

News from SF writer Lance Robinson

My Coffee Shop Quest

Roughly six centuries ago, in the highlands of Ethiopia, plants of the genus *Coffea* called out to the Creator with a yearning plea, “Lord, help us arise and fulfill the purpose we were created for!”

The Lord heard their supplication, was pleased, and arranged for beans to be carried to Yemen by a creature who learned to cultivate those beans and to prepare beverages from them. Thus began the evolution of *Homo sapiens* into *Homo coffea*.

From Yemen, coffee spread throughout the Middle East and Mediterranean. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, coffee plants were taken to Java, and then Brazil, Colombia, and other fortunate lands, and soon after that the symbiosis between coffee and humans extended around the world.



*With some writer friends
at Seattle Coffee House*

This development marked the beginning of a new historical epoch, with one of its mainsprings being the *coffeehouse*, a place where coffee and humans gather to celebrate their mutual interdependence, discuss philosophy, and write fiction and poetry.

I do most of my writing at my desk at home, but I find that I’m often more productive sitting with my laptop or a notebook in a coffeehouse. And Thunder Bay, the city where I live, has an inspiring number of independent coffeehouses.

Back in December, I gave myself a goal of writing in every coffeehouse and coffee shop in the city. Initially, the goal came with a deadline: March 31st. Then I started to learn just how many coffee shops Thunder Bay has. Friends began telling me about other places I didn’t know even existed.

As a result, I wasn’t able to meet the deadline, but some of these same friends began joining me on my excursions, and we pressed on. Except for the big, corporate, Starbuck’s kinds of places, I believe I’ve now been to every coffee shop in Thunder Bay.

I don’t know if coffee feels it has fulfilled its purpose in this world. I know I don’t feel my coffee shop quest is complete. Perhaps it’s more an ongoing part of my life than a mission to be completed. And so, I carry on.

Thunder Bay Coffee Shop Review

For those of you who live in Thunder Bay, or who may one day visit Thunder Bay, I'll share a few comments on some of my favourite Thunder Bay coffeehouses:

Dolce Coffee House: best cheesecake.

Eldar Café: a wonderful atmosphere, Persian music in the air, delicious baklava. The best cappuccino of my quest.

The Habit: this former church still feels like a cathedral with its beautiful stained glass and celestial, open space. Won the prize for strongest espresso.

Rose N Crantz: As well as running a coffee shop, this roastery also supplies some of the other coffee shops in the city. Tied for first place in the Best Espresso category.

Upshot Coffeehouse: The word I would use to describe the atmosphere here is *community*.

Café Ora: I love the space—big and airy.

Copper Kettle: Tied with *Rose N Crantz* for Best Espresso, and I love the cozy feeling.

Upcoming Events

I'll be at two different book fairs in May.

From May 15th to 17th, I'll be at KeyCon in Winnipeg. KeyCon is Manitoba's longest running science fiction and fantasy convention. The vendors' marketplace is open to the general public; convention passes are not required. It's at the Hilton Winnipeg Airport Suites, 1800 Wellington Ave.

Fri. May 15, 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

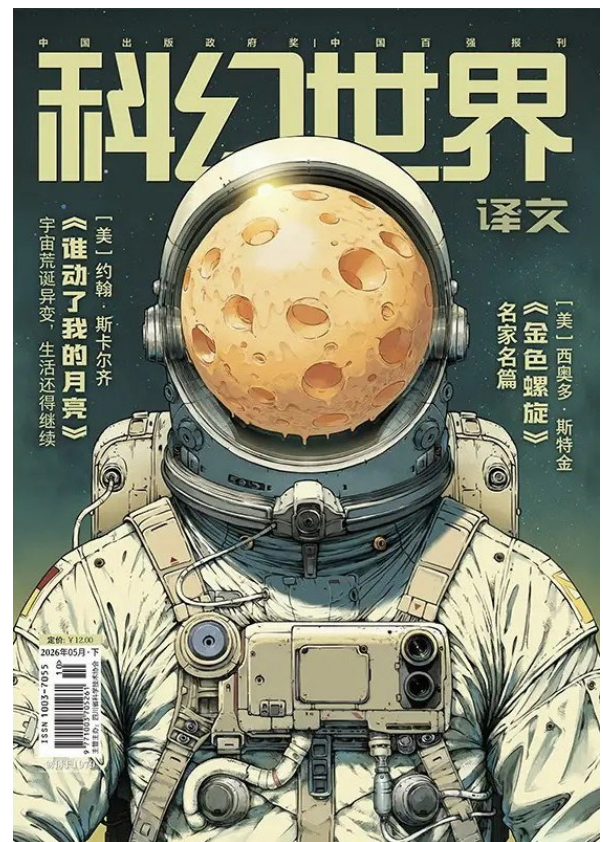
Sat. May 16, 10:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Sun. May 17, 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

And on Saturday, May 23rd, I'll be at LitFest in Thunder Bay. The LitFest book fair runs from 10:00 to 4:00 at the Italian Cultural Centre, 132 Algoma St. S. It's open to the public at no charge.

Latest Publication

My novelette "One Step Away," which originally appeared in *Analog* magazine, has now been published in translation in *Science Fiction World*, the largest and most influential science fiction magazine in China. This is first time my work has appeared in translation.



How to Support a Writer

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- If you've read *Chasing New Suns*, *Think Weirder Vol. 1*, or *Writers of the Future Vol. 40*, write an honest review on Amazon, Goodreads, or some other platform. Reviews drive the algorithms of these platforms and help other readers discover me.
- Go into a bookstore or library with the *Chasing New Suns* ISBN number (978-1-0688724-0-2) and ask them if they have it in stock or can get it.
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