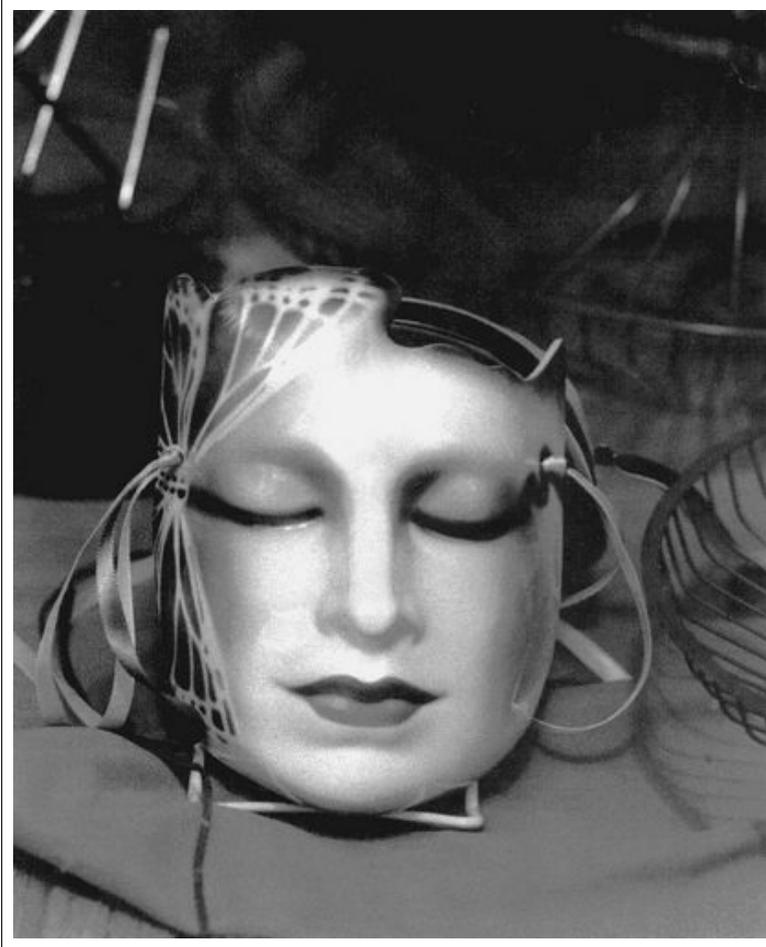


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PIXEL NINE



January 2007

PIXEL **Nine**

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AMDG

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*Some portions of Eric's column are reprinted from his blog at www.journalscape/ericmayer
Dave Locke's "I Feel A Draft" was first published in Yandro February 1973.*

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to
Pixel readers and contributors!**

“Does anyone set out to be a troll?”

CONTENTS

Cover: photograph by David Lewton

- 3 Notes From Byzantium**
column by Eric Mayer
- 6 Much Nothings About Ado**
column by Lee Lavell
- 9 Whither Fandom?**
column by Ted White
- 15 Found In Collection**
column by Christopher Garcia
- 17 I Feel A Draft**
humor by Dave Locke
- 20 Being Frank**
zine reviews by Peter Sullivan
- 22 Pixelated**
lettercolumn

Notes From Byzantium

Eric Mayer Illustrated by Brad Foster

Writing In The Holidays

One the many things I don't like about the holiday season is that readers seem to expect something with a seasonal theme. Or maybe writers (or writers like me, to be more precise) just think that readers naturally want some holiday words.

For me that's a problem because I dread the holidays. No other time of year is so filled with the ghosts of people who are no longer here. I suppose it's perfectly appropriate that Christmas practically starts with Halloween these days.

I always used to tie the column I wrote for the local weekly to the holiday. Even at Christmas that wasn't a problem because I was just out of high school and about the only ghosts casting shadows over the colored lights were those of departed pets.

I tended to turn out some sentimental tripe about the virtues of old fashioned

Christmases of which I had no experience, the sort of thing that makes for the best sentimentality. Sappy sentiments which would sound laughable in July are what's wanted at Christmas, like the gaudy lights no one (or almost no one) would consider stringing all over their house in the summer.

When I was publishing a fanzine I often included a holiday piece, or an appropriate cover. Once I did a drawing of Santa's sleigh being pulled through the air by bats.

Writing a column for a fanzine I guess I should no longer feel quite so constrained.



Weighty Matters

While browsing the web the other day I was surprised by an advertisement, just in time for the holiday season: “Save time and money with a postage meter.”

Considering the extent to which email and other sorts of electronic transfers have superseded snail mail, a postage meter seemed a peculiar thing to advertise on the web. Like advertising a reed pen in a typewriter shop, or advertising a typewriter in a computer store.

During that ancient epoch when I mailed out my dittoed and hectoed personalzine *Groggy* I never owned my own postage meter. Calculation of mailing costs was far too risky a stunt to try at home.

The basics were easy enough. For one stamp I could mail six pages of standard weight duplicator paper held together with two staples. (Since my finances were such that I tended spend a lot of time searching under the sofa cushions for the extra quarter I needed to buy a six-pack, my zines were limited to six pages) After that, though, it got complicated. If you think taking the number of staples into account was cutting things too fine, think again.

Even the humidity could affect mailing

costs. I learned the hard way to avoid sending my zine out on rainy days. I might have been mailing a Christmas issue because it was just the sort of wet, bitter day you often get at the beginning of December. I trudged through the steady drizzle to the post office with a bag full of pre-stamped zines. The clerk plopped a zine on the scale and chided me for not having enough postage. When I protested that a single stamp had been sufficient for six sheets before, the clerk explained that might be true on a sunny day; thanks to the rain the paper was probably heavier than usual, having absorbed moisture from the air.

I resolved to check for inclement weather before mailing and certainly never mailed my zines the same day I printed them, soggy off the press.

Whether any of my zines arrived with deficient postage thanks to a stray goblet of hecto jelly clinging to the cover I can't say.

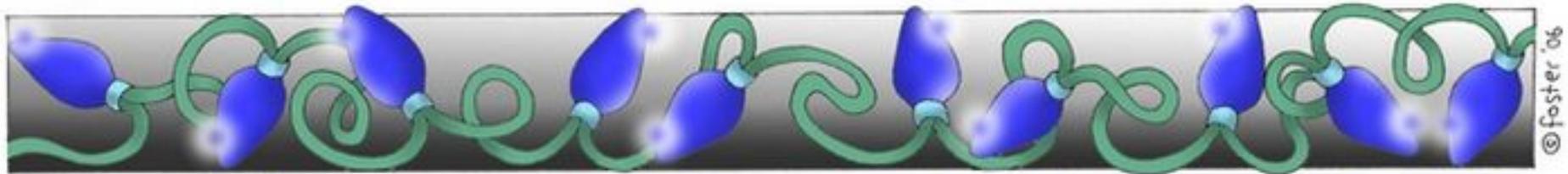
Moisture in the air wasn't the only hurdle to be overcome, however. There was the time the clerk weighed a well stuffed envelope, stuck on the appropriate stamp, weighed it again and added a second

stamp. He informed me that the addition of a stamp had pushed the letter into the next weight category. (Apparently nuclear physicists could use post office scales to weigh atomic particles.)

This strikes me as wrong. Surely you shouldn't have to pay to mail the stamp? If you take the stamp's weight into account then you're not paying so many cents per ounce but so many cents per ounce, minus the weight of the stamp.

Maybe I should have asked the clerk to let the glue on the back of the stamp dry off and try weighing it again. (Moisture you see...) Or maybe I should have put the stamp on at home and let the glue dry on the way to the post office. Then again, the clerk moistened stamps on a damp sponge. Who's to say spit wouldn't weigh more?

Considering the condition of some of the zines I received, I wonder if the rates should've been based not on what was sent but what actually arrived. I sometimes got a few scraps of torn paper in a plastic bag. I guess I was lucky I wasn't charged for postage due for the weight of the bag. Or for the weight of the postage due stamp.



An Advent Calendar

When I was very young my parents brought out an advent calendar on the first of December. Each night before being tucked into bed, I opened one of the twenty-four doors cut into the nativity scene on the calendar.

A short sentence and a small line drawing behind each door told a bit of the familiar Christmas story – the journey of Mary and Joseph, the star over Bethlehem, the wise men who traveled from the east – culminating on the last night in the birth of Jesus which heralded the arrival of Santa Claus.

It sounds crass to put it like that but I was only a kid. Santa was easier to believe in than Jesus. The concept of a jolly fellow who left gifts for well behaved children was simpler to grasp than the idea of someone who suffered and died for our sins, whatever those were. And the reward for belief in Santa was more tangible. You can't sled down the hill behind the house on eternal salvation.

There's no doubt that the countdown to Christmas gifts excited me, but there was also something magical about those words waiting to be discovered behind the doors,

even if I did know how the story ended.

Years later I bought advent calendars for my own kids. The only ones I could find had chocolates behind the doors. The kids seemed to like them well enough but to me those calendars just weren't the same. With chocolates you know pretty much what you're getting. Words offer more possibilities, whether hidden behind the doors of advent calendars or inside books.

Blue Light Special

My dad was an artist and a good one. His watercolors won awards at juried shows, museums purchased his work and he was even featured in *American Artist*. Undeniably, he had a fine aesthetic sense. Which is not necessarily what kids are looking for at Christmas.

I'm thinking in particular of the blue lights. One year Dad decided that strings of multicolored holiday lights were a bit garish if not downright tasteless. If lights had to be displayed – a practice of questionable artistic merit to begin with – then at least they should be tasteful. Some-

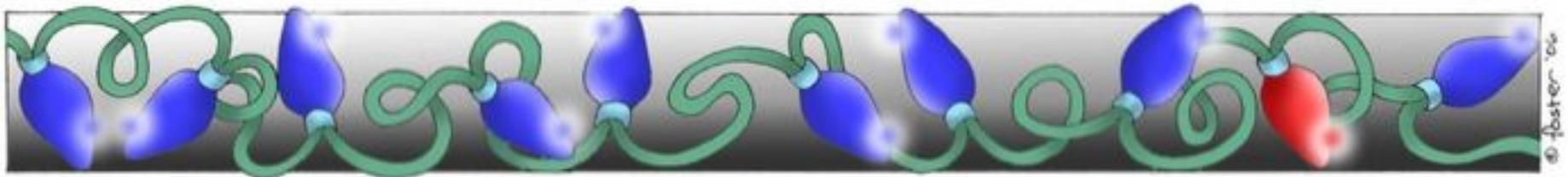
times a limited palette is best. Plain blue for example.

Lights along the edge of the roof, draped over the snow heaped rhododendrons in front of the house and the small hemlock at the end of the driveway cast a blue glow over the snowy yard. Through the blue framed picture window could be seen the blue bedecked tree in the living room. The effect was striking. But not exactly merry. Compared to the other houses along the street decked out in cheerful motley ours appeared sunk in a pit of gloom, depressing as old black and white Ebenezer Scrooge in the yearly telecast of "A Christmas Carol."

So for a few years I had a blue, blue Christmas, just like Elvis. He didn't sound pleased about it though and neither was I.

Luckily my Dad's blue period, like Picasso's, didn't last forever. At some point, for some reason (maybe my mother protested) colored lights returned. Although we certainly never had an illuminated Santa or plastic reindeer on the roof, sad to say.

Dad passed away two years ago, just before the holidays. If he were here to do it, I'd be happy to have him put up the blue lights again. •





Much Nothings About Ado

Lee Lavell

Feliz Navidad...I think

Of the many memories I have concerning teaching, some of the various programs we put on stand out. I should like to recount the tale of one of them right now, in honor of the Christmas season.

Back in those olden days the school where I taught gave an annual Christmas Program, as did most schools, for the December PTA meeting. The theme for that particular year was *Christmas Around the World* and each grade level, kindergarten through six, was to participate. The program was “created” and directed by the music teacher. The first grade portion of the program was to center on Christmas in Mexico. It was to go as follows: Around a dozen first graders were to be on stage dressed in cobbled together Mexican-style costumes (this was not a well-to-do neighborhood, so we had to make do with what we could) as a first grade choir stood along the walls to sing, while the on-

stage children danced. From above the stage were hung a couple of large piñatas filled with brightly colored confetti. After the song was over, while the piano was still playing, the children on stage were to break the piñatas with yardsticks and pointers that they had been given. When the piñatas broke the children were to celebrate with “Oles” and the curtain would close.

Sounds nice and simple, right? Unfortunately things did not go quite as smoothly as had been anticipated. The piñatas had been made by the school art teacher who had gotten carried away in the strength of the papier mâché. Thus, when the children hit them with their sticks it barely moved them from the twine from which they were hanging. The children swung at them harder and they began to sway slightly. Determined looks began to appear on the children’s faces. Whack,

whack, whack! Nothing. Backstage the teachers were beginning to get panicky. Running around they found a couple of mop handles and handed them out to the children on stage. Two or three children held the handles together and swung with all their might. Wham wham wham! The determined looks had been replaced by those of rage. The children, with fierce scowls, were hitting them with every ounce of strength that they had. The piñatas began to swing wildly on the twine but not a crack was appearing. Finally, after one massive whack, the twine on one of the piñatas broke and it came crashing down upon the stage with a resounding thud, still unbroken. The children jumped back stunned. This was not what they had been told would happen. They moved around it, wondering if they should hit it again. Fortunately the audience decided that this was the climax and began applauding. The children looked up, some-

what bewildered, then decided everything was all right after all and jumped up and down, yelling, “Yay!” and forgetting all about the oles, while the curtain closed.

After the program the piñatas were thrown into the trash and carried off to the dump where, sometime in far future, some archaeologists will discover them and wonder what these impermeable objects contain that had to be so important that they were protected so carefully.

The Times They Are A-Changing

In celebration of this New Year I shall now proceed to look backward as to how things used to be, at least where I lived.

Science fiction was that “crazy Buck Rogers stuff.” It existed mostly in pulp magazines which cost from fifteen cents to a quarter. Does anyone remember Sergeant Saturn and his cohorts Snaggletooth, Wartears and Frogeyes? The prozines ran fanzine review columns.

The first computers, like ENIAC, were gigantic room-sized things. No one even dreamed of the transistor or PCs or the Internet.

Comic books cost a dime, although there were occasional fifteen cent or quarter specials.

Smoking was considered glamorous and sophisticated. Cigarette lighters were not disposable but had to be refilled with lighter

fluid and periodically have their flints replaced.

Most movies were black and white. The screens were square. There were many neighborhood theaters. When TV came in the screens were small but were housed in huge consoles. They were all black and white. There was no cable. Just “rabbit ears” and roof antennas to bring in the few networks and local stations.

Distance travel was mostly by train, bus, or car. Air travel was a luxury and quite expensive. They were all prop jobs, no jets. Local mass transport here was by streetcars, which ran on rails and had antennae that connected them to overhead electrical wires.

White Castle was one of the very few fast food restaurants.

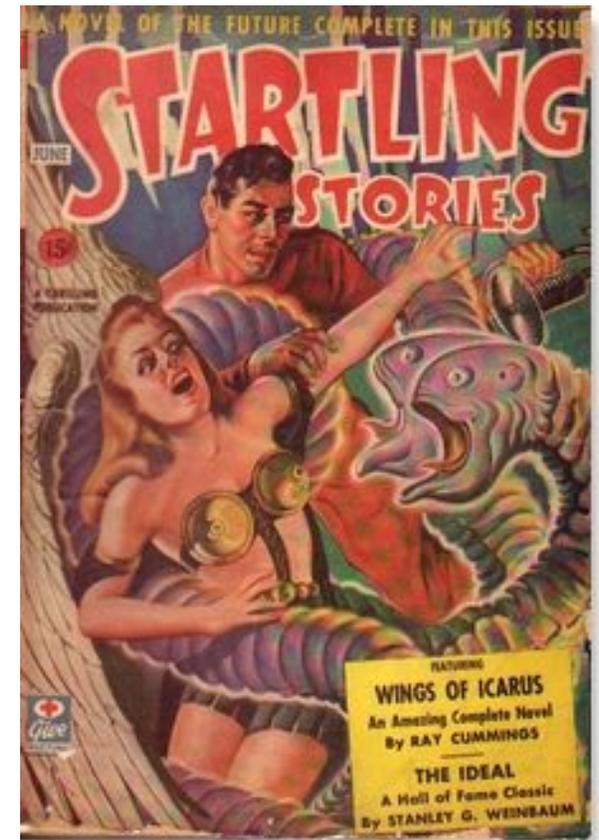
All women were “homemakers” and couldn’t even get credit under their own name if they were married. Women seldom wore slacks and *never* for dress.

Neighborhood theaters ran kiddie matinees, where it cost about a dime to get in. They always featured some sort of action serial.

NASCAR didn’t exist. Open wheel racecars were incredibly dangerous. There were no old race drivers. There were no women drivers. In fact, women were not even allowed in the pits.

Does anyone remember ice cream sodas? Green stamps? Zoot suits? Victory Gardens?

Milk was delivered to your door. It came in bottles and was not homogenized. Bread was also delivered. Doctors made house calls. Quarantine signs were put on houses for measles and scarlet fever. There were no antibiotics, but sulfa was around. The anesthetic was ether.



Refrigerators were “ice boxes” literally, and the “ice man cameth.” When refrigerators first came in the freezers were tiny with only enough room for ice cube trays.

A healthy breakfast included a couple of eggs (usually fried), whole milk, buttered toast and bacon, sausage or ham.

In the newspapers women were never raped; they were “criminally assaulted.”

Schools were segregated. Neighborhoods were segregated. In fact, almost *everything* was segregated.

Mad was a comic book and had a companion, *Panic*.

Home recording, sound only, virtually didn't exist. There were a few disc and wire recorders. When tape recording came in the machines were huge, heavy reel-to-reel things.

Radio featured dramas, comedy, situation comedy, musical and quiz shows. I remember when Ricky and David Nelson were so young they couldn't even play their own parts. The aforementioned remark is for those who still remember *Ozzie and Harriet*. For those babies who don't remember them, look it up!

In the kitchen there were no dishwashers, microwaves, blenders or garbage disposals. In fact, about the only appliance was the toaster, and they were not always automatic and the toast had to be turned around by hand. Gas stoves did not have automatic pilot lights and the burners and oven had to be lighted by a match. Many furnaces were

of the coal type and had to be filled and stoked periodically. Coal was stored in a coal bin in the basement.

Cars did not have safety belts, air bags and all the other safety features. Most were standard transmission. Automatic transmission was a big luxury. Most cars were black. The tires had inner tubes and blowouts were common.

Telephones did not have pushbuttons. They did not even have dials. You had to pick up the earpiece and talk to “Central” (the central operator for the area) to get your number. There were no area codes, but there were lots of party lines.

First class postage cost three cents. Post cards were a penny. Before zip codes there were zones and before that nothing.

There were only forty-eight states.

Hats were a fashion must for both men and women. Men had to remove their hats when they came indoors. Women were also expected to wear gloves. Hose had seams down the calves. Pompadours and big shoulder pads were high fashion for women during WWII.

Rock music of any kind didn't exist but we did have Big Bands, Boogie-woogie, and Conga lines.

Music was played on record players using 78rpm discs (platters). Many of the machines were of the hand crank type and had to be rewound after playing a couple of records. The needles had to be changed frequently.

Random Thoughts

Signs can be interesting and amusing. There are a group of stores in Indianapolis carrying the name “Party and Sickroom Supplies.” I guess they are catering to people who like to be ready for all contingencies.

Once, when visiting a friend at a local hospital, I was on the elevator to her floor when the cab stopped on the way to let someone exit. I stared out at a sign on the opposing wall which read “Pediatrics – No children allowed.” I presume the doctors on that floor had a lot of time to go golfing.

I have come to the conclusion that cats are Republicans, considering their conservative approach to life. On the other hand, dogs seem to be the Democrats of the pet world, more outgoing and adaptable to change. I'm not sure what birds are...probably independents and flighty, hopping from one side to another as the weather changes. All of which makes me wonder whether rabbits would vote for a “right to life” candidate.

For a while I worked at the polls during elections and it made me wonder about our quality of voters. It's sort of scary. I remember especially one woman who had to ask how to scratch in order to vote for a candidate because “his twins were so cute.” People complain about our government but what can you expect when choices are made on bases like that! •

Whither Fandom?

Ted White

“Geeze, Steve,” I said to Steve Stiles. “I’m exhausted. Does it have to be right now?”

“No, of course not, Ted,” Steve said in his soothing tone of voice. Very mellifluous, actually. “No, I was just curious.”

“Well, see, I’m going to write about it.”

Steve nodded, waiting expectantly.

“I’m going to call it –

“WHEN FANDOMS COLLIDE,” I said with a dramatic flourish.

“Was that with an exclamation point, Ted?” Steve inquired. He gave me an owlish look.

“No, it was all-caps,” I said.

Steve nodded. “I see,” he said.

“It’s about a couple of things that have happened recently in two different corners of fandom. Things that kinda point up how different those corners are,” I said.

“Tell me about it,” Steve said. His owlish eyes had become hypnotic.



Jerry Bails has died.

Does that name mean anything to you? Have you ever heard it?

A whole lot of people know who Jerry Bails is – or was. They’re over there in comics fandom. Comics fandom has existed in occasionally close parallel with SF fandom for a long time – since the ‘30s. Many early comics fans and apparently the only ones who published comics fanzines were also and maybe primarily SF fans. Dave Kyle and Malcolm Willits were two who published comics fanzines in the ‘30s and ‘40s respectively. Bhub Stewart created EC fandom, a very active subset of comics fandom, in the early ‘50s.

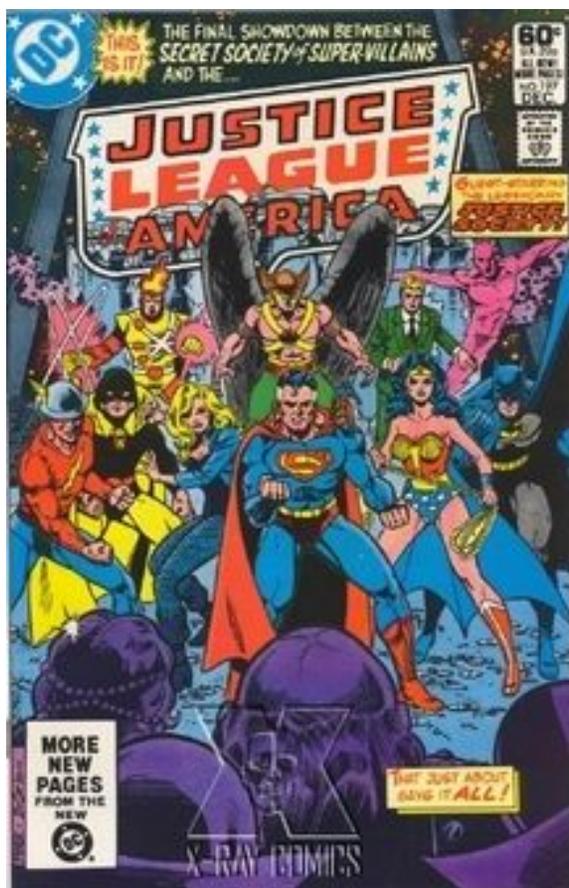
Being SF fans and knowing all about fanzines, Kyle, Willits and Stewart imported that knowledge and terminology into

their respective comics fandoms. And comics fandom has always had “fanzines.”

But Jerry Bails knew nothing about fanzines or, indeed, any of the prior incarnations of comics fandom, when he reinvented the wheel with *Alter-Ego* #1, March, 1961. Jerry had been a huge fan in his childhood of *All Star Comics* – as indeed was I, actually – and its group of comic book characters from other comics, the Justice Society of America. When DC Comics revived the Justice Society, this time around as the Justice League of America, in 1960, Jerry had an epiphany and decided to publish a “newsletter” for the comic’s new and old readers.

Thus was launched superhero comics fandom, which took on a life of its own, dwarfing all the comics fandoms which had preceded it.

Jerry was not some jerk kid. He had several degrees and was teaching at Wayne State University when he launched *Alter-Ego*. But



he did project a somewhat gosh-wow enthusiasm into his fanzine, which undoubtedly connected with his younger readers.

I no longer remember why, but Jerry sent me the first issue of *Alter-Ego*, and, I think, all of those which followed in its original incarnation. And I followed along, “lurking,” if you will, watching the early dittoed *Alter-*

Ego spin off its advertising section into a separate, more frequent, ad-zine for buyers, sellers, and traders of comics, and seeing a whole new fandom of other fanzines (most of them photo-offset, to present art well) springing up around their feet.

Jerry also reinvented the idea of having a co-editor in another city. His was Roy Thomas, a schoolteacher in St. Louis who shared his interest in old *All Star Comics*. In the mid-’60s Roy moved to New York City, worked briefly at DC Comics, and then settled in at Marvel Comics as Stan Lee’s assistant. I met Roy soon after he arrived in New York and we hung out together regularly after that. We’ve stayed in touch over the years.

I wrote a letter of comment to Jerry Bails on his first issue, but I don’t recall much further correspondence between us. When he turned *Alter-Ego* over to Roy and gafiated back into academia I lost track of him.

Then, this year I joined a new comics list, formed from the apparent ashes of an older one I hadn’t been on, and a month or two later there was Jerry Bails, posting to the same list. I was impressed. He had dropped all the gosh-wow and was thoughtful and insightful in his comments, which tended to transcend comic books.

In mid-November, I got an off-list email from Jerry, responding in part to my hav-

ing posted to the list, “Mormonism, the 19th century’s version of Scientology.”

Jerry said, “Only a sense of self-restraint keeps me from so characterizing all religion. I am a scientist by nature and training. I will agree that some religions are hokier and even more dangerous than others, but none of them makes any sense to me.

“Obviously, my original issue (about the changing nature of the media and their impact) seems beyond the pale of those on the [...] list. I won’t pursue it.

“It is probably just as well that my death is near. I find the non-intellectual character of the post-modern world depressing. Such fear of dealing with ideas, and getting beyond ‘I like this; I don’t like that.’ Subjectivity is something I hadn’t expected to find so much of in the 21st century. I find it pretty boring, as well as depressing.

“As one of my earliest correspondents in Fandom, I just wanted to say ‘so long,’ and I enjoyed your ‘right-on’ critique of *Alter-Ego* #1. It was the first genuinely honest reply I got, and I always remembered it.

“I hope your health is good.”

I responded with concern about *his* health, and then apologized for what I suspected had been a rather snarky letter of comment. He replied, ignoring my query about his health, to say, “As you may recall, I knew nothing of science fiction fandom when I started *Alter-Ego*, except a few exchanges with Julie on one visit.” Julius Schwartz had shown him copies of the

Lupoffs' *Xero*, which ran a series of articles on comics under the heading, "All In Color For A Dime." "So, I *was* re-inventing the wheel. I was glad to have your comments, but the 'gosh wow' effect you noted at the time was what I was shooting for. I was also trying to reach younger fans, most of which knew nothing of science fiction."

That was my last note from Jerry. Two days later he was dead.

There is talk in comics fandom of creating an award in Jerry's name. It will honor comics *fans*. I think that's an excellent idea.



"Y'know, Ted," Steve Stiles said to me. "I should have gone to those comic art group meetings you used to tell me about. Ever since then, I've wished I had. I mean, I *should* have."

"You've been telling me that for years, now, Steve," I said. "So I mentioned that to John Benson recently. John went to all those meetings, although he disagrees with me about when and where they started. He actually *kept lists* of who attended which meetings. And guess whose name popped up on several of those lists, Steve?" I pointed my finger in his direction, trying not to waggle it admonishingly.

"Yeah, well, once or twice. But not regularly. I never met Sid Check. I never smoked dope with Wally Wood – who is, as you know, one of my heroes."

"Well," I said, cutting him off. "It's too late now. And anyway, that's only one corner. Of fandom, I mean. There's this other one..."



For as long as I've been in fandom, the N3F has been a joke. And I mean that seriously, folks. I've been a fan for 55 years now, but the N3F – National Fantasy Fan Federation – has been around for about ten years longer.

And it didn't take ten years for another one of those noble fannish ideas to prove itself a mistake. The original idea had been Damon Knight's – in a piece he'd titled "Unite or Fie" – to join all of fandom into one huge, all-embracing, umbrella organization.

This urge was strong on fans in the just prior to World War Two period. FAPA had been formed in 1937 to give all fanzine editors a "clearing house" through which they'd send out their fanzines and receive all the others. This idea was Don Wollheim's. Both Wollheim and Knight were Futurians.

Well, FAPA quickly evolved into something parallel to genzines, rather than replacing them (and some, like *Skyhook*, were circulated both inside and outside FAPA), denying fandom forever any single central clearing house for all fanzines. (That is, until eFanzines.)

And something similar happened to the N3F. It became something *parallel* to fandom. Rather than absorbing all other fanclubs and organizations, it set itself up alongside them, and created within itself endless "Bureau"s becoming fandom's first actual bureaucracy.

By 1948 or 1949 the N3F had become a laughingstock to the rest of fandom when Charles Burbee revealed that he'd received a letter from the N3F Welcome Bureau *welcoming him*, a major BNF, *into fandom*. By this early point the N3F had already become so insular and removed from the rest of fandom that some of its members were ignorant of who Burbee was.

Some of my contemporaries in early '50s fandom joined the N3F with the vow of re-



forming it. This included Harlan Ellison and John Magnus, among others. Most of them lasted no longer than two years in that organization before dropping out in disgust, tired of butting heads against the entrenched bureaucracy that controlled the N3F (usually in fact one or two obstinate fringe-fans who had dug into the N3F for the long haul). But then again, recall what I said last issue about fan politics.

Over time the N3F became the bucolic backwater of fandom, most notable at different times for the, umm, “fannish characters” who arose from it to general prominence – people like Seth Johnson and Harriet Kolchak, each of whom inspired many stories to be told around the fannish campfires to wide-eyed new generations.

But it’s still around, amazingly enough. I was made aware of that some few years ago by Janine Stinson, who, in addition to publishing her own *Peregrine Nations*, was putting out *Tightbeam*, the N3F “letterszine” of many generations duration. But the copies I saw from Jan had few letters and consisted mostly of book reviews. Nor did they have very many pages.

Jan always struck me as a welcome anachronism in modern-day fandom. A relative late-comer to fandom, she picked up on the urge to do fanzines as entirely too many modern fans have not. She’s held onto that urge, too. Although she gave up *Tightbeam*, she kept *PN* going and joined Bruce Gillespie

in a bi-continental co-editorship of *Steam Engine Time*.

I applaud Jan for this, wholeheartedly and without sarcasm or cynicism. The urge to do fanzines, or participate in them, is what binds us all, and she has been a positive inspiration.

That said, Jan is proving herself a true “Neffers,” as witness this letter which I gather she wrote to Chris Garcia, but was posted, apparently with her permission, to the Fmzfen list, by Jeff Redmond.

“Hi Chris, et al,

“I would like to offer a different perspective to Chris’ statement concerning the N3F.

“The hostility between certain segments of fandom at large and the N3F stems from the actions of several neofen decades ago. These folks, new to the N3F and excited about passing on word of a national club for SF readers, approached all and sundry at cons with urgings to join the N3F and get in on the fun. They were young, ignorant of the ‘BNFs’ of fandom at the time, and their ignorance pissed off a lot of oldtimers and snobs. Thus, the club has been the target of these and other fen who side with them for decades. No matter that the people in N3F who actually were the targets are either dead or no longer members. No matter that the N3F now advocates the diplo-

matic approach when Neffers attend cons and pass out club flyers, and that the clubzine is trying to educate its membership about well-known fen past and present. To certain people, nothing the N3F can do short of folding up and blowing away will appease them. It is this grudge-bearing, childish nonsense that exasperates me. I’ve had a run-in with Andy Porter before re: the N3F (when he was still running *SF Chronicle*, as it was then called), and I’m just damned sick of his attitude toward the club and anyone who has an opinion different from his.

“Because of the hostility visited on the N3F as a whole by the actions of some of its members decades ago, Neffers became defensive and, yes, in some cases hostile in return.

“I find it exceptionally repugnant that any fan would choose to be scornful and snobbish toward a neofan for doing something out of ignorance. Art Widner’s attitude toward the N3F personifies this, and he’s still slagging the club (I’ve read posts of his on newsgroups this year concerning it). What is so damned hard about taking the neofan aside, calmly and politely explaining that one has been in fandom for a long time, showing them the fanzine lounge at the con, and/or introducing the neofan to other longtime fen and inviting him/her to some panels on fan history, or something similar?

There are people who've been in fandom a long time who consider themselves BNFs (apart from those designated as BNFs by others, and who are humble about it) and expect (and sometimes demand) obeisance from the rest of fandom for their self-described lofty position in that group. This is the kind of snobbery I never expected to find in fandom.

“There seems to be no motivation to educate among people like this, and that's really a shame, because they have much to teach, if only they would consider the giving aspect of it. They are human, like the rest of us, not gods, and no more deserving of adoration in any form than a tomato.

“Regards,
“Janine”

That's the complete letter, as quoted by Redmond. It is what it is: both naïve and sensible, both paranoid and defensive. It is stereotypically “Neffers.”

Jan had herself been on the Fmzfen list until recently. What caused her to leave the list was apparently the reactions of several people like Andy Porter and Robert Lichtman to the entrance of a *new guy* onto the list. That new guy was Jeff Redmond. (You see how this all ties together? In this column there are no coincidences.)

Redmond wandered into Fmzfen apparently courtesy of the N3F and Jan Stinson.

Although he claims to be 42 years old, and to be the member of a variety of writers' organizations – among which the N3F stuck out like a sore thumb – and to be a published author (albeit via a vanity publisher), he came on in Fmzfen like a clueless adolescent.

It didn't help that Andy Porter almost immediately challenged his credentials, wondering what the N3F was doing among organizations like the SFWA and the Romance Writers of America. Very quickly Redmond was reacting in kind – as he perceived it – calling Robert Lichtman “Herr Lichtmann” on the one hand, while responding to a Swedish member of the list with a post written entirely in fractured Swedish and then debating the quality of that Swedish with Ulrika O'Brien and John-Henri Holmberg.

Somehow it came up on the list that Redmond was the author of a piece on Frank Frazetta which had appeared in a recent issue of Chris Garcia's *The Drink Tank*. Virtually without prompting, Redmond offered this explanation of how he'd “written” the piece:

“I downloaded most of it from the Mars Dust webzine. Though the information is readily available from many other sites. I've never met Mr Frazetta personally, and will not be able to do so because of his death. The information on the sites is posted by his son,

and by those who knew Frank and worked with him.

“Copy and paste, hack and cut, snip and delete. Then rewrite, and rewrite again. The same quotes, facts, and information told (in the same ways) once again.

“Sorry is it's amateurish by your higher standards, but I do not expect to win any Pulitzer prizes with anything about fanzines. Chris is the editor of his zine. If he likes it he uses it. It is, of course, strictly voluntary for others to bother read.”

What Redmond is describing may not meet the legal definition of plagiarism, and may in fact be closer to how modern college students “write” their papers, but it's a far cry from fanwriting.

While Andy Porter was stirring up the villagers and urging them to light their torches and storm Castle Redmond, I was trying to be a voice of moderation on the list, not yet convinced that Redmond was more than an ignorant newby, or “neofan,” as we once called them. Indeed, I was reminded of the adolescent Andy Porter I'd once known. But Redmond kept getting stranger and stranger – the quote above may give a slight indication – and then Jan Stinson delivered a round of stinging condemnation of Redmond's critics and quit the list.

Not long after that list-master Bill Burns was presented with evidence that Redmond had “quoted” Lichtman from the list to Chris

Garcia, but had inserted an epithet into the quote to make it appear Lichtman was insulting Garcia. Burns tossed Redmond off the list.

This prompted Redmond to send me this off-list email, responding to something I'd said on the list:

"I believe that, right or wrong, Ms Stinson is seriously considering a legal action. I don't believe she can file anything against the fmzfen in general, but she may try to go after certain individuals. She says her attorney is checking into harassment and stalking charges.

"Interesting that a short while ago she was very much against me. Though now she apparently feels I am no longer anyone to feel threatened by. She has asked me to help her. I have replied that she should wait and see what her lawyer comes up with first.

"But I have been saving all the e-mailings I've been getting. Especially the ones the obscenities, threats, and defamations. The fmzfen group will continue, though there might be a few less participants next year.

"Just thought I'd let you know. I am not your enemy, and I have no personal quarrel with you. Good luck."

In the days following his exit from Fmzfen, Redmond has been subscribing various of us (Porter, Lichtman, myself, others on Fmzfen) to spam lists, and sending us

spurious emails claiming to be forwarded by "Robert Lichtman" (with a quasi-forged yahoo! account in Lichtman's name), one of which was from a Nazi site. My spam is five times what it was previously. Good thing Jeff is not my enemy, eh?

What he most certainly was is what they call on the Internet "a troll." Someone who joins a list to say provocative things that stir people up, get them angry. It seems like he met a willing accomplice/antagonist in Andy Porter, but as time went on (and he remarked on someone having a "Protestant nose"), he stirred more and more people up. The normally low-traffic Fmzfen was suddenly burgeoning with posts.



"I don't get it, Ted," Steve said, shaking his head. "What's your point? Is it about the N3F, Jan Stinson, or this Jeff Redmond guy?"

"All of the above, Steve," I said, giving Steve my Buddha look. "All of the above." I folded my hands across my lap and smiled. "It's the N3F, you see. It sucks new fans in, promising them All Of Fandom, and giving them a fearful, paranoid backwater instead. To the extent that they 'succeed' in the N3F, they are bound to it. If or when they stick their heads out and interact with other parts of fandom, there's some culture shock."

"Okay," Steve said. "That's Janine Stinson. What about this Redmond troll?"

"I gather he was her protégé of sorts. I think he maybe suckered her in with his gift for gab, but I dunno. I mean, maybe she saw him as some kind of Pro or something. As for *what* he was, well, does anyone set out to be a troll?" I was picking up steam. It was time for a new paragraph.

"I mean," I said to Steve Stiles, "you remember the young Andy Porter – 'Andy Silverberg, Phonefan?'"

Steve sighed.

I continued. "Andy had a difficult adolescence. He came through it. We took him into the Fanoclasts and took him on our road trips, and he grew out of it. Well, most of it, anyway." It was time for another new paragraph.

"Who knows what Jeff Redmond was, and what he became in response to the treatment he got? Did he join the list in order to disrupt it? Or was that just the way things played out? If some people hadn't challenged him right off the bat, would he have made all the same Wrong Moves?" I pointed at Steve. "Do you believe in *predestination*?"

Steve shrank back. "Ted, you know I converted to Judaism."

"So, anyway," I said. "That's it. Does it make sense now?"

"Well," Steve said, shaking his head, "I dunno – it does when *you* tell it, but..."

"That's good enough for me," I told him. •

Found In Collection

Christopher Garcia

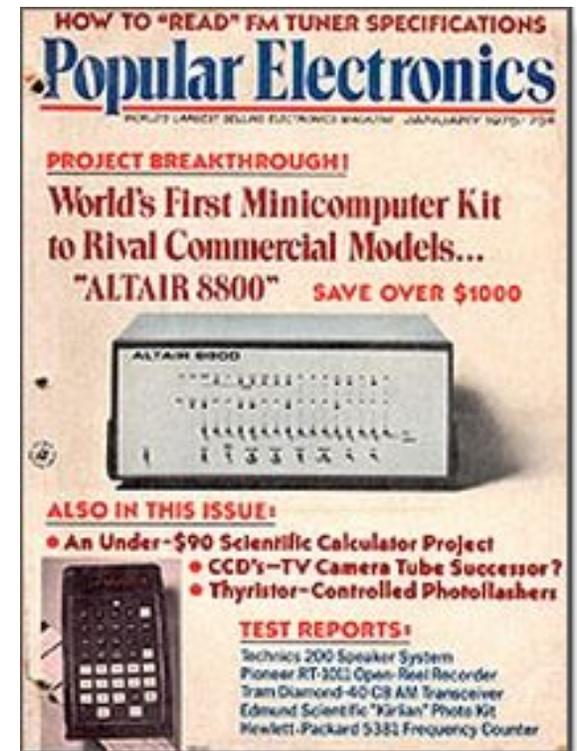
It's never too surprising when I find a fanzine in the collection. It's even less surprising when I find a filk tape lying around. I barely bat an eye at fannish buttons anymore. It's even easy to believe that I'll find fen in the volunteer pool of the Computer History Museum. There's only been one thing that's really hit me lately as strange: a programme book.

Now, I've never actually found a programme book from any convention in the collection that wasn't put there by me. I've found several that I've picked up while looking for work things, but this was a copy of the 2002 Con Jose Programme Book mixed in with an even stranger lot of stuff.

About thirty years ago, everyone was putting out home computers. In early 1977, Apple, Commodore and Tandy all released small computers for the home that really took off and sold millions of units around the world. The Apple][was a huge success,

and led to Apple becoming the most dominant force in the early days of personal home computing, but before Apple there were the CP/M machines. Beasts like the IMSAI and the Northstar Horizon all made hobbyists drool and fork out thousands of dollars to bring the CPU home without any software. The King of that first generation was the Altair 8800.

The Altair was built in Albuquerque by Micro Instrumentation & Telemetry Systems, or MITS. They were a small company that got the cover of Popular Electronics and were inundated with requests to buy the system. A couple of kids, Bill Gates and Paul Allen, started a company to provide software, starting with BASIC, that they could sell to MITS' customer base. This was a great idea, but as has always been the case, it was easy to make a copy of and therefore easy to buy once and spread among all your friends. This



led to the company Micro-Soft, to earn about two bucks an hour for the work they put into the programming of the BASIC language system for the Altair (and I think it explains why Microsoft is so radically out of step with Free Software).

Bill Gates, the guy who actually programmed the tape (and did a damn fine job of it), wrote an open letter to just about everywhere that would print it. He sent it to the hobbyist mags, the individual clubs like The Homebrew Computer Club and the Boston Computer Society, and to the few dealers who had started popping up, like The Byte Shoppe, the Computer Store and Computerland. The letter, which basically said knock it off, became the first well-known letter in the personal computing world and also signaled the beginning of the Personal Computer Business era. That letter killed the Hobbyist era and made Bill Gates some life-long enemies.

One of whom must have donated this box that had the WorldCon programme in it.

There was the Open Letter, as printed in the Homebrew Computer Club newsletter, sitting right below the Con Jose book, followed by several rebuttal pieces that appeared in that newsletter, as well as in those of several other clubs. There was a long post printed from the Berkley Community Memory Project that argued with the article (and this was a couple of years after it had been published). There were anti-Gates articles, notes on Microsoft's late 1990s problems

and so many other things that I had a hard time figuring out why anyone would be against Bill Gates so badly. Yeah, he's richer than a foie gras milkshake, but he's a smart guy and a decent programmer. Yeah, he's anti-competition, but his company has put out some good stuff in with the crap they turn out more often. This was a collection of things I'd expect to find coming from a guy who had spent years researching the evils of a single man.

I looked all over the box and couldn't find the address or the name. I figured it'd just be some guy who I'd never heard of



Paul Allen and Bill Gates ca. 1976

anyways. I took the programme book home with me and went over it a few days later. Inside, there were a bunch of notes about various panels. One of those panels was the History of Computing panel that I was the moderator for. My name was circled, as was that of Eric Raymond. Next to my name he wrote 'give papers to museum?' and next to Raymond's he had written 'ask about Gates' book.'

I thought for a minute about it and I realised who had donated it, and when even. At that panel, there was a guy who kept bringing up Pro-Linux and Anti-Microsoft stuff. He was so disruptive that I had to let Cliff Stoll run on for a while about calculators so that he wouldn't interrupt (and if you've ever heard Cliff speak, you'll know that it's impossible to interrupt him anyhow). The interrupter, as I remember it, stopped me the next day and asked if I would accept some of his early stuff from the Homebrew Club. I said yes and he had me follow him to the car and take them. There was no box, so I went to my car and put them in the box that I rediscovered when looking for other materials. He must have put the programme book in with the papers and I put it on top at some point. I put a bunch of boxes in the museum after I got back and I never thought to look at them again...at least not until I started doing this column.

For once, fandom has given me an excuse to do my job a little better! •

I Feel A Draft

Dave Locke

I thought I'd try for a change-of-pace this time. Often I sit at the typewriter and bring to life some ugly item out of my medical history for the purpose of amusing you. I do this, however, in the pink of health, because these stories are easier to look back on that way. Also, they don't have typewriters in operating rooms. This time, however, I'm not in the pink of health, so I will write this column with a Bromo-Seltzer at hand, and I will tell you about a time that I was healthy.

This is, however, a medical story.

Back in the dim, dark days of the early '60s, when I was classified 1-A by my Local Draft Board #40, they would occasionally worry about my health and cheerfully request that I get a physical examination. Of course, I say "cheerfully" in a facetiousness, as I recall from the tone of their letters that my health would be in grave danger if I were to disregard their requests. So I always went. After awhile, these examinations all

bended together in my memory. But the first one I went to, at the age of 18 when Board #40 initially took an interest in me, is a definite standout in the memories of my mind (set that to music, someone). Sort of like gluing an 8 x 10 glossy photo inside an Instamatic photo-album.

I guess that when I turned 18, a lot of other guys did, too, So many, in fact, that there was barely standing-room at the examination building and it took them all day to process us through. I guess somebody in their traffic department fell down on the job. They were also too understaffed to handle us all.

We stripped down to our shoes and shorts, and trotted around gripping a medical form upon which entries were placed as we went from examination to examination.

As far as I know, everybody got through the piss-in-a-bottle test in fine shape, un-

like the episode in *Alice's Restaurant*. I heard that one fellow became excited and got it stuck in the bottle, but I dismissed this as locker-room humor.

The blood test was one of the more interesting examinations, The fellow with the needle had very little feel for that sort of thing, and would come up dry on two or three jabs before he confirmed that his victim did indeed have blood. I have always felt that the medical profession is a poor place in which to encounter sadists.

After you had given your quart of blood, you were di-



Manfred Klein

rected to sit down somewhere along a row of benches. Unfortunately, after awhile the benches filled up. One fellow stood there for awhile, feverishly looking for an empty spot so that he could sit down. He didn't fine one, and he much too polite to ask someone else to give up their seat, So he fainted. I watched five guys five up their seats, so that three of them could lay him face-down on the bench.

When it became my turn under the needle, the black fellow who was wielding it became rather upset over the fact that after repeated efforts he was unable to locate any blood in my left arm. I ventured the comment that had he used colored dyes in his needle I would now possess the world's largest tattoo, and it was at this point in time that I was first introduced to the word "honkey." The wielder of this Tom-Thumb javelin later discovered blood in my right arm, after finally giving up on the left. A few more holes in my left arm and it would have fallen off at the elbow.

A later examination was to have an X-ray. I discovered further along in life that there is an agitator of the first-water at every such military establishment, and at this place it was the fellow who gave you the X-ray. Only one person was allowed in the room at a time with this gentleman, so you couldn't hear what was being said, but you could look through the window and see that each fellow in there was getting a rough time. A particularly odd recurring phenomenon was

when the examiner placed his fist in the examinee's back and shoved him against the X-ray plate. Everyone recognizes the fact that your chest has to be against the plate if you are going to get a good X-ray, but the odd part was that each examinee already *had* his chest against the plate. The fist-in-the-back was for the purpose of trying to push your chest *through* the metal plate, and it also served to get you a good crack in the jaw or the nose when your face rebounded against the plate. Despite the fact that everyone saw this, the examiner was clever enough to vary his timing so that when he caught you he would get the maximum effect. The conversation, or at least mine, is well remembered and it went like this:

The examiner took the sheet that I was carrying and compared my address, which



I had filled in, with his files. "The addresses don't match here; what the hell's going on?" he snapped. "Don't you believe in sending in a change-of-address to your board, punk?"

"I sent in a change-of-address," I replied, chest up tight against the plate. I might mention that you would spend this entire session with your chest against the plate, waiting for three things: 1) the fist in your back, 2) for him to take the X-ray at his convenience, 3) to get out of there.

"I haven't got it here," he growled. "What did you do, send it on a postcard?"

"No, I sent a letter."

"You're a goddam liar, kid. When do you claim you sent it in?"

"Two weeks ago. Probably hasn't gotten to you yet."

That was a choice piece of wording, and he probably chuckled to himself as he promptly 'got me' with a fist in the back. Sure enough, I banged my jaw.

"Stand up against that plate, creep!" he hollered. "How the hell as I gonna get an X-ray." I didn't say anything, I just stood against the plate.

"You getter send in your goddam change-of-address next time, boy, or we're gonna be down on you with meat hooks." I heard him take the X-ray. When it stopped whirring I stayed there, as I had a premonition of what would happen if I stepped back without his express authorization.

"You know it's over, punk," he sneered. "Get your ass out of here." He slapped my

Manfred Klein

paper into my shoulder and it fell away onto the floor. I squatted to the floor and glanced at his face before coming up. He had a malignant smile as he watched me pick up the paper, and was joyfully waiting for some sort of retort on my part. I smiled broadly at him, and watched the smile disappear from his face. I left. When I exited, the smile disappeared from mine.

The asshole test came next, I believe. All you guys will remember that one. You gals may or may not have heard of it, but you may have caught a passing reference to it now and again. For your benefit, I will detail just exactly what it consists of. Hundreds upon hundreds of guys will retain their shoes but will discard their shorts and their papers, and will stand in rows, each row facing another, for a period of maybe ten minutes before the people in charge get around to starting the examination. You could see everyone's eyes roving around, looking for the biggest hammers. This was in the absence of anything better to do with your time. This is also a unique experience, and perhaps your only opportunity to discover some correlation between hammer-size and a physical feature which would be apparent when a person is clothed. I discovered one correlation which appeared to be about 90% correct, but I don't want to give away any trade secrets or digress too far from my story. At any rate, we stood there until this old, has-been doctor came shuffling along with his bent-back. Then we were issued the in-

struction to turn around, bend over, and spread our cheeks with our hands. We were to remain in that position until the doctor patted our ass. So, hunched over, the doctor shuffled from body to body, eyeballing each asshole as he went up and down the lines, patting a cheek as he finished with each examinee. Now I know why his back was permanently bent. And I pity the poor guy who was at the end of the last line and had to remain in that ridiculous position for an ungodly amount of time.

At this point, they began to realize that there were too many of us and too few of them, and that they couldn't possibly administer all the tests to all of us and get us out of there in that same day. So they started skipping tests on some of us.

I was wearing glasses, so they skipped me and a few dozen other eyeglass-wearers on the eye test. They got us together in a group and made notations opposite "Eyes" on each of our papers, and then directed us to some other examination. I guess there wasn't much need for them to be very clever about these short-cuts they were taking, as which of us teenagers dared to say anything about it?

Well, unfortunately I did.

After being passed on two or three examinations, I took a look at the medical paper that I was carrying to see just what was being put down there. One of the more interesting items was the notation

"Teeth – OK." I stepped out of line (in more ways than one) and hailed down an official-looking person. He stepped over to me and I pointed out this notation to him.

"What's the matter, son, don't you think your teeth are all right?"

I took them out and held them in the palm of my hand.

"What do you think?" I said.

I damn near got drafted right on the spot.

It was at this point I discovered that the services have no sense of humor.

So there's another medical story for you, far enough in the past that I can look back on most of it in a humorous key. Even if I do have an upset stomach and a mild headache.

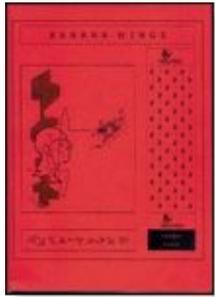


Being Frank

Peter Sullivan

Banana Wings 28

(Claire Briarley and Mark Plummer)



One of the joys of fan-nish writing is that it is possible to fall off the precipice of over-extended metaphor into the valley of the frankly bizarre, and as long as it's still interesting, it doesn't really matter.

So, in the editorial this time, an extended review of *Steam Engine Time* turns into a convoluted discussion around Bruce Gillespie's metaphorical underpants.

Meanwhile, *BW*'s own sercon underpants are showing with a round table discussion piece on "New SF for Older People," based on the premise that the old wrinklies in fandom really ought to start reading some of the newer science fiction out there, as rec-

ommended by the yooof of today. There's also an article by Max giving some more of the background to the YAFA (Young Adult Fan Activities) stream at the British Worldcon, but which is also an excuse for some more James Bacon stories.

The lettercolumn is as usual excellent, with a good trans-atlantic flavo(u)r, and there's a closing article by Claire, talking about reading old fanzines (with a nod to both the *Checkpoint* and *Skyrack* archive projects, which – together with *Ansible*, of course – means that the whole of British fandom's newszine history since 1959 is now available on-line).

eI 29

(Earl Kemp)

This issue is sub-titled "The Compleat and Unexpurgated Who Killed Science Fiction?" Much like the title of the film *Alvin and the Chipmunks meet Frankenstein*, this

really tells you all you need to know, assuming you have all the necessary context. But, for those of us who came in late...

Who Killed Science Fiction? was Earl's 1960 anthology, including contributions on that theme from just about all the big name science fiction authors of the time. "Science Fiction" in this context means magazine science fiction – ironically, media science fiction (films and telly) has prospered as never before since 1960. Earl had plans for a second edition in 1980, but this fell by the wayside. However, with the help of his son, Terry Kemp, Earl has now pulled together both the original edition, and the unpublished material from 1980, in one mammoth (189 page) e-book.



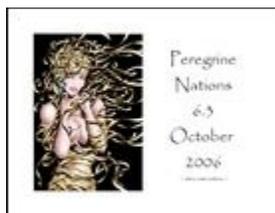
If you were going to compile a list of the greatest half-dozen fannish publications, I suspect that *Who Killed Science Fiction?* would be on the list. Given the rarity value of the original paper edition (something that Earl deliberately engineered at the time), it's good to have it available in electronic format. What next – an e-book version of Francis Towner Laney's *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!?*

Peregrine Nations 6.3

(Jan Stinson)

This fanzine has always had an exceptional lettercol, and this issue's 12-pager is well up to standard. A lot of fanzine lettercols come across as a series of conversations between the editor and the letter writer. But Jan's lettercol has a more 'multi-lateral' flavour, with writers responding to each other's points in previous letters at least as much as responding to articles. The whole feel is more like a large, informal APA rather than a conventional letter column. Of course, as a minor APA-hack myself, this is absolutely fine by me.

As well as the stand-out lettercol, there are also a few general articles and book reviews, plus Jan revives her own fanzine review column.

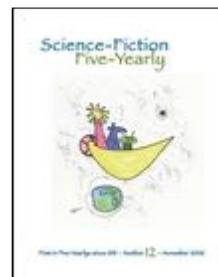


Science Fiction Five Yearly 12

(Lee Hoffman, Geri Sullivan, Randy Byers)

Cultures, including sub-cultures such as our own of science fiction fandom, have a tendency to build up traditions. Indeed, if I was feeling all sociological, I might go so far as to say that a culture or sub-culture is, at least in part, defined by its traditions. Fanzine fandom's traditions are, ironically, often non-fanzine based (e.g. TAFF). But this fanzine, appearing every lustrum since 1951, is very much a tradition of fanzine fandom – and, as a bonus, does actually happen to be a fanzine. It's also the fanzine that keeps the word 'lustrum' alive, notwithstanding Wikipedia's claim that the word is now obsolete.

The stand-out article for me was Claire Brialey's piece, ostensibly comparing her experience at a ZZ9 (*Hitch-hikers' Guide to the Galaxy* Fanclub) pub meet twenty years ago to the one-day convention earlier this year to announce the TAFF results, coincidentally held in the same pub. In practice, it's also at least in part another series of James Bacon stories. And with an undercurrent of hope and expectation of the emergence of a new generation of British fans. One of the time-binding as-



pects of writing something like this in a fanzine like *SFFY* is that there will be a natural tendency to revisit all of this five years on and see how accurate the predictions turned out to be.

If you can get hold of the paper version of this fanzine, rather than relying on the download edition, it's well worth doing so – the white fibertone paper makes it feel like a fannish artifact from times past. •

Banana Wings 28 (Claire Briarley & Mark Plummer)

quarterly, paper, A4, 32 pages.
e-mail: fishlifter@googlemail.com

eI 29 (Earl Kemp)

quarterly, PDF or HTML, 11 x 8½", 189 pages
<http://www.efanzines.com/EK/>

Peregrine Nations 6.3 (Jan Stinson)

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

Science Fiction Five Yearly 12 (Lee Hoffman, Geri Sullivan, Randy Byers)

five yearly (of course), paper or PDF, 11 x 8½", 58 pages.
<http://www.efanzines.com/SFFY/>

Oh, and there has been the usual slew of fine issues of *The Drink Tank* from Chris Garcia this month (<http://www.efanzines.com/DrinkTank>). Plus the Plokta web site has been updated with some more recent issues of this Hugo Award-winning fanzine, now available up to April 2005's issue 34 (<http://www.plokta.com/plokta>).

Pixelated

Notes From Byzantium

Lee Lavell

From what I read I suspect that Eric may have some Hobbit blood in him and that his natural home, in which he would feel most comfortable, would be in a hole. I know I'm that way. I like basements and enclosed places. I love where I live but I keep most of my blinds shut so I feel enclosed.

Joseph Major

I used to spread sheets over the chairs in the living room and pretend I was living in a tent. That and propping up the mattress so I could lie down on the box spring.

We never did have a cornstalk sukkah, back when we lived on a lot cut out of my grandfather's farm. Did do a lot with tobacco sticks, but that's another story.

When we moved in closer to town my father built, or had built, a little hut under a tree in the back yard. I should take a look and see if the place is still there.

Never did much digging, except for the time we buried a cigar box (remember cigar boxes?) of bottle caps (remember metal bottle caps?) in the back yard. I recall the hole being as tall as I am but then I was smaller then.

Lloyd Penney

I remember wanting to have my own little place when I was a kid, and my bedroom just wasn't it. I remember getting a large wood and wire crate, and converting it into a little sanctum sanctorum all my own. A sheet over top to light the inside yet keep the sun out, a blanket and pillow and cold drinks and goodies inside, plus a radio for some good tunes. That little arrangement lasted all of one week, for my brothers couldn't stand to see me having such a good time, and they wrecked the whole thing as soon as I went inside the house. They also wrecked my radio, and it took me a long time to forgive them for that.

Lee Lavell

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Eric Mayer

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Joseph T. Major

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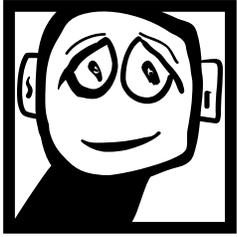
Lloyd Penney

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John Purcell

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Illustrations by **Manfred Klein**



Lee Lavell has a point about all the branches which have sprung out from fandom. It's amazing when you stop to think about it how many interest groups can trace their lineage back to sf fandom, many of them much larger than sf fandom. I'm not so sure whether that makes them part of SF fandom. Some of those branches seem to have broken off, fallen in the river and floated out to sea.

Lloyd Penney

I never thought of fandom as fractured, but as a smorgasbord of interests. You could sample a little from each bowl, or chow down on one particular dish, whatever you pleased. I've done my sampling and chowing down, and as a result, I like to think I know a little something about a lot of various fandoms, and have found the interests I prefer to settle with. I just wish that others had been as curious as I was so that they could understand what interests me.

John Purcell

Well. I never thought of fandom being fractured; mostly, I have thought of *fans* as being fractured. Lee has a longer experience with fans than I have, and she went through the nuttiness of Seventh Fandom and witnessed firsthand the growth of media influ-

ences in fandom. By the time I came onto the fannish scene (1973), fandom had significantly grown in size and begun its balkanization with Comics, ERB-dom, SCA, and *Star Trek* subgroups. The explosion of media sf thanks to *Star Wars* in the mid-70s resulted in more subgroups, thus I have to agree with Lee's concluding analogy that Science Fiction is a tree, and all of these branches grow naturally out of the main trunk. The fertilizers - computer, entertainment, gaming - make sense, too. At least I have the choice of which branch of this stfnal tree to climb out onto. (By the way, great idea to use Lee's old Worldcon registration cards as illoes.)

Tokyo Rose

Lee Lavell

Monsters always attack the country/city that has produced the film, which begs the question of the chicken or the egg. Perhaps the monsters are attacking that location in revenge for the terrible films being made about them.

Eric Mayer

I am pretty certain Godzilla isn't out in the woods. You'd see his head sticking up out of the pines from miles away. Dave Locke's article was hilarious. How much great stuff did he write during the 70s alone? My favorite monster was Reptilicus. At the end of the movie, after he was blown to

monster heaven we saw his foot sitting on the sea bed. Which was good news because he was capable of regeneration. Sadly it must take a long time because I've been awaiting his return for over forty years now.

Joseph Major

I figure the monsters are getting directions. There's some sort of undersea Travellers' Aid: "Yes, you want to take that course. Climb ashore and stomp away!" It's like the space station run by the Romulans that directs Unstoppable Alien Probes to Earth, or occasionally to the Klingon Empire. (It has to be the Romulans; they never get hit. There's no money in it so the Ferengi are out, and the Borg *are* an Unstoppable Alien Probe.)

John Purcell

I simply adore Godzilla movies, and have a small collection of them here. They are so much fun to heckle. For that matter, anything that's labeled a "Sci Fi Original Movie" is a lot of fun to heckle, if you can stifle your gagging reflex long enough. Given a choice of *War of the Gargantuas* over *The Flintstones* is tough. I think that I'd opt for the monsters.

Whither Fandom?

Lee Lavell

The local ISFA clubs in the 50s, 60s and 70s solved the political problem by not allowing

any politics. These ISFAs split off from the first ISFA because Ray Beam, who organized it, wanted the club to *do* things so a bunch of the members quit the club. Ray changed the name of the club so we reorganized, taking the name back. Our club, throughout its several existences, had but one philosophy: do nothing as a whole. This was not written into by-laws. We had no by-laws. It was just understood. About the only thing the club did as a whole was to try to get people to contribute toward paying for refreshments at meetings (this was the “treasurer’s” job) and sending out meeting notices (the “secretary’s” job). Oh, we occasionally had a picnic to which members contributed to the pitch-in. At one time the president was a dog. Later on even that office was dispensed with and the top officer was my cat, Gummitch, who was High Priest of Mrs. Pboth, the club goddess. (We eschewed Ghu.) If someone entered the club who wanted it to do something, like the Three Davids, they were immediately encouraged and helped to do things on their own.

Eric Mayer

I hate to admit it, but controversial stuff is bound to generate the most response, as I'm about to prove. Ted's account of the Gilliland contretemps was fascinating, though in all fairness I must reserve judgment. Current fans, or fans in the group we associate with, tend to be in the right, as opposed to fans who have gafiated or are ac-

tive in another group, because we tend to only get one side of the story.

I ran across an example of the sort of thing that happens last year. I was poking around the Internet to get an idea of what had been going on in Fandom during the past twenty years. I googled the esteemed editor of *Warhoon* 28. Naturally I found mostly references to the great TAFF kerfuffle. I was startled, though not particularly surprised, to come upon a mention of myself in Rob Hansen's “Then” which was...how can I put politely? A fabrication?

Well, let's be kind. Rob had apparently taken it upon himself to read my mind but his telepathic powers were not all he fancied them to be. Or maybe he had found his psychic abilities trustworthy in the past for writing fan history but there were disturbances in the aether that day. I suppose he just didn't want to be a pest by querying me directly on the matter so I probably shouldn't be too harsh.

I didn't see any reason to get up in arms over an off-hand remark so I let it pass, however if it had been a whole article then it might be a different story and – the point is – there is a lot of such faux fan history floating around.

Fans will insist on presenting unsubstantiated opinions as fact. They will also characterize autobiographies and personal memoirs as histories, which they are not.

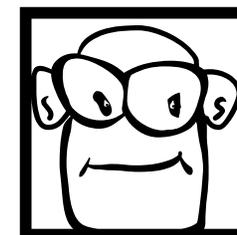
And even actual fan histories are not subjected to the sort of scrutiny real histories have to survive. In the larger world falsifications and careless mistakes are far less likely to go unchallenged and opposing viewpoints and interpretations are more likely to be available to anyone who is interested in judging what actually happened. Fandom is too small for that. There aren't enough fan historians to ride herd on each other. Worst of all, when it comes to controversies, fans have often gafiated and taken their sides of the story with them.

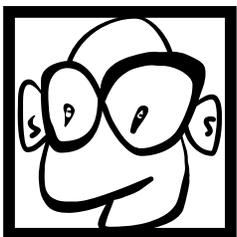
Having said that, I will admit I am inclined to believe Ted's side of the Gilliland affair simply because it sounds so typical of what happens when a new wife decides to mark out her territory. And that, I would guess, probably had more to do with the unpleasantness than fan politics.

Fan politics are often not so much local as they are personal. It is a bad idea to get involved, or even form opinions on, fan disputes which purport to be about fan politics if you know nothing about the interpersonal relationships which are what the disputes really arise from, as I know only too well.

Lloyd Penney

I remember Dolly Gilliland quite well, always easy to talk to, and Alexis kind of held to the shadows. It is strange that we got to





know Dolly and Lee better than we knew Alexis. When it came to Lee, we knew her from living in the Buffalo/Niagara Falls area. We met Lee and Gerry Uba when we first started going to the Contradiction series of conventions in NFNY. Gerry was confined to a wheelchair, and I could tell that Lee was getting a little tired of the whole thing. I do not even know if Gerry is still alive. Both the Ubas disappeared for the longest time, and I didn't see Lee again until a Worldcon sometime in the early 90s when she appeared on Alexis' arm. Lee donated lots of homemade jewelery to sell, with the proceeds to go to funding the Toronto in 2003 bid.

John Purcell

Ted White's "Whither Fandom?" column this time is most intriguing, and one that had me shaking my head. How people can take this hobby interest so seriously is beyond me. I freely admit that I've done it, notably over campaigning for the editorship of *Rune* back in 1980, but realized shortly after that teapot of a tempest that such behavior takes all the fun out of being a fan. Yuck! Fan politics is not for me. I remember reading these letters Ted refers to in *File:770* last year, again not understanding what in the heck was going on. I tend to gloss over things like

that in lettercolumns. However, I do thank Ted for this cautionary tale. Where is the fun in causing such a ruckus, and losing a good friend in the process? This simply makes no sense to me.

Fearsome Creatures

Lee Lavell

Marcus Loidolt, an Outdoor Education teacher, told me of a "mythical" creature in Indiana which turned out not to be mythical after all. This animal, the Swamp Rabbit, was reputed to be at least twice the size of a normal cottontail, was aquatic, had webbed feet and climbed trees. It turns out that the swamp rabbit is an actual rabbit, more common in such states as Texas and Arkansas. It is larger than the usual cottontail, being around 6 to 8 pounds, is aquatic in nature and will often "snorkel" underwater. I found no mention of webbed feet but there were references to splayed feet. I also could not find anything about it climbing trees, but it does not burrow, but instead builds nests out of twigs, sticks and such on the ground. Its habitat in Indiana is in a very small part of southern Indiana and it is on Indiana's protected list. It occurs to me that this may explain some of Tim's "fearsome creatures"...perhaps they are actual animals that are so rare for that area that they have become exaggerated to the point of becoming mythical.

Eric Mayer

Interesting piece by Tim Cassidy on creatures out of folklore. So we might have Squonk lurking around us here in Pennsylvania?!! The idea that there might be strange creatures out in the woods in our civilized, built-up part of the world sounds preposterous at first, but from where we are you can look out over a seemingly endless succession of mountains, mostly forested, mostly undisturbed except for an occasional overgrown logging trail or a hunting cabin. It's undisputed there are coyotes out there and wild boar, neither of which I've seen. I did see a 400 pound bear in our backyard one afternoon. They live out there too, although you wouldn't normally see any evidence of them very far from the woods. I suppose if there were Squonk someone would've spotted one but maybe Squonk are smart enough to stay out of sight.

Joseph Major

From this one goes to Paul Bunyan. I once read an article on folk tales where the author pointedly disdained the Paul Bunyan stories, because, you see, they weren't real folklore; some individual had actually written them.

The fame of legendary creatures increases as one goes west. For example, the eruption of Mount Saint Helens destroyed the habitat of a protected species: Bigfoot. Yes, Bigfoot is a protected species, and the area around

Mount Saint Helens had a large number of Bigfoot sightings.

John Purcell

I really enjoyed Tim Cassidy's piece. There are a lot of "fearsome creature" myths in the stories of native Americans, and it would be so cool to revive them again. Fun, fun, fun stuff.

Being Frank

Lee Lavell

While I like Peter Sullivan's reviews of the contents (although they are a bit superficial), I wish he would say something about the layout and presentation of each fanzine.

Eric Mayer

Peter Sullivan does a nice job with his capsule reviews. The fact he has so many zines to review every month is remarkable.

Pixelated

Lee Lavell

Interesting way of doing the LoCs this time. Keeps most of the topics all together instead of scattered all over the place.

Eric Mayer

You majored in Medieval History. Eeeek! You probably know more about Byzantine times than I do. And I thought a degree in

English Lit was useless. (No, I stand corrected...I know a degree in English Lit is useless)

Andy Porter's LoCs about duplicating are regular mini-articles. I found a place in Manhattan which did color xerox for 50 cents a sheet. In the late seventies color xerox was unusual, to me at least. I scraped up enough money to do a cover. Must've been at the shop for three hours. The machine kept breaking down. They gave the impression people didn't usually try to make 60 copies.

Amusing observations on Gaiman and Tucker in Joseph Major's letter.

Joseph Major

Conspiracy theories are what silly people do in order to have the world make sense. Wiser folk realize that the world never made sense to begin with.

As of this writing the furor has just died down over the brief career of O. J. Simpson's attempt to make a little money by arguing how he would have committed the murders if he had committed the mur-

ders. It's a pity; I was waiting to see Dominick Dunne's review. (Dunne's book *Justice* contains several virulent essays on the trial, and decrying Simpson's acquittal; as you know, Dunne's daughter Dominique was murdered by a guy who got off easy.)

Lee Lavell shouldn't complain. I remember the issue of *Astromancer Quarterly* that had most of a picture of an elephant with the note, "Continued on Page 78". This was, by the way, a 32-page zine. (The bidzine for the abortive Buffalo Worldcon bid. One regrets that the zine did not continue after the bid folded.)

John Purcell

As for your loccol, your editing this time around was a good idea, grouping comments about a particular topic together. Lots of faneds have tried this format before, and it takes a deft hand to pull it off. Including subheadings helps to move from topic to topic. Good job. •

