



December 2006

# PIXEL *Eight*

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“Hey, Godzilla, where the hell  
did Tokyo go? ”

# Notes From Byzantium

ERIC MAYER

## Gimme Shelter

The neighbors in front of us, at the foot of the hill, are having a new house built. Cunningly, they've decided to have the new house constructed around the ramshackle old house whose badly patched roof we've gazed out over for the past five years. So far a wooden carapace encloses three sides and the top of the existing structure. I wonder if the place will be just the way they want it when they're done? Will they feel at home there?

I've never felt at home anywhere since I left the house where I grew up. I'm not sure I felt at home there either. I just took it for granted. People have homes. Just like a woodchuck has a burrow or a bird has a nest. Or so I thought. As an adult I've lived in a series of noisy, unsuitable apartments I didn't own and couldn't afford and a house I owned and could afford, and which was – because I could not afford to be picky – not

suitable for me. My current house is small and suits me better, but it isn't exactly what I'd choose if I were able.

Human beings must be unique in having to pass their days in dwellings they don't like. Does a fox select a cave it doesn't care for? Would a beaver build an uncomfortable lodge?

When I was small my grandmother read to me the story of Scuppers the Sailor Dog. The Little Golden book, written by Margaret Wise Brown and illustrated by Garth Williams, tells the story of a dog who wants to be in his boat on the sea. That's the only place he feels at home. I still remember the book fondly. I suppose it appealed to an instinctual urge to have the sort of shelter we need, to be just where we want to be.

As kids we were always playing in one sort of shelter or another. There were

places that were built for us. Every autumn, my grandfather would construct a hut out of corn shocks in the garden and he and my father put up a fancy tree house with siding and a porch in the big apple tree behind the barn. We spent a lot of time in these official shelters but there were others we made for ourselves, perhaps following some instinctive urge.

On rainy days my brother and I would push together every table and card table in the house and cover them with sheets to create tent-like mazes. I liked to crayon a control panel onto a cardboard box, take it into my bedroom closet, shut the door and pretend I was in a spaceship. There's an

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Illustration by

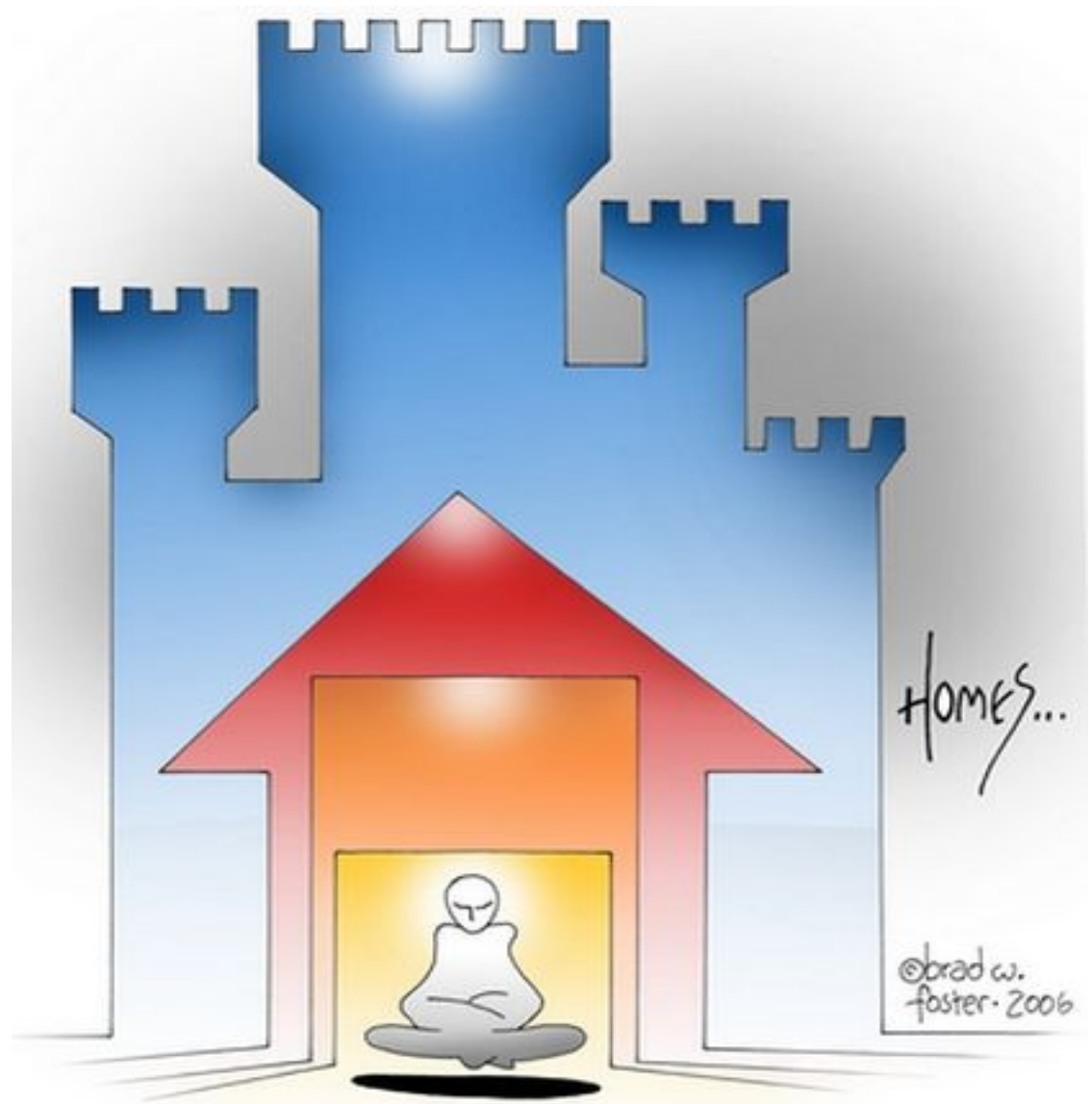
**Brad Foster**

appeal to confined spaces when you're a child. Limited environments are more easily controlled.

Once, my friends and I found three wooden doors discarded in the nettles near the edge of the scrubby patch of woods in back of our homes. We cobbled the doors together with some throw rugs and corrugated cardboard to make a clubhouse. It was a good place to tell ghost stories on summer evenings, when we were allowed to stay up late and fireflies flashed in the dark bushes all around. When we weren't in the mood for stories Johnny would swipe a bottle of his father's Aqua Velva and a pack of matches and see how long he could hold a handful of flaming after shave. Some things you can only do in the privacy your own home.

Not that we used the clubhouse for very long. The first hard rain found the gaps in our workmanship, not to mention dissolving the cardboard, and turned the rugs on the floor into a sodden, slimy mass. It was unsalvageable. Johnny suggested it might be best to burn it down but we decided to leave it, a ruined monument to be visited at intervals, as the weeds grew up through our handiwork, a reminder of ages past, when the summer had been young.

Probably the most intriguing unofficial place was the one made by our older neighbor, Bobby, who was better known as



Rubber Foster because at our instigation he would come lurching and staggering after us, flopping around like a rubber zombie, but nevertheless at terrifying speed due to his age advantage. At the far end of his yard, behind clumps of forsythia bushes, Bobby dug a rectangular hole in the ground. He laid plywood over the top and covered the plywood with sod. A hinged trapdoor and ladder provided access. The hole seemed about ten feet deep. It probably wasn't but I could stand up without hitting my head on the ceiling.

We'd sit down there in the dirt with a flashlight and pretend we were cave explorers. Sometimes we'd turn the flashlight off and pretend we were cave explorers whose flashlight batteries had run out. We'd imagine earthworms emerging from the walls in the darkness. Other times we'd take a snack with us and play at being miners trapped by a cave-in with nothing left to eat but a bag of Cheese Curls.

That wasn't even the best part. Bobby had also excavated a tunnel which curved around from one wall to the adjacent wall. The passage was barely wide enough to crawl through. Rocks sticking up out of the soil bruised your knees. You could feel the severed ends of roots brushing at you. There weren't any wood supports. It was an animal's burrow. If you paused at the U-bend you might as well have been

prematurely buried. You could almost feel the weight of the damp earth pressing in all around, squeezing the dark into a viscous blackness that lay right up against your eyes.

It was cozy down in the hole in a horrible sort of way.

I imagine it was dangerous. We could have ended up in the local paper, stupid kids smothered under a ton of collapsed dirt, a sad lesson for others. I would never have had to endure all those apartments whose walls and floors and ceilings vibrated endlessly to the thump of stereo speakers cranked up high.

Not that I could tell you exactly what sort of place I'd feel at home in. If I were able to simply go out and choose whatever dwelling appealed to me, like bears and chipmunks and mice do, I'd probably botch my selection. Mice seem to think it would be pleasant inside the walls of my house but I keep putting poison out. I always feel kind of guilty doing so.

When I lived in a fifth floor walk-up in Brooklyn I spent a lot of time hiking to escape the relentless assaults of my neighbors' stereos, radios and television sets. At the end of the street was an abandoned apartment complex of sorts, identified by a plaque on the wall as Warren Place. The building enclosed a courtyard, entered by an archway. The

entrances to the apartments opened off the courtyard rather than the street.

It was quiet in there, closed off from the city and deserted. There wasn't much solitude to be found in Brooklyn, at least not what a country boy considered solitude. The spot had an almost magical aura. Warren Place, I thought, could be somewhere I'd feel comfortable.

A few months after I moved from Brooklyn I read in the newspaper that a dismembered corpse had been found in a dumpster in there.

I don't suppose I'll ever find the place that's exactly right for me. Probably no such place exists. I can't help envying Scuppers who, at the end of the day at the end of the book, retired to the bunk on his boat, which was just right, first placing his hat on the hook for his hat, his rope on the hook for his rope and his spyglass the hook for his spyglass.

Maybe that's what home is about – a hook for everything we need a hook for. •



# Much Nothings About Ado

Lee Lavell

## The Myth of Fractured Fandom

When I first re-entered fandom in early 2006 one of the first things I began to hear about was how fandom was so very fractured now. I've been thinking about this since and have come to the conclusion that it is all a bunch of hooley. Fandom has always been "fractured" if that's what you want to call it.

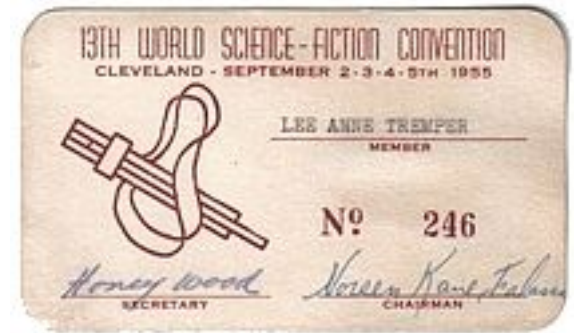
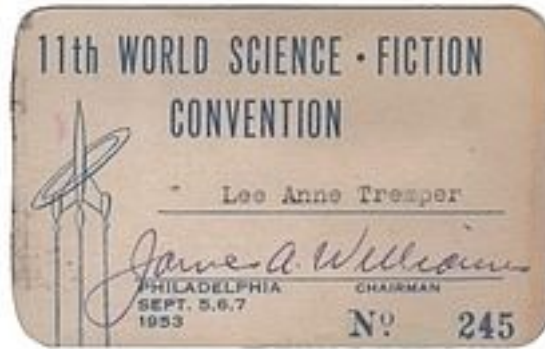
First let's do the basics. Fandom is more properly SF fandom. (After all, there can be all sorts of fandoms besides ours.) So, what is "SF?" Varyingly, it has stood for, through the years *scientifiction*, *science fiction*, *science-fantasy*, *sci-fi* and the one I prefer because it is all-encompassing *speculative fiction*.

I first entered SF fandom in 1950. Fandom was very small then, but not nearly as small as it had been in the thirties and forties. It was just beginning to grow. Back then fandom gave the illusion of being united because there were so few of us. Also, there were few outlets for SF. Some pulp magazines, many of which were killed during WW II because of the paper shortage were just now starting to be revived. Media SF was virtually nonexistent except for kiddie serials and monster movies. Radio had a few things which sometimes featured a form of science fic-

tion although mostly they were supernatural stories. There was one SF radio program that I remember called *Dimension X*. When TV came on the scene it was again mostly kiddie stuff like *Captain Video* and *Space Cadet*.

So, there we were, neofans and old-fans-and-tired, all together because there weren't enough of us to separate. But that didn't mean we didn't have our own separate interests. Some of us loved the club experience, some of us were letterhacks, some liked to publish fanzines, others to write for them, some wrote SF, some fanfiction, some articles, others reviews or critiques, some wanted to put on conventions and others wanted to attend them. Some had specialized interests in what media that existed. Some were fake-fans, who just liked the conviviality and intellectual stimulation of their association with fans.





As SF grew in the fifties and sixties so did the number of fans and with this increase the differences became more apparent. The “fiawolists” disagreed with the “fijaghistis.” *Famous Monsters of Filmland* spurred the movie fans. History buffs who wondered what the medieval period would have been like without all the plagues, inquisitions and squalor formed a sub-fandom that eventually became The Society for Creative Anachronism. (They like to disavow their debt to SF now but just look at their vocabulary and you can see the roots.) And so it went. Fandom was now getting big enough to support all these sub-groups, but still they mostly interacted.

By now fandom has so increased in size that this interaction is no longer needed. They are big enough to stand alone, and

don’t need “fandom’s” support any more. They have become entities unto themselves. But they are still fandom.

When one speaks of a “fractured fandom” one thinks of something that breaks, like a pane of glass that shatters into many pieces. This is not how I think of fandom. I regard it as a tree. The trunk is the main source and from it springs many branches which are all the sub-fandoms. Eventually a seed-bearing fruit forms on that branch, drops off and a new tree, or fandom, germinates and grows. Some times there is a really good growing season as some fertilizer is spread. One of those fertilizers has been the rise of the computer. Because of it many new fandoms have been formed based on the availability of the home computer. Enter-

tainment media was another fertilizer. Whole fandoms sprung up based on movies, television programs and computer gaming. And there are enough people around to support these fandoms now, while there wasn’t when fandom first began.

I guess that what I am trying to say is that fandom is no different than it was when it first started. It’s just bigger so the different factions are more apparent. So live with it, people. Fandom is just a big conglomerate mess. That’s what makes it so much fun. •





Originally published in *Sirruish 10* – Feb 1973

I think I've turned my kid off of anything that concerns science-fiction or fantasy. I let him watch *War Of The Gargantuas* the other day...

*TV Guide* blurb'd the movie as follows: "*The War Of The Gargantuas*" (Japanese: 1970) Russ Tamblyn as an American scientist fighting monsters in Japan.

Channel 5 advertised the movie in *TV Guide* with the following:  
TWO 150-FOOT MONSTERS IN COMBAT  
STOMP A NATION FLAT! (Sound like your

upstairs neighbors?)

Nothing sounds as bad as our upstairs neighbors. But I digress.

Channel 5 must operate on a fantastic budget. They run the same movie five days in a row, Monday through Friday. They advertise it with ¾ page spreads in *TV Guide*. And they buy the worst that they can find.

If memory serves me, there were two monsters in this film. One was black, and evil. The other had red fur, and was good. Although their skin and muscle tone were flexible enough to all them to run like hell, all modern weaponry and even disintegrating lasers could do no better than to singe their fur. So, they proceeded to stomp Tokyo.

What really amazes me is the number of times that the Japanese have had to rebuild Tokyo. Every time a monster is discovered, it heads straight for Tokyo.

Imagine two fishermen in a small seafaring boat anywhere on Earth. Except on dry land.

"John, lookitthat forchristsake!"

"Oh Christ, what is it?"

"It's a giant monster awakened from the deeps!"

"How do you know that?"

"It's rubbing its eyes."

"Suddenly the monster starts swimming away.

"Where's the ugly mother going?"

"Tokyo, of course. Better phone ahead and tell them to hold off on the reconstruction."

The crowd scenes in Tokyo used to really be something. Thousands of people fleeing for their lives, keeping just ahead of the monster's footsteps (or occupying them.) In later Japanese horror flicks, though, the crowds are getting less panic stricken. Perhaps they're getting jaded by it all. Even *The Fugitive* got tired of running after awhile. One of these days we may see a crowd scene that goes something like this...

"Good grief, Yamasaki, look at that!"

(Yawn) "What?"

"That giant 250-foot monster that just stepped on your wife!"

"Oh, *that*. That's nothing. You should have seen the one we had around here the other day."

But my kid took it all deadly serious. "Kill that monster."

"Why? What did he do to you?"

"He ate that woman and spit out her hat."

"I don't blame him. That was a pretty ugly hat. As for the woman, I wouldn't mind –"

"Careful," my wife interjected.

"Tell you what, Brian," I said. "I'll hold you up on my shoulders and you pop him one right in the nose. Ok?"

"No," he said, softly. "No, I don't think so."

"Time to go to bed. Pleasant dreams." But



he dreamed of cowboys. Guess that's because I watch *Gunsmoke*, and don't watch *Night Gallery*. Brian watches what I watch, but that isn't true the other way around. And I'm getting mighty tired of eating breakfast with *Bozo the Clown* and *Hobo Kelly*.

I wonder if a young monster gets in shape for adult life by stomping on Little Tokyo? One of these days they should rebuild Tokyo in New Zealand or someplace, and really fool the hell out of those monsters.

"Hey, Godzilla, where the hell did Tokyo go?"

"I dunno; I thought it was right around here someplace."

They've even got Japanese monster movies playing at the drive-in theaters around here. I thought it was bad enough that television would buy them, but to have them in a theater is ridiculous. But the places get packed, so there must be people with cash who want to see that sort of stuff. "Held over for the third big week! – *Gorgo Does The Backstroke*." But maybe the teenagers don't really care what's playing at the drive-in, just as long as they know who will play at the drive-in.

"Hey! Open up that car. What's going on in there?"

Shades roll up. Window rolls down. "Nothing, sire, we're just watching the movie."

"Then why doesn't she have any clothes on?"

"Well, the monster scared the crap out of her and I'm just helping to clean up."

"Oh, yeah? Well why isn't your car facing the screen?"

"We can't see over the headrests when we're in the back seat."

"Tell me what the show is about."

"The monster is stomping Tokyo."

"Ok. Sorry I bothered you."

Monsters are big business in Japan, and fairly big business here, too. I wonder why the monsters aren't getting on the big bandwagon to rake in some fast cash doing television commercials?

"Godzilla, you may stomp me for this, but you have *bad breath*. Why don't you try some Scope?"

Stomp.

"So I came to the States and the President told me: 'Try it! You'll like it!' I said: 'Aaargh, but whathell is it?' He said: 'Try it!'"

So I ate New York City. Thought I was going to die..."

Yup, monsters are big business. And can be even bigger. (300-foot, 350-foot, 400 foot, etc.)

But I've got to get my kid turned away from that stuff. The other day I was lying on the sofa and he stomped on me.

As it turned out, it wasn't that he was whole-heartedly involved in a monster fad. He was just angry because he found out that we had watched *War Of The Gargantuas* instead of *The Flintstones*.

I can get angry over a choice like that, too.



# Whither Fandom?

Ted White

## All Politics Is Local

I want to tell you a cautionary tale. I want to tell you how fannish politics took down a Hugo-winning fan.

Many years ago – in 1980, if memory serves – I wrote a piece about the politics of fandom. It appeared in *Warhoon* #29. In it I expressed my deep distaste for the politicking which sometimes occurred in fandom.

Fandom, I noted, was an anarchistic meritocracy. Because all activity in fandom was – and still is – entirely voluntary, fandom is effectively a functioning anarchy. While I don't think fandom is unique in this respect, I do think it is a distinguishing feature of fandom. Indeed, I think it is one of several defining characteristics of fandom. The “traditions” of fandom, against which newcomers sometimes chafe, boil down to workable and working solutions for various recurring problems which fandom has faced.

And the “meritocracy”? That comes from the fact that in fandom we are not judged for

what we *are*, but for what we *do*. Principally, we are judged by the nature and quality of our fanac. Those who do things well – art, writing, editing, whatever – receive acclaim for it. A “BNF” – although the term is declining in usage – is a Big Name Fan precisely because *others* accord him or her with that honor. You can't walk into fandom and announce, “I am a BNF” and expect more than a few derisive hoots of laughter.

In my own experience, politics in fandom occur mostly in those groups and organizations formed in fandom – clubs, apas, conventions. And of course the meta-politics of the countries in which we live also can intrude.

This probably came together for the first time at the first Worldcon, in 1939. A “Worldcon,” although that term had not yet been coined, because the convention was originally planned to be held on the grounds of the New York World's Fair,

this convention was soiled by two kinds of politics.

On the larger level, the New York City fans involved divided themselves politically into the Futurians (left-wingers, some of them Communists) and New Fandom (right-wingers). The spokesman for the Futurians was Don Wollheim, who would go on to professional fame as a prozine editor (*Stirring Science Stories*, *Cosmic Stories*) in the early '40s, an editor at Avon (*Avon Fantasy Reader*) later in the '40s, the editor of Ace Books in the '50s and '60s, and the owner/publisher/editor of DAW Books in the '70s. The spokesman for New Fandom was Sam Moskowitz, who would go on to be best known as fandom's first and greatest bloviator.

Moskowitz barred the Futurians from attending that convention. He physically stood in the door and barred entry to them. That sort of set the stage for New York City fandom and its politics, which was ran-

corous and disputatious for the next several decades. In NYC fandom there was a common joke: put three fans together and they'd form a club, from which one or two would either be expelled or resign to form a rival club. Clubs were always schisming.

In the early '50s there were often rival Worldcon bids from separate NYC fanclubs – bids which of course cancelled each other out. (And that was the point: When NYC Fan B heard that NYC Fan A was mounting a bid, Fan B would mount a rival bid to stop Fan A's bid in its tracks.) So when Dave Kyle put together the successful bid for New York in 1956, he did so with a "fusion" or "unity" committee, made up of members of all the rival fanclubs.

This was successful in overcoming the usual stumbling blocks to a NYC bid, but sowed the seeds for the subsequent WSFS Inc. lawsuits – between Chairman Kyle and committee members Belle Dietz and George Nims Raybin – which succeeded in roiling fandom for several years.

I moved to New York City in 1959, and attended meetings of the various fanclubs then in existence. I went to only one meeting of the Lunarians, then run by Belle Dietz – a fannish yenta whose bossy personality I found off-putting. But more off-putting to me was the political structure of the club and its business meetings.

The first club I'd joined, in 1954, was

Washington D.C.'s WSFA. Less than a year after I joined, and while I was still in high school, the youngest member of the club, I was – to my surprise – elected the club's president. As an eager young fan, I brought all my fannish friends from both the D.C. and Baltimore areas into the club, doubling the membership and bringing active, fanzine-producing fans into a rather backwater club, as well as prompting the return to the club of several of its founding members.

To me WSFA was all about common fellowship in fandom. We got together to pass out the latest copies of our fanzines, to talk about the last Worldcon and the upcoming one, and to hang out together as fans.

But to the handful of people who had been running the club before I showed up, most of whom knew nothing about fanzines and attended no conventions, I was an intolerable nuisance, cluttering up club meetings with chattering fans, and ruining what had been for them a quiet evening of cards. Worse, I'd stolen from them the political control of the club – without even realizing it. They watched helplessly as we revived a one-day "convention," Disclave, and turned it into an annual weekend event.

But WSFA had "trustees," who were a behind-the-scenes political force in the

club. It was the trustees who prepared the slate of approved officers for election. And the disgruntled WSFans who resented WSFA's new fannish activity seized control of the three trustee positions. From that point on, I was never elected to another office in the club, over the five years I was active in the club before moving to New York City.

I didn't care. I hadn't joined the club to achieve a political position in it. I had joined to hang out with my fellow fans, and that didn't require any politicking. But it rankled a bit to realize that *just by being an active fan* I'd made enemies of these people.

So when I moved to NYC, I was primed to be non-political – maybe even anti-political – in my fannish activities. And when the Fanoclasts were founded in 1960 (by Larry & Noreen Shaw, Dick & Pat Lupoff, and my first wife Sylvia and myself), we established at our first meeting that we would avoid fanpolitics as best we could. The Fanoclasts had no officers, no elected positions at all, no dues (no treasury or treasurer), and no business meetings. We had only one rule: We were all friends, and one No vote – a blackball, in effect – would keep out a new applicant.

In practice, no formal votes on prospective members ever occurred; it wasn't necessary. One or two people were in fact denied membership, but by commonly voiced con-

sensus, informally expressed. Most prospective members fit in so well that the issue was never raised. And for that reason the club easily survived for many years longer than most previous NYC fanclubs had, and put on a Worldcon in 1967 without any internal strife at all.

I've always pointed to the Fanoclasts as the best example of a functioning anarchistic club I could think of. No rules – just right (to quote a restaurant commercial).

The essential problem with fan politics is the kind of person attracted to it. Typically they are people with a Big Fish Small Pond personality problem. They see fandom as a power vacuum and it sucks them in. "Here is a small pond in which I can be a big fish!" *They want to run things.*

Such people, when correctly harnessed to necessary tasks, can be useful. The con-running branch of fandom is clogged with them, each more self-important than all the others. But to the extent that they start telling the rest of us what to do, how to behave, or, indeed, how to fan our ac, they are at best annoying and at worst a serious problem. Maybe that's why, despite having co-chaired a Worldcon and having run several smaller cons, I avoid con-running fandom these days. Too political, too many Big Fish crowding a small pond.

The politics is, after all, a *distraction* from actual fanac, from fandom itself. It introduces friction into the smoothly meshing gears of fandom, in the form of

petty power plays and bruised egos. And to some extent the bad (fans) drive out the good. Fandom is a voluntary activity, after all. And if someone else is making fandom less fun for you than it should be, it's easy to gafiate. Who can stop you? No one is barring the door from fandom marked "exit."

All of which brings me back to WSFA and my cautionary tale.

I returned to the D.C. area in 1970. At that time I found WSFA to be meeting in downtown D.C., in an area in the Northwest just off Washington Circle, in a large floor-through apartment belonging to Doll and Alexis Gilliland. The actual president of WSFA then was Jay Haldeman (the now-late brother of Joe Haldeman), and I'd time my arrival at WSFA meetings to be after the



conclusion of the business meeting, so I could hang out with the Haldemans, Alan Huff, Ray Ridenhower, the Gillilands, and others of that era.

I'd known Alexis since 1964, when he submitted a novel to *F&SF* and I read it. It was a variation on "Gunpowder God," and not bad, but not sufficiently original, either. I was in the D.C. area for a visit and attended a WSFA meeting, where I met Alexis face to face not long after I'd read his *F&SF* submission. I encouraged him to keep writing, and our meeting was a convivial one.

Once back at WSFA regularly, I also got to know the vivacious Doll Gilliland. A former lounge pianist and singer (Alexis had met her at one of her gigs), Doll was dynamite: a strong personality backed by a lot of talent and drive. She was an inspiring force in WSFA for years, mounting elaborate musical presentations at local Disclaves, and a behind-the-scenes source of energy for the club.

She could get pushy. Once, at the request of someone I knew at the Smithsonian, I organized an evening program at that institution consisting of the professional members of my writers' group, the Vicious Circle. It included Charles Sheffield and Dave Bischoff. Not long after that event had occurred, Doll upbraided me at a WSFA meeting: "Why wasn't Alexis invited?" she demanded. Actually, it hadn't occurred to me,

but Doll acted like I'd insulted Alexis and by extension her. But her ebullient personality didn't allow her to carry a grudge and we remained friends.

By then the Gillilands had moved into Virginia, to a house in south Arlington. The meetings, which occurred on the first and third Fridays of the month, were split between Virginia and suburban Maryland (no longer in D.C. itself), with the Gillilands hosting the first Friday meetings.

Maryland meeting places (various members' houses) came and went over the years, but the Virginia meetings remained a constant: always at the Gillilands'. The Gillilands had become fixtures in WSFA. I went only sporadically to the Maryland meetings, but I attended the vast majority of the Virginia meetings, always timing my arrival to follow the business meetings.

It came as a profound shock to everyone when Doll suddenly died in late 1991. I'm sure the shock was greatest for Alexis, but the whole club felt her loss. She had been the club's spark plug, and an indefatigable hostess at every Virginia meeting.

It didn't seem very long after that – but it was maybe a year – when Alexis began introducing a new woman, then Lee Uba, formerly Lee Swanson, as his "fiancée."

She'd been living in his house by then for several months as his housekeeper.

It was impossible not to contrast Lee with Doll, and for most of us the contrast was not a favorable one. Lee was loud-voiced and lacking Doll's social skills (to put it as diplomatically as I can). She horrified some of Alexis's friends. My then-wife, Lynda, pulled Alexis aside at one of our parties, at which he'd announced he intended to marry Lee, and asked him if he was sure he wanted to do that. He told her his eyes were wide open; he knew what he was doing. Subsequently Alexis and Lee (who were married on Halloween, 1993) stopped coming to our parties when Alexis almost caught her smoking a joint and she told him a whopper about "second-hand smoke" triggering a "Vietnam flash-back" for her.

It is my suspicion that Lee feared and distrusted me after that, fearing I'd blow the whistle on her to Alexis. But I could be wrong about that; her behavior might not have been that narrowly focused. Recently it has come out that both she and Alexis are alcoholics and that fact may better explain her subsequent behavior – toward me and toward others.

In any event, Lee became the 600 pound gorilla of WSFA. Her strident voice and erratic behavior came to dominate the club as she eased herself into Doll's position of club hostess and power behind the throne. Along

the way she made enemies, but most of them chose not to confront her, simply dropping out of the club instead, most notably when Lee banned Jack and Eva Chalker's toddler son from WSFA meetings, due to what she said was his behavior. Eva has said recently that she believes that this was when Lee first began seizing the reins of power and assuming the right to unilaterally ban people from club meetings.

Since I avoided WSFA's politics as much as I could, most of this turmoil eluded me. I'd arrive around 10:00 p.m., chat with Rich Lynch, trade deviled egg recipes with Alexis, and hang out with Walter Miles. Sometimes I'd allow myself to get into a pointless discussion-cum-argument with Joe Mayhew (who always argued from a Jesuitical point of view), and sometimes I'd get into an intense conversation with Elspeth Kovar. It was all fannish socializing, from my point of view. And I still miss Avedon, who used to enliven meetings back before she became an expatriate in London.

But in early 2002 Keith Lynch set up a WSFA e-list and talked me into joining it. Lee was a significant presence on that list, being perhaps the most frequent poster, but often with single-sentence posts which left me wondering what her point was. But in April the shit hit the fan, both metaphorically and literally. On April 20, 2002, Lee Gilliland posted this to the list, wholly with-

out provocation:

"It matters not one whit WHERE Keith found personal information about me or anyone else. He had no business doing so. It is an invasion of privacy. And against current Virginia statutes." [all strictly *sic*]

Various members of the list responded. This was my response: "Did I come in on the middle of this? What \*preceded\* Lee's post quoted above which prompted her to write it? I've seen nothing from Keith on this list that would provoke it."

It turned out that this eruption into the list had been provoked by Keith Googling Lee and turning up a reference to her in Rich (no relation) Lynch's outline for a '60s fanhistory, which has been posted on the web for years, on both its original site (Roxanne Smith Graham's website) and his own Jophan site. Keith had earlier mentioned this privately to Lee, and it upset her enough that she requested that he keep it to himself, which he did.

But it had obviously fermented in Lee's mind, leading ultimately to her outburst on the WSFA list. At concurrent and subsequent WSFA meetings she said a good deal more, at one point characterizing Keith's Googling of her as "three steps from rape," and accusing him of having a secret crush on her (the thought of which left Keith aghast) and of "stalking" her.

Rich Lynch, acceding to Lee's angry de-

mands, removed the mention of her from the outline on his own website, but it remains, still Google-accessible, on Roxanne's largely dormant website, for those who care to look for it. Here it is:

```
> Elizabeth Swanson (known in later years as Lee Uba)
  -- granddaughter of SF author Fredric Brown
  -- was in Air Force in early 1970s
  -- since Air Force's covert operation known as "Air America" did *not* officially exist
  >> therefore, she was *not* involved in any U.S. Military activities
  >> she was *not* a radar operator
  >> she was *not* stationed in Cambodia
```

I'm sure you can see what so upset Lee – can't you? Can you? I can't, actually. But here's the rub: the *source* for this entry was Lee herself.

Well, that set in motion a number of subsequent events, which led to Lee mounting a vendetta against Keith which erupted again last year, when she insisted that he was "spreading lies" about her. Her accusations were unfounded, but when others in the club challenged her about them, she raised the ante. Anyone who disputed her was a

trouble-maker and would be banned from the club. At some point Walter Miles rose to defend Keith, and I incautiously backed him. For those efforts we were both banned from the club.

And at that point Alexis entered the fray for the first time publicly. He not only backed up Lee – although he had only Lee’s word for what happened, since he himself never read the WSFA list – he publicly denounced Keith at a meeting as “a liar!” which sufficiently upset Keith that he subsequently resigned from the club. And, moved to justify banning me from the club, Alexis joined Lee in her insistence that I was not a WSFA member and had no right to attend meetings. Alexis published an open letter to the club (which to this day he hasn’t had the nerve to send to me) defending my banning by claiming that a year or so earlier I had “snubbed” Lee at a meeting. And Alexis wrote a letter defending his actions and attacking me which was published in the December, 2005 issue of *File 770*, #146, on page 24. It’s on eFanzines, if you want to read it. (And letters in response from both Keith Lynch and myself are in #147.)

I was offended. I’d been a peripheral player up to then, and it appeared to me that Alexis was scapegoating me. In his reading of fandom I was an easy target. He had only to say, “that awful Ted White,” and all of fandom would rush to his side. I had for

roughly forty years regarded Alexis as a friend, and I had always treated him with friendship. This was not the way I’d expected to be repaid. Why, I spent more time talking with Alexis at those WSFA meetings than anyone else. And not once had he raised the issue of my “snubbing” Lee – something I’d never done, as we both well knew. Like everyone else, I walked on eggshells around Lee, having no desire to set her off.

Elsbeth Kovar and Keith Lynch actually paid my WSFA dues (\$10, annually) for 2005 and 2006, to make my ban more indefensible. The Gillilands made claims that I’d sneaked my membership application past them, but in fact I’d had no hand in it and made no effort to challenge their ban. (There was no “application,” since I was already a longtime member. My dues were simply made current. This consisted of giving the money to the club treasurer.)

I dropped out of WSFA instead. This was *exactly* the sort of fan politics I wanted to avoid. And I stated publicly that the only way I’d ever set foot in the Gillilands’ house was if and when I received a sincere public apology from them. I know now that this of course will never happen.

I wasn’t the only one who took the Gillilands’ behavior as a signal to quit the club. More than half a dozen notable WSFA members, including Elsbeth and Mike

Walsh, also stopped attending the Virginia meetings or dropped the club entirely. And in the fullness of time – July of 2006 – the officers of WSFA found another Virginia home for the meetings and put it to a vote. Overwhelmingly, the members voted to move the Virginia WSFA meetings out of the Gillilands’ house.

This apparently shocked the Gillilands, who for some reason never thought the club would *do this to them*. Such was their arrogance, they assumed that the club *belonged* to them. They showed up at the first Friday meeting in August – the first in Virginia not at their house in over three decades – to contest the legality of the vote at the previous meeting. They did not prevail, and stormed out, not to be seen at another WSFA meeting since then.

I attended that August meeting, my first in nearly a year. (I arrived after the Gillilands’ departure, although not by design – I still try to miss the business meetings.) I saw a number of people I hadn’t seen at a WSFA meeting in years. The atmosphere seemed almost celebratory, and definitely joyful. It was as if the club had emerged from beneath a cloud, and once again the sun shown and people smiled and laughed. I enjoyed it. I had a good time.

This October WSFA held its new annual convention, Capclave. And Steve Stiles inadvertently caused a clamor when he briefly

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ran into Alexis Gilliland there at a Ravencon party, and Alexis gave him a new open letter, a five-page document titled “Alexis Gilliland Discusses The Moving of WSFA.”

When Steve mentioned this open letter to me, I mentioned it to the WSFA list. At first WSFans’ responses were, “I didn’t see Alexis there, and I seriously doubt he was there, so I seriously doubt he handed out this document.” One person actually suggested I’d made it all up.

But then, a day or two later, a good number of WSFans began receiving Alexis’s open letter in the mail. And their tone changed remarkably. One and all, they condemned Alexis’s piece and Alexis and Lee as well, often in bitter terms. It was remarkable how he managed to unite the club in the conviction that it was well rid of the Gillilands.

Naturally, Alexis did not send me a copy, although once again I am featured prominently in it. Keith Lynch, who is also attacked at length in Alexis’s screed, was also not sent a copy. (Did I mention what a sniveling coward Alexis is?) But Steve Xeroxed his and sent copies to us each. Later in that week WSFA found out that copies had also been sent to non-WSFans in places like Boston. I have no idea how widely it has been distributed. I have no idea whether *you’ve* seen it.

If you have seen it, you’ve noticed that

Keith and I occupy only the first two pages. The remainder is devoted to trashing other members of WSFA: Mike Nelson, Elspeth Kovar, president Sam Lubell, and vice-president Cathy Green. Cathy is an attorney, so it’s ironic that Alexis spent almost a page on her, getting virtually all of his details about her educational and work history, as well as her relationship with her family, *completely wrong*. And here’s the true irony: Alexis got all those facts wrong because he depended on a Google search Lee had done on Cathy! Is this then also only three steps away from rape?

In July it came down to the club vs. the Gillilands, and the Gillilands lost. Rather than rising to the occasion with any graciousness, they had a temper tantrum. And Alexis wrote his open letter, to explain that it was, in the end, *all Mike Nelson’s fault*.

Watching all this unravel as I have, I’ve been struck by the sheer *unnecessariness* of it all. Why did it happen? Why did it have to happen?

It happened because people got caught up in the politics of fandom. They became ensnared in the politics of fandom. They invested their egos in untenable political positions – positions which anyone with any sense would avoid.

The Gillilands completely lost sight of

why they were in fandom to begin with. It – or at least that tiny segment called WSFA – became the venue for the exercise of petty power, for being Big Fish in a Very Small Pond, for drawing lines and insulting people and displaying increasing arrogance. Because he’d hosted WSFA meetings for 38 or 39 years – an unparalleled span of time for *any* fanclub host – Alexis came to regard it as his right, his privilege, undeniable and untrumpable. He overreached.

And then, unable to deal with the consequences of that, he shot himself in his foot. He wrote his five-page denunciation of WSFA. He burned his bridges. All the slack people had been cutting him, as Lee had rampaged through WSFA like a mad elephant, was gone. The fence-sitters have all jumped down on the other side, now thoroughly pissed off at him. His name has become mud in WSFA. All those years as the club’s de facto senior eminence, lost. No one will see and admire his row of Hugos any more.

That’s fannish politics for you. And, I hope, a strong cautionary tale. •



# FEARSOME CREATURES OF THE LUMBERWOODS

Tim E. Cassidy

No subject can grasp the attention, and fire the imagination of children and adults, like mythological beasts. They represent the mystery, lore, and the “wildness” of nature long past. Portrayed even today in stories, books, and modern media, it seems everyone knows of European dragons and unicorns, but very few people know about the menagerie of “fearsome creatures” that inhabit the forests and fields of North America. By incorporating such diverse and uncommon fauna, educators, interpreters, and naturalists can rejuvenate their cultural and environmental programs, and help preserve a rich heritage of forgotten folklore.

In 1910, William T. Cox wrote, “Stretches of forests that once seemed boundless are all but gone, and many a stream is quiet that once ran full of logs and echoed to the song of the river driver.

Some say the old type of logger himself is even becoming extinct...” He was correct; an

end to centuries of traditional logging and lumberjacking in North America was on the near horizon. The old ways of gathering nature’s resources and shaping the land by hand and beast was disappearing, being replaced by machine and engine. The Wild West had been tamed and it was



*Hodag*

now time to close the book on the Northern Lumberwoods. So, at the beginning of the twentieth century new-fangled gadgets were quickly replacing the axe, the peavey, the cross-cut saw; replacing the teams of horses and oxen that helped haul the lumber down the old tote-roads, and replacing even the lumberjack himself. In this process of great change, William T. Cox focused his efforts to make a lasting difference for the conservation and preservation of the Northern Lumber Woods and its heritage. A heritage born of hardy folk, who lived, worked and loved the lumber lands. He began collecting their stories, legends and tall tales. He recorded their disappearing folkways by interviewing lumberjack, aborigine, and native. And he wrote it all down for posterity before it was gone and long forgotten.

William T. Cox had a good sense of humor, an excellent eye for detail, and a strong passion for natural history that few shared.



*Agropeltes*

He states in his book that, "Every lumber district has its peculiar tales...and nearly all have mysterious stories or vague rumors of dreadful beasts with which to regale newcomers and frighten people unfamiliar with the woods...It is my purpose in this little book to preserve at least a description and sketch of some of the interesting animals which he (the lumberjack and logger) has originated." He didn't collect just any tall tale about just any old critter; he began preserving the stories of those animals that never actually existed; fearsome beasts, born from the varied imaginations of lumberjacks and loggers. Critters that gallivanted through the north woods, romped about the southern swamps, and lurked in the high mountains waiting patiently for the next unsuspecting victim. Beasts such as the splinter cat, the snoligoster, the slide-rock bolter, the agropeltes, and the wapaloosie to name just a few. This wonderful menagerie of "fearsome creatures" roam no more, though a few local favorites, such as the squonk, who is native to Pennsylvania; and the hodag, who originated in Maine, but has been adopted wholeheartedly by the state of Wisconsin, are still alive and well in those regions popular culture. They can be seen on advertisements, billboards, t-shirts, souvenirs, and have even been adopted as high school

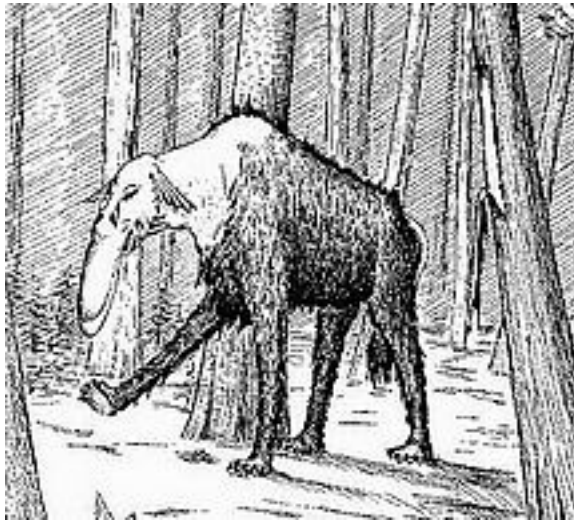
mascots.

These tall tales were definitely meant to be entertaining, but today they serve other purposes by opening the eyes of the reader to a way of life that has since disappeared. These stories also give us a glimpse into our own psyche, imaginations, and fears. They bring a sense of "wildness" back to the wilderness when the wilderness becomes mundane. Bears are no longer fierce; deer become a nuisance; the call of a loon is so common place it's hardly noticed. To the old time loggers and lumberjacks, fearsome creatures were the answer needed so they would not take the nature that surrounded them for granted. Fearsome creatures helped fill the need for mystery and suspense in their outdoor lives.

Today most of the "fearsome creatures" have disappeared, replaced with the return of the wilderness, and its native, charismatic mega fauna. Today the land is alive again with deer, bear, bison, moose, cougar, wolves, owls and loons to name just a few of bountiful native fauna. Modern conservation and preservation practices have brought back many from the brink of extinction and helped in saving what was left of their disappearing environments. Animals more common now than ever, yet rare enough to be cherished for the sense of wildness they bring. These are today's fearsome beasts; wild and majestic. Or are they?

How often do folks actually get to see such animals? We are at a time where kids and adults can watch television and see these beasts daily. It's a time when a kid can turn on the television any given day and watch those wolves, moose, and wolverines. Our modern media has brought the beasts to our homes and away from the wild. They have taken away the uniqueness, the wildness, and the rarity and made it commonplace.

It is time to bring back the "fearsome creature of the lumberwoods." Perhaps we need them more now than ever. Today, with the help of modern technology, mythical



*Hugag*

creatures are brought to life with ease. Dragons, unicorns, basilisks, and hippogriffs to name a few are brought to life with techno-magic in films and TV shows. This has brought the old myths to life, and kids and adults alike are reveling in the magic of this new "wildness" they used to only be able to imagine and dream about. Indeed the bestiary creatures have followed in the steps of their factual prehistoric brethren, as they walk across our television screens. But these creatures are of European, African and Asian descent. Where are the North American critters? Several have always been here waiting. Creatures such as Bigfoot, lake monsters like Champ and sea serpents such as Cad-bourosaurus have not only continued to exist in our realities as either fact or fiction, they have entrenched themselves in our popular culture. Can we bring the squonk, the hodag and the wapaloosie to life by adding them to our programs? Absolutely! The great thing is we can use them to introduce kids and adults to nature they now seeing as mundane, because it is going to take an uncommon approach to re-introduce the "wildness" back to nature. •

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### ***You Had To Ask Dept.***

A truck driver was driving along on the freeway. A sign comes up that reads, "Low Bridge Ahead." Before he knows it, the bridge is right ahead of him and he gets stuck under the bridge.

Cars are backed up for miles. Finally, a police car comes up. The cop gets out of his car and walks to the truck driver, puts his hands on his hips and says, "Got stuck, huh?" The truck driver says, "No, I was delivering this bridge and ran out of gas."

## The Drink Tank 103 (Chris Garcia)

It's not really feasible to review *all* of Chris's fanzines these past few weeks (I count a grand total of eight, including co-edited zines), so this will have to do for them all. This issue, Chris indulges his interest in film-making by writing about the Dogme 95 film-making philosophy,

a sort of 'back-to-basics' movement that originated in Denmark in the mid-1990s. As Chris notes, even films that aim to be 'Dogme 95-compliant' usually end up cheating on one thing or another. Meanwhile, Frank Wu writes about being at a loose end, having achieved both his ambitions for the year already (making an animated film about a space chicken, and drilling a water well in Nicaragua).

## In A Prior Lifetime 16 (John Purcell)

This is the first of two fanzines this month to dedicate a special issue to the memory of Bob Tucker, who died early in October. John's first memory of Bob dates back over



# BEING FRANK

Fanzine Reviews by

## PETER SULLIVAN

31 years to a specific 'SMOOOOOTH!'ing ceremony (see <http://tinyurl.com/y8w89e>) at John's first out-of-state convention.

There's also article by Ted White on the Fan Hugo Awards, where Ted confesses to creating the Best Fan Writer and Best Fan Artist awards in 1967, to go with the pre-existing Best Fanzine award. But he now thinks that all three of these awards have had their day, and should be removed – whilst recognizing the impracticalities of getting this agreed.

To me, the argument against a Best

Fanzine Hugo award these days is one that Ted doesn't make, at least not directly. The problem is that it focuses on one specific aspect of fan activity, to the exclusion of others. Where's the Best Filker or Best Costumer awards? Previously, you could justify a Best Fanzine Hugo, in that fanzines were the primary vector (other than conventions) for all types of fanac, and so all fans were involved in fanzines to a greater or lesser extent (even if they were, say, filking fanzines or costuming fanzines).

But these days, it's possible to be a highly active actifan and not be involved in fanzines at all.

John also reviews the latest *Chunga*, and there's a lettercol with lengthy pieces by Eric Mayer, Chris Garcia and Robert Sabella.

## The Orphan Scrivener 41 (Eric Mayer & Mary Reed)

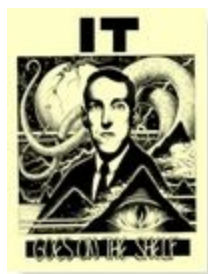
Is *TOS* actually a fanzine? Well, it's on [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com), which I suppose is indicative if not conclusive. I suspect, as much as anything, it's an opportunity for Eric and Mary to take time out from writing their mystery



novels, and just witter on about whatever takes their fancy. This time, Mary writes about stamp-collecting (or more specifically collecting detective fiction-related stamps), whilst Eric reminisces about trick-or-treating – “Nothing beats putting on a mask and prowling the streets at night. Unfortunately, I’m too old to do that without getting arrested.”

### **It Goes On The Shelf 28** (Ned Brooks)

Originally, Ned Brooks’ fanzine was called *It Comes In the Mail*, and was a fanzine review zine. Actually, rather more than that, in that Ned used to review just about every item of fannish mail he received, whether it be fanzines, LoCs, book catalogues or whatever. However, the sheer volume of material involved defeated this, and from 1985 onwards, this fanzine has been called *It Goes On the Shelf*, re-focusing on books. My suggestion that eventually there will have to be another re-naming to *It Downloads to the*



*My e-books Folder* didn’t go down too well. As Ned is a true book collector, who whom the book as physical artifact is just as important as the words within. This issue features details of Ned’s latest finds, and squibs of com-

ment from various readers.

### **Prolapse 3** (Peter Weston)

Twenty-three years won’t, I’m sure, be a record between issues of the same fanzine – although Bob Tucker’s death means we



won’t now be getting issue 2 of *Science Fiction Fifty Yearly* in 2007 as expected. But 23 years is still quite an impressive gap. The main focus of this issue is the letters of comment on the previous issue –

finding the file with these in was Peter’s impetus to put out this issue. This gives it a somewhat eerie feeling of looking back via a time machine to fanzine fandom in 1983. Peter illustrates the letters with photos of the writers, a neat idea that I’ve not seen before.

There’s also a couple of articles about APA-B, which Peter started within the Birmingham Science Fiction Group (the name was a conscious homage to the most famous club APA, APA-L from the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society). This later evolved into a more general APA called The Organisation, and Sandra Bond and William McCabe both contribute articles on the APA’s subsequent history and evo-

lution - much of which seems to revolve around Joy Hibbert, a fannish legend in both science fiction and postal games fandom before her early death in 1999.

### **Science Fiction/San Francisco 33** (Jean Martin & Chris Garcia)

Not even electronic fanzines are completely immune from the problem of having material rendered obsolete by the time they reach you. This issue had a reasonable amount of discrete (and not so discrete) shilling for ‘Chris for TAFF.’ All neatly rendered irrelevant by the postponement of this year’s TAFF race before the issue even made it to the front page of efanazines.com. Oh well.

SiliCon, a local San Francisco Bay Area convention, had the good taste to devote a whole panel to this news-and-events fanzine, and there are several reports back from this event, which editor Jean Martin describes as ‘more of a fun conversation among the editorial staff, contributors and our guests.’

This issue also features a round-up of some of the Halloween costumes on display in San Francisco on the big night - but no roller-skating nuns this year, it seems. Maybe the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence



were having a quiet night in – or is that a contradiction in terms?

### **Vegas Fandom Weekly 87** (Arnie Katz)

The other Bob Tucker Memorial fanzine this month. The format is similar to the rich brown memorial issue that Arnie did earlier this year, with Arnie starting off with an editorial trying the impossible task of trying to summarize probably the most significant fannish careers of all time into eight pages – although probably ‘Fan-father of us all’ probably does it as well as anything. Further contributions from Ted White, Robert Lichtman, Earl Kemp, Shelby Vick, Linda Bushyager and Dick Lupoff



round out the issue. Arnie is probably the only active editor these days who could have rustled up such a roster at short notice of people who had known, respected and loved Bob for fifty years or more. •

### **The Drink Tank 103**

weekly, 11 x 8½", PDF, 9 pages.  
<http://www.efanzines.com/DrinkTank/>

### **In A Prior Lifetime 16**

monthly, 11 x 8½", PDF, 20 pages  
<http://www.efanzines.com/Prior/>

### **It Goes On The Shelf 28**

annual, HTML.  
<http://www.fanac.org/fanzines/IGOTS>

### **The Orphan Scrivener 41**

bi-monthly, HTML.

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

### **Prolapse 3**

23-yearly, A4, PDF, 21 pages.  
<http://www.efanzines.com/Prolapse/>

### **Science Fiction/San Francisco 33**

twice-monthly, 8½ x 11", PDF, 50 pages.  
<http://www.efanzines.com/SFSF/>

### **Vegas Fandom Weekly 87**

weekly-ish, 11 x 8½", PDF, 18 pages.  
<http://www.efanzines.com/VFW/>

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## **KIDS IN CHURCH**

A little boy was overheard praying:

“Lord, if you can’t make me a better boy, don’t worry about it. I’m having a real good time like I am.”

After the baptism of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the

back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, “That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I wanted to stay with you guys.”

A wife invited some people to dinner. At the ta-

ble, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, “Would you like to say the blessing?”

“I wouldn’t know what to say,” the girl replied.

“Just say what you hear Mommy say,” the wife answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, “Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?”



# Pixelated

## Notes From Byzantium

*Andy Porter*

It's always good to read Eric Mayer, even if this was a case of *deja vu* all over again because I read his blog and it all sounded Very Familiar. But it was good to read again. I too like Halloween, especially those people who keep their doors closed but leave a little bucket of goodies that I can swipe from. I'm not supposed to eat that sugary junk but a Halloween-sized chocolate bar or Tootsie-Roll isn't going to kill me. At last, that's what I tell myself.

*Lee Lavell*

"The Corn Hut" thing was beautifully written. I wish I could have happy memories of Autumn but too many bad things have happened to me then, that the season only makes me depressed. Halloween: my most memorable costume came

about when I was an adult. The children where I was teaching were having a Halloween party (back in the days when Halloween parties were allowed in schools) and everyone was costuming. My kids kept asking me what I was going to wear and I told them I didn't have a costume, which was true. They looked so disappointed that I thought I *have* to do something. At the time I had long hair – very long hair, almost long enough to sit on, so on my break, just before the party, I took it down from the bun I had it in, combed half of it over my face, and stuck on a pair of sunglasses and a cap. The kids' immediate reaction was as I had hoped: "Cousin Itt!" I had ex-students coming back to me for years saying, "Do you remember when..."

*Joseph T. Major*

So Eric wishes he were really named "Rod." Rod Mayer, what a name. Almost as exciting

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**Claire Brialey**  
cb at fishlifter dot demon dot co dot uk

as “Rod Smith” (who works in Frankfort, and writes for *Alexiad*).

### *John Purcell*

Apparently you snagged one of Eric’s bits from his blog that I wanted to use in *my* zine. **\*fount!\*** At least he was kind enough to send me another piece which will appear in my next issue. He is such a fine writer that I may actually track down one of his and Mary’s mystery novels and **\*gasp\*** buy one! And on an adjunct teacher’s salary, no less. I hope he appreciates the sacrifice.

I actually read one of Moorcock’s Elric novels during last year’s holiday break between semesters, *The Sleeping Sorceress*, and enjoyed it. A fun read not meant for serious cogitation. Don’t anybody tell Moorcock I said that. Oh, wait. He’d probably agree with me. Never mind.

## **Much Nothings About Ado**

### *Andy Porter*

Lee Lavell’s column is really timely, because I live just about a mile downwind from Ground Zero – see <http://camazotz.com/wtc/1.html> for a whole bunch of harrowing photos taken from my neighborhood – and some bastard has been going around my neighborhood putting little stickers up on everything (street signs, informational Parks Dept. signs, traffic lights, etc.) saying “9/11 Inside Job,” which I’ve been removing, when I can. Today I noticed that they’ve written “Google: 9/11 Inside Job” all over the backs of lots of benches on the Brooklyn Heights Promen-

nade in dayglo yellow, and it really pisses me off. If I actually found someone doing that, I’d happily stomp on their hands and end up being arrested for assault. Conspiracy theories are fine until they become graffiti written all over where you live.

### *Eric Mayer*

I’m not sure I agree with Lee Lavell about that teaching gene. My dad taught high school art and loved it so much even after he retired he continued to teach classes at home and for various colleges and art groups. I only tried teaching once (a nonfiction writing class at Writers and Books in Rochester, New York) and I’ll never do it again. It was one of the worst experiences I can recall. I had no idea what I was doing. No feel for it. Teaching certainly is a skill and just because you know something doesn’t mean you can teach it. On the other hand, someone can be an excellent teacher even though he or she may not possess a particularly high degree of skill in what they’re teaching.

*When I went back to college in my late twenties, my major was Secondary Education. I got involved in a program called “Exploratory Teaching” where I was essentially an unpaid teacher’s assistant. After a few days I realized that teaching was not for me, and my minor (Medieval History) suddenly became my major. Apparently I didn’t think that situation through too well*

*either, since about the only thing you can really do with a degree in Medieval History is teach...*

### *John Purcell*

Lee Lavell’s musings about the teaching gene make sense. Speaking for myself as both teacher and parent, there are things that I want my students to know in order to be successful in the real world, and I feel the same way about my children. Our fifteen year old daughter has now started driving, and has progressed to the point where I am no longer white-knuckling it when drives to school or the store. She’s improving, asks questions, and even rattles off the rules of road quite literally straight from the driver’s manual. Neither of my parents was a teacher, but I most certainly understand what Lee means by imparting wisdom to the next generation. Logically speaking, this makes sense.

Her conspiracy theory about the O.J. Simpson case is a beauty. Actually, the idea that Ronald Goldman was collateral damage really isn’t that far-fetched. Stranger things have happened in real life, y’know. This theory works very well, and I am surprised that no one has ever thought of it before. What I really liked about Lee’s conspiracy article was how it really ended on page 28 and not on page 30, which we were led to believe on the bottom of page 7. Art imitates life yet again.

## **Whither Fandom?**

### *Andy Porter*

Ted White’s column brings to mind lots of stuff about the Good Old and Bad Old Days of



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Mimeography (and Ditto, too, which was my specialty). I wrote about those old memories in Trufen – comments I thought I should save for a rainy day. So here they are (in a comment originally addressed to Marty Cantor, who is very much a keeper of the flame when it comes to publishing actual hold-in-your-hands fanzines):

I remember when the USPOD did away with airmail printed matter just a few years ago, meaning you had to send all printed matter overseas at letter rate. And I too remember when I was in apa-L in the mid-1960s and mailing my zines to LA for 50 cents a week, which was a lot of money back then. I've been more active in the last 9 months since I got my new iMac and DSL than I was in the previous several years combined, and this is, at least for me, a Good Thing. So, yes, holding a fanzine in your hands that you've lovingly produced, printed, stapled and must mail is a Good Thing. But now, it's not the Only Thing.

We've all forgotten the bad old days, when we had to shlep to somewhere to buy mimeo ink and mimeo paper and drag everything home on the subway, spent hours typing up stencils, going down to the Gestetner store on lower Fifth Avenue to get artwork electro-stenciled (at least I got to meet Bergeron there once), slaving over a hot light table or mimeo table (or over a big table if you couldn't afford the accoutrements), pasting e-stencils into pages with evil smelling stencil cement (fans and Doctor Kildare remember the smell of ether), praying that the stencils wouldn't tear when we ran things off, slipsheeting pages, then checking each sheet to make sure that ev-

erything has printed, the agony and boredom of collating, running out of staples in the middle of things – and worrying about too thick an issue: would the staples go all the way through? – then taking them to the post office, the really bad days when the local postmaster would argue that we weren't entitled to mail at book rate, or bulk rate, or some other rate, worrying that the mailman had thrown our stuff away, and then finally waiting for letters of comment to come in – when we get to start everything over for the next issue...

We don't have to do that stuff any more. For every wonderful thing that happened when we pubbed our ishes, there was endless drudgery, which we've blessedly mostly forgotten. It's like childbirth (or so I've been told): if women remembered what a horror it was, we'd have all been extinct ages ago.

I have a Heyer Duplicator catalog from the early 1970s (with wonderful hectographs, spirit duplicators, mimeographs, styli and shading plates, plus other neat stuff) and eventually plan to scan everything in and make it available to a wider audience. Somewhere...

### *Lee Lavell*

All schools did not have mimeos, at least in Indianapolis. Grade schools had spirit duplicators. My experience with mimeos helped me with ditto machines, however, since mechanically they worked about the same. We had one machine that had a very touchy paper feed and I was about the only one who could use it. Often I would have another teacher show up at

my door; offering to watch my class if I would run off her dittoes for her.

My first mimeo was a regular size Sears with a defective roller which Sears refused to repair or replace. This cost Sears a lot of money in the long run since I have bought almost nothing from them. When I could afford it I replaced it with, I think, an AB Dick.

Before I had a lightscope I piled two stacks of books evenly and placed a picture glass over them and an upside down desk lamp for a light source.

Over the years I accumulated a large collection of styli, shading plates and lettering guides. The last mimeo I owned was superduper electric Roneo, with multiple drums that could be easily removed. These drums were used for different colors of inks. I had drums for black, blue, red, green and brown.

The kind of stencils used was important. Ones with soft wax were wonderful for tracing delicate illoes, but were lousy for typing. The center of the "o"s always fell out. The hard wax ones were great for typing, awful on illoes. The solution of course was to splice the illo into the hard stencil, the same technique used later with electrostenciled illoes.

The kind of paper used was also important. Oddly enough, the cheapest papers, like Twill-tone, was best for mimeoing since they were quite absorbent, thus preventing set-off while still allowing nice dark lines.

Having a large solid space entailed sometimes peeling the paper off the drum and setting it off to dry.

The stencils could be placed on the drum in reverse position so illoes could be run facing the opposite direction from the original, which allowed more freedom in layout.

And finally, having an ezine eliminates the collation parties and therefore a lot of fun.

*If you want, Lee, you can come over to my house next time I'm ready to publish an issue and we'll grab staplers and circle the computer while silping a couple of Nuclear Fizzes.*

### **Eric Mayer**

Ted's account of printing processes was quite interesting. I could never afford a mimeo and never managed to find a usable second hand machine. I printed my fanzines on a hectograph (of the flat pan type) and a hand cranked spirit duplicator, both purchased at Sears in Brooklyn. The duplicator was what was called, I guess, gravity fed, which meant that the fluid was in a plastic bottle on the side which you tipped up when you needed it. Then it bubbled with a sound like one might make chugging beer. Or maybe I'm remembering the sound of me chugging beer which was absolutely necessary before embarking on a print job with that machine.

As for hectographs, Ted's description of pressing a sheet down on the inked gelatin and pulling it up, while accurate, is somewhat less detailed than it might be. I assume he didn't want to frighten the youngsters. He thoughtfully left out how the sheet was liable to rip off gobbets of purple jelly. I'd have to keep wetting the gelatin but

it would gradually become cratered like the surface of the moon. Later prints were not only faded but dotted with bubbles. At some point the sheet would stick. I'd have to grab it with both hands and dig my heels in. The whole gelatin pad was liable to come flying and flopping out like some Lovecraftian invertebrate. I've probably written far too much about the horrors of hecto over the years. Actually, it insured I always had something exciting to write about in my fanzine.

I only owned one mimeograph but I could never make it work. I printed a single page for an issue of *Groggy* on it, just to say I had. (I'd also printed pages by silk screen and potato) There was something wrong with the ink pad – at least. The machine had belonged to a local radio station. It was a monster. The big gray metal cabinet it was mounted on must have weighed a ton just by itself, except you couldn't detach it, and the motor looked like it came out of a Volkswagen. When I changed abode the movers charged me extra, for a "piano." I moved that mimeo twice. And only printed one page. Now that, I submit, was excessively faanish.

### **John Purcell**

I know very little about the inner workings of the mimeograph. The only time I owned one – late 1976 to some time in 1978 - I really didn't know what the heck I was doing. It sort of worked; cutting the stencils with the typewriter wasn't a problem, but incorporating artwork was as far out of my ability as Pluto is from the

Sun. For a short period of time I did have access to a spirit duplicator at the University of Minnesota (where I was an under-graduate for two years), so I availed myself of that whenever possible. I can still smell the fresh sheets in my mind's nostrils; in high school, everybody used to wrap the handouts around our faces in school and deeply inhaled. Ah, those were heady times.

But I really didn't know dick about mimeos. Whenever I got issues of *Rune*, *Mota*, *Energumen*, *Gegenschein*, *Granfalloon*, *Pong*, and all the rest of those wonderful zines of the seventies and eighties in the mail, I used to sit and marvel at them, wondering how in the hell those people got such incredible results. Of course, they had electrostencilers and other doo-dads available, but they also did exactly what Ted wrote about in his article: those people experimented and worked at their craft. To this day, I still shake my head in wonderment when I remember watching Ken Fletcher drawing direct to stencil illos for *Rune*. Truly, that ability is a lost art.

## **Found In Collection**

### **Lee Lavell**

I wish I knew more about computers. Then I could make some intelligent comments on Chris' columns. I do remember Univac and all the fuss made over it back in those prehistoric days of yore.

### **John Purcell**

Man, Chris Garcia sat on a panel with Poul Anderson, David Gerrold, and Brad Lyau? That must have been an interesting panel. Poul was a

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well-known Minneapolis fan and pro long before he moved elsewhere, and I remember talking with him and Karen Anderson at Minicons back in the day (they used to return from time to time). They were a cool couple. Great story, Chris!

## Being Frank

*Lee Lavell*

I really love fanzine review columns and wish more zines would feature them. I reiterate my wish though that Sullivan would take one zine and do a more in depth review of it.

*John Purcell*

A nice collection of fanzine reviews herein. I really appreciate the way Peter and you give editorial addresses and websites so that interested readers can go peruse, read, enjoy, and hopefully LoC these fanzines. Keep up the good work, gents.

## Apathetic Competence

*Lee Lavell*

A couple of solutions to getting a business' attention are as follows. 1. If on the phone, first connect to Customer Service so that you're actually talking to a human being and not just punching buttons. Customer Service will usually pay no attention to your protestations that the bill is wrong. That's to be expected. Simply say, "I won't pay it." It's amazing how fast one gets connected to someone who *can* get things straightened out. 2. Back in those aforementioned days of yore,

bills came with a punch card that warned "Do not fold, spindle or mutilate." So of course I folded, spindled and mutilated. Took care of that problem.

*Joseph T. Major*

Since this is science fiction, I am reminded of the story about the man who had some exotic medical condition. The doctors couldn't find out what was causing it and the tests (and bills) soared. At the same time, his insurance company had installed a new computer system that they had no idea how to use. For some reason, they threw out each payment solicitation after failing, and so the hapless narrator had to get *all* the doctors, labs, hospitals, etc. to rebill him every time he submitted a payment request. As I said, this is science fiction. He was also working on a way to create stabilized compressed matter. So, once he had accomplished it, he included a chunk in his payment envelope, along with the latest incarnation of all his bills. The payment envelope saying that no postage was required if mailed in the United States... so they would have to pay for several tons.

I've never had medical insurers so obtuse, fortunately.

Unfortunately, I have had medical problems.

*John Purcell*

And as usual, the Dave Locke reprint is another sterling example of why I consider him one of fandom's finer writers. Do you have a secret

stash of these lying around, or is Dave sliding them all to you under the door when we're all not looking? I think a lot of my students display ample supplies of apathetic competence, and they use it so effectively. Now if only I can direct that ability into something constructive, like writing competent term papers. Man, am *I* lost in a dreamworld there.

## Pixelated

*Joseph T. Major*

Lee Lavell: I see, it wasn't the library that let you read *Forever Amber*. Did you know that Kathleen Winsor (the author) died in 2003?

Chris Garcia: But nowadays *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is PG and a soft PG at that. The old classics of obscenity are now commonplace. It somehow takes all the fun out of being bawdy. I'm reminded of the famous faux-clueless review of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in a gamekeeping magazine that said that while there was some useful material on gamekeeping in the book, there was far too much extraneous material and the reader would be better advised to read a particular manual on gamekeeping. At least I hope it was faux-clueless.

I still recall with some pleasure pointing out to Tucker the enormous gaffe Neil Gaiman had his protagonist in *American Gods* commit. The protagonist's wife had been raised from the dead. As you know, such people are zombies. When a zombie walks, Bob Tucker's fanzine, *Le Zombie* is published whenever a zombie walks. Therefore, Tucker was laboring away furiously. The

protagonist himself drove through Bloomington. *And he didn't even think to stop and help Tucker!* Naturally, I emailed Tucker himself with the news of this shameful neglect. He said he would mobilize Saint Louis Fandom to stop this disgusting scofflaw. When I reviewed the book, I took up Gaiman's theme of the gods among us, and wrote of the encounter with three Fannish Ghods, and how Ghu, Herbie, and Roscoe took up this neglect...

### *John Purcell*

There are a couple things in Lloyd Penney's LoC that bear commentary. Are most fans really owners of a "happy fannish sedentary lifestyle" that shortens our lives? Possibly. But I keep thinking about the lengthy lifetimes that a lot of fans seem to have had. I mean, we have been blessed with a fair number of octogenarians populating our genre, and they seem to be fairly active. Must be the mental gymnastics of writing and fanning that keep us mentally young at heart. Liquor does have a preservative effect, it must be said, but my gut feeling is that most fans live longer because they are mentally active.

The other thing Lloyd mentions is seeing your own name as a byline in zines. I have to admit I get a charge out of that too, but after a while even the novelty of seeing your name in another zine wears off. Right now I feel most like you do, David, when you said in response to my loc that you feel more like a "spectator" than anything else" when you're producing *Pixel*. Yeah, that makes sense. A lot of times I feel the same way when putting out my zines. It's a lot of fun edit-

ing other people's efforts into an attractive, coherent whole. No matter what you say, David, I think you put out one of the better fanzines being produced at the moment. Awards notwithstanding, if you're anything like me, getting feedback like this feels good. My intention is to nominate/vote for your zine as one of my top five favorite zines of 2006. So there.

## Miscellany

### *Andy Porter*

All in all, another really good issue, with excellent design and typography. You bastard.

### *Lee Lavell*

Picky picky picky department: How come you say my column is continued on page 30 (which doesn't exist) when it's actually on page 28? You got Chris Garcia's continuation correct. Why are you picking on me? It's a conspiracy.

*OJ made me do it, Lee.*

### *Eric Mayer*

Excellent cover photo, great illos by Brad Foster and neat little loccol decorations.

## WAHF

### *Earl Kemp*

Thanks, David, I enjoyed this very much, including Peter's review of *eI*.

### *Arnie Katz*

Thank you for another excellent issue! Not only is the material uniformly entertaining, but I marvel at your ability to get it all done in such high style at under 700K of memory.

### *Claire Brialey*

This is not a proper letter of comment – although I'm only stating this up front so that you realise I'm doing it deliberately, rather than you reaching this conclusion yourself and thinking that I've behaved even more badly than is actually the case. Because I have been bad, obviously. I haven't given you any indication at all that I have read and enjoyed *Pixel* or *Catchpenny Gazette* before it, and this is mostly because I feel I'm not keeping up and ought to find time to go back and re-read properly rather than just leaping in with the latest issue.

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## *You Had To Ask Dept. (cont.)*

It was mealtime during a flight on an airline. "Would you like dinner?" the flight attendant asked John, seated in front.

"What are my choices?" John asked.

"Yes or no," she replied.