

stf amateur II



The Stf Amateur 11

August 2024

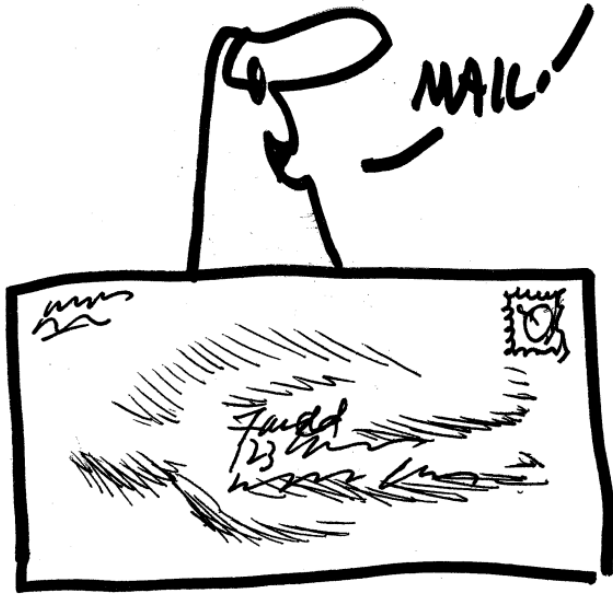
#	Title	Date	APA	Pages
1	Cover artwork by Pete Jaquay			1
2	Table of Contents			2
3	Letters of Comment			2
4	Call for Submissions			1
5	<i>Telegraphs & Tar Pits</i> #121	July 4, 2024	APA-L	15
6	<i>Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D.</i>	July 4, 2024	APA-L	4
7	<i>Faculae & Filigree</i> #33	July 3, 2024	LASFAPA	2
8	<i>The Brass Hat Mind</i> #8	July 3, 2024	SAPS	1
9	<i>Snow Poster Township</i> #17	July 16, 2024	N'APA	7
10	<i>Space Warp & WOOF</i> #2024	July 18, 2024	WOOF	8
11	<i>Telegraphs & Tar Pits</i> #122	July 18, 2024	APA-L	6
12	<i>Telegraphs & Tar Pits</i> #123	July 25, 2024	APA-L	10
13	<i>The Explosion Containment Umbrella</i> #22	July 25, 2024	eAPA	2
14	The UFO Checklist and bacover			2
Total				63

You can learn more about cover artist Pete Jaquay at <https://www.instagram.com/pete.jaquay> and <https://www.youtube.com/@PeteJaquay>.

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>) and the Fanac Fan History Project (<https://fanac.org>), as well as for the Usual. Letters of comment, cover art, and spot illustrations are welcome and desired—as are other contributions. A member of the Fan Writers of America. This is a Karma Lapel publication.

Topical Index

Title	Pages
Administrivia	<i>T&T</i> 121-1, <i>T&T</i> 122-1
<i>Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D.</i> Comic Strips	<i>T&T</i> 121-4
Celebrating Black Comics Creators	<i>SW&W</i> 2024-5
Comments	<i>T&T</i> 121-13, <i>F&F</i> 33-1, <i>SPT</i> 17-4, <i>SW&W</i> 2024-7, <i>T&T</i> 122-5, <i>T&T</i> 123-9, <i>ECU</i> 22-1
Day Trip Report: Little Tokyo	<i>T&T</i> 122-1
Event Report: Culver City Book Festival	<i>T&T</i> 121-1
Fantastic Television: <i>The Adventures of Superman</i>	<i>T&T</i> 121-2
From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews	<i>T&T</i> 121-8, <i>SPT</i> 17-3, <i>T&T</i> 122-2
From the Reading Pile: Comic Book Reviews	<i>T&T</i> 123-3
From the Reading Pile: Fanzine Reviews	<i>T&T</i> 123-1
Ignorable Themes	<i>T&T</i> 121-12, <i>T&T</i> 123-8
Juvenalia: "Ghost Stories"	<i>T&T</i> 123-1
Last Week's Senryu	<i>T&T</i> 121-1, <i>T&T</i> 122-1, <i>T&T</i> 123-1
On the Minicomics Work of Suzanne Baumann	<i>SW&W</i> 2024-3
On the National Fantasy Fan Federation Laureate Awards	<i>T&T</i> 121-1
A Personal Introduction and Minicomics Reviews	<i>SW&W</i> 2024-1
Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews	<i>T&T</i> 121-11, <i>T&T</i> 122-5, <i>T&T</i> 123-7
Straddling Fandoms	<i>SW&W</i> 2024-1
Trip Report: Chicago and Wisconsin	<i>SPT</i> 17-1
An Uncomfortably Large Number	<i>SW&W</i> 2024-4
An Update on Club Involvement	<i>ECU</i> 22-2



—William Rotsler

Cy Chauvin's piece on nonfiction that sf fans might find of interest was a delight to read, though he stole the idea from Dale Nelson's "Sorta Like Tolkien" in an early issue of *Portable Storage*; same concept, nonfiction that might feel related to Tolkien's obsessions. At any rate, this was a great piece, and I would have published in a heartbeat had he sent it to me while publishing *Portable Storage*. Very engaging. More like this, Cy!

Bad boy me, I never subscribed, and rarely read the prozines. In my early years of being a fanboy, say, 17-18, I used to buy old pulps for specific authors, but that was it. So I guess I haven't been very supportive. My brother Michael subscribed to *Analog* for a few years, probably the final years before John W. Campbell died. He liked Campbell—bought the collected editorials selected by Harry Harrison when they came out, as well.

Your mention of Fleet Week to John Hertz brought back many memories of Fleet Week in San Francisco. San Francisco being a relatively tightly built town, all those horny sailors strolling around San Francisco in those cute outfits were hard to ignore. It was celebration time for many, and a big party scene in the Castro.

I know Bruce Gillespie always goes for the old, but in the case of *The Thief of Bagdad* with Sabu it was a thrill ride for me at 13, seen on a huge screen in an old movie palace in San Francisco. I gotta say "Meh!" to the 1924 silent film. While you were being bored by those gol-dang 106 minutes, I was being wowed.

Never cottoned enough to the Magnetic Fields to

invest in their music. I suppose that might have been a mistake. Many folks I know particularly liked *69 Love Songs*. Perhaps I was too brutal. I do amuse myself now and again by singing Stephin Merritt's "Time Enough for Rocking When We're Old," now that I am old. One wonders if he had been listening to Warren Zevon ("I'll Sleep When I'm Dead").

I've been reading Sam Moskowitz's *Under the Moons of Mars*, his history of the Munsey group of pulps, circa late 1890s to the first couple of decades of the 20th century. In all seriousness, I've been finding it compulsive reading. I reckon I'm going to have to ferret out some of the obscure university press books on the dime novel and story papers if this compulsion keeps up.

One for your records: FLAP is a very active apa still. I think D. Gary Grady may be the OE, or whatever they might call their collater. (Tim Marion, a FLAP member, is a former editor of [*South of the Moon*], but I'm sure he has no idea you've picked up the reins.) There's also Lil Apa—but I think it's invitation only. Do you want me to contact APA-50 or FLAP to see if they want to be listed in the next edition of *Blue Moon Special*?

[I reached out to D. Gary Grady about FLAP when compiling *Blue Moon Special*, but the email address I had bounced. I was able to garner Slanapa details from another participant. We'd love to include FLAP in the next edition if it's still active.

The same goes for APA-50. I'd been emailing Terry Floyd, but a listing didn't come together in time. We've since received information from Allan Beatty and plan to follow up for next year's ish.

Lil Apa might be new to me. I'd like to include invitation-only apae, but that's up to the participants! An APA-L participant also mentioned Little APA as a "secret apa." Lil Apa and Little APA might be the same thing.—HR]

Mr. Sanchez seemed a bit snippy in his explanation of his ole sasquatch painting.

[I thought so, too, and debated printing that. The eller in question later asserted his comment "was not even about his illustration, but rather about someone else's comment!" The prickliness seems to have blown over.—HR]

I loved your piece on old LA. I once had a fantasy of doing a two-week urban hike around greater Los Angeles, with map, daypack, and water bottle, and then moteling or hoteling it at night. It never happened, of course, and now I am old and tired, and

need new boots.

Two birds with one stone: Fandom (and sf) is a lifelong interest for me, for sure, but neither FIAWOL or FIJAGH seem applicable. I don't do fannish signifiers, ever. Though it is nice to know whose car that was at some Westercon or another I attended and saw the FIAWOL plates. Not just any nutty fan, but Barry Gold!

Post-retirement and pre-move to Albuquerque, all my books were in boxes waiting for the move. While waiting I hard-used the Tucson library doing a quick catch-up on 21st century sf and f and found that I liked 99 percent of it. T. Kingfisher's *Thornhedge* was really good. But even better in the fairytale realm are Alix E. Harrow's two novellas, *A Spindle Splintered* and *A Mirror Mended*, also published by Tordotcom. Those are brilliant, moving reworkings and I highly recommend them. (Although not strictly necessary, reading them in written order adds great depth: Spindle first, Mended second.)

Thanks for finally giving me the proper descriptor for Oregon—chamber jazz. It's completely apt. I have been describing them as “very architectural, almost classical.” They are so composed I sometimes wonder if “jazz” is really the appropriate label. It never occurred to me that Oregon was similar to Windham Hill's back catalog, the progenitors of “New Age.” But then again, I like a bit of George Winston on occasion. And since you brought that up, while I was listening to some of the attached I thought, “Oh, yeah, I can see how it could be misunderstood as New Age, but it ain't.” (Kinda like people misconstruing Mike Oldfield as New Age.) I was lucky enough to see Oregon twice. I took my friend Bob Clifford, who'd never heard of them before, to one of the concerts. Midway through the concert, he leaned into my ear and said, “Now, this is truly soul music.” I couldn't have agreed with him more. ... [S]ome of the songs I adore and hear in my head, among many others.

Another brilliant cover. Followed the link. The man's a hilarious genius!

—William Breiding

[T]hanks for the latest bundle of zines. As one commentator said, “Holy crap, you are one prolific mofo.” Well, he didn't use those exact words, but that was the gist.

—Mick Taylor

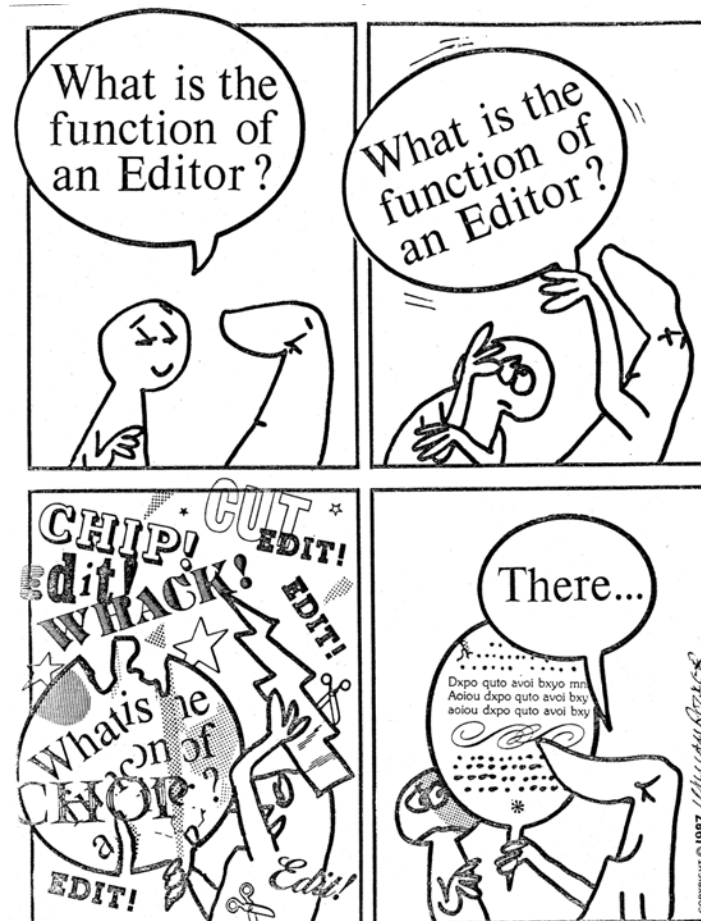
[I'll add “One prolific mofo” to a recent eller's “the biggest zine,” to my growing collection of out-of-context blurbs for my imaginary press kit!—HR]

Also, while searching *eFanzines* for reviews of *The Stf Amateur* and a bit of potential egoboo (one occasionally does this), I found the following review of #6 in Guy H. Lillian III's *The Zine Dump* #59 (March 2024):

Here's a smart idea. A fan-ed who does short zines for a number of apas and other outlets gathers a bunch together between two staples, adds a cover, and that's his zine. Heath is one of those hyper-active “omniapans” and here, adorned with a nice cover by Michael Waggoner, are his zines, pubs for LASFAPA, eAPA, APA-L and what have you. He calls for contributions to his various efforts, including *Telegraphs & Tar Pits*, *Faculae & Filigree*, *Emulators & Engines* ... If nothing else, a neo-fan-ed could glean a sense of the apas available from this pub, and in addition to the N3F, amateur press associations are a fine introduction to our fanzine idiocy.

You can access that and other issues of *The Zine Dump*—which I recommend—at <https://efanzines.com/ZineDump>, and Lillians's fanzine *Spartacus* (<https://efanzines.com/Challenger>) recently received a 2024 N3F Laureate Award for Best Non-N3F Fan Publication. The recognition is well deserved.

Call for Submissions



—William Rotsler

Do you write or draw? As *The Stf Amateur* continues to evolve from an interconnected assortment of standalone apazines to its current bundlezine format, it's only natural that it eventually becomes a proper genzine. Effective immediately, *The Stf Amateur* is open to submissions of all kinds.

The Stf Amateur is hereby requesting the following:

- sf, fantasy, and horror news
- fanart, illos, and fillos
- cover art
- poetry
- filk songs and lyrics
- short fiction
- articles and essays
- fanzine, book, movie, television, and other reviews
- con reports
- jokes
- letters of comment
- ... and other material

If selected for publication, material will initially be included in one of my apazines, as well as a monthly issue of *The Stf Amateur*. Cover art will be considered solely for *The Stf Amateur*. Contributors will receive the issue in which their material appears.

Send your contributions to Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA 90230; kalel@well.com; or via fax to 323-916-0367.

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #121

July 4, 2024

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

Some weeks, the poems
come easily. Other weeks,
they elude me so.

Administrivia: July 11's Distribution

A reminder that I'll be traveling July 6-13, 2024. I'll be unable to print, collate, or mail a distribution Thursday, July 11, so we'll take that week off. Distribution will resume July 18.

On the National Fantasy Fan Federation Laureate Awards

In late June, I learned that occasional eller Jean-Paul L. Garnier was recently recognized in the National Fantasy Fan Federation's Laureate Awards. No less than *Locus* reported on the awards. (<https://locusmag.com/2024/06/2024-n3f-awards>) Space Cowboy Books' *Simultaneous Times* Vol. 3, edited by Garnier, received the N3F Laureate for Best Shorter Work or Anthology. After sending him my congratulations via the *Instagram*—kudos!—I referred to *The National Fantasy Fan* Vol. 83 #6 and saw that I had received the N3F Laureate for Best Fan Writer. Whaaat?

I'd been aware that I'd been nominated, but given the others on the slate—Guy Lillian III and Joseph T. Major—I didn't at all expect that I'd be so recognized. Lillian's *Spartacus* received the Laureate for Best Non-N3F Fan Publication, so other faneds were also represented. But it was an unexpected surprise.

This isn't my first Laureate. Last year, I received the Laureate for Best Television Show, Film, or Video because of a series of screenings I'd hosted for Neffers. While I was honored then, as well, I was somewhat flummoxed because "Heath Row's Productions" felt like an outlier to the wide range of movies and television shows released in the previous year—and because I'd ended the series due to lack of interest or involvement among Neffers.

Regardless, the recognition as Best Fan Writer means a lot to me, and I am grateful for the vote of confidence. I'll value this Laureate along with

previous N3F awards such as the 2010 Franson Award and 2012 Kaymar Award.

After all, it's not every day that I'm mentioned in *Locus*. Somehow I'd missed their reportage on last year's Laureate Awards, but my name's now appeared in *Locus* twice, at least online. I'll have to check whether I'm named in the print edition.

Event Report: Culver City Book Festival

Last weekend, the Wende Museum hosted the Culver City Book Festival (<https://wendemuseum.org/program/ccbookfest2024>), a one-day event showcasing area publishers, authors, and other literary activity. Activities included panel discussions such as Poet Laureates Luis J. Rodriguez, Lynne Thompson and Brian Sonia-Wallace, and Culver City Artist Laureate Katy Krantz; Publishers of Color; and the current state of romance literature; as well as a zine-making workshop—which I didn't explore. Poetry readings were also featured, and food was available outside the museum.



I made a point to stop by and check out the event because the LASFS was tabling there for Loscon, offering a series of hastily scheduled author signings over the course of the day. I brought a box of APA-L back issues for Krystal Rains to display on the table and made my way through the event to see what was on hand.

There was quite a bit of sf-related material on offer! Author Matt Harry (<http://www.mattharrywork.com>), who collaborates with the mysterious and elusive Euphemia Whitmore on the Codex Arcanum series, shared a table with Loscon. He was displaying the novels *Sorcery for Beginners* and *Cryptozoology for Beginners*, as well as another title. We couldn't have asked for a better tablemate.

Colin Hinckley, whose *The Black Lord* was published by Tenebrous Press (<https://tenebrouspress>).

com) last year, was tabling nearby. I also met the brother and sister of a principal investigator at the SETI Institute. They were selling their sibling Dr. Laurance R. Doyle's *Reflections of a SETI Scientist* (Red Thistle, 2022).



Brandie June at the Loscon table with Krystal Rains and Richard Costas

There were multiple publishers on hand, as well. I talked briefly with the people staffing the Semiotexte(e) display—<https://www.semiotexte.com>—and picked up a slim book by Julio Cortazar (see below). Inventory Press (<https://www.inventorypress.com>) offered a very impressive table, including a tidy paperback edition of the *Get Out* screenplay by Jordan Peele and the hefty *Cyberfeminism Index* edited by Mindy Seu.



Colin Hinckley and friend

I enjoyed a brief conversation with the volunteer staffing the 826LA (<https://826la.org>) table, which offered several future-oriented works by students (see below). And at the FlowerSong Press (<https://www.flowersongpress.com>) table, I met Natalie Sierra, author of the 2021 novel *Charlie Forever and Ever*.

Finally, I had a brief conversation with one of the museum staff, inquiring whether their collection of samizdat materials includes any fanzines. She encouraged me to stop by the front desk to inquire further, which I plan to do.

I didn't stay long, perhaps an hour, but it's an impressive event, and next year, I'll plan to stay longer to check out some of the readings and other programming, as well as the zine-making workshop. Incidentally, Rains and I briefly discussed plans for the 2024 *AnaConzine*, with which I intend to help. Based on the pictures I've seen online, it looks like she and Costas had a good day!

Fantastic Television: *The Adventures of Superman*

Last weekend while folding laundry, I watched the first few episodes of *The Adventures of Superman*, which I used to watch Sunday mornings while growing up in southern Wisconsin. (T&T #120)

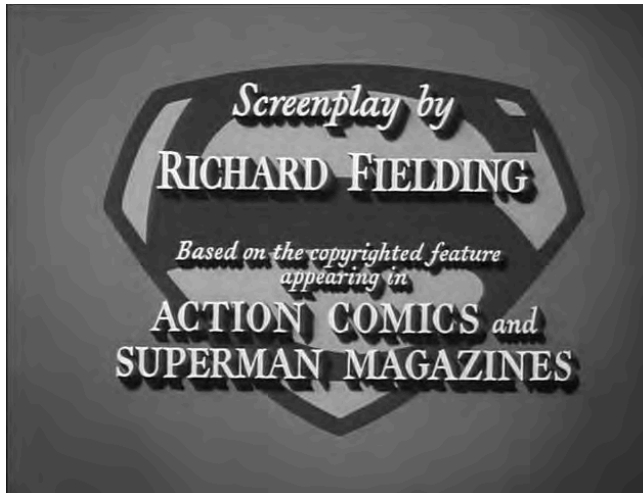
The first episode, "Superman on Earth," originally aired Sept. 19, 1952. It largely retells his origin story to kick off the program. Departing from the comic book slightly, Superman's adoptive parents are named Eben and Sarah Kent rather than the traditional Jonathan and Martha Kent, and a younger actor portrays a 12-year-old Clark Kent even though Superboy isn't featured. Much of the ensemble cast is there from the jump—George Reeves as Kent and Superman, John Hamilton as Perry White, and Jack Larson as Jimmy Olsen—but Noel Neill wouldn't return to the role of Lois Lane until after the first season, which featured Phyllis Coates.

"The Haunted Lighthouse," the second episode, first aired Sept. 26, 1952. A surprisingly quiet episode following the initial episode, it concentrated primarily on Jimmy Olsen as he tries to solve a mystery while visiting a distant aunt on an island off the coast of Maine. There's an abandoned lighthouse, a mute housekeeper, a hostile cousin, and a mysterious cave accessible only when the tide is out. Superman eventually arrives to help resolve the criminal conundrum.

The third episode, "The Case of the Talkative Dummy," originally broadcast Oct 3, 1952. In that story, a ventriloquist is flummoxed by mysterious interruptions to his act while on stage. Olsen, Kent, and Lane eventually connect the off-stage antics with a series of armored car robberies, revealing them to be an inside job.

Each episode features a title card promoting the program's comic book inspiration, which by that time, had been on newsstands since 1938. There'd already been two film serials, the 1948 *Superman* and 1950's

Atom Man vs. Superman, both starring Kirk Alyn and Neill as Kent/Superman and Lane. And the radio serial *The Adventures of Superman* was broadcast 1940-1951. Bud Collyer's voice acting was successfully kept secret until 1946.



Inspired by watching the episodes, I then turned to reading some representative comic books roughly from the same time period. First, I turned to *Superman* (Signet, 1966), an early paperback collection predating the much later graphic novels and other trade paperbacks. The mass-market paperback features just five stories, reprinted in black and white and reformatted.

“The Invulnerable Enemy” first appeared in *Action Comics* #226 (March 1957). “Superman’s Three Mistakes” was first published in *Superman* #105 (May 1956). *Superman* #127 (February 1959) included “Titano the Super-Ape!” While those three issues credited Whitney Ellsworth as editor, #127 was reportedly edited by Mort Weisinger, whose name few might recognize. “The Menace of Cosmic Man!” was drawn from *Action Comics* #258 (November 1959), with editing credited to Weisinger. And “The Menace of Red-Green Kryptonite” first ran in *Action Comics* #275 (April 1961), also edited by Weisinger.

So, who’s this Weisinger guy? An early science fiction fan, he was one of the first—the second, according to Harry Warner Jr.’s *All Our Yesterdays* (T&T #119)—to transition from sf fandom to professional work in the field. Before doing so, Weisinger assisted with the fanzine *Fantasy Magazine* and served as a literary agent (Solar Sales Service with Julius Schwartz—they also published the fanzines *Science Fiction Digest* and *The Time Traveller*) before becoming editor of *Thrilling Wonder Stories* in 1936. He attended the first Chicon in 1940 along with Otto Binder and Jerry Siegel. In Orty Ortwein’s book *The*

First Geeks (see below), Weisinger is photographed with Ray Bradbury at the first Worldcon in 1939.

Before he moved to comic books, Weisinger edited *Thrilling Wonder Stories* from 1936-1941, with stints editing *Startling Stories* (1939-1941), *Captain Future* (1940-1941), and uncredited work on *Strange Stories* (1939). He also contributed a number of short stories written using the names Mortimer Weisinger, Will Garth, and Tom Erwin Geris to outlets such as *Amazing Stories*, *Science Fiction*, *Thrilling Mystery*, and *Wonder Stories*, as well as magazines he edited.

Schwartz, eventually a longtime editor at DC Comics, started work at All-American Comics, which merged with DC, in 1944. Weisinger already worked at DC, starting as an editor in 1941. If you compare the names of writers who contributed to *Thrilling Wonder Stories* under Weisinger’s editorship and writers for *Superman* and *Action Comics* later on, you’ll see some interesting similarities.

That struck me while reading *Superman in the Fifties* (DC Comics, 2002). Featuring an introduction by Mark Waid, the collection includes stories reprinted from comic books such as *Action Comics*, *Adventure Comics*, and *Superman* written by Edmond Hamilton and Otto Binder between 1950 and 1959—both under Weisinger’s editorship. Those writers also contributed actively to the sf pulps, with Binder collaborating with his brother using the pen name Eando Binder.

In Waid’s introduction, he contends that “Superman editor Whitney Ellsworth and his successor-to-be Mort Weisinger worked overtime supervising *all* media to ensure a consistency to the Superman legend.”

So unified was their “vision” for Superman that the comics, the newspaper strip, and the television show often shared identical storylines—sometimes simultaneously, but not always. Certain TV episodes were later adapted for the comics and vice versa, and it’s a little-known fact that many of Superman’s greatest villains made their first appearances not in the comics magazines but in the strips... . . . [A]fter production of the television show wrapped in 1957, Weisinger was given full editorial rein over Superman... .”

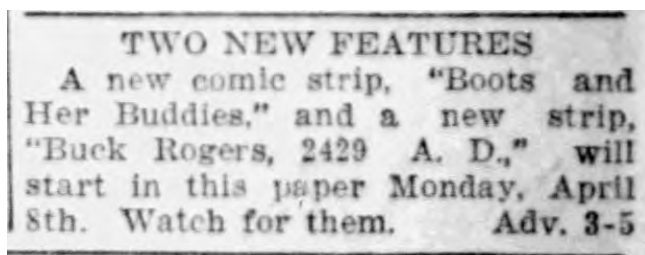
For example, “Panic in the Sky,” (S2E12) is similar to “The Menace from the Stars!” from *World’s Finest Comics* #68 (January-February 1954) and “When Stars Collide!” in *Action Comics* #63 (August 1943). “Around the World with Superman” (S2E26) draws on “The Girl Who Didn’t Believe in Superman” in *Superman* #96 (March 1955)—which is included in *Superman in the Fifties*... and which was edited by Weisinger.

I'll continue watching *The Adventures of Superman* more mindful of its connection to sf. Not bad for a participant in First Fandom!

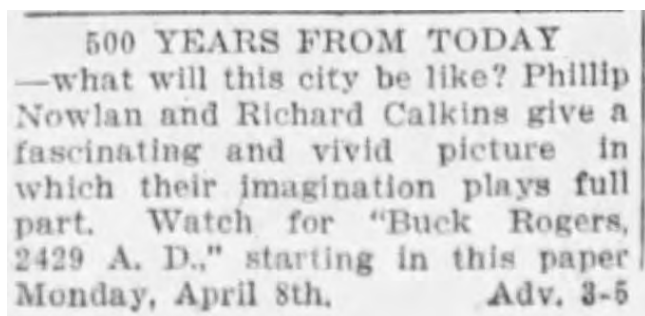
Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D. Comic Strips

While the *Tom Corbett, Space Cadet* comic strip debuted in *The Los Angeles Times* in 1951 and the *Buck Rogers* Sunday strip began in the *Times* in 1935 (T&T #111), neither was the first sf strip to appear in the Los Angeles area. The *Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D.* daily comic strip first saw print in *The Pomona Progress Bulletin* in early April 1929—six years earlier—after about a week of promotion in that newspaper. Pomona is located about 30 miles east of Los Angeles, so LA-area fen might have had to take a short trip to experience the strip at the time.

Dating back to April 3, 1929, promotion of the forthcoming strip fell into one of several categories: advertisements, articles, “fake articles,” and very brief mentions I’ll term “squibs.” Here are what those latter short promotional items looked like:

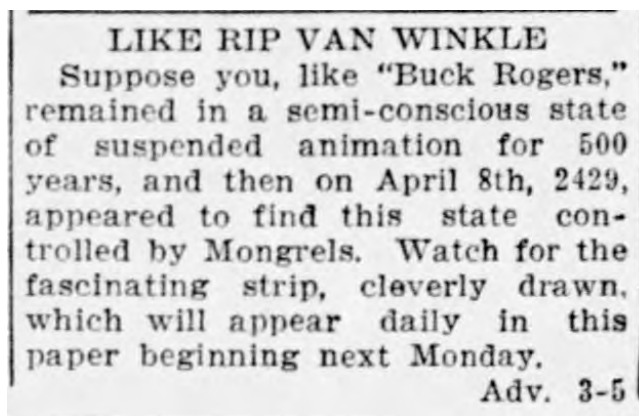


TWO NEW FEATURES
A new comic strip, “Boots and Her Buddies,” and a new strip, “Buck Rogers, 2429 A. D.,” will start in this paper Monday, April 8th. Watch for them. Adv. 3-5



500 YEARS FROM TODAY
—what will this city be like? Phillip Nowlan and Richard Calkins give a fascinating and vivid picture in which their imagination plays full part. Watch for “Buck Rogers, 2429 A. D.,” starting in this paper Monday, April 8th. Adv. 3-5

A man named George H. “Buck” Rogers III died in Lynnfield, Mass., earlier this year. A businessman and active golfer, he was born in 1949. His obituary doesn’t mention an interest in sf, but we can speculate on the source of his nickname.



LIKE RIP VAN WINKLE
Suppose you, like “Buck Rogers,” remained in a semi-conscious state of suspended animation for 500 years, and then on April 8th, 2429, appeared to find this state controlled by Mongrels. Watch for the fascinating strip, cleverly drawn, which will appear daily in this paper beginning next Monday.
Adv. 3-5

All from *The Pomona Progress Bulletin*, April 3, 1929

In addition to those brief items, mere teases, the newspaper published at least one even briefer teaser largely devoid of content:



NEXT MONDAY EVENTFUL DAY
* * *
Buck Rogers, ‘Boots’ Coming Here

The Pomona Progress Bulletin, April 4, 1929

“Boots” refers to *Boots and Her Buddies*, a comic strip by Edgar Martin syndicated from 1924-1968. The strip was a stark contrast to *Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D.*, focusing as it did on the “Sweetheart of the Comics,” the “Sweetheart of America,” or “Everybody’s Sweetheart.”

The *Buck Rogers* strip was written by Philip Francis Nowlan and drawn by Richard Calkins. But it wasn’t the first appearance of the character. Like Edmond Hamilton and Otto Binder above, Nowlan had previously contributed to the sf pulps. He published several novellas, including one titled “Armageddon 2419 A.D.,” which appeared in the August 1928 issue of *Amazing Stories*.

Nowlan’s other pulp writings include “Onslaught from Venus” (*Science Wonder Stories*, September 1929), “The Time Jumpers” (*Amazing Stories*, February 1934), “The Prince of Mars Returns” (*Fantastic Adventures*, February 1940), and “Space Guards” (*Astounding Science Fiction*, May 1940), in addition to his *Buck Rogers*-related writings.

Inspiring competing strips such as *Flash Gordon*, *Brick Bradford*, *Don Dixon and the Hidden Empire*, and *Speed Spaulding*, *Buck Rogers* went on to be adapted for movies, radio, and television.

Advertisements for the 1929 strip debut were represented thusly:



Buck Rogers 2429 A. D.

Is a narrative strip-story of the life in America five hundred years hence. The Mongols, a super-race from Gobi Desert, have overwhelmed this country. The struggle of the surviving Americans is an amazing story of love, passion and adventure that will thrill you every day. Read

Buck Rogers 2429 A. D.

BEGINNING MONDAY
IN THE

PROGRESS - BULLETIN



Buck and Wilma High Above the Earth

—drawn by the airplane and supported by Buck's inertron belt, sped through the clouds. The Mongol airship with its deadly Disintegrator Ray gun was left behind.

They had escaped from almost certain death—

But a greater danger awaited them. Read this amazing story of cruel, merciless super-men who had overwhelmed American and virtually destroyed her. It is packed with

Love—Passion—Adventure—Thrills

and the Super-Science of Tomorrow
in the Great Narrative Strip

“Buck Rogers 2429 A. D.”

Beginning Monday
in the


PROGRESS-BULLETIN

“Pomona’s Daily Newspaper”

Phone Ex. 70

278 S. Thomas St.

Both from *The Pomona Progress Bulletin*, April 3, 1929



I WAS TWENTY YEARS OLD WHEN THEY STOPPED THE WORLD WAR AND MUSTERED ME OUT OF THE AIR SERVICE.

I LEFT MY HOME IN POMONA AND GOT A JOB SURVEYING AN ABANDONED MINE NEAR PITTSBURGH, IN WHICH THE AIR HAD A PECULIAR TANG, AND THE CRUMBLING ROCK GLOWED STRANGELY.

I WAS EXAMINING IT WHEN SUDDENLY THE ROOF BEHIND ME CAVED IN, AND -----

Read the strange and fantastic adventures of Buck Rogers in 2429 A. D. as told in the cleverly-drawn picture narrative beginning monday in this newspaper.

The Pomona Progress Bulletin, April 4, 1929

There were also fake articles that served as advertising, as well. Those might have been of special interest to more general readers of sf because they addressed science fictional themes and concepts in prose—connecting Nowland’s pulp past with the more visual comic strip medium. Besides, how often does one get to read science fiction in the pages of a newspaper?

Inertron Amazes Man Who Slept For 5 Centuries

—

PENNSYLVANIA ORG-ZONE, April 5, 2429—(Inter-Org. News Bul.)—Buck Rogers, who apparently has existed in a state of suspended animation for 500 years, claims that he never heard of inertron, the synthetic anti-gravity element discovered 50 years ago.

He expressed amazement that a substance not found in nature, and having the characteristics of inverse gravity, could be so built up.

Rogers was found at the mouth of a cave which he declared to be an ancient mine in which he says he was trapped in 1929, a century before the Mongol conquest of the earth. He was discovered by Patrol Scout Wilma Deering, who says he came to her rescue when she was attacked by Half-Breeds.

—

(The adventures of Buck Rogers in the year 2429 A. D. will appear daily in picture-story form in The Progress-Bulletin, beginning next Monday.)

The Pomona Progress Bulletin, April 5, 1929

ATOM SPLIT UP BY SCIENTISTS OF FUTURE ERA

MASSACHUSETTS ORG-ZONE, April 6, 2429—(Inter-Org. News Bul.)—The "disintegrator ray" is the outgrowth of the "cosmic ray" discovered 500 years ago by the ancient American scientist, Dr. Robert A. Millikan, according to Charles "Buck" Rogers, the youth who apparently slept 500 years in an abandoned mine.

Rogers declares that Dr. Millikan, who, he says, lived a century before the Mongol conquest of America and the beginning of modern forest civilization, was the first to discover that electrons, combining into atoms in outer space, give rise to highly penetrative rays of infinitesimal wave length. Rogers suggests the theory that the early Mongol scientists succeeded in reversing this process, and so destroyed the atom.

Electronists here verify Rogers' idea of the manner in which the disintegrator ray works as substantially correct.

Rogers was taken into custody recently by Patrol Scout Wilma Deering, near Post 782.

(The adventures of Buck Rogers in the year 2429 A. D. will be published daily in picture-story form in The Progress-Bulletin starting Monday.)

Audio Death Ray Used in Serial Strip

MINNESOTA ORG-ZOSE, April 8, 2429 (Inter-Org. News Bul.)—The death dealing properties of sound waves were known as early as 1928, according to "Buck" Rogers, a student at the military training ground here.

Rogers is widely known as the youth who was born at the close of the 19th century, fought in the great war of 1914-18, a century before the Mongol incursion, and then existed in a state of suspended animation for more than 500 years.

Rogers declares:

"Scientists at the University of California, which was one of the leading educational institutions in the days of the ancient American civilization, were experimenting as early as 1928 with the lethal characteristics of sound waves from crystals vibrating at the rate of 750,000 times a second. If I remember rightly they were working under the direction of Prof. A. R. Olson of the chemistry department of that institution."

Rogers thus shatters the tradition that audio death vibrations were first discovered 200 years ago by John Elane, pioneer of modern American science who founded the Denver Org. and as Boss of the Western Orgfederation, composed of the Denver, Boulder, Pueblo, Santa Fe and Salt Lake Orgs. developed the first successful resistance to the domination of the Mongols and so laid the foundations for the modern forest civilization.

(The picture-story of the adventures of "Buck" Rogers in the year 2429 A. D., to be published in serial form, starts today on Page 1, Section 2.)

Finally, the newspaper also offered journalistic coverage of the comic strip:

LOOK FIVE CENTURIES AHEAD
* * *
Also, Meet a Charming Young Girl

Two intensely interesting picture-stories, both new and unlike any ever published in Pomona, will entertain readers of *The Progress-Bulletin*, daily starting Monday.

"Boots and Her Buddies" has as its central figure "Boots," a beautiful, pert and thoroughly modern girl who had added to the usual accomplishments of an attractive young miss the art of flying. She has recently opened a tea room, and as the story opens Monday she is finding the proprietorship of such an establishment is neither as easy nor as profitable as she had supposed. But along with the sheaf of bills she receives in the mail, comes a letter marked "Personal" which states—but you'll have to wait to make your acquaintance with "Boots" on Monday before you find out what's in this letter.

Besides her beauty, her ready humor, her adventurous spirit and her various accomplishments, "Boots" has another qualification that will make her popular with Pomonians—she is always attractively garbed in the latest mode, whether for business, a party or an airplane flight. Watch for her Monday.

"Buck Rogers, 2429 A. D.," the other new picture-story strip starting Monday, is a distinct innovation, and one that seems destined to hold the interest of everyone who enjoys an imaginative glance into the future.

Buck Rogers is shown as an adventurous young man who fought with the air corps during the World War, was mustered out of service, and who, in 1929, got a job surveying an abandoned mine near Pittsbergh, in which the air had a peculiar, pungent tang and the rock walls glowed strangely. Suddenly the roof behind him caved in and he felt himself growing unconscious.

When you meet Buck next Monday, you will see him emerge from his rocky prison to find that five centuries have elapsed, that 100 years after he lapsed into unconsciousness the Mongols of the Gobi desert, having developed scientific instruments of destruction then unrivalled, had conquered the world, reduced American cities to ruins and driven native Americans into hiding in the vast forests which grew over the former fertile farm areas.

The native Americans, however, by 2429 A. D. have formed organizations called "orgs" and have been preparing for a war to drive out the Mongols.

Buck meets a girl, of course, and together they seemed destined to share many adventures. You'll enjoy their story and that of the Americans in their campaign to free their country once more.

Look in *Mandays'* paper for both "Boots and Her Buddies" and "Buck Rogers, 2429 A. D."

The Pomona Progress Bulletin, April 6, 1929

TWO ARRIVE TO ENTERTAIN YOU

Miss Boots, Buck Rogers Are Featured in Two New Daily Picture-Strips

M., Mrs. and Miss Reader, meet Miss Boots!

Also, shake hands with Buck Rogers!

What, you've met them already? Oh, to be sure. They are right above this, aren't they? Then introductions are unnecessary.

You might enjoy a little gossip about these newcomers, anyway. Here goes:

Boots, that charming blonde girl who is so elated over the mysterious letter she has just received, has a past! Some months ago she learned to fly an airplane, and altho you might not guess that this disconsolate tea room proprietor is an aviatrix, it is true, nevertheless: she has had more than 300 hours in the air, and is an accomplished, licensed pilot. Does that give you a hint as to what's in store for her?

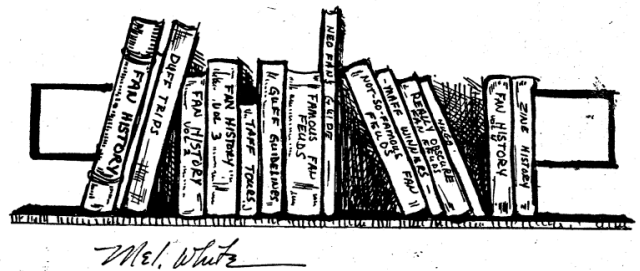
Buck Rogers, your fellow townsman, who served with the United States air service in the World War, begins his startling adventures today. As you have seen, he is trapped in a mine, awakening 500 years later after remaining in a state of suspended animation, to find the world vastly changed. You'll find his adventures in America in the year 2429 of absorbing interest.

Firemen to Play Hosts at Dinner Here April 16th

The Pomona Progress Bulletin, April 8, 1929

After this ish, I'll include the first two weeks of the comic strip as it appeared in *The Pomona Progress*

Bulletin, perhaps the first appearance of the comic strip in the Los Angeles area.



From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

The Dark Half by Stephen King (Signet, 1990)

Inspired by watching the movie adaptation last week (see below), I began reading Stephen King's novel shortly after the movie ended and completed it over several days. While I generally consider the best of King's work to be that written or published before about 1986 or 1987 when *It* and *The Tommyknockers* came out—and perhaps to include his short stories and nonfiction written up to that point—I'm glad I read this novel, which came out slightly later and was the novel that followed *The Tommyknockers*.

In part drawing on King's own experience utilizing a pseudonym—he also wrote as Richard Bachman—the novel focuses on Thad Beaumont, a writer of contemporary novels who also dabbles in harder stuff, knockdown crime fiction, and finds that that work is more successful commercially. When a reader threatens to out the author as his pen name, George Stark, effectively blackmailing our protagonist, the author decides to out himself, planning to no longer write using that pseudonym.

He and his wife—parents of a young child—feel relief and liberation upon making the decision, but the author's pseudonym, Stark, has other ideas. Not only does Beaumont tap into another self or persona when writing the more violent and vicious novels, it turns out that the author was the sole survivor of a vanishing twin—in which the fetal tissue of a twin brother was absorbed before birth, to be removed from his brain (An eye! And teeth! In his brain!) when he was a boy.

That vanishing twin has somehow found form, drawing on aspects of Stark's character Alexis Machine. He proceeds to hunt down the people involved in the decision, killing them—the blackmailer, the publishers involved—before moving on to threaten Beaumont and his family.

Many of King's themes are included in the book, including recovering from alcoholism, the writing process, and Maine. The novel even includes Castle Rock, one of King's favorite fictional locations. It also

includes a couple of innovative concepts. In addition to the vanishing twin, which actually happens, *The Dark Half* features psychopomps, or creatures that guide the newly dead to the afterlife. In the novel, they take the form of sparrows. Automatic writing also plays a role, as does sensory processing disorder.

Unfortunately, music plays a very small role in the book, and there weren't enough song references to warrant a playlist. There are however, a few pop culture references and intertextual references, including mentions of or allusions to *Bonanza*; Donald E. Westlake (who inspired the novel's pseudonym); *Cujo*; Sidney Sheldon, Elmore Leonard, Jim Thompson, and other authors; Hunter S. Thompson; Mel Blanc; Saki's "The Open Window;" Bob Dylan; and others. An Afterword credits Shane Stevens, author of *Dead City* and other novels, with the name Alexis Machine. King also recommends the work of Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser.

There are portions of the book that felt padded, primarily when King offered a chapter from one character's point of view, and then again, from the POV of another. But overall, I enjoyed the book thoroughly, finding it better than the movie—particularly in the later scenes involving the joint writing session and the psychopomps coming home to roost. If you haven't read this yet, there's no reason to avoid it.

Doors to Our Future by the 3rd Grade Students of 74th Street Elementary School (826LA, 2023) I picked this up at the 826LA table during last weekend's book festival (see above). Volunteers worked with the third grade students of several teachers at the 74th Elementary School in Los Angeles. Each class wrote a story collectively about the students' visions of the future, and each student participating wrote their own story.

The results are appropriate for the students' ages and are relatively formulaic, with each piece enabling readers to reverse engineer the writing assignment. Students were encouraged to imagine a door through which they could pass to an imagined future. What is that door like? What does one experience when approaching the door, at the door, and on the other side of the door? And in the future, how old will you be, how will you spend your time, who will you be with, and what "rules" will exist? I found that latter aspect especially intriguing, perhaps echoing the presence of rules at school.

There's more fantasy in the stories than science fiction—dragons!—but the imagined futures of the students are informative and inspire hope for younger generations. Some students imagined themselves just a

year or two in the future, while others pictured their 40- or 50-year-old selves. Senses played a major role in the narratives, and the young writers concentrated on how the world smelled, felt, and tasted. Family and friends—and pets—were invoked frequently.

Some of the stories include pop culture references such as Spider-Man, Alice in Wonderland, the band Queen, "Baby Shark," and Rihanna. And others include aspects of science fiction or technology such as the importance of math, stars, Tesla, and 30,000,000 robots. That's a lot of robots.

The futures envisioned are full of hope. There's clean air. We're expected to take care of the homeless. And even people in their 40s and 50s get to play tag and eat pizza every day. Our interests might change as we age, but the intent to seek health, love, and play resonated with me. They're good goals.



Los Angeles Times, June 29, 1956

Fantomas Versus the Multinational Vampires by Julio Cortazar (Semiotext[e], 2014)

This slim volume was perhaps the find of last weekend's book fest. While the 87-page volume usually retails for \$15.95, it was available for \$10—and was a delight no matter the price.

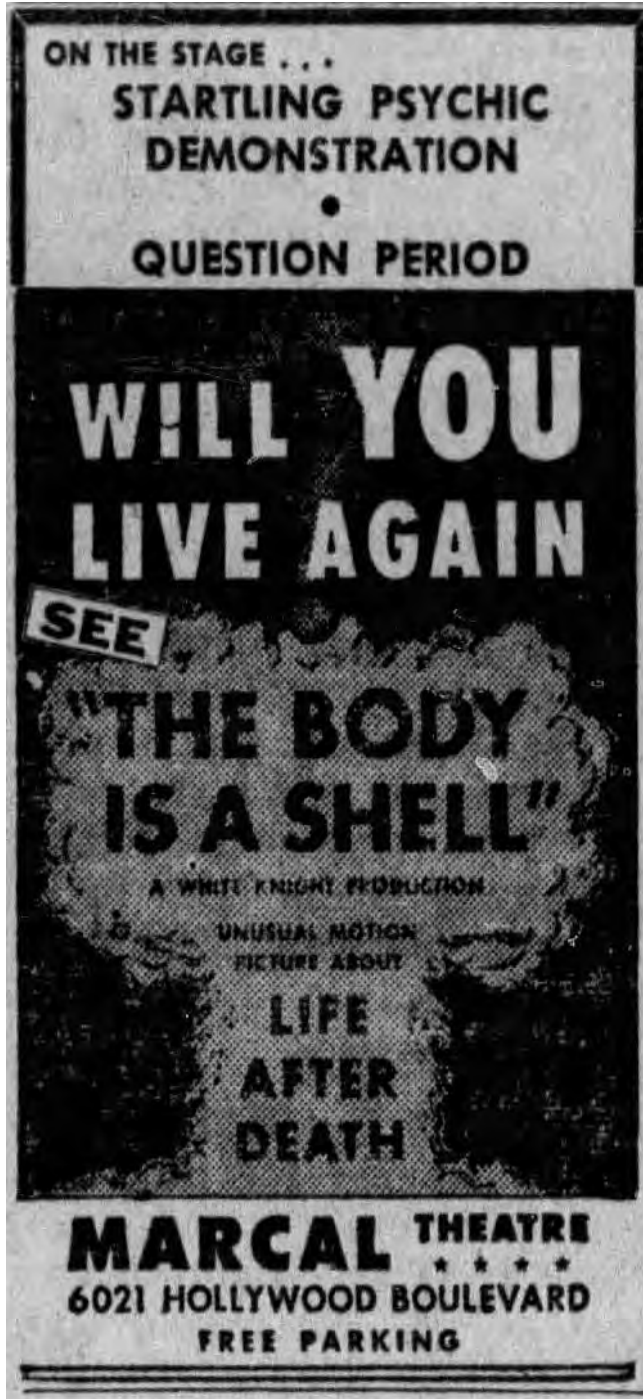
Subtitled "An Attainable Utopia," the slim book was written by Argentine-French author Cortazar, co-founder of the Latin American Boom, in 1975 after he participated in the Second Russell Tribunal in Brussels, investigating human rights violations in Latin America, and read the Mexican comic book *Fantomas: la amenaza elegante* #201.

Originally created by French writers Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre in 1911, Fantomas also appeared in Mexican comic books—ostensibly as the same hero—in the 1960s.

#201 (November 1974) featured a story titled "La inteligencia en llamas," or "The Mind on Fire," which concentrated on the criminal destruction of the world's libraries and books—and which included real-world figures such as Octavio Paz, Susan Sontag, and Cortazar as characters who help the masked hero defeat the criminals.

Several pages of the comic book are reproduced

within the pages of the book, and while you might think they've been detoured initially, they are reprinted as they originally appeared. In the book, Cortazar buys the comic book from a newsstand before taking a train home after the tribunal. "[T]here's something about comic books, one scoffs at them but one starts to leaf through them all the same, until one of them, a fotonovela or Charlie Brown or Mafalda, pulls you in," he writes.



Los Angeles Times, June 29, 1956

In this case, he's pulled into *Fantomas*. He's a character in the comic book, in which he talks to Fantomas on the telephone while in Barcelona. He calls Sontag on the phone—in the resulting book, as well as within the pages of the comic. And the intellectuals help Fantomas defeat the criminals, securing the works of Victor Hugo, Dante Alighieri, G.K. Chesterton, and H.G. Wells for future generations.

Combining a consideration of the human rights tribunal and the political role literature—and literacy—played in the comic book, Cortazar offers a fun, critical fantasy while highlighting the importance of big ideas. Along the way, he distinguishes between tourists and exiles, remarks on the utility—or futility—of history, comments on revolution, and refers to suspense films. “[E]conomic domination required other kinds of domination, other accomplices and other victims,” Cortazar writes. But his thesis takes the form of a question: “What are books compared to those who read them...?”

In the end, he urges against complacency. “[T]he mistake is to think we need a leader, to refuse to lift a finger until we have one, to sit waiting for this leader to appear and unite us and give us our slogans and get us moving,” Cortazar writes. “The mistake is to be content to let realities stare us in the face . . . and still to keep waiting until somebody else—always somebody else—raises the first cry.”

At the time, Cortazar's meditation on human rights and heroism was published as “a glossy pamphlet” by the newspaper *Excelsior* in Mexico. Its message—and its subtle gesture toward pulp hero inspirations and the need to act—is just as meaningful today.

The First Geeks: Ray Bradbury, Forrest J Ackerman, Ray Harryhausen, and the Founding of Science Fiction Fandom by Orty Ortwein (McFarland, 2024)

This recently published book should be read by anyone (everyone) with a connection to the LASFS and Los Angeles-area fandom or an appreciation for any of the three principals named in the subtitle. Ortwein, a librarian who's worked with the Center for Ray Bradbury Studies, weaves three histories: of early sf fandom, of LA fandom specifically—fulfilling an important purpose—and of three men's friendship, how it affected them, their lives, their work, and the world around them.

Bookended by scenes set at San Diego Comic-Con or otherwise in the current day, the book returns full circle, contending that the earliest active fen—in the days before cons and mass-media and -market attention—contributed importantly to the world

modern-day fan experience today. Hence the title, which is slightly unfortunate. Were they the first? No. They certainly weren't the only. But that's not Ortwein's point, online naysayers aside. Their friendship—and what that friendship facilitated—is the focus of the book.

Similar to Harry Warner Jr.'s *All Our Yesterdays* (T&T #119), there is so much in this book—so many little details that warrant further research and exploration. Ortwein covers the three men's discovery of science fiction and fandom, the development of the Science Fiction League, their meeting through the SFL—later becoming the LASFS—the role LA fanzines played in Bradbury's early writing, early fanac and cons, Robert A. Heinlein joining the SFL, Bradbury becoming a pro, the impact of World War II, and the legacy of each (including the impact of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*).

Los Angeles and area fandom is richly portrayed, and this book can be shelved beside Warner's and Rob Hansen's *Bixelstrasse*. It made me want to watch the documentary *Uncle Furry's Ackermansions*. It made me wonder if the LASFS still has the full runs of so many prozines. Many notable locals are also featured, including Morojo and Tigrina. Clubhouse and meeting locations are identified, and Los Angeles is strongly centered as the home of these three men. I highlighted many items I need to learn more about—and perhaps include in the still forthcoming *Los Angeles County Fanac Guide*.

In many ways, this is a history of the SFL and the LASFS as proxies for LA fandom. As such, I can only highly recommend it. Highly! Highly! It might not be perfect—the only errors I identified were a couple instances of run-together words without spaces in between—but it's welcome, in depth, and important.

Garraka, the creepy demon in *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* who gives New York a "Death Chill," was animated by Sony Pictures Imageworks with an eye toward Ray Harryhausen's legendary stop-motion creatures from *Jason and the Argonauts*. In fact, the team paid particular attention to the skeleton army and Medusa for performance reference.—*IndieWire*, April 5, 2024



—William Rotsler

Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

The Dark Half

A friend and I watched this movie on video cassette last week. It's a 1993 adaptation of Stephen King's novel (see above) written and directed by George A. Romero. Largely filmed in or around Pittsburgh, the movie is a relatively straightforward adaptation with little deviation from the original book. Lines of dialogue are frequently lifted straight from the pages, and the only notable difference I was able to detect was the name of the pencil used by the protagonist author and his "dark half."

In the book, Thad Beaumont writes using Berol Black Warrior pencils, an actual brand of pencils no longer in production—or if it is, reportedly not as fine a writing implement as it used to be. In the movie, they're Berol Black Beauty pencils, perhaps because of trademark issues. Berol Black Warrior pencils also come up in the novel *Misery*.

DOUBLE HORROR SHOCK SHOW!

ALL-NEW

THE BLACK SLEEP

Starring
BASIL RATHBONE · AKIM TAMIROFF
LON CHANEY · JOHN CARRADINE · BELA LUGOSI

Reunited the United Artists

"THE CREEPING UNKNOWN"
 Starring **BRIAN DONLEVY**

AND

ORPHEUM DOWNTOWN
 Broadway at 9th - Mt. 6272 - FREE PARKING - Cont. 10:30 - Late Shows

Now

HOLLYWOOD NEW FOX HO. 2-0723
WESTERN DISTRICT UPTOWN WE. 4-1126

INGLEWOOD FOX OR. 8-7373
ALHAMBRA EL REY AL. 2-4911 - 10-1122
UNIVERSITY CULVER UN. 2-3124

EAST L. A. UNITED ARTISTS 5136 Whittier Bldg. AN. 1-3924
SOUTH GATE SOUTH GATE DRIVE-IN Atlantic & Firestone LD. 5-3396
N. HOLLYWOOD VICTORY DRIVE-IN Victory at Coliseum SF. 7-4823

ALSO NOW PLAYING AT THE FOLLOWING DRIVE-INS
LA MIRADA La Mirada · **TWIN-VUE** Gardena
HASTINGS Pasadena · **LOS FELIZ** Glendale
AND STRAND Redondo
ROXY Glendale · **TOWN** San Fernando
MAJOR Burbank · **BAY** Pacific Palisades

Los Angeles Times, June 29, 1956

Another difference—an improvement in this case—is that the character Reggie Delesseps, a slightly absent-minded eccentric of a professor who smokes a pipe, was cast with a woman, Julie Harris. In the novel, the character is named Rawlie Delesseps and is a man. Harris shines as Delesseps, and her portrayal of the pipe-smoking woman academic who drives a banged-up Volkswagen Beetle was a lot of fun.

Given the year the movie was made in, the special effects representing the psychopomps, the sparrows, was a bit ham handed, as was the scene near the end in which they carry George Stark off into the sky. In fact, the climactic scene in which the birds intervene was given much more space and time in the book than it was in the movie, resulting in far more drama and horror.

The special effects representing Stark’s decay and dissolution as he faces writer’s block, requiring Beaumont’s help, aren’t bad, but King’s descriptions are much more effective. The physical decay visible on screen isn’t half as impressive—or horrible—as that described in the novel.

Other than Harris, the acting throughout is pretty lackluster, and while this is a straightforward adaptation, it’s a fine example of one that doesn’t quite land with as much force as its source material. There’s little sense of place, the focus is more on the violent action of the killings than on the supernatural underpinnings, and the movie comes across as relatively matter of fact. As Romero’s third production with a larger studio, I understand it was somewhat challenging for him as a director.

Regardless, watching the movie inspired me to read the book, and I’m glad I did. To that end, at least, it served its purpose.

Ignorable Theme: Horror

“Do you read, watch, or otherwise appreciate horror as a genre? How does it relate to sf and fantasy?” Clearly, given some of the movies I watch and my commentary on *The Dark Half* novel and film above, I appreciate horror. But my interest in the genre is somewhat specific. I have very little interest in horror—literary or cinematic—in which the horrors done are merely human: Man’s awfulness to man. So that precludes an enthusiasm for serial killers, true crime, or the torture porn (*Saw* and its ilk) that seems to have become so popular in recent decades.

But if the monsters aren’t merely Very Bad People, I’m interested. I appreciate horror books, stories, and movies in which there’s an aspect of the supernatural, which is where horror abuts fantasy in my consideration.

My favorites include the Universal and Hammer horror pictures, as well as practically any Dark Old House movie or ghost story. I've read Edgar Allan Poe, Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, and H.G. Wells. I absolutely adore the weird fiction of H.P. Lovecraft and other practitioners of that craft. I also thrill to Lovecraft's precursors and influences such as Robert W. Chambers. And in the realm of comic books, EC Comics and pre-Comics Code Authority horror comics are absolutely delightful. While I didn't have much exposure to the Warren magazines and its knockoffs (*T&T* #95) while I was growing up, I eventually found my way to them and consider them similarly wonderful.

If you were to monitor the magazines I receive in the mail, you'd also detect an interest in the adjacent genre. I fervently follow *Fangoria*, *Filmfax*—which is rumored to be folding—*HorrorHound*, *Monster Bash* (*T&T* #120), *Rue Morgue*, *Scary Monsters*, and similar titles. While I was aware of *Fangoria* and *Starlog* as a child, I missed seeing *Famous Monsters of Filmland* on the newsstands. I was pleased by its brief relaunch and avidly seek out back issues.

All that said, while I'm a little young to be a proper Monster Kid, my interests might be in monster movies more than in horror per se. Regardless, there's a novel by Clive Barker within reach, I recently checked out a collection of horror short stories from the library, and I otherwise dip into the genre as such occasionally.

Comments on APA-L #3076

Those of you who receive APA-L in the mail might have noticed hand-corrected page counts in the Table of Contents. The PDF version has been corrected.

In *Vanamonde* #1600—congratulations on the milestone issue!—**John Hertz** offered multiple quotations from Winston Churchill's *The Hinge of Fate*. Good advice, all, and "Verify your quotations," made me chuckle. In journalism school, I was taught "If your mother says she loves you, check it out." "Get at it and bite it," also resonated with me, along the same lines as "Look around" and "Run and find out."

I will share your feedback with cover artist Damon D. Brown. To be fair, Derek LaPorte does comment on other *ellors'* apazines, in his *In Betweens*, which alternates with his serialization of "The Winnower." I don't mind that his fiction issues eschew them. Your haiku about jacaranda was beautiful. I took pause to consider their cost: the eventual loss of their glorious blooms, their stickiness—and the sap—and that some people are allergic to jacaranda. I don't often park under jacaranda trees, so I'm willing to focus primarily on their benefits. The blue line work in Tim Kirk's illustration turned out pretty well!

KING of the THRILLERS!!!

KING KONG!

with **FAY WRAY**
ROBT ARMSTRONG
BRUCE CABOT

from the Story by **EDGAR WALLACE** and **MERIAN C. COOPER**

Chief Technician **WILLIS J. O'BRIEN** Executive Producer **DAVID O. SELZNICK**

plus 2nd HORROR HIT

I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE
with **James Ellison**
James Doe **Tom Conway**

R.K.O. HILLSTREET DOWNTOWN
Eighth and Hill Streets
Doors Open 10:30 • TR. 6941

NOW in 12 Theatres

HOLLYWOOD IRIS
HO. 3-2184
4508 Hollywood Bl. • Daily 12:30

MIRACLE MILE EL REY
WE. 1-1101
5317 Wilshire Blvd. • Daily 6:30

PACIFIC DRIVE-INS

UNITED ARTISTS PASADENA
608 E. Colorado
RY. 1-6577 • Cont. 12:45

EAST L. A. FLORAL DRIVE-IN Madonk N. of Brooklyn AN. 2-0766	BURBANK SAN VAL DRIVE-IN S. F. Road at Winona TH. 6-1710-TH. 2-5714
BELL GARDENS GAGE DRIVE-IN Gage Ave. E. of Eastern PA. 1-2328 • TO. 2-7185	INGLEWOOD CENTINELA DRIVE-IN Centinela E. of Sepulveda OR. 8-2283
SAN FERNANDO LAUREL DRIVE-IN Laurel Canyon 3/4 mi. N. of Van Nuys Bl. • EM. 9-2588	ARCADIA EDWARDS DRIVE-IN Pack and Live Oak OO. 7-8179
PUNTE VINELAND DRIVE-IN Vineland bet Valley & Garvey FO. 8-7076 • ED. 6-7518	WEST L. A. OLYMPIC DRIVE-IN Olympic and Bundy CR. 4-6218 • GR. 3-4448

Los Angeles Times, June 29, 1956

Matthew Mitchell's *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #64 celebrated the birthday of his son Nickelas Tate. Katz N' Jammers Cafe looks like my kind of place, as does Pirates Dinner Adventure (<https://piratesdinneradventure.com>). Medieval Times (<https://www.medievaltimes.com>) also looks tempting!

The reactions to your *Red Dwarf* T-shirt pleased me. I wore a *Dungeons & Dragons* T-shirt under my hoodie when I went to the book festival last weekend (see above), and at least two people commented on it, even though only a portion of the logo was showing above the zipper.

I was unaware that Maribeth wrote stories. Definitely keep those fanzines and semiprozines. And if you ever feel like it, I'm sure others would be interested in any reprints you felt like sharing. When we moved here in 2009, I was amazed at how much history there is in southern California. It's true that the United States is a relatively young country, its west coast even moreso, but that's only the case if you focus on American history. While our day trip focused only on relatively recent history, we've even hiked along a trail that's been in use for almost 4,000 years: the Chumash Indian Trail, if I remember correctly.



Los Angeles Times, July 6, 1956

In *Toony Loons* #765, **Joe Zeff** updated others on his blood sugar and other medical issues. May your replenishment of magnesium help your appetite and digestion. While I'm pleased that southern California has moved out of its rainy season, your description of the recent thunderstorms piqued my interest. I imagine that Colorado rain can be intense.

I forget what back issues I sent Beverly Warren when we first started discussing APA-L, but given Barry Gold's presence, they might have been from early 2023. Perhaps even late 2022.

C.D. Carson's *Always Going Home* #48 reported that there will be Man and Atom displays at both the North American Science Fiction Convention (<https://www.nasfic.org>) July 18-21 and Worldcon (<https://glasgow2024.org>) Aug. 8-12. That reminds me to

return to my Hugo reading! Your upcoming travels sound wonderful, and I look forward to reading about them.

I'm currently reading Robert A. Heinlein's first written—but not first published—novel, *For Us, the Living*. In it, he proposes a unique solution to going to war. Only people who qualify to fight in the war are able to vote on whether a country goes to war. Those who vote yes are included in the first draft. Those who don't vote are included in subsequent drafts. And those who vote no are included in the last draft. That would certainly put the decision in the hands of those most directly affected by its outcome.

Your mention of Everett F. Bleiler's *Science-Fiction: The Early Years* hit home. I recently procured a copy and have yet to fully explore it. Thank you for responding to Jose Sanchez's response gracefully. I debated publishing it and think we can just let the squall pass. Did you ever hear any stories about Aimee Semple McPherson from your paternal grandfather's family?

I appreciated your remarks to Matthew Mitchell on *Doctor Who* casting and consistency. Comparing Jodie Whittaker's stint to that of Jon Pertwee in terms of "elapsed Earth clock time" seems valid. We'll see how long Ncuti Gatwa is able to stay in the role.

Kudos to you for your efforts to digitize and archive public information booklets. As someone who's pursuing similar work related to apae, I applaud you! The batch of *Atom* bulletins sounds eminently worth preserving. How do your pants always wear out in the same way?

In *In Betweens* #4, **Derek LaPorte** converted distance into literature, an impressive feat indeed. I enjoyed your remarks on George Alec Effinger's *What Entropy Means to Me*. Interestingly, Effinger also wrote several *Planet of the Apes* television adaptations, as well as stories and books featuring the humorous Maureen Birnbaum (*T&T* #77). I'll have to prioritize reading his *Maureen Birnbaum, Barbarian Swordsman*. The concept of competing stories or truths resonated with me. How many miles is Effinger's novel worth?

Your "Towards an Ideal Rating System" intrigued me. I might reverse the order of the bottom half of the scale so your 4 is the bottom of the barrel while your 1 is adjacent to the neutral 5. That way it's more of a progression from worst to best—or vice versa.

Beverly Warren's *Sirius Barks* #11 commented on Clifford Simak's *Way Station*. Thank you for your reading notes; it sounds like an interesting book to read post-pandemic! I haven't watched *House of the Dragon* yet, but I enjoyed *Game of Thrones*. We used to watch it weekly with our neighbors. I'd somehow

missed that Matt Smith appeared in the show. How is he as Daemon Targaryen? I enjoyed him in *Last Night in Soho*.

The group interview for *Lost L.A.* sounds like a fun gathering. Thank you for encouraging Ken Rudolph to publish a fanzine! Indeed, he edited *Shangri L'Affaires* in the late 1960s. While he was editor, *Shaggy* was nominated for the 1969 Best Fanzine Hugo. Other nominees included *Science Fiction Review*, *Riverside Quarterly*, *Trumpet*, and *Warhoon*. The award went to *Science Fiction Review*, edited by Richard E. Geis.

I will share your feedback with cover artist Rev. Ivan Stang. The trajectory you describe—fandom being consuming until it isn't—is pretty common, I think. (In fact, you and Matthew Mitchell have that in common!) How was the LASFS changing when you became less involved? Had I known you lived so close, I'd have let you know we were in the area. Next time. I also realized later that another friend lives one block away from Silver Lake Meadows. I could have knocked on his door, too! Next time I eat at Astro Family Restaurant, I'll think of William Rotsler. I've never been to Modern Eats (<https://www.moderneats.com>), but it looks good.

There are secret apae? Tell me about them!



Los Angeles Times, July 13, 1956



Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D.—Wilma Explains

By PHILLIP NOWLAN and RICHARD CALKINS

I WOULD HAVE BEEN ANNIHILATED AS I STOOD LOOKING AT THIS 25TH CENTURY AIRSHIP, RIDING ON ITS "REPELLOR RAYS", HAD NOT WILMA HURRIED ME UNDER THE TREES, WHERE WE COULD NOT BE SEEN FROM ALOFT.

THE TERRIBLE DISINTEGRATOR BEAM REDUCED EVERYTHING IT TOUCHED TO NOTHINGNESS. AS THE MONGOLS CRUISED SLOWLY OVERHEAD, THE DEADLY ALL DESTROYING RAYS CUT DEEP GASHES IN THE MOUNTAIN NEAR US BEFORE THE SINISTER CRAFT WENT ON ITS WAY.

IF THAT BEAM HAD CAUGHT US WE'D BE NOTHING BUT A LOT OF DISINTEGRATED ATOMS AND ELECTRONS RIGHT NOW.

AND HOW!

I'LL REPORT TO THE BOSS AT ONCE.

WHO ARE THESE MONGOLS ANYWAY, WILMA?

ABSOLUTE MASTERS OF AMERICA AND THE WORLD. CRUEL, INHUMAN SUPER SCIENTISTS. HISTORIANS TELL US THAT

MANY YEARS AGO, THE MONGOL REDS, FROM THE GOBI DESERT, CONQUERED ASIA, FROM THEIR GREAT AIRSHIPS, HELD ALOFT BY GRAVITY REPELLOR RAYS, THEY DESTROYED EUROPE, THEN TURNED TOWARD PEACE LOVING AMERICA.

BEGIN ON THAT BIG IDOL HOLDING A TORCH, CHANG LING, THAT'S THEIR GODDESS.

Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D.—Chaos

By PHILLIP NOWLAN and RICHARD CALKINS

THE MONGOL REDS CROSSED THE ATLANTIC IN THEIR GREAT DIRIGIBLES. THE NAVY, AMERICA'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE, WAS ANNIHILATED. THE DISINTEGRATOR BEAMS BIT DEEPLY INTO THE OCEAN CAUSING IT TO SWIRL AND BOIL. BOTH SHIPS AND AEROPLANES WERE COMPLETELY DESTROYED AS THE RAY TOUCHED THEM.

THE ARMY MADE BRAVE BUT FUTILE RESISTANCE AS THE MONGOLIAN AIRCRAFT SWEEP ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

WASHINGTON D. C. WAS WIPE OUT OF EXISTENCE IN 3 HOURS BY THE TERRIBLE RAYS WHICH CUT THE VERY FOUNDATIONS FROM UNDER ITS MAGNIFICENT BUILDINGS.

THE COUNTRY'S INDUSTRIAL, TRANSPORTATION AND CREDIT STRUCTURES CRUMBLLED. GOVERNMENT CEASED TO EXIST, AND----

STARVING MOBS, REDUCED TO ELEMENTAL SAVAGERY, FOUGHT THEIR WAY OUT OF THE CITIES TO SCATTER AND HIDE IN THE COUNTRY. IT WAS THE DEATH OF A NATION.

BUCK ROGERS, 2429 A. D.—A Nation Reborn

By PHILLIP NOWLAN and RICHARD CALKINS

ON THE RUINS OF NEW YORK, SAN FRANCISCO, DETROIT, AND A DOZEN OTHERS, THE MONGOLS REARED CITIES OF SUPER SCIENTIFIC MAGNIFICENCE.

THERE THEY SYNTHETICALLY PRODUCED MARVELOUS FOODS, TEXTILES, METALS AND AMAZING LUXURIES, LEAVING TOWN ONLY FOR THE SPORT OF HUNTING WILD AMERICANS IN THE FORESTS.

AND INDEED FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS THE AMERICANS DID LIVE HUNTED LIVES IN THE FORESTS THAT GREW UP OVER THE ONCE CULTIVATED FARMS AND RUINED TOWNS AND CITIES. STILL THEY CHERISHED THE UNDYING FLAME OF FREEDOM, AND LITTLE BY LITTLE—

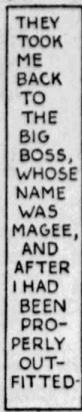
THE WIDELY SCATTERED AND LOOSELY BOUND ORGANIZATIONS OR "ORGS" BEGAN THE SLOW PROCESS OF REBUILDING A CIVILIZATION AND RECAPTURING LOST SCIENCE,

WE ARE NEARING THE TIME WHEN WE SHALL ONCE MORE STRIKE FOR FREEDOM.

THEN COUNT ME IN, WHERE THE RECRUITING OFFICE.

(AND SO ON) (TO BE CONTINUED)

Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D., *The Buffalo News*, Feb. 21-22, 1929, and *The Pomona Progress Bulletin*, April 15, 1929



Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D., The Pomona Progress Bulletin, April 16-18, 1929



Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D., The Pomona Progress Bulletin, April 19-20, 1929

A Note on Sources

While the comic strip debuted in *The Pomona Progress Bulletin* on April 8, 1929, that week's worth of strips aren't available from that paper on *Newspapers.com*. The strip had debuted in *The Buffalo News* in New York a couple of months earlier. Rather than pick up where the strip was in general continuity, the *Bulletin* started at the beginning of the strip's run—as a paper should. I was able to identify the strips missing online from the *News* in order to offer the full first two weeks as they might have appeared in the *Bulletin*—despite the earlier appearance on the east coast.

The *Bulletin* was not the first newspaper in California to print *Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D.*, but it might have been the first in southern California. *The Oakland Tribune* began publishing the strip March 4, 1929, roughly a month before the *Bulletin* did. Interestingly, the archival copies of the *Tribune* on *Newspapers.com* are missing the strips from at least the entire month of March 1929. (I didn't look further.) It looks like someone might have... cut them out of the newspapers they used for scanning.

If Ray Bradbury is any indication, that might have been somewhat common practice.

Faculae & Filigree #33

July 3, 2024

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

Comments on LASFAPA #569

This issue will be a shorter edition than usual because I'll be traveling when the deadline arrives, and I don't plan to take my laptop with me. Hopefully, I'll send this to the Little Sin Ghod and Lord High Counter of Legumes before we depart for the Midwest on July 6.

The cover might be the most intricately detailed work by Brad W. Foster that I've ever seen. An absolutely wonderful reprint, it reminded me of *The Great Race*. (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #118)

Rich Lynch, it's good to see you in the pages of LASFAPA, and after our periodic email correspondence, *It's Still Rock and Roll to Me* came as a pleasant surprise. I've never seen Billy Joel perform live, but I remember the release of his album *An Innocent Man*; I ordered it from Columbia House. That record prompted me to check out previous recordings such as *The Stranger*, *52nd Street*, and *Glass Houses*, but he lost me after *The Bridge*.

I remember appreciating that Joel initially attracted notice because of radio broadcasts in Philadelphia and that he spent time playing in piano bars. (I even thought he was from Philadelphia rather than Long Island for a time.) According to a 1993 interview on the *Charlie Rose Show*, Joel performed as "Bill Martin" for half a year at The Executive Room piano bar on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. The Executive Room was located at 3953 Wilshire Blvd. in a building that was torn down in the early 1980s. That location is now a two-story shopping center (3959 Wilshire Blvd.) that includes a donut shop, a Subway, a small gym, and other restaurants and businesses. Across the street at 3952 Wilshire Blvd. is Nothing but Coffee.

Of course, as a young man, I was also aware of his marriage to Christie Brinkley, which lasted five years. Her appearance in the music video for "Uptown Girl" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCuMWrFXG4E>) remains a highlight of that era of MTV. At the time, I remember thinking that it was wonderful that a guy who looked like Joel could be in a relationship with a woman who looked like Brinkley. I didn't really

consider their mutual status as celebrities.

Regardless, I was unfamiliar with his song "Miami 2017 (Seen the Lights Go Out on Broadway)," which first appeared on his 1976 album *Turnstiles*. I either didn't listen that far back, or that intently. So thank you for bringing the song to my attention! I shall have to listen to it.

I was also unaware of *The History of Time Travel*, which is streaming on Prime Video. That time travel continued to occur during the making of the fictional documentary—and that reality continued to change as the film progressed—sounds very interesting, indeed. The last paragraph of your review is astounding and required (deserved) rereading. Well done, good sir—and welcome back.

In *Fool's Mate* #572, **David Schlosser** mentioned Marty Cantor's "Collate, Collate, Uber Alles," with which I was unfamiliar. *Was ist das?* I'm now up to LASFAPA #131 in terms of optical character recognition. Looks like it's time for another spurt of activity! Perhaps after my holiday travels once I'm back mid-month.



Los Angeles Times, July 13, 1956

Thank you for explaining what you didn't like about your early apazines. Since I got involved in apahacking again, I've been mindful of the potential for "island comments" and try to avoid the temptation. We don't all read new issues with back issues readily at hand, and my resulting monthly fanzine, *The Stf Amateur*, is read by folks who aren't also active in the apae in which I am. Regardless, we're all prone to being out of context here.

I quite like the idea of Pulling off a Gunderloy! I have a couple of apae deadlines coming up two days after I return from our trip. For one of them, I can file via email, but the other submission needs to be mailed. Perhaps I can find time to hand write a page or two to photocopy and mail before our departure.

Nick Smith's *Labyrinthine Lines* dated June 2024 reported on a couple of storytelling situations. I'm glad that the Sam Hinton Folk Festival was fun even though the Twisted Horn event series was

rescheduled. Was it then canceled because people weren't drinking enough? I can't believe you used to ride to school in a Ford Model A. I didn't realize you were that old. Just kidding. What an awesome experience.

Your commentary on the demise of Sci-Fi World echoed other reports I've read on Scifi.radio and in the *Los Angeles Times*. A great idea, but clearly, the wrong people (person) to make it happen. The former Sears building would have been a great location, too. Has David Gerrold commented on the fiasco publicly?

I'll have to locate the Asterix and Lucky Luke volumes I bought during that trip, but *Asterix und Maestria* was published by French and European Publications Inc. as recently as 2013. This paperback edition might have been published even more recently, perhaps a later printing. One German paperback edition available for sale online was published by Ehapa Verlag in 1991. Its cover indeed indicates "Band XXIX," so the numbering of the translated series might have differed. I appreciate your attention to detail!



Los Angeles Times, July 20, 1956

In *The Title Goes Here*, **Janice Morningstar** informed LASFAPAns of a recent birthday! Happy birthday, Janice, albeit belatedly. I'm glad you took a photograph for the reunion even though you consider yourself unphotogenic. I love the now apparently less commo tradition of comic college songs. When I was a boy, my parents would often sing the humorous songs encapsulating the rivalry between Indiana University and Purdue University, and I was disappointed that when I got to college, such funny songs were no longer sung. The reunion sounds like an excellent experience.

Alan Winston's *Lost in the Clouds* consciously shifted from passive voice to active voice, which I could appreciate. We do These Things to ourselves. Regardless, I can empathize with your concerns about pet care costs, the relief of paying off a loan, and the ongoing pleasure and problems posed by living an active, involved life.

How about that Supreme Court, huh? Grr. I'm not familiar with L. Neil Smith's Lando Calrissian novels and will keep my eyes open for them. Apparently, he was a Libertarian activist and was so recognized with the Libertarian Futurist Society's Special Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2016.

And there's a bacover by Brad W. Foster, too? We should be so lucky. **Alva Svoboda**, I missed you. I was actually hoping that your fanzine would follow Winston's contribution. Hope all is well with you and yours.



Los Angeles Times, July 20, 1956

The Brass Hat Mind #8

JULY 3, 2024
THE BRASS HAT MIND #8
BECAUSE OF POOR PLANNING ON MY PART,
TWO ISSUES IN THE LAST MAILING, AND
SOME SUMMER TRAVEL TO CHICAGO
AND SOUTHERN WISCONSIN, I WILL BE
UNABLE TO MAIL OUR BELOVED EDGE
THE WSTMARY PAGES IN TIME.
SO I SEND THIS AS BURNT OFFERING
AND PLAZATION - THE SAME
MESSAGE WRITTEN NINE TIMES,
THOUGH YOUR CARD VARY. THIS
SHALL COUNT AS AN ISSUE EVEN
IF IT DOESN'T COUNT TOWARD
MINAC! NOT LONG AGO, WE WENT TO
GO SEE INSIDE OUT 2. IT WAS FINE
AND FUN BUT CAN PERHAPS BE
AVOIDED. I FOUND THE PRECURSOR
MUCH BETTER IN ITS INNOVATIVE
APPROACH TO EMOTION REGULATION.
MEMORY GAMES INTO PLAY - AND AN
IDENTITY - BUT IT MIGHT NOT BE AN
IDEA WORTH CONTINUING. *Thentz*



For this quarter's mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society, this was the best I could do: Nine postcards containing the same handwritten message—*The Brass Hat Mind #8*. Other covers included *All-Star Comics* #43, *Aquaman* #1, *The Brave and the Bold* #29, *Detective Comics* #244, *Green Lantern* #1, *The New Gods* #1, *Showcase* #22, and *Superman* #146. I selected this card to represent the group because Supergirl was created by Otto Binder and Al Plastino; Binder wrote science fiction with his brother using the name Eando Binder. This issue of *Action Comics* was edited by early fan-gone-pro Mort Weisinger. (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #121)



Snow Poster Township #17

July 16, 2024

Snow Poster Township is an apazine published by Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. Banner artwork by Henry Chamberlain. *Snow Poster Township* is prepared for contributors to NAPA, members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, 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: Chicago and Wisconsin

After spending July 4 and 5 in the Los Angeles area—enjoying the fireworks from blankets on Playa Del Rey Beach with my wife and son—Caitlin and I flew to Chicago for the weekend to see friends from college. Our flight Saturday morning went smoothly, and we took the Pulse bus from Chicago O'Hare International Airport east into Evanston near our Airbnb, which was within walking distance of a friend's home.

Friends were gathering from throughout the United States for a backyard cookout Sunday afternoon, so we had time to explore the area—returning to the campus of my alma mater Northwestern University. Saturday night, we met up with friends, one arriving on a later flight before the rest of his family followed from another location, for dinner at perhaps Taboun Grill in Skokie, Ill. (<https://taboungrilltogo.com>). There were five of us present to recognize our host's birthday, and we ordered a number of dishes to share, including the signature Palestinian flatbread, as well as a malt beverage that was more soft drink than beer despite its placement on the menu.

In our Airbnb, a basement unit in a row of townhomes behind a gas station, we watched some

television, including the end of *Sunset Boulevard*, the beginning of *Silent Running*, and portions of a couple of *RiffTrax* episodes, including *Hillbillys in a Haunted House*. I'd not watched *RiffTrax* before but was familiar with *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. They're similar and involve some of the same people—Mike Nelson and Kevin Murphy—but don't feature the hecklers' silhouettes and seem to comment on a wider range of material, including relatively recent movies, which perplexes me.

Sunday morning, before going to my friend's house for the cookout, we walked east to Dempster Street and Chicago Avenue in order to walk north toward Northwestern's campus. We stopped at a nearby Jewel-Osco for suntan lotion before grabbing a breakfast of pastries and coffee at Pâtisserie Coralie on Davis Street. We'll return there in the future.

We walked around NU, revisiting some of my old stomping grounds, including the former location of WNUR, University and Deering libraries, Shakespeare Garden, and the water along the Lakefill before trying to get into Norris University Center. With classes not in session, gaining access to buildings on a Sunday was challenging, but we did find one open building—and bathroom—before continuing our walk.

Before walking to my friend's house, however, we stopped by a friend's comic book store, Comix Revolution Evanston (In the early 1990s, owner Jim Mortensen and I co-founded the NU Comic Book Interest Group, which hosted events featuring Scott McCloud, Chris Ecker, Larry Marder, and others.), and Bookends & Beginnings, which had relocated from its previous location in Bookman's Alley. Comix Revolution is notable because it stocks a well-curated selection of non-comics books as well as comics and graphic novels.



Sidewalk self-portrait

Then we headed west along Church Street toward the Evanston-Skokie border. The cookout was wonderful, with many friends present, delicious summer food, non-alcoholic beer, and a rainstorm. I played badminton with friends’ sons, and despite the rain, several of us walked to a nearby sculpture garden in a local sculptor’s backyard—necessitating a change of clothes and some time with ours in the dryer. The afternoon cookout turned into evening pizza from Lou Malnati’s Pizzeria (<https://www.loumalnatis.com/evanston>), and we left just as a game of *Cards Against Humanity* was about to break out.

Monday morning, before heading back to O’Hare for the bus to Wisconsin, we met friends for breakfast at Walker Bros. Original Pancake House in Wilmette. I had a western omelet with rye toast, and after a relaxing meal and ongoing conversation, Caitlin and I picked up the Pulse bus back to the airport. We arrived early enough to catch a bus before our planned bus, and I texted my parents about our earlier arrival.



We spent the next five nights south of Madison, Wis., spending time with my parents and sister. While there, we enjoyed a couple of day trips. One involved Old World Wisconsin (<https://oldworldwisconsin.wisconsinhistory.org>) in Eagle, which includes a number of relocated historic homes and structures. Its staff re-enacts life during the late 1800s and early 1900s, and we enjoyed exploring the Scandinavian and other homesteads that reflect the state’s history.

Additionally, we went to Baraboo to visit the International Crane Foundation. (<https://savingcranes.org>) After walking around the grounds—even seeing the retrieval of a replica egg from a “nesting” pair—and exploring a hiking trail briefly, we went downtown for lunch. The food at Driftless Glen Distillery (<https://driftlessglen.com>) was excellent, but the real allure included Circus World ([https://](https://circusworld.wisconsinhistory.org)

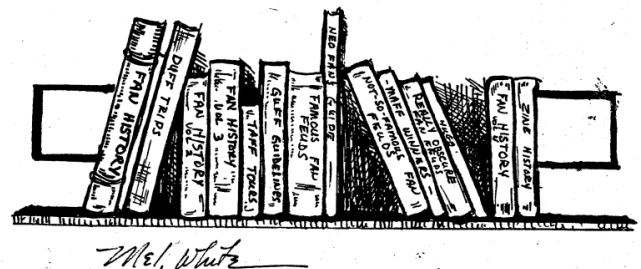
circusworld.wisconsinhistory.org)—which I’ve gone to previously; this time we just stood outside—the A.L. Ringling Brewing Co. (<https://alringlingbrewing.com>), located in a historic home; the International Clown Hall of Fame & Research Center (<http://www.theclownmuseum.com>); and a local bookstore, The Village Booksmith (<https://villagebooksmith.com>), where I picked up a few sf anthologies in paperback. Incidentally, the proprietor is also Baraboo’s mayor. The shop even had back issues of *Star*Line* dating back to 2012 on the shelves!



This “Yankee Home” was relocated from the town I grew up in!

As a side note, on the way to Baraboo, we passed through Sauk City, once home of August Derleth. We didn’t go to Place of Hawks (<https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/artsandculture/august-derleth-house>), but we looked down Lueders Road toward it as we drove by. Another highlight was a visit by a high school friend who drove up from Janesville. I’d texted him as the bus drove through that city earlier in the week, and we enjoyed a walk, conversation, and hug, as well as reminiscing with my family. I look forward to seeing Steve again.

Our return home was uneventful. On a Saturday in mid-July, we made the bus south to O’Hare on time, arriving earlier than expected, which made our flight back to Los Angeles International Airport painless despite a brief delay on the runway.



From the Reading File: Book Reviews

ABCs of Physics by Chris Ferrie (Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2017)

Part of the publisher's Baby University series, this 28-page board book is written for preschool and kindergarten readers, though the text offered addresses several reading levels of progressive maturity. The first line is for the earliest readers, associating a physics concept with a letter of the alphabet. The next sentence expands on the scientific topic for slightly older readers, and the final text on each page is perhaps aimed at adults reading along with a child.

Over the course of the book, Ferrie considers 26 areas of physics—or notable scientists—from Atom to Zero-Point. Other interesting topics include Black Hole, Fusion, Kelvin, Newton, Relativity, and Wavelength, though they're all fascinating ideas for such young readers.

I'm not sure how meaningful the book would be for preschool and kindergarten readers, but I love that this book exists. It could help develop an early interest in science and encourage longer conversations with a parent, family friend, or teacher about topics children that age might not usually be exposed to. And the progressively more challenging text can meet readers' needs as they age—or inform accompanying adults who might be less well versed in science.

Each page includes a simple illustration representing the scientific concept. Here's one page's text as an example:

D is for Diffraction

Diffraction happens when a wave hits an object.

Waves can be made up of different things like liquid, light, or sound. When waves hit more than one object, multiple diffraction events can create beautiful designs called interference patterns.

Overall, the Baby University series includes more than 40 books, including titles such as *Statistical Physics for Babies*, *ABCs of Biology*, and *Baby Medical School*. I've now found the ideal unexpected present for toddlers and young children. This is a book—a series—to remember in the future!

The Freeze-Frame Revolution by Peter Watts (Tachyon, 2018)

While Watts considers this book a novella, it actually qualifies as a novel, though it only clocks in at 186 pages. It's a wonderful read, concentrating on the crew of a generation ship, the *Eriophora*, on a 65-million-year mission to build gates and hubs that serve as entrances, exits, and transfer points for a network of

wormholes that enable faster-than-light travel. The *Eriophora* has no such luxury.

Given the extreme length of the mission, whether those gates and hubs will ever be used is unclear, as is the fate of humanity overall. So the crew, awakened periodically by an artificial intelligence (named Chimp) piloting the ship to help build the gates, is increasingly discontent—and suspicious. Awakened only in small groups, just a few at a time, they begin to rebel against the AI, creating locations in which they can't be monitored or overheard, and communicating through handwritten music that the AI can't access or process.



Los Angeles Times, July 27, 1956

That code is replicated in part within the text of the book. Throughout the novel, individual letters are printed with red ink, and I was able to transcribe several lines of a message that relates to and represents those in the story—a nice touch, though I didn't fully transcribe the code.

In addition to the concepts of FTL travel, a network of wormholes, an advanced AI, and a generation ship, the length of the mission—65 million years!—also allows Watts to consider evolution. That mostly shows up in the portions of the book in which a group of the rebellious crew members are hiding in a hydroponic garden of sorts. They hope that the AI mistakes the genetic engineering of particularly aggressive plants for evolution.

Parts of the book reminded me of Brian Aldiss's *Non-Stop (Telegraphs & Tar Pits #34)*, though the crew doesn't devolve or fracture into factions like they did in that novel. (Not everyone on the crew is involved in the rebellion, so there might be an in crowd.) Instead, given the short periods of time that they're awake over that time span—in stasis otherwise—they barely even age. Except for one notable character, who feigns death and goes entirely off the grid, as it were.

I'd not read anything by Watts before checking out

this library book, but I found this novel wonderful. He's an impressive writer, and the book is chock full of big ideas, handled well in such a small page count. I will seek out his other books. This might be part of a series, the Sunflower Cycle.

Los Angeles Times, July 27, 1956

This Skin Was Once Mine and Other Disturbances
by Eric LaRocca (Titan, 2024)

I spotted this on the new book shelf at the library and checked it out, unfamiliar with LaRocca's short horror

fiction. The collection includes four stories written over the course of two years, as well as an introduction of sorts that serves as a trigger warning. I wasn't sure what to make of that. While apparently intended earnestly, why would you pick up a book of body horror stories if you might react badly to reading it? Can there be horror that doesn't unpleasantly shock or surprise someone? Perhaps, I suppose. This is not that book.

Many of the stories aren't at all supernatural, so the horror stems from people treating other people badly. Exceptionally so. The title story touches on possible child abuse and *Flowers in the Attic*-like imprisonment—and reminded me somewhat of Jack Ketchum's *The Girl Next Door*. "Seedling" is somewhat supernatural, though its ending suggests the narrative might be hallucinatory. That story touches on the death of a parent, open wounds, and body autonomy, as well as inappropriate parent-child relations.

"All the Parts of You That Won't Easily Burn" falls away from the supernatural and instead concentrates on self-harm, the endorphin rush that can result, and the recruitment of others to seek seemingly solitary "pleasures." The ending suggests that turnabout is fair play when seeking such horrible delights.

And the final story, "Prickle," builds on that theme, with two elderly friends reuniting and falling into their old routines. In a public park, the two play a game of Prickle, in which they try to hurt a stranger without that person's awareness of their agency in that hurt. That story ends similarly to the previous piece, and one man is caught in a dastardly act while the other watches.

While I tend to like a little more supernatural in my horror, LaRocca's short story collection is very well written and enjoyable to read—if you enjoy horror fiction. The queer underpinnings are intriguing if not overly present, and I was surprised not to see indications of previous publication in the indicia. LaRocca's stories would be well suited for many appropriate prozines.

Comments on N'APA #270

In a Mini-Editorial, **Jefferson P. Swycaffer** responded to George Phillie's query in the *National Fantasy Fan* whether N'APA should welcome fan fiction. While I would welcome fiction within our apa's pages—first publication or reprints—I'd be wary of including fan fiction. By this, I don't mean fiction written by fen, but fiction utilizing other established characters and creators' intellectual property. I'd encourage fiction, but not fiction riffing on Harry Potter, Twilight, Percy Jackson and the Olympians, the

Lord of the Rings, and the like. The N3F's historic concern about fan fiction in that sense has been copyright oriented. But original fiction written by fen? Bring it on, sez me.

Incidentally, the four book series listed above are the most popular book-related categories on *FanFiction*. (<https://www.fanfiction.net>) The next six, to round out the top 10, includes the Hunger Games, Warriors, the Mortal Instruments, Maximum Ride, *The Hobbit*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*. Interestingly, perhaps all of those would be appropriate for a fannish publication.

The top 10 movie list is also intriguing: Star Wars, the Avengers, Pirates of the Caribbean, How to Train Your Dragon, X-Men, *High School Musical*, *Rise of the Guardians*, the 2009 *Star Trek* flick, Thor, and Frozen. The television show top 10 starts to stray from fannish works but still concentrates heavily on genre: *Supernatural*, *Glee*, *Doctor Who*, *Sherlock*, *Once Upon a Time*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Stargate: SG-1*.

Regardless, while I enjoy and appreciate fan fiction, let's keep N'APA free of it. Fiction, however, I'm all for. Mr. Swycaffer, I would certainly welcome reprints of works to which you retained the rights.

I previously commented on *Intermission* #143 in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #19: "In *Intermission* #143, **Ahrvid Engholm** opened with a History Corner piece recognizing the death of Christopher Priest—and his participation in the 1985 Swecon. I don't have any Priest books cataloged in my library yet, and I don't know that I've read much, if any, of his writing. What do eAPAns recommend? Inspired by Engholm's press clipping, I looked for mentions of Priest in the *Los Angeles Times*. 2006 seems to be a high point in terms of local coverage of the author—focusing primarily on Christopher Nolan's movie *The Prestige*, which adapts Priest's 1995 novel. The *New York Times* has woefully neglected Priest's writing, but the *Chicago Tribune* reviewed Priest's *The Adjacent* in 2014. A 2015 *Tribune* review of Darran Anderson's *Imaginary Cities* mentions Priest's *The Inverted World*. So that's three for me to check out, at least!

"Having recently read Jack Finney's novel *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, I should probably read John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* soon, too. Have you listened to *Moon Phantom*? Shades of Whistler's Mother..., the cover art to Mark Clifton and Frank Riley's *They'd Rather Be Right* seems awfully—almost eerily—familiar. I wonder where I've encountered it before. Seems strange that it'd be selected for a Hugo rather than the other books you listed, but that might be hindsight in action.

"I enjoyed your writeup of the short film festival. I missed this year's Fantasporto (<https://fantasporto.com/pt-pt>) this winter (almost spring!) in Portugal but hope to check it out at some point. When I return to the States, I need to return to attending screenings hosted by the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films. Upcoming films include *Laroy, Texas*; *The Fall Guy*; *Challengers*; *The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare*; *Kidnapped: The Abduction of Edgardo Mortara*; *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*; and *In a Violent Nature*.

"Today, my wife and I ran into two friends from Braga while we were shopping at Ikea in that city. They told us about a recent experience seeing a movie through a local cineclube. Such film clubs are something I haven't experienced before. They're not commercial movie theaters, and they're not quite membership organizations, but they're smaller, independent groups that frequently host screenings of less commercial movies, usually just for a single showing.



Los Angeles Times, July 27, 1956

"In Lisbon, there's the open-air Cine Society (<https://www.cinesociety.pt>), which screens movies almost nightly—and which has mostly sold out its events through early June. The Alvalade Cineclube (<https://alvaladecineclube.pt/en>) in Lisbon doesn't seem to be too active in recent months. The Cineclube do Porto (<https://cineclubedoporto.pt>) seems much more active. Closer to where we live when we're here, the Braga Film Club (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bragafilmclub>) seems promising, and the Lucky Star Cineclube de Braga (<https://www.facebook.com/cinebraga>) even more so. Thank you for sharing your *Vimeo* channels *Filmfandom* and *Club Cosmos*."

In *Archive Midwinter* dated March 10, 2024, **Jefferson P. Swycaffer** commented on the strategies employed during war time. I wonder which is more important, negatively affecting a country's economy and production options and therefore the morale of the citizenry, or negatively affecting the morale of the

soldiers. That might depend on your enemy and whether they take cues from the general population.

Speaking of publishing blunders, even though my *Snow Poster Township* #16 was not included in the previous distribution—though I submitted it before deadline—here I am with #17. You lucky N’APAns get two issues this time around! While *Crank Dot Net* has been archived and is no longer being updated, it remains available at <http://www.crank.net>. Might still be worth sifting through.

Thank you for informing us about the Emerald Cove books! *Exiles of Eeria* (<https://amzn.to/3Y6zWYF>), *Kidnapped!* (<https://amzn.to/4d6G3An>), and *Stolen!* (<https://amzn.to/3W4BZKh>) all look worth checking out. I quite like the idea of themed anthologies. I am curious how your chauffeuring Marion Zimmer Bradley went badly.

That you reprinted your “The Stupid Equations” in such close proximity to discussing whether N’APAns should publish fiction in their fanzines made me chuckle. Your repeated use of the sentence, “The Emergency Craft is a miracle of engineering efficiency,” was utterly delightful. And the ending! Oh, the ending. More of that, good sir. More of that!



Los Angeles Times, Aug. 3, 1956

Mark Nelson’s *Brandy Hall* #6 expressed that he doesn’t “think War Crimes mean anything other than Victors Justice.” Is there no international standard for war crimes or human rights? What is the cost when a country recognizing an international body such as the United Nations breaks that standard? In recent years, I wonder about that even in the context of the United States.

Your and Ahrvid Engholm’s discussion of appropriate materials for school libraries gave me pause. There are queer people in the world. And same-sex couples. And transgender people. Why shouldn’t children be exposed to that in an educational setting? I’m not sure it’s a debate, but a portrayal of How the World Is, and How People and Families Are or Can Be. To educate children as though the world doesn’t include such people or families seems odd to me.

Part of the purpose of schools—and perhaps larger cities—is to serve as empathy engines, environments in which people can learn about the rich diversity of

the human experience. By bringing different people together, from different backgrounds, homes, locations, and situations, we expose each other to Other Ways of Living. Ideally, that increases our understanding of and empathy toward people who are different from us, and in some cases, it might be very meaningful to see your own family structure or identity within the school setting. The alternative feels like hiding ideas, pretending that things don’t happen, and trying to keep people from considering a different way of living as okeh, healthy, and good.

I enjoyed your etymology of “robot” and “android.” I will share your commentary on *Snow Poster Township* #15 with contributor Cy Chauvin. Your remarks on Marion Zimmer Bradley reminded me of the recent revelations about Alice Munro (<https://tinyurl.com/MunroeNAPA>) and perhaps Neil Gaiman (<https://tinyurl.com/GaimanNAPA>). I’ve not read any of Munro’s work, but it’s interesting that many of her characters might have been in situations similar to her own. Personally, I think Bad People can create Good Art and that one can still appreciate and enjoy their art. Whether you give them your money might be another issue entirely.

In *Brownian Motion* #8, **Garth Spencer** recounted his early days in fandom. I enjoyed that mightily. I first was introduced to the idea of making your own media by Jules Feiffer in his book *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, in which he reprinted some of his juvenalia, homemade comic books. That changed my life for the better. Finding my first issue of *Maximum Rocknroll* led me to *Factsheet Five*, which showed me you could make your own magazines and music. Imagine my pleasure, when I saw your name in early issues of *F5* while going through Marty Cantor’s fanzine collection. Worlds collide. Who knew that my fannish interests would eventually bring me to sf fandom, where Gunderloy cut his chops before delving into the world of mundane DIY media?

I appreciated your News-Like Substances. Thank you for sharing the news! Recently, I mistakenly thought I was already a member of the Canadian SF and Fantasy Association to the extent that I sought assistance logging into the Web site. I am not yet a member, much to my chagrin. Kalin was quite kind.

My sympathy and empathy for losing so many files. When my home office was burgled (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #16), the perpetrator made off with at least one external hard drive. I have no idea what was on it, so I can’t really miss it, but I wonder what wonders were lost. What pen names did Elisabeth Vonarburg use when submitting her stories that had been rejected? Was she rejected as a woman but accepted as a man? She’d previously been published as a woman,

so I wonder why her work had been rejected.

I'll share your feedback with Cy Chauvin, too. Yes, you understand my cover exchange idea correctly. I draw you a cover, and you draw me a cover. Voila. Marion Zimmer Bradley and Walter Breen's connection to Diana Paxson and therefore the Society for Creative Anachronism and Asatru piqued my interest. When was she expelled from the Troth? You're now accepting advertisements? Paid? Why, Mr. Spencer! You've gone mersh.

George Phillies's *Ye Murthered Master Mage* #270 included Very Good News: "Last year the count of Short Story Contest entrants hit a recent record." How do we build on that if that's where our growth is? Offer more writing-related activities and services? Offer contest applicants a membership discount? Seems like an opportunity. If we decide to pursue fan fiction (see above), perhaps we consider a fan fiction-only apa in addition to N'APA—so if something happens, it's more contained. That could also be an activity that's supported by the N3F—members help manage it—but not be an official activity. But given the success of the contest, original fiction might be more intriguing. Regardless, I applaud your inclusion of "Shepdon First."

Despite your interpretation of the reasons for their leaving, I quite miss David Speakman and R-Laurraine Tutihasi—and their contributions to the N3F. I wasn't involved in the situation, but when someone reacts to actions so strongly, it might be helpful to consider the actions. Both remain active in fandom, but in different quarters, so it's the N3F's loss and broader fandom's gain.

FanFic #1, then, offers **George Phillies's** contribution of fiction, "Shepdon Downs." I will read the story with greater attention in the future—after the deadline—and thank you for including it!

Samuel Lubell's *Samizdat* #25 reminded N'APAns that he got involved because of and during the COVID-19 pandemic. That's what pushed me to join the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, too! A good reason to seek the company and ideas of others. I'm glad you've chosen to stick around. Thank you for the Hugo Award reminder. I still plan to vote in the short fiction and fan categories, and the deadline is coming up soon!

Wait... is your Balticon this year or next year? Did I join 57 as a supporting member but not 58? Oof. It looks like I joined 56 and then forgot to keep doing so in order to support your con. The best laid plans, as they say. I hope it went well and look forward to reading all about it. Thank you for reminding us you "run the magazine discussion group for the Washington SF Association..." Would you be willing

to let us know what the bimonthly selections are so we can perhaps discuss in parallel ourselves? I know I'd welcome the reasons to read.

I read and enjoyed your Author Spotlight on Harry Turtledove. I was unaware that he'd "worked as a technical writer for the LA County Office of Education," which makes him a local in addition to his time at UCLA. It makes sense that he incorporated his interest in history into his writing. I also enjoyed your Artist Spotlight on Omar Rayyan, though I would have welcomed some examples of his art, had permission been given. Luckily, we can sample his work at <https://www.studiorayyan.com>.

After deadline, I'll return to the serialization of your undergraduate thesis. It's appropriate you turn to history thish yourself, given the profile of Turtledove. As always, your project updates interested me, particularly Project Nonfiction thish. After my trip to the Virgin Islands (*Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #59-60), I started reading John A. Michener's *Caribbean* but have not continued to do so. Perhaps I should return to that novel! I, too, made very little progress.



Los Angeles Times, Aug. 10, 1956

Space Warp & WOOF #2024

July 18, 2023

Space Warp & WOOF is an intended annish published by Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA 90230, United States; kalel@well.com; +1 718-755-9840 mobile; +1 323-916-0367 fax. It is prepared for participants in the Worldcon Order of Fan-Editors (WOOF), members of the 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.

Straddling Fandoms

The previous edition of *Space Warp & WOOF*, #2023, served as a sort of catchall for fannish writing I'd done that year that didn't make it into my many apazines or resulting monthly fanzine, *The Stf Amateur*. This year's now-annish is much the same: material I didn't publish in my own apazines or fanzines.

The difference is that most of what wasn't circulated to my general readership over the last year was published in *Tetragrammaton Fragments*, the official newsletter of the United Fanzine Organization (<https://unitedfanzineorganization.weebly.com>), a self-published comic book cooperative. As a new member of the UFO, I contribute an occasional column titled "Dollar Box Dilettante" to its newsletter, T-Frags.

While I occasionally write about science fiction-, fantasy-, and horror-adjacent comic books in my apazines and *The Stf Amateur*, my writing for the UFO isn't necessarily related to the fantastic. Instead, it focuses more on comic books more generally, comics fandom specifically, or self-publishing more generally.

Comic book fandom is adjacent to and overlaps with the fandom engaged in via Worldcon and WOOF. Speculative fiction—sf, fantasy, and horror—is a genre. Comic books are a format. Both groups of fen publish fanzines and participate in amateur press associations. The most recent edition of *Blue Moon Special* (<https://tinyurl.com/BlueMoonSpecial2024>), an apae directory compiled by Garth Spencer and myself, includes several apae concentrating on comics, the Legion of Super-Heroes in particular. LSH fandom alone is quite vibrant.

Regardless of whether you read comic books or consider yourself a comic book fan, I hope that the following is still of some interest to WOOF contributors and readers.

A Personal Introduction and Minicomics Reviews

(Originally published in *Tetragrammaton Fragments* #272, September 2023)

Thank you, all, for voting to admit me to the august ranks of the United Fanzine Organization—regardless of how you voted. I've been aware of the UFO for decades, perhaps first exposed to it via Ian Shires's *Self Publisher!* As I was considering how to best evolve from publishing a number of apazines toward a more consolidated genzine, correspondence with Kurt Erichsen and Steve Keeter, as well as an order from Jim Main and interaction with Jeffrey H Wood, returned my attention to the UFO as a group in which I should—and perhaps could—participate, even though I don't draw or publish comic books.

As I said in my letter accompanying my application, I've read comic books as long as I've been able to read—and dabbled in minicomics and non-science fiction fanzines for decades. I published my first zine, *No Drama*, in 1988, eventually resulting in a reviewzine titled *Karma Lapel*, which featured covers by Scott Saavedra and Steve Willis. At its peak, *Karma Lapel* was a 36-page tabloid newspaper. I served as production assistant for two Highwater Books titles—Megan Kelso's *Queen of the Black Black* and James Kochalka's *Tiny Bubbles*—reviewed zines and comics for *Zine World*, briefly reviewed minicomics for the Poopsheet Foundation online, published a short-lived comics shop freebie called the *Culver City Comics Collector*, and continue to correspond with minicomics creators such as Clark Dissmeyer.

More recently, however, my fan activity has centered on sf fandom, including the National Fantasy Fan Federation (my comic reviews have appeared in *Mangaverse*—<https://tnfff.org/mangaverse>), participation in the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, and membership in a number of sf-related amateur press associations. I am also the official collator for APA-L, a weekly apa that's been active since 1964. UFO member Kurt Erichsen occasionally provides APA-L covers.

While I understand that my current bundlezine, *The Stf Amateur*, is somewhat different from the publications of other UFO members, I hope to delight rather than disappoint. I look forward to exchanging publications with UFO members on an ongoing basis and reviewing your work in my various apazines that have their own independent circulations—to bring attention to our work outside the confines of the UFO. I'd also like to help showcase the work of members in my pages otherwise. If any UFOlk would like to submit illustrations, cartoons, or cover art for *The Stf Amateur*, I'd appreciate it. Reprints of work already used elsewhere are welcome, as well.

And I hope that my involvement helps bridge comics fandom and sf fandom, contributing to a cross-pollination of the fannish conversations underway, and helping to document the history of

our collective fanac. I frequently donate fanzines, minicomics, and zines to several university libraries' special collections, including DePaul University and the University of Iowa. All UFO materials will go to the Heath Row Zine Collection at DePaul.

As a new member, I will revisit and consider your comments, feedback, and concerns in the UFO Members Only Facebook group—in order to continue to improve my fanzine(s) and meet the needs and interests of all my readers, regardless of how they make their way to *The Stf Amateur* and other titles. I'm proud to be a part of the UFO after all these years.

I will most likely review UFO checklist publications of an sf, fantasy, or horror nature in my other sf apazines and *The Stf Amateur* so non-UFOlk become more aware of our collective efforts. For this edition, in part because I haven't yet started receiving UFO checklist publications, here are a few of my recent favorite non-UFO and non-genre minicomics and related items.

The House of Your Dreams

Published in a limited edition of 73 copies, this chapbook by minicomics creator Clark Dissmeyer features a short story he submitted to L. Ron Hubbard's Writers of the Future contest and perhaps *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* in the 1990s. Based on one of the author's "very earliest memories," it is admittedly archaic stylistically, and Dissmeyer cannot decide whether it's dream or memory. Regardless, it's a brief—12 pages—read and decidedly strange and outre. The story resonates with elements of H.P. Lovecraft and other weird fiction and ably blends the imperfect memories of childhood and adult efforts to reconcile such recollections. Dissmeyer accompanies the story with an illustrated and hand-lettered cover, as well as a hand-lettered introduction. I enjoyed the story's developing tension, the growing horror of the approach of the "menace out of the west," and the resolution of the mysterious conflict. Given its focus on prose, this is an oddity among Dissmeyer's self-publishing, but shows promise and potential as a writer. Write to inquire via Clark Dissmeyer, P.O. Box 1, Riverton, NE 68972.

***Meditation Funnies* #14-16 (May-October 2023)**

Since reaching out to M. Elias Hiebert after seeing his work on social media, I've enjoyed receiving his quarterly minicomics that concentrate on his meditation practice and insights gained through it. Very simply drawn, though now utilizing blue pencil, the comics are primarily gentle gag panels focusing on a person—presumably Hiebert—sitting in the lotus position. At 32 pages, #14 largely considers the thoughts that arise while meditating and other mundane wonders such as one's foot

falling asleep, posture, stray sounds, why the minicomic isn't a Web comic, the dissolution of fantasy, a mix tape, and the benefits of goalless practice. #15 takes a look at reluctance, self-criticism, the relationship between thoughts and words, breathing, and several quotations from Dogen. And #16 touches on the fundamental embarrassment inherent in any artistic practice, boredom, and prayer. Hiebert's portrayal of the imp, internal critic, or sidekick adds quite a bit of humor to his often philosophical realizations. I look forward to receiving this in the mail and appreciate the creator's meditation and artistic practice. Write to inquire via M. Elias Hiebert, P.O. Box 200394, Denver, CO 80220; meditationfunnies@gmail.com; <https://eliashiebert.com>.

***My Comeback Mini* (April 2023)**

Sam Henderson published this eight-page minicomic of his more recent work for the 2023 MoCCA Arts Fest earlier this year. Ostensibly *Magic Whistle* #3.3.1, the mini is also available as a color PDF. It contains comic strips addressing the Band-Aid selection available when one gets their flu shot and why vaccinations are important, and a dirty joke about grapefruit. That second piece, "The Grapefruit," reminded me of my own experiences in grade school—which included scatological references but not this specific joke. When one doesn't know what something means—or is—it can be tempting to act like you do, in order to not reveal that you don't. With all the thoughts running through Monroe's mind in this piece, his response takes the better part of valor. Henderson's artwork is characteristically cartoony, and the longer form of these two strips, as well as their subject matter, reflect more maturity than some of his previous work. There's still a dirty joke and the phrase "butt stuff," but the humor is more nuanced. Great to see after all these years! \$2 via PayPal to magicwhistle.henderson@gmail.com.

***You Don't Get There from Here* #58-59**

These two most recent 32-page diary minicomics by Carrie McNinch collect her daily diary and travel comics created between March 16 and June 19, 2019. The diary comics usually comprise three daily panels along with a recommended song, while the travel comics utilize longer-form storytelling. #58 is squarely a travel comic, focusing on a trip McNinch took to Hiroshima, Japan. The comic details her experiences with public transportation, capsule hotels, walking around, manhole covers, food and drink, the sights and sites she sought out, trees, how she felt standing at the hypocenter of the A-bomb explosion, and the importance of peace. She also shares stories about taking the ferry to the island of Itsukushima, shrines and temples, the ghost story of

Himeji Castle, returning to Nagoya, frogs, drinking, cats, and the sadness that travelers sometimes experience before returning home. One could plan their own travel itinerary based on this minicomic. #59 returns to McNinch's usual diary format. She focuses on returning home to her cats, watching movies, her friends and family, picking up her mail, making and reading comics, money concerns, dog walking, depression and grief, hiking, food, the moon, and a short trip to Denver for the Dink Comic & Art Expo. She also addresses listening to music, going to Disneyland, pet sitting, going to a Bikini Kill concert (with me!), panic attacks, the physical aches and pains of aging, and other topics. McNinch is perhaps my favorite minicomics diarist. Her evident love of the small wonders in life, active involvement in self-publishing, and personal challenges all combine for a compelling, loving, and personal reading experience. Highly recommended. Write to inquire via Carrie McNinch, P.O. Box 34091, Granada Hills, CA 91394; cmcninch@gmail.com.

On the Minicomics Work of Suzanne Baumann

(Originally published in *Tetragrammaton Fragments* #273, November 2023)

Because I've yet to receive any United Fanzine Organization publications other than a welcome packet of materials published by Tom Fellrath (Thank you, Tom! I'll review your comics in various fanzines to perhaps help reach new readers.) and *Tetragrammaton Fragments* #272, this column largely focuses on the work of one minicomics creator: Suzanne Baumann. (P.O. Box 12096, Hamtramck, MI 48212; <https://www.fridge-mag.com>) Baumann is an artist and designer who co-founded the Hatch Art Center (<https://www.hatchart.org>) in 2006.

I've previously reviewed a couple of her publications in *Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #87, collected in the November 2023 issue of *The Stf Amateur*—which will mail in early December—but I also recently received several items that weren't science fiction-related and therefore deserve mention here.

Baumann's Marginalia collects 16 pages of "pictures ... doodled in the margins" of various books and textbooks. They're largely related to the content of the book in question and portray images representing hedonism, math, pets, newspaper journalism, John Keats, and Uranium-238. This 1995 mini is such a good idea. Don't throw away your doodles; publish them! (Available in the *Fridge-Mag: The Early Years* paper bag collection of minicomics for \$16.)

Chris Leif #1-2 are two 1996 minicomics (both 16 pages) that focus on the character named in the title. Inspired by a friend's dream about a hockey

player named Chris Leif—and later, a teenage boy—the first issue offers single-panel pages featuring dreams, lunch, mice, dancing, staying up late, cats, and more mice. While #1 is relatively rodent obsessed, the second issue is squarely centered on another obsession: haircuts. Single-panel pages remark on styling gel, bleaching your hair, hairdressers, and bad haircuts. Combining fine lines with thicker inking, the comics aren't narrative in the traditional sense but definitely offer slices of life or moments in time that contribute to a larger sense of who Leif is and what he cares about. Some portions are utterly—perhaps “udderly”—bizarre. (Available in the *Fridge-Mag: The Early Years* paper bag collection of minicomics for \$16.)

I might have seen *Custard King*, an eight-page mini published in 1996, when it first came out. In the mid-1990s, I corresponded and hung out with Michigan-based minicomics creators such as Sean Bieri, Matt Feazell, and Robert Lewis. Baumann reminded me in a kind note that it's been two and a half decades since we've been in touch. In any event, some panels—and the cover—remain firmly in my memory. Composed of darker, denser panels, the mini tells the tale of the king of a median strip who yearns for frozen custard. The character could very well be a prototype for Turtleneck Boy (see below). (Available in the *Fridge-Mag: The Early Years* paper bag collection of minicomics for \$16.)

Damned Bunnies is the longest-form work in the *Fridge-Mag: The Early Years* paper bag collection of minicomics. Published in 1995, the 52-page digest features heavier stock, screen-printed covers and a single story. A newspaper reporter wants to become a freelance art critic and seeks out an artist hosting an exhibition in a gallery. That leads to personal injury, a hospital visit, the artist's attempt to make amends, and a new career in experimental film and performance art. The piece is bookended by cartoony portrayals of greeting card rabbits, which the artist has been trying to grow beyond. It's a bizarre story and quite compelling, and I enjoyed parsing the dialogue of the artist's wife, who has a thick accent. (Available in the *Fridge-Mag: The Early Years* paper bag collection of minicomics for \$16.)

The Legendary Rajiv Coffee Table Book, published in 1995, is a misleadingly named 16-page brochure-sized mini “featuring Rajiv in 14 provocative poses.” Chanda and Chaitra, as seen in *Spime* (see below), are prominently positioned on each page, gesturing to a blank square in which the 14 poses are placed. The repetitive nature of the concept reminded me of clip art comics such as *babysue* and David Rees's *Get Your War On*. But the provocative poses are surreal to the extreme, largely mixed-media portrayals of the mysterious Rajiv, whom readers are never quite able to visualize

clearly. Far from a one-joke concept, though very silly, this is an exercise in structured creativity that made me laugh out loud at least once. (Available in the *Fridge-Mag: The Early Years* paper bag collection of minicomics for \$16.)

The Moldy Bagels offers a 40-page wordless comic accompanied by title cards much like those used in silent movies. In fact, one can read this 1998 mini quite cinematically given the pacing, panel content, and facial expressions. More thickly inked than some of Baumann's comics, the story concentrates on a very well-dressed woman—perhaps a representation of the artist herself—who decides to dispose of the titular pastries by feeding them to the pigeons, which leads to a fantastic misadventure and a disappointingly early arrival to work. The inking and panel density is especially pleasing in this publication, and the concept and narrative pace is worth returning to—or replicating. The mini is almost similar to a series of storyboards, which is an excellent idea. (Available in the *Fridge-Mag: The Early Years* paper bag collection of minicomics for \$16.)

Spime #1 was originally published in 1996. The 16-page digest is a well-balanced collection of Baumann's different approaches to comics. Some of the work is a half page or page, but there's also a two-page and a four-page story. There's even a Chris Leif strip not included in the minis above, as well as an appearance by Yul Tolbert. Topics include the Chicago Comicon, Raffi, the history of Africa, and young love. The two-page "Puddin' and Pie" reminisces about childhood toys and gender ambiguity, and the four-page, mummy-centric "The Dream" reminded me of *The Moldy Bagels* (see above) stylistically. Perhaps the most wide-ranging introduction to Baumann's comics! (Available in the *Fridge-Mag: The Early Years* paper bag collection of minicomics for \$16.)

The Turtleneck Dialogues is a 96-page mini collecting six issues of *Turtleneck Boy* published between 1998-2010. Initially a single-creator work featuring Baumann's fictional sweater-garbed and goateed character with whom she imagines conversations, it soon grew to become an anthology mini containing the work of Bieri, Pam Bliss, Alden Scott Crow, Androo Robinson, Tolbert, and others. While most of the other contributors submitted single gag panels or pages, Baumann's contributions—and a few others, including Bliss—sometimes cover multiple pages. In terms of Baumann's work, it's an autobio comic "with a sidekick." Characters discuss the Arthur books and how the main character's nose changed over time, the Jackson 5, Bill Clinton's election campaign, domination fantasies, matching sweatsuits, clouds, comics-related correspondence, and other topics. Baumann's artwork is whimsical and willowy, and it's fun to see

how other contributors make the character their own, sometimes working in their own characters, as well. (Available for \$8.)

It was great fun to read—and in some cases, reread—so much of Baumann's early work. Now I need to acquaint myself with her more recent publications!

An Uncomfortably Large Number

(Originally published in *Tetragrammaton Fragments* #274, February 2024)

I would like to take this opportunity, and to take advantage of this forum and safe space to announce the following:

I have decided to stop buying comic books.

Yes, having read comic books for most of my life, even before learning to read formally in kindergarten, I have decided to no longer purchase said comics—despite the immense enjoyment, ideas, and pleasure that they bring.

You see, I also have an admission to make. I have almost finished cataloging my comic book collection, and the result shocked me. The fact that I have almost 13,000 comic books is alarming.

13,000.

Let that number sink in for a little while. Think about how many short boxes that might entail. Think about how much money I must have spent on comics over my lifetime. Think about what I could have spent it on otherwise. I'm not a rich man, and my family lives comfortably—but it's still way too much money. My wife would be disappointed.

Let's be clear: I'm not bragging that I have 13,000 comics; I'm ashamed.

My cataloging efforts—from DC's Paul Pope limited series *100%* to Scott McCloud's wonderful *Zot!* for Eclipse—don't yet include trade paperbacks or collections. And I'm not even done yet. (I'm close.) But 13,000 comic books is too many comic books. I cannot buy any more. I absolutely cannot.

Because regardless of how the number might strike you—how large is your collection, if you have one?—13,000 feels like a very large number to me. It's not as many comic books as in Michigan State University's collection: 350,000 as of 2022. It's not as many as in the collection of Bob Bretall in Mission Viejo, Calif.: 138,000 as of 2023. (I'm presuming he hasn't moved.) But it's likely too many for most people. And now that I have a count—and a better understanding of what I actually have—it's too many for me.

But don't feel sad—or worry about my loss, mental health, or well-being. Notice that I didn't say I was going to stop reading comic books, thinking about comic books, or writing about comic books. I'm going to stop *buying* comic books. The idea of buying another comic book has become overly egregious. Pernicious. Basically, a non-starter.

Worry about me if I buy again.

Because I feel so uncomfortable about the size of my collection, this is a surprisingly easy decision to make. I've been reading and buying comic books for almost 50 years. I've made my own photocopied comics. I've had a hand in making them for other creators, serving as production assistant for a couple of Highwater Books titles. I've also reviewed them in various fanzines, my own as well as those published by others. I helped run a comic book club and event series while a college student. I've written newspaper articles about comics. I've even gotten rid of boxes upon boxes of comics in the past—when I moved from Brooklyn to Los Angeles in 2009. (Later, I tried to reclaim those boxes and luckily failed.) But unlike Bretall, I cannot claim to have read every single comic book that I currently own.

That's appalling.

I might own 13,000 comic books, but I haven't necessarily read those 13,000 comic books. Why own a comic book if you're not going to read it? Why buy a comic book if you're not going to read it? Am I a comic book buyer, or a comic book reader? What kind of a fan am I?

Those are the questions I've been asking myself as I near completion of The List over the last few days. I have no good answers. Even if I were not drawn to relatively low-grade, inexpensive reading copies (even coverless!), were I a Certified Guaranty Company client—I'm not—it embarrasses me that I have so many comic books I almost certainly haven't read. Comic books are meant to be read, not bought or kept. They are meant to be experienced. They are meant to breathe and see the bright light of day, to frolic and gambol in the fields.

Instead, I've kept mine sometimes—but not always—sheathed in protective bags with backing boards, almost all in short boxes. (I stopped using long boxes decades ago.) About 50 of those boxes are in the back room—the “library”—that adjoins my home office in a detached finished garage behind our home. About another 50 are in a storage unit—that I also spend money on. I don't yet have an accurate box count. I am, however, nearing an accurate count of comics.

13,000.

Given that number, I cannot buy another comic book. I can, however—and most certainly will—do my best to read those comic books. I've spent almost 50 years amassing a collection that's too big, that's uncomfortably large. I can now spend the next 40-50 years reading those comics—and disposing of them.

Don't worry: I won't throw them away. I'll either give them to a friend or sell them to my favorite local comic book store for another eager reader to discover. I'll do so by the short box, not as singles or

runs on *eBay*, and I'll be satisfied by whatever the store offers. I'll let that store credit accumulate until I think I've divested myself of enough comic books to have earned the right to acquire something else—or I've freed up enough space to accommodate something else.

Now that I have The List, I can make sure that whatever I get isn't something I already have. (The near-full short box I've prepared to take to the shop this weekend is all doubles. You see, I have so many comic books that I didn't even know what I had. So I bought some back issues twice. Both copies remain unread.)

I've ended my subscriptions. I've turned off auto-renew for *The Amazing Spider-Man*. And I've pruned my pull list down to just four titles: *Cerebus*, *Groo*, *Love & Rockets*, and *Usagi Yojimbo*. That part was hard, and I'm already wavering: Do I add *The Amazing Spider-Man* once the sub runs out?

In closing, I have a question for you: Is using store credit earned by selling books the same as buying another comic? It might be. Perhaps, instead of accepting store credit, I should seek cash.

That, at least, I can spend on the storage unit.

I could even read in it.

Celebrating Black Comics Creators

(Submitted for *Tetragrammaton Fragments* #275, May 2024, but expected to see print in #276)

A few years ago, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago hosted an exhibition titled *Chicago Comics 1960-Now*. (<https://mcachicago.org/exhibitions/2021/chicago-comics-1960s-to-now>) Curated by Dan Nadel, the exhibition ran from June 19 to Oct. 3, 2021. It featured the work of more than 40 local cartoonists, including creators such as Lynda Barry, Ivan Brunetti, Daniel Clowes, Chester Gould, Jay Kinney, Jay Lynch, Anders Nilsen, John Porcellino, Archer Prewitt, Chris Ware, and Skip Williamson—people whose work you might know and love. The work on display bridged comic strips, minicomics, alternative titles, and undergrounds, offering a rich cross section of creativity in Chicago. Anya Davidson reviewed the exhibition for *The Comics Journal*. (<https://www.tcj.com/trip-report-chicago-comics-1960s-to-now>)

The exhibition also included numerous notable but perhaps less well-known Black comics creators from Chicago, including Tom Floyd, Richard “Grass” Green, Seitu Hayden, Jay Jackson, Charles Johnson, Yaoundé Olu, Turtel Onli, Jackie Ormes, and Morrie Turner. Their names might be new to you. Those nine Black comic artists became the focal point of a 2021 book published by the MCA Chicago and New York Review Comics, *It's Life As I See It: Black Cartoonists in Chicago, 1940-1980*—offered as the exhibition catalog. Featuring essays by Johnson and Ronald Wimberly—and edited by

Nadel—it's a welcome, much-needed survey of Black comics creators, in Chicago or anywhere.

Nadel's introduction to the catalog addresses Jackson's 1940s science fiction serial comic strip published in *The Chicago Defender*, gag panels published in magazines such as *Jet* and *Negro Digest*, racial stereotypes, the role of Black-owned newspapers, Black superhero titles, and creators' eventual migration from the Black press to more mainstream publications and audiences. Johnson's essay "My Life as a Cartoonist" considers his high school short stories, a parody of Wonder Wart-Hog, writing scripts for Charlton Comics, and his contemporary young adult fiction series *The Adventures of Emery Jones*, *Boy Science Wonder*.

The book is absolutely wonderful, offering chapter-length profiles of each Black creator featured, as well as at times lengthy examples of their work. While the book includes older, historic examples—Jackson's strip *Bungleton Green and the Mystic Commandos in the 21st Century*, Ormes's more feminine gag panels, and Turner's Peanuts-like *Dinky Fellas* strips are individually amazing—some of the more recent work resonates strongly with that done by members of the United Fanzine Organization. Olu's educational science-oriented comics reminded me of the "process comics" of Larry Marder's *Tales of the Beanworld* as well as the work of Yul Tolbert. Onli's *Heavy Metal*-inspired *Nog, Protector of the Pyramids*, is wonderful. And Green—oh, Green!—is entirely in the UFO's wheelhouse. We shall focus our attention on him.

First emerging through comic book fandom, Green created comics such as Xal-Kor the Human Cat, Wildman and Rubberboy—later published by Megaton Comics as *Wildman*—and contributed to mimeographed fanzines in the 1960s, including *Alter Ego* (see below). He also published unapologetic comics about the Black experience—or white stereotypes of Black lives—such as *Ghetto Bitch* and *Super Soul Comix*. Similar to Johnson, he drew for Charlton before finding a home in undergrounds such as *Teen-Age Horizons of Shangrila*, *Snarf*, and *Bizarre Sex*. He might have been the first Black contributor to underground comics. Only one example of Grass's work is included in the catalog, the previously unpublished 1990 semi-autobiographical piece "Smoke Power," commissioned for a Black version of *Mad* magazine.

Luckily, additional work by Green has also been reprinted or published in recent years. In 2002, Hamster Press and TwoMorrrows Publishing—the current publisher of *Alter Ego*—issued *Xal-Kor the Human Cat* #1, a 100-page comic featuring recent work by Green. In his foreword, Jeff Gelb recounts Green's presence in the fan-made comics of the

1960s, highlighting the strength of his Jack Kirby homages. The Xal-Kor stories, seven of which appeared in *Star-Studded Comics* in the 1960s, might be Green's best work—he won an Alley Award for Best Fan Comic Strip in 1966—particularly this late-career "graphic novella." Also a musician, Green died of lung cancer in Fort Wayne, Ind., in 2002. That's gently ironic given "Smoke Power" above. (https://web.archive.org/web/20090412162226/http://www.sfreader.com/sa_081502.asp)

Otherwise, three other anthologies published by Hamster feature older work by Green. *Fandom's Finest Comics* (1997), edited and annotated by Bill Schelly, reprints "The Origin of . . . Xal-Kor, the Human Cat!" from *Star-Studded Comics* #5 (September 1964) and "Operation Big Move," a Xal-Kor story from *Star-Studded Comics* #8 (March 1966). The full page depicting Queen Roda's underground lair in the latter story is a startling example of Green's vision.

Alter Ego: The Best of the Legendary Comics Fanzine (1997), edited by Roy Thomas and Schelly, includes Ronn Foss and Green's cover to *Alter Ego* #4 (October 1962) and *Alter Ego* #6's (March 1964) parody "The Bestest League of America Meets Da Frantic Four" written by Thomas and drawn by Thomas and Green—each artist drew a team. That latter piece, which gently reminds me of early issues of *Mad* and the Marvel parody series *Not Brand Echh*, often earns Green's overall portfolio comparisons to the work of Harvey Kurtzman. Frankly, I don't actually see Kurtzman in any of Green's artwork, despite the similar approach to superhero satire. The in-reverse opening page is impressively innovative, however. I don't think I've ever seen behind a full-page panel.

The Best of Star-Studded Comics (2005), edited and annotated by Schelly, includes Green's artwork in the near-jam "Introducing the Liberty Legion," for which he drew a chapter; the Xal-Kor stories "A Friend in Need" (indicating hints of Steve Ditko as well as Kirby) and "Xal-Kor to the Rescue;" "Introducing Wildman and Rubberboy;" unpublished pages of Jim Starlin's Powerman, inked and lettered by Green; and a previously unpublished 1963 piece by Green, "Crime Crasher vs. the Black Dragon."

And *Fogel's Underground Price & Grading Guide 2015-2016 Vol. 1* includes an interview with Green that expands the portrait of the man. The interview considers the racism inherent in undergrounds along with their political and social satire and irreverent humor. Green also discusses the challenges facing Black comics creators in that era. In the Black community, being an artist was often associated with being gay at the time, Green said. "The thing is, can you write or draw good stuff?"

The piece then reviews several examples of Green's more challenging pieces, including *Super Soul Comix* #1, *Horny Comix & Stories* #2-4, and *Ghetto Bitch* #1, describing the creator as an "equal opportunity offender."

Green might not have considered himself "responsible to present a social agenda for Black America." He might have poked fun at Black solidarity. But his work paved the way for more realistic portrayals of people of color in comics—and media—today. His work might also serve as a role model for other Black cartoonists. And first and foremost, Green was a comics fan, a comics creator who loved comics. His work is worth revisiting, and perhaps emulating—in comics and fanzines alike.

Comments on WOOF #48

España Sheriff's cover for the 2023 WOOF was absolutely wonderful, perhaps the first time I've seen her work in such a large format. I've long admired her smaller pieces in John Hertz's *Vanamonde*.

With *Intermission* #137.5, **Ahrvid Engholm**—who's also active in eAPA and N'APA—ye olde faned circulated a special issue outside his usual channels. I can't believe I didn't read it until now! Ah, it's excerpts from other issues? "Stockholm, USA" first appeared in *Intermission* #137, and I recognize many of the Snippets also included. But when Engholm writes, "The History Corner, covering the past of sf and fandom, is the perhaps most appreciated part of *Intermission*," he's really saying something. If you don't already receive his fanzine via email, contact him to get on the list. The History Corner impresses and inspires me every single issue. While I didn't participate in or read the 2022 WOOF, I'm pleased to see that he also offers mailing comments. "Motorcycles..." gave me some items to learn more about: Bill Danner's *SteFantasy* and the other listed fanzines.

Juan Sanmiguel's inclusion of *OASFiS Event Horizon* #421 (March 2023) inspired me to check whether the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society is exchanging *De Profundis* with the Orlando Area Science Fiction Society. (Checking...) We are! Nice to see you here, too, Juan. Thank you for including me on the OASFiS mailing list. I'll have to pay more attention to those with a subject line including "New Online Event Horizon"! I haven't been mentioning the exchange in *De Prof*—and should. I'm sure local members appreciate the event list, story reviews, and other news. The story reviews are solid gold, and I can't believe I've been missing those.

In *Little Passport for WOOF*, **Chris Garcia** updated apans on his health and family news, as well as audiobook and podcast recommendations. His invocation of the Balcony Insurgents wouldn't

have rung a bell for me a year ago, but here we are, and I feel a little more faanish.

Alan Stewart's *Ytterbium Hendecoxide* was my introduction to the fanzines of the ANZAPA participant. (That's one of the few apae I don't participate in.) I'm pleased to make your acquaintance! Did you know that Garth Spencer's N'APAazine is titled *Brownian Motion*? I appreciated the subheading of "Brownian Noise." Your list of ribbons and modified text reminded me that even though I occasionally attend cons, I've not once worn a ribbon on my badge. I've received one, and I put it in my pocket. Some day... The photographs of the ribbon strips in the Comments were even more impressive.

Apparently, I wrote a brief professional bio for some reason in 2021. Your comment to Jan Vaněk Jr. inspired me to locate it in Drive, and I reproduce it here, just for kicks. This is not a fannish bio; I've not yet found cause to speak at a con.

Since 2008, Heath Row has worked as the Research Operations Manager for Google Inc.'s Insights Lab, an internal think-and-do tank. Previously, he served as Editorial and Community Director for *Fast Company* magazine for almost a decade. Heath has also taught undergraduate- and graduate-level classes at New York University and the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. He is a graduate of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. He is the author of the book *Communicating Ideas: 11 Steps to Selling Innovation*.

In *Mustn't Grumble*, **Nic Farey** offered two pages of mystifying aphorisms, squibs, and poetry. I don't know what you're grumbling about, but I like it. A lot.

Roger Hill graces APA-L, for which I serve as OC, once a year with his *Report from Hoople*. That might be what inspired me to throw in to WOOF last year, and we included thish in APA-L #3042 in October 2023. In *Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #88, I commented on it thusly: "Roger Hill's *Report from Hoople* #150.012 appears in our pages because of WOOF and the recent Worldcon in Chengdu, China. Even though I joined as a member, in order to participate online, I never received any information about how to do so. When I reached out to member services, no one responded to my request for assistance. Regardless, while my Worldcon experience this year might have been a bust, submitting to WOOF was not—and I look forward to the resulting apa. Thank you, Don Eastlake, for shepherding it. I, too, lived in Evanston, Ill., for a time. It, like Chicago, is my kind of town."

In *Halloween Honey*, **Guy H. Lillian III**

showcased Vampira (aka Maila Nurmi), whom I adore. As the first horror host, she hosted *The Vampira Show* in the mid-1950s on KABC-TV in Los Angeles. Her grave is located in Hollywood Forever Cemetery, and I highly recommend the books *Vampira: Dark Goddess of Horror* by W. Scott Poole (Soft Skull, 2014), Sandra Niemi's *Glamour Ghoul* (Feral House, 2021), and *Vampira and Her Daughters* by Robert Michael "Bobb" Cotter (McFarland, 2017). Somewhere along the way, I procured several DVD compilations of some of the surviving television footage. Your fanzine will inspire me to revisit those!

In your mailing comments, you remarked, "It's not necessary that a fannish craziness like WOOF have a purpose, of course..." In addition to "memorializing brothers and sisters who have left us in times past..." I've felt what might be another *raison d'être* while composing my ish. Last year, my first contribution, I merely submitted material fanzine readers might not have read elsewhere. This year, I'm also commenting—which I usually do in apazines. That's been an interesting experience, and somehow different from the usual commenting. For one, there's a year in between issues; that's an impressive timespan we've all crossed between editions. I feel rather silly that I'm hacking this out a week before the deadline, when I've had all year to come up with something.

WOOF also strikes me as different because it's associated with a con, the Worldcon no less. Some of you will be there. Some of you won't be. Some of us—me—have never been to a Worldcon in person. (Though I did participate in CoNZeland online.) I'm imagining that most of you have probably met in person, while I only know some of you through your fanzines—and names. And looking at the TOC, I'm really only familiar with perhaps half of the contributors to WOOF. So this is exposing me to an aspect of fandom—and *fen*—I haven't yet encountered. So the "new and unfamiliar names" can go both ways: newcomers to WOOF and new *fen* for neos. It's also impressively international, as you indicate. It is, after all, Worldcon. Your comments will inspire me to read the 2022 WOOF, as well. Maybe that'll pull me all the way back...

David Langford's *Ansible* #435 reminded me how much I miss seeing the fanzine in print. If you're still mailing hard copies, I might have to pony up some SAEs. Reading it online just isn't the same. (Do you think a letter to California would cost £1.70 or £2.50? Perhaps I could just send you some filthy lucre—and unstamped envelopes.)

In *Newt News* #0⁰, Jan Vaněk Jr. remarked on uncertainty about WOOF, his love of Bilcon, other cons, and the introduction of *Bradbury's Shadow: Chronicle of Czech Science Fiction* at Loscon. I don't think we crossed paths, but your name is

familiar, and I'll seek out the anthology. If you are still looking for a home for "a longer, proper article" on the subject of your Solaristics scoop discovery, I'd be interested for *The Stf Amateur*. It's been a year; I'm sure the opportunity has passed!

Rich Lynch's *Four Essays* offered just that, reprinting material previously published in other sources. I'm glad I'm not the only person doing so, good sir. Resonating with Lillian's comments above, I appreciated your memorials to Noreen Shaw, Forrest J Ackerman, Art Widner, and Ron Bennett. All are people worth remembering and returning to.

In *Chengdu Report*, Donald E. Eastlake III, our estimable OE, commented on his experiences at the Worldcon in China. What a wonderful opportunity. Thank you for serving as OE last year, and for sharing a conrep with us!

And John Thiel weighed in with *Parables of Playland* #1. I was unaware that people were invited to participate in WOOF. If that is indeed the case, I apologize for just chucking a fanzine WOOF's way last year. Your later remark that the invitation came in the mail made me wonder whether John Hertz had mailed it. That totally makes sense, and I'm glad you answered the call to action.

But, John, I wouldn't let one rejection deter you from trying to place "The Strawberry Chocolate Girl" elsewhere. Submit, submit, and submit again! If the prozines don't bite, approach the semiprozines. If you get no cheer there, there are plenty of fanzines that might welcome your fiction. I'd welcome considering the piece for *The Stf Amateur*, and worst case scenario, there's always *Pablo Lennis*. Regardless, I empathize. A year or so ago, I submitted a story to the National Fantasy Fan Federation's Short Story Contest, and since that didn't win, place, or show, I've done nothing with the piece. Your WOOFzine will inspire me to pick that back up, along with another short story I workshopped with the N3F's Writer's Exchange Bureau. I write plenty of words. Maybe there's a story in me, too.



Los Angeles Times, Aug. 17, 1956

Telegraphs & Tar Pits #122

July 18, 2024

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

The rockets' red glare
illuminated the skies
of our fair city.

While I wrote about my family travel after July 4 in *Snow Poster Township* #17, I'll include commentary on a weekend hike along with the Day Trip Report below.

Administrivia: A Correction

In APA-L #3077's Table of Contents, the Patron Saint was incorrectly identified. The Patron Saint for that distribution was in fact Doug Abe. (*T&T* #24)

Day Trip Report: Little Tokyo

The weekend before the 4th of July weekend, my wife, son, and I took a day trip to Little Tokyo. Our destination, the *Giant Robot Biennale 5* exhibit (<https://www.janm.org/exhibits/grb5>) at the Japanese American National Museum. I've long been friends with Eric Nakamura and Martin Wong of *Giant Robot* magazine (<https://www.giantrobot.com/collections/giant-robot-magazine>), and Highwater Books often tabled by them during San Diego Comic-Con years ago. The magazine is now defunct, though the store and gallery remain (<https://www.giantrobot.com>), and Nakamura periodically helps curate local exhibits featuring artists associated with his work. (If you haven't yet seen the PBS *Artbound* episode "*Giant Robot: Asian Pop Culture and Beyond*," you can do so at <https://www.pbs.org/video/giant-robot-mzveco>.)

This year's Biennale featured more than 10 artists, focusing primarily on nine. Sean Chao's (<https://www.seanchao.com>) wooden cockpit sculptures and terrariums were whimsically fantastic. Former industrial designer Felicia Chiao (<https://www.instagram.com/feliciachiao>) contributed works utilizing copic markers and ink, and Luke Chueh's (<https://www.instagram.com/lukechueh>) paintings were quite impressive.

Giorgiko (<https://www.giorgiko.com>) also

contributed large-format paintings, and James Jean's (<https://www.jamesjean.com>) sculptures of wood, resin, and metal helped enliven the installation. The ceramic sculptures of Taylor Lee (<https://www.instagram.com/nicheceramics>) featured Astro Boy, Mega Gundam, King Ghidorah, and Mazinger Z.



Mike Shinoda (<https://www.mikeshinoda.com>), the artist and musician behind Fort Minor, offered multiple paintings, some of which had been used as record album covers. Rain Szeto's (<https://shop.rainszeto.com>) ink and watercolor work is exquisitely detailed and at times borderline cyberpunk. And Yoskay Yamamoto's (<https://yoskay.com>) work in wood and papier-mâché was also wonderful.

At the end of the exhibit, there were a couple of installations featuring items from GR2's Post-it shows, photographs of the people who surround the magazine and its subsequent activities, and other material related to *Giant Robot*. The exhibit runs through Sept. 1, so if you enjoy the collision of pan-Asian fine art and pop culture, check it out.



Monster Patrol Toys

After exploring the exhibit, we enjoyed lunch at the nearby Hachioji Craft & Vegan Ramen (<https://www.fooddiscoveryapp.com/los-angeles/hachioji-craft-ramen>) before stopping by the Fugetsu-Do Bakery Shop (<https://www.fugetsu-do.com>) for some sweet wagashi. I didn't venture into Anime Jungle (<https://animejungle.net>) because there was a line, but we checked out Monster Patrol Toys (<https://monsterpatroltoys.com>) and Ginza-USA Gifts & Music, where they stock intriguing Japanese souvenir movie pamphlets and DVDs such as Toho's *Lake of Dracula*. We then walked by the Japanese Style Bell Tower and through Japanese Village Plaza Mall before returning home—a wonderful day.

On July 4 before my son joined us for the evening fireworks, Caitlin and I went on a morning hike along the Leacock Memorial, Temescal Ridge, and Bienvenida Loop trails. The trailhead is in a residential neighborhood with ample parking and serves as an easy alternative to the main park entrance, which can be more heavily trafficked.

The Leacock Memorial Trail is a trail cutting between residential properties to the Bienvenida Loop, and you reach the more commonly utilized trail not far from the trail to the waterfall (or from, if you started at the main entrance). We chose to take the loop counterclockwise, which I'd recommend. There's a slight incline on the eastern portion of the loop, but overall, the route has an elevation gain of 1,414 feet.



Once on the Temescal Ridge Trail, you pretty much head north, and the ridge isn't overly exposed. You'll pass the scenic Skull Rock—which looked more like a skull the last time I was here—eventually reaching Green Peak. The views by the communications towers are excellent in all directions.

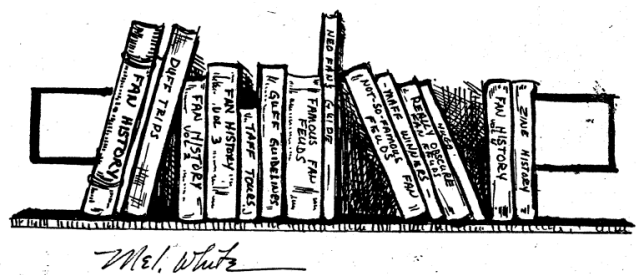
We'd arrived early enough in the morning that the skies were still cloudy and the morning mist was

either going up the canyon or over the ridge. At times, visibility into the distance was obscured by mist, which cleared by midday—and certainly while along the ridge. Most of the other hikers we encountered were on the Loop, and not too many venture north along the ridge, which made for excellent hiking.



Misty mountain hop

Near the towers, we encountered two helmeted people who were using electric off road unicycles similar to those made by InMotion (<https://www.myinmotion.com>), with the wheel oriented in the direction you face. Onewheel (<https://onewheel.com>) makes a similar unicycle, but you stand on it like a skateboard. We later saw them down by the coast at the end of Sunset Boulevard. They'd covered a lot of ground!



From the Reading Pile: Book Reviews

For Us, the Living by Robert A. Heinlein (Virginia Edition, 2008)

Inspired by reading Stephen Schryer's "Neoliberal World Reduction: Robert Heinlein and Milton Friedman's Free-Market Utopias" in *Science Fiction Studies* (<https://www.depauw.edu/site/sfs>) #150 (July 2023), I read Heinlein's first written—but not first published—novel. I'd also finally decided to splurge on the Virginia Edition collection (<https://www>.

heinleinbooks.com) in order to be able to more readily read the author programmatically.

In William H. Patterson Jr.'s Introduction, the scholar writes that Heinlein wrote the novel in late 1938 after his time working with End Poverty in California and Democratic politics. It remained unpublished until 2004, after the author's death. When he was unable to sell the book, Heinlein turned to writing short stories, drawing on the history of the novel's utopia for standalone stories with which readers might be more familiar.

The book's structure is similar to that of H.G. Wells's *When the Sleeper Wakes* (aka *The Sleeper Awakes*) or *The Shape of Things to Come* and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. In all of those books, a sleeper—or in this case, the dead—awakens in the distant future (2086, for Heinlein), and various people help them explore and understand future societal and cultural modes and mores. The novel's protagonist spends most of the novel talking to academics, artists, and economists. There's not a lot of action, but it's interesting reading all the same, especially in light of Heinlein's later work.

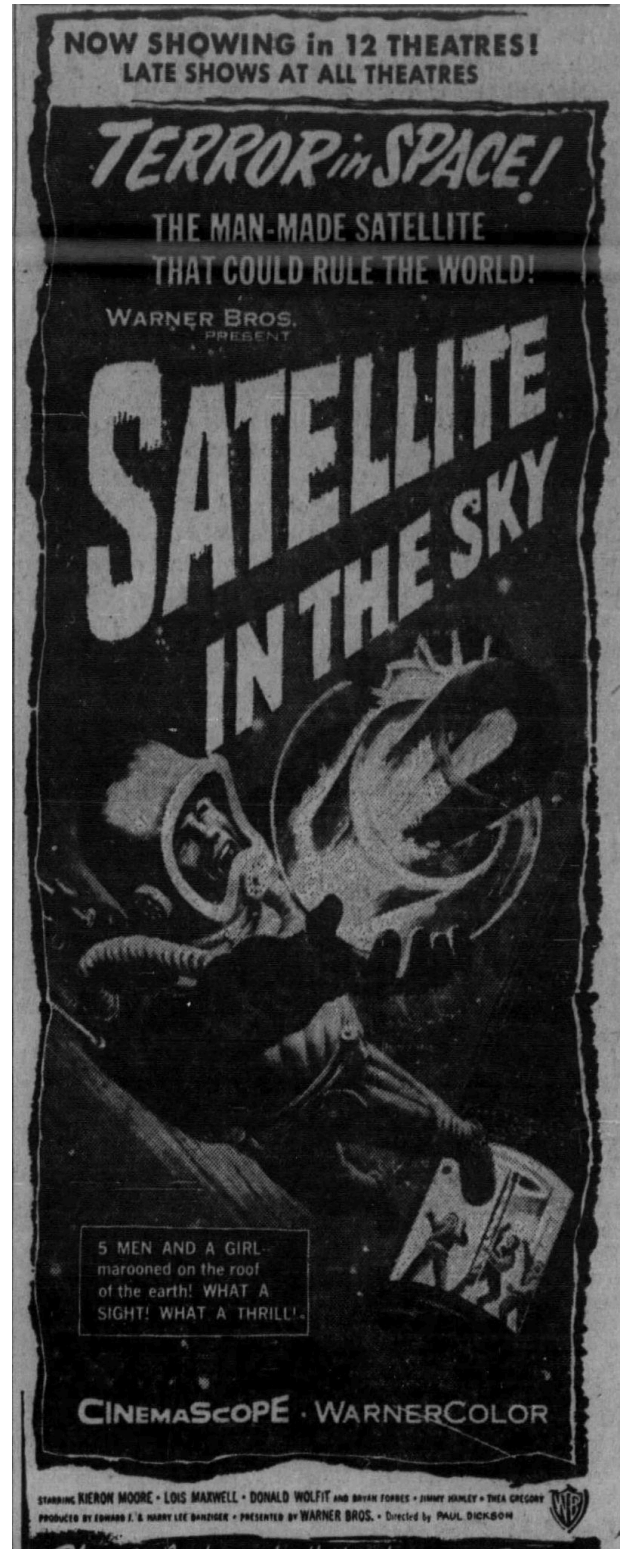
Despite *For Us, the Living's* penchant for socialism rather than libertarianism, many of Heinlein's future philosophical elements come across. The book addresses the then-future World War II, secularism, the New Deal and Social Credit, economic independence, education and parenting, the democratic process (only people who are eligible to fight in a war being able to vote on whether to go to war, for example), feminism, sexuality, and other themes.

In his introduction to the 2004 Simon & Schuster edition, Spider Robinson wrote that "this book is essentially a series of Utopian lectures, whose fictional component is a lovely but thin and translucent negligee, only half-concealing an urgent desire to seduce. At age thirty-two, Robert was already trying to save the world—and perfectly aware that the world was largely disinclined to be saved."

Robinson also suggests that *For Us, the Living* is "immensely much more than just [Heinlein's] first novel. It is all of them, dormant." Even though the novel as such was a failure, it led to everything else Heinlein ever did. "[H]e looked back over the lengthy and detailed imaginary future he had just thrown together as a set decoration, and saw the ideas stacked all round its empty stage ... and realized it offered him a canvas so broad that, given enough time, he might contrive to spend all the rest of his working days in the sheer joy of telling stories..."

Without *For Us, the Living*, we might not have gotten "Coventry" or many of the other Future History

stories. "The seeds of many of Robert's major novels are clearly visible, here, needing only room and time to grow," Robinson wrote. This might not need to be the first or only Heinlein book you read, but it is very much worth reading within the author's broader context.



Los Angeles Times, Aug. 10, 1956

The Great Hunt by Robert Jordan (Tor, 2019)
The second volume in the author's Wheel of Time Series, this picks up where *The Eye of the World* (T&T #109) leaves off. The adventuring party (in roleplaying game terms) spends most of the book searching for the Horn of Valere, which has been stolen, as they contend with other issues and intrigues.

Mat Cauthon struggles against the effects of the dagger he pilfered from Shadar Logoth. Nynaeve reluctantly becomes an Accepted in the ranks of the White Tower, above the rank of Novice, but not yet Aes Sedai. Rand al'Thor is identified as the Dragon Reborn, a role he does not relish. And the party—in various groupings depending on who's where—continues to evade and engage with the evil forces of Ba'alzamon.

Friends are revealed as Darkfriends. An undead army is summoned. And there's enough that builds on the ideas offered in the first novel that *The Great Hunt* is no mere sequel, though about a dozen novels remain.

Within the pages of APA-L, there has been some discussion of Jordan's growing cruelty as the series progressed. A reader might encounter the first instance of that here, with the introduction of the damane, or Leashed Ones, magic-wielding women who are harnessed by others, made to do their bidding. The codependence between the damane and their sul'dam is problematic, as is the addictive, near sexual, thrill that comes from serving as a sul'dam.

If the Leashed Ones continue to be a major part of the storyline, I can understand growing distaste over time. But otherwise, the Wheel of Time continues to be a wonderful series, a wide-ranging epic fantasy that resonates with much earlier work despite its initial publication in 1990. (Incidentally, I recently saw a car with the bumper stickers "Bela Is a Darkfriend" and "I Killed Asmodean.")

The Midnight Ride by Ben Mezrich (Grand Central, 2022)

Before leaving Wisconsin in early July (*Snow Poster Township* #17), I started reading this mass-market paperback thriller, pulled from my parents' bookshelves. It's not entirely speculative fiction, but there's enough alternate history in the mix that it might merit our attention. Similar to the Indiana Jones series, Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, and the National Treasure series of movies, the story blends history—in this case the Revolutionary War—and the fantastic: Paul Revere was an alchemist, and the Liberty Bell hides the secret of transmutation. Instead of the philosopher's stone, perhaps it's the philosopher's gong... or... tone.

The characters are compelling and include an MIT student of dubious lineage who moonlights as a card counter, an ex-con hoping to profit from a deal gone sour, and a bumbling but exacting professor (often sparring with a more credulous rival) who becomes embroiled in the adventure. They face off against a global criminal conspiracy and a couple of assassins, including one whose background might be similar to that of Marvel Comics' the Black Widow. That character also resonates with real-world espionage education for young Soviet women.

The Midnight Ride is an enjoyable read that carries a strong sense of place in its portrayal of Boston. Recommended if you occasionally dabble in what I consider grocery store fiction, or if you appreciate Freemason-related conspiracy theories, alternate history, or books that seem to have been written to encourage a film adaptation.



—William Rotsler

Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

Vampires

Speaking of movie adaptations, this 1998 flick directed and scored by John Carpenter brings John Steakley's 1990 novel *Vampires* to the big screen. I haven't read the book yet, but Steakley has other fantastic writing credits, including two pieces in *Amazing Stories* and two in *Friends of the Horseclans* anthologies edited by Pamela Crippen and Robert Adams.

The gist of the movie is that vampires exist, the result of a botched exorcism performed on behalf of the Catholic Church 600 years ago. The protagonist, Jack Crow (an unconvincing James Woods), has been raised and trained by the church as a vampire hunter. As the leader of a team of vampire hunters, he's reportedly the best, but you wouldn't be able to tell it.

While sleuthing out—and slaying—a nest of “goons,” he and a colleague (Daniel Baldwin) realize that the nest's master is in fact the prototypical, 600-year-old vampire. That vampire is searching for a black cross that will allow him and other master vampires to walk in sunlight, which seems to be a Very Bad Thing.

Encumbered by a recently bitten prostitute—portrayed by Sheryl Lee of *Twin Peaks*—the two attempt to hunt down and kill the remaining vampires before that can happen. It's not a great movie, but it's occasionally fun, particularly the scenes in which the vampire hunters utilize a crossbow and electric winch to drag their prey into the sunlight. The combustion scenes are also impressive.

Overall, however, the movie is unconvincing. Woods doesn't impress as a tough guy or the best vampire hunter ever. The vampires come straight out of central casting. Lee's vampiric convert alternates between deadpan stares and manic twitching. Baldwin comes across as Just Another Baldwin. And the repetitive country blues rock score is only occasionally relieved by Carpenter's more traditional synthesizer-driven compositions.

If you enjoyed *From Dusk Till Dawn*, *Blade*, or *The Lost Boys*, watch those movies again before you watch this one. You might find them sufficient.

Comments on APA-L #3077

In *Vanamonde* #1601, **John Hertz** updated ellers on the Classics of SF at Westercon LXXVI, which took place while I was in Chicago. I hope your time in Salt Lake City and the discussions went well! While in Baraboo, Wis., (*Snow Poster Township* #17), I enjoyed a single scoop of my favorite ice cream flavor: Blue Moon. I quite like the elevation to Fandom Is Just a Glittering Hobby.

I will share your feedback with Garth Spencer. We've already identified at least a few additional apae we'll include in the next edition of *Blue Moon Special*. In recent years, Dynamite Entertainment has published a number of Green Hornet-related comic book series. I've read a few here and there but am particularly interested in 2017's *The Green Hornet '66 Meets the Spirit*. There's also Dynamite's *The Lone Ranger/Green Hornet: Champions of Justice*.

Matthew Mitchell's *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #65 reported recent temperatures in Mojave. Ooch, that's a hot one. If Maribeth didn't enjoy being scared, she must not have found works employing the Wages of Sin Are Death or At Least Being Threatened with Death frightening. I will share your feedback with Jose Sanchez.

This is suggested as tongue in cheek and self-consciously sacrilegious, but perhaps Yahweh had forgotten the dinosaurs, decided we'd figure it out for ourselves later, or wasn't proud of hir previous creative experiments. Was there a rainbow in the sky after the asteroid impact? No dinosaur would have been able to see it.



Los Angeles Times, Aug. 24, 1956

Just a few days ago, my son was telling us about sriracha sauce vending machines. We speculated on whether they were primarily utilized by Japanese or non-Japanese people. He also said that most vending machines are owned by individual proprietors, not distributors or bottlers, though there are some bottler-owned machines. Do please dig into your archives.

So we don't wonder too hard or too long why Barry and Lee Gold have stepped away from APA-L, I can tell you, in part. I'm not entirely sure why Barry wandered off in early 2023. But how I responded to a recent Ignorable Theme offended Lee, who was debating slowing or ceasing her participation regardless. She felt that I'd responded to an ellers' contribution in a manner that suggested that their answer to a question was incorrect. I've since apologized, we email occasionally, and I hope that she

might eventually find her way back to our pages. Until then, she remains active in other venues. *Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood* is indeed an excellent movie. A friend reports that the related novel Quentin Tarantino wrote is worth reading, as well.

In *Sirius Barks* #12, **Beverly Warren** indicated that she'd done nothing related to science fiction in recent days. That's okeh! Along the lines of FIAWOL vs. FIJAGH, we might oscillate between the two over time. It warmed my heart to read that you like Matthew Mitchell in APA-L. Apae definitely fulfill a different purpose than social media. Slower, longer, vs. shorter, faster.

Our cat Spooner ran and hid under the bed while fireworks were set off in our neighborhood on July 4. He also ran and hid under the bed today after visiting the veterinarian because I was inspecting the latches of his carrying case, and he thought—I'm speculating—that I might want to put him back inside of it. He wandered back out as we ate lunch in the kitchen. Digging into our emails, I found that the issues I first sent you in February 2023 were APA-L #3005 (Jan. 26, 2023) and #3006 (Feb. 2, 2023).

In your closing remarks, you described *T&T* as "the biggest zine." Were I in the market for marketing pull quotes, I might be tempted to use that out of context! In general, I sequence our fanzines in the order in which I receive them. Most weeks, I finish my contribution just before I start to print, collate, and prepare for mailing. (It's now 5:21 p.m.)

Joe Zeff's *Toony Loons* #766 continued his description of Marcia Minsky's cataract surgery. I hope she heals fully and quickly. Cracker Barrel is one of a few chain restaurants I enjoy thoroughly. My family often ate at them during summer vacations, and as an adult, I consider them as on par with the Olive Garden. Besides, when I was younger, Cracker Barrel sold old-time radio cassette tapes in its gift shops, and I'd often peruse their wares for tapes of *The Shadow*, *The Green Hornet*, and other programs. One might even say that the restaurant introduced me to OTR. For that, I am grateful.

While in Chicago, I had a grilled bratwurst. It had been forever and a day. I think your description of modern horror—violence and blood, not horror—is apt. Here's to "real horror"! Thank you for the clarification of my comments on *The Flying Sorcerers*. (*T&T* #120) The balloon was indeed filled with hydrogen.

Welcome back to **Jean-Paul L. Garnier** and *Space Cowboy's Accretion* #10. I've been holding on to his submissions waiting for a comments addendum since his previous appearance and decided to include his fanzine in the distribution regardless. Enough time has

gone by that he's unlikely to catch up on commenting on back issues and might be more likely to jump back in with brief comments as we proceed.

Where has he been? Editing *Worlds of If* (<https://worldsofifmagazine.com>) and *Star*Line* (<https://www.sfpoetry.com/starline.html>), negotiating book contracts, writing books, and selling books. Not only has he secured contracts for three books so far this year, he recently guest edited an issue of *Eldritch Science* for the National Fantasy Fan Federation. (<https://tinyurl.com/EldritchScience12>)

I appreciated your reports on recent podcasts, events and event recordings, and other literary activities. Hold the phone: You're in the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*? Kudos and congratulations—for the N3F Laureates, as well. Your camping trip sounds delightful, as does your work with the Dreamachine. I've never used one, but I've utilized a light and sound machine (or mind machine) over the years and recommend the experience. When combined with binaural tones, the effects can be quite intriguing. Is *Wave IX* the project we talked about? If so, what's my deadline again? (I'll also email you.) I also read and enjoyed your reading list and scifaiku.



Los Angeles Times, Aug. 24, 1956

descriptively named fanzine is a 20-page black-and-white digest. After sharing memories of working as a disk jockey for WVFI-AM, “Notre Dame’s closed circuit college radio station,” Fellrath considers more than 10 musicians or musical groups to offer a sort of mix tape.

Music highlighted includes the Smiths, New Order, Shawn Mullins, the Killers, David Baerwald, U2, the Dixie Chicks, R.E.M., Green Day, David Byrne and the Talking Heads, and others. Fellrath also discusses music identified while vacationing in Mexico and a couple of playlists he maintains.

Fen will appreciate the author’s invocation of Dave Gibbons and Alan Moore when considering New Order, as well as mentions of songs featured on *Dawson’s Creek*. I’ve created a playlist including songs mentioned in this at <https://tinyurl.com/Fanzine2Playlist> to augment Fellrath’s own playlists.

Available for \$4 postpaid from Phoenix Productions, 8031 Griswold Drive, New Albany, OH 43054.



Los Angeles Times, Aug. 31, 1956

***The Screening Room* #1 (Fall 2023)**

Published and edited by Jim Main, this 44-page, full-color fanzine concentrates on fantastic film and television. After a brief editorial and a teaser for the next issue—*The Thing from Another World*, *Land of the Giants*, and *8th Man?* Bring on #2!—several articles concentrate on movies, television shows, and anime old and new alike.

Buck Oviatt’s “*King Kong* 1933: The Characters and the Actors Who Portrayed Them” offers just that: Discussion of the movie and the people featured in it. Largely providing biographical sketches of the primary cast members, the article also considers

notable crew members such as Willis O’Brien and Marcel Delgado. The piece views *King Kong* in the context of *The Most Dangerous Game* and *Mighty Joe Young*, which brings in Ray Harryhausen. The five pages of movie stills at the end of the article are absolutely wonderful.

“The Lost World Found: TV’s Jungle Gem” by Michael F. Housel takes a look at the late 1990s TV program *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s The Lost World*. Over the course of three seasons and almost 70 episodes, the show builds on Doyle’s 1912 novel *The Lost World*, resulting in a relatively wide-ranging lost-world adventure.

Housel has spent a lot of time watching and thinking about the program, and his article considers three themes reflected over the course of the series: social conflict, surrealism, and exotica/erotica. He also details the adaptation’s lineage, cast and characters, and other notable aspects. Each theme is explored fully, with Housel highlighting multiple episodes to back up his thesis.

I’ve only watched the first two episodes so far and am delighted that someone took the show so seriously. (Its special effects are occasionally clumsy, and the cheesecake aspect is hard to ignore.) I’m not sure how much of the program I’ll watch—it’s not as good as, say, *The Infinite Worlds of H.G. Wells* (T&T #11), but it’s likely to inspire me to read Doyle’s original novel. One could do worse.

Finally, Will Murray explores the first color TV anime series, *Kimba the White Lion*. He examines the production of the series, its origin as a manga, a sequel anime series featuring a more mature lion, and the obvious relationship with *The Lion King*. The back of the issue includes an advertisement for Murray’s crossover novels *King Kong vs. Tarzan* and *Doc Savage: Skull Island*. Clearly, there’s more to explore.

The fanzine’s design and production is relatively loose, featuring a somewhat large typeface, but *The Screening Room* is a passionate project. Not only are the articles intriguing and inspiring—this issue is a wonderful starting point for further exploration—the fanart throughout is excellent. Pieces by Allen Freeman and Kevin Duncan stand out strongly.

Available for \$7.50 postpaid from Jim Main, 130 Wellsville Ave., New Milford, CT 06776; mainjim23@gmail.com.

***Tetragrammaton Fragments* #275 (May 2024)**

The aspirationally bimonthly newsletter of the United Fanzine Organization offers an interesting, in-depth perspective on the self-published comic book cooperative’s activities and other aspects of DIY comics, minicomics, and related material. While not

as wide ranging as *Comix World*, *City Limits Gazette*, *White Buffalo Gazette* or even the UFO's own Ian Shires's *Self Publisher!*, T-Frags is a useful entry point to a fandom adjacent to our own.

Content includes columns and comics reviews contributed by members of the UFO, as well as fanart and other illustrations. Chairman Steve Keeter's "Quotations from Chairman Loathly" notes the death of Larry Blake, who's been referred to in issues of *Argentus*, *Endeavor*, and *It Goes on the Shelf*—and who participated in Chicon 7 in 2012. Blake's impact and influence on this community resonates, and several members share stories about their experiences with the comics creator.

Ian Shires expresses frustration with the lack of immediate enthusiasm for the new Web site *Indyfest USA* (<https://indyfestusa.com>) as well as a firm resolve to keep making waves in his efforts to lift all boats. J.E. Carrales III shares his thoughts on what makes a good comic book or fanzine review—encouraging creators by offering constructive criticism rather than being dismissive or snarky—before commenting on recent UFO publications.

Joseph Morris touches on writer's block, abandoning projects, and missing deadlines—situations we've all faced. He also mentions an ongoing obsession with underground comics; I look forward to seeing what he produces in the future. Kurt Erichsen focuses on the value of revisiting your past work and the new potential he now sees in Valerian the Barbarian. Erichsen's advice for artists participating in art shows at sf cons is priceless: "[H]and-colored prints could be sold for the same if not more money than original artwork," and "[I]f you want to sell, you better draw cats and dragons."

In "Tales of the UFO," Larry Johnson further explores the connection between sf and comics fandom—even mentioning Edmond Hamilton. (*T&T* #121) I enjoyed and appreciated his amusing commentary on the language and acronyms used in apae and sf fandom. "Ellers" refers to participants in APA-L—APA-L'ers, perhaps—and he's sharp to notice that I'm in the minority when using "fen" instead of "fans." Fandom can sometimes feel like a murky swamp, so your invocation of the Back Bay Fens is apt! Johnson also reviews recent UFO publications, drawing connections to his own work and experiences, and recognizing the death of Blake.

Rob Cooley offers comfort to people who've recently experienced the death of a loved one, and Tom Fellrath notified UFOlk of work scheduled to appear in Antarctic Press' *Planet Comics* #30. As I read this issue, it struck me how similar T-Frags is to apae. The columns and reviews occasionally resonate

with apa mailing comments, and UFOlk respond to previous issues of T-Frags, as well as comics distributed during the interim. Perhaps there's One Big Comic along with One Big Fanzine and One Big Fandom.

Available for \$3.50 from Steve Keeter, 10118 Mason Dixon Circle, Orlando, FL 32821; steevekeeter@gmail.com.



Los Angeles Times, Aug. 31, 1956

From the Reading File: Comic Book Reviews

Dream Diary #2 (Summer 2023)

This 48-page full-color comic book published by Larry Johnson offers graphic and written documentation of dreams the creator experienced between 2011 and 2023. (Or drawn in that time frame; the introduction indicates some of the dreams occurred in the 1990s.)

Johnson has maintained a dream diary for several decades, "chronicling my night time adventures in notebooks first thing in the morning when the memory of the dream is still fresh." In a slightly less surreal style than that utilized in *Horseman* (*T&T* #95 and *The Brass Hat Mind* #7)—these are, after all dreams—Johnson depicts his dream self in a number of bizarre situations.

Over the course of the issue, Johnson encounters his dead or sleeping self, floats above his home, locates a rickety elevator and railing-less staircase, makes a mess with green paint, is accosted by chickens "armed and dangerous, carrying little guns, shooting indiscriminately" as well as a "large winged reptilian creature" with a penchant for plates, removes

a good luck guru from a refrigerator, explores a construction site, and screens a Betty Boop movie.

Similar to *Horseman*, what's of interest here are the recurring themes and imagery: encountering himself, stairs, history (Greeks and Egyptians), flight, fire, people in states of undress, vehicles and industrial equipment, and the presence of friends and family, as well as guest stars such as Barbra Streisand, Judy Garland, and Lou Costello. The drawings of the dragon in "Chaos Plaza" are wonderful.

Dream Diary exemplifies the dreamlike nature of Johnson's other work, and he indicates some experience with lucid dreaming in "Screwed." "This was a lucid dream. So I had some control," he writes. "For a lucid dream I didn't have much control."

Dreams can be rich fodder for creativity. I wonder how much of Johnson's dream life ends up in his other comics! Available for \$7.50 postpaid from Larry Johnson, 31 Greenbrook Road, Hyde Park, MA 02136; <https://sites.google.com/view/larryjohnsoncomics/home>; LewBrown1@verizon.net.



Los Angeles Times, Aug. 31, 1956

***Galactic Diary* #1**

In response to my review of #2 (*The Brass Hat Mind* #7), Verl Holt Bond sent me a copy of the previous issue of this "science fiction, horror, fantasy, and sword and sorcery" series, as well. I'm grateful he did. While #2 focused primarily on the four-part "Post-Holocaust Blues," this first issue—featuring work from 2020-2021—feels more like an anthology comic similar to those published by EC, Charlton, and other publishers. (Gene Day's *Black Zeppelin* also comes to mind.)

The 52-page digest includes six black-and-white pieces, one of which was previously published in *Flying Pig Publications Presents!* "Neanderthal Sunset" features a scientific research ship that crashes on an unknown world that might be Earth 120,000 years ago. The six-page story ends somewhat abruptly, but the conclusion still packs some punch. This might be the highlight of the issue.

"Invasion of the Rodan!" depicts kaiju attacks on Tokyo, Los Angeles, Moscow, Paris, and New York and again ends abruptly—perhaps suggesting that this was intended as the introduction to a work longer than these six pages. "The Cosmic Misadventures of

Maggie and Melvin" focuses on an encounter with UFOs. Melvin seems a coward in the face of the statuesque Krarn, but Maggie proves most formidable. (There might be a joke on the final page, but it eludes me. The use of "Wood" instead of "would" makes me think it's a *Plan 9 from Outer Space* reference.)

"Graveyard Shift" could have appeared in *Ghostly Tales*, *Haunted*, or a similar title. Amidst gravestones featuring names such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert E. Howard, Christopher Lee, Vincent Price, and Clark Ashton Smith—all manufactured by H.P. Lovecraft & Company Headstones—the morality tale warns readers against rejecting the gift of love. Bond's use of the skull as narrator at the end works really well.

"Hell's Bells" also resonates with horror anthologies of the past. Bond's depiction of the devil on pp. 37-39 is delightful, especially the second panel of p. 37. And "Undefeated" serves as a connection to the second issue, including some of the same characters. Bond's anatomical drawing sings in this piece, and the combat scenes on pp. 42-43 are particularly effective.

I might encourage Bond to concentrate on the pacing between stories as well as that within stories. Interspersing blank pages, text, or otherwise punctuating the pieces might make their endings more clear and effective. Several of the stories aren't capped with a "Finis" or "The End," though others are, and you might not know they're over until you recognize that a new piece has begun.

This is one of my favorite comics in recent months. Other comics editors would be well served by soliciting work from Bond for their anthologies. With the relaunch of EC Comics, perhaps we'll see him in *Epitaphs from the Abyss!*

Inquire via Verl Holt Bond, 1663 Blue Heron Lane, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250-5519; bondverl123@gmail.com.

***The Improbable Girl and the Wonder Kitty* #7 and 9-10 (2023 to April 2024)**

Thank you, Joe Ely Carrales III, for ensuring I received the other two issues featuring cover artwork by Don Simpson—such a wonderful run of three covers!—in addition to the new issue. Carrales's ongoing series focuses on the Improbable Girl and the Wonder Kitty, two superheroines who work in a newspaper mailroom and serve in the armed forces in some capacity. Issues #7 and 9 bookend a storyline the creator began crafting in the late 1980s, "The Druid's Secret."

In the back matter to #9, Carrales sheds some light on his creative process. He storyboards on

standard-sized paper to determine the flow of a page and issue, draws panels as full pages in sketchbooks, photographs the artwork, edits and colors the photos using Adobe Photoshop 3.0, and lays out the pages in Microsoft Publisher, which explains his use of square-cornered speech balloons. That is a great example of how form can follow function—and how our self-publishing is influenced by the computers, software, and other tools available to us. We don't all have the newest technology.

Carrales indicates that while he doesn't draw digitally, he does adjust his drawings while editing the photos. (I remarked on images that seemed computer generated in *T&T* #95.) Knowing more about Carrales's creative process will inform how I read and interpret his work in the future. My remaining quibble might be that his densely packed panels and pages are occasionally difficult to read because they're so flat. Better delineating foreground and background might better serve his artwork and make the pages feel less heavy and dark.

Regardless, "The Druid's Secret" is a doozy of a story, from the antagonist's facial disfigurement and discovery in #7 to #9's reunion of Xaviron and Aristria. So many neat ideas reside in #9: spontaneous combustion, a Greek soldier protecting the crown of Aristria, mysterious sludge creatures "rising up from the sea," and the final confrontation. Throughout, readers also engage with more everyday scenes at home, at work, and while volunteering.

#10, then, covers new ground, the result of a crossover and collaboration with Ryan Howatt, creator of the character Badger. Interviewed in #9, Howatt discusses the creation of Badger, originally a *Dungeons & Dragons* character, a shovel-wielding bard. (Not to be confused with Mike Baron's Badger.) In this issue, the titular superheroines are sent to Badger's world of sword and sorcery through a Tesla coil-driven portal. It's a fun fish out of water story and a nice change of pace for Carrales in terms of storytelling. At the end of the issue, they intend to return to the modern day—with Badger in tow.

Carrales continues to welcome cover contributors; #10's is drawn by Trish Ellis. I appreciate the sense of community I get from this series. Whether Carrales is involving other artists, partnering with like-minded creators, or interviewing other creators, it's clear he's looking around as much as he is concentrating on "high-concept world building."

Available for \$10/issue postpaid from Carrales Studio Productions, P.O. Box 1274, Premont, TX 78375-1274; marisolinskikitty@gmail.com.

Madame Boogala #3 (Fall 2023)

This is my first exposure to this ongoing series by Larry Johnson. The basic gist is that Madame Boogala is a bit of a fortune teller or Romani, "one of the 'Magic People' centuries ago in the Old Country." While a student of her grandmother, she read sacred scrolls that opened a rift between the Land of Darkness and her world, resulting in the need to halt such incursions.

In this issue's story, "Son of Goomar," she and her son meet a man whom they think is her grandson, though her son, Goomar, is less sold on the idea. Window dressing includes a crystal ball, smoking candles, and lab equipment used to make potions, and the artwork is a little less cartoony than that of *Dream Diary* (see above) or *Horseman*. In fact, the panels in which Madame Boogla remembers the past—such as that on p. 4—suggests that Johnson can draw well in a more detailed (or sketch-like) fashion than he usually does in his comics.



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 7, 1956

The erstwhile son of Goomar gets in Boogala's good graces quite quickly, while Goomar sets out to investigate who he might really be. That takes him to the library and Crowe's Curios, where he discovers an important clue. Because the son of Goomar is not, in fact, his son. (Shock! Horror!) He's a demon, Melado, dulling Boogala's senses with vile potions in order to unleash Brown Jenkin—a nice nod to Lovecraft, perhaps—and the demon Chula on an unwitting world. In the end, Melado's efforts are stymied.

It's a great gambit for a series, shades of Doctor Strange, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and other Monster of the Week concepts. Boogala is a bit of a cipher or nonentity in this issue, with most of the focus on Goomar, his "son," and others in the community. I look forward to learning more about Boogala.

Johnson includes reader comments and a handy "Demonology" detailing his demonic influences, and the back cover artwork is absolutely wonderful. Available for \$6.50 postpaid from Larry Johnson, 31 Greenbrook Road, Hyde Park, MA 02136; <https://sites.google.com/view/larryjohnsoncomics/home>; LewBrown1@verizon.net.

***The Mighty EnergyGirl* Vol. 2 #36 (Spring 2021)**

If you look closely, there's a cameo appearance of EnergyGirl in *The Improbable Girl and the Wonder Kitty* #9. (see above) Creator Ken Bailey recently joined the UFO and sent members this 36-page, full-color issue as an introduction to the group. The man can draw—he's been making comics since 1964—and his superheroine seems to have quite a bit of backstory and history dating back to at least 2004.

In this issue, EnergyGirl has taken a new superheroine, dubbed Newbie, under her wing. Her protege is a former astronaut who fell victim to an alien growth virus. The story recounts Newbie's origin—caught in some “sort of energy-radiation” while repairing a remote arm during extravehicular activity. Upon her return to Earth, her body begins to change and develop in unexpected ways, attracting the attention of the Federal Department of Super-Humanics.



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 14, 1956

Newbie isn't always able to control her strength, and the FDSH hopes that E-Girl will be a calming influence. Great power isn't meaningful or productive unless you can control it. The comic also addresses the wisdom of age, making way for the next generation of heroes, and other topics.

I found one aspect of Bailey's comic quite interesting. Each page seems to be drawn on a worksheet-like template page featuring the same banner, while the pages themselves vary in layout, structure, and content. Even the introductory page and back matter pinups utilize the template. I'm curious why Bailey uses them. Do the comics first appear online? As a single-page serial?

The artwork is very well drawn and colored with what appear to be markers. While speech and thought balloons, and captions, are drawn, the text uses computer typefaces. Pages include from one to five panels, with most incorporating three or four. Bailey occasionally lightly outlines his figures, which helps set them off from the backgrounds.

A new issue is expected in August. Available for \$4.99 through the Comix Well Spring Bookstore (<https://tinyurl.com/E-Girl36>). Inquire via Ken Bailey, 2232 N. 30th St., Sheboygan, WI 53083.

***Something in the Water* #1-2 (2023)**

These two eight-page minicomics were written and drawn by Tom Fellrath during COVID-19. Inspired by hiking in Appalachian Ohio, he decided to explore the contradictions posed by the beauty of the region, generational poverty, and unhealthy drinking water. The result is an ongoing series—two more issues have been published—exploring the impact on a community and perhaps eventual efforts to address the situation.

Told through faux *Wikipedia* entries (*Librario*), population statistics, and community health findings, as well as Fellrath's simple but effective artwork, the first issue sets the stage: Vinton County faces serious public health challenges.

The second issue continues the innovative approach to storytelling, incorporating dialog by way of a group chat, in addition to simply drawn panels. The story turns its attention to a team of door-to-door census takers from the Ohio Department of Health trying to assess the health of the community. The protagonist is a Muslim woman, perhaps—she wears what might be a shayla, hijab, or hijab amira—and her texts with her mother also add to the story.

Initially, the residents are unwelcoming, though at the end of #2, that might change. It's a great approach to a public health issue, and I applaud Fellrath for picking up the pens and pencils himself—inspired by Inktober. Available for \$1.25/issue postpaid from Phoenix Productions, 8031 Griswold Drive, New Albany, OH 43054; <https://phoenixprods.wordpress.com>.

***Timetrvlr* #24 (March 2024)**

This is the first issue of *Timetrvlr* Ian Spires has published in almost five years. It's also the first work of his I've seen since the *Dungar the Barbarian* and *Self Publisher!* days of the late 1980s and 1990s. There was a time in which Spires and SP! was my gateway to the world of minicomics. Between him, Steve Willis and Max Traffic, Matt Fezell and the Michigan crew, and S.S. Crompton's Demi the Demoness, there was a lot going on. (I did not, however, realize that Crompton worked as staff illustrator for Flying Buffalo Inc. Worlds collide!)

A lot has transpired since the *Timetrvlrs'* first 1986 appearance in *Dungar the Barbarian* #8, and a shaky drawing hand will lead Shires to work with guest inkers such as Michael Neno as the minicomics series continues. This 20-page colored mini jumps right back in where Shires left off five years ago.

That means that, even with the useful “Guide to Our Characters”—some of which draw on the work of Larry Towsley, Christopher Allen Howard, and Jerry

Smith—I don't really know what's going on. The Timetrvlrs are a group of dimension hoppers, perhaps facing off against the AI Collective. Utilizing the Overseer, which seems kind of like the Mother Boxes from DC comics, they also go up against God, an elder giant; Satan; and dragons.

In this issue, the Elders are waiting in cyberspace, the Timetrvlrs recently saved God, and a Probability Storm is underway. Something with a gravity signature lands on the hull, and the team decides to investigate. Smiley shrinks, finding a crystal ship—and attempts to communicate.

Even though each character is simply drawn in a distinctive fashion, I could really use a more detailed guide to the cast of characters as a newcomer. After a call for letters of comment, the issue offers “the conclusion to the set up of our crossover,” which seems to be drawn or inked by someone else. The lettering and artwork in this backup story reminded me of James Kochalka.

Longtime readers of this minicomic might well be thrilled by its return. I was pleased and gently confused—not a bad state of being. Available for \$1.50 from Dimestore Productions, 1546 Yale Ave., Madison, OH 44057; <https://dimestoreproductions.com>; ian@indyfestusa.com.

Screened at the Globe: Movie Reviews

Curse of the Dog God

Midweek, a friend and I watched the Mondo Macabro DVD release of the 1977 *Curse of the Dog God* (aka *Inugami no tatari*). Written and directed by Shun'ya Itô, the Japanese movie is an interesting mix of folk horror, rural revenge, environmental caution, mob justice, and motorcycle gang cinema, incorporating elements of each.

The basic plotline is that a rural village's health and wellbeing is threatened as a mining company begins to excavate a uranium deposit. Even before the well water is poisoned—either by a solvent used by the mining company or by the protagonist's father—a young mining worker is burdened by the curse of the dog god after destroying a roadside shrine and killing a boy's pet dog.

His colleagues are killed, as is his wife, and he struggles against the dire effects of the curse as he tries to defend an isolated family from the anger of other villagers, who think the family is the cause of the curse. That introduces a guilt-ridden love triangle with a friend of his ill-fated wife.

Playing relatively loosely with time, the filmmakers elide many events, gently suggesting what's come before in later scenes, leaving you to figure out what exactly happened.



—William Rotsler

The horror aspects are muted, accomplished primarily through makeup and lighting effects, though there is one wonderful scene involving an unattended drill in a mineshaft—quite a surprise for a movie made in 1977. Otherwise, highlights include the isolated family's father beheading a dog in order to draw the dog god into himself at one point, and the scenes in which his younger daughter is possessed. That sequence is absolutely wonderful, incorporating lighting, an animated wedding kimono, and body doubles.

Tonally, the movie reminded me a little of *Hausu* or one of the *Yokai Monsters* movies. Interestingly, one scene, in which the protagonist's wife dies in the snow, reminded me of Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* movies. Guess who wrote a portion of both flicks? Itô. My friend and I even wondered aloud whether Tarantino had seen *Curse of the Dog God*. Chances are good he has.

Ignorable Theme: Reading

“When and where do you read? Do you have any reading habits or rituals? Do you stash books anywhere in case you need them?”

I read daily, often for hours, and sometimes just for a little while. Most of the time, I read after work, in the evening instead of watching television, before and after dinner. Much of my reading is done while reclining or sitting on the couch in our living room, as my wife reads—and I also usually read in bed before going to sleep at bedtime. When reading in bed, I either read fiction or, recently, comic books.



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 14, 1956

While reading Stephen King’s *The Dark Half* recently (*T&T* #121), I stayed up late to read, read before work in the morning, and slipped in reading sessions throughout the day. It’s a sign of a good book—and not overly common—if I wake up early to read before starting my day. I have fond memories of staying up late after bedtime as a child to continue reading instead of going to sleep.

While traveling recently, I read several books on the plane, on the bus, and in my parent’s home. I wouldn’t say that I have any reading rituals, but I do have habits or practices. I’m an active reader, which means I’ll highlight portions of the text—usually with a highlighter because I mostly read print rather than ebooks—make lists on the last page, or otherwise take

notes of ideas that strike me. If I don’t have a highlighter, I’ll make check marks in the margins to draw my attention to passages I want to return to.

If a book or story includes multiple song references, I’ll make a playlist for the book. One recent example is *Mixtape from Neptune*, which features songs mentioned in or inspired by Christopher Mark Rose’s story “Mixtapes from Neptune” in *The Magazine of Science Fiction & Fantasy* (September/October 2023). You can listen to that short playlist at <https://tinyurl.com/MixtapeFromNeptune>.

I do sometimes read ebooks, on my Kindle, Kobo, or iPad. When using the Kindle, I’ll highlight while reading and make those highlights visible to Everyone upon finishing the book. But it’s not the same as being able to actively read a book. And I haven’t been able to figure out how to highlight on my iPad using my Apple Pencil, though I’m pretty sure you can.

Most of the above remarks apply to books, but I also read fanzines, magazines, and comic books. Those I read less actively, though I occasionally note a comic book reference—usually to a back issue—I want to follow up on. I read magazines more often now on my iPad, using the *Readly* or *Pocketmags* apps. *Readly* enables me to keep up with multiple British magazines—music and fannish alike—that used to be relatively cost prohibitive otherwise. And I sometimes read comic books using *Marvel Unlimited* or *DC Universe Infinite*. I’m more likely to read physical comic books or to download PDFs of back issues online.

In the past, before the pandemic, I’d print out PDF fanzines at work in order to read them as hard copy. Now, I usually read PDF fanzines on my iPad, having downloaded copies from *eFanzines* or elsewhere and uploaded them to Drive. I receive only two print-only fanzines: *Pablo Lennis* and *Idea*.

Finally, I try to read the newspaper daily. While I used to receive and read a handful of newspapers, I’m now down to the *Los Angeles Times*. I’ll pull sections and pages from which I want to save articles in the *Pocket* app. I no longer use *Twitter* (now *X*) as aggressively as I used to, at one time posting article links as often as every 15 minutes.

Do I stash books anywhere? No. But I was inspired to ask other readers the question because a friend of mine keeps books in his car so he can read while waiting if he has the opportunity. I quite like that idea, and I picture paperbacks squirreled away on the drivers side, in the back seat, in the glove compartment, and in the trunk. Like a spare tire, just in case. In case of emergency: Break glass.

Comments on APA-L #3078

Welcome back, **Mark Bondurant**, with such a wonderful black-and-white cover!

With my taking the week off while traveling, several contributors still submitted items that week. I appreciated having material to work with upon my return so it all didn't come later the next week. I apologize for any confusion my travel might have caused. As mentioned in last week's distribution, you can read about my travels in N'APA's *Snow Poster Township #17* or the forthcoming issue of *The Stf Amateur*.

In *Toony Loons #767*, **Joe Zeff** updated ellers on Marcia's cataract surgery and related travel. I look forward to your comments on Ringo's Food Market in Aguilar, Colo. Best of luck removing the wooden dowel from your sliding glass door track! Stuff like that can be frustrating.

While the *Buck Rogers, 2049 A.D.* comic strips didn't print overly lightly, I can appreciate how it'd be challenging to read them. The darker hue of the scanned newsprint would certainly be tidied up for a proper reprint. I've emailed you the PDF of the distribution to see if the electronic version is any easier to read. If so, I think you'll enjoy them.

Derek LaPorte's *In Betweens #5* remarked on his ongoing reading of the works of George Alec Effinger, specifically an advance reading copy of *When Gravity Fails*. Thank you for contributing your short story, "Discount Interstellar Inc.!" I enjoyed the first-person stream-of-consciousness storytelling. Geez, if Discount Interstellar is a descendent of Spirit Airlines, I'm not sure I'd use them for space travel. (At the end, I see you've flown Spirit, too!) The filename extension quip made me chuckle. The distinction between the soloist and the choir seems meaningful—and really is, in the end. What a fun story. Quick, clever, and surprisingly lighthearted for a pretty serious outcome.

Your idea for Dr. Hyde and Mr. Jekyll sounds promising. Keep us apprised of its development. I hope you're able to stop by Space Cowboy Books in Joshua Tree. Be sure to say hi to Jean-Paul! I've been there just once, and it was a fruitful visit. I rate your fanzine 10/10.

In *Sirius Barks #13*, **Beverly Warren** reported that she "didn't do anything relating to Science Fiction," but she comments on a Robert A. Heinlein novel she recently read and discussed with a friend—and that seems sufficient. Besides, apahacking is fanac! When people comment on whether a piece of art "holds up," I think you're right—they mean whether they still feel the same about it (the work, unchanged) now (they've

changed and have a new perspective).

I think that's a valid question to consider. I absolutely adored L. Ron Hubbard's *Battlefield Earth* when it first came out in 1982. I was 9 years old. I've since read it several times as I've aged and continue to enjoy it. It is not merely a book that appealed to the 9-year-old me. (No skin off Hubbard's nose, in either event!) I've had a similar experience with Michael Moorcock's Swords Trilogy. I first encountered it in a collected paperback edition when I was younger, and it blew my mind. I've remained a fan of Moorcock over the years, have reread the collected trilogy—and enjoyed it anew—several times, and just recently read *The Runestaff*.



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 21, 1956

The topic also comes up in the context of John Hertz's Classics of SF discussions occasionally, in a slightly different way. A book that might have been culturally important or appropriate upon publication might or might not "age" well as society and readers continue to change. The topic usually comes up related to portrayals of gender, race, and similar topics. Again, that has little to do with the book, a product of its time, but of the changing state and nature of readers in an ever-changing world. That's one reason I love reading older books. I think we can find new meaning in old works when reading them in new times—regardless of when they were published.

As I begin to read the works of Heinlein in a more organized fashion (*T&T #122*), I'll prioritize the juveniles at some point; I've yet to read them all. *Red Planet* and the juveniles offer another way to consider whether books "hold up": Can adults enjoy reading books written for younger audiences? Of course they can—even if they didn't first read them as a youth.

While scanning and reading back issues of APA-L, I've enjoyed coming across some of John Hertz's

fanzines that preceded *Vanamonde*. One title not included in his *Fancylopedia 3* entry: *What Can a Thetan Think?* I look forward to coming across any other fanzine titles used over the years.

I was intrigued by Drew Sanders being the only surviving member of the first LASFS board of directors. When was he active on the board? To clarify, my National Fantasy Fan Federation Laureate Award was for Best Fan Writer, not Best Non-N3F Fan Publication. I don't want to detract from the recognition of Guy Lillian III's *Spartacus* (<https://efanzines.com/Challenger>), which is well worth reading. I'll have to learn more about Little APA.

Matthew Mitchell's *The Form Letter of Things Unknown* #66 remarked on the heat of his July 4 weekend. Embarking on a staycation at a local motel sounds like a smooth move! But returning to work to find the air conditioning out? Brutal. That it happened two days in a row is icing on the cake. Icing not long for this world.

What discussion forums do you frequent? Outside of fanzines and apae, I can hardly keep up with the Well or Discord, but I'm curious. I enjoyed reading about the discussion of continuity errors in the work of Arthur Conan Doyle. "What matter if I hold my readers?" indeed.

I will share your feedback with cover artist Taral Wayne. Ooh! The copies of *Fandom Is a Way of Death* that I have are not fully compiled. I'm still missing the ending. Some day. Your discussion of your uncle's wartime reading of classic literature reminded me of a fanzine article I recently read about Armed Services Editions. I'll see if I can find a citation. Jon D. Swartz wrote about them in *Origin* #37 (<https://tinyurl.com/Origin37>), but that was back in 2021, so that's not it. I wonder whether soldiers still read comic books. Craig Miller and Jim Kreuger's Comic Book Sunday events collect comics for donation to Operation Gratitude, so perhaps!

Thank you for your additional commentary on Mort Weisinger and Jim Shooter. I'll prioritize Stephen King's *Rose Madder* for future reading. This past weekend, I put *The Dark Half* back in its box instead of releasing it into the wild, and there sits *Rose Madder*, lurking, waiting, and biding its time. May Fluffy Little Puppy continue to win out against Dark Side. Your "Green Hornet Book Gag" made me chuckle.

In *Toony Loons* #768, **Joe Zeff** reported the loss of a beloved Buck knife. I'm sorry it wore a hole in your pocket! Oh, you and Bespoke Post. You'll have a replacement in no time. I'll share your feedback with cover artist Tiffanie Gray. She'll grace our cover again this week, I believe!



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 28, 1956

The Explosion Containment Umbrella #22

July 25, 2024

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 #243

In *Wild Ideas* #49, **Henry Grynnsen** considers the humanization—and potential enslavement—of robots. For a recent mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society, I knew I wasn't going to be able to hack out a snapzine in time to mail copies to the OE in advance of the deadline. I didn't have computer problems, but some planned summer travel—and definite time problems. So I did the next best thing: I hand wrote a mini-issue of *The Brass Hat Mind* on the back of a postcard—nine times. Hand-written fanzines in apae were more common in the day of mimeograph and other reproduction methods—just write on a stencil!—but it's still a valid way to participate. That said, I am not at all suggesting that Ahrvid Engholm should write an issue of *Intermission* long hand. That's crazy talk.

Grynnsen's consideration of robotics resonates with his contention that speculative fiction—at least horror—is a zombie genre. The introduction of the piece focuses more on zombies than robots. One of the more interesting treatments of zombies I've encountered in recent years is Stephen King's novel *Cell*, which contends that mobile phone use makes zombies out of all of us. Generally, I'm not interested in zombies, unless we're talking about their mythological origins—as seen in *White Zombie* and *The Serpent and the Rainbow*—which Grynnsen details.

I was fascinated by your discussion of the alcoholic blackout as an example of a loss of either awareness (which I might call sensation), awareness + awareness (which might be true awareness or self-awareness rather than mere sensation), or something else. Where does agency fit into this? As a recovering alcoholic who no longer drinks, I was lucky to only black out a few times. One retains agency and sensation but might lose self-awareness. One doesn't usually retain memory of the period of time in question.

That is different from being trapped in your body, or experiencing locked-in syndrome, in which you are paralyzed but fully self-aware, lacking agency and

perhaps sensation. Eventually, Grynnsen comes around to the idea of the zombie robot. He contends that conscious robotics isn't possible, which seems reasonable to me. Even in the smartest or most advanced robots, it seems we'd have prescribed and somewhat limited agency, perhaps sensation—but not self-awareness outside of the programmed agency.

Now, what if we were able to upload human personality and memory into a robot? In his recent short story “Discount Interstellar Inc.,” which appeared in APA-L, Derek LaPorte portrays a world in which multiple people could be uploaded into a humanoid creature or robot elsewhere. Some would be “soloists,” in control of the body, and others would be in the “choir,” or mere passengers. It's fiction, sure, but that seems close to the concept of a zombie—or a zombie robot—at least for some of the people embodying the shared space.

How does dissociative identity disorder fit into this? Thought provoking as always, good sir.



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 28, 1956

William McCabe's *In the Meantime* updated eAPAs on his health situation. I hope you receive test results soon so you at least know what's going on. It's got to be hard to treat symptoms when no cause has been diagnosed. It would have been wonderful to see the full run of *Brumble*. Only a handful of issues are available via *Fanac* (<https://fanac.org/fanzines/Brumble>). I've started sending APA-L tables of contents to *Fanac* as I OCR back issues. The first are now available via https://fanac.org/fanzines/APA-L_QQ. That collection will grow over time.

"I've been writing for apas for 40 years and I'm nobody as far as fandom goes," you wrote. Pah! You, sir, are a valued eAPAN and excellent apahack. We all find our own little pockets of comfort and community, of involvement. To some extent, even the BNF among us are also nobodies. After all, this is fandom. We can't all be king of Shit Mountain, but we can all try to reach the peak, or at least climb the mountain. Searching *Fanac* for your name yields almost 300 entries. Searching *eFanzines* yields more than 50. You

have been recorded in the annals of fannish history!

In *Intermission* #144, **Ahrvid Engholm** seems to have overcome his computer difficulties, which must be a relief indeed. I enjoyed seeing you in the 2023 WOOFF, which I recently commented on for the 2024 edition. And your name popped up in back issues of Wolf von Witting's *CounterClock*, which I just stumbled across while looking for information on English translations of non-Perry Rhodan German sf series. *CounterClock* #4 was particularly of interest to me. I love the idea of pre-loaded e-readers—or even MP3 players.

It's slightly amusing that the Eurovision Song Contest can also fall prey to—or employ—"unusual voting patterns" similar to those we've recently experienced in the Hugo Awards associated with the Glasgow Worldcon, and its precursor in China. The controversy does seem like a tempest in a teacup, far from Ben Foster of Screeching Weasel jumping off stage to punch a woman in the audience a dozen-plus years ago. (<https://tinyurl.com/Foster-punch>)

That Joe R. Struly is a fine speaker, I've heard! I was saddened to read about Alvar Appeltofft and the subsequent scandals with the foundation. At least the fanzine collection ended up in the Royal Library. Thank you for sharing your *Locus* obituary for Bertil Falk. Ooh! Henry Grynnssten wrote fiction? Alas, there's nothing listed in the *Internet Speculative Fiction Database*.



Los Angeles Times, Sept. 21, 1956

The Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Films grew out of the Count Dracula Society, founded by Dr. Donald A. Reed. Since 1972—a decade after the society's founding—the organization has organized the Saturn Awards (<https://www.saturnawards.org>) to recognize notable genre films. Last year, I was a paying member, which meant I could vote in the awards—and attend free weekend screenings not far from my home—but I'm debating renewing for this year. I didn't go to many movies and failed to vote last year.

And **Garth Spencer's** *I Never Got the Hang of Thursdays* #223 either suggests that possums would sully his fanned efforts, or that any failings can be blamed on the absence of possums. I empathize with your description of a critiquing workshop. I've only workshoped a couple of stories online with the

National Fantasy Fan Federation's Writer's Exchange Bureau. It was helpful, and I implemented some of the readers' feedback, but, like you, I "want to write for my own fun, not so much for editors' or readers' expectations..." That said, I did just submit a story to a friend's anthology fanzine. He hasn't accepted or declined it yet. It would be nice to figure out fiction enough to publish—or even sell—some stories and perhaps join the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association, joiner that I am. It's not that I want to become a filthy pro; I just want to see if I can do it.

I enjoyed your thoughts on "Everyday Complexity" and will have to return to it with more attention and care. I do think that most financial- and healthcare-related processes are perhaps too complex and arcane for the average citizen; that might contribute to more people not rising above paycheck-to-paycheck lifestyles. See, Mr. McCabe? If Mr. Spencer can say, "I am a Prominent Fan"—as he certainly should—perhaps all of us can. Repeat after me: I am a Prominent Fan. Rinse, repeat.

Here's to prominence.

An Update on Club Involvement

I've got a little space left, so I might as well try to fill some of it and make this more than a commentzine. Even though I no longer serve on the directorate of the N3F, I've remained adjacent and active as a member. George Phillies occasionally reprints my book reviews in *The N3F Review of Books*, and Jason Hunt has expressed interest in reprinting my movie reviews in the revitalized *Films Fantastic*. And *The Stf Amateur* sometimes shows up in the new FrankinZine (<https://tnfff.org/frankinzine>), a service of the N3F Franking Bureau that replaces Phillies's email redistribution of fanzines.

As a former chairman and director—and former editor of *The National Fantasy Fan*—I've also continued to manage the N3F directorate's mailing list, the Official Round Table or ORT, the modern-day equivalent of the chain letter through which the N3F directorate historically conducted business. This week, I divested myself of that responsibility, changing ownership to current chair Becky Jones. I also stepped down as an administrator of the N3F and N3F Adult groups on the *Facebook*.

So I am now just a member, a participant in N'APA, and no longer in any position of leadership. The current directors can do what they do without any bottlenecks. But I shall remain a Neffer. I continue to agree with its founding principles, and I appreciate the straight line to history—and affiliation with other productive Neffers over time.

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). Official UFO Website at <https://unitedfanzineorganization.weebly.com> and the United Fanzine Organization Facebook group at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tfrags>. Newsletter \$3.50 for non-members, \$20 for 6-issue subscription.



TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS! (THE UFO NEWSLETTER) (\$3.50 for non-members, or a 6-issue subscription for \$20 from 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.



GALACTIC DIARY #2 (\$5.00 per copy which includes first class postage. Send check, money order or cash to Verl Holt Bond 1663 Blue Heron Lane Jacksonville Beach, Florida 32250) From Verl Bond comes this exciting post-holocaust adventure, promising, and delivering, "science fiction, horror, fantasy, & sword sorcery!" In the future, a band of heroic survivors battle against cutthroat destroyers, led by Mortimer the Torturer!



HORSEMAN #6 (\$6.50 postpaid via PayPal to LewBrown1@verizon.net) or snail mail to Larry Johnson, 31 Greenbrook Rd, Hyde Park, MA 02136) Larry Johnson's amazing dreamlike saga continues, as Horseman encounters a strange flowerlike being and creation ensues! A truly unique fantasy adventure, told entirely in beautiful full color, and completely wordless. Words are not needed however, this book is a dazzling feast for the eyes!



MIDNIGHT DOUBLE FEATURE #1 (\$5.00 postpaid from Michael Waggoner, 41 Province St., Richford, VT 05476. Or, PayPal to rev_mykd@hotmail.com) "This comic will combine my love of comics with the classic vibe of the B-movie double bills of yore" states Michael Waggoner, and he then goes on to present two gripping sf/horror stories, written by Mike with stunning artwork by Michael C. Spell and Christopher Herdman. Spirits of the dead and demonic beings appear, amidst a classic battle of good vs. evill



THE STF AMATEUR JANUARY 2024 (\$6.00 postpaid from Heath Row, 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA 90230, or, PayPal to kalel@well.com or @Hrow . Outside US rates inquire via email. Free PDF @ <https://efanzines.com/HR/index.htm>) The "January" issue of Heath Row's fascinating apazine features in depth reviews and commentary of UFO zines, as well as apa comments, letters, and an amazing sf cover by Larry Johnson!



THE STF AMATEUR FEBRUARY 2024 (\$6.00 postpaid from Heath Row/ 4367 Globe Ave./ Culver City, CA 90230, or, PayPal to kalel@well.com or @Hrow . Outside US rates inquire via email. Free PDF@ <https://efanzines.com/HR/index.htm>) Beginning with a stunning color cover by Patrick Ijima-Washburn, STF AMATEUR's "February" issue also includes Heath Row's "Telegraphs & Tar Pits" and "The Brass Hat" apazines, as well as engaging reviews and commentary. From Doctor Who to fanzine talk to UFO reviews and much more, this issue offers a wealth of fine reading.



THE TRIUMVIRATE, VOLUME 3 (\$7.00 on Amazon.com, or PayPal \$7.00 to david.oliver.kling@gmail.com) David Kling's absorbing sf/fiction zine includes a rare old comic strip from Steve Keeter and Steve Shipley – "The Mexican Beer Bandido" is politically incorrect, but was made during a more naive and innocent time (the 1980s). Also included: "Crimson" – Kerry Perdy's gripping story of a downed airship pirate and her adventure under a rain of blood; Larry Johnson's "Hands On Experiment", and much more!



THE TRIUMVIRATE, VOLUME 4 (\$7.00 on Amazon.com, or PayPal \$7.00 to david.oliver.kling@gmail.com) David Kling's "Journal of Fantasy, Science Fiction, & Horror" continues! Included "Ghost of a Chance," in which a man is led into a surreal world by his father's ghost; Robert Henry's "The Boy in the Wood," a magical adventure in a forest setting"; David Kling's own "Whispers from the Abyss," in which "a cosmic exploration turns dark." Amazing sf/fantasy adventure providing hours of great reading!

