilling new full color adventure! Also included: a letter column and a fascinating excerpt from the 1890s newspaper EVERY SATURDAY (what would you do if you were attacked by huge, and extremely perturbed, bears?!).



UNCANNY ACTION, #1-4 COLLECTED NEWSPRINT EDITION(\$5.00 postpaid via PayPal johnmullerillustration@gmail.com or from John Muller, P.O. Box 41, Scotrun, PA 18355) Issues Number 1 through 4 of John Muller's gripping sf epic UNCANNY ACTION are collected in one (newsprint!) edition. The drama begins on page one: "It had slept for thousands upon thousands of years, but it has awoken... it will start feeding..." As the creature contemplates its revenge, it is pursued by the only one courageous enough to follow! John Muller spins an unforgettable yarn.

