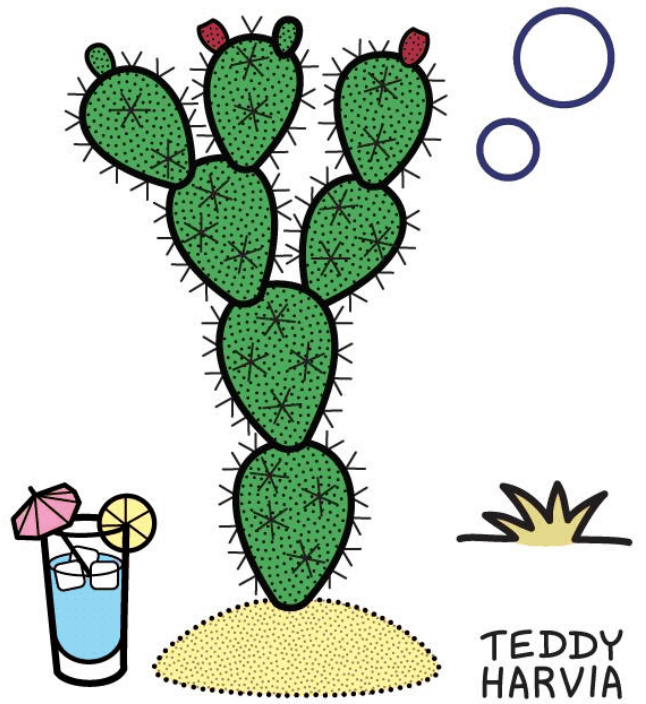


# OPUNTIA 573



You should never let your xerophytes get too dry. They're thirsty if they have extreme folds or wrinkles.

I get frown wrinkles when I need a drink.



TEDDY HARVIA

# Victoria Day 2024

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

**ABOUT THE COVER:** It's been a while since the Goddess Opuntia graced our pages. Many thanks to Teddy Harvia for sending some covers up from Dallas, Texas.

The Goddess has previously graced this zine as below.

Goddess introduces herself	#24
SF novels come in bursts	#24.1
prickly pear worships the ground she walks on	#25
Bacchus fondled Opuntia	#26.1
index in her head	#26.2
cactus spines	#27
roots in Canada	#28.5
pricklypear babies	#29
fossils	#29.1
"Your pad or mine?"	#40.5
creating cartoons	#41
lifesize photo	#41.1A
straight man complaint	#41.1C
drinking	#42.1
global warming	#45.5
Zeus gave her the shaft	#47.1B
goddess handling a spear	#47.5
broke Olympic record	#48
takes off helmet	#48.1A
cold chest	#48.1B
shows top	#48.5A
return of Goddess	#327
well-drained soil	#330
on a pedestal	#333
Cupid shooting arrows	#334
sex pictures on vases	#340
Tantalus fermenting ambrosia	#341
Old World versus New World	#342
classical music	#349
Judgement of Paris	#350
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Cactoblastis	#357

# CALGARY ZINE PARTY 2024

photos by Dale Speirs

Calgary zine festivals have been going on for several years but their publicity was so poor that I usually found out about them after the fact. However this year I spotted their poster while Googling what to do on the Victoria Day weekend.





The zine fair was held in the old YMCA building on 12 Avenue SW in the Beltline district, now a community centre. I was surprised at how well attended the event was..





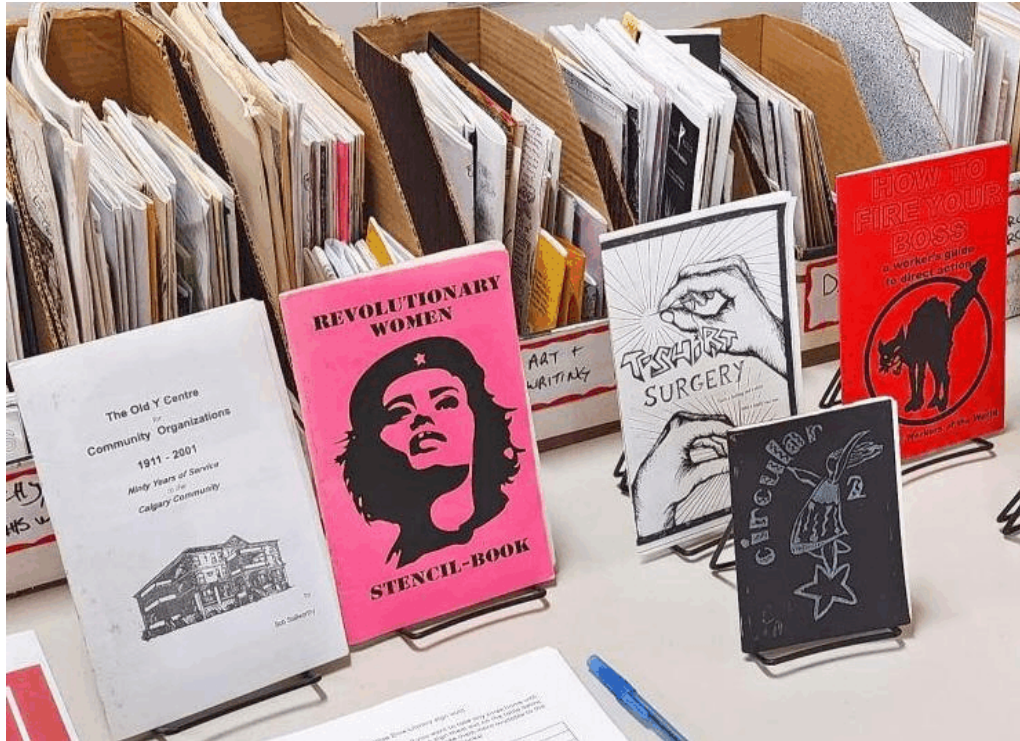


One doesn't see many tabletop printing presses these days.

In fact, this was the first time I have ever seen one in the actuality.



The community association keeps a zine library.





**SIGNS, SIGNS, EVERYWHERE A SIGN**  
photos by Dale Speirs

Seen in Calgary in 2023.



## LIGHTS, CAMERA, MURDER!?: PART 11

by Dale Speirs

[Parts 1 to 10 appeared in OPUNTIA's #394, 413, 429, 451, 478, 495, 520, 531, 541, and 560.]

### **Murder On Stage.**

WITNESS FOR THE PERSECUTION (2022) by E.J. Copperman (pseudonym of Jeff Cohen) was a novel in a series about Sandy Moss of Los Angeles, California. She hoped to practice family law but was constantly handed criminal defence cases.

Her latest client was movie director Robert Reeves, accused of murdering stuntman James Drake on the set. The deceased was in an affair with Reeves' wife. The cables holding Drake for the stunt were cut, leading police to the obvious conclusion.

Reeves was not an easy client to handle, although Sandy had an advantage. She could quickly bring him into line by mentioning how many years he would serve in prison.

Sandy had to maneuver with and around the law while trying to prove a negative. The alarums included kidnapping, the bomb squad, faked smartphone videos, and courtroom testimony that went from bad to worse.

The trial was in the best Perry Mason tradition, with plenty of legal twists, tomato surprises, and J'accuse! finger-pointing from the witness box. Perjury splashed around the courtroom like water. The judge made it clear after the J'accuse! that the case was about Reeves, not the killer.

The murderer worked on the crew. After Reeves was acquitted, she became the person of interest. That wasn't the end of the story. The movie was completed and Sandy was invited to the premiere. On the red carpet, Reeve's ex-wife tried to kill Sandy with a knife. A shot was fired. The premiere was indeed a night to remember.

### **Murder Off Stage.**

CROSS-STITCH BEFORE DYING (2013) by Amanda Lee (pseudonym of Gayle Trent) was the sixth novel in a cozy series about Marcy Singer of Tallulah

Fall, Oregon. She operated an embroidery shop when not Marpleing. Her mother Beverly was costume designer for a movie being filmed in town. When the leading lady was murdered, Beverly was a suspect, so Marcy went sleuthing.

There an been an apparently unrelated robbery and shooting before the movie crew arrived, so the village was already buzzing with excitement. The investigations, both police and Marcy, brought to the surface assorted past histories and recent conflicts.

The death toll rose, as it so often did. The production of the movie had the usual difficulties with giant egos and just plain rudeness. Marcy and her friends spent much time rehashing who could have done what to whom in all possible variations.

Everything wrapped up in the final chapter when all the loose threads were hastily tied together in one big Gordian knot. The murderer was trying for revenge in a failed tryst. The other sub-plots were hand-waved into a semblance of order. The novel cut off sharply.

OODLES OF POODLES (2013) by Linda O. Johnston was a novel in a cozy series about Lauren Vancouver, who despite her surname lived in Los Angeles, California. She operated a pet shelter when not Marpleing.

As the story opened, she was observing a movie being filmed whose star was a white miniature poodle named Shelby. As was and still is the custom, there were several white poodles playing the role. (Just as there was more than one Lassie.)

Lauren's good friend Carlie Stellan was the veterinarian on site, assisted by a humane society representative. The movie director was Hans Marford, who had an argument with Carlie. Not long after, he was killed in a hit-and-run accident.

Carlie was a suspect, which concerned Lauren. The movie studio executives were concerned because filming had halted but they still had to pay the crew. Eventually the filming restarted. Meanwhile Lauren and the police investigated.

The animal trainers had been feuding with Marford because the poodles didn't always respond to commands the wany they should have. Other past histories were unraveled.



Between the pet shelter and the sleuthing, Lauren was a busy woman. There were alarms at both the shelter and the movie set. In the denouement, the murderer was an actress who had hoped for a big part in the movie. She took her revenge on Marford the extreme way.

THE HOLLYWOOD SPY (2021) by Susan Elia MacNeal was set in Los Angeles in 1943. The protagonist Maggie Hope, a British secret agent, arrived in Hollywood after a friend of her former fiance was murdered.

Her investigations took place in a sea of racism, where crypto-fascists made speeches in the streets against Jews and negroes. The Zoot Suit Riots, between Hispanics and USN sailors, were regular occurrences. The Ku Klux Klan were there in force.

Meanwhile, Disney churned out propaganda and the nightclubs did a roaring trade in jazz and steaks. Hope circulated among the theatres, the Garden of Allah Hotel, and the movie sets.

Reality was uncertain in Hollywood. Hope saw a woman gunned down on a sidewalk, only to rise up again after the director yelled 'Cut!'. Public transit did not allow on board anyone carrying reels of film, a common thing in Hollywood. In those days, movie film was made of nitrate celluloid, very flammable, which explained why movie theatre fires were more common then.

The action went in and out of stage sets, where cameras rolled and spies skulked. Alarms included arsonists using nitrate celluloid to start fires. The death toll rose. The murders were eventually solved, fixed on the fascists.

The denouement veered into an extended discussion of attempts to negotiate a peace with Germany. The author didn't want her research to be wasted, so there were lots of infodumps. This novel was an unusual look at the rampant racism in Los Angeles of those days, particularly in the movie studios.

FATAL FUDGE SWIRL (2023) by Meri Allen was the third novel in a food cozy series about Riley Rhodes of Penniman, Connecticut. She operated the Udderly Delicious Ice Cream Shop when not Marpleing.

Former child star Cooper Collins was in town filming a romantic comedy. His mother Diantha, an aggressive socialite, was planning a Halloween-themed wedding for her latest conquest.

People weren't sure what number husband Dominic would be because she had been married and divorced so many times. Six? Seven? Dominic was head chef at the local Inn On The Green, which Diantha owned.

His ex-wife Mary Anne Dumas also worked in the kitchen, which set up some interesting sociodynamics. Dominic and Mary Anne had a cooking podcast series into which Diantha had usurped her. The filming for that was not related to the rom-com movie, whose crew were still scouting locations as they set up.

Diantha didn't survive past Chapter 5, nor did she see Halloween night or her wedding. Riley found the body, as Miss Marples usually do, although fortunately the deceased was at the Inn, not in the ice cream parlour.

Riley had her own troubles though. Someone sabotaged the wedding cake she prepared and messed about with the custom ice cream recipes. Not a break-in, so it had to be an employee with a key. Good help was hard to get in Connecticut.

With that last sentence in mind, Riley found herself working as a substitute maid at the Inn, scrubbing toilets. As she said, "*Poirot never had this problem*". The upside was that custodial staff are invisible to most guests, so by keeping her eyes and ears open she could get in quite a bit of sleuthing.

Meanwhile the movie crew carried on. One of the stars was a local cat named Sprinkles, whose reputation as a foul-tempered feline preceded her. An actress was being stalked. There was drama everywhere, not just in front of the cameras.

Riley never met anyone upon whom she didn't cast suspicion. By the three-quarter mark of the novel, everyone had a page or two of why he or she could be the murderer.

Diantha hadn't been popular with the townfolk but not so that anyone would kill her. However, the inheritance she left was substantial. She had two grown sons and a stepson, none of whom enjoyed life in Penniman. The surmise was that the sons would liquidate the estate, take the money, and run.

The denouement swerved hither and yon, involving both cast and crew of the movie. Diantha had been foolish enough to tell her sons that when she married Dominic, she would change her will and leave her wealth to him.



One of the sons forestalled her the hard way. The method he used was connected to an SFX in a movie he had previously produced. A blackmailer tried to take him out but he almost got her. Some messy alarums in the last few chapters but everything worked out, thanks to Riley and the police.

### **Foul Play.**

BLACKSTONE, THE MAGIC DETECTIVE was an old-time radio series that aired from 1948 to 1950. There were 79 episodes, written by Walter B. Gibson and Nancy Webb. Available as free mp3s from the Old Time Radio Researchers at [www.otrr.org/OTRRLibrary](http://www.otrr.org/OTRRLibrary)

The episodes were 15 minutes with commercials, which were edited out in the mp3s, reducing them to about 12 minutes each. Quick and easy listening on your morning commute.

The character was based on a real magician Harry Blackstone Sr, although the plots weren't. Rhoda Brent played his assistant. In each epilogue Blackstone would explain a simple magic trick the audience could do at home.

“The Message From Nowhere” aired on 1949-02-27. Blackstone and Rhoda traveled to Hollywood where they had a scene in a movie. Upon arrival, they found filming at a standstill. The studio had received several letters threatening the kidnap of a child star.

The producer sent the child to a safe place and the studio refused to pay off on just a threat. While walking around backstage, Rhoda overheard the culprit talking on a telephone to an accomplice. He caught her but she was able to scratch a message on a piece of slate that Blackstone was to use in his act.

The message got through and the would-be kidnapers were caught. They were working on the inside of the studio and knew where the child was. As the police approached, gunfire instantly broke out but the child was unharmed. That's one way to lengthen a prison term.

### **Collecting Hollywood.**

A KILLING IN COSTUMES (2022) by Zac Bissonnette was a novel about Jay Allan and Cindy Cooper of Palm Springs, California. They were washed-up 1990s soap opera actors, pardon the pun. They now operated a movie

memorabilia store called Hooray For Hollywood. The shop didn't do any better than their careers. Customers stayed away in droves.

Their luck seemed to change when they got an offer to buy the collection of Yana Tosh. She was a 90-year-old whose career had peaked in the 1950s as a supporting actress in numerous forgotten films.

Yana had a nasty son Warren Limon by a rich and now deceased husband. Jay and Cindy had competition for the sale, a mega-auction multinational company with 4,000 vice-presidents. Their representative Dylan Redman tried to muscle into the deal. Instead, someone else muscled him out of life.

Jay and Cindy found themselves at the top of the suspects list. They were mentioned in the news, so thusly they found themselves Marpleing in self-defense. After many alarums, with suspicion blown about like desert sand, they found the culprit.

Yana had been discretely selling pieces from her collection over the years. She substituted replicas so that no one would suspect her financial straits. Dylan, for all his other sins, was a good art dealer who could spot fakes, so he went into the blackmailing business. He learned the hard way that blackmailers have shortened lifespans.

### **The Unreality Of Reality Television.**

NOTHING TO FEAR BUT FERRETS (2005) by Linda O. Johnston was a novel in a cozy series about Kendra Ballantyne of Los Angeles, California. She had once been a high-priced lawyer but a scandal brought her down to a freelance pet sitter.

She had to rent out her mansion and live in the maid's quarters. The tenants kept ferrets, which became part of the murder investigation. The victim was Chad Chatsworth, a handsome reality show leading man who had the bad grace to be found dead in Kendra's mansion.

The tenants were Charlotte LaVerne and her boyfriend Yul. They were hovering on the fringes of reality television stardom, or at least supporting roles if not bit parts.



The killer was involved in a complicated mess as Chad and others vied for the limelight in the reality show. He was a womanizer as well, which made for a long list of suspects off camera.

Blackmail against him was the prelude, then his murder. The ferrets were introduced as evidence at the trial. Only in California.

REALLY DEAD (2013) by J.E. Forman was a novel in a cozy series about travel writer Ria Butler. She was in the British Virgin Islands where her brother James was filming a reality television series.

Reality intruded a bit too much when a missing assistant's foot was washed ashore on the beach where a bikini shoot was in progress. There was as much trouble and strife behind the camera as in front, or, after the police became involved, off stage.

The victim had been dabbling in sharp practice she ought not to have done. The denouement was quite funny, as the film crew chased the killer as the police closed in. The arrest on the beach would make for smash ratings.

### **Unreal Mafia Reality.**

FOUR PARTIES AND A FUNERAL (2023) by Maria DiRico (pseudonym of Ellen Byron) was a novel in a humorous cozy series about Mia Carina of Queens, New York City. Her family operated a catering hall called Belle View Banquet Manor.

Family as in the Boldano Family, which got the facility in payment for gambling debts. Mia's father Ravello was someone in the organization, run by Donato "Big Donny" Boldano. The latter had a layabout son Little Donny, whom he dumped on Mia as an event planner.

Mia managed to re-dump Little Donny on her colleague Cammie Dianopolis, a wanna-be influencer and a lousy worker. One reason the Mafia doesn't rule the world is that they are stuck with mostly incompetent staff. Too many deadbeat relatives on the payroll.

Among the proms, graduations, and weddings was a rental by the production company of a pilot television show. The proposed series was "The Dons Of Ditmars Boulevard". They were flooded by amateurs trying out for the parts.

This was a reality show whose producers spared every expense. Giles St James and his ex-wife Ariadne, an Englishwoman who spoke posh, were still partners in the production company. She became very good friends with Little Donny.

Big Donny's other son Jamie was about to be married to Madison, so there was a barbecue out in the wilds of Connecticut to celebrate. Out there Little Donny announced he had a part in the reality show, which made his father apoplectic. But no one died or was killed.

On with the show, whose crew were all dysfunctional, each in their own way. Little Donny wasn't a real Mafioso despite his father, so his regular routine of idling up and down the boulevard was too dull to film.

As with most of his kind, Little Donny didn't know how to swim, so Giles arranged for lessons on camera. To pep up the sequences, the pool was decorated with what were called donettes, a bevy of nubile Noo Yawk women in minimal swimsuits.

The segment was filmed at a mansion owned by a Mafioso who was now a guest of the State of New York up the river. Giles survived to the end of Chapter 7, when one of his numerous enemies murdered him in the pool's change room.

Little Donny was the obvious suspect to the NYPD. Big Donny knew Mia was a Miss Marple, so he put her in charge of exonerating his son. She started off with a traditional Marpleism, illegal entry into the dead man's apartment.

Ariadne and her crew not only didn't mourn Giles but were pleased because his murder would boost the ratings. The wake for him, catered by Belle View, was covered by cameras. Great stuff all around.

Even better, except for Ariadne, a woman named Violet Kreppy St James and claiming to be Giles' current wife crashed the party. She claimed his estate, including his half of the production company. As we would say back on the ranch, the wake was a real barn-burner.

Mia, always playing the idiot in the idiot plot, agreed at this moment to be the maid of honour for Madison's wedding. That meant she had to organize the bridal shower, which the happy bride-to-be decided would be held in New Orleans that weekend.



All the dons and donettes, accompanied by the television crew, were reasonably well behaved on the airplane. Mia had her hands full upon arrival in New Orleans.

Her greatest fear was that Big Donny would not be pleased if the unruly celebrants went viral on social media. Alas, the donettes and Madison got into a street brawl. The event was quickly posted by passersby who knew a good YouTube video when they saw one. And don't forget Tik Tok.

The next day was even better. A mini-parade turned into a brawl that only ended when a thirsty donette grabbed a water bottle meant for Ariadne and promptly keeled over. Not fatally though because she took just a few sips of the arsenic-flavoured water. All on film.

Finally back to Queens for more alarms and excursions. Mia could always find more ways to entangle herself in other people's business. Mostly she barged around asking people "*Are you the murderer?*"

Meanwhile, back at the reality show, a Remember The 1980s prom was staged. Few of the dons and donettes had been to a prom because most of them dropped out of high school or did time in juvie. A dull performance but which livened up when Mia's other brother Posi showed up, on the lam from work parole.

Afterwards, Mia and some of the crew went sightseeing, culminating in the assistant producer Michael Planko falling into the Hudson River. Someone slugged him from behind and pushed him into the water. Alas, there were no cameras to film the attack for the show. He was hauled out and taken to hospital.

Finally to the actual wedding of Jamie and Madison. The ceremony went well but even as the bride and groom were signing the register, Ariadne was kidnapped by the murderer and his after-the-fact accomplice.

The two culprits were extremely ambitious to get ahead in the production company by any means necessary. They didn't succeed and Ariadne survived. Strangely this wasn't the climax of the story.

Instead, the epilogue had Mia acting on the request of police for a sting operation against the company. Two of them actually. The first was copyright theft by one of Mia's relatives, a very minor Mafioso, stealing film of the show and using Chinese distributors to pass off fakes. Also discovered was that

Ariadne and Giles had been fiddling the company books. He was beyond the law now but she was going up the river.

And so to the recipes appendix. Leading off was Pasta Puttanesca, followed by Italian Wedding Cookies, Coconut Amaretto Bread Pudding, Tricolor Cookies, and Tuna Casserole.

The novel read well. Sustained humour is more difficult to write than straight drama, so the author did an excellent job. Well recommended.

### **The Unreality Of Time Travel.**

The founders of Wikipedia once regretted that the major use of their invention was biographies of celebrities and movie plots instead of teaching one's self the basics of string theory. Peter Wood had applied this principle in his story "Une Time Machine, S'il Vous Plait" (2024 March/April, ASIMOV'S).

His story defies easy summary. Time travel was involved, and a Star Trek imitator called FTL, which was a Canadian television series that lived and died in a few years in the middle 1970s. Think STARLOST with Captain Kirk and Darth Vader.

The series made a fourth-dimensional turn when the time travelers hijacked the production and revised the characters and plots. The actors weren't happy but were contractually obligated. Much drama in the table-read room, with the clash of giant egos forced to yield to money. An amusing story.



## FOOD COZIES: PART 27

by Dale Speirs

[Parts 1 to 25 appeared in OPUNTIA's #432 to 434, 436, 438, 441, 442, 444, 447, 450, 454, 456 to 458, 460 to 462, 465, 475, 507, 512, 524, 530, 538, 550, and 565.]

One important rule about food cozies: Never read them on an empty stomach.

### **Auntie Clem's Bakery: Omnibus #1.**

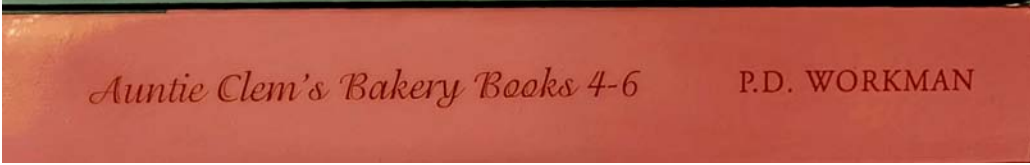
P.D. (Pamela) Workman has a lengthy series of food cozies called Auntie Clem's Bakery. The protagonist was Erin Price of Bald Eagle Falls, Tennessee. She couldn't set foot outside her bakery without tripping over a corpse.

The first six novels are available in two omnibus volumes, which I bought from Amazon print-on-demand. Each volume of three novels is about 600 pages in the trade paperback format. I'll review the second volume in a future issue.

The omnibus spines are shown here. Spot the typographical error.



*Auntie Clem's Bakery Bakery 1-3* P.D. WORKMAN



*Auntie Clem's Bakery Books 4-6* P.D. WORKMAN

I'll review the cozies by their individual book titles. The first in the series was GLUTEN-FREE MURDER (2017).

The opening pages set up Erin's story, as she arrived in the village where she grew up and had left long ago. She had been a foster child passed around from home to home after her parents were killed in a car crash.

She inherited her Aunt Clementine's estate, comprising a small café on Main Street and a house a few blocks away.

Her aunt operated the business as a tea room but Erin was a baker, so she re-opened the shop in a new guise. She immediately ran into antagonism from the townfolk because there already was a bakery. Her operation was to be gluten-free, nut-free, and so forth, just the kind to annoy a rural community. That she opened on Sundays pitted the holy rollers against her.

The grand opening brought in Angela Plaint, the village's rival baker. Extraordinary news transpired when she told Erin that she had become gluten allergic several years ago. She now had to operate her bakery from a distance, relying on hired help to do the baking.

The reader might wonder, as did Erin, why she didn't just convert to a gluten-free operation. That question became moot when Angela ate a gluten-free muffin, then died on the premises. The police had their own questions.

The Deppity Dawg was Terry Piper, always accompanied by his faithful dog K9. Terry and Erin had a mixed relationship, although there seemed to be potential for romance when he wasn't grilling her about the murder.

The police believed Angela's death was murder because she did not have her epipen with her. They could not find it in the bakery nor Angela's house, shop, or car. Their conclusion was that someone had stolen it prior to feeding or dusting her with wheat flour.

Erin found an abandoned kitten in the back alley behind her shop, later named Orange Blossom. That created another thread in the story. She couldn't keep the kitten in the bakery so she took him home. This provided a fresh set of contretemps trying to domesticate a feral kitten.

The next morning Erin caught an intruder in her shop, a young homeless woman named Victoria, the niece of Angela. She had a key to get in and out when the shop was closed, given to her by Aunt Clementine. Angela had never given Victoria any support.

Having taken in a homeless kitten, Erin took in Victoria. Life as a foster child gave Erin sympathy. She needed help in the bakery anyway as trying to run it as a one-person business would be too much. Erin was rather shaken to eventually discover Victoria was a teenaged transvestite boy. A nephew, not niece, of Angela, which explained her antipathy to him.

Piper pointed out that Erin should get the locks changed as soon as possible. She should have done that when she took possession. Not to be polite about it, but Erin often acted as the idiot in the idiot subplots. Instead of immediately dialing a locksmith, she tried to find out who had keys to her store and house.

Erin snooped when she could. She learned that Angela had all kinds of enemies, mostly from her many financial frauds. Erin then played the idiot some more by going spelunking and getting herself trapped in a cave by the killer.

Since she was booked for the series she was rescued. The murderer was being blackmailed by Angela and disposed of her with flour dust. The grand climax was Erin trying out her new door locks. She had them replaced on the penultimate page.

DAIRY-FREE DEATH (2017) was the sequel. Trenton Plaine, son of Angela, had inherited her bakery and intended to run the shop. He had disappeared from town years ago but was back and loaded for bear. His father Adam had also vanished but no one knew where he was.

His high-maintenance girlfriend Joelle Biggs was a vegan who browsed Erin Price's shop with dismay. The gluten-free products were okay but Erin did use milk and eggs in her recipes.

A day later, Trenton was found dead in his bakery, lying on the floor. Guess who found the body? Yes, Erin was now a committed Miss Marple. The autopsy said soy allergy killed Trenton. Erin hadn't known he was allergic, and many of her health food items contained soy. Did Joelle know?

Erin was dealing with numerous emotional problems, from her past and in her present. More seriously she was being harassed by Alton Summers, a sleazy private detective who was trying to shake her down for money because of her past life.

Searching through her house for what Aunt Clementine had in the way of documents brought forth extensive journals and papers on the genealogy of the family. Erin found discrepancies between what she had been told about her parents' death and what Clementine had recorded.

Erin had been told by social workers that her parents died instantly in the car wreck. Their actual death certificates showed they had died separately weeks

later. Vic, as Victoria called himself, was having his own problems. Word was out in the village that he was a transvestite. Living with Erin kicked up the rumours another notch.

Trenton's brother Davis arrived to claim his brother's estate, mostly just the bakery. He wasn't any better than his brother. Erin's house was torched by an arsonist, but that got a few of her brain cells working. She realized that Joelle wasn't Trenton's girlfriend but that of Davis.

Erin learned that as young teenagers, the Plaine boys had poured a cement pad for Aunt Clementine. Thinking about Adam's disappearance, she phoned the police and told them she knew where his body was. At that point, the novel abruptly ended.

ALLERGEN-FREE ASSIGNATION (2018) picked up where the previous book left off. The police brought in ground-penetrating radar and did indeed find the body. Angela and Trenton were dead so that left Davis Plaine as the only one the police could interrogate.

During the dig they came across a wounded domestic rabbit which Erin and Vic adopted. They named it Marshmallow, who became a companion for their kitten Orange Blossom. Assorted alarms and confusions followed. A man went missing in the caves but was found with a head injury. Erin disobeyed the Deppity Dawg, barged into a crime scene, and was bawled out for contaminating a crime scene.

She had a new hire to train in the bakery. At home she was still trying to learn how her parents died. Unfortunately she did. The police had a curveball thrown at them when the medical examiner said the body wasn't Adam Plaine but a John Doe.

After assorted alarms, Erin learned the truth from an oldtimer. The body under the concrete slab was her father, killed by Adam Plaine, who had been having an affair with her mother. The car accident victims were Adam and her mother.

Davis tried to kill Erin but she was booked for the series so she survived. The police got him. A final twist set the stage for the next novel. Erin's mother was pregnant by Adam. She was brain-dead after the accident but was kept on life support until the baby was born. Erin had a half-sister out there somewhere. More to follow.



## **Bake, Batter, And Rolls.**

SUGAR PLUM POISONED (2023) by Jenn McKinlay was the fifteenth novel of a food cozy series set in Scottsdale, Arizona. The protagonists were Angie Harper, her husband Tate, and her sister-in-law Melanie DeLaura. The three were partners in the Fairy Tales Cupcakes bakery when not sleuthing.

Rising-star musician Shelby Vaughn arrived in town for two weeks of Christmas concerts. She hired the bakery to supply cupcakes for the VIP lounge each night. The order was for 50 cupcakes per night, which was a lot of baking.

For the Christmas season, both the bakery staff and Shelby's backup dancers were all dressed in Santa costumes. Shelby's business manager Doc Howard had the honour of being the victim, found murdered after a public argument with her. His dead hands clutched a piece of Santa suit cloth and a cupcake.

That basically implicated everyone. The deceased was a sharp practice man with gambling debts, arrogant manners, and no mourners. The sleuthing kept Melanie busy. That and her agreeing to host the family Christmas dinner. Backstage there was much jockeying for position now that a vacancy had occurred.

The traditional gunpoint confrontation was held in the theatre lobby during intermission. The crowd at the concession stand got a better show than in the auditorium. The murderer blabbed all in front of hundreds. She had feared Howard was going to fire her. For good measure she was secretly Shelby's mother.

The recipes appendix was entirely cupcakes, leading off with Sugar Plum (spicy batter plus vanilla buttercream frosting). Following on were Eggnog, Peppermint Bark, Sugar Cookie (flavour, not actual cookies), and Gingerbread.

PINK LEMONADE CAKE MURDER (2023) by Joanne Fluke was the 32<sup>nd</sup> novel in a food cozy series about Hannah Swensen of Lake Eden, Minnesota. By now she wasn't just a Miss Marple, she was an adjunct of the local police.

Her bakery was ramping up for the Tri-County Summer Solstice Celebration. The recipes were scattered through the text instead of concentrated in an appendix. Thus, as Hannah prepared for the Solstice fair, the second chapter was followed by a recipe for Pink Lemonade Whippersnapper Cookies.

The first subplot was the impending resignation of police detective Mike Kingston. He felt he was superfluous in the village police force, not entirely without reason. From there, nothing much happened as far as the Tropical Pie recipe (apricots, pears, and pineapples, only one of which is tropical).

Retired baseball star Bernie Fulton arrived in town. Two recipes came and went during the set-up for the festival and his public appearances, viz Lakeside Stew and the titular Pink Lemonade Cake. Fulton attended a local baseball game but left early on a stretcher for the morgue.

Someone called him out permanently with a baseball bat under the bleachers. Hannah's mother Delores had a public argument with Fulton not long before and thereby became the prime suspect. After the first-responders arrived, there was a pause for Chocolate Lace Cookies, which Hannah kindly served to the Deppity Dawgs.

As the investigation swung into operation, there were Blue Cheese Meatloaf Mountains and Cherry Crisps, both washed down with 7<sup>th</sup> Inning Slush. Take me out to the ball game indeed.

Hannah commenced sleuthing, digging up scandals about Fulton. He liked the company of local teenaged girls, which drew the ire of many parents. He was dogged by allegations of betting on games during his career. After the Nutella Trifle and How Now Brown Cow (chocolate milkshake with brandy), the investigation continued.

The denouement was Hannah in a corn field with the killer, but she was indestructible. The murderer didn't like Fulton fooling around with his girlfriend.

Along the way through the text were recipes for Curveball Cookies (white frosting with red icing seams), Strawberry Pie, Root Beer Cookies, Summertime Cookies (oranges), Cinnamon Toast Popcorn Balls, Cotton Candy Popcorn, Egg Bacon Pasta Salad, Lemon Muffins, and Orange Muffins.

## **Tea For Trouble.**

STEEPED TO DEATH (2022) by Gretchen Rue (pseudonym of Ashley MacLennan) was the first novel in a food cozy series about Phoebe Winchester of Raven Creek, Washington State. Her Aunt Eudora had died, leaving her a

bookstore/tea shop called The Earl's Study, plus a fat marmalade cat named Bob. Step 2 of becoming a Miss Marple was the body found on the back steps of the shop, apparently a burglar.

Fortunately for Phoebe there were two other suspects. Nonetheless, since murder was done on her property, she was committed to sleuthing. Lots of back stories, including her auntie, and no one was as they seemed.

Hither and yon Phoebe went, between crime scenes, police stations, and the tea shop. Pastries and cookies wait for no Miss Marple, and the sourdough rises no matter how many bodies fall. The denouement was a gunfight in the rain. The culprit was mixed up in a tangled inheritance and real estate mess, of which Phoebe hadn't been aware she was part.

Readers with frazzled nerves can relax in the recipes appendix with Chocolate Hazelnut Latte, Earl Grey Tea Shortbread (made from real earls, tea leaves that is), Parmesan And Black Pepper Sourdough Biscuits, and Avocado Toast.

DEATH BY BUBBLE TEA (2022) by Jennifer J. Chow was the first novel in a food cozy about Yale Yee of the Eastwood district in Los Angeles, California. She lost her job in a bookstore just as her cousin Celine arrived from Hong Kong. Celine was a pretentious social media influencer.

For sufficient reasons, Yale's father who was a restaurant owner, put the two women in charge of a food stall, serving small dishes and drinks. The bubble tea with gold flakes was a success until a customer was found dead with the flakes in his stomach.

Celine became a suspect but eventually Yale shifted the suspicion to someone else. The final confrontation was different, a battle with liquid nitrogen. The murderer had accidentally killed the victim during a personal dispute. Now she had to stop Yale from sleuthing.

The recipes appendix began with Grapefruit Green Tea With Boba, and finished on the next page with Spicy Cucumber Salad.

HOT POT MURDER (2023) was the sequel. Celine lived well thanks to wealthy parents. She may have been a prominent influencer on social media but that didn't pay the bills and she lived on credit cards paid for by her parents.

The opening venue was a meeting of local Asian restaurant owners, the AAROA, a meal where they gathered around hot pots while talking business. Much description in the first chapter about how the food was prepared and eaten.

There were two hot pots. Jeffrey Vue, AAROA president, went to plug in an extension cord for the second pot. It was the last thing he ever did, and his electrocution closed the first chapter. Somebody in the group dunnit.

The police came and went, then Yale began Marpleing. She and Celine still had their food stall to operate in the night market. Unlike the original Miss Marple they had to earn a living. The murder put an interesting aura over the memorial service for Vue, since the killer must have been present.

A power struggle broke out within the AAROA, which didn't have a dozen members. That I believed, having belonged to numerous clubs and organizations in my lifetime. My observation is that the smaller the group then the more vicious a controversy can be.

Lots and lots of pages about food preparation, mostly Chinese and Korean dishes, with which most readers won't be familiar. Mostly soups and stir-fry recipes, mixed in with the plot often enough to make this a real food cozy.

Sleuthing in between the food focused on the members of the AAROA, one of whom must be the culprit. Yale wasn't much for tact and diplomacy in her questioning, and mostly annoyed or outright angered suspects.

Someone forged a cheque on AAROA's bank account. The new president of the association had his restaurant torched. Celine's parents arrived in town, determined to drag her back home. They cancelled her credit cards and mobile telephone, which they could do since they paid for the accounts.

One of the suspects confessed to both the murder and the arson. There were still forty pages to go, which will make the reader suspect a red herring. The reader will be correct, as the real culprit wanted to clear out some of her competition.

Yale was trapped by the murderer inside a walk-in freezer. She not only escaped but trapped the killer inside until police arrived. Celine reconciled with her parents. All was well, ending with a recipes appendix of two items, Chai and Scallion Pancakes.



LAVENDER BLUE MURDER (2020) by Laura Childs (pseudonym of Gerry Schmitt) was the 21<sup>st</sup> novel in a food cozy series about Theodosia Browning of Charleston, South Carolina. She operated a tea shop.

As the novel began, she was catering a Lavender Lady Tea at a plantation. The occasion was an English-style hunting party, blowing away grouse and, as it turned out, the host Reginald Doyle. Not with a shotgun but with a handgun in a nearby field of lavender.

Following on were more alarms, such as a house fire, a missing daughter-in-law, and a seance to ask the dearly departed who killed him. There's never a dull moment down on the plantation.

Life went on. Back at the tea shop, business was brisk. The special of the day was lavender tea and lavender cream scones, on tables decorated with lavender candles. A few days later, the shop hosted a Gone With The Wind Tea, with sweet potato scones, apple-pecan salad, barbecue sandwiches, and peach cobbler. Y'all come, heah?

Not everything was tea and cakes. Theodosia had a knack for finding any number of alarms and inserting herself into the middle of them. Lots of actual excursions around South Carolina as well.

The culprit, assisted by accessories before and after the fact, wanted wealth the quick and easy way. He was up against a Miss Marple with 20 previous cases to her credit plus booking for the series.

The recipes appendix began with Hawaiian Tea Sandwiches (pineapple, ham, and cherries). A lengthy list followed, comprising Pear Butter, Ham Tomato Pasta, Ginger Cardamom Cookies, Lemon Chicken Breasts, Cream Cheese Green Olive Sandwiches, Buttermilk Biscuits, Parsley Bacon Tea Rounds, London Fog Latte, Chai-Spiced Fruit Compote, Parmesan Prosciutto Puffs, and Candied Edible Flowers. Whew!

### **Café Crime.**

DEATH BY HOT APPLE CIDER (2021) by Alex Erickson (pseudonym of Eric S. Moore) was the ninth novel in a food cozy series about Krissy Hancock of Pine Hills, Ohio. She operated a combination bookstore and café while Marpleing with the help of her policeman boyfriend.

The village fete was underway, for which Krissy's café was supplying apple cider and an apple bobbing booth. A local curmudgeon named Sidney Tewksbury bobbed for an apple but never came up for air.

Murder by poison and so concluded the first chapter, getting things off to a fast start. The deceased had plenty of enemies because of his self-righteous interference around the village. Krissy was a mess herself, with two ex-husbands bothering her. She was feuding with a nasty real estate agent selling the house beside hers.

During her Marpleing, Krissy came across Sidney's podcasts. The most recent one, just before his death, mentioned that because her store sold sinful books and sinful food, he had planted a time bomb. That was one heck of an alarm.

While the Deppity Dawgs sussed out the store, Krissy visited Sidney's brother Kevin. He didn't mourn his sibling's passing and told her that Sidney was all talk and no action. She learned that Sidney may have been egged on by Maggie Reed, equally fanatical and who was still in business harassing people.

Krissy had a café to run, so her sleuthing paused at intervals for baking chocolate pastries and pumpkin pie. Maggie began harassing her, taking up where Sidney had left off and bringing along friends.

On the brighter side, Krissy's romance with police detective Paul Dalton seemed to be progressing well. Her sleuthing continued, constantly switching back and forth different suspects. When she was too stressed, she pigged out on chocolate. Been there, done that, say us all.

Eventually she had the final confrontation with not one but two culprits. Saved at the last moment, as Miss Marples usually are. Sidney had been poisoned as a backslider. As nutty as he was, his murderer was further around the bend. Revolution devours its children.

DAIRY, DAIRY, QUITE CONTRARY (2022) by Amy Lillard was the first novel in a food cozy series about Sissy Yoder. For a living, she secretly wrote an advice column under the disguise of 70-year-old Aunt Bess.

Sissy was formerly of Oklahoma but returned to her birthplace of Yoder, Kansas, after a romance gone wrong. Among other reasons, she was helping her Aunt Bethel, who had suffered a broken leg and needed help to run her

Sunshine Café. Sissy was also helping her very pregnant cousin Lizzie, who was on bed rest.

The milkman cometh and in this case died at the back door of the café with a knife in him. Restaurants use a lot of milk so he was a regular every morning at 08h00. Sissy found his body and the plot began rolling.

She began her sleuthing during the funeral. Hampering her was that most of the townfolk had the same surname as she did. She knew only a few of them, the rest of whom were on the order of cousins or uncles once or twice removed.

Sissy worried that the Deppity Dawg was trying to pin the murder on her, even as she tried to blame the murder on her cousin Josie. The Deppity suspected Sissy because she was an outlander, while Sissy suspected Josie because she smoked too many cigarettes. Real professional sleuthing all around.

The Marpleing carried on but what was unusual about this cozy was that many others had their suspicions. They weren't necessarily sleuthing but Sissy had a rough time gaining confidences. She worked in a café where customers quizzed her just as she did them.

The narrative slowed down while Sissy tried to construct a chronology of who walked where and when on the milkman's route. Somewhat reminiscent of those old murder mysteries where the detective clocked everyone with railway schedules and when church bells chimed.

She eventually identified the culprit, a woman who had an affair with the milkman. No gunpoint confrontation because the murderer stole the milk van and tried to drive away. She didn't know how to handle a delivery van and the Deppity had no difficulty collaring her.

The novel concluded with Sissy consoling herself with roast beef and chocolate peanut butter pie. Not at the Sunshine Café but at a competitor who had better food. Now there's a twist ending.

DEEP FRIED DEATH (2024) by Maddie Day (pseudonym of Edith Maxwell) was the twelfth novel in a food cozy series about Robbie Jordan of South Lick, Indiana. She operated the Pans 'N Pancakes café when not Marpleing.

The annual Outhouse Race was nigh. In the same way that Calgary Stampede chuckwagons are purpose-built for racing and are not traditional cookwagons from the rangelands, so it was with the outhouses.

They were mounted on four steerable wheels with a Dutch door. The driver sat inside and steered down a hill like soapbox derby carts. The outhouses were brightly decorated, with the name of the sponsor prominent.

Robbie entered her café, hoping to boost pancake sales. She was in the early stages of pregnancy by her husband Abe O'Neill and had trouble cooking due to morning sickness.

The outhouses were stored at the top of the hill overnight for an early start the next morning. The race didn't happen after a corpse tumbled out of the Pans 'N Pancakes outhouse during the set-up.

The defunct was Evermina Martin, who had just opened a new diner across from Robbie's place. Her head had been bashed in with a heavy iron skillet. Her ex-husband Zeke was the race organizer.

Initial investigating by police and Miss Marple, pardon me, Robbie, brought forth a list of people who had it in for Evermina, who was not widely mourned. Security was non-existent at the fair overnight, so anyone could have murdered Evermina and stuffed her body in the outhouse.

Suspects included Wendy Corbett, who broke up the Martin marriage, other restaurant owners who had been trolled with bad reviews online by Evermina, and a group of self-righteous women from the local evangelical church. Robbie learned about her brother-in-law's psychotic stepdaughter the hard way.

Robbie was busy running the café and didn't have much chance to Marple. She had staff for the tables and cooking but still had lots of paperwork, inventory control, and supplies to order. A new deep fryer was coming and the walk-in freezer had a sticky door.

That latter item was waving a red flag. She didn't mention the problem to her staff, any one of whom might be trapped inside the freezer. Nor did she get around to calling a technician to fix the door lock. An ominous foreboding if ever there was one.



Both state and sheriff police forces were involved with the murder investigation, which gave Robbie two sets of uniforms to feud with. The list of suspects multiplied, basically any outlander who drove into town. Police and Robbie were busy finding connections between people who were supposedly strangers to each other.

Robbie did most of her sleuthing in her café, a busy place with a steady flow of customers. Realistic, at least compared to many cozies where Miss Marple seldom spends time in her shop.

Once all the alarums were used up, there was a final excursion when Robbie located the murderer about to kill again. Fortunately, and surprisingly for a cozy, she did not get herself trapped at gunpoint. Instead she called police and waited a safe distance away.

That walk-in freezer with the sticky door was never mentioned again. A violation of the rule of Chekhov's gun. After the action and explanations were done, the recipes appendix followed.

Apple Dumplings began the recipes, then Cheese Fritters, Creamy Catfish Chowder, Strawberry Coffee Cake, Coq Au Vin (actually served in Robbie's café), and Memorial Day Cocktail (red, white, and blue ingredients, although the result was a purple drink).

### **Cooking The Books.**

BAYOU BOOK THIEF (2022) by Ellen Byron was the first novel in a food cozy series about Miracle Fleur de Lis James-Diaz of New Orleans, Louisiana. She went by the name of Nicki for obvious reasons. Recently widowed, she opened Miss Vee's Vintage Cookbook and Kitchenware Shop in a corner of the Bon Vee Culinary House Museum.

The building was formerly the home of restaurateur Genevieve (Vee) Charbonnet. Several of her family and former staff were directors or employees of the museum. The Charbonnets were not exactly old money, so the museum and its restaurant were always hustling.

The murder, and there was one (if I may paraphrase a well-known New Orleans woman), was a tour guide Franklin Finbloch, who had previously been caught stealing vintage cookbooks. Someone slashed his neck with a Depression-era

can opener, then stuffed him into a steamer trunk at the museum. He had lots of enemies.

The suspects had their own back stories, as did Ricki, who had at least two. In the denouement, quite a few pages and one more corpse were needed to explain a book pirating scheme by the murderer. Finbloch tried to muscle in on the conspiracy but was instead muscled out. Ricki and friends concluded with Pecan-Encrusted Trout, Asparagus, and Bourbon Pecan Pie.

The recipes appendix was a selection from vintage cookbooks in the author's collection. Included were French Pancakes a la Gelee (1950), Swedish Salad (1928), Daisy Canopes (1950), Gingerbread (1975), Coconut Patties (1939), and, anachronistically, Crawfish Etouffee (2014).

### **Syrupy Stories.**

A DOOMFUL OF SUGAR (2022) by Catherine Bruns was the first novel in a food cozy series about Leila Khoury of Sugar Ridge, Vermont. Her father had been murdered during a targeted attack.

She returned home to take over the family sugar maple business and investigate his death. There was a maple tree orchard, café, and gift shop, collectively called Sappy Endings. She hadn't been much involved in previous years and had to rely on the two staff to carry the weight.

As she settled in, she learned unsettling facts about her father's life. Long ago he had a partner in the business whom he bought out under stressful circumstances. Now the son was seeking revenge.

Leila's brother Simon had argued loudly and publicly with their father hours before the murder. The police were taking that into consideration. Noah Rivers, one of the hired help, wanted to buy Sappy Endings and resented his offer being refused.

In keeping with Miss Marple tradition, Leila barged about interrogating suspects and putting herself at risk in isolated situations. The alarums were ugly: a stalker, all four tires slashed on her car, and a drive-by shooting.

Leila began digging up history from microfilmed newspapers at the library. She found lots of stuff. The librarian who assisted her was named Paige Turner. Too

cute for me. Leila continued stalking all the possible suspects, nevermind she had her own stalker. In the real world the police would have run her in for obstruction or at least get her remanded for 90 days psychiatric examination.

Her stupidity was such that in the denouement she was trapped at gunpoint twice with two different killers. Natural selection should have eliminated her from the gene pool but she was booked for the series.

Ah well, nevermind and on to the recipes appendix, which began with Baklava, topped with maple syrup of course. Then on to Maple Shortbread Cookies, Maple Syrup Bagels, Glazed Maple Doughnuts, and Maple Pork Chops.

### **NOT FOOD COZIES: PART 3**

by Dale Speirs

[Parts 1 to 2 appeared in OPUNTIA #550 and 565.]

#### **That Old Time Food.**

Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding were comedians who worked old-time radio from the 1940s to the 1960s. They were always ranked in the Top Ten of radio comedians and their comedy withstood the test of time. They seldom had live audiences, preferring to broadcast from studio booths. They did voices both male and female, with nutty characters and bizarre sound effects.

At one time or another they worked on every radio network. Many episodes of the BOB AND RAY show are available as free downloads from the Old Time Radio Researchers at [www.otrr.org/OTRRLibrary](http://www.otrr.org/OTRRLibrary) Well recommended.

“Merchandising Ice Cubes” was a 1953 episode which began with Bob and Ray lamenting they were missing out on merchandising. Mickey Mouse, Roy Rogers, and Hopalong Cassidy were earning millions selling toys and T-shirts with their images on countless doodads and clothing. No one seemed interested in buying anything decorated with pictures of two middle-aged men.

Their laments were interrupted by Mary McGoon, whose segment of the episodes answered letters from listeners. On hand was a letter from a new bride who wanted to know how to prepare ice cubes. Mary began by explaining how to drill a water well and install a pump.

Next, fetch a pail of water and use it to fill a pan. Tear strips of paper out of an old catalogue or magazine and arrange them vertically in the pan of water. Space them according to the size of ice cubes wanted. Place the pan outside on the porch and let the water freeze.

The resulting ice cubes will be delicious as only home-made food can be. They’ll melt in your mouth. Of course this recipe can only be used in winter in cold climates.

“The Bob and Ray Gourmet Club” aired on 1960-02-22. A reporter did a remote from the club. The daily feature was white bread peanut butter sandwich with the crusts trimmed off. When the square dancing began, the show cut back to the network studio.

Not long after, the episode of 1960-03-10 had ace reporter Wally Balou reporting from Sufferin, upstate New York. He was at the processing plant of the Sufferin Succotash Company. The canning season was in full swing.

The manager Kenton (Sonny) Feswick explained the ingredients such as sweet corn and lima beans were first inspected for quality. Then the additives were mixed in for preserving purposes to keep the natural taste.

Sonny mentioned the advertising campaign for canned succotash featured a certain animated cartoon character who kept spraying “*Suffering succotash*” Back to the studio, where Bob and Ray talked to an impersonator Fenton Keswick, no relation to the succotash man.

#### **Bake, Death Rattles, And Rolling Over Dead.**

MURDER AT AN IRISH BAKERY (2023) by Carlene O’Connor (pseudonym of Mary Carter) was a novel in a police procedural series about Siobhan O’Sullivan of Kilbane, Ireland. She was a Garda officer in County Cork, as was her husband Macdara Flannery.

The big excitement in Kilbane was the arrival of a baking reality television show. There were six contestants in the event, held in an historical water mill. The building housed the Pie Pie Love bakery, who were acting as the host.

The owner Fia O'Farrell was the last of her family. The local residents wondered what would happen to the mill after her. They also wondered about the star competitor Aoife McBride, whose mental health had declined recently. Besides competing in the bake-off, she was staging a book release of her autobiography.

Even before the competition began there was an obsessive protestor campaigning against sugar. He had an altercation with McBride, who dusted him with some makeup powder from a new compact she had just received.

Moments later he mysteriously collapsed from poisoning and was dead on arrival at the hospital. No identification on him. McBride was the obvious suspect but then again she may have been the intended victim of the poisoned makeup and didn't know it was poisoned.

The show was about to begin and nothing would stop the filming. The judges and contestants all had giant egos. The opening ceremony was therefore a lively one as they insulted each other. The producer loved that.

The first day, with a lively audience, was for pickup shots of the competitors at their stations rather than the actual bake-off. They also handed out samples. Free food always brings in a crowd. After the event, the sponsor's agent William Bains showed up, insisting on a gimmick for the bake-off.

The next day, when the competition began, a different gimmick happened. McBride was found dead with her face in a pie she had prepared. Someone had tampered with her blender and she was electrocuted.

Bains turned out to be a fake, so that was another search. The gardai had lots of forensic detecting to do. McBride's blender had been sabotaged by Bains. He had also set up other sabotages.

The gardai circulated artist impressions of the dead protestor, hoping someone could identify him. They still didn't know what killed him but it seemed the poisoned compact was intended for McBride.

Siobhan and her fellow gardai began discussing all the permutations of who was where and did what during the baking. Enough to glaze the eyes. A flow chart might be helpful to track all the suspects.

The baking competition continued in another part of the mill because forensic technicians were still inside the original location. The gardai conducted interviews on one side of the spare room while the bakers worked on the other side.

Television cameras were pointed every which way. If two murders didn't boost the ratings of the bake-off, then nothing would. Television also helped identify the dead protestor when Siobhan saw him in a commercial touting sweets.

He was an actor George O'Leary, from Dublin, who had obviously been hired to play the part for some unknown reason. Even more bizarre, the Dublin agency had also hired out Elizabeth Wynne, a doppelganger of McBride.

That raised the question of which woman was the actual victim. The question was soon answered with dental records showing the dead woman was the imposter.

The real McBride hadn't been seen in public for weeks before the bake-off. The question then arose if she had been murdered long before. The killer might have planned Wynne's death as a way to convince everyone that it was McBride who died there and thus remove any suspicion.

Further alarms occurred in a steady drum beat, confounding the investigation. Suspicion was thrown about like flour, covering everyone. The show must go on, and the filming continued.

The first round of baking was re-done, this time without anyone dying. But with only twenty pages remaining in the book, events began breaking fast. Bains was located and arrested. McBride's body was fished out of Donegal Bay.

The J'accuse! meeting was certainly different. After Siobhan identified one of the contestants as the murderer, the accused began throwing eggs at everyone's face in order to escape. That was in a commercial bakery, so there weren't just one or two cartons of eggs but entire racks.



The murderer failed. She blabbed a confession. Her mother's recipes had been stolen by McBride for a very successful cookbook. Revenge is a dish best served cold. One recipe finished up the novel, for Chocolate Guinness Cake. One cup of Guinness in the cake, and Bailey's Irish Cream in the frosting, so don't eat and drive.

**Bake Until You Die.**

Here is a food cozy series written by Misha Popp that had me flummoxed as to how to classify the books. In general these novels were written like a cozy and bore all the hallmarks except for one thing. The Miss Marple of this series assassinated people by gifting them with poisoned pies.

Daisy Ellery was the protagonist. For an appropriate fee, she would deliver pies to targets, pies flavoured with sugar and spice and everything not nice. Orders were accepted online via the dark web.

She lived in a food truck and moved about from state to state. This prevented the police from associating sudden-death victims with having eaten a slice of her pies.

MAGIC, LIES, AND DEADLY PIES (2022) was the first novel, mainly an explanation of how Daisy Ellery got into the poisoned pie business with her food truck. She wasn't as careful as she should have been and was soon dealing with a blackmailer.

Daisy carried on, delivering poison pies at intervals and selling safe pies at college campuses, farmers markets, and festivals. She neatly dealt with her blackmailer not by poison but by feeding him an amnesia pie.

The recipes appendix began with a basic recipe, how to make pie crust. Then on to Honey Crunch Apple Pie, Raspberry Almond Pie, and finally Peanut Butter Murder Pie. The author was just kidding about that last one unless, as she noted, you feed it to someone with food allergies.

A GOOD DAY TO PIE (2023) was the sequel. Daisy was competing in a television food channel bake-off, an elimination event that paid \$100,000 to the last baker standing. She recognized one of the judges, Bryan Miller, a restaurant owner who was a womanizer, wife-beater, and pimp.

The first round in the bake-off was black-and-white cookies. Daisy privately agreed that Miller was a fair judge. She had to bottle up the fact that his wife had contracted with her for a murder pie. The second round required the contestants to produce cookies with at least three different flavours.

Surprisingly the first victim wasn't Miller but one of the competitors, Chloe Moore, who had her head bashed in. After four or five more days in the bake-off (I lost track; it was the night of Chocolate Day), Miller finally departed this world before time. Not from a murder pie, which hadn't yet been delivered.

The police were snooping around asking questions, but after a short delay the filming resumed. The next round was breakfast bagels in the morning and turnovers in the afternoon. Daisy tried to do some Marpleing between her baking.

She was perturbed because a couple of other people knew what her real business was, making pie deliveries that much more dangerous. In the final confrontation the murderer was caught and blabbed all on camera. He killed Chloe for romantic reasons. Miller found out and tried to blackmail him.

The recipes appendix was for basic items, which could then be frosted or topped as desired. These were for cookies, bread, and doughnuts, with suggestions for coatings or fillings.



*I collect interesting postmarks.*

## FREE STUFF ONLINE

I provide sources for the scientific pdfs and mp3s reviewed in this zine. Here is a summary of some good resources, all of which are free.

In particular, the “Seen In The Literature” column cites only peer-reviewed papers. For topics such as climate change or social media effects, more people should be reading these papers instead of blogs where commentators confuse their opinions as being facts.

For scientific papers for which free pdfs are available, the easiest method is to Google either the title of the paper or its digital object identifier, the phrase beginning with doi.org.

Many papers are behind a paywall, so unless you have access to a university library computer, you can only get the abstract. However, the abstract is often enough to understand the gist of the article.

Every scientific periodical has free email notifications of each new issue’s table of contents. I subscribe to dozens of notification services, in case you were wondering how I manage to keep up with the literature.

For zines, [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com) provides current pdf zines as well as some older ones. A club called Fanac at [www.fanac.org](http://www.fanac.org) does the reverse; they provide thousands of old zines from the 1930s to date, with a few current zines. Both sites have a free email notification service you can subscribe to.

The Old Time Radio Researchers have thousands of old-time radio shows (1930s to 1950s) covering all the genres, such as comedy, science fiction, fantasy, and mystery. Visit [www.otrr.org/OTRRLibrary](http://www.otrr.org/OTRRLibrary).

They also publish a free bulletin OLD RADIO TIMES, available at [www.otrr.org/?c=times](http://www.otrr.org/?c=times), with an email notification service. Don’t pay money for audio books and listen to a droning voice when you can listen for free to full-cast shows such as Jack Benny or Inner Sanctum from the OTRR.

For pulp fiction magazines from all genres, visit [www.archive.org/details/pulpmagazinearchive?&sort=-downloads&page=2](http://www.archive.org/details/pulpmagazinearchive?&sort=-downloads&page=2)  
Books in the public domain are free from <https://gutenberg.org>

## WORLD WIDE PARTY ON JUNE 21

Founded by Benoit Girard (Quebec) and Franz Miklis (Austria) in 1994, the World Wide Party is held on June 21st every year. 2024 will be the 31st year of the WWP. Mark your calendars now!

At 21h00 local time, everyone is invited to raise a glass and toast fellow members of zinedom around the world. It is important to have it exactly at 21h00 your time. The idea is to get a wave of fellowship circling the planet. Rescheduling it to a club meeting or more convenient time negates the idea of a wave of celebration by SF fans and zinesters circling the globe.

At 21h00, face to the east and salute those who have already celebrated. Then face north, then south, and toast those in your time zone who are celebrating as you do. Finally, face west and raise a glass to those who will celebrate WWP in the next hour.

Raise a glass, publish a one-shot zine, have a party, or do a mail art project for the WWP. Let me know how you celebrated the day.

## SEEN IN THE LITERATURE

### Stars.

Andales, H.D., et al (2024) **The oldest stars with low neutron-capture element abundances and origins in ancient dwarf galaxies.** MONTHLY NOTICES OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY 530:/doi.org/10.1093/mnras/stae670 (available as a free pdf)

[Our galaxy, the Milky Way, formed in the early stages of the universe, then grew by merging with other galaxies. The older a star is, the less metal it has.]

Authors’ abstract: *We present a detailed chemical abundance and kinematic analysis of six extremely metal-poor halo stars with very low neutron-capture abundances ([Sr/H] and [Ba/H]) based on high-resolution Magellan/MIKE spectra.*

*Three of our stars have [Sr/Ba] and [Sr/H] ratios that resemble those of metal-poor stars in ultra-faint dwarf galaxies (UFDs). Since early UFDs may be the building blocks of the Milky Way, extremely metal-poor halo stars with low, UFD-like Sr and Ba abundances may thus be ancient stars from the earliest small galactic systems that were accreted by the proto-Milky Way.*

*We label these objects as Small Accreted Stellar System (SASS) stars, and we find an additional 61 similar ones in the literature. A kinematic analysis of our sample and literature stars reveals them to be fast-moving halo objects, all with retrograde motion, indicating an accretion origin.*

*Because SASS stars are much brighter than typical UFD stars, identifying them offers promising ways towards detailed studies of early star formation environments.*

*From the chemical abundances of SASS stars, it appears that the earliest accreted systems were likely enriched by a few supernovae whose light element yields varied from system to system.*

*Neutron-capture elements were sparsely produced and/or diluted, with  $r$ -process nucleosynthesis playing a role. These insights offer a glimpse into the early formation of the Galaxy.*

*Using neutron-capture elements as a distinguishing criterion for early formation, we have access to a unique metal-poor population that consists of the oldest stars in the universe.*

## **Alien Life.**

Suazo, M., et al (2024) **Project Hephaistos –II. Dyson sphere candidates from Gaia DR3, 2MASS, and WISE.** MONTHLY NOTICES OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY 531:doi.org/10.1093/mnras/stae1186 (available as a free pdf)

*Authors' abstract: The search for extraterrestrial intelligence is currently being pursued using multiple techniques and in different wavelength bands.*

*Dyson spheres, megastructures that could be constructed by advanced civilizations to harness the radiation energy of their host stars, represent a*

*potential technosignature, that in principle may be hiding in public data already collected as part of large astronomical surveys.*

*In this study, we present a comprehensive search for partial Dyson spheres by analysing optical and infrared observations from Gaia, 2MASS, and WISE. We develop a pipeline that employs multiple filters to identify potential candidates and reject interlopers in a sample of five million objects, which incorporates a convolutional neural network to help identify confusion in WISE data.*

*Finally, the pipeline identifies seven candidates deserving of further analysis. All of these objects are M-dwarfs, for which astrophysical phenomena cannot easily account for the observed infrared excess emission.*

## **Planets.**

Cuzzi, J.N., et al (2024) **Saturn's F ring is intermittently shepherded by Prometheus.** SCIENCE ADVANCES 10:doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adl6601 (available as a free pdf)

*Authors' abstract: One of the stranger planetary rings is Saturn's narrow, clumpy F ring, lying just outside the main rings, in a region disturbed by chaotic orbital dynamics.*

*We show that the F ring has a stable "true core" that dominates its mass and is confined into discontinuous short arcs of particles larger than a few millimeters in radius. The more obvious micron-size particles seen in images, outlining and obscuring the true core, contribute only a small fraction of its mass.*

*We found that these arcs of large particles orbit Saturn in a specific corotational resonance with the nearby 100-kilometer diameter ringmoon Prometheus, which stabilizes the F ring material and allows it to persist within the disturbed region for decades or longer.*

*Toward the end of the observing period, a small chaotic glitch in the orbit of Prometheus temporarily disrupted the confinement, but the arcs seem to be able to adapt.*



## Satellites.

Minetti, A.E., et al (2024) **Horizontal running inside circular walls of Moon settlements: a comprehensive countermeasure for low-gravity deconditioning?** ROYAL SOCIETY OPEN SCIENCE 11:doi.org/10.1098/rsos.231906

Authors' abstract: *Long-lasting exposure to low gravity, such as in lunar settlements planned by the ongoing Artemis Program, elicits muscle hypotrophy, bone demineralization, cardio-respiratory and neuro-control deconditioning, against which optimal countermeasures are still to be designed.*

*Rather than training selected muscle groups only, 'whole-body' activities such as locomotion seem better candidates, but at Moon gravity both 'pendular' walking and bouncing gaits like running exhibit abnormal dynamics at faster speeds.*

*We theoretically and experimentally show that much greater self-generated artificial gravities can be experienced on the Moon by running horizontally inside a static 4.7 metre radius cylinder (motorcyclists' 'Wall of Death' of amusement parks) at speeds preventing downward skidding.*



*To emulate lunar gravity, 83% of body weight was unloaded by pre-tensed (36 metre) bungee jumping bands. Participants unprecedentedly maintained horizontal fast running for a few circular laps, with intense metabolism and peak forces during foot contact, inferred by motion analysis, of 2 to 3 Earth body weight, high enough to prevent bone calcium resorption.*

*A training regime of a few laps a day promises to be a viable countermeasure for astronauts to quickly combat whole-body deconditioning, for further missions and home return.*

[Image is from this paper.]

## Geology.

Krijgsman, W., et al. (2024) **Causes and consequences of the Messinian salinity crisis.** NATURE REVIEWS EARTH AND ENVIRONMENT 5:doi.org/10.1038/s43017-024-00533-1

[Africa is slowly drifting north-northeast against Eurasia. About 6 megayears ago it closed off the Strait of Gibraltar. The Mediterranean Sea dried up, producing kilometres-thick salt deposits at the bottom of a huge torrid canyon. This period is known as the Messinian salinity crisis. About 5.3 megayears ago, erosion cut through the land where the Strait now is, allowing the Atlantic Ocean to flood the Mediterranean.]

Authors' abstract: *Salt giants are massive salt deposits (hundreds of metres thick) that form during the evaporation of semi-enclosed seas. The drivers of salt giant formation and their feedbacks on global and regional environmental change remain debated.*

*In this review, we summarize the boundary conditions, causes and consequences of the Mediterranean Messinian salinity crisis (5.97 to 5.33 million years ago). Salt giant formation is more complex than the simple evaporation of an enclosed sea.*

*Instead, the tectonic setting of an evaporative basin largely determines the timing and mode of salt formation, with superimposed impacts of orbital-scale climate and sea-level fluctuations.*

*These drivers triggered precipitation of carbonates, gypsum, halite and bittern salts, with well-defined orbital cyclicities in carbonate and gypsum phases. Removal of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  during salt giant deposition decouples the oceanic  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  sinks, causing reduced  $\text{CaCO}_3$  burial and, consequently, increased ocean pH, lower atmospheric partial pressure of  $\text{CO}_2$ , and global cooling.*

*Salt giants, which reflect a net evaporite-ion extraction of ~7 to 10% from oceans and persist over million-year timescales, could therefore be an important climate driver but are currently underconsidered in long-term carbon cycle models.*

## **Paleobiology.**

Luo, C., et al (2024) **Exceptional preservation of a marine tapeworm tentacle in Cretaceous amber.** GEOLOGY 52:/doi.org/10.1130/G52071.1 (available as a free pdf)

Authors' abstract: *Parasites are ubiquitous in extant ecosystems but rarely preserved in the geological record, especially parasitic worms (helminths).*

*One such group is Cestoda (tapeworms), a specialized endoparasitic group of platyhelminths (flatworms). They have a complex lifecycle with at least two hosts, infecting all major groups of vertebrates.*

*However, their fossil record is extremely sparse due to their soft tissue and concealed habitats, with the only widely accepted example before the Quaternary being eggs discovered in a shark coprolite from the Permian.*

*The lack of body fossils greatly hampers our understanding of their early evolution. We report a slender, armed fossil from mid-Cretaceous Kachin (Myanmar) amber (ca. 99 megayears old).*

*This fossil displays unique external (armature pattern) and internal (partially invaginated tentacle and rootless hooks) features that are most consistent with the tentacles of extant trypanorhynch tapeworms that parasitize marine elasmobranchs (mainly sharks and rays).*

*Our study thus probably provides not only the first partial body fossil of a tapeworm, but also arguably the most convincing body fossil of a flatworm. In*

*addition, the exquisite invaginated tentacle inside the fossil highlights that amber can preserve the internal structure of helminths.*

*Remarkably, nearly all extant trypanorhynchs are endoparasites of marine elasmobranchs, thus our study provides an exceptional example of a marine endoparasite trapped in terrestrial amber.*

## **Dinosaurs.**

Chiarenza, A.A., et al (2024) **Early Jurassic origin of avian endothermy and thermophysiological diversity in dinosaurs.** CURRENT BIOLOGY 34:doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2024.04.051 (available as a free pdf)

Authors' abstract: *A fundamental question in dinosaur evolution is how they adapted to long-term climatic shifts during the Mesozoic and when they developed environmentally independent, avian-style acclimatization, becoming endothermic.*

*The ability of warm-blooded dinosaurs to flourish in harsher environments, including cold, high-latitude regions, raises intriguing questions about the origins of key innovations shared with modern birds, indicating that the development of homeothermy (keeping constant body temperature) and endothermy (generating body heat) played a crucial role in their ecological diversification.*

*Despite substantial evidence across scientific disciplines, a consensus on dinosaur thermophysiology remains elusive.*

*Differential thermophysiological strategies among terrestrial tetrapods allow endotherms (birds and mammals) to expand their latitudinal range (from the tropics to polar regions), owing to their reduced reliance on environmental temperature.*

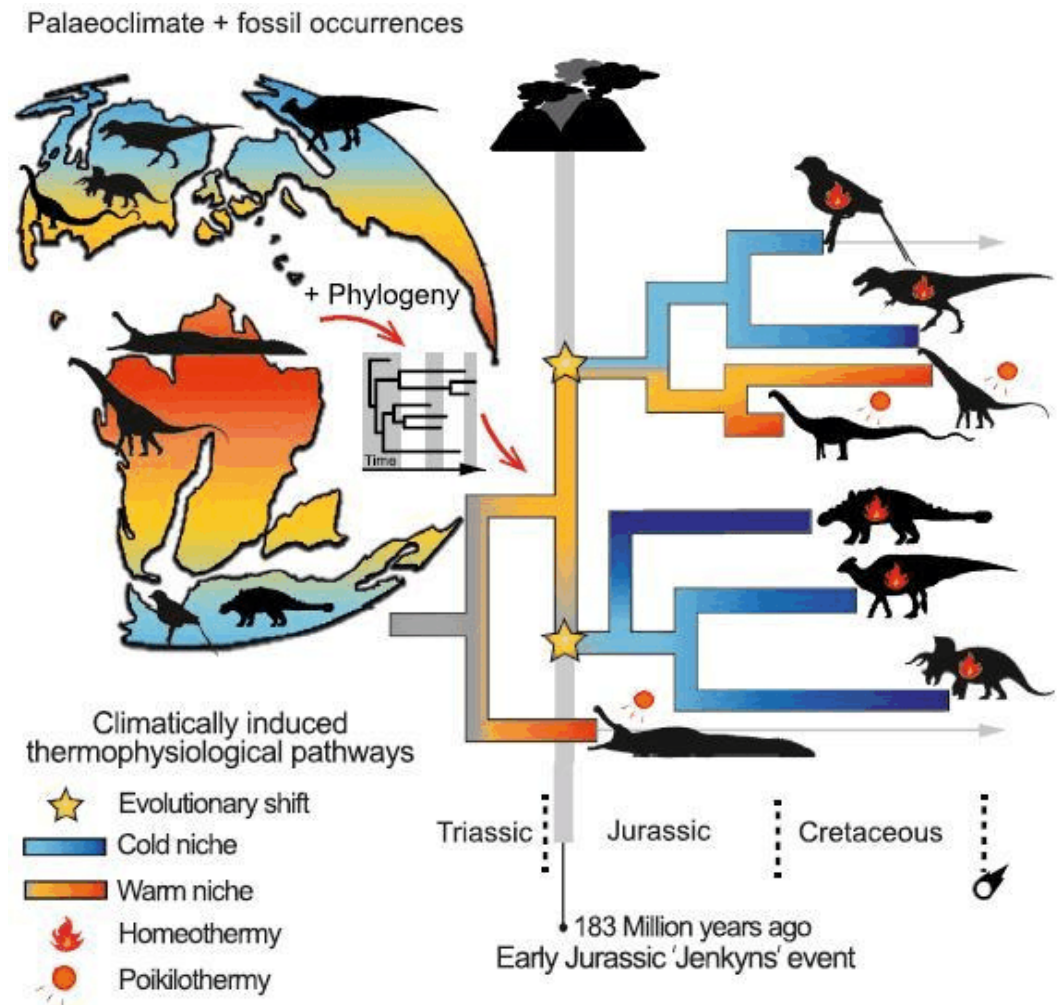
*By contrast, most reptilian lineages (squamates, turtles, and crocodylians) and amphibians are predominantly constrained by temperature in regions closer to the tropics. Determining when this macroecological pattern emerged in the avian lineage relies heavily on identifying the origin of these key physiological traits.*

Combining fossils with macroevolutionary and palaeoclimatic models, we unveil distinct evolutionary pathways in the main dinosaur lineages. Ornithischians and theropods diversified across broader climatic landscapes, trending toward cooler niches.

An Early Jurassic shift to colder climates in Theropoda suggests an early adoption of endothermy.

Conversely, sauropodomorphs exhibited prolonged climatic conservatism associated with higher thermal conditions, emphasizing temperature, rather than plant productivity, as the primary driver of this pattern, suggesting poikilothermy with a stronger dependence on higher temperatures in sauropods.

[Images are from this paper.]



**Botany.**

Saez, C., and I. Pagan (2024) **Plant viruses traveling without passport.** PLOS BIOLOGY 22:doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3002626 (available as a free pdf)

[Plants have thick rigid cell walls, so viruses can't simply float through the intercellular spaces as they do with animals and infect cells along the way. Once they penetrate a plant cell by an insect bite or surface wound, they have to move from one cell to another by microscopic tubes called plasmodesmata.]

Authors' extracts: *Unlike animal viruses, which evolved receptor-mediated mechanisms to facilitate exploiting the extracellular environment for within-host dissemination, plant viruses are restricted to the intracellular compartment (symplast).*

*Thus, cell-to-cell movement occurs through symplastic channels (plasmodesmata), which transverse the plant cell walls and connect adjacent cells.*

*The plasmodesmata are not cell-to-cell highways. Although they are permeable for small molecules, there is a size exclusion limit that precludes free passage of larger molecules such as virus particles.*

*In these cases, active transport mechanisms are required, and plant virus genomes encode movement proteins (MPs) that act as "passports" by increasing the size exclusion limit and mediating virus passage across plasmodesmata.*

*This way, viruses reach the plant vasculature, but they still need to transit through it to colonize other parts of the plant.*

*For that, plant viruses are mainly transported via phloem, the living tissue in vascular plants that transports the soluble organic compounds made during photosynthesis, a process in which MPs are also very important.*

*Thus, MPs play crucial roles in short- and long-distance dissemination of plant viruses within the host, and it has been long accepted that MPs are their signature proteins.*



*Two plant viruses (citrus yellow vein associated virus 1 and 2: CY1 and CY2) systemically colonize their host without needing an MP, which may represent a game-changer in the current view of how these pathogens move within their hosts and achieve successful infections.*

## **Environmental Science.**

Weis, J., et al (2024) **One-third of Southern Ocean productivity is supported by dust deposition.** NATURE 629:doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-07366-4 (available as a free pdf)

*Authors' abstract: Natural iron fertilization of the Southern Ocean by windblown dust has been suggested to enhance biological productivity and modulate the climate. Yet, this process has never been quantified across the Southern Ocean and at annual timescales.*

*Here we combined 11 years of nitrate observations from autonomous biogeochemical ocean profiling floats with a Southern Hemisphere dust simulation to empirically derive the relationship between dust-iron deposition and annual net community production (ANCP) in the iron-limited Southern Ocean.*

*Using this relationship, we determined the biological response to dust-iron in the pelagic perennially ice-free Southern Ocean at present and during the last glacial maximum (LGM). We estimate that dust-iron now supports  $33\% \pm 15\%$  of Southern Ocean ANCP.*

*During the LGM, when dust deposition was 5 to 40-fold higher than today, the contribution of dust to Southern Ocean ANCP was much greater, estimated at  $64\% \pm 13\%$ .*

*We provide quantitative evidence of basin-wide dust-iron fertilization of the Southern Ocean and the potential magnitude of its impact on glacial-interglacial timescales, supporting the idea of the important role of dust in the global carbon cycle and climate.*

*Photosynthesizing primary producers (phytoplankton) inhabiting the sunlit ocean surface fix dissolved inorganic carbon and other nutrients, support the base of the marine food web and facilitate carbon export to depth.*

*This process, one of the factors regulating atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations and therefore climate, is termed the biological carbon pump.*

*Primary productivity in the Southern Ocean is seasonally limited by light and the micronutrient iron. Consequently, the Southern Ocean's biological carbon pump does not operate at its maximum efficiency.*

*Changes in the supply of iron to the Southern Ocean, either through natural variability or deliberate human intervention, therefore have the potential to impact atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. Thus, to understand the role of the Southern Ocean in the global carbon cycle it is critical to investigate the response of its ecosystems to iron addition.*

*Windblown mineral dust is enriched in iron, allowing it to relieve iron stress in the Southern Ocean and thereby stimulate the biological carbon pump and export production.*

*The iron hypothesis posits that increased dust fluxes to the Southern Ocean during glacial periods led to lower atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> through fertilization of Southern Ocean productivity.*

## **Human Prehistory.**

Ghoneim, E., et al (2024) **The Egyptian pyramid chain was built along the now abandoned Ahramat Nile Branch.** COMMUNICATIONS EARTH AND ENVIRONMENT 5:doi.org/10.1038/s43247-024-01379-7 (available as a free pdf)

*Authors' abstract: The largest pyramid field in Egypt is clustered along a narrow desert strip, yet no convincing explanation as to why these pyramids are concentrated in this specific locality has been given so far.*

*Here we use radar satellite imagery, in conjunction with geophysical data and deep soil coring, to investigate the subsurface structure and sedimentology in the Nile Valley next to these pyramids.*

*We identify segments of a major extinct Nile branch, which we name The Ahramat Branch, running at the foothills of the Western Desert Plateau, where the majority of the pyramids lie.*



Many of the pyramids, dating to the Old and Middle Kingdoms, have causeways that lead to the branch and terminate with Valley Temples which may have acted as river harbors along it in the past.

We suggest that The Ahramat Branch played a role in the monuments' construction and that it was simultaneously active and used as a transportation waterway for workmen and building materials to the pyramids' sites.

[Image is from this paper.]

### Technology.

Berdiev, A.N., et al (2024) **Global cryptocurrency use, corruption, and the shadow economy: New insights into the underlying linkages.** AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIOLOGY 83:doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12566

Authors' abstract: *The recent prevalence of digital currencies has challenged policymakers as they try to control the supply of money and rein in clandestine activities. Corruption and shadow economy are widely prevalent illegal/unobserved activities that have been hard to eliminate worldwide.*

*These longstanding and entrenched activities have possibly found a new avenue to thrive and evade detection/punishment. So disentangling the nexus between corruption, shadow economy, and digital currencies is important.*

*Using recent cross-country data, this paper analyzes the interrelationships between corruption, shadow economy, and cryptocurrencies.*

*We argue that a large underground sector in a nation provides a mechanism through which corrupt government officials use cryptocurrencies to conceal their unauthorized earnings.*



*Employing formal mediation analysis, our results show that the positive nexus between corruption and cryptocurrency adoption is mediated by the shadow sector. Quantitatively speaking, three-fourths of the correlation between corruption and cryptocurrency usage is mediated by the shadow economy.*

*The primary implication of our findings is that effective monitoring of cryptocurrencies should pay attention to policies to control both corruption and the shadow economy.*

Williams-Ceci, S., et al (2024) **Misinformation does not reduce trust in accurate search results, but warning banners may backfire.** SCIENTIFIC REPORTS 14:doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-61645-8 (available as a free pdf)

Authors' abstract: *People rely on search engines for information in critical contexts, such as public health emergencies, but what makes people trust some search results more than others? Can search engines influence people's levels of trust by controlling how information is presented? And, how does the presence of misinformation influence people's trust?*

*Research has identified both rank and the presence of misinformation as factors impacting people's search behavior. Here, we extend these findings by measuring the effects of these factors, as well as misinformation warning banners, on the perceived trustworthiness of individual search results.*

*We conducted three online experiments (N = 3,196) using COVID-19-related queries, and found that although higher-ranked results are clicked more often, they are not more trusted.*

*We also showed that misinformation does not damage trust in accurate results displayed below it. In contrast, while a warning about unreliable sources might decrease trust in misinformation, it significantly decreases trust in accurate information.*

*This research alleviates some concerns about how people evaluate the credibility of information they find online, while revealing a potential backfire effect of one misinformation-prevention approach; namely, that banner warnings about source unreliability could lead to unexpected and nonoptimal outcomes in which people trust accurate information less.*

**SPACE FILLER (PARDON THE PUN)**

photo by Dale Speirs

I don't ordinarily eat Oreo cookies but when Safeway had a sale on these I bought a package. They tasted like ordinary Oreos despite the red and blue fillings.

