



PIXEL
ONE

PIXEL ONE

pix·el (pīk'səl, -səl') n.

The basic unit of the composition of an image on a television screen, computer monitor, or similar display. Short for *Picture Element*.

March 2006

"No one really knows exactly how much havoc fanzines have created."

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Have you ever had an argument with yourself and *nobody* won? Well, that's what happened to me about this issue. The astute will notice right off the bat that this zine not only has a different name but a new format as well.

I'll admit that I've got my obsessive-compulsive tendencies, and one of them is that I haven't published a given title for more than 14 issues. Except this time. I noticed that the fabric of the universe was (apparently) not irretrievably damaged because I published 15 issues of *Catchpenny Gazette*, but rather than take any chances I've decided to "retire" that title.

I'd decided a while back that I was going to bow to reality and accept the fact that most people reading this fanzine *don't* print it out, and that I was going to return to a more "screen-friendly" version. And since I decided

to change the name with this issue I figured it was as good a time as any to go whole hog and throw everyone for a loop. Gone is my penchant for a more retro look (both Noah Count and Effie Cascious, erstwhile "mascots" of *CPG*, are enjoying their retirement in Naples, Florida), although I don't expect the actual contents to change much at all, just the packaging.

The new format can still be printed out, though. Instead of the non-standard size I used for previous onscreen versions of *CPG*, *Pixel* is done 8½ x 11 landscape format so that without any problems it can be printed for those who prefer it. It'll be a somewhat different "flip-book" kind of zine, but I feel that doing it this way is the best compromise I can come up with.

—David

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Thanks to Brad Foster, artist extraordinaire, for going above and beyond what any fan editor could reasonably expect.

Extra-special thanks and gratitude to Dave Lewton for recently scanning, printing, and sending me copies of my 1970 fanzine, *Microcosm*.

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AMDG

JIM LAVELL

Again Modest Proposals

No one really knows exactly how much havoc fanzines have created in our little fannish microcosm. Fans must publish them to be recognized as Big Name Fans; fans must write long analytical letters of criticism to remain on mailing lists; many fans are forced to engage in fund raising campaigns in order to build garages to house proliferating collections. Is it any wonder that there is so much interest in reducing the number of fanzines by burning them – on a selective basis, of course.

The art of fanzine burning is indeed a charming old custom, hallowed by antiquity. It has been practiced for years by Conservatives, Liberals, Fascists, Communists, atheists, rival editors, mothers, fathers, and drunken sex-starved librarians. As it is with everything of importance since the invention of the cloak and shroud, its beginnings are cloaked in mystery and shrouded in secrecy. Many scholars believe that the first instance of fanzine burning occurred in the Middle Ages when a monk was trying to illuminate a parchment one-shot. All agree, however, that burning was almost non-existent during the period when they were made of stone. With the

coming of papyrus, fanzine burning entered a new era and made a long stride forward.

One of the most famous literary references to fanzine burning occurs in Shakespeare. In *The Tempest* (Act III, scene ii) Caliban gives the following helpful advice to fellow conspirators when they are plotting against Prospero:

*Why, as I told thee 'tis custom with him
I'th' afternoon to sleep. There thou mayest
brain him,
Having first seized his zines; or with a log
Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake,
Or cut his wezand with thy knife. Remember
First to possess his zines; for without them
He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not
One spirit to command: they all do hate him
As rooted as do I. Burn his zines.*

Since our heritage is so ancient and we have practiced it so continuously, it might appear strange that there should be need at this time for instruction regarding methods required in destruction by fire. The need, nevertheless, is not only real but urgent. Many who are currently occupied in fanzine burning are not, of themselves, readers or owners of the magazines and are unable to effectively deal



When Friar Tuck sent copies of his fanzine into safekeeping during the French Inquisition, he was later able to trace some to a dealer in fish who used them to wrap his wares. This was the first appearance of the wrap zine...

Illustrations by **Jim Lavell**

with the destruction of these unfamiliar objects. For those able to read, these instructions will be found helpful.

Presumably the fire has been brought to an extremely high temperature. If it has not, it is not advisable to burn a fanzine whole. The initial step is to remove the binding, which is the outer part and has little printing on it. If, in the case of *Trumpet* or *Outworlds*, the binding should be of buckram or leather, it may be necessary to pour petrol over it to increase its flammability. Following this initial step the inner pages may be removed, a few at a time. If, like *Granfalloon*, the pages have been cunningly stitched together instead of stapled, this will be a laborious process, but well worth the energy expended. Large fanzines such as *Beabohema*



HISTORIC ATTITUDES

Shortly after the Norman Conquest in 1057, Queen Margaret married Malcolm Canmore, an exemplary soldier who could neither read nor write. When the queen showed a liking for a particular fanzine, he would take it in his hands and kiss the back cover. Fans have been kissing back sides ever since.

burn with exasperating slowness and require the expenditure of positively enormous quantities of petrol. Contrariwise, five or ten page zines such as *The Wit And Wisdom Of John W. Campbell* will burn quite rapidly. An additional dividend may be accrued by the simple expedient of removing the pages one at a time. Each page will burn rather quickly this way, giving off a pretty flame and leaving almost no ash.

Now we arrive at a point that may be left to the preference of the budding burner; that of selecting the site of the conflagration. Some experienced burners have reported that many pleasant effects may be garnered by judicious selection of the site. *Yandro*, for example, burns quite cheerily in the fireplace on a cold winter night. The soft glow of its embers provides a suitable end to a night of fannish merrymaking.

For cooking and especially barbecuing *Conglomeration* is of convenient size but has serious drawbacks. It gives an unsteady heat and leaves clinkers. *Embelyon*, however, when put to the torch imparts a not to be desired flavor to the meal being prepared.

With the advent of mimeography and offset printing, fanzine burning has lagged disastrously behind the publication rate. Numerous suggestions have been advanced from all sides, especially the Right and Left, about how to close the Fanzine Gap. The destruction of the individual magazine is, when viewed objectively, simply not feasible for the simple fact that hundreds of copies may be printed whilst only a few copies are being destroyed. One modest proposal being considered in some militant quarters is to burn the post offices and thus prevent the distribution of the offending articles. Still another suggestion is to burn the printing supply houses and thus

insure that the publishers' supplies will be cut off.

Because of space limitations, there is limited opportunity to discuss in detail the relative merits of the proposals. The burning of individual fanzines contains the element of sport and offers the participant the chance to be creative in his destruction.

The burning of post offices is a more desirable solution and the resulting conflagration can be spectacular. The burning of printing supply houses has merit, but since these businesses are scattered throughout the country, it would be inconvenient for a majority of fans to attend and they would have to be content with watching the blazes on television.

It is apparent that the specialists in the field have overlooked the simplest and most efficient method; one that would also afford a great deal of satisfaction to many people. It would strike at the very source, could be used nationwide, and with the exception of polluted air, would be without unpleasant side effects. This is so obvious that we can offer no explanation why its advantages have not been recognized and put into use.

Why not burn publishers?

We are quite certain that now that this method has been broached the simplicity of it will be apparent to all. Publisher burning will become widespread and it is likely that publishers themselves will join in with utter abandon.

It may be the greatest thing since The Great Staple War. ▀

Originally published in Embelyon 4, 1971

ERIC MAYER

Notes From Byzantium

More Math in Schools

I don't often comment on the news but recent reports of plans to make U.S. workers more competitive by emphasizing math and science skills in the schools were a painful reminder of my school days as a liberal arts outcast.

So far as I know, math and science skills have always been emphasized, or at least ever since Russia orbited Sputnik in 1957 and put the United States into a groundless panic. When I struggled with long division in the fourth grade I might as well have aiding and abetting the comrades in Moscow.

The school system I attended made it plain that while the arts were fine for kids to play at, grownups turned their attention to math and science. By the time I got to high school, I had to give up a study hall to elect an art class, and then my advisers made it clear that someone with my brains ought not be wasting his time on frivolous pursuits.

It wasn't that I disliked math and science. What scientists told us about the world fascinated me but I've personally always been more comfortable working with words and images than with numbers.

There is no need to further emphasize technological studies. We all have whatever skills we

were born with and the government can't increase the number of us gifted in math and science by decree (and don't seem inclined to do it by biological engineering...)

If education were treated as a right, not simply a commodity that many individuals and communities can't afford, then we'd have plenty of scientists and mathematicians. And maybe some more people with a grasp of other subjects like ethics and history which this country needs right now at least as much as it needs more scientists.



Shellac Memories

The Floyd that figures most prominently in my musical memories isn't Pink, and the most memorable Collins isn't Phil.

Fifty years ago, one of the 78s I used to play on the hand cracked Victrola that my grandparents still kept in their living room, was "The Ballad of Floyd Collins."

At the time I didn't give much thought to the reality behind the lugubrious ditty. Years later I learned that Floyd had been a legendary spelunker – discoverer of Crystal Cave – who'd been trapped underground while exploring. The doomed rescue effort lasted 18 days and captured the country's interest thanks to radio which was a fairly new medium back in 1925.

The subsequent ballad turned out to be an early radio hit, so it wasn't surprising to find an old shellac disk which had survived, except I'd never thought of my grandparents as the sort of people who rushed out to buy the latest chart topper.

The faint hiss and crackle the steel needle scraped out of the depleted grooves sounded like an ancient radio transmission. For me, it

Illustrations by **Brad Foster**

was like listening to an audio time machine. I wasn't much bothered by poor Floyd's demise. The passing years had transmuted his tragedy into history.

Besides, a song about a man who died in a cave was more to my liking than the sappy, Ray Coniff stuff my parents listened to.

Strange to think that my memory of listening to the song is as distant as Floyd's misfortune was back when I sat in front of the old Victrola.



Ideas vs Words

Last week I read Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. I can't remember whether I read it when I was a kid, or even if I saw the Disney movie. I do seem to recall having a set of View-Master reels based on the story. I must have. Where else would I have seen a giant 3D squid?

I was surprised how much I enjoyed the book. Surprised, because it probably it wouldn't meet a single requirement for either literary or

popular fiction today. The style was clunky, the plot virtually nonexistent, descriptions of marine flora and fauna resembled encyclopedia entries.

Yet the voyage of the Nautilus had me enthralled. I was constantly amazed by the undersea world Verne conjured up – from the ruins of Atlantis to the treacherous waters beneath the south pole pack ice.

Ideas are far and away the most important aspect of fiction. All the stylistic matters writers and editors and critics tend to agonize over, mean nothing compared to ideas.

We struggle to learn writing skills because most of us do not have truly great ideas and so, to make our stories work, we need to express what little we have to say in the most enjoyable manner possible. Most of us are competing to elevate our pedestrian imaginings slightly above the mediocre thoughts of others by dint of whatever technical tricks we can learn.

If I had the vision of a Jules Verne I wouldn't need to know how to write.

Rubbish Day

Today's off to a good start. I managed to drag the rubbish to the road for pickup. Luckily it was only one 30 gallon, plastic bag. Two weeks worth.

Since the car's snowed in at the bottom of its grassy knoll, I had to haul the bag down the hill by hand. I managed to avoid throwing my back out, or breaking a leg by slipping on ice, or ripping the bag open on an errant branch.

The descent reminded me of trash day

Eric's column is extracted form his blog at <http://www.journalscape.com/ericmayer>

when I lived in a fifth floor walk-up in a Brooklyn brownstone, only the stairs weren't icy or nearly as steep. And I was younger.

Back then I was going to school, even more impecunious than I am today, so sometimes trash went up the stairs too. Other people's trash, that is. A cunning little bookcase someone had mistaken for a lopsided box, and a chair that stayed upright quite comfortably if you shifted most of your weight to one side.

Then there was the severed head I found propped up by the curb. Not just any severed head either. The head of none other than John the Baptist, served up by Salome. Why anyone would throw away a three-foot tall reproduction of a Gustav Klimt painting I'll never know.

Anyway, today's bag is at the roadside, waiting for the waste disposal truck, or a feral cat, a dog that's slipped its chain, or a couple crows. Whoever gets there first. ▀



DAVE LOCKE

Difugalty: I Remember Lemuria, and Mu, Dimly

It was one of my usual exciting Saturdays. I had my shirt on two buttons out of position and with my imagination I followed the scent of instant coffee down the hallway and through the living room into the kitchen. My kid sat there with cereal on his face, and when he saw me demanded that I retreat ten steps and turn on the cartoons. I stood there until the set warmed up and was confronted with the picture of a horrified short fat Japanese who shouted, just as the sound cut in, "Captain! It's a monster!"

"Not before breakfast," I said, and turned it off.

With a second coffee and a third cigarette, and a three-year-old who had gotten involved in something elsewhere, I reinstated the movie.

The undersea people of Mu were attacking the vessels in Tokyo harbor. They surfaced this submarine, a door open on top of the deck, and this large metal dragon popped up and started destroying all the Japanese vessels with a heat ray.

The Japanese weren't too happy about this, so they whipped up a flying/sailing/diving/earth drilling ship in a couple of days and took chase. The ship was wide at the base, and had big needle-nosed fins. It tapered to a point, which was actually a big revolving drill. After

flying out over the harbor the ship plunged into the ocean, sailed to the bottom, and with the help of the drill on the nose of the ship it began sailing thru the rock on the ocean bottom. How they could sail through the rock when the ship had a larger diameter than the drill, I don't know, but I've worked two years with the Japanese and refuse to underestimate their cleverness.

It was when the ship, with those large sharp rocket-fins, began backing out of the same hole at a hundred miles an hour – that's when I boggled.

"Not before lunch," I said, and turned it onto the cartoons and called my son.

I frontled into the bedroom and sidled out of my clothes, as I usually do when I go to put my bathing suit on. Naturally, I stood there naked, just as my wife walked in.

"What's the matter – didn't you like the movie? I see Brian is ... what's going on here? Or coming off, as the case may be."

"The movie was driving me crazy. I let Brian watch the cartoons."

"It looks like you changed channels too late," she observed. "Maybe I should switch them back for shock treatment."

"Never mind the hysterics," I said with

fleshy dignity. "Where's my swim trunks?"

"Why? Are you going to dive into Tokyo harbor and help fight the undersea people of Mu?"

The water was still cool. Our apartment manager like to keep it at 90°, but when they went on vacation they left Phoebe in charge and I promptly dropped the water temperature to about 82°. All these weird Southern Californians we have for neighbors would dive in at one end of the pool and come out the other end on a dead run. Where I come from 90° is a hot shower. I hated to swim in our heated pool out here because of the strange motions I kept making with my left hand, as though I were reaching for a bar of soap.

But they were back from vacation, and hadn't hiked up the pool temperature yet. On the deeper end of the pool (eight feet) there's a large underwater light set three feet below the surface of the water. It's held into the cement wall by four screws which brace it in there – about the same way you'd be holding yourself up if you were climbing out of a well you'd fallen into. Of course, you'd have more than an eighth of an inch lip on which to position your hands and feet, but the light didn't. And it kept falling out, and would dangle at the end of its cord, hanging about three feet above the bottom of the pool

and illuminating the hell out of a very small area.

I saw that it was dangling again, but this was none of my business. I'm living in an apartment so that if I want to I can spend all my free time watching Japanese horror movies. The only tool we maintain is a white wall-telephone, which is remarkable in its simplicity and handles all kinds of repair and maintenance with a minimum of exertion. Once in a rare while it requires a second or a third application, but it hardly taxes my patience and barely at all my strength.

However, I'm a kind-hearted soul, wont to aiding people fight off vicious animals and animals fight off vicious people – however I happen to view the situation at the time of passing. I'll help people start their cars, repair their lawnmowers, and move their furniture. I'll help children up the stairs, old ladies cross the street, and young ladies cross the street and up to their apartment. I'm a decent person, and I've got to

stop watching those Superman re-runs.

But the light was dangling, and the repairman came to fix it while I was in the pool. He lay face down on the pool apron, stuck his arms into the water and hauled up on the dripping fixture. After replacing the bulb he said to the apartment manager: "We need someone in a suit to put this back in."

She nodded in agreement, and they gazed out over the pool as though deep in meditation.

I treaded water carefully.

The problem was that none of the four screws could be tightened by hand. This was the basic problem. It was due to this that I encountered the additional problem of trying to use a screwdriver while suspending myself three feet underwater. If my breath didn't give out, if the screwdriver didn't slip off the head of the screw, then I still had to cope with the difficulty of getting leverage. It is extreme-

ly difficult to exert pressure while kicking like mad in an attempt to at least stay in the same position.

I came up for air. "Do you mind if I take a half-hour break? I think there's a Superman re-run on."

After piercing my thumb with the screwdriver I told them it was no use. "I can't get enough leverage."

The repairman scratched his head. "I can take off my shoe, roll up my pants-leg, and hold my foot on your head."

"You can do the back-stroke inside a live volcano, and I can stick this screwdriver inside your ear. You also have the choice of going for your swimming trunks or of draining the pool a few feet. But you do not have the option to hold my head underwater with your foot."

"Just trying to be helpful," he protested, with a hurt look on his face.

"You're not getting paid four dollars an hour to hold my head underwater while I repair your light. And this job isn't paying me a nickel more than if I were inside rooting for the Japanese while the undersea people of Mu are destroying all the vessels in Tokyo harbor."

I swam haughtily away, leaving a trail of blood in the water behind me.

Later, after the Japanese had blown up the undersea city of Mu, and all the strange-looking yellow-skinned and slant-eyed people who had lived there, I got a call from Dean Grennell.

"Dave Hulan is over here and the two of us don't like to drink alone. Why don't you come over and the three of us can sit around and drink alone."

"That's not a bad idea," I told him. "I'd be glad to drink alone with you. I'll be over as soon as I change the bandage on my thumb."

"What happened to your thumb?" he asked, incautiously.



"I stuck a screwdriver into it at about the same time as the Japanese were drilling through rocks beneath the city of Mu," I told him.

"I hope you aren't too far ahead of us," he said, and hung up.

When I walked in on them they were toasting with glasses of a ruby-red beverage. I looked skeptically at the drinks, being all too familiar with the experiments and spirits of Dr. Grennell.

"I'll get you a drink," he said to me as he hopped up from the kitchen table and dashed into the kitchen. He went by way of the patio, swimming across the pool, leaping the hedge, and running around the block to come into the kitchen via the window over the sink. Dave Hulan set down his drink, smiled up at me in greeting, and slid under the table.

I ran double-time into the kitchen. "Wait a minute," I said. "What are you planning to fix me?"

"A cherry bomb. The same as we're having." Dean had stoppered up the sink, thrown out the potato peelings, and was pouring gallon jugs of vodka and cherry wine in with each hand.

"I've been drinking bourbon today, and maybe I'd better stick with that," I told him.

Dave Hulan crawled into the kitchen and wrapped his arms around my ankles. "I don't want to drink this stuff alone!" he bawled.

A few hours later, after much small talk of no consequence (just like the content of this column), Dean got up and went to bed. We didn't think much of it at the time, since Dean often leaves in the middle of a party or a conversation to go to bed, especially if the conversation has turned away from re-loading or cameras. And sometimes even cameras. But sooner or later it dawned on us that the rest of his family had gone to bed ages ago, and we were the only ones still conscious in the Grennell household. The last comment was debatable, so we debated that for

another half-hour or so until the real matter of import struck us.

Who was going to lock the door when we left? All the Grennells were in bed.

The last people awake in the Grennell household sat alone in the dining room. There was a knock at the door.

It was Don Downey, one of Dean's neighbors, so we invited him in for a drink.

"Where's Dean?" he asked.

"He went to bed long ago," Dave told him.

"What are you doing here?"

"We can't leave until we solve this terrible problem," I said, in deep seriousness, and explained it to him. Surely someone should lock the door after we left. But who was going to do it?

He laughed, poured another drink, and we launched ourselves into another hour or so of crucial small talk. Finally, after Don and I finished the bourbon and Dave crouched inside an empty gallon jug of cherry bombs licking the inner walls, Don leaned over the table and whispered confidentially to me.

"You're right. Who is going to lock the door?"

Finally Jean Grennell woke up and we talked for another half-hour or so. And we took a vote, and she was unanimously elected to lock the door after we all left.

So I went home, and at two a.m. in the morning I slid into bed and told my wife I'd never been in such a predicament before. Never.

"I'm too tired," she mumbled. "Maybe tomorrow."

"No, you don't understand," I told her. "I'd never felt so helpless, so unable to make a decision before in my life. And me an executive. It was excruciating."

And I told her about the problem of some-

how locking the door behind us when we left. I couldn't order someone to do it, because they didn't know how and were looking to me for guidance. And I had let them down. Jean Grennell had come out and taken the responsibility out of my hands and satisfactorily resolved the matter.

"Don't worry too much about it," she soothed. "You'd never encountered that problem before, and anyway it wasn't your decision to handle. It was Jean's department."

"I knew you'd be understanding. You didn't even laugh when they backed the ship out of the same hole at a hundred miles an hour. You're terrific."

"I'm too tired," she mumbled. "Maybe tomorrow."

"But not before breakfast," I said, and turned myself off.

It was one of my usual exciting Saturdays. ▣

First published in Yandro, December 1970

Are There Worms in Hell That Never Die

Lee Lavell

Are there worms in Hell that never die?

I think of this and want to cry.

Poor little worms, what awful sin

Consigns you to the fires within

That awful pit for eternity?

If Satan were an angler he

Might say, "'Tis you who have to pay

For all the fish that got away."

LEE LAVELL

Much Nothings About Ado

I first got into daytime dramas (soap operas) in 1940 when I was eight years old. (It would help my self image if you would think of this as 1960.). At that time I contracted a severe case of the measles. In that era one was stuck in a darkened room, quarantined for around two weeks. Nothing to do. Couldn't read. The only thing left was listen to the radio. And the only thing, just about, on in the daytime were myriads of fifteen minute soaps: *Ma Perkins*, *Portia Faces Life*, *Our Gal Sunday*, *Lorenzo Jones and His Wife Belle*, *Rosemary*, and many others including the only night time soap, *One Man's Family*. As a result I got hooked on a few until most of the radio soaps died out with the advent of television.

Fast forward then to the late sixties and early seventies and *Dark Shadows*. In the summer and vacations and finally when it came on late enough that I could watch it after my teaching duties, I followed it assiduously, until it too died.

So I went looking for some of the actors from *DS* on other soaps and got hooked into *Days of Our Lives* and *The Young and the Restless*. I have followed those two ever since.

A few years ago the head writer of *Days*, James E. Reilly, began writing a second soap and I thought I would check it out. The show is called *Passions* and it is unlike any other day-

time drama that has ever existed.

Passions includes the basic soap-type families: The Cranes (headed by the nasty nasty Alistair), very rich and powerful, the upper middle-class black Russells, the middle class white Bennetts, the blue collar Irish-Latino Lopez-Fitzgeralds and the neighborhood witch. Yeah – that's what I wrote: witch. And that's where things start to go wonky.

When we first met Tabitha Lennox, the witch, she had as her companion a living doll named Timmy, played by Josh Ryan Evans, a little person who stayed with the show until he died during an operation. Coincidentally, the character, who had become a real boy, ala Pinocchio, died on exactly the same day as when the episode was shown. Her current companion is her half human daughter, Endora. (Are you beginning to sense a trend here? Dr. Bombay has also shown up, as well as a member of the Kravitz family.) Endora is a toddler who communicates by comic-book balloon. One must be careful at the Lennox house. There seems to be a gateway to Hell there as well as the resident "Boys in the Basement" (manifesting themselves by tongues of fire shooting from the heating grates when they are displeased). You also

would not like spending the major holidays there. For Thanksgiving Endora loves turkeys – live ones. While most soaps have the traditional sentimental celebrations, Tabitha gets a visit from "Norma Bates," dressed in a Santa suit and carrying the skull of her dear daddy, Norman, in one hand and a hatchet in the other.

Most of the characters on *Passions* are over-the-top. There are the usual soap star-crossed lovers, Sheridan and Luis, but they are really star-crossed, going back in various lives to Anthony and Cleopatra. One of them even managed to go down on the Titanic. Then there's Rebecca, who is so much of a tart that one could almost call her a pie. The ultimate over-the-top, however, is Edna, with her snorts, walker and diapers. At one point Edna even had an orangutan as a care-giver. Edna really must be seen to be believed. Unfortunately, presently she's off-stage, after having accompanied Norma on her last Christmas visit.

You never know what to expect. Things go along ordinarily (for *Passions*, that is) and then Whoops! We're suddenly in Oz, or some of the characters have briefly become cartoons, or there's a production musical number. (They've done two of those, both adapted to fit the circumstances on the soap: a Bollywood number and the "Jailhouse Tango" from *Chicago*). All sorts of disasters occur: earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, near asteroid hits, you name it. If they haven't done it, I'm sure they will. They love special effects, big ones and little ones.

Passions is *Dark Shadows* with a sense of humor. If you have a chance, watch it! (*Passions* airs on CBS; the Sci-Fi Channel is also re-running episodes from the beginning.) ▣

GEEZER QUIZ # 2: What do the following have in common? Billy, Mary, Freddy, Uncle and Three Lieutenants.

PETER SULLIVAN Being Frank

Most of my radio listening in the car these days is BBC, but I do occasionally wander onto some of the local commercial radio stations. One regular advertiser is a local firm called Frank's Factory Flooring. The adverts consist of someone with an exaggerated North-East accent (presumably meant to be the eponymous Frank himself) who reads a hurried list of all the latest carpeting special offers in store, always concluding with the tagline "I luv carpets, me." (Although it's a radio ad, you can *hear* the misspelling. Trust me.)

Well, like Frank, I too have a passion. I luv fanzines, me.

I discovered the postal games Hobby at the tender age of 15 back in 1983. In retrospect, it was never the games per se that were the interest, it was the zines. I was good and waited until I was 17 to start my own postal games zine, mainly because it took me a while to get hold of a second-hand mimeograph. And, as I got re-involved in the postal games Hobby over the past year or so, and diversified into science fiction fandom as well, I discovered that there was a description for people like me. We weren't peo-

ple who read postal games zines but who didn't play games. Or people who read science fiction fanzines but who didn't read science fiction. No, we were fanzine fans. And proud. So what this column - intended to be the first of a series - will be about will be fanzines. Postal games zines, science fiction fanzines, fanzine fandom fanzines, whatever. In both science fiction fandom and the postal games Hobby, there seems to be a comparative dearth of fanzine/zine reviewing at the moment, which I intend in a small way to try to fill.

This could easily get out of hand, of course. There's no intention to try to re-create something like *Factsheet Five*, the famous behemoth everything-zine reviews fanzine of the 1980s and early 1990s, that covered just about every area of interest, from right wing "hate" zines to punk rock. (I note that the relaunch of *Factsheet Five* seems, according to its website, to have entered a spiral of Real Soon Now that has lasted over a year already.) Instead, this column will carry reviews of zines and fanzines that form part of *my* fanish interest. This is a fairly *ad hominen* principle, but hopefully if you are reading this, there's enough overlap between your inter-

ests and mine that the end product will be of interest.

The Abyssinian Prince 299 (Jim Burgess)
paper, 3-weekly, 11x8.5", 16 pages, \$1.50 within USA, \$3.00 overseas.

Jim Burgess, 664 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02908-4327 USA. 12

Also on the web at

<http://devel.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP/>

A thinner-than-usual issue ahead of the 300th issue spectacular, which is reputed to be shaping up for 100 pages. The lettercolumn, which is the main focus of the non-games content, has been getting a little bit baseball-heavy recently for my personal liking (really since Jim's beloved Boston Red Sox won the World Series in 2004), but then I've never understood the American fascination with grown-up rounders anyway. Features a revived subzine from me, called *Octopus's Garden*, in which I shamelessly re-cycle APA contributions that no-one else would otherwise see. Expect a longer and more detailed review next issue, by which time the monster 300th issue should be on hand.

Games currently run include Diplomacy, Breaking Away (cycling), plus a number of other games in the sub-zines. Waiting lists for new

Illustration by **William Rotsler**

games are open for Diplomacy.

Ansible 223 (Dave Langford)

paper, monthly, A4, 2 pages, SSAE.

Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, England, RG1 5AU.

Also on the web at <http://news.ansible.co.uk/>

There's almost nothing I can say about *Ansible* that hasn't been said before at some point over its 27-year run. So instead, I'll take this opportunity to plug the Checkpoint Archive Project.

Checkpoint was *Ansible's* predecessor as the leading British science fiction fan news zine in the 1970s, and Dave is currently co-ordinating an effort to get all of the back issues re-keyed and available on-line at <http://checkpoint.ansible.co.uk>. Volunteers are eagerly sought to type up the text – either from photocopies or scans provided by Dave – and we already have 80 of



the 110 issues done. Most of the issues are fairly short (4-6 pages), so the work involved in doing a single issue isn't excessive. Having done a few issues myself, I can recommend it as a productive form of fan activity – you get almost as much internal egoboo as typing a new fanzine yourself, without the annoying hassle of having to work out what you're going to say next. And if you get an Ian Maule issue, you can even have interesting philosophical internal debates with yourself about how faithful you should be to the original typos. Oh, and British postal games Hobby members might like to note the frequency that recognisable names like John Piggott (*Ethil the Frog*), Nick Shears (*Down Alien Skies*) and Hartley Patterson (*War Bulletin, News from Bree*) crop up. So why not e-mail Dave and volunteer for re-keying an issue?

Banana Wings 25 (Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer)

paper, quarterly, A4 booklet, 36 pages, "the usual."

Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer, 59 Shirley Road, CROYDEN, Surrey, CR0 7ES.

Voted Best Fanzine in the Nova Awards last autumn, and deservedly so, not just as a consolation on missing out to *Plokta* on the Best Fanzine Hugo. This issue has a somewhat unusual structure, in that *BW* usually specializes in 2-3 page guest written articles. But this time, there's a much longer piece - 10 pages in all - about the mailing list discussions ahead of a panel discussion at Novacon about what science fiction books to recommend to teenagers. Thereby proving both to Claire Brialey's dad and to my wife that science fiction fanzines do, indeed, sometimes talk about science fiction. The discussion itself involves at

least seventeen different people, but still seems reasonably coherent - whether this is a sign of clear, constructive argument by the participants or whether it's just good editing on Claire's part I don't know.

There are also a couple of articles that move forward one of the ongoing themes from recent issues of *BW* - people's different expectations of science fiction conventions, triggered by Peter Weston's comments on the trufen.net web site on the 2005 Eastercon. Claire contributes an article which is notionally about James Bacon, but which, like all the best fanzine articles, is in reality about her¹. Chris Tregenza follows up with a fanzine article and accompanying artwork whose basic thesis seems to be that "serious" science fiction conventions, like fanzines themselves, are dying on their feet, and that "Fun Cons" such as the upcoming Year of the Teledu is where it's at, man. Mark then invokes editorial privilege to counter some of these points with a nostalgic look back at *Mexicon 2* in 1986, showing that "serious" fanzine fans know how to part-ay too. It would be interesting to know if Mark's article was already part-written before he saw Chris's or not. But in either case, it's a good example of the old fanzine tradition carrying a debate on in parallel, rather than the sequential form that we're becoming used to from mailing lists, livejournal and weekly fanzines.

This review is already too long, so I'll do little more than mention that there's an excellent 12-page letter column, plus that there's a listing of back issues available for the requisite amount of postage – write for details.

¹ Erm, potential ambiguity there. I mean that all best fanzine articles are about the author, not necessarily specifically about Claire Brialey. Unless of course the author is Claire Brialey. Or something. I'm beginning to think that this footnote is rapidly confusing more than it clarifies, so I guess we'd better plough on.

Borealis 64 (Ian Harris)

paper, 6-weekly, A5 booklet, 8 pages, 46p within UK

Ian Harris, 36 Brecon Place, Pelton, Chester-le-Street, County Durham, England, DH2 1HY.

Also on the web at

<http://www.boriszine.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/>

What happens to a postal games zine when the editor recognizes that he has too hectic a lifestyle to sustain his games load, but doesn't want to fold his zine? It probably ends up a bit like *Boris*, where editor Ian Harris has manfully resisted the temptation to open any new waiting lists for a while. This means that the postal games part of the zine has dwindled to almost nothing. But this actually doesn't matter as much as it might, in that *Boris* is a rare example of what I would call a games fanzine. In that Ian is a fan of games – old games, designing games, re-designing games, rating games or whatever – and writes about them entertainingly. Mixed up with the sort of general “slice of life” observations that any personalzine editor would recognize – this issue, it's the tale of an e-mail confusion involving me, but previous stories have involved the trials and tribulations of trying to post a full-sized pram sold over e-Bay, and having to escape from a locked, empty warehouse whilst on night shift.

Games currently running are limited to a Postal Backgammon tournament. Waiting lists for new games are open for Golden Strider, Postal Minesweeper and Footy!2.

Chunga 11 (Andy Hooper, Randy Byers, Carl Juarez.)

paper, quarterly-ish, 11x8.5", 34 pages, “the usual.”

1013 North 36th Street, Seattle, WA 98103, USA.

Also available on the web at

<http://www.efanzines.com/Chunga/>

Convention reports take most of the feature

article space this issue, including a double-header from Randy Byers and Sharee Carton about their trip to the SF Worldcon in Glasgow last summer. At which *Chunga* failed to win the Hugo Award it was nominated for, but a good time was had by all anyway. Equally interesting is a highly fannish review of the Seattle Science Fiction museum, complete with illustrations, which are (as is not uncommon in SF fandom) actually commissioned for the article rather than extracted from the nearest clip-art CD and shoe-horned in. The museum was actually founded (both in terms of a cash endowment, plus much of the original material for exhibit) by Paul Allen, who is of course the “other” Microsoft billionaire.

Some good fanzine reviews from Christina Lake follow, disproving my point above about the comparative lack of fanzine reviews these days. The letter column is quite Brit-heavy, even by normal *Chunga* standards, as several older fans crawl out of the woodwork with comments on Dave Langford's account of the funeral of John Brosnan last issue.

Claims Department 7 (Chris Garcia)

PDF, “quarterly”, 11x8.5”, 15 pages.

<http://efanzines.com/DrinkTank/index.htm>

FAPA, the longest-running general science fiction APA, is no longer the monster it was, and has for some time now had several empty slots in its 65-member roster. (This is usually the cue for an old-timer to bang on about how “I can remember when there was a waiting list for the APA for people on the FAPA waiting list.”) But one recent addition to the FAPA membership is Chris Garcia, who runs his trip-related fanzine *Claims Department* through FAPA. Of course, Chris being Chris, he can't possibly slow down to just quarterly pace, so this particular issue is a “between

FAPAs” special.

The basic structure of *Claims Department* is that Chris writes about a journey he has taken, talking about what happens on the way, and any books read, films seen or whatever *en voyage*. It's a good basic structure that provides an overall theme for each issue without being restrictive. This particular issue covers a road trip to Las Vegas and back.

What's interesting about *Claims Department* is that, although the writing is not noticeably any more personal than Chris's other fanzine, *The Drink Tank*, I find it much harder to find comment hooks to write letters of comment. Does there come a point where a personal zine becomes so personal as to be uncommentable?

The Drink Tank 68 (Chris Garcia)

PDF, approx weekly, 11x8.5”, 8 pages.

<http://www.efanzines.com/DrinkTank/>

It will prove true in spades (redoubled and vulnerable) every bitchy comment that fanzine fans have ever made about the irrelevance of the Hugo Awards when this zine fails to even be nominated for the Best Fanzine award this year. Quantity does not necessarily equate to quality, but as a personal body of work, Chris's output over the last 12 months deserves some recognition at least.

The sixty-eighth issue is somewhat smaller than some recent issues, but there's still a piece where Chris faunches over various exhibits from the Movieland Wax Museum, which are now being auctioned off due to its closure. The biggest exhibit of all being sold off is the entire bridge of the *Enterprise*, complete with a full set of wax figures – I dread to think how much those will go for if there's a bidding war. A few pages of carnal reminiscences from M Lloyd and others, before a tail piece by Chris about the Cinequest film festival, which he describes as

like a two week convention. Which, as a survivor of the longest ever games convention (Manorcon in 1994, which was also World Dip Con IV, and lasted from Thursday morning to Tuesday evening) sounds pretty darn scary to me.

There's no letter column this time – Chris has a regular stable of letter writers, including Lloyd Penney, Eric Mayer and John Purcell– but I guess this is probably due to lack of time rather than lack of material.

Next issue is number 69, which we have been promised will be a special Sex Issue, guest-edited by regular contributor M Lloyd. A nation trembles.

Ode 272 (John Marsden)

paper, 5-weekly, A4, 20 pages, 85p within UK, £1.10 surface mail overseas.

John Marsden, 91 Westwood Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, England, NR33 9RS.

There is a website at

<http://users.breathe.com/jandcmarsden/Ode-online/Index.htm> but most of the content is still reserved for the print edition.

This long-running postal games zine (continuously produced since 1979) has outlasted all of its contemporaries and is still chugging along with an impressive list of outside gamesmasters. John notes this time that no other British postal games zine has started a game of Diplomacy since 2001, so this makes *Ode* pretty much the center of the British postal Diplomacy hobby. Of course, there's still a few non-Diplomacy games zines about – the Brits diversified into postal games other than Diplomacy much quicker and much more so than the North American postal games hobby, which remained Diplomacy-dominated until fairly late on.

Games currently run in the magazine itself are Diplomacy (x9), Gunboat (Diplomacy variant), Vain Arts (Diplomacy Variant), Mercator

(Diplomacy Variant), Diplomacy Bourse, Bus Boss (x3), Railway Rivals (x7), Acquire, Maneater, Puerto Rico (x2), Hare and Tortoise, 1830 and 1837. With a game of Talisman and a game of Empires of the Middle Ages run by players-only flyer. Waiting lists for new games exist for Diplomacy, Railway Rivals and Maneater.

The Orphan Scrivener 37 (Eric Mayer & Mary Reed)

HTML, bi-monthly.

<http://home.epix.net/~maywrite/tos37.htm>

Eric (also, of course, a *Pixel* regular columnist) and Mary are professional writers, who co-write the "John the Eunuch" series of books. (Don't bother with the jokes – I'm sure they've heard every single one of them before.) But *TOS* is more of a playground for them to write about whatever interests them rather than direct promotion for the books.

Whilst I'm not sure whether the old saw that "all knowledge is in fandom" is necessarily true, I would posit that a somewhat more limited claim that "all potential Trivial Pursuit answers are in fandom" is possibly more realistic. For instance, thanks to Mary's piece this time, I now know that onychomancy is the art of fortune-telling by examining the white marks and specks often found on fingernails. Meanwhile, Eric frets about whether listening to his editor and making changes makes him a hack. No, Eric, but it *does* make you a professional writer...

Royal Swiss Navy Gazette 14

(Garth Spencer).

PDF, approx annual, A4, 23 pages.

<http://www.efanzines.com/RSNG/>

About a year since the last issue, but reading

Garth's account of his various trials and tribulations during this time, you can definitely understand why. The main set-piece article, by Taral Wayne, is an outline history of the march of technology in producing science fiction fanzines, from letterpress to mimeograph to photocopy to e-fanzine, with various esoterica such as ditto, hecto and litho along the way. Nothing in there that was really new to me, but nice to see it all set out in one article. The letter column has some interesting discussion of science fiction conventions, and the tendency for them to seek to be all things to all fans. Both the now-defunct Mexicons in the UK and Corflu in North America have tried to buck this trend, by targeting specifically at fanzine fans. Is this the way of the future, with specialist conventions serving different fandoms, with just the Worldcon remaining as the one broad gathering of all fandom? It would remove the pressure for smaller regional conventions to try to be "mini-Worldcons" in terms of the fannish interests represented, if nothing else. The zine finishes with a brief list of fanzines received, typically with a capsule two line review of each one.

Taboo Opinions 86 (Richard Geis)

PDF, weekly-ish, 11x8.5", 2 pages

<http://www.efanzines.com/Taboo/>

Bitchy single-line reviews are typically incredibly unfair, but still fun as long as you're not the subject of them. For instance, I once saw Suzanne Vega's *Bitter Little Pill* album reviewed as "Oh for God's sake, girl, cheer up." Tempting as it might be to apply the same line to Richard Geis, it would probably be unfair. It's not as if my own political opinions are necessarily that far away from his. But he does seem to have a much more dystopic outlook than, well, pretty

Continued on page 22

CHRISTOPHER GARCIA

Found In Collection

There are numbers that I don't like to hear said aloud. 911 is one of them. Nine-Eleven is another. Sadly, last week I heard it when a guy fell down like he'd had a heart attack around the museum. Not in the museum, but on the sidewalk outside the museum, and someone came in yelling, and I'm not making it sound any different than it sounded hearing it, "Call Nine-Eleven! Call Nine-Eleven!" Oddly, I was at the front desk at the time, reading a fanzine. That's right, I was reading a fanzine and this person running in was disturbing my reading time. Now, I did put down the zine and the sirens were already blaring outside, so I didn't have to make the call. I went back to my reading after making sure the lady was going back to the guy outside.

I had been looking through some boxes that I had actually given to the museum back when I was going through one of my big moves. I've moved 7 times in the last 8 years. I had a bunch of old calculators and such that I donated, but what I hadn't realized is that I had left a couple of other things in there. I had to go through it looking for a calculator to take apart for a demonstration piece. I pawed through the box and found a Con program book from the second Con I attended after I officially came back to fan-

dom in 2000.

In 2001, I went to Baycon. I've been going to Baycon since the first one, but I didn't go to several, including 1995 through 1999. I didn't remember much about it; I knew I did a panel or two, but looking through the book, I realized that this was the year I should have gotten back into fanzines because there was some serious good stuff going on.

Going through, I was quick to notice that some of the folks I knew a little about then I've grown to know a lot about. Rudy Rucker I knew as a San Jose State prof who was also a writer. He was Writer GoH and I did a discussion with him not knowing how good a writer he was. James and Kathryn Daugherty were the Fan GoHs, and they've become my two favorite people in fandom in the years since. In fact, it's James who is Toastmaster at Baycon this year, taking over after my run last year. I knew a little about Poppy Z. Brite, and I only briefly talked to her at the con.

Strangely, it was one of the regular people panels that I had forgotten about until I reread the program book. In 2001, I was first recruited to do a panel on food called "Tastes Like Gaghk!" It was a fun panel about the future of food. I had a lot of fun getting ready for

that one, but it was at the panel that I met a guy who I didn't know much about at the time. His name was Adam and he was a guy who worked at Industrial Light & Magic. I've always loved special effects, so I wanted to get a few words in with the guy. I got there early and he showed up and we chatted. He was a nice guy and when the panel started, it ended up that he had a weak stomach. Now, the things we were talking about included eating various insects and the things that might fall into an industrial sausage press. One of the girls on the panel was a Klingon by day, but here she was dressed very nicely and looked gorgeous, and she talked about literal versions of Klingon food that they'd make at their Klingon parties. This all turned Adam rather nasty shades of white. It was hilarious to watch.

Now, I discovered when I was looking over the programme book that the guy on the panel was Adam Savage. Adam Savage debuted in 2002 on a show called *Mythbusters* as one-half of the inventive team that went about disproving everything from urban legends to movie stunts. I'd had a good time chatting with him, and I found a couple of emails that we'd exchanged before the con talking about what we'd be doing. I sent him a note and I haven't heard back yet.

Some guys go and get famous and don't even remember the guys they meet once on a panel where people take turns trying to make him puke.

The ambulance took care of the guy on the outside and he was even up and walking by the time I got up to check if there was anything else in that box I had dug up. It turns out that there was, but that'll be another edition of "Found In Collection." ■

LETTERS F pistles

Eric Mayer

What an outstanding issue. Scene on the cover could've been places in northeast PA. In fact it could easily have been taken at Ricketts Glen State Park which features a trail leading past a series of waterfalls. And hey, I thought I recognized that quote on the contents page! Loved the telebubbie in the tree cartoon!

All your new contributors are terrific. I'm truly sorry there won't be any new pieces from Jim Lavell. The test questions struck me as being hilarious, even as far removed as I am from such horrors – one never forgets! But I always faced tests in the same state of mind I faced LoCing fanzines. Prepare to bullshit. There was something that reminded me of E.B. White in his observations on bills and gadgets and that's a high compliment.

I never heard that album Jack Blandifet writes about but I'm always interested to read about music from that period. I did have an old Paul Butterfield Blues Band album. I particularly remember "Shake Your Money Maker."

Interesting pieces by Chris Garcia and Lee Lavell but I'm not enough of a movie goer or SF magazine reader to have much to say. I will say, as far as horror goes, Stephen King's most hor-

rific book, for me, is *Pet Cemetery* and the boy's death is far worse than the supernatural material.

As for Dave Locke, I guess he won't reveal the name of this rustic fan he met? I mean, there are as many cows as people where I live, but still...

I think Dave told me the guy died of brucellosis.

Love those bios. What a good idea. If you don't watch out everybody'll be doing it. But that "Nobel" prize I got...was that a typo? Did you mean the prize for the John the Eunuch mysteries? The... uh... No Ball Prize?

I wish I'd thought of that, Eric!

I want to comment at length about what Jan Stinson said about series books because the whole topic of writing books has been on my mind lately, as you know from our correspondence.

Writers are pretty much forced to concentrate on series these days. And I agree, it isn't a good thing. But time and money considerations make it difficult to break away from a series.

I can describe my own situation, which

may or may not be typical. My wife and I have written six historical mysteries set in Byzantium for Poisoned Pen Press. The primary problem I've found at the level of professional writing I'm at is that time is money and I have to spend too much time making money to live on to have much time left for writing unless I get some payment for the time I spend writing. (If I were comfortably retired or independently wealthy then I could write whatever I pleased and however much I wanted)

The way publishing works today, in the mystery field which I know something about, and perhaps in the SF field as well, is that publishers mostly want series for marketing reasons. And not only do they want series but they need about a book per year. This isn't really the publishers' fault. It's just the way the market works. Publishing is a brutal business. With about 200,000 books being pumped out a year (more than 25,000 novels) it is all but impossible to even bring a particular book to the attention of readers let alone sell enough to pay for printing and distribution and office costs, etc., etc. (and remember publishers typically give at least 55% discount to distributors). Anyway, you can't stay in business unless you can make ends meet so publishers can't be blamed for wanting to put out books which might allow them to make back their investment.

Unfortunately, for someone who writes as slowly as I do, even co-authoring half a novel every year, particularly considering all the research required for an historical, is a monumental task. I've always spent all my spare time on creative projects, dating back to when I discovered fandom in the early seventies. I'd arrive

Illustrations by
Brad Foster & William Rotsler

home from work and spend all evening writing articles and LoCs and putting together the next issue of my fanzine. But writing novels, for me, takes more than all the spare time I have available these days.

The only reason I can write books is by juggling my freelance work. If I were on salary someplace, I couldn't. And to take a few less freelance projects, to free up a little extra fiction writing time, I need the royalties from the novels. If I were to spend a whole year, or more, writing a novel I couldn't sell – if I wasted that much time without being compensated for it – well, I'd be out of the writing business and that'd be the least of my worries. I suspect that's the case with many writers. They just can't afford to risk X number of months of work on a roll of the dice, which is often what publishing seems to be. And as far as finding the time to write something other than the series while writing the series ... well, forget it ...

Now believe me, I realize how fortunate I am to have a chance to write fiction, to make up stories, which I love doing. Most writers are lucky to sell one book. The chance to keep writing books is something most writers (myself included) are not inclined to gamble away, and, realistically, even established authors are far from guaranteed that some new project they do will sell. So, under such circumstances, it isn't very onerous to keep writing books in a series. Chances are, the alternative is to stop writing books. Heck, I kept publishing the same fanzine for years!

It's interesting for me to note that the fact that my life seems to revolve around writing books for an indie publisher is no great change.

During my twenties and thirties my life revolved around writing for fanzines. For a few

years I did mini-comics. Messing with creative projects has always been what's most important for me and I've always tried to do that first and then scramble for a living. ▀

Ted White

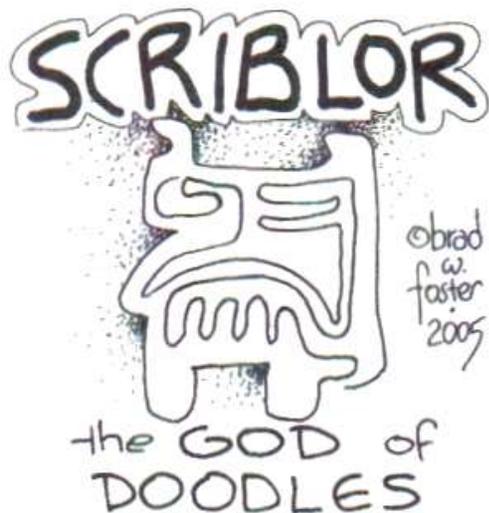
In #14 Eric Mayer writes about the form rejection slip he once received from *Fantastic*, and John Purcell in #15 says he got some too.

I created that rejection letter (and mimeoed it on the mighty QWERTYUIOPress, too). It served for both *Amazing* and *Fantastic*. I based it on a rejection letter I'd gotten circa 1953 from Ray Palmer at *Other Worlds*. That letter had boxes which could be checked off and I thought that was a good idea.

From 1963 to 1968 I read the slush pile at *F&SF*. At one point I decided to compile some statistics and I established that I was reading around 600 manuscripts a month, of which perhaps half a dozen would be passed up to the Editor (Avram Davidson when I started; Ed Ferman later), who would typically buy one. So for most of those five years there was one slush pile story in each issue of *F&SF*. Early on I was encouraged not to add any handwritten comments to the printed *F&SF* rejection slips (printed on the backs of covers). "It will only lead to more submissions," I was told. But since some of those authors deserved encouragement, I did add a handwritten note once in a while.

So it was with that background that I created the *Amazing/Fantastic* rejection letter. Drawing also on John Campbell's *Analog* rejection slips, I wrote a letter which explained the format in which we expected to see all submissions, and then offered a series of boxes which could be checked off which offered more specific criticisms or suggestions.

I did not read the slush pile (unsolicited



manuscripts) for *Amazing* and *Fantastic*, having burned out during my *F&SF* days. Grant Carrington was my first slush pile reader. Subsequently members of my writers' group, The Vicious Circle, took over the task. Readers in the group included Tom Monteleone and David Bischoff, as well as Grant, Linda Isaacs/Richardson and others.

Eric mentions that his submission to *Fantastic* was returned with all the boxes checked. Frankly, I think this was unlikely (since some comments were the opposite of others), but had I known about it at the time I would have raised the issue with the readers. However, I suspect Eric is having us on.

Also in #15, Jan Stinson looks askance at a writer who has been working professionally for 30 years and "who has chosen not to start writing a novel unless a contract for it has already been signed." She thinks "in a creative sense it's limiting," but I have no idea why.

Jan, I wrote sixteen novels in the 1960s and 1970s. I had a contract for each and every one, and would not have written any of them without that contract. Even working at a red-hot pace (one finished chapter a day; a novel in two to three weeks), I was putting a lot of time and work into each one of those novels and I needed to know that a payday would climax my efforts. (I averaged two books a year, but actually did six in 1966.)

In no way were these contracts creatively limiting. At the beginning of my career I would submit the first chapter and a detailed outline of the remainder of the book. Within a few years all it took was a meeting with the editor and a handshake (that's how I sold my *Captain America* novel to Bantam Books); I had by then a good track record.

If one editor/publisher didn't want my proposed book, another would. When Paperback Li-

brary (now Warner Books) rejected my *By Furies Possessed* because it wasn't like an Ace Book, I sold the novel to Signet Books (a better market) and sold Paperback Library *Spawn Of The Death Machine*, the actual sequel to my Ace Book, *Android Avenger*. Paperback Library got their Ace-like book, and Signet got the SF novel I was burning to write.

I've written only one novel "on spec" (without a contract) – a mystery novel I wrote in 1998, mostly to see if I could do it. Sadly, it has yet to sell, although it's never been marketed aggressively. It's "hard-boiled" and its protagonist works for drug dealers, and this seems to have put the editors of the now female-dominated mystery field off. I'm thinking about rewriting it, turning the protagonist into a woman, and putting a female pseudonym on it...

And so it goes. ▣

Lee Lavell

Interesting issue, David, despite the addition of "Much Nothings." Been a long time since I've written a LoC but here goes.

"View From The Attic" – Getting Jim to write something was always a bit of a chore. Part of it, I think, was he was so bad at typewriting and his handwriting wasn't much better. I encouraged him as much as possible, especially to do things for something other than our fanzine. I had to keep after him just to write the editorial, which is why our two editorials were called "Nag, Nag" (for what I did to him) and "Nag" (for what I was doing).

Jim was not only funny on paper and in person, he was also funny asleep. When I first met him he was a sleep walker, but after we were married that calmed down to plain old

sleep talking. There is one particular instance that I remember quite clearly. He woke me up by asking very loudly, "What is Gummitch doing?" This puzzled me because Gummitch, our Siamese cat, was sound asleep at the foot of the bed. "I don't know," I replied. "What *is* he doing?"

"He's learning how to repair shoes," Jim answered.

Ah hah! I thought. Sleep-talking. Let's see where this goes. So – "Why does he need to repair shoes?" I asked.

Jim: "Because it's a long walk."

Me: "A long walk to where?"

Jim: "A long walk to Minnesota."

Me: "Why does he want to go to Minnesota?"

Jim: "He's going to the University of Minnesota."

Me: "What will he study there?"

Jim: "Paleo-paleon-ttttt..."

(Since he seemed to be getting confused about this I thought I'd go back to the beginning.)

Me: "Why does he have to walk? Why can't he take the bus?"

Jim: "I guess he's just not up to repairing a bus yet."

At this point the conversation ended since I was laughing so hard I fell out of bed and woke Jim up.

"Notes From Byzantium": Of course cats can tell time. Cats know lots of things that they never let us mere humans be aware of – like repairing shoes.

As far as age goes, when I reached 55 some establishments gave me a senior discount. But they were only a few, so I wasn't really old yet. I couldn't even retire. But at 58 I could, and did, but Social Security didn't work. Sixty and 63 passed with more discount being added but

there were still some left. Then came 65 – no getting around it. I was officially a senior citizen everywhere. So I guess I’m old, like it or not.

“Palimpsest” holds little interest for me personally. I have no objection to rock and, in fact, like a lot of it, but my personal tastes do run more toward folk and dixieland jazz.

“Shambles”: Don’t get me on games. You wouldn’t like me with games. People play Monopoly with me only once. Maybe someday I’ll do a column on the fine art of cutting your opponent’s throat.

“Found In Collection” I can relate to, being a pack rat myself. I periodically clear out things that I have hung on to for years for no reason whatsoever, and it kills me nonetheless.

Marcus had some quibble about your bio of me – the part that says I have the better part of my mind intact. I’m not sure whether he means that there’s less of my mind or that the worse part of my mind is intact. ▣



Chris Garcia

I’ve always had a strange relationship with winter. I don’t actively hate it, though I hate rain and that’s what we get in winter, but I’ve seldom had snow in my life.

January/February were prime months for playing baseball out front of Rich Casem’s house. He was four years older than me and Felicia Louie, but we always played and had fun. I think I was 6 when I hit my first technical home run (knocking the ball into the yard of the old guy who was always out watering his lawn and wouldn’t let you get it). I used to love Groundhog’s Day. My granma used to buy me a card for it every year until I was in college.

I’ve seen the upside down bi-plane stamp. It was at a show in LA back in the early 1990s. The had a lot of security around it. I’ve only got a few stamps, a couple of Nazi stamps, a bunch from the old CCCP, some from Uganda, Congo, Canada, the silent film series from Liberia, and a few Brit stamps. I’ve got a Penny Black, a tuppence blue and a few other earlyish ones. Charles Babbage was one of the guys who came up with the British Postal system methods in the 1830s, while he was working on the Difference Engine.

Jim Lavell is one of those all-thumbs guys. I am too, for the most part. I was laughing hard about the ‘Fostering Communication’ stuff. Of course, nothing changed on campuses between 1970 and 1993 when I started college – except for that whole Vietnam thing ending.

Never been a big fan of Blood, Sweat and Tears, though I must admit they had a great horn section. I do love the idea of The Super Group, but too many of them have been very annoying. I hated Wings, but the modern idea of a Super Group is Velvet Revolver, with

members of bands like Guns & Roses and Stone Temple Pilots or Praxis with Buckethead of The Deli Creeps, Brain of Primus and Bernie Worrell and Bootsy Collins of Parliament/Funkadelic. I often hesitate to mention bands of the recent past when writing in various fanzines because I fear that most of my readers would never know the bands I mention due to age differences.

Elephant is one of the truly great movies of the last decade. What *Kids* was in 1994 *Elephant* is for recenter times. It’s a hard hitting, at times hard to watch film that refuses to give you any more than the events themselves. It’s the kind of film making that I enjoy: verité with a touch of harshness. Great film by one of the really great American filmmakers, Gus Van Zandt.

I found your name in the Programme Book, John Purcell. Since you were there, I’m saying that you must be the one to write up the 1976 WorldCon for my WorldCon issue. So it is written, so it shall be.

Wow, I’ve been accused of being Arnie Katz, rich brown and now Cheryl Morgan! Who am I going to be accused of being next? My guess: Harry Warner III. ▣

John Purcell

Another fine issue. You know, it wasn’t until something like last week that I realized you and I kind of returned to fan pubbing at roughly the same time (2003). For the life of me, I can’t seem to recall seeing any kind of fanzine from you when I was active in my first fannish incarnation back in 1973-1989. Will you do me a favor and refresh my memory? What zines did you produce then, if any? Your name certainly sounds familiar, but I hope I’m not confusing it with David Bratman, who used to loc my old zines fairly regularly.

I was pretty much out of fandom by 1973, although I may have attended some local club meetings that year. I published the last issue of my fanzine, Microcosm, in September of 1970, although I published some APA zines after that.

Throughout this entire issue I thoroughly enjoyed the art contributions of Brad Foster. He's producing such fun stuff nowadays that I have to get some new material from him for my zine.

Eric Mayer's notes about playing wiffle ball in the snow reminds me of when my brother and I used to play wiffle ball with our neighbors in our own backyard in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. We didn't do it in the snow, but there were usually six or seven of us out there nearly every day from May to October. We wound up wearing down the grass in five areas: pitcher's depression, batting area, and all three bases. Dad wasn't exactly furious, but once in a while he'd shake his head in wonderment. At least we were outside having fun. Once we all outgrew wiffle ball and were all in high school or college, Dad reseeded the entire yard to repair the damage.

I used to collect stamps fairly actively back in my teen years, and remember actually having that Dag Hammarskjöld stamp in my collection, which got to be pretty substantial. When I sold the collection to another collector in town, I got about two hundred bucks for it, which wasn't bad since I barely did any active stamp transactions myself. I do, though, still collect coins, and that collection at one point was appraised at approximately \$1,500 about ten years ago. Not bad for pulling stuff out of pocket change and the occasional e-Bay purchase.

I got into philately pretty late in life. Most collectors seem to start as kids, but I was around 30 when I first started in the hobby.

And directly as a result of reading The Scarlet Ruse, one of John D. McDonald's Travis McGee books, all about some extremely valuable stamps that had gone missing. I get interested in the hobby periodically and fill in some missing numbers in my collection.

I am really looking forward to reading more of Jim Lavell's material. Since I am a college English teacher, that test – the definitions were good – had me giggling uncontrollably, especially the essay questions for that poem. Most chillingly appropriate, too, because I really have seen poems like this in anthologies replete with esoteric analyses that seem to have little in common with the poem itself! This is too funny. Keep these things coming.

Since Jim is no longer with us, and was not a very prolific writer when he was (see his wife Lee's letter earlier), this issue's piece by him may well be it. Unless Lee finds more by him – she's been rummaging through boxes in her attic finding all sorts of gems, so it's hard to say what she might turn up.

Your other new contributors, Jack Blanford and Lee Lavell, must likewise be kept. Al Kooper was a seminal figure in rock and roll in the late 60s; I was a huge fan of his, and still remember wearing out the grooves on his *A Brand New Day* album. *Super Session* was a great set, and the combination of Kooper and Bloomfield produced some remarkable material. And if it wasn't for the creation of Blood, Sweat & Tears, that other rock band with horns, Chicago Transit Authority, may not have made it big. BS&T wasn't commercially viable, but it had style and substance. CTA

started out fine, but with a decidedly pop orientation, which is why it became successful. Of the two, I prefer BS&T, but the early Chicago material was quite good, too.

I was a big fan of Kooper as well, in fact I just finished reading the second edition of his musical autobiography, Backstage Passes and Backstabbing Bastards. I saw CTA when they opened for Jimi Hendrix during one of his tours (1968?), and they were very, very good. I can't remember if this was before their first LP was released or not, but no one in the audience seemed to know who they were.

Reading Lee Anne Lavell's contribution starts to fill in the holes permeating my memory bank. Now I remember you being from Indiana. (Hear that clinking sound? That's the sound of knowledge plunking into my head.) That comment about being married to someone named Jim and having "three sons named David" is pretty choice. Funny how things get blurred over time.

As to her write up of *Elephant*, she is dead-on accurate (sorry about the pun, but I couldn't help myself): true horror is not knowing when something terrible is going to happen at any given time. So true. Is Lee going to regale us, your faithful readers, with retellings of her fan-nish days from the 70's? That would be most enlightening from my point of view.

She might, but that could involve revealing certain youthful shenanigans of your editor that he'd really rather not have brought to light. She's already done that privately and watched my ears turn crimson red. However, if she can leave me out of it, she's welcome to give it a go here. And don't forget, Lee's "fannish days" stretch back to the early 1950s. She does have

some interesting stories. Ask her about her first meeting with Harlan Ellison – go ahead, I dare you!

Dave Locke's early fannish contact reminiscence makes me glad that I encountered fandom at Minicon 7. Not too many cows wandering the convention looking for some action. He's right, though; it's the truly odd fans that are more memorable than run-of-the-mill fans. As if we are all cut out of the same mold...

A couple more things before I sign off. Thank you, Ned Brooks, for correcting me about Harry Warner, Jr's favorite typewriter. When I went digging through old issues of my zine, *This House*, I finally ran across the lettercolumn in which he was talking about preferring manual typewriters over electric typewriters; it was in my comment to him that I mentioned my father's Royal typewriter, not Harry. My mistake. See? I *told* you my memory cells need to be regenerated every ten years or so.

Like you and Chris Garcia mention, your lettercolumn is rapidly becoming the centerpiece of *CPG*; many interesting people sending in great letters. It certainly seems like you're getting more readers every issue, and that is A Good Thing. Chris's comparison to us letterhacks being "drinking buddies who can't seem to all meet in the same place" is a perfect analogy. In my mind, that is exactly what we are. It's kind of like a con suite in print, if you will, where we can chat back and forth and all and sundry topics. Come to think of it, that sounds more like an APA, doesn't it? In any event, our electronic epistles help to keep the fannish dialogue going, especially when one reads the *LoCols* and articles in recent issues of *Catchpenny Gazette*, *Vegas Fandom Weekly*, *In A Prior Lifetime*, *Drink Tank*, and other zines floating out on *efanzines.com*, to say nothing of *Trufen.net*. Fandom is one

big dialogue, and I for one find it very mentally stimulating and enjoyable. ▣

Peter Sullivan

Interesting to see Eric look at baseball as a harbinger of summer, or at any rate spring. I guess I used to look at cricket the same way. But these days I'm as likely to be listening to cricket on the radio on the way to work in the morning in December or February ("Welcome to a sunny afternoon here in Sydney...") as during the summer. I guess it's our own fault for teaching other countries how to play - if, like the Americans and baseball, we'd kept it to ourselves, it'd still be a summer-only sport.

I suppose the only way we've kept baseball "to ourselves" is that its popularity is largely confine to this hemisphere. It's probably more popular in some Central American countries and the Caribbean than it is here., and many players on major and minor league rosters are from "south of the border." Of course, the Japanese have a passion for it as well, but relatively few of their players come here to play. When I was young I loved to play baseball, but don't care much these days for watching it, either live or on television.

Jim's complaint about the wrapping of books was written long, long before the monsters that are Internet book shops visited our lives. I would guess that trying to open a typical package from Large South American River.com, with boxes in boxes and books pinned to the middle of odd sheets of cardboard with that icky plastic stuff like butterflies pinned to a corkboard is enough to make him nostalgic for the "cardboard iron maidens" of the 1970s.

I gather that *Warhoon 28* is available as a

reprint in dead tree format from The Fanac Fan History Project (www.fanac.org). That doesn't necessarily remove the impetus to make it available electronically as well, but it does perhaps make it less urgent.

C'est Magnifique was indeed a postal games zine, that I ran from about 1985 to 1994. Given that most of the non-games content was hobby news and letter column, I've probably pretty much exhausted my backlog of articles, so you're all safe for the moment. It's odd that postal games fandom, despite its origins in science fiction fandom (John Boardman in North America, people like John Piggott and Hartley Patterson in Britain) has had comparatively [few] links with it since. Despite the fact that we re-invented or borrowed many sf fandom concepts - zines, zine archives, polls and awards, conventions, and so on. ▣



much anyone else, come to think of it. But then, Ambrose Bierce defined a cynic as “a black-guard, whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they should be.”

The Tangerine Terror 32 (Howard Bishop) *paper, 6-weekly-ish, A5 booklet, 24 pages, 75p in UK.*

Howard Bishop, 43 Guinions Road, High Wycombe, SP13 7NT.

Launched just before the turn of the century, I believe, and still the last new postal games zine to start in the UK. Now back in 1985 when I started, you didn't typically hang on to that title for more than a few days.

This issue has the usual compact letter column, mainly discussing football – Howard is, for his sins, an Oldham Athletic fan, although I've noticed that the letters from fans of other teams seem to have taken on a pitying rather than mocking tone. When even the fans of your rivals start to feel some sympathy for you, that's probably the bitterest pill of all. There's an article on the current state of cricket, with the new “super sub” rule that they've introduced into the One Day Internationals getting a particular slagging off, and deservedly so. Cricket is meant to be a game for 11 people (fielding substitutes notwithstanding), and this is the first step on the slope to American Football-style mass substitutions, which have already infected Rugby League.

The baseball focus in the games continues with rules for a new baseball simulation game called Diamond Dogs Lite. This is at the simpler end of the scale, certainly compared to some of Howard's previous efforts! Interestingly, it's not

pro baseball that's being simulated, but Little League. I can't immediately spot the “irate father runs onto field and punches umpire” rule, but you never know. Hobby news this time is mainly a few plugs for upcoming games conventions, but there's also a mention of the postponement of the Zine Poll. This must be the oldest postal games Hobby institution either side of the Atlantic, having run every year since 1974, but there's just not enough interest any more to continue with it.

Games currently running include Cathedral, Where In The World Is Kendo Nagasaki, Gravel Kings, Rome Imperium, Big Break, Postal Bobsleigh, Royal Portrait, Adventures of Baron Munchausen, Punters & Gatherers, Railway Rivals (x2), Trawling, Euroliga, 7 by 7, Boom Town. Waiting lists are open for Deadwood, The Far Seas, Airforce, Manager, Celebrity Weakest Link, The Country Game, Drunk & Disorderly, Decathlon, 147 Break, Africa 1880, The Big Break, Le Tour, Backpacks & Blisters, Postal Tennis 2, Gotopoly 2, Diamond Dogs Lite, and Winter Olympics. Most of these games are either Howard's own invention or his postal adaptation of obscure board games, so don't worry if you've never heard of many of these.

Vegas Fandom Weekly 67 (Arnie Katz) *PDF, weekly, 11x8.5", 20 pages.*
<http://www.efanzines.com/VFW/>

I gather that there are still some quite senior fans who don't bother reading *VFW*, assuming it to be just a little local news zine, of limited interest to non-locals. This ignores the fact that it's always run general articles about fanzine fandom, mostly written from the point of view of introducing Vegas newcomers to fandom, but usually with enough comment hooks to get the Big Name Fans in-

involved. But in any case the center of the zine these days has to be the Chatback letter column, which has proved an interesting middle-ground between the quarterly or slower frequency of traditional fanzines and the blink-and-you've-missed-it frequency of the fannish Internet mailing lists. Much of the conversation is about science fiction fandom itself – its history and its future. With Arnie definitely (and defiantly) battling for e-fanzines as the future of fandom in the 21st century. Me, I don't really care whether fanzines are electronic or paper – I like them all. Which is where we came in, really. ▀

Hopefully the format of the above listings should be fairly obvious, but just in case:

- First is the name of the zine, issue number and editor's (or editors') name(s).
- Second (*in italics*) is as many of the following bits of information as are relevant: medium (paper, Adobe Acrobat PDF file, or HTML web page), frequency, page size, number of pages, price.
- Most paper-based science fiction fanzines are traditionally available for "the usual" rather than subscription. Where this is the case, then for a sample issue, I would suggest sending sensible amounts of postage (*not* just a single first class stamp!) or an amusing or interesting letter explaining why they should send you a copy, or (even better) both.
- Third is the main contact address – postal for paper zines, web site or e-mail for PDF or HTML zines.
- Oh, and there's an optional line for zines that are primarily paper-based, but which also have a web site of some description.