

# THE KNARLEY

## KNEWS #141



*The Knarley Knews* -- Issue 141  
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1. All contributions may include a pseudonym (e.g. Knarley, Sydrous, Shit-for-Brains) at the contributor's whim.
2. To get this fanzine you are required semi-yearly to initiate contact with the editors (black-holish behavior is not rewarded). This could be a postcard, phone call, your fanzine, or contribution of your choice. The editors, of course, prefer a contribution so they don't have to write so much. This notwithstanding, you may purchase copies for \$3.00 each.
3. Advertising is free provided that the ads are of interest to the editors and that it is for a non-profit organization.
4. It is the editors' policy not to unduly censor or restrict the ideals of free speech. (We like a good argument as much as the next guy.) However, we reserve the right to make minor content and format changes to fit your piece in or to add appropriately denoted editorial comments.
5. Contributions are currently acceptable using the following computer formats.  
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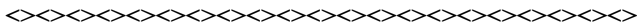
**Next Issue Deadline:** February 10, 2012

# Editorial

(In which Knarley gets to spume!)

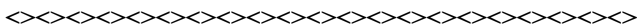
I am saddened to report the death of long-time fanzine fan Bob Sabella. He was the longtime editor of *Visions of Paradise*. He was also a high school math teacher who was well loved by his students. He retired about a year ago to pursue his many hobbies and was taken from us by a brain tumor earlier this month.

I will miss his fine fanzines, hearing about his life and family, and his interesting reviews of science fiction and other literature. In memoriam, this issue is dedicated to his memory.

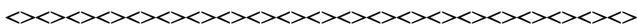


We are firmly in the grip of the holiday season and, as usual, I am appalled by the rampant change in behavior that is made abundantly clear by the buying frenzy. Everyone seems to remember their willingness to give to others, but only during December. Whatever happened to largess the rest of the year? I see this in charities that spring up to help needy families with Christmas purchases that are relatively quiet or even silent the rest of the year. It is as if the families are only needy in December. Not that helping in December is a bad thing, I just wish this was something that happened more routinely during the rest of the year. There are, of course, other charities that are active all year, but I see a subtle hypocrisy in all this that adds to my distaste for the holiday season.

Some of you may think of me as a bit of a scrooge about all of this, and you are probably right. I just think that we can do better to show charity and the spirit of giving throughout the year rather than in one short annual frenzy.



As is typical, work has slowed down at the end of the year. Rather than go into work and try to find things to do, I have moved my active files to my home office and have been working in short bursts there. This has allowed me to do a few nagging projects around the house and spend more time with the family. Overall, this has been the best work year for me with a healthy number of billable hours and added training and responsibility.



This issue is delayed somewhat. I had intended to get it out at the end of November, but mother nature intervened. For those of you who follow the weather, you know that California had a major wind storm. As a result we were without power for about six days. We have a backup generator, but it isn't ideal and needs to be refueled every three-to-four hours. As a result of this and the outage, it makes it harder to get everyday things done, much less get to side projects like a fanzine. The next week I was in Atlanta for training, so I decided to push the issue back until later in December.

An added factor in pushing the issue back was our intention to get a new laptop – not for primary use by any children. In fact, I am typing this editorial on the new machine now. It is certainly a vast improvement on the ancient laptop I have been using for preliminary issue preparation. I still port the documents to the somewhat aged Mac for final layout and printing, but it certainly is nice not to have to wait a minute or two for programs to load or to switch between the e-mail and word processing programs. I am also trying out Open Office for now as I decide whether to fork over for the cost of Microsoft Office. So far it appears to be doing what I need it to do. I'll keep you up to date as I work with it more.



The only other major development is we have taken the preliminary steps to get a solar system installed. We are going with Sun Power panels and should be able to generate about 80% of our electricity needs. There is no storage system so we will be selling back power during the day and buying power at night. When PG&E goes to a time of use system, our power bill should be about \$0. We currently have a copy of the contract in front of us, but are awaiting some feedback as to whether the panels can be installed on our existing roof. We have pretty good exposure to the south and will only have to trim back two trees. If all goes according to plan, we should have the system in place sometime in February.

The only drawback to the solar system is that it won't solve the power outage problems. In order to safeguard the system and utility personnel, the solar system disconnects itself when the main power goes out. This makes sense, but is frustrating as we would have available power during daylight hours while PG&E is out, but can't use it. It seems to me that it shouldn't be too hard to simply install an interrupter that would disconnect only from the power lines rather than from the house as well.



Here's to an improved 2012, even if we will have to put up with a full year of political propaganda as we go into the national election cycle. I am skeptical that it will improve things as both parties seem to be on a course of continued deadlock. I had seen it suggested that the Republicans will do anything to defeat Obama – including tanking the economy. I see this as a risky strategy, because if the public perceives this to be the case, it is likely to backfire. The cynic in me thinks that it will continue to be business as usual in Washington, and we can just expect more of the same, no matter who gets elected from either party.



Until next issue...

# Sue's Sites: Once Upon a Fairy Tale

## Adventure by Disney

By Sue Welch

"Mom, Sandy and I are taking the girls to Germany on a Disney Adventure and we are wondering if you would like to come with us?" asked Henry's brother, Charles. "Mom, are you there?" There is silence as I try to process this information. Me the one who said I would never ever step foot in Germany; I might change my mind if someone offered me a free trip but wait a second I believe that I have just been offered a free trip. "Of course, I would love to go." "There a catch though," said Charles, "the girls are going to sleep in your room."

So off we go with a two day jet lag stopover in London to Heidelberg, located near Lufthansa's hub city of Frankfurt. Heidelberg today has a population of 140,000. One in five of its residents attends the University of Heidelberg founded in 1386, and rides a bicycle at breakneck speed. Heidelberg Castle, begun by Prince Elector Reprecht III as a royal residence in 1398, stands on a hill overlooking the River Neckar. The castle's washer woman serves as our guide and offers much gossip about the goings on. Heidelberg's old town consists of a narrow mile- long shopping pedestrian street along the river, for those who are hungry or in need of souvenirs. A medieval bridge gate, originally part of the town wall, sits at the entrance to the old stone bridge (1786) crossing the river. We spend a relaxing hour enjoying snacks while traveling on a tourist boat on the river.

A short coach ride the next morning drops us in Alsfeld, a medieval town, to meet the Brothers Grimm, who are overflowing with stories for us. Plaques on houses here date as early as the 1500s. I ask about foundations for these large three story buildings as well as the church tower. The Grimms tell us the stones were merely laid on the dirt and piled up high. We see a wolf run through the village and the children of our tour run to catch him but not fast enough as he escapes. Later we see Little Red Riding Hood taking a basket of food to her grandma. A town resident captures the wolf, after which we are treated to a picnic lunch at grandma's house. There are many such medieval towns throughout Germany; they are alive and serve as home (cheaper housing) to many who work in the big cities. Germany has an excellent rail system complete with internet access so the 1-2 hour commute to work is not wasted time.

That night we have rooms in Waldeck Castle, a partially restored castle, sitting 400 feet above Lake Edersee. We bike ride, swim and remember how to do archery. We sit outside on the terrace for a delicious dinner. The rooms are large and modern, only lacking in ventilation/ac; today it is hot and hotter in the room. I move my bed under the window.

We first see Lowenburg Castle or Castle of the Lion from afar at the top of a 300 feet hill. The walk down is through



beautifully landscaped gardens. It was conceived as a romantic medieval castle ruin, a fantasy of Landgrave Wilhelm IX but gained its notoriety by being the first neo-gothic structure in Germany. It was bombed in WWII and is undergoing extensive repairs. Near the castle we meet a beautiful princess who hugs the children.

On to Rothenburg, considered the epitome of the German town; it sits on a plateau overlooking the Tauber River, a beautiful medieval walled town with fertile farm land just outside of its gates. During WWII it was heavily fortified against the Allies who none the less bombed it; the German commander quickly surrendered to avoid further damage. Funds came from all over the world for its restoration; on the city wall stones are inscribed with the names of those who contributed. It is totally charming with its medieval buildings and shops. A master baker gives us a lesson in pretzel making. It was here in the Eisenhut Hotel that I fell in love with the painted wooden horse; very priceless, at least 300 years old and definitely not for sale. The night watchman lets us accompany him on his rounds at dusk to see that the streets are clear of humans, a concept not understood by the children of our group.

The highlight of the trip is our visit to the Steiff Bear Museum. The place is full of stuffed animals. And for a price they can come and live in your house. The company's founder Margaret Steiff was the inventor of the teddy bear. A seamstress in a wheelchair due to polio as a baby, she made animals as a hobby and then for money. She was progressive in her policies such as floor to ceiling windows and hiring of women. The museum is hands on and encourages climbing and hugging. The exit is through a two story slide into their sales room; fortunately there is an outlet shop for discontin-

ued merchandise around the corner; even so my daughter-in-law is reluctant to allow her baby to play with the colorful ball I bought for him due to its cost (\$24.85 euros).

Neuschwanstein Castle, the home of Ludwig II, known as the Fairytale King. Ludwig became King of Bavaria in 1864. In 1869 he began the construction of the palace as a retreat for himself and as homage to the composer, Richard Wagner. The 19th-century Romanesque Revival palace sits on a rugged hill above the village of Hohenschwangau in southwestern Bavaria, across the river from Austria. Ludwig had severe issues with his parents; he became obese as well as a recluse. The day before his death in 1884, he was deposed on grounds of mental illness (no medical examination was performed) and died under mysterious circumstances. Most of the castle remains unfinished as of today. Disney was awe struck by this castle; it was the inspiration for Disneyland's Sleeping Beauty Castle and has appeared prominently in several Disney movies.

The trip finishes with a tour of Munich. For our farewell dinner we gather at Hoffbrauhaus, one of the oldest beer halls in Germany; we dine on typical German fare (and plenty of beer) with a rousing accordionist and lots of German dancing.

I found Germany a very modern country: things work and run on time; no pot holes on their roads; no traffic jams; friendly people; and delicious food. Our two guides, Nadine from Berlin and Daniel from Connecticut, were organized, knowledgeable and fun. Disney offered an excellent trip for families with children.

P.S. Recently I have taken on the responsibility of being the keeper of the Fechheimer family genealogy which my beloved Uncle Dick spent years and years putting together without a computer and without a cell phone with free worldwide phone calls. Research was done from microfilm and contacting family members by mail and information was typed (more information required a retyping). I am putting Dick's work into Family Tree Maker and doing research through ancestry.com and other sites as well as information from distant family members. This story is about Meyer, son of Samuel, who took the name of Fechheimer when the people of Germany (July 1787) were required to take last names. He had two wives and 14 children (12 sons) most of whom immigrated to Cincinnati, Ohio before spreading out through the United States. I have developed a strong desire to see these little medieval towns of Bavaria where they lived. Hopefully there will be another trip to Germany in the near future.

## Welcome Aboard

by Gene Stewart

Cruise ships and closed luxury resorts of the Club Med model offer the illusion of travel without exposure to other cultures. Insulated vacations for bigots? Safe zones for uneducated, uninterested human hamsters? Or is it more about scarfing every penny for the corporation and not letting profit escape into the host economy?

Science fiction as a genre works on the same model.

Choosing a book the cover of which proclaims it to be science fiction ensures the reader an experience of a certain kind. They'll know from the first page that it's science fiction. They'll be kept supplied with ideas and action. Embedded lectures will be fascinatingly scientific. Plausible will be a watchword for every event, opinion, or speculation.

Best of all, human foibles, other than glaring character flaws necessary for plot twists, will be emphasized by their absence. There will be no ambiguity or irony. The strong reliable captain really is strong and reliable. What is said is meant literally. They say what they mean and we know why they do everything; motives are kept clear as empty space.

No messy human stuff, in short, will stay this story's courier from the swift completion of its plot points.

Science fiction is the literature of ideas, we are told. Repeatedly. Science fiction fosters a sense of wonder about such things as the scale of the universe, the vast sweep of human ambition, and technology's potential to transform everything. "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," Sir Arthur C. C. Clarke told us in *Profiles of the Future*, 1961. Magic is full of a sense of wonder. Big ideas and the scope of far-flung adventures in futures where technology can do for us what wishful illusionists could only dream of, that is science fiction.

Science fiction is for ten year old boys, someone once observed. He shall remain unnamed to protect him from the fen with Dixie cups of cold vomit who may wish to throw it on him. Despite anonymity, however, this observer of science fiction had a telling point. Boys of that age are interested in precisely the mix of things comprising science fiction. They are also uninterested in girly crap like relationships, how people get along together, and all that touchy-feely emo stuff. Cooties repel them.

This harsh observation is made in reference to the original readership for science fiction, which were indeed ten year old boys and engineer types with arrested development. Many will hasten to point out that science fiction has moved on, grown up, and learned to embrace almost all literary traits

from a wider world. They'll point to the New Age, which transformed the Golden Age of Science Fiction by infusing arts and humanities into the breadboard circuitry and Estes catalog trope and topos. They'll congratulate themselves with swelled chests and speak of science fiction being as good as any other genre and better than most, hastening to add that literary is just another genre, so take that, academic snobs.

Examples can be found to prove any point. Yes, there are literate genre tales and moronic literary crimes. Yes, there are works that span the range and exceed all limits, even in the science fiction idiom, even as there are fumbling pilferage of science fiction's refined notions by clumsy literati desperate to seem bright even as their inspiration and ability wanes.

A good story well told is a writer's goal and a reader's joy, and good writing does not depend upon idiom, genre, or form.

And yet.

And yet, science fiction in aggregate tends to be insular. It resists change, generally speaking. Space opera routinely dominates awards, notable exceptions aside. In recent years, juvenile has become a term that seems to add cachet to a science fiction story's chances at winning an award or being liked, bought, read, and discussed by the science fiction readers. Does this mean they seek to rediscover the frisson of novelty experienced when they were kids first finding science fiction? Are they sense of wonder junkies flailing for a fix?

Some dismiss such questions, saying they are outdated. Science fiction has grown up, they assert. It embraces all styles, approaches, and qualities of writing in the wider sense, they claim.

Countering these objections requires an explanation for why, then, science fiction continues to be recognized as distinct from other genres. Despite expansion and undeniable growth, science fiction has retained hull integrity.

Which returns us to the initial image of cruise ships and closed luxury vacation resorts. There are in fact things science fiction does differently. Other genres do not focus on technology, for example. In an April 1975 essay for *Natural Science*, Isaac Asimov wrote, "Science fiction can be defined as that branch of literature which deals with the reaction of human beings to changes in science and technology."

Some say science fiction predicts the future. It is more accurate to say it explores potential futures, some more realistic than others, some more solidly rooted in known science than others, but all considered possible. Thus came the proposed new appellation, speculative fiction. This came in with the New Wave writers, who had studied humanities perhaps more than science, and who wanted to free themselves from the picayune reliance on straight extrapolation from some science nugget. Yes, science fiction speculates, sometimes from informed perspective, other times more like a grizzled geezer panning for gold in random streams.

Editor, writer, and bearded prospector Damon Knight defined science fiction as what ever he pointed at when he said science fiction. His finger has written and, having written, has moved on, so we'll have to rely on our own finger-pointing now, each of us. Name calling is popular, too; feel free to join in.

Case in point, Margaret Atwood. She hit it big with *The Handmaid's Tale*, a grim dystopia featuring harsh ideological rule in a North American society gone evangelical Christian with a Taliban-like intensity. Terrifying, harrowing, and all-too-feasible – listen to the Dominionist-dominated GOP politicians if you doubt this feasibility – this extrapolation of a bible thumper's wet dream was pure If This Goes On and What If.

It won literary accolades as well as selling well, and Atwood, asked about science fiction, made the statement the science fiction guardians of ideological purity took offense at. They called her names ranging from Clueless and Ignorant to A Literary Snob, Thief, and worse.

Seems only science fiction writers doing it "properly" are allowed to "use science fiction's ideas" and when Perceived Others do it, well, it's an affront, and outrage, and a sacrilege. Insularity was threatened by such a breach in science fiction's hull.

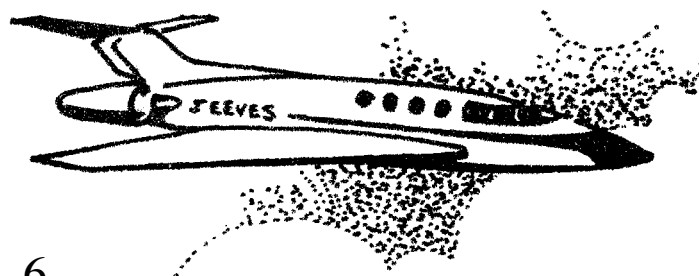
A wide-ranging pattern was noticed by science fiction defenders. Literary types, bereft of ideas, lacking inspiration, and unable to be creative on their own merit, pilfered science fiction ideas they did not even grasp, and wrote fatuous nonsense that did not qualify as science fiction but was, of course, awarded literary honors and promoted into bestseller status. How galling for all those On Board.

This in turn brought charges from academics against science fiction's insularity, its determinedly low brow addiction to Mere Plot, and its insistence upon arbitrating Real from Fake. Harold Bloom's choleric tirade against genre when Stephen King was given a National Book Award is the low water mark for literary snobbery, bigotry, and sheer idiocy.

Consider science fiction as a vacation guaranteeing integrity of experience, though, and all becomes fair and clear and warmly sunny.

So write, and read, what you want.

Just remember, please stay on the ship and do not leave the compound. We need the money. And you do not need the aggravation of encountering Those Others.



# INTERLOCUTIONS

Gene Stewart  
1710 Dianne Ave.  
Bellevue, NE 68005  
Fri 6 Oct 2011

Knarley,

My Dan Brown article gleaned a good amount of reaction, and even got **Major Joe** to crack a remark. Yeow.

Nice **Schirm** cover; yes, the virgins flock to Barak.

Your vacation into the past has me eager to travel again. Well, to think about it, anyway.

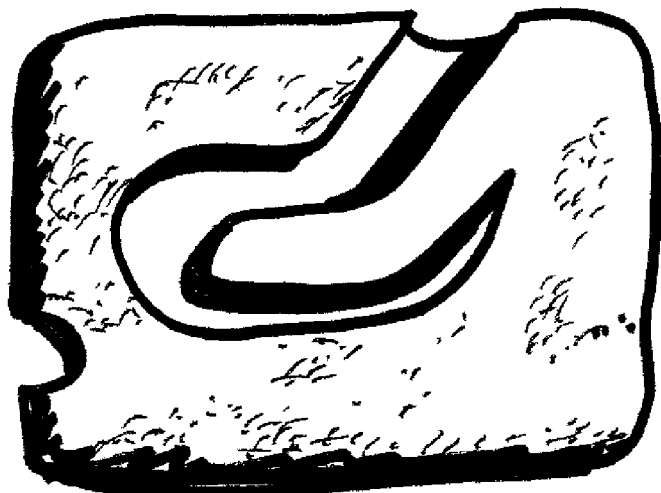
Pears are just reincarnated relatives so they may still be annoying burdens enve in the new form.

Geocaching is interesting and I'm glad to hear you're enjoying it. I'd give it a try once I drop more weight.

PG&E sounds typical of today's greed.

**Sue Welch** makes Austin sound great. I've lived twice in Texas with no remarks from Dan Fleming, but never made it to Austin. Wish I had.

**Alexander R. Slate's** theory to revamp capitalism has to flow all such theories have; it's not sociopath proof. One needs to control them – rid any system of them – first or they will thwart all checks and balances, so we have seen since Reagan set'em loose. Greed is no good in any way and we'll die rather than admit it. Of course, our discussion is naive. The Top Percent Rich are wielding complex financial instruments engineered by Ivy League math wonks. These amount to WMDs and the target is the global middle class. Wage slavery is the goal. So really, no one in a position to



ALLEN MONEY, 10/28/11

change things is seeking solutions. The way it is now suits them just fine.

Wal-Mart's CEO is paid nearly \$17,000 an hour. The average hourly wage for his drones is under eight. This says it all.

**Cuyler Brooks, Jr.** Lit crit? Me? Dan Brown was rich from book sales prior to the move. That just boosted him into a King's orbit.

Bookcase wall discoloration is due to plot seepage. You need better fiction to prevent such leakage.

**Alexis Gilliland** Are you seriously saying fiction must be factual or factually accurate?

The current lack of civility is nothing new in history and is due to human chimp nature and culture shift. I'd add stress to the pile.

Uh, the GOP mindless hate attack and specious impeachment of Clinton stopped his Presidency in its tracks, as designed.

Happy 80th birthday, sirrah! Bravo.

And now to **Bob Jennings** Molds are some of the most recalcitrant life forms this side of fen.

"Brown never claimed the book was anything but a novel." Exactly my point.

Erich Segal did what, now? Wrote *Love Story*? He typed it, is about all.

Attacking this season's popular flavor is the whole boring practice I abhor.

"Hand-wringing and pathos ..."? You need to get out more or read some romance novels.

Blaming the net for the dearth of fan artists is ludicrous. It is the lack of interest among young folks doing other things, that's all.

Your views on book publishers are funny and quit obviously based on vast experience. Average writers can go hang fire in a bar. Only good ones need actually publish. You are ignoring what is already happening in electronic publishing, but that is a good thing. More for the few who pay attention.

The vampire fad you sneer at has already lasted since 1861 or so. I'm betting it ain't going anywhere anytime soon.

Calling me a liar is a remarkable admission of ignorance. Welcome to the cesspool, slappy.

**Milt Stevens** Sponges obviate licking for envelopes. Just saying. The reason you send no Yule cards lies elsewhere.

Thanks, **John Purcell**, for the good words.

**Joseph Nicholas** Cooties are lie communicable stink lines. Pre-adolescent boys say girls have cooties – think lice that affect only one’s peers’ esteem – meaning they find them icky and don’t want to be contaminated by them – in other words, lose machismo regard among one’s pals. That’ll be ten pounds sterling, please.

**Joseph T. Major** Brown never claimed *The Da Vinci Code* was true, he instead said he put it together as fiction using many true claims and facts. Gee, it almost sounds like what science fiction writers are somehow allowed to do.

Yes, Kindle convinced me, too, in part due to the 3600 book capacity. My eyes appreciate the help, too. Agreed about indexing – the newer ones are said to use page numbers.

Who was saying “you can’t write science fiction anymore” prior to Gibson and why? And why could they not have been right? Sure would’ve spared us a lot of crap.

**Jim Stumm** You actually think we’re living in the debris of **regulated** capitalism? Do you honestly think there are any rules or laws that corporations actually follow? Seriously?

Guess we don’t be seeing you at the protests.

**Dave Szurek** “Pure unflinching democracy,” makes you flinch, doesn’t it? Can’t blame you. The fat part of the bell curve is scary. I can un-hex you, for an eye of Gingrich.

Thank you, **Clint Marsh**, kind words are always appreciated.

Steve Jobs has dies and shrines are popping up at Apple stores all around the world. Paul McCartney tells us why: Jobs, he said, told him once he was most proud of what he didn’t do. Meaning be evil.

Good issue, Henry  
-Gene Stewart

☐**TKK**: *Yes, the young folks are creating more dynamic art in the form of Youtube video clips; or at least wasting a lot of time and bandwidth watching them.*☐

Joseph T. Major  
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October 10, 2011

Dear Knarley & Letha:

And now the knews . . . The software takes 60 to 90 seconds to load because of Gates’s Law, which states that software speeds are halved every eighteen months. Thus answering

Moore’s Law about processor speeds doubling every eighteen months. (Except, it seems that they aren’t any more.)

Geocaching . . . I looked it up. So much for my old Boy Scout skill of drawing a map with a compass and measuring paces. I suppose there is an entire “fandom” in this.

Louisville Gas & Electric (LG&E) is also playing tricks with the electric charges, but the winner is Louisville Water, which has some kind of strange fee rate where you get charged if you use too much or too little. The time our cellar flooded because the pipes froze and burst was at least off the books.

Towards a New Theory of Capitalism: One wonders how long the day care centers at Patagonia will last. If, for example, a parent claims that her child was assaulted by Satanic Ritual Abusers. Or if the day care center violates the Americans with Disabilities Act. I mean, “when.” Or if the day care center fails to accommodate a religious need . . . the number and diversity of legal entanglements are quite broad in their spectrum. I don’t really think this benefit is going to persist for much longer.

Now that I’ve ordered the last issue of A. Langley Searles’s *Fantasy Commentator*, which is the biography of John W. Campbell, Jr. by Sam Moskowitz (how about that, three famous names in one sentence?) I find the Terry Jeeves cartoon about the Hieronymous Pizza to be apropos. The book, too. It ought to be nominated for a Hugo but would lose to something like Chicks Dig Sparkly Emo Vampires: A Celebration of Twilight by the Women Who Love It (there isn’t really such a book. Yet).

If **Bob Jennings** thinks his case of poison ivy (between the fingers) was bad, it was probably as well he never met Grant McCormick’s father. Mr. McCormick had a good pension, but did something to keep himself busy; he cut lawns. (Including the Colony Motel, which turned up in *Stranger In a Strange Land*, after a fashion.) One time he ran into a patch of poison ivy and got the rash all over. Including inside his mouth.

I notice all the people defending Dan Brown’s novel. The problem is that they are a decided minority; other people (who don’t write to *TKK*, but that’s another story) are actually going to the places. But then, Leigh Teabing . . . er, Baigent, Leigh, and Lincoln reported with bated breath on how the priest at the ancient site that contained the Great Mystery of the Templars/Cathars was rich, implying that he had found the Templar/Cathar Treasure. He had, but not in the sense they made of it. He charged big for tourists to come see the ancient site that contained the Great Mystery of the Templars/Cathars. *Personne jamais argent perdu qui sous-estime la crédulité des gens français.*

Namarie,  
Joseph T Major

☐**TKK**: *Yes, there is a complete sub-culture just for geocaching with just as diverse a cross-section as you’ll find in*



*science fiction fandom. Sometimes the measure of a business is when they will thank their lawyers for identifying the risk and then accept the risk anyway for other important business reasons.*□

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12 Oct 2011

Dear Henry,

Great cartoon cover! I like that idea.

I'm glad you and the family did finally manage to get away on a vacation. It sounds like you all had fun. Geocaching sounds challenging.

Ah, yes. The Japanese internment camps. That always makes me gnash my teeth. Property stolen and lives smashed. I read about a book that focuses on the art made in the camps, but I can't remember what magazine I read about it in. Not real long ago.

I enjoyed **Sue's** visit to Austin, Texas. I've driven through Texas, but didn't visit any of the cities. I did enjoy the vistas there though.

LOCs: I know that Texas has been baking, but **Brad Foster** really gave us the feel of it!

Re: e-books. I've recently published a few fiction reprints and a new non-fiction book. I've heard that giving away one or more e-books helps with marketing. I'll see, but I know writers for whom it has worked. Yes, finding good books amongst the constantly proliferating piles isn't easy. I rely on reviews a lot for print books and could do the same for e-books, but I don't have an e-reader, nor is it on my Christmas list. I admit that reading on the computer isn't any fun.

Btw, I was hoping for an update from **Chris Garcia** about the mold invasion's aftermath. Is he out of his car? I see in the WAHF box that **Julie Wall** is getting married. I remember when she was editor of the *Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin*. (I'm pretty sure that was the zine.) Anyway, congratulations to **Julie**, and thanks, Henry, for all the news, etc.

Appreciatively,  
Joy V. Smith

□*TKK: I'd be amazed if there was any one marketing strategy that worked for all authors and genres. Yes, Julie was one of the editors of the SFC Bulletin. Actually one of the presidents as editing is one of the president's tasks.*□

Alexis Gilliland  
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October 12, 2011

Dear Henry and Letha,

Thank you for *TKK* #140, a nicely produced issue with an abundance of comment hooks. **Alexander Slate's** New Theory of Capitalism is more than a little utopian, and appears summarized when he asks: "Why can't businesses simply determine a reasonable portion of the market to have, leaving room for others?" That is actually a very hard question and no mechanism is offered by which such a determination could be made. Nor is the distinction between a monopoly and an oligopoly necessarily benign; the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890 was the government's attempt to ensure competition by preventing the formation of monopolies, but it also forbade companies from sitting down to allocate the shares of their collective market. As one might expect, all those capitalists being regulated lobbied the government to maximize their profits, not only lightening the hand of the anti-trust enforcers but also creating loopholes in the tax code so that they were obliged to pay less tax. As a practical matter this meant that government collected disproportionately more taxes from the less influential, a process Sen. Russell Long (D La.) summed it up with a little jingle: "Don't tax you, don't tax me, tax that fellow behind the tree." Currently more than half of all potentially taxable income has been exempted from taxes, and most of those tax exemptions flow to the rich. The progressive ideal of tax reform would be to simplify the tax code by eliminating all its multifarious loopholes, thereby enabling a general lowering of the tax rates. The practical effect of this would be that the rich would need to pay more taxes, so such a reform is unlikely to happen without some serious class warfare, of which the Occupy Wall Street movement might well be the opening skirmish.

Regulations, despised by capitalists for cutting into their profits, were imposed to ensure the health of their customers, the safety of their workers, and, for the general public, better design and a cleaner environment. In theory this meant an enforceable minimum of proper civic behavior, with which the most cutthroat capitalist had to comply. In practice, this proved not to be universally the case. For one example, Kenneth Lay, the CEO of Enron, lobbied to deregulate energy, and the voters of California bought into his promise of lower energy bills through deregulated competition. Since Enron had a monopoly on electric transmission in California, the company exploited a series of rolling blackouts (unheard of before deregulation) and in 2001-2002 extorted an additional 20 billion dollars from the electricity users of California. For another, on April 5, 2010, an explosion in the Upper Big Branch coal mine near Montcoal, West Virginia, killed 29 miners. The 120-page report on the accident charged Massey Energy, and its CEO Don Blankenship, with "... frequently and knowingly violating the law, and blatantly disregarding known safety standards...." Before the accident the fines on

scores of federal safety violations had gone unpaid, even as those violations remained uncorrected while Massey Energy cut corners in the pursuit of profit, paying only lip service to the safety of its miners. The point being that capitalists are an unruly lot who have a large hand in the formulation of government policy (so it is simple-minded to speak of evil government versus virtuous capitalists as the Libertarians tend to do) nor do our noble capitalists necessarily obey the dictates of that policy when they find it is weakly enforced.

**Alexander** then chides me for inadequately refuting the arguments of **Jim Stumm**, with whom I have sometimes been in disagreement. Without reprising the past dispute, it would seem appropriate to consider the arguments that **Jim** makes in the current issue. Comparing eggs to eggplants, he says: “(Alexis) notes that “about a quarter of the nation’s houses are underwater.” Yes, and about 99 percent of the nation’s vehicles are underwater, since they are worth less than when they were purchased.” He goes on to assert that houses are an investment and since investments fluctuate in value, the fact that 28 percent of the nation’s houses are under water appears to be perfectly normal. Sigh. First of all a new car begins to depreciate the moment you drive it off the dealer’s lot, it wears out in ten or fifteen years, and one just naturally expects to replace it before it wears out completely. In contrast a house may outlast its owner and her heirs, though this is no longer the general case, and in the past a properly maintained house maintained its value in constant dollars, though this is no longer the general case, either. Disputing my facts he says: “It’s not true that ‘the price of houses went down all over the country.’” Indeed? From 1997 to 2006 the price of the typical American house increased by 124 percent, due to the housing bubble, which got started off via commoditization, i.e. selling bundles of mortgages offered as AAA bonds that paid more interest than conventional AAA bonds. That business was so immensely profitable that the demand for new mortgages swiftly outstripped the supply, leading to the wholesale issuance of sub-prime mortgages that drove the housing bubble to spectacular heights. Bubbles burst, alas, and by September 2008 average US housing prices had declined over 20 percent from their mid-2006 peak, continuing to trend downward to 26 percent below that peak in January 2011. Most of the initial foreclosures had been against speculator owners who had little or none of their own cash at risk, but the rest, including the current 28 percent, had too much equity to walk away from. They bought their houses to live in, “investing” only in the sense that they thought they would be better off owning than renting. Some parts of the country (California and Florida) were hit harder than others, and perhaps in some rustic backwater, where housing prices never went up, they never went down, either. However, the price of houses did, in fact, go down all over the country. I don’t agree with **Jim**’s analysis of unemployment, either. “Obamacare is not a straw but the anvil that broke the camel’s back,” may be a nice rhetorical flourish, but is seriously disconnected with reality. I do agree that our heroic job creators aren’t creating jobs because they are uncertain about the future. However, their uncertainty isn’t mostly about a health care plan which hasn’t

yet been finalized, their main uncertainty is whether there will be sufficient demand for what they hope to sell. Why might there be uncertainty about that demand? Because the general public is paying down its debt and saving its money, even if the US government can’t bring itself to do so. Those hapless people stuck with a mortgage bigger than what their house is worth feel neither rich, nor optimistic, and they are done with taking on debt to drive the economy. One should also note those 3 million manufacturing jobs that went to low wage countries like China. This increased the profits of our job-exporting capitalists at the expense of our middle class workers, and a smaller, poorer middle class is less able to serve as the engine that drives the economy. Perhaps when the wages in China approach those of the US, some of those jobs will come back, unless of course they don’t. Think of the robotic arms tirelessly spot welding car bodies on the modern assembly line as an example of capital replacing labor. And as computers become smarter (an IBM computer recently beat the human world champions of Jeopardy) they will increasingly take over the functions of middle management, thereby making goods cheaper, profits larger, and the middle class smaller. No wonder unemployment is expected to remain high and demand low.

What else? **Bob Jennings** mentions “the’ milk company in China that was adding melamine to their milk in order to increase the test value for protein after the milk had been watered. This was a common cheat, an industry-wide practice, and while melamine is not highly toxic it proved fatal to some infants on an all milk diet. Even in a communist country you have to watch the capitalists, but in China, where the coal mines are owned by the government, you can’t always tell who they are. China has a much higher fatality rate among its miners than the US, because the Chinese government behaves like Massey Energy in giving production a priority over worker safety.

Best wishes,



*TKK: Anti-trust enforcement depends significantly on whether the Republications (less) or Democrats (more) are in the White House.*

Brad W Foster  
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13 Oct 2011

Greetings Henry ~

New issue of *TKK* arrived this week, to much cheer and jubilation. (Okay, a -bit- of jubilation, and a -touch- of cheer, but I really did try to get the other folks in the post office lobby

to join in on a “hip-hip-hooray” when I pulled the envelope out of my postal box.)

You guys sure do get around a lot. If it wasn’t for conventions and art festivals, I’d be at home almost all of the time. Just got back this past month from Archon up in St. Louis, and doing the Red River Revel over in Shreveport. So nice to be home and sleeping in my own bed again.

Your comment about getting “vouchers” rather than cash for volunteering to step down from a flight reminds me of how much I hate any of those kinds of “rewards”: vouchers, credits, miles, points ... it all comes down to where I usually have to actually spend even more money to make use of them. Give me good ol’ cash. I’ve got one credit card that gives a cash-back percentage rebate. Not points or miles, but actually takes dollars off what I owe them, depending on how much I use the card. Works for me!

Had to look up “geocaching,” and now I know it’s a 21st century, hi-tech version of “hide and seek.” Right?

Looks like some of **Garcia’s** mold problems from issue 139 have a traveled over the fannish waves, as I’ve been having horrible, puffy eyes and watering for a few days, and can detect an odd musty smell ... both signs together point to mold. We have flooding/leaking problems in the house in the past, so that also points to mold. Problem is, so much furniture and nonsense piled around, hard to get to look under carpets, or at walls. So, in between popping some antihistamine to be able to function, will be moving stuff around for the next few weeks and see if can find the source, hoping it is something I can take care of on my own. And after moving one filing cabinet today, already have tossed out a lot of stuff that I now realize I really don’t need to keep. So maybe, in long run, will be a good house-cleaning out of it all.

Sorry my use of the term “eccentric” to describe your new erratic publishing schedule struck the wrong note. I never thought of it as an age-related term. In my mind I always applied it to anyone who did something different, or unexpected, but in an interesting way.

Oh, and since a couple of people mentioned the font choice on the cover to 139, I had to go back and look up what it was I actually used. Turns out it’s a font called “Uranium.” So, that must be nu-clear powered spaceship.

Regarding **Bob Jennings** on fan art dying out in fanzines. I agree, many people just post art up on a page like Deviant Art, rather than actually sending it around anywhere to be used, whether that is in print, or in an ezine publication of some kind. That to me is just another way of putting up your portfolio. Fan art is stuff you are actually sending out for free to people to use in their publications. I think that a lot of what Randall Munroe puts up in his XKCD web comic is freaking brilliant, and I now check in at least once a week or so to see new stuff, or to dig into his archives. I’ve no problem that he does it with stick figures. As someone pointed out years ago, the Hugo art awards at one point seemed to actually be

for “Best Cover Artist” (Pro) and “Best Funny Cartoonist” (Fan). However, I also don’t think what he does really qualifies as “fan” art, because of how he is presenting it. But, the category has always been an odd one, and like all the other fan categories, will have to be refined as the realities of new ways of presenting art through the inner-tubes changes. I’ll be curious to see what the list of final nominees looks like next year. It’s always been the category with the least nominations and votes, and the least comments. We’ll see if this changes anything.

Finally, agree with **Jim Stumm** re that the idea of buying a house -used- to be that you were buying someplace to live, not an investment. The idea that everything has to increase in value, and if it doesn’t you are “losing” money, is just bizarre to me. But it seems that is how so much value is assessed these days in this country. I love how a company can have a year of record breaking profits, and then the next year have huge profits, but not quite as large as the previous year, and they moan that they are somehow “losing.” Still making huge profits, but there was no increase, so it’s bad. It’s the new way for business executives to measure dick size among themselves, I guess.

Another fine issue, looking forward to seeing #141, whenever it arrives on your not-eccentric (quirky? funky?) publishing schedule.

stay happy~  
Brad

☐**CKK:** *We don’t do any where near the travel we used to. Scheduling and finances have taken their toll. “Eccentric” didn’t strike a wrong note, just a different one.*☐

Milt Stevens

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October 20, 2011

Dear Henry and Letha,

In *Knarley Knews* #140, Henry mentions going on a family vacation. That’s an image you see fairly often in movies and on television. My own family never went on any vacations during the time I was growing up. My father did want to take us on a vacation once in 1947. In response to the idea, my mother, sister, and I came down with chicken pox. My father never considered the idea of a family vacation again, although he and my mother went lots of places after my sister and I had moved out.

I think **Alexander Slate** is engaging in wishful thinking. He is essentially saying that if people were nicer things would be nicer. A number of philosophical systems have been trying to encourage people to be nicer for millennia. They’ve had mixed results with the idea. Some of the people will be nice all of the time, and all of the people will be nice some of

the time, but you will never have all of the people nice all of the time. To this basic situation, you add avarice. Avarice is a popular product and will never go out of fashion. Avarice works under all economic systems, but capitalism is the only system that officially endorses it.

Lacking universal good, we might try spreading the idea of rational self interest as far as possible. Defoliating the entire landscape, strip mining, and dumping poison in the local water supply aren't really good ideas. However, businesses have done all of these things and used profits or efficiency as the justification. I don't think capitalism should make too much noise about efficiency. The fascists made a lot of noise about efficiency. They weren't really efficient, but they managed to tarnish efficiency as an ideal.

Capitalism is very unpopular at the moment in the United States. Capitalism deserves it. Things like rust belts, and outsourcing and downsizing have pissed people off. We now have an Occupy Wall Street movement. I don't know what they want to accomplish or what they can accomplish, but they certainly are a sign of hatred. If they ever got close to actually occupying Wall Street, the Army would be called out, and they would be shot. After that, who knows what might happen.

Nobody seems to be thinking about some things that could be done at the moment without much work. Outsourcing is one of our ills. The President could have the Labor Department compile a list of the companies that have done the most outsourcing. The public would react to that information. Of course, the *Wall Street Journal* or the *New York Times* could also do it. Unfortunately, I doubt they will.

Yours truly,  
Milt Stevens

☐**CKK**: *I'm sorry you never had family vacations. It is a fond memory of my growing up and it is now the same for my children.*☐

Lloyd Penney  
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October 22, 2011

Dear Knarley:

Thank you kindly for issue 140 of *The Knarley Knews*. The **Schirm** art on the cover reminds me of one of the current funny photos distributed on Facebook ... five nuns, each carrying a rifle, with the caption, "The terrorists found that the virgins waiting for them were not what they expected." More comments after the end of the paragraph....

You're right that we demand so much from our computers. For some reason, high-speed is too slow for some. We keep

getting offered faster and faster Internet service, but does a few milliseconds faster make that much difference?

**Gene Stewart**, you say it true. When I turn on American television, all I see is guns and the result of gunplay. If guns and gunplay is a natural part of American life, no wonder there is such a fascination with CSI shows. Death is a part of life, to be sure, but it's become a cavalier part, a spectator sport. Guns do kill people, because there's a person at the working end. Dubya did say that he didn't want the USA to be the world's policeman, but it has been just that for a long time. Outside of the USA, all non-Americans see this, but we mostly hold our tongues.

We can also see how hostile the Republicans are to Barack Obama, to the Democrats and to the general electorate, which will still vote for them. Outside of the US, we roll our eyes and tsksksk about the most toxic politics we've ever witnessed, and recognize a touch of that in our own politics. Canada doesn't have its own version of the Tea Party, but give it time....

My loc ... we recently found some of Connor's kid art you sent to us a long time ago. We'd be happy to keep it, but would you like it back? You could put it on the fridge, and freak him out when he sees it. Yvonne is taking her real estate law course, and is finding it relatively easy. I mentioned using my Palm Tungsten again. I am using it to compose this loc right now. I did some work for that design studio as part of my interview. I never heard back from the studio, neither did my agency, and I was never paid for the work I did. However, I have applied to the Law Society of Upper Canada for my old job there, and fingers crossed for a call for an interview this coming week.

Even after our announced retirement from convention committees after 30 years, we were offered committee positions with two conventions, one in Toronto, and one in Montréal. We turned them both down, and it wasn't hard at all.

The Reno Worldcon was wonderful fun in the desert. We sure got our exercise walking from our room, through a large casino, and down a very long enclosed walkway through a long convention centre. But, it was worth it. We were on programming, small but great art show, small but great dealers' room, great entertainment with Dr. Demento and filkers Tricky Pixie, plus a heard a wonderful mini-concert by Erika "Unwoman" Mulkey. The Hugos were great, no one accepts a Hugo like **Chris Garcia**. The current plan is to skip Chicon 7 in 2012 and LoneStarCon 3 in 2013 so we can afford to go to the London Worldcon in 2014, should they win it.

You're right, I never did finish the story about our superintendent who said we abused everything because he said we must have abused the ceiling, right through to the roof, which let the rain in, we moved out as soon as we could, and moved to Brampton. Afterwards, we found that he had been exposed as the jerk he was by evicting a single mother on Christmas

Eve. He got some pretty bad press in all the local papers, and looked good on him.

I'm going to do the APA-like RAE, BNC on the rest of the issue. It's a busy evening, and we've got a local show called the Bazaar of the Bizarre tomorrow. Happy anniversary, say hello to Letha for me, and see you next issue.

Yours,  
Lloyd Penney.

□CKK: *This may not be the most toxic level the US politics has ever gotten to (see some of the arguments in the Washington-Jefferson era or what led up to the Civil War. I don't know why I would have sent some of Connor's art to you. Did he leave it behind at the Toronto Ditto? We can't easily put it on the fridge as it is aluminum and magnets don't stick to it.*□

Jim Stumm  
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October 22, 2011

**Gene Stewart:** About "driving us toward extinction:" Rather than humans becoming extinct, the more pressing problem surely is over-population of humans. To be moving **toward** extinction, a species must have a falling population, but the number of humans is rapidly rising.

Even 400 active serial killers, if there are anywhere near that many, could hardly make a dent in the USA population of some 300 million. Besides that, by far the greatest number of murders in USA are committed by young black males, not serial killers like Jack the Ripper. If you omit these murders by African-Americans, the murder rate in USA is similar to the rate in those other countries that are pointed to as paragons of civility.

I don't suppose your belief in the vileness of corporations leads you to do without goods and services produced by corporations.

The US Government spends so much on "defense" because it has taken on the mission of policing the entire world, with the support of both neo-cons and liberals, and the opposition of only total pacifists, and libertarians who would wage war only in response to an attack on USA.

I'm sure the 1000s who died in the World Trade Center and other bombings would be reassured to know that Al Qaeda is only a database, a database that builds bombs. And that Osama was nothing more than a sick old coot is rather belied by his own words in all those videos he starred in calling for jihad against USA.

"Sociopaths are attacking the nation." Yes indeed. Especially the ones who get elected to public office, since the election process itself seems to select for sociopaths.

**Alexander Slate:** Individual businesses shouldn't concern themselves with what's good for business as a whole, or for society. Business as a whole is more properly the concern of chambers of commerce. The welfare of any particular industry is the proper concern of that industry's trade association. The welfare of society may be the concern of any person in his private capacity, and he might join with like-minded persons in organizations aiming at the betterment of society, but this should not usually be the concern of profit-seeking companies.

I don't think that the **purpose** of business is to provide goods and services that people need and desire. The **purpose** of business is to make money for its owners. The method it uses to make money, that is, the way it persuades people to give them money, is by providing goods and services that people want to buy. As for providing business people with purpose and goals, I don't think anyone goes into business for that reason, although that may provide some secondary satisfaction for some people.

If extra employee benefits, by reducing work absences, make a business more efficient, and that translates into greater profitability, then that business will beat its competition, and competition will induce other firms to adopt the same practices. Conversely, if these practices are not spreading throughout the industry, that would show that they do not increase profitability. Making money is what counts in the end. Efficiency only matters to the extent that it increases money-making ability. Some employee benefits, such as



maternal leave, directly increase employee absences. Where I work, one of the most highly desired job perks that increase employee satisfaction, is being given more time off in added sick days, vacation, personal days off, and many holidays. This obviously increases absences.

Competition is not good for business. It's good for their customers. Businesses do indeed prefer to turn into monopolies, or failing that, into cartels that divide up the business available among a few dominant firms. This is a tendency that should be opposed and resisted. Ease of entry should be maintained so that lean and hungry newcomers can enter any market and give the stodgy old guard a run for their money. Old established businesses are usually not in favor of such a free market. That's why they oppose libertarians, who are preferred by the young turks. Libertarians are opposed to any kind of corporate welfare. We want a level playing field with no government preference for any players. That's what's best for consumers.

"If everyone is downsizing," but not everyone is downsizing, although lying news programs seek to convey that impression. There are always businesses expanding and hiring, and new businesses being formed all the time. There would be a lot more of this if we had a freer system with a lot less obstructive government regulation. The benefit of less regulation is not that it makes businesses happy, but that it leads to more jobs, and through competition, better and cheaper products for consumers. Government constantly changing the rules and imposing new burdens on business tends to suppress business expansion and leads to secure, giant firms foisting shoddy goods on consumers because they feel safe from competition.

About "If companies didn't feel the need for cut-throat competition, society would be better served." No it wouldn't. Cut-throat competition leads to products with the lowest prices and most desired features, beneficial to consumers. Having more companies is good because it means more competition. But higher employment producing the same amount of goods and services necessarily means higher prices for consumers. What's good for consumers is good for society.

You say: "A controlled amount of reasonable production makes for healthy profits and a more stable overall market." Most 19th century tycoons would have agreed with that sentiment entirely. They formed trusts to divide the market among themselves, to share out their healthy profits, and keep the market stable, so their own comfortable positions would not be threatened. But that led to abuses that resulted in government trust-busting and anti-trust legislation.

This isn't what you say it is, an older theory of capitalism. It's a pre-capitalist theory. It's the medieval world of guilds controlling all production. Everyone locked into their position in society. No mobility, no progress, no innovation to shake things up. No Steve Jobs types to upset the apple cart. Capitalism is opposed to all that. Today's overregulated crony

capitalism uses government powers to try to re-institute this kind of business feudalism.

Capitalism brings creative destruction, failures like Lehman Brothers, and Enron to clear away the deadwood. We need more of that, not "too big to fail," or government bailouts. Fat cats shouldn't be comfortable and complacent, with a "stable market" where their status and fortunes are secure. On the contrary, they should stay nervous, looking over their shoulders at new guys racing to overtake them. And if they turn to their friends in government for help, they should get a firm and final refusal. They should do the best they can for their customers or get out of the way. We need cut-throat competition and let the chips fall where they may.



☐**CKK:** *Your approach to business tends to ignore the danger of the "race to the bottom" that was so prevalent before federal workplace regulation by the government. By making the bottom line the sole goal of business encourages the established businesses to hold their employees hostage and reduce pay and benefits to create a truly serf class. See Upton Sinclair's The Jungle. This is not to say that the pendulum of government regulation has swung too far the other way.*☐

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4 November 2012

Hi Henry;

Received *Knarley Knews* #140 a week or so back. My apologies for being late with an LOC, but we've had some weather problems over here, on top of other aggravating problems.

I enjoyed the issue but a lot of the material doesn't inspire much in the way of commentary. This was especially true of your long narrative concerning your vacation travels and explorations. While I'm sure all this gallivanting around was great fun for you and the family it doesn't offer much for the readers beyond being happy that you were happy, (as it were), or occasionally noting that they too went to some of the places you visited and either nodding in agreement at your conclusions or shaking their heads in astonishment that you found the Pooky Point Panda Bear Museum (or whatever it might have been) so delightful when they thot it was a pretentious waste of time and money.

None of these fan travelogs, yours included, actually delivers the same kind of thrill or interest level you as the participant actually thinks it does. These travel diaries invariably slog off into inanities and mundania well beyond the boredom level for a lot of readers, myself included. Not that I'm picking on

you in particular; most fan travel trip reports suffer from the exact same sort of thing.

Gosh! What a thrill it was for the family to fill the radiator with fresh new unfiltered anti-freeze and chug up the mountain to Erection Point so we could all see the statues of the Unknown Nudists. It was a real educational experience for the whole family, especially our two young daughters, who got to experience even more on-the-spot education when our dog Rex decided to stop barfing out the window and discovered that the toy poodle one of the other tourists had on a leash happened to be in full heat. Gosh again, what a penetrating educational experience. You can bet the digital cameras and the iPhones videos were going full blast for quite awhile there. Some of the teenage visitors were about to slip over to the side of the parking area and continue to create their own education experiences as well, but what with the noontime heat abating somewhat and the radiator mostly cooled down, we decided to coast back down hill and push onward so we could be part of the Corn Dogs Across America pageant tomorrow afternoon. Gosh, what a thrill it all was.

Yeah, thrilling.

People very rapidly get used to new technology and are very upset when anything interferes with the application of that new technology. Computers especially can be very addictive, but it's wise to remember that those machines have a nasty habit of crashing or hanging up or losing data at the most inappropriate times. I also notice a lot of people seem to be slaves to their technology, especially those portable telephones everybody in the world except me carries around with them all the time.

Hey, the technology is supposed to serve the humans, to make their lives easier and able to cope better. There's nobody on the planet I need to talk to right in the middle of a meal with friends, or a similar social situation, yet I'm constantly astonished that people will take phone calls right in the middle of some important occasion. The worst were a couple of people who took telephone calls during a wedding ceremony, one of which was asking when the ceremony would be over so the person being called could come visit the caller for some (thankfully) unreported reason.

I had a great deal of trouble taking **Gene Stewart's** article seriously because he started the dialog with a number of extraordinary unwarranted assumptions and then ran with them as though they were the absolute truth. For example, his assertion in the second paragraph that "The USA is the most violent 'civilized' country on the gasping planet. Violence of all sorts is its prime export." Really? Since when? What possible factual basis has **Mr. Stewart** for making these remarkable statements? I don't believe either of those statements is correct, and in particular I doubt his assertion that violence is our prime national export.

Then, in the next paragraph down he asks "is the USA's excess of sociopathic greed and psychopathic destructiveness a

refinement of the human condition?" No, to all of that. I don't think the US happens to have any excess of 'sociopathic greed' or 'psychopathic violence'. I challenge him to provide some factual basis for these ridiculous declarations.

Then farther down he says that "blood suckers and ravenous monsters are decent descriptions of the corporate mentality, currently deploying greed like teeth and talons to tear away gobbets of [the] pulsating planet". This may play well as anarchy level poetry, but it happens not to be true.

The fact that the rest of his article builds out of these kinds of ludicrous statements, with assertions equally false, which he uses to build to even more fantastic conclusions, convinced me that I can't take any of the comments made in this article seriously. Hypotheses built on false information usually lead to dramatically escalating errors in logic and random, totally erroneous conclusions, as is amply demonstrated by this particular piece. Please, the reputation of your fanzine and the intelligence of its readers deserve better than this.

In a somewhat similar vein, **Alexander Slate's** endless series of articles on new theories of capitalism seems not to be breaking any new ground, that I can see. Most of the interesting points have been made in your recent letter columns.

Here's some information that might be useful to **Mr. Slate** – one of the prime problems with modern capitalism in the US was caused in the 1970s when the labor market suddenly exploded. Millions of women came into the labor market, computers and high-tech mechanization of all industries meant that instead of there being a balance between the demands of capital and labor, labor was in such abundance that capital could hire and fire as they pleased with no shortage of labor at any level, and therefore, they didn't need to raise wages to entice new or qualified workers to come onto their payrolls.

The development of all that high tech machinery meant that worker productivity jumped, which meant capital needed even fewer workers, so they were able to erode the power of unions and collective bargaining, cutting back on fringe benefits as the same time. The availability of cheap fuel, meant that it also became possible to export production facilities, first to more friendly states who would build their factories or distribution hubs for free, often with no taxes thrown in for good measure, and then, to export the bulk of their operations overseas where labor costs were even lower and environmental restrictions were fewer.

As a result of this marvelous storm of events the profits for capital business has grown enormously in the past forty years, while the real wages of American workers adjusted to the inflationary index has hardly moved at all.

Add in the economic and social pressure aggravated by aggressive advertising has caused many Americans to feel inferior if they aren't able to keep up with the flow of new expensive gadgets "everybody" seems to be buying – home

computers, shiny new cars, luxury vacations, electronic gadgets by the boat load, big screen TVs, designer clothing, and of course, the ultimate keeping-up-with-the-American-dream accusation, your own home, and suddenly Americans were using loose credit to buy all these goodies and push themselves into massive debt, which their stagnant wages could not possibly keep up with.

The ultimate monkey wrench in this little scenario came when Reagan and the two Bushes along with their Christian Fascist party members in Congress decided to not only give generous tax breaks to the extremely wealthy (their biggest campaign contributors, after all), but also to deregulate the banking and financial segments of the capitalist system. Given the opportunity these financial wizards quickly figured out that they could make money giving out loans to people who didn't deserve it, then sell off these high risk loans in blocs to investment groups on the assumption that altho most of them would go bad, the twenty percent or so of "good" loans, made to people who would make every effort to pay back their house/car/credit card debts would generate a sustainable profit for the bulk credit block buyers.

This was akin to watching an accident about to happen, only in slow motion. When this financial pyramid scheme ran out of suckers to buy the loan packages, and when the nation's overstressed consumers started to not pay their credit card bills or their home mortgages, the house of cards began to collapse.

If we'd had some government regulation in place back there, or even just retained the common sense regulations that existed from 1933 up thru the 1970s, most of these problems could have been prevented and ironed out. But our duly elected political opportunists didn't do any of that, and here we are.

Gold seems to be an OK investment right now, altho it is difficult for me to understand how somebody buying gold at \$1700-\$1900 an ounce or more is going to show much profit from the stuff. Sure the price is going up right now, but sometimes gold also drops in value, and there are usually handling fees to buy or sell the stuff. I suppose if you want to park your wealth in something that will probably not depreciate over the long term gold might be useful, since thru the ages people have traditionally regarded this pretty yellow metal as a source of enduring wealth. Of course there may be a problem turning the metal back into money again.

It seems to me that if you are looking for a safe place to park your wealth you might be just as well hoard addictive narcotics. At least you could probably turn that stuff into cash faster than finding a buyer for a pile of gold if the economic cow-patty really hits the fan.

Considering the enormous fascination the human race has had with gold over the centuries, perhaps this might be the key to getting the space program going again. The theory that most of the gold on the surface mantle of our planet

came from asteroids and meteorites seems to be gaining new acceptance in the scientific community. That being the case, there must be a bunch of the stuff floating around out there in the vacuum void, from the asteroid belt and more.

If gold prices rise above two grand an ounce, as they seems likely to do by next year, then maybe this would be enuf of an inducement to cause free-enterprise companies to start their own space exploration businesses to launch off into the depths of outer space to mine the stuff and bring it back to planet earth where there would be sufficient profits generated to pay for their exploratory trips. Right now I don't see anything except a profit motive being able to restart the interest in outer space exploration. Gold, small in volume, high in sales value, might do the trick. Seems workable to me.

The problem with benevolent dictatorships or absolute monarchs is that the dictators/kings die, and then they are replaced by other leaders who are not necessarily benevolent. Sometimes the nations or empires these people forged also don't survive either. Feuding among military and family factions has been responsible for most of the wars in Europe and Asia over the centuries, often caused by the death of the supreme leader and the chaos that follows. Given this kind of track record I'd prefer we use some other form of government. Democracy may not be perfect, but it sure beats living under the shadow of the Caesars.

Thanks for the mention of *Fadeaway*. Issue #26 will be out in the mails in a couple of weeks. Comments always appreciated.

---Bob Jennings

☐CKK: *I didn't provide the travelog thinking that it would be some riveting and thought-provoking narrative, but rather just a way to give an update and suggest some places other might like to visit. I'm sorry you don't agree with all of the articles. They seem to have done their job, though, in providing a number of comment hooks for you.*☐

Rodney Leighton  
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Tatamagouche, N.S., B0K  
IV0  
Canada  
November 6, 2011

Everyone I know, almost, is embracing new technology. My sister came to visit awhile ago and brought with her one of those Kindle things; instead of reading one of the novels I thought she would or the numerous magazines I thought might interest her, she usually read her Kindle. I could never understand how she could read a book while peeling mushrooms, washing dishes or virtually everything else and that is a neat bitty gadget, must be a lot lighter than a novel.

**Joe Major** being perhaps the most voracious reader I have ever known has really embraced technology. His wife even



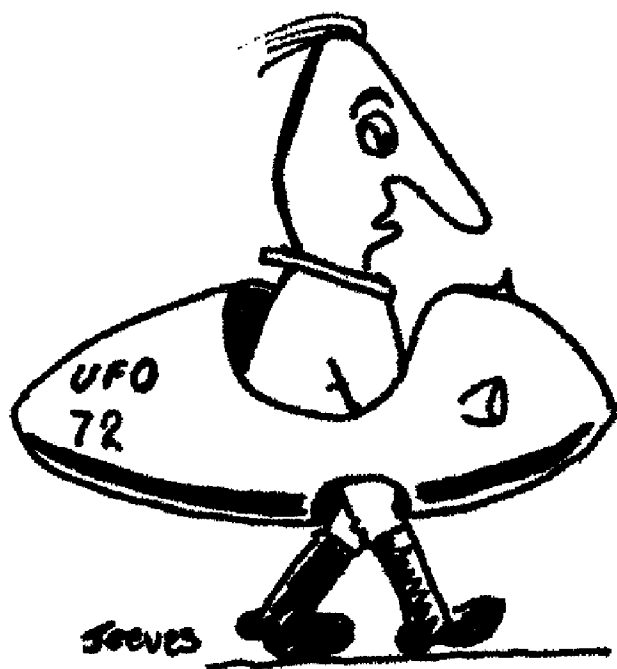
works in a library. Yet they apparently have a bunch of these thins. In the latest *Alexiad*, Joe has taken to reviewing books he read on the Kindle.

In the notes, he asks: "Who says the Internet is all bad?" Not me. Being barely able to keep my head above water, with things breaking, buildings falling down and the roof leaking, there is no way I could get a computer and internet if I wanted to. My friend Lyn, who is one of the few people I know who still writes long letters frequently now has a website. If I had the necessary things I could go to [www.lynmcconchie.com](http://www.lynmcconchie.com) and read about what she has been up to and a whole range of things; tales of the cat and book reviews and various stuff.

Me, I much prefer to await the letters and read them that way and read any of her books she chooses to send me. My sister may use her computer and internet connections to buy me a copy of the Bret Hart/Shawn Michaels DVD which WWE is going to release shortly and which I read about in the most recent issue of the *Wrestling Observer Newsletter*. Or perhaps the book by Jerry Jarrett.

And my friend Chuck uses his computer and internet and puts tv shows on dvd discs and ships them to me. Currently I am watching a show called *New Tricks*; a BBC production about a hot female cop and three retired male cops who solve open cases and unsolved crimes. It was not that good at the start but is getting better all the time, very good plots and story-lines and acting.

So, the powers that be decreed that no one in Canada could watch tv unless we paid for it. The two stations I had vanished. My sister thought that since I have been watching hockey games for decades I should do something to see that I could do so and did some research. Found out that for a bit under 50 bucks a month I could watch all the hockey I could stand, including every game my fave Montreal Canadiens play. I could also watch what passes for pro wrestling. I did a



bit of checking and found that for a bit under \$200 I could get tv: One station, CBC from Charlottetown. That would give me the same hockey I have had. Well, being that at that time I was unemployed, with no idea when work might start and poe-gy about at an end, I decided to not do anything tv wise for awhile. As it happened, by buying an occasional newspaper and listening to the radio I find that Les Habs are playing like shit; losing every game and watching them would be frustrating and anger producing.

I skip various portions of WON but I read all the reports on WWE and TNA. Curiously, this has the effect of making me not want to watch their shows. I don't suppose that is the result Dave would wish for and if someone were to put some of their shows on dvd and send them to me I would be delighted to receive them and would watch them. Same for hockey games.

Two television sets. No television reception. Weird, innit?

So, work started really well, got bad, disappeared and has now started again. Boss has said he has enough money to go to Christmas or major snowfall, whichever comes first. Wants me to work every day. I have to work every day it is possible. Try to generate some money.

One result of this is that I do not expect to have time or energy to use this machine. And sometimes I hate the poor old thing. And sometimes I can't stand the thought of typing. Interesting that I used to be bothered that people didn't write or didn't write for ages and now I am doing the same thing. If it is work and or aggravating, it's no fun, right?

So, here's the plan: I am going to launch a new *Leighton Look*, possibly with a different title or even no title. When work ends for this year I will go to Truro and find a helpful person to manipulate the computer and file for a new poe-gy claim. While there I will stop at Staples and get some copies of whatever I have and will then mail those copies off to people. If you are reading this you will likely get a copy although I might restrict distribution to due to various factors. This is probably the only thing anyone will receive from me the rest of this year.

I am now toying with the idea of resurrecting the *Look* or something like that next year. It could be a way of continuing to receive some zines without trying to write aloe which is becoming harder and harder to do and perhaps keeping in touch, sort of, with friends who don't have time to write or don't want to or perhaps like me find writing to be a chore. Probably will restrict distribution to people I have heard from in some fashion; probably a quarterly thing.

Then again ... most of you have seen this sort of thing before.

I took sister back to P.E.I. this trip. First time I had been there for 8 years. Crossing the bridge my head was full of thoughts of my mother who loved the water, who used to gaze at the water when we crossed the thing, what she could see of it and

the last time I was on that bridge was bringing my sister's and her belongings over to live with my father after mother died. We had loaded the bed of the truck with stuff and placed suitcases in the club cab portion of my truck. Arrived at her place and unloaded the stuff from the back, with help from her landlady and her brother. They have a restaurant in the village which they are really proud of. My sister wanted to take me there for lunch. Well, I haven't eaten in a restaurant in something like 25 years; I have some physical problems and some psychological problems. Well, we will give it a try. So we arrived. And waited. And waited. Finally a menu; much later food. I had been craving homemade baked beans and everything in the restaurant is supposed to be home-made. So I ordered baked beans and fish cakes. Started on the beans and muttered something about coming out of a can; my sister's friend said, no, everything is home made. Since she is a nice attractive woman who has been very good to my sister I kept quiet. But either the beans were out of a Graves can or the cook uses their recipe; the bread roll was nowhere near as good as those my 80 something year old aunt made for me and the fish cakes were not that great. The chocolate torte was delicious. But what do I know about restaurants. So we went back to their place and walked around the property and I headed home and 20 km. into New Brunswick I stopped for a drink and a piss and noted out of the corner of my eye, guess what?? Suitcases! Turned around and headed back to the damned island. No thoughts of Mum this time, probably because I was so pissed off at myself. So after eight years of avoiding the place and the bridge I crossed it twice in one day; four times, twice each way.

It's only a couple of hours away. I used to visit my sister in the other places she lived; she's the only sibling I have any contact with. Not going to have time this fall and I am not going to P.E.I. in the winter, barring an emergency. But maybe next spring I will go over and give the restaurant another try. Shouldn't condemn it on the basis of one visit, right?

I am off to take saws to get fixed; buy some stuff; some KFC and perhaps some Chinese food.

□**TKK:** *I haven't watched broadcast TV in over 10 years; except what I get on cable or satellite. I look forward to your resurrection/reincarnation of the Look. KFC and/or the Chinese place sound like restaurants to me.*□

Alex Slate  
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16 Nov 2011

Thanks for the issue, as always.

One more thing about Austin, from the fannish perspective. Austin is the headquarters of FACT (the Fandom Association of Central Texas) the organization of which I was once a board member and editor of both the newsletter and fanzine (the one time Hugo winner *The Texas SF Inquirer* - under the

editorial leadership of Pat Virzi). FACT is also the organization responsible for the NASFIC in Austin, the worldcon in San Antonio, and the Worldcon bid. FACT also runs an annual convention, Armadillocon, primarily known for its sercon focus.

**Alexis:** "It may be that today's lack of civility can be traced to the internet..." Quite possibly true in part, but I don't think it is any one thing that is the cause. Some sociologists have talked about the affluent society effect, which has arisen in any number of cultures. In the US it stems from being the only unaffected industrial powerhouse at the end of WWII. It led also to the syndrome known as "The Ugly American" and eventually led to the atmosphere that surrounded discourse on the Vietnam War. It was during this period where the supporters of both sides abandoned much of the pretense of civility and determined that any action was correct if it made your point. Eventually, it has led us today to the feeling of entitlement and the rise of the cult of greed in American culture. Add in one more thing, that is that, at best, peoples' behaviour takes a while to catch up with available technology and you have a nasty brew.

**Jim Stumm:** Oh gee, where to start??? Never mind, I'm not going too, it's just not worth the effort today.

Anyway, Knarley, I'm glad you were able to get away on a vacation.

Best  
Alex Slate

□**TKK:** *I'm not certain that behavior always catches up with the technology. Despite the existence of email and message boards for over 30 years, people still have flame wars entirely too often over a perceived slight or disagreement. Then again, maybe this is just part of human nature as anonymous flaming was common in the period around the American Revolution.*□

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7 Dec 2011

Hello! Henry

"Time can certainly fly when you aren't paying too much attention," is the beginning of your *TKK* 139 editorial. Better late than never, this my LoC on that issue.

I backup my issues of my ANZAPazine on a USB drive, which I place out of sight under our Lisa Snellings-Clark sculpture, so, no danger of my USB drive finding itself in our washing machine in the wash cycle.

The value of the sculpture to me relative to the info on the USB drive, I rather would lose the USB drive than the sculpture.

The age of your children is proof of the age of your and Letha's marriage. Mary Ellen was horrified to be reminded that our older son, Russell, is 26 years old.

What is the attraction of teaching English in Japan, Japan as opposed to another country, I mean? Like your Connor, Russell wanted to teach English in Japan: Russell got as far as taking basic Japanese instruction and one interview.

Chickens? Did you have chickens in Wisconsin? Do one of you come from a family which raised chickens? Or are you new to chickens on your mountaintop?

I don't know where **Chris Garcia** was living, in his car or elsewhere, by the time Renovation (2010 Worldcon) was happening. If he still was living in his car I expect that **Chris Garcia** is the only answer to the trivia question Which Hugo winner when he won was living in his car? I don't remember if I heard this resolution from **Chris** or second-hand, regardless, **Chris** now wants to win a Hugo in every category; he believes Best Novel will be the most difficult category.

I am not Dan Brown, super-selling author, but I am not sure that I would want to be defended by **Gene** "Dan Brown Cooties" **Stewart**, e.g. this snippet from **Gene** who I understand to be on the side of authors being unfairly picked on, "constipated little literalists eager to squirt their smeary marks of envy, resentment, and foolish consistency onto a writer's huge, and harmless, non-political, uncontroversial success." **Gene**, have you considered a career in talk radio?

Your mother, **Sue's**, report of her experience on the top of New Zealand's South Island does not make me less of a supporter of the New Zealand in 2020 Worldcon bid; quite the contrary.

**Marc's** artwork illustrating the cover of *TKK 140* ("AH, OSAMA'S ARRIVED. THERE GO HIS VIRGINS") prompts me to caution you to think twice about publishing an image of The Prophet. Yes, a non sequitur, but Muslims and martyrs and 40-or-however-many virgins. My mind works thusly.

Looking at the art, I am thinking I want to see **Marc's** version of Edgar Rice Burrough's Martian thoot. Prompted by reading a profile of the director of the upcoming John Carter of Mars movie I have started to re-read *A Princess of Mars*. I read it first in the 1960s, my copy being the Ballantine Books 50 cent edition. I thought I might find it unreadable but I am at page 62 and I intend to finish. The info dumps I found annoying but I have settled into the rhythm of this tale published, when this LoC sees print, 100 years ago.

Speed is the main selling point, Henry, for cell phones. No ads, either, that I see for computers announce that they are fast enough for most people. You ask "How did we ever manage to get anything done 10 or 20 years ago with much slower and more decrepit machines?" But, then, those machines were fast!

Board games are the business of Snakes and Lattes, located in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood. Our older son finally got Mary Ellen and I to go with him. I am sure that Clue is one of the more than 2,000 games which customers can play. We sampled two games: each of us ate or drank: the cost for four hours for all three of us was less than \$40. Each group is given a hard model animal as its marker. The staff take orders on iPads. I would go back.

The advantage of visiting craters in California in what I presume is desert is the lack of mosquitoes. Years ago we drove into the northwest corner of Algonquin Park because I wanted to see Brent Crater, created by a meteor 450 million years ago. Mary Ellen and Russell and Dennis retreated to the car soon after we started on the trail. I persevered but the reward was slight: the bottom of the crater is filled with water and the trees around it are dense. But I did see a black bear.

We are pet free, after having two cats, sequentially. I expect we will remain petless.

Electricity, here in Mississauga, in future will cost more during peak hours per time of use billing. This change of billing will begin when every house has had its smart meter installed. We now pay more, as do you, the more we use electricity, but, unlike you, we have chosen to be billed in equal payments through the calendar year, thus our individual bills do not rise and dip.

My government advises Canadians travelling to your country "Criminal occurrences are frequent in many U.S. cities, and tourists may be targeted. Canadians should exercise normal security precautions." Nothing, **Gene Stewart**, about serial killers.

The rates of crime in many categories in Canada have been declining for years but our current, Conservative, government, with a majority in the House of Commons but only 40 per cent of the vote in the most recent election, is forging ahead to build prisons because of, and I am not making this up, unreported crimes.

My understanding of the reason, **Alexander Slate**, that U.S. car makers want fewer employees is that the car makers do not have cash in hand to pay the pensions the car makers agreed to pay their retired employees.

I am trying to imagine, **Ned Brooks**, how you separate a book from its mold using Lysol: immersion?

I have not been to Texas in summer. We plan to attend Worldcon in San Antonio in 2013, although, **Brad Foster**, I am not encouraged by your report of a record streak of 100-degree-plus days. July and August where we live in the so-called Great White North is too hot and humid for my comfort. But, if you look at a map and follow the lines of latitude, you see Mississauga is south of Boston.

Λ

Murray Moore

□TKK: *Ah, but does the USB drive ever enter your pocket on the way to its hidey-hole? My mother had chickens for a while when I was in high school. I don't think we were allowed to have them in Wisconsin due to local zoning. Our electrical bills do not fluctuate seasonally due to the lesser variation in weather, only when PG&E "tweaks" its rates. Your geography lesson reminds me of the trivia question: "Which country is south of Detroit Michigan? The unusual answer is, of course, Canada. This is not very intuitive as most residents of the the US think of Canada as being north of everything in the US.*□

Sheryl Birkhead  
25509 Jonnie Court  
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November 21, 2011--heck,  
now it's into December...

Dear Knarl,

Well, despite getting the used Macbook, I seem to have hit more computer nags than before. With Apple's Lion I will no longer be able to use the software and access files/records for over 20 years so I am trying (so far in vain) to locate a drawing program that is compatible and deciding on what format to save all the records for the past umpteen years. Unfortunately I tried saving some of my art on letterheads, then converted them to pdf and they lost a lot in the translation. You may appreciate that an online group of FreeHand users are suing Adobe—in an attempt to get them to either support the application or release it. I doubt this is going to happen, but I keep hoping!

I (as the saying has it) was gobsmacked when I realized I now have two issues of *TKK* sitting in the zine pouch, so I had better get busy!!

**Brad's** cover on #139 reminds me of Celtic design. I have tried a few simple ones, years ago, and had to continuously follow the ribbons to make sure pieces went where they were supposed to. Nicceeee.

Ah, you say your laptop is old and decrepit – this new-to-me-old-Macbook is from late 2007—so it is going on 4 years. You know you have a problem when you want RAM for Christmas.

Um- for a double play does the military have any offerings for architects? Yeah, time does manage to do its thing.

I think the ground wasps that took umbrage at my running the lawnmower over their nest were actually yellow jackets. We had a Mexican standoff—I was just outside of whatever radius it was they had established and that was as far as I could/would go. My sister-in-law suggested mothballs and a quick bit of research said yup that might work—and yup, that did work. As in your case I did not get stung, but that was just dumb luck.

Condolences on the passing of Kira's rat. Hope the "kitten" has learned proper climbing technique.

Ah, and I turn the page to see a piece by Hugo winner **Chris Garcia!** I refuse to jump ahead to #140 and see if there is a follow-up explaining where he managed to land. Yeah, that mold is nasty stuff.

My niece moved to Sydney for work. My brother and his wife did a world cruise last year and passed by—took time away from the ship to visit with their daughter. In a month or so they and their younger daughter will head back down under and visit with daughter #1 for a few weeks. At that point both daughters will spend some time in Sydney while the parents keep on traveling. I know New Zealand is on the itinerary again! Your mother's recap of the land evokes nice images.

Yeah **Brad** we all muddle along, or at least try to. Right now I am going month to month-hoping that what I have spent (and it is all going on credit cards!) will be covered by what I can get into my checking account in time. The interval has shortened to month by month—and **that** worries me. But, so far, even if it is a scramble, I pay everything off each month—even found Care Credit to cover the dental work (which has been a nightmare)—which offers no interest as long as you make the minimum payment monthly and **pay** the whole thing off within the agreed interval. Yes, I already figured out that the minimum payment would not payoff the whole thing—but apparently a lot of people ignore the part about paying the **whole** amount off within the specified time. So far, so good, or at least marginally okay!

I had a foul up with taxes last year too—and am trying my darndest to make sure that does not happen again. Crossing my fingers that my calculations will actually net me a refund—but I'll take just not owing.

I just got a distribution (right term?) from a class action suit with a stock I owned years ago. This is the second one this year. The first one specifically stated that the proceeds were not required to be sent to the IRS and, hence, there was no tax to me. This second one says to ask my financial (right!) consultant. Wanted to be safe, so I called and asked the IRS—they said both were taxable and went under the other income category. The last time I tried to tell TurboTax I had other income it wanted documentation as to what this money actually was. Finally I overrode it and forced it to accept it as "simple" income. These two checks are very small, but I want to be scrupulously honest about this.

Not being very fiscally knowledgeable, I listened to part of an interview with the "new" (first female) IMF president (Lagarde). It was interesting to listen to and hear the mention of gossip about rumors of her being considered for the French presidency. I could follow everything discussed—pretty much a first where such things are concerned for me. Ah yes, and the financial repercussions just keep right on coming...

(Agh, this software **has** to be my fallback, but refuses to work with text the way I usually do stretching out spacing and not splitting words—yeech—but I see no affordable way around it and I must come up with some functional way to keep records with the new system. I have that system on a thumb drive—bought and paid for—but will **not** install it until I have this figured out. It could be a long wait!)

Nov 26th is the second annual buy small business Saturday and this is the first I have heard of it. I need to look around and see what small businesses still exist close-by. I am guessing that the bigger chains of grocery stores don't count and I don't know of any small non-chain stores within a reasonable driving distance. I **will** try.

Ah, I see you made the summer vacation. I, once again, will go w here I have gone since 1991—nowhere! My first plane trip was to an LACon. While I was out there (any years ago now) I rented a car and did the tourist thing, including the Hearst castle. Quite interesting.

Yes, the veterinary ER bills are eye openers! Kamere just visited the veterinary cardiologist after I heard a heart murmur on his regular exam. The regular price for exam and echo is \$565. This is the first time my DVM actually helped (the cardiologist was school a year ahead of me but we never ran into each other) —they gave me a 50% discount—then I had to pay for the first diagnosis of the illness—and had been told by Kam's insurance company that, as both his owner and veterinarian, they would not accept my findings. Then, the insurance has a \$200 deductible per diagnosis—after that they pay 90% no annual or lifetime cap. So, while this time they only paid me about \$15—each time he goes back the deductible has been paid. I figure that at about \$20 a month, I could handle his insurance and I could **not** handle any large bills. I also have to say that his insurance has been more forthcoming and rapid in payment than my own insurance. Once again I called **my** insurance to be sure they would cover the flu shot—long story. They said yes. I filed all the papers they requested. They said no. I called and they said how silly of us, of course it is covered- I'll send it back upstairs. I have not heard the response yet. Please note that the last time this happened it took over 5 months and a lot of calls- to get them to cough up the money (but that was a shingles vacc and cost \$214 so I was more willing to dig in and fight!). Last time I checked the website (phone calls take a minimum of a half an hour) it still says they are refusing to pay, despite this being one of the 100% covered procedures. Sigh. The neighbors felt getting insurance for their new puppy was an unnecessary expense. Cost to one ER and then a specialist for surgery over \$8000.

The electric company certainly is involved in creative financing! An increase I understand, but a tripling?

My father was an agricultural economist with the federal government. I get lost when the dollar value has more than several zeroes—and I knew a little about GNP, but as I understand it, even that terminology has been replaced. I admit to my ignorance. I struggled through explanations about what

WE'VE SOLVED ALL  
THE PROBLEMS OF  
DRINKING FROM A  
FIRE HOSE EXCEPT  
KIDNEY FAILURE!



went so very wrong with the financial institutions—but struggling doesn't necessarily mean understood! I have resigned myself to simply living without much in the way of loans—so far so good.

For **Ned's** discolored wall, my first insanely simple response was that someone had simply painted around the bookcase. No—not buying that theory?

Interestingly, our cattle seemed to gravitate to poison ivy as tasty treats. I always wondered why their milk never had any problems (I am now guessing the culprit compounds got digested)—but when they gorged on wild onions—yeech—the milk tasted awful!

My intention was to get this written, then work on doodling—but that hasn't happened and I figure it is wiser to figure out how to print this on a letterhead sheet and get it mailed...than wait for time to take pen (so to speak) in hand--

Thanks and I'll try to respond faster next time!

ie!  
*Sheryl*

□**CKK:** CareCredit is a nice program, but you are right about the minimum payment. Some stores offer the same deal, so the trick is to divide the purchase price by the number of months in the promotional period and use that to set your payment amount. Figuring out whether a class action settlement is income can get tricky. I typically look to see if it is related to a deducted business expense or an investment to make the decision.□

R. Laurraine Tutihasi  
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19 Dec 2011

I just finished reading another enjoyable issue.

We, too, enjoyed visiting Mono Lake. The formations there are something to behold. We also haven't visited the Devil's Postpile but hope to one of these years.

Owning pets can certainly be expensive. We recently had a suspicious growth removed from Mercury. It turned out to be benign, but one can't be too careful. I've now taken care of three cats dying of cancer, and I don't really want to do it again.

Perhaps you should look into supplementing your electricity with the home-grown kind, either wind or solar. From the new billing structure you describe, it could be a very wise investment.

Thanks to **Sue** for her article about Austin. If we ever get there, I'll know what to do.

Re **Alexander Slate's** capitalism article, *The New Yorker* had a very informative article a couple of months ago about Keynesian economics. Never having studied econ in college (or elsewhere), I found it very educational. Keynes was very much the pragmatist. Too bad someone like him isn't in charge around here.

R. Laurraine Tutihasi

☐**TKK**: *Caring for any pet with a debilitating disease is not fun. We did that a few years ago and there was nothing we could really do to help either of our two cats with a disease that was never fully diagnosed.*☐

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Dec. 17, 2011

Dear Henry and the gang:

I know that it's over a year that I haven't LOCced, and my own zine was on hiatus too. Guilty, but with explanation:

The good thing for me was that I finally landed a new RPG writing contract. For it I put all of my writing for personal kicks on hold.

One good thing wasn't balanced by bad stuff though: because of chronic fatigue I slept in front of my keyboard more than I wrote, so I never made that deadline and missed my other

ones too. That ruined the 2011 Script Frenzy for me too; I got a shade over 30 of the 100 pages that I needed for a victory.

I had a major PC crash this past summer. I was hoping to LOC before it happened. My computer works again, but getting back n the LOC 'saddle' was tough by then.

NaNoWriMo 2011 was dreadful for me, again due to fatigue. I wrote less than 20,000 words the whole month. I'll try for at least a round 10 tries next year; after that I don't know if I'll continue.

One other good thing: I'm saving now for a trip to England in 2014, if London wins Worldcon that year. That will be the furthest that I've traveled if it happens. I've never before been outside of North America.

The past year plus I've been getting used to Garfield Oscar, the cat who came after Squeaky (he moved in after, didn't replace her). He can be upsetting a lot because he refuses to poop in his litterbox, only on my floor - but he's bonded in my heart now and me in his.

Another good thing: I now know the basics of InDesign. I was intimidated by books I read on it, but I had a zine to prepare, so I just dived in. I'll learn to use it better over time.

My stuff got a major move in my apartment this year, so I can't find my zines to refer to specific pieces, so I'll talk in generalities.

I read Sue's Sites about New Zealand with a lot of interest due to the tragic synchronicity; they appeared around the same time as the major earthquake in Christ's Church there.

The passing of Terry Jeeves must have hit you hard too. When I first joined **TKK**, Knarley was printing Terry's stories about his experiences of WW 2.

See you all next time,  
Jeff

☐**TKK**: *Congrats on the job. I hope you can get your fatigue under control. We once tried to train a cat to use the toilet. He knew what he was supposed to do, even perched on the toilet seat, but just couldn't manage it. He would then go on the floor in front of the toilet and be so guilty that we gave up on the idea. Terry Jeeves will be missed.*☐

We also heard from ...

Megan Bouchard, Brandon Green, John Hertz, Patti Hetherington, Guy H. Lillian, III, Jose Sanchez, and Sue Welch



## Fanzines Received in Trade

*MarkTime 105* by Mark Strickert; PO Box 1051; Orange, CA 92856; busnrail@yahoo.com; irregular; \$2 or the usual. Travel updates and general nattering in these two issues.

*MaryMark Press* by Mark Sonnenfeld; 45-08 Old Millstone Dr.; East Windsor, NJ 08520; irregular; the usual. Various strange publications with experimental writing styles.

*A Meara for Observers #9* by Mike Meara; meara810@virginmedia.com; irregular; the usual. A nice zine with many fine color pictures of Mike's DIY project in Parthenay France.

*Opuntia 71.1A, 71.1B, & 71.1C* by Dale Speirs; Box 6830; Calgary, Alberta; Canada T2P 2E7; irregular; \$3 or the usual. One of the most prolific zines with lots of interesting content. Three issues with various reviews of Dale's recent reading.

*The Reluctant Famulus 83 & 84* by Tom Sadler; 305 Gill Branch Road; Owenton, KY 40359; tomfamulus@hughes.net; irregular; the usual. This is a great genzine. Lots of SF and other interesting things along with a good letter column.

*Vanamonde No. 883-892* by John Hertz; 236 S Coronado St No 409; Los Angeles, CA 90057; This is John's APA-L zine with interesting tidbits.

The "usual" generally refers to stock in trade within the fanzine community. It can generally be met by trading of a fanzine, sending in a letter of comment, or by providing a contribution in the form of an article or some artwork.

*Alexiad Vol. 10 No. 5 and No. 6* by Lisa and Joseph T. Major; 1409 Christy Ave.; Louisville, KY 40204-2040; bi-monthly; \$2 or the usual. A nice fanzine with lots of book reviews and a solid letter column.

*Banana Wings #47* by Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; 59 Shirley Road; Croydon, Surrey CR0 7ES; UK; fishlifter@googlemail.com; irregular; the usual. A nice fanzine with lots of traditionally fannish content.

*Dark Matter 6* by Nalini Haynes; PO Box 144; Lynbrook, VIC 3975; Australia; darkmatterfanzine@gmail.com; irregular; the usual. A quite longish (~200 pages) fanzine in an easy to read e-format. Includes many interviews and book reviews.

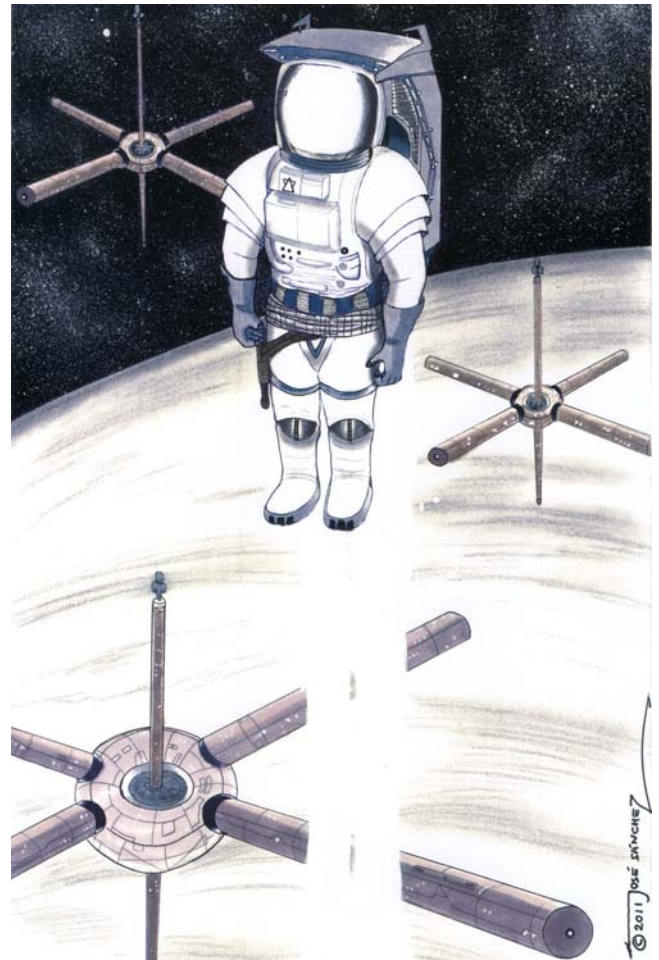
*Fadeaway #25 & 26* by Robert Jennings; 29 Whiting Rd.; Oxford, MA 01540-2035; fabficbks@aol.com; bi-monthly; \$15/year or the usual. A fine general interest zine that is also distributed with SFPA.

*Fanzine Fanatique* by Keith Walker; 6 Vine St.; Lancaster LA1 4UF; England; KWalker777@aol.com; irregular; exchange or editorial whim. A short zine composed primarily of capsule reviews of other zines.

*Feline Mewsings #46* by R. Laurraine Tutuhasi; 2081 W. Overlook St.; PO Box 5323; Oracle, AZ 85263; <http://homepage.mac.com/laurraine/Felinemewsings/>; Laurraine@mac.com; irregular; \$3 or the usual. A nice personalzine normally distributed as part of FAPA.

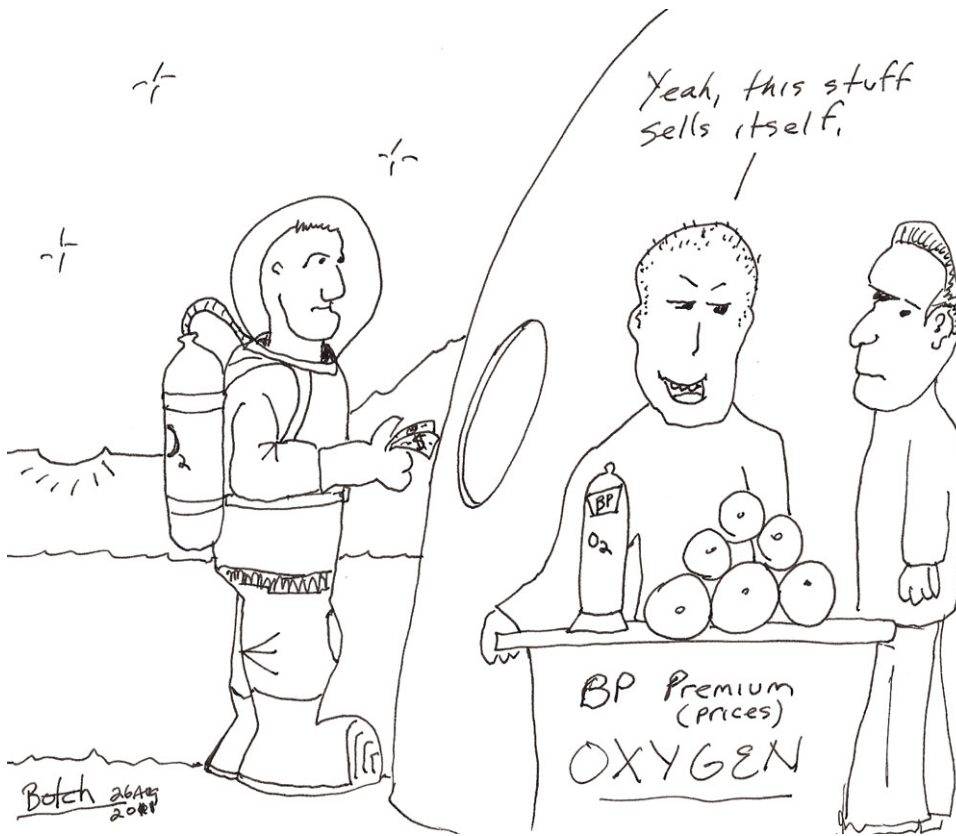
*It Goes on the Shelf 33* by Ned Brooks; 4817 Dean Ln; Lilburn, GA 30047-4720; nedbrooks@sprynet.com; annual?; the usual. A compendium of Ned's eclectic reading which ranges across the spectrum to SF, fantasy, and genres I can't even put a name to.

*Lofgeornost 105* by Fred Lerner; 81 Worcester Ave; White River Junction, VT 05001; fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu; irregular; the usual. This is Fred's FAPA zine.



## Knarley's Planned Con Attendance

Mars in 2095 (Worldcon 153)  
Marsport, Mars  
Labor Day, 2095



### You Got this Issue Because ...

\_\_\_\_\_ A young bobcat ate most of the neighbor's chickens. So far nothing at our place, likely due to the presence of two dogs in the yard.

\_\_\_\_\_ We finally gave up on our tomatoes for the year. One batch of spaghetti sauce and a few extra to snack on were all that we could manage.

\_\_\_\_\_ You are going to write me some interesting articles.

\_\_\_\_\_ We trade

\_\_\_\_\_ You sent me a contribution. Thanks.

\_\_\_\_\_ You sent me a letter of **complaint** comment.

You have \_\_\_\_\_ issues left before you are designated a black hole and dropped from the mailing list.