



PIXEL ELEVEN

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Notes

2006 FAAn Award results

The results of the voting for the FAAn Awards were announced at the banquet at Corflu 24 in Austin, Texas on February 11th. *Banana Wings* received top votes as Best Fanzine, followed by *Pixel* and *Vegas Fandom Weekly*. Most of the regular contributors to *Pixel* also did well in the other categories – a complete run-down of the voting can be seen at efanazines.com. What really pleased me (other than the fact that *Pixel* moved up one spot in the results) was that there were nearly twice as many votes cast this year as last, which I think is a good sign for fanzine fandom. Once again, I have to thank the regular contributors to *Pixel* in 2006 – Eric Mayer, Dave Locke, Lee Lavell, Ted White, Chris Garcia, Peter Sullivan, Brad Foster, David Lewton, and Kyle Hinton plus the regular letterhacks. Although my name inevitably gets attached to the zine, they're the folks that make it what it is. It's also interesting to note that of the top five zines, only *Banana Wings* isn't available in a digital format!

“ Why are we in such a hurry about everything? ”

Contents

Cover: photograph “Palms Up”
by Jen Woll

- 3 Much Nothings About Ado
column by Lee Lavell
- 6 Notes From Byzantium
column by Eric Mayer
- 11 Whither Fandom?
column by Ted White
- 15 Found In Collection
column by Christopher Garcia
- 17 Being Frank
zine reviews by Peter Sullivan
- 20 Pixelated
lettercolumn

Special thanks this time around to Brad Foster for the artwork!

Much Nothings About Ado

Lee Lavell illustrations by Manfred Klein

Pratfalling into the Future The Grinch Speaks

In a previous column I listed many things as they used to be fifty-plus years ago. In this column I intend to discuss some of the progress that we have made since then and the implications of that so-called progress.

It seems to me, in many cases we have been in such a hurry to “progress” that we have been tripping over our own feet in doing so. Let’s take our diet as a quick example. I’m not sure anymore exactly what we are supposed to eat. First fat is a no-no, and then suddenly some fats are good and some are bad. There’s good cholesterol and bad cholesterol. Gotta watch out for trans-fats. And so on. I either spend half my time at the grocery reading labels and trying to remember what I last read about food requirements and dangers or just say to heck with it and go ahead and poison myself.

Same thing with alcohol. During prohibition it was banned and now doctors are prescribing red wine as a heart attack preventative. I wonder if the same thing will happen with tobacco.

We have become terribly spoiled in many ways. The necessities of life are food, clothing, shelter, and health care. Nowhere there do I see air conditioning, television, cell phones, computers, or fancy cars on that list. Yet people are considered almost

poverty stricken (or strange Luddites) if they don’t have them.

Health care has become another problem. First of all, we have become so health-conscious that we protect ourselves from infection to such a degree that we are reaching a point where we have given ourselves no chance of building up a resistance to incoming germs. In addition we have overused antibiotics so that the bacteria have built up a resistance to them and they are becoming ineffective. *And* on top of that, with all the new medicines and technology, health care has become so expensive that it is almost unreachable and the cost of effective health insurance has escalated right along with it. So, while health care has improved dramatically, a lot of people can’t afford to take advantage of it.

And why are we in such a hurry about everything? It seems that we can’t wait for anything anymore, never giving any chance to study the impact of our technologies. We build Interstates and through-ways to get to places quicker in our increasingly more complex cars. What do they do? Well, the through-ways in the cities get increasingly more clogged, so traffic slows or comes to a standstill; bigger and “better” ones must be



constructed, until they too become obsolete. The emissions are destroying our atmosphere, the cars are becoming more and more expensive, and the cities are getting bigger and more unlivable. The Interstates destroy our landscapes and habitats not to mention, because of the speeds allowed, lives. With a little thought, I'm sure a practical and safe mass transit system could have been engineered with much less destruction.

Technology is a wonderful thing but things become obsolete almost before they are available. From records we went to tapes and then to CDs and now we can download thousands of tunes. How many can one listen to anyway? We had a mail service. It may not have been the most efficient thing but it worked for years. Now, thanks to the computer and the Internet, we have email and instant messaging and Palm Pilots and Blackberries and what-have-you. All very nice but look also at what the computer has done to the readers of this era. Sometimes I think they don't exist except to email each other. With the computer and the Internet have come information and more information and sometimes information that we don't want people to know. So we have hackers, and identity thieves, and viruses, and worms. But do we take the time to correct all this? No, we just go ahead and make faster and more powerful computers so the thieves, and viruses, and worms will have more to deal with and we will have more to cope with.

We don't seem to learn from the lessons of the past at all. We rebuild cities that have been destroyed by natural disasters, never thinking that maybe, just maybe, it might be wise to avoid certain areas that are prone to those disasters. We continue to construct taller and taller buildings. The events of 9/11 should remind us that they have a great big bulls-eye on them.



Vietnam sure didn't keep us from sticking our noses into Iraq, did it?

Okay now, I've got the curmudgeon out of my system for a while. I really do appreciate and utilize most of the advantages that we have attained over the years. I just wish we could be a little more circumspect about them. I wonder if somewhere, way way back when, there were cavemen grumbling about this new-fangled wheel, when lugging things around had been sufficient for years and where was all this going to lead! (I guess we know now, don't we?)

Skipping into the Future, or Pollyanna Stomps All Over the Grinch

Now that I've gotten the downside of the future out of my system, I should now like to look at things from a rosier point of view.

Let's start with tolerance. Now, I would be the first to say that things are not where they should be yet, but oh my God, things are really so much better. No longer are we a country in which the only way is the white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant, heterosexual male route. African-Americans hold respected political offices, have a national holiday dedicated to one of their leaders, are present in the most prestigious schools (both as students and professors), and hold high positions in science, business and industry. Maybe it's still harder for them to get there, but it's no longer impossible, as it once was. Each year brings an improvement. No one thinks anything about a Catholic holding the presidency any more although back when Kennedy was running "The Pope will control the U.S.A." was heard quite frequently. That seems absurd now. Many, many gays now feel free to come out of the closet and a lot of people just say "So what...he or she is gay. So what?" Yes, there is



still gay-bashing, but most people are horrified by it and we now even have laws specifically against hate crimes. There will always be stupid people, but reason seems to have taken over. Women's rights have improved as well. A woman may now stand independently. Most jobs are now available to her (although they still don't pay as much as they should compared to men). An un-

married woman is no longer a freak or an "old maid." She is an individual, trying to get along in this world, just like her male counterparts. I guess things like this just take time, sad to say, but they are progressing in the correct direction.

Communication: Wow! Who would have thought this even just a few years ago? I am not just talking about communication between people bypassing snail mail completely. I refer to the communication of ideas, of information. Facts are literally at our fingertips now if one has a computer. We can find out things instantaneously and from all fields all over the world. Sometimes these facts can be a bit scary but they can no longer be hidden for the most part. And from information comes progress.

The media: hundreds of TV channels. Movies in your home. Special effects have improved so dramatically that is very difficult to tell what is real and what isn't except by common sense. (After all, there aren't really any aliens, dragons, or hobbits... are there?)

Nowhere have there been any greater advances than in the field of science...all sciences. No longer is space travel that "crazy Buck Rogers stuff." We've been to the moon and plans now are to go back. We have a space station. We've sent probes to Mars and there is water there, even some occasional running

water it seems. Our probes have visited the outer and inner planets. We've checked out comets and asteroids. We've detected the presence of planets around other stars. Space science is alive and well. And while we're at it, those old clichés of science fiction the zap gun (the laser), the space warp (black holes and wormholes), and alternate universes (string theory) are now upon us. Science has brought us many advances in medicine. Not only are many horrible diseases like polio and smallpox now virtually eradicated thanks to vaccines, but surgeries are quicker, simpler, and much less invasive. Sure, we've got AIDS to worry about now, but advances have been made in its treatment so that it is no longer a death sentence. Hopefully a vaccine will be found soon.

We do have worries about our ecology and global warming, but at least now we are beginning to recognize them and with that recognition we can begin to work on remedying them. So we are in the first steps there.

It would have been nice to say that we had eradicated war, but unfortunately that is not the reality. Hopefully, someday that will be the case as well. We have got to learn to live together; there is no other way about it. If we don't, all these advances will have gone for naught. So maybe someday, with communication as the route through which it grows, we will have not just a technologically advanced civilization, but one of understanding and peace as well. •

Notes From Byzantium

Eric Mayer illustrated by Brad Foster

How To Remove A Cat

Rhubarb in her blog (<http://www.journalscape.com/rhubarb/>) commented:

Have you ever noticed that as the cat settles down on your lap, knitting her claws and purring, she finally relaxes into a comfortable position and then goes deeply into sleep. While she is sleeping, she seems to get heavier and heavier, until you are pinned under a hundredweight of cat.

When, finally, you have to move, because nature calls or your leg has gone to sleep or the phone rings, it is nearly impossible to dislodge the cat. Enduring a barrage of extremely disgruntled meows and disentangling of the claws and heaving over the dead weight, you finally break free – and realize how cold the house is. Cats are wonderful heat generators.

I found myself embroidering her thoughts:

In case you haven't noticed, cats live in their own world. Not only can't you teach them to sit up, they refuse to obey the laws of physics as well. Ed Cagle, whose fanzine I read long ago, once remarked that he believed in the "Steady State" explana-

tion for the expansion of the universe, except that new matter was not, as the scientists postulated, created inside supernovae but inside cats. He had observed that a cat would eat a pound of food and leave five pounds in the litter box. (Although he expressed himself more pungently.)

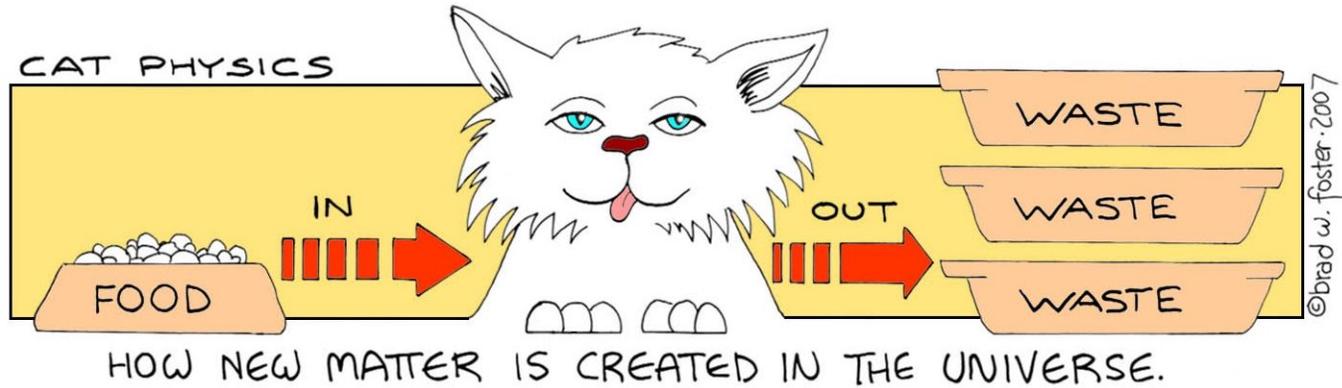
As far as the conservation of energy goes (and it only goes so far) cats have their own rules. A cat at rest tends to stay at rest. A cat in motion tends to head toward a place where it can stay at rest.

When I am in the same room as our cat that place is my lap. Or, rather, the cat perch I obliging create by crossing my legs, since I have no lap otherwise.

Once it is sitting on me, the cat goes to sleep. A sleeping cat gets heavier. This is because the cat is converting every last bit of energy in its body into matter. The cat's weighty head lolls over the side of my leg. If I'm lucky it doesn't drool. (I am seldom lucky.) The cat continues to droop, almost like it's melting. (Or as if it's a mass of fur covered Silly Putty.) The cat's sides move slower and slower. Finally, inevitably, the increasing pressure on the nerves makes my leg go to sleep. My foot begins to tingle uncomfortably.

Petting the cat gets no response. Joggling my leg is no more effective. I try to move my leg to push the cat off and it seems like it has not only melted but stuck. I manage to get my hands

CAT PHYSICS



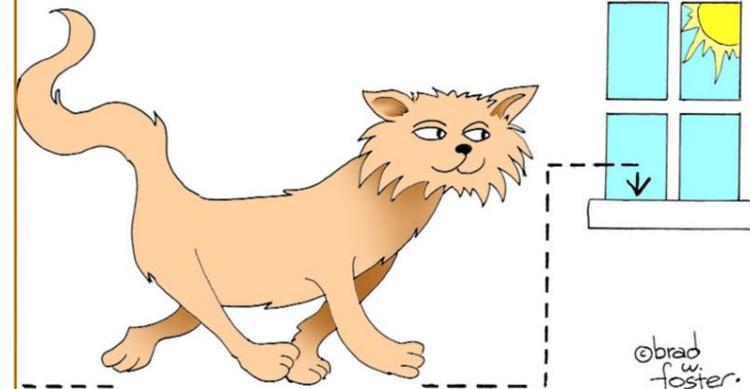
FIRST LAW of CAT PHYSICS

A BODY AT REST WILL REMAIN AT REST UNTIL IT'S TIME TO EAT.



SECOND LAW of CAT PHYSICS

A BODY IN MOTION WILL SEEK A PLACE TO REMAIN AT REST.



under the flaccid mass of feline, grab hold and lift. Although still apparently asleep, its claws seem to have gripped my trousers.

I pull harder. The cat comes loose with a sound like Velcro. I sit it on the floor. It wobbles and slumps and blinks like it doesn't know where it is.

I manage to get up, shake my numb leg, and hobble toward the stairs. Just as I reach the top of the stairs the cat suddenly materializes under my feet and I have to grab the railing to avoid falling. I guess it's just the cat's way of reassuring me it is still alive and perhaps should be given a tin of food so that it can start creating matter for the universe again.

Words I Remember

My grandparents were born in the 1890s of parents who had emigrated from Germany. I don't know which of these factors, if any, contributed to the colorful expressions I heard in their house and nowhere else.

One mysterious term my grandfather frequently used, and with which I was totally unfamiliar as a child, was "bugger." When my friends and I got to racing around on the porch that surrounded the house on three sides and stomping and shrieking, my grandfather would open a window and holler, "You little buggers had better stop that or I'll take my razor strap after you."

I knew only too well what the razer strap (strop) was since it hung ominously from the towel rack in the bathroom. He never actually got around to taking it after us but it wasn't hard to imagine the horror that would ensue when leather met backside.

My friends and I used to puzzle over what a "bugger" was. I know today that sounds impossible, but it's true. We figured

maybe it derived from the expression being "bugged" as in annoyed. Years later, when I was old enough to know the definition, my father explained to me that "Grampy didn't mean what the word really means." He reckoned my grandfather hadn't known what it meant either.

My father also took me aside once when I was still a kid to excuse another of my grandfather's usages. I could tell he was embarrassed, but apparently he felt he needed to set me straight.

"Your grampy is a smart man but he left school early and he doesn't always use words correctly. He says your'n when he means yours. Now, you don't want to copy your Grampy. Your'n is what you make when you use the toilet. You don't want to be telling people that something is their urine do you?"

Of course not. Except in jest...

"Hey Johnnie, this Root Beer Fizzie's mine and that's your'n."

"Ewwww. It doesn't look like pee."

"No. I said it's your'n."

Well, you get the idea.

My grandmother's vocabulary was less fraught. Her strongest expletive was "Oh Lordy!"

She also employed some words and constructions which may be common somewhere but which I found odd. Something that was expensive, for instance



was “dear.” “I didn’t buy any apples, they were too dear.”

“Mind” was another favorite, for “be careful.” “Mind you don’t touch that hot pan.”

An odder expression, to me, was the way she used “powerful” as an adjective. For instance, “Mind you don’t touch the pan, it’s powerful hot.”

“Powerful” could be used to modify practically anything. A person could be powerful hungry, or it might be powerful windy out. However nothing was ever “powerful sour.” You wouldn’t think the quality of being sour would require its own expression but I suppose in a household where my grandmother practically lived at the stove and pies, jellies, jams, and home canned delicacies of all sorts appeared at nearly every meal, sour was as useful a term as “snow” is to the Eskimos. Thus, if an apple pie, say, or a batch of canned rhubarb, was overly tart, my grandmother would exclaim, “That’s sour as pig swill!”

Needless to say all the kids in the area would race around at the drop of a lemon candy or a glass of inadequately sugared Kool-Aid, screaming “Arrghhh. It’s sour as pig swill!!!”

The origin of my favorite expression, however, was clear. Although my grandparents’ house had modern plumbing they both grew up on farms where the call of nature necessitated that one commune with nature on the way to the outhouse in the back yard. So it was no mystery to me why my grandparents referred to any serious intestinal difficulties as “the back-door trots.”

Sounds almost like the name of a band.

Cover Art

Book covers today are usually formulated by marketing and advertising departments rather than created by artists. It’s been that way for a long time, although I do seem recall, back in the sixties that a greater number of books, like the Ballantine Adult

Fantasy series, featured covers which added something in their own right and were not simply an advertisement wrapped around the pages. I still see attractive covers, but not many.

The books I grew up with were not the disposable consumer items they have become. I remember the books in the small, darkly varnished bookcase beside my grandmother’s rocking chair. Among them were *Heidi* and *The Wind in the Willows* which she read to me in the evenings. There were no jackets on these books to become torn and dirty. Their covers were colored and embossed with pictures. So were the Thornton W. Burgess animal stories from the library.

The most impressive volume in the bookcase, with the most elaborate cover, was Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. That tome weighed practically as much as I did. I’m not quite sure what it was doing there. Maybe at one time everyone had to have a copy. My grandmother never offered to read it to me and when I was old enough to read for myself it became the very first book that I found to be utterly unreadable.

I recalled this after being alerted to Publishers’ Bindings On-line (<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/>) – a digital collection of thousands of decorative bindings produced between 1815 and 1930. The site is well worth browsing for a glimpse of an era when even commercially produced books were an art.

Schedules

This morning I woke to a pale pink sunrise. A few days ago, I admit, we didn’t get up until nearly noon. Today, like yesterday, I will be working continuously, until I go to bed, on a legal article, with only a few breaks for necessities like eating and web surfing. Last month I mostly labored on the first draft of a mystery novel, knocking off whenever I finished a chapter, that being about as much exertion as my brain can manage in a single day, or so I’ve convinced myself.

I no longer have a schedule, aside from needing to get up early to haul the trash down to the road Thursdays, when there's enough trash to haul down, and a holiday hasn't pushed collection back until Friday, like this week.

Until my mid-forties I got up for school and work five days a week. Saturdays and Sundays were free along with the endless summers and long vacation breaks of my school days and, later, at my job, the few holidays marked in red on the wallet calendar given out for the new year, as well as those precious personal days. I wondered what it would be like to free of schedules, to be retired, because most of us who need to work for a living are required to show up somewhere every day whether we feel like it or not.

As it happens I won't ever be able to retire, unless I win the lottery, but freelancing at least liberates me from a schedule. I find myself reflecting on the situation only because it is unexpected, strange even. I had grown up believing sentient matter such as myself existed in only two states – working at a job or retired. (And, perhaps the third state of “bestselling author” which sentient matter rarely appears in under normal conditions)

Now my life revolves around deadlines. Every job has a due date. Rather than juggling personal leave days and holidays I try to slide assignments this way and that. So many days on this, so many on that. If I agree to write this article by the end of January will I be able to finish the one I'm working on by the middle of March?

We have an old fashioned spring driven clock on the bookcase in the office. Sometimes, when I stop typing, I can hear it ticking, loudly, insistently. Better that than hearing the alarm every morning. •

From the
Calling Doctor Howard, Doctor Fine, Doctor
Howard...
Department

A man comes into the ER and yells, “My wife's going to have her baby in the cab!” I grabbed my stuff, rushed out to a cab, lifted the lady's dress, and began to take off her underwear. Suddenly I noticed that there were several cabs – and I was in the wrong one.

At the beginning of my shift I placed a stethoscope on an elderly and slightly deaf female patient's anterior chest wall. “Big breaths,” I instructed. “Yes, they used to be,” replied the patient.

While acquainting myself with a new elderly patient, I asked, “How long have you been bedridden?” After a look of complete confusion she answered... “Why, not for about twenty years – when my husband was alive.”

A nurse was on duty in the Emergency Room, when a young woman with purple hair styled into a punk rocker Mohawk, sporting a variety of tattoos, and wearing strange clothing, entered. It was quickly determined that the patient had acute appendicitis, so she was scheduled for immediate surgery. When she was completely disrobed on the operating table, the staff noticed that her pubic hair had been dyed green, and above it there was a tattoo that read *Keep off the grass.*

Once the surgery was completed, the surgeon wrote a short note on the patient's dressing, which said, “Sorry, had to mow the lawn.”

from the Internet, submitted by Beth Hinton

Whither Fandom?

Ted White

Oh, what tangled webs we weave! I was thinking that as I flew home from what was one of the best Corflus I've attended – and I've attended them all. I was thinking that because it was easy to remember the panic I'd felt during last year's Corflu in Toronto when I'd realized that we had no one bidding for the 2007 Corflu.

But let's backtrack further – much further. Let's go back to Corflu One, in 1984. Linda Blanchard, rich brown and I were relaxing and getting sercon and Linda said, "You know, *we* should do a Corflu." It was my impression that Linda meant her and rich, since they were at that point living together in Northern Virginia. But I said, rather nobly, I thought, "Well, if I can do anything to help..." Famous last words, those were. Because Linda talked to Allyn Cadogan, who told her that Corflu's founders wanted to do the second Corflu (in Napa Valley), but that "we" could do the third Corflu if we wanted to.

Thus the succession of Corflus was informally established. And when, at the second Corflu, Bill Bowers told me he was thinking of doing a Corflu in Cincinnati, and I suggested to him that he do the fourth Corflu, the succession was confirmed. By "gentlemen's agreement," we would avoid conflicting bids and bidding wars. Bidders would get in line and get the following Corflu.

This made a lot of sense to those of us who were considering doing a Corflu. Corflu's attendance rarely gets much above 100

and has been as low as 20, and no one makes money on the convention – a number have in fact been subsidized by their committees – so it makes sense not to waste money and energy on bidding wars. (There has been only one contested bid – requiring a vote between sites – in the quarter-century of Corflus, and that occurred when we couldn't convince either party to wait a bloody year.)

In recent years bidding wars have not been an issue because we've had the reverse problem: Finding someone to bid for next year's Corflu. When Frank Lunney and I arrived in Toronto to find that *no one* was bidding for the following year, we experienced something akin to mild panic. Like most regular Corflu attendees, we prize the convention, it's at the top of the list of cons for us each year, the one we will get to if we possibly can. And the idea that none was lined up for the following year was disquieting.

Had this occurred in the mid-'90s, it would have been dealt with before the con itself. Emails would have been exchanged, a volunteer would be found (or "persuaded"), and there would be a bidder, fait accompli. I would have had no hand in this. Others, smofier than I, and Much Concerned, would have taken care of it. In all likelihood I would never hear about the behind-the-scenes machinations. And I prefer that state of ignorant bliss.

But perhaps both Frank and I had become too accustomed to

others rescuing Corflu's chestnuts. And in 2006 those "others" had fallen short, perhaps preoccupied with other more pressing problems. So we found ourselves pulled into action, feeling an urgent need to twist arms and come up with a bidder for 2007.

I have to ask myself, in retrospect, if our sense of panic was warranted. I have to wonder whether, if we had done nothing at all, Pat Virzi would have volunteered herself to put on this year's Corflu anyway. Pat probably knows.

But as it was, Frank and I found ourselves in Toronto sitting across a restaurant table one night from Pat and the subject came up. Pat expressed an attitude which was not totally negative to the idea, and Frank and I seized the advantage and both her arms, which we began (metaphorically) twisting. The outcome was that Pat bid for the 2007 Corflu in Austin and our bacon was saved for yet another year.

Pat put on a superb Corflu. In no respect was hers a last-minute fill-in for a "real" Corflu. Pat covered all the bases. She thought of everything and her follow-up and execution were flawless. (Just as one example, she revived the idea of Corflu doing a "fanthology," but instead of a best-of from a previous year's fanwritings, she had Robert Lichtman assemble a collection of F. Towner Laney's best writings, *Ah, Sweet Laney*, and did an outstanding job of graphics design and publication. This volume is still available from Pat for \$15 a copy – well worth it – and all monies raised from its sale will be passed along to future Corflus...another example of how Pat has helped her successors.)

It was a sense of guilt for thrusting Pat into all these responsibilities and work which led me to volunteer to handle the programming for her Corflu. But it was a sense of déjà vu panic which hit me when Frank and I began asking if anyone was bidding for 2008. No one appeared to be. And here we were all over again.

We had heard vague rumors about Seattle, so we decided to

see if we could twist some new arms – those belonging to John D. Berry and Randy Byers. I had a plan to confront the two together, but Frank jumped the gun and cornered John in the bar. "He won't do it," he told me soon thereafter. "You blew it," I accused him. "I wanted to catch John and Randy *together*." We both sighed.

Then the phone in the consuite rang. It was Joyce Katz, calling from Las Vegas. Frank talked to her a long time, then hung up without passing the phone around. Not too long thereafter, James Taylor and Teresa Cochran were in my room and some of the rest of us were having a chat, and the conversation I was hearing between Frank and James and Teresa appeared to be about Las Vegas bidding for 2008, and who would be doing what. My spirits went up. Then my phone rang, and it was Joyce Katz, seeking my blessing for a 2008 Las Vegas Corflu. "I really want to do one," she told me.

Subsequently I was told about a possible San Francisco/Bay Area bid which had been considered on a if-no-one-else-bids basis. But if the last Las Vegas Corflu had been relatively recent, having occurred in 2004, the last San Francisco Corflu had been even more recent, only two years previously. The San Francisco bidders must have felt a sense of vast relief when the Las Vegas bid was announced.

But what of 2009 and beyond? Would we have to go through this sort of last-minute brinksmanship at every Corflu? Could my constitution, or Frank's, withstand such an annual workout, with all attendant panic?

The happy answer is that this does not appear to be an issue any longer. As I announced at the Sunday banquet, it appears our ducks are now neatly in line. Following Las Vegas, there actually will be a Seattle Corflu in 2009. In 2010 a UK bid looms, twelve years after the Leeds Corflu. And for 2011? Chris Garcia thinks he'll be ready to do one then. So we have the next four years all lined up. That's not too many.

(That early bid with Linda Blanchard? Well, by the time Corflu Two rolled out, she was no longer living with rich brown and had moved out of the area, subsequently to marry Dave Bridges and move to Texas. So, as the only one of us at Corflu Two, I presented the bid and the committee that put on Corflu Three turned out to be rich, myself, and Dan and Lynn Steffan. I was a little surprised that Linda and Dave did not put in an appearance at the Austin Corflu, the way they had at El Paso, in 1991. But Texas is a big state. We had to settle for Mike Moorcock...)

* * *

I've mentioned before that I work for a court reporting company as an editor/proofer. What this means is that after a transcript of a proceeding is created – either by a stenographer or a transcriber working from an audio recording and the reporter's detailed notes – it comes to me (or one of the three other editor/proofer(s)). I listen to the same audio recording on earphones and read the transcript on my computer screen. My first task is to convert the transcript from Word or a text file created by a stenographer to Total Eclipse, a legal-formatted word processing program. I proof and edit it in Total Eclipse, which, once you learn its odd tricks, is faster and easier to work with.

The proofing part requires little explanation. I listen to the audio and correct misheard or misunderstood words, and fill in the blanks when the transcriber can't figure out what was said, and types in "(inaudible)."

The editing is more subtle. For example, my prime directive is that no lawyer or judge ever says "yeah" in one of our transcripts. All such "yeah"s become "yes"s. Along the same line, I try to ensure than all lawyers speak grammatically, in complete sentences – although in fact many self-interrupt and speak in broken sentences.

Understand, these lawyers are not actually "on record" in

these transcripts. They are conducting depositions, and everything the witness being deposed says *is* on record, and not subject to editing in any form. The attorneys' questions are edited into coherency.

But we also do hearings, meetings, boards of inquiry, etc. (In transcripts "etc." is *always* spelled out as "et cetera.") Right now I'm doing a 322-page transcript of a full day meeting on the subject of world democratization. Half the speakers are identified only by their initials; the reporter had to get a security clearance. Members of USAID were prominent participants at the meeting. A number of them stuttered or repeated half-sentences, all of which our mindless transcriber (a sleazy firm called SoftScribe) wrote down. Typically, the transcriber was clueless about punctuation, adding commas where none were needed and leaving them out where they were indeed needed. So my editing takes two forms: re-punctuating sentences (rejoining subsidiary clauses in some cases, breaking up run-on sentences in others) and taking out the false starts and stuttering. Unquestionably, the end product is more readable and understandable, and no doubt the participants come off sounding better than they really did.

It's a slow, tedious job when I get one of SoftScribe's transcripts. I vastly prefer those done in-house by people like Lynn Steffan (who got me the job), or a stenographer like Olivette Graham, whose desk is directly at my back.

The fun of course comes in "juicy" transcripts – ones which tell a good story, or in which opposing lawyers go for each other's throats. They can make my day.

And every so often I read something so good that I copy it down for my own amusement. Here's one I saved: "You don't know what's going to be pulled out of the next rabbit's hat, you know." A lawyer said that. His meaning is obvious, but he has his metaphor all wrong.

I mentioned SoftScribe. This company outsources its

transcription work to India, and was set up by an Indian fellow who used to work for us. Because the transcribers are unfamiliar with the American idiom, they totally fail to understand or correctly transcribe phrases like “the whole nine yards,” or “covering all the bases.” Periodically I copy down some of their more egregious errors. Here are a few:

“My two cents worth” was transcribed as “my true sense was worthy.” “I thought I answered that already” was transcribed as “that’s what I asked them really.” The simple word “feel,” as spoken, was somehow transcribed in a burst of wordiness as “have put on that” – something which made no sense at all in context. More common were misheard words (which in context also made no sense), such as “exit strategy” transcribed as “excess strategy,” and “fraud, waste and mismanagement” transcribed as “fraud, ways to mismanagement.”

Some, like “a pie” for “applying” are silly, but some of these errors would have serious consequences if not corrected. “I haven’t had that,” an answer from a witness in a deposition, was transcribed as “I have had a hand out.” Worse, “the original injury” was transcribed as “there is no injury,” a claim the deponent plaintiff was very unlikely to make.

SoftScribe claims to have an in-house proofer, but I’ve seen transcripts from them which weren’t even spell-checked (“hte” for “the” for example). So it’s just as well that I am there to catch and correct their mistakes.

On the other hand, I want to point out an editorial error in my last column. In it I referred to Dan Steffan living in “far-oof exotic Portland, Oregon.” Dave, fearing I had forgotten how to spell “far-off” corrected me. Unfortunately, “far-oof” was not an error, not a misspelling. It is instead an old typo which became embodied in fanspeak, like “pocdsarcd,” or “fantisted.” Thus was the editor/proofer proofed and edited.

It’s harder to mark the margins of an electronic file with blue “stet”s but I may be obliged to think of something. •



Brad Foster

Found In Collection

Christopher Garcia

This is the sort of reversed “Found in Collection.” This is what happened when fandom finds something and makes sure that it gets into the hands of the right people. The Right People, in this case, are us noble Computer History-types at the Computer History Museum. Let me take you back to January, 2007...

BASFA is a group that meets every week at Emil Villa’s The Hick’ry Pit in Campbell, CA. It’s the Bay Area Science Fiction Association and it’s the largest weekly fannish meeting in the area. We’re not the oldest local club (that would be the mostly inactive Little Men who’ve been around since the 1940s) but BASFA’s the best-known. We don’t put on cons or put out a zine, but we meet, talk, eat and generally try and make everyone else in the club marvel at our personal cleverness. There’s a pun tax, which some pay as a badge of honor. There’s a party fund that has a giant former candy barrel as its collection site. We’re a strange group and one with officers more or less for life (I’m currently Vice-President) and we’re a fun bunch of personalities.

For some, the best part of any meeting is the auction. Since we don’t have weekly dues, our auction is the main fundraising method. People bring books, video tapes, comics, magazines, fanzines (which I almost always buy), electronics once in a while, and various other fun things. I’m a big fan of the auctions and am known for my bidding style (which sometimes

causes me to outbid myself and once in a while bid on things that I actually brought in for the auction!). This week after the initial talking that we all do every meeting, one of the members brought a book and dropped it on the auction pile.

It was an old elementary school library book. Those are often the worst books you can buy. This one was a slim copy and with the classic clear cellophane cover that more kids library books seem to have. This one had some sort of computer-themed cover. It was a printer with a piece of bar paper that had *Hello Mr. Chips*. I looked at it and I knew I must buy it. It was a riddle book written by the



queen of the riddle book, Ann Bishop. The art was by another well-respected kids illustrator (who did some art for *Playboy* in the 1970s) Jerry Warshaw. This was exactly the kind of book that they'd sell through the book order groups when I was in elementary school.

Now, at BASFA, I am known for my auction skills. I bring a fair bit of money and will often outbid myself. Once or twice I've entered into drawn-out battles over particular pieces with a few folks. Harold is the first guy I ever got into it with. He wanted the book *The Times We Had* by Marion Davies and since it was about old Hollywood, I took it to him. What had expected to go for 50 cents ended up in a twenty dollar battle that I won. I read it and let him borrow it, but he became my sworn auction enemy.

Barbara Johnson-Haddad is the secretary for BASFA. At one point she and I battled over another book (neither of us can remember which book) and I won with an extreme over-bid as the auctioneer was less than a heartbeat away from saying "going three times." I admit, I have a flair for the dramatic.

The book was passed around during and the meeting and everyone got a good look. The jokes were awful. *What do you call a CPU in an Abbey? A Chipmonk.* Horrid, but far more humorous than anything we currently have in the collection. I must possess it and give it to the museum. The end of the meeting came and it was auction time. There were a few things that went first, none of them I bought, and the last thing was the riddle book.

"One dollar," I said.

"Two dollars." It was Harold, that bastard!

"Three..."

"Four dollars!" Harold said with great interruptions.

"Ten dollars," I said very evenly. I knew that an extreme bid like that, especially at the end of the auction was going to scare

everyone off.

"Alright," Dave Gallaher, the auctioneer and treasurer of BASFA calmly announced "I've got ten dollars once. Ten Dollars twice..."

"Fifteen dollars." It was Barbara, exacting her revenge when it hurt the most.

"Twenty dollars," I said with a definite sense of finality.

"Going, going, gone," Dave said and we wrapped up the meeting.

I went over the book while we were all hanging around afterwards and the jokes were even worse than I had thought. *Why aren't computers good in tight situations? Because they always fail when the chips are down!* Ann Bishop, author of more than 100 riddle books, you're a monster for unleashing these beasts on unsuspecting children.

I took it into the collections meeting the next morning and handed it over.

"What's that, Chris?" my curator asked as I handed it to him.

"Riddle book from the early 1980s," I said.

He looked it over.

"Nah, we don't need this," he said and handed it back to me.

Right now, I'm staring at it on the shelf by my desk, annoyed not only that the museum didn't want to add it to the collection, but that I had been outdone by my own auction-fu.

Disgraceful. •

Being Frank

Peter Sullivan

Trap Door 24 (Robert Lichtman)

annual-ish, paper, half-letter booklet, 60 pages, US\$5.
11037 Broadway Terrace, Oakland, CA 94611-1948, USA.

The front cover is a Steve Stiles cartoon, always an excellent way to start off a fanzine. This cover even has a hidden joke, which I didn't discover until googling the name of the creature depicted.

It's a well-known cliché that retired people, after the first few weeks/months, wonder how they ever had the time to go to work, and Robert's editorial this time shows that he's no exception to this. In his case, this is probably even more acute, in that previously he had been living away (as the lesser evil compared to a daily commute of over sixty miles in each direction). So the first priority was to move back home. Robert also confesses to getting involved in fannish mailing lists as a distraction.

He editorialises about the shift from paper fanzines to electronic ones. In the process of sorting his fanzine collection out, he "came away with the strong feeling that paper fanzines are an endangered species that should be cherished and protected." Notwithstanding the obvious cost problem – both printing costs and postage. In Robert's case, he has reduced some of the financial pressures of doing a large, significant print run paper

fanzine by running a fanzine auction of some of his duplicates from his own fanzine collection, giving him the cash to continue producing *Trap Door* as a traditional paper fanzine. A repeat of this fanzine auction is likely at some stage in the future.

One of the alleged benefits of efanzines is their higher 'visibility,' in that they can be found and responded to by new fans who would never have made it onto the mailing list for paper copies. Robert doesn't entirely accept this argument in practice, noting that he's never had so much as a single LoC of response from the copies of *Trap Door* on the efanzines.com website. But he accepts the principle, and is going to try a "halfway-house" – releasing a PDF version of each *previous* issue each time he does a new paper issue. I know that Peter Weston is trying something similar with *Prolapse*, and I can see many of the few paper fanzines remaining becoming "lagzines" in this way, with their electronic editions following behind the "definitive" paper versions.

Robert also reports progress (of a sort) with Harry Warner Jr.'s fanzine collection, which had been in limbo



since his death in 2003. It's been sold intact to someone in Texas – whether an institution or an individual is not clear.

Grant Canfield contributes the lead article, “Thrilling Architect Stories,” describing his early days as a trainee architect, including a dangerous incident whilst working on a construction site, and learning the craft as a high-speed draftsman. He also talks about the impact that technological changes have had on the job – moving from old-fashioned blueprints to blueline prints, through to today's CAD (computer-aided design) process. A large part of the role of an architect seems to be just “keeping the show on the road” and everything ticking over, although Grant confesses that he still gets a buzz out of the actual drawing.

The impact of technology is also the theme of Michael Dobson's piece, “Every Man A Rembrandt.” In which he talks about using Logo Creator and clip art to generate logos for fictitious toys. My personal favourite is “Cindy Commando – Armed and Adorable – the only doll endorsed by the NRA,” although the “Edvard Munch – dolls you'll SCREAM for” also sound fun.

Jeff Schalles' “My Film Career” talks about his time as a member of a production staff, in two spells in the 1980s and 1990s. He had various lighting-related jobs, starting off just driving the van with all the equipment, but later becoming a Best Boy and even Gaffer. What comes through is the sheer mundanity of much of the work – mainly commercials rather than big film shoots, although he did once get to work on a Bananarama pop music video. And how much hard work – mainly lugging equipment – was involved.

Robert's wife, Carol Carr, contributes “Stuff,” which is almost like a second editorial. Giving her side of the Great Moving In, and with lots of “slice of life” little squibs that good fannish writers are always so good at. This is probably my favourite piece in this issue, with a nice collection of disconnected

thoughts – unless the overall connection is simply the absurdity of the human condition.

Gregg Calkins' “He Was An Old Fan... And Tired” is a short piece remembering Bob Tucker, whom Greg first met at the 1952 Chicago Worldcon. What comes through, as with many of the other Tucker tributes, is that Bob never considered himself an “Elder Ghod” of fandom, and was always kind and accepting of fellow fans, even pimplly jejune teenagers as Gregg was then.

“I Am A Fan Boy,” confesses Bruce Townley, discussing his meeting with Bruce Campbell, star and producer of the *Evil Dead* movies at a signing session. Not a genre of movies I would ever want to watch, but Bruce T. says some enthusiastic and interesting things about them. For example, noting that, for zombie movies in particular, “given the shambling pace of the menace, the film maker has some time for, of all things, character development,” allowing the viewer to actually *care* who gets their brains eaten next...

“Long Beach Bounce” is a travelog by Dan Steffan, who also provides the artwork for this piece. (Getting artists to illustrate their own pieces always saves hassle for the editor.) Dan writes an excellent piece about rediscovering the buzz of long-distance travel, after doing a round trip from Oregon to Long Beach, California and back. And if anyone wants to buy some snow chains, bought for \$75 at the roadside and used only once (for about 10 miles), Dan's your man.

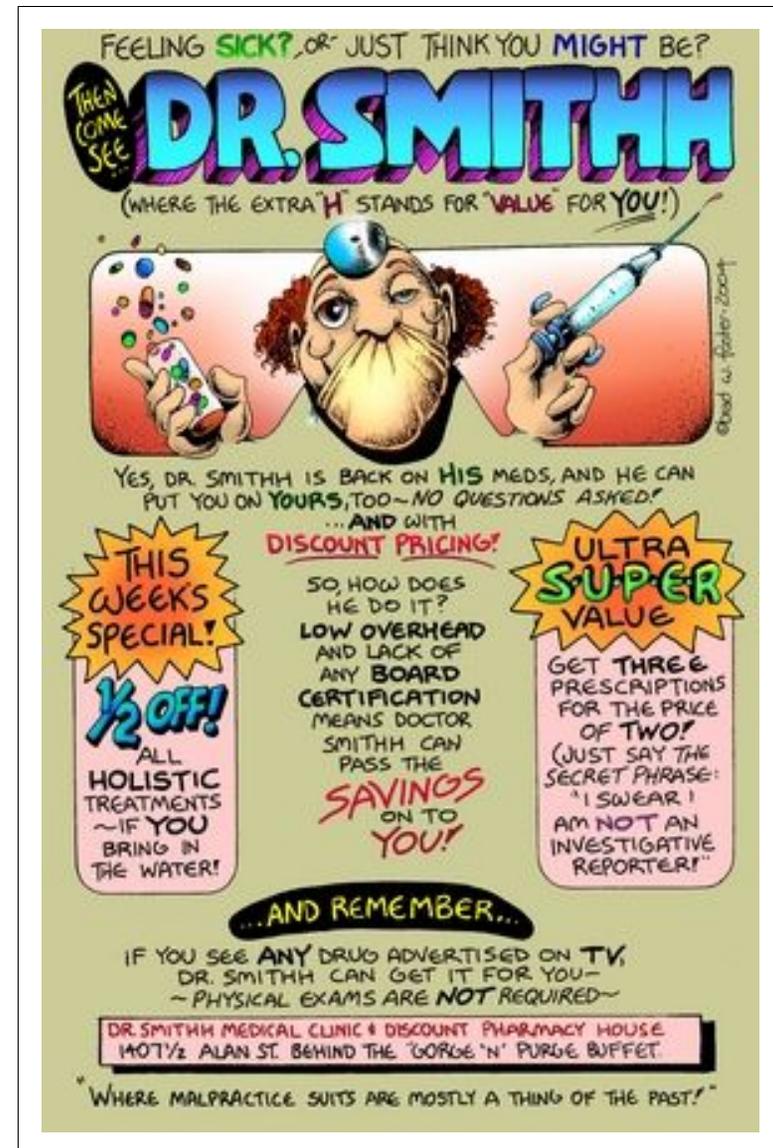
Ted White contributes an article about a fan feud he had with rich brown back in 1959, when rich was still a teenager and Ted not much older. Ted eventually got bored of the feud, and ended it by claiming it had been a “hoax feud” all along, which he and rich had started to see if people would “fall for it.” Not only did this convince most observers, it also appears to have convinced rich brown as well... Ted notes that rich brown had actually wanted to write up this story in the 1990s, but doesn't appear

to have got a round tuit before his death last year.

The final article is a piece by Jay Kinney, entitled “The Rant to End All Rants,” in which he gets to play the curmudgeon on various Post Office-related topics, shoes, eye glasses, fashion, boutiques, cyclists, car drivers and just about everything else. I always enjoy a good, comprehensive rant, and whilst this might not quite meet the standards it sets itself in the title, it’s still a high-quality spleen-venting.

The lettercolumn is, as usual with *Trap Door*, high quality, both in terms of the range of correspondents and the actual material. The latter is down to Robert’s tight editing, with a significant number of fen relegated to the “We Also Heard From” section at the end. One increasing but sad trend in fanzine letter columns is the rise of the posthumous letter. Last issue, Robert had one of the last letters of Harry Warner Jr., whilst this time it’s Ron Bennett, who died late last year.

Robert finishes the issue with his traditional count of fanzines received, broken down by location and year. The exact proportion of fanzines out there which are electronic rather than paper isn’t as simple a calculation as it might appear, especially since many fanzines (including now, of course, *Trap Door*) are available in both formats. But, as Robert notes, “Overall, we seem to be talking to each other in fanzine form as much as ever. And that’s good.” Robert may be preaching to the choir on this, but, for as long as fanzine fandom includes stand-out issues like *Trap Door* 24, I’m more than happy to add my own personal “Amen.” •



Brad Foster

Pixelated

Lettercolumn illustrations by Manfred Klein

Eric Mayer

That cover photo by Jen Woll is striking. The quality of the light is very strange. Again Brad Foster's illos are wonderful. I'm actually a little embarrassed that he continues to deign to keep my writing company issue after issue, but it is really neat. The illos, and *Pixel* in general do, I think, support what you say in your interview with Dave Locke, that words can be enhanced by the visual surroundings they find themselves in. OK, actually that's not exactly what you said, but that's my own take on your basic premise.

That may not be exactly what I said, but it's pretty much what I meant.

The quality of the light in Jen's photograph is because she shot it using infrared film.

I enjoyed Dave Locke's interview with you. I'm with him in wishing you would write more. However, there's no point forcing the issue. The "I-have-to-write-an-editorial-but-have-nothing-to-say" vein of humor has been pretty much mined out.

You popped up in fandom and left before I got involved, circa 1972. When I discovered faanish zines they generally balanced creative expression with social interaction. Today the social

part pretty much overwhelms the creative part.

At their best, faanish fanzines tend to be creative but good humored and mainly for fun. Most other self published zines I've across have tended towards what strikes me as literary pretension or else the editors seem intent on depicting themselves as wildly unconventional. Well, probably they *are* wildly unconventional. Still, to me a lot of what I see in zines outside fandom seems like posturing. At any rate I've felt even more uncomfortable around other zines than I do around fanzines. *Pixel* still finds a balance, or tries to. There ought to be more loccers.

Eric Mayer maywrite2 @ epix.net

Lee Lavell leelavell @ comcast.net

Joseph Major jtmajor @ iglou.com

Lloyd Penney penneys @ allstream.net

Gregg Trend trendres @ yahoo.com

Claire Brialey banana @ fishlifter.demon.co.uk

John Purcell j_purcell54 @ yahoo.com

Addresses are slightly munged to prevent harvesting off the Web.
Remove the spaces around "@" to contact the writer.

If you filled the pages with convention reports and discussions of fandom I guess you'd get more response.

I agree with you entirely that fandom is becoming a bunch of old pharts. Everything changes. Everyone changes. But a bunch of geezers endlessly contemplating grainy photos of their navels snapped back in 1960 is nothing at all like the fandom I found attractive. A fandom without young folks doing their own creative things isn't fandom. And I count myself among the old pharts. You just can't look at fandom the same way when it is no longer novel, as you mention. But it is like Christmas. Long after I knew the truth about Santa I could still experience some of the excitement through my young children. We need young fans, so we can feed on their sensawunda like vampires!

I love Harry Bell's piece. To me this is a great example of the sort of faanish writing that has become a lost art. He's taken a trivial mundane happening and inflated it with Lovecraftian horror. Plus, he knows when to quit. Of course I have to reveal that thirty years ago I wrote an essay in which *something* figured prominently. Now the reason I mention this is that I got that *something* from somewhere, and presumably Harry did too, but I can't remember exactly where. Was it Lovecraft who used it?

I dunno...sometimes I think my LoCs are better fanzines columns than my column. They tend to deal with faanish subjects. •

Lee Lavell

Overall the usual great issue despite one glaring lack. (Hah)

"Notes from Byzantium": English is a mess. I would have never even remotely understood English grammar if I hadn't taken a year of Latin in High School yea these many years ago, and that doesn't help much with punctuation. As far as spelling goes there are so many inconsistencies that memorization (and

some knowledge of etymology) is the only way to go. As an example, here are a couple of word puzzles I've come across over the years: 1) Pronounce "ghoti." (Answer *gh* as in enough, *o* as in women, *ti* as in action – the pronunciation: "fish") 2) This one I'll let you work out for yourself. Name a *common* eight letter English word with only one vowel. Oh, a "y" counts as a vowel.

"Dialog with Two Fans": I really found this very interesting and I hope Locke makes it into a series!

"Bob and Weave": Nice to see an "editorial" this time. I know that you think that the magazine is its own personality, but between this and "Dialog" it's good to "see" the face behind it.

"Whither Fandom et al": Coo – Shades of all the inter-fandom squabbling of years ago. I've read it. Now let it go.

"Something": Funny. I am reminded of an apartment I lived in many years ago. I thought I had a mouse so I complained to the management. They said for me to get some rodent poison, so I did. I put the powder out in a lid overnight. The next morning I found the powder neatly dumped on the floor and lid had disappeared. I moved.

"Not SMoF": The only good SMoF is one who is so secret he doesn't exist. Anyone who wants to chair a Worldcon is sick sick sick.

"Being Frank": Interesting rundown of the candidates. I assume that Sullivan didn't mention *Pixel* simply because of the column's appearance in it. I, personally, have some problems with the categories in general, but perhaps that will be corrected at the upcoming Corflu or sometime in the near future.

"Pixelated": To Lloyd Penny – I have no idea when badges came into being at conventions. They were already in existence



at my first convention, which was Chicon II.

“Much Nothings about Ado”: By far the best entry Lee Lavell has made in this column. It was well written, both serious and humorous and very insightful. Top item in the whole issue! Too bad you stuck it at the very end on pages 31 to 34 where many people didn’t notice it. •

Joseph Major

“Notes from Byzantium”: Stylite saints were a particularly self-advertising form of abnegation. I once ran across a comment that stylites were particularly damned, since their form of activity helped no one else.

Punctuation, is used, by John Norman, which is a pseudonym, of Professor John Frederick Lange, a professor of English, no less, in a highly, stylized, individuated, manner, which often, leaves the reader, confused, if not pixelated, even before, he gets, to the philosophical content. (I am being terse, considering that I once found a paragraph in one of his books that ran for three pages.)

“Dialog With With Two Fans”: So you got out just before I got in. These things happen. (I started out by writing a review for our clubzine; thirty years on, I would stand by the conclusion, if not the choice of language).

So you worked for Ziff-Davis. At one point Ziff-Davis owned *Amazing Stories*, though they sold it to Sol Cohen, who hired Ted White, and tried to publish a SF magazine on nothing.

“Wither Fandom?”: I watched the Jeff Redmond affair on Fmzfen with all the horrid affinity of an office worker observing

a train wreck on the tracks below the window. He started off on the wrong foot (posting a message meant for another group) and never found a footing. Nowadays electronic communication makes the traditional methods of harassment work quicker. It used to be that you had to go to considerable effort to have somebody start getting Big Mail. Now it takes an hour or two worth of keystrokes. Which is why the maturity level of the Internet is declining.

I had the impression that he started off as the eager newbie who has all these ideas to stir up the tired old group, jumping in without looking to see if any of them had already been done. When those who had been there done that weren’t enthused, he turned. Again, this is something long-time fans have seen before, all too often, made quicker by the speed of Internet communication, and intensified by its particular nature; with neither the time for reflection of printed communication nor the cues and feedback of conversation. So the man met the moment, and it wasn’t a pretty sight.

“Something”: Could it be an opossum? We had an opossum. (See the next *Alexiad* for the story of the opossum. I’ll never trust Pogo again.

“Pixelated”: “[It] would have been a big sign on the roof that said ‘Bah Humbug.’” You mean like the Charles Addams cartoon about how the little ones still believed in Santa Claus, and had a bellows to prove it?

We have five reasons for not having a tree or lights. Used to have six, but one died last year.

“It’s much harder to wrap commercialism around crucifixion and resurrection...” Then there were the Japanese students who included in their Christmas decorations a crucified Santa Claus.

I remember milk deliveries. In fact, in Frankfort, they went on long enough for me to see plastic jugs of milk being delivered.



Astromancer Quarterly: Has Joe Maraglino been doing anything since then? It seems such a pity, given the outstanding display of talent in the production of that zine. •

Gregg Trend

Read with considerable interest several of Ted's columns recently and Dave Locke's interview with you. Ted, whom I've known on paper and in person since 1958 (when I was 15) mentioned in his column concerning printing methods/machines fans have used over the years the fact that I was cutting a wax stencil at Corflu 23. (This was only the 2nd corflu I've been able to attend, the first being the momentous 4th held across the river from Cincinnati in Kentucky for logistics reasons.)

Ted mentioned that he was copying a drawing thru a mimeoscope, and that he hadn't done any stenciling in a long time. I commented that I, unfortunately, made my drawing to fit a legal-size sheet rather than the standard 8½x11" sheet. This was probably not only because I hadn't used tool or typer on a stencil since c. 1980, but because I'm an academically trained "fine" artist who's used to using the "entire" sheet of drawing paper...and I was drawing the leprechaun free-hand, out of head, with no preliminary sketch. Too bad Colin may not run it off anytime soon (but that's usual with Colin Hinz projects), because he probably doesn't have any legal sized mimeo paper (I do.)

A lot of the last mimeo projects I was doing used what I call a Gestafax (or electrostenciller, and when Ted owned a print shop on the fringes of the Village in NYC, c. 1960-62, he had one) owned by Brian Earl Brown, here in Detroit, who got it from a church. I had a chance to get one from my church last year but I passed it up. I liked the mezzo-tint quality of the reproduction.

My thing with self-done printing is direct image Multilith. I art school I did engraving, etching, mezzo-tint, serigraph and litho (both plate and stone.) My first wife's father owned an AM Multilith from the early 1950's until it stopped working c. 1984 (that is, the water fountain became inoperative). He was the printer for 2-3 ethnic organizations, plus printing instructions for his wife's Easter egg decorating demos/classes (what we Ukrainians call "pysanky" – one is a "pysanka" – colorful wax-resist, permanent dyed designs resembling embroidery on raw eggs). When I was about 13 (before I worked on my first fmz, but not before I knew about SF Fandom – that's another longer story) I did illos & designs for a monthly newsletter. Then I did a mimeoed "newspaper" in the 7th and 8th grade, and illos for the high school newspaper (mimeoed before we got a contract with an offset printer – when I entered high school it was brand-new, we were the first 9th grade class in there, February, 1957!).

I've also done ditto work in the distant past for friends, both fan and mundane. Never done hekto, but have seen Eric's work from *Groggys* that Brian got (I may have gotten some too) and in fanzine exhibits at Worldcons. He was really good and is much too modest about his artistic abilities.

Like you, I was a commercial artist. However, besides being a graphic designer, free lance, during the latter part of that career, I was an art director in several Detroit-area agencies in the 1960s & 1970s. I started as an apprentice in high school at a place called Canfield Printing & Engraving that did work for the company my Dad worked for (he was a Metallurgical Design & Research Engineer, and...amateur architect, designing our house and several other residences). I also worked for a studio called Art Center, started by graduates of the Art Center College in Pasadena.

I was professionally trained (to some extent because I was

actually a painting major) at an art school here in Detroit (now called College for Creative Studies). I then went to 2 universities and got a BFA & an MFA in studio art (because what I did wasn't exactly painting). I've taught art at the college level, too.

At some point in the 1980's, advertising work was "driving me crazy." So, at first I thought of getting a teaching certificate (but the market for art teachers was very low), maybe in English comp & lit, but I had too much catching up to do. Then my first wife discovered that the local public U. was looking for applicants for its Library Science program. I was working for Gale Research, a reference publisher so this seemed like a good idea. Going part-time I got an MSLS, with a Certificate in Archival Administration (actually my major) in December 1990. By that time I had put in a year and a half of archival work funded by the Library of Congress. I continued to work on various projects around the US, until early 2003, when my first wife had surgery. She had endometrial cancer (that's the lining of the uterus), and she had 8 rounds of chemotherapy. She was healthy enough to return to work (as a psychiatric social worker – which she had done since 1970, 23 years with the State of Michigan) in late October. In a couple of weeks she was too ill to work (damn those stem cells!!), and she died on December 5th, only 57. Oh, I was down, down, down, depressed. We had lived together for 32 years, married for 31. Her oncologist said in January she had a 95% chance of surviving past one year. Ha! she didn't even make that!

Anyway, I haven't painted a painting since about 1982-83. Sometimes I draw, but mostly I photograph and "fool" with CGI. (I used early forms of Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, CorelDraw as far back as the '80's when the OS was DOS; I used to do abstract animations using algebraic/Boolean equations with Basic. I think BasicVisual is rather cool.)

So, more to the point: I actually had portfolios when I went to agencies & studios; I went to art school, and have art degrees. But, I've known people like you who had just the basics and essentially were taught on the job. I was too "chicken" to work in NYC, tho I did show some work to van der Poel, who was the art director for *Galaxy* (my favorite zine at the time – that was December 1961.) I had read *Galaxy* from 1954 to 1962 – but when Gold left it was junk...) He told me he could pay \$25/page for a new artist. I thought this was hilarious because I was used to ad agency rates in Detroit (even tho I was only 18 at the time). I didn't care if I could've gotten something in print, I needed \$ to live in NYC (even tho you still could live there relatively on the cheap).

The last company I worked for as an artist decided to move into computers in the late 1980s. Since I'd been into computers for about 10 years at the time, I was the logical choice to be trained on a couple of different systems. The first was a system DuPont made, called "Vaster" (because it combined vector and raster options) that was state-of-the-art at the time. Instead of using a scanner (they were very expensive then) it had an off-the-shelf video camera for getting "real world" items into the system, which worked surprisingly well. I always to a kick out of Vaster being house in a "box" the size of a small refrigerator; when you looked inside, there wasn't much more than would fit in a desktop PC case today. I always assumed they thought that people buying the system would figure they were getting more "bang for their buck" with a really big box...

The other system I got extensive training on was Context, software that ran on a Sun workstation. I didn't spend much time using those machines, though – I was in

charge of the network of Macintoshes that we used as “front-ends” for the Contex machines – the Macs were used for typesetting and scanning. The coolest part of the Sun machines was the (at the time) very realistic flight simulator, which was rumored to be a somewhat stripped down version of one used by the military.

Like you, I used very early versions (in some cases 1.0) of popular Mac graphic arts programs – Freehand, Illustrator, Photoshop, and Quark. It’s been 15 or 16 years since I looked at or used any of them.

Therefore, my experience with the commercial art world is rather different than yours. I must say *Pixel* is rather neat looking, tho “conservative.” But, that’s OK. It’s easy to read. Ted on children of fans & whether they become fans: my only son (now 30) was not only not interested in Fandom, but not interested in SF (unless it was assigned for class). I like literary fiction and mysteries, and mostly non-fiction. He also wouldn’t listen to so-called Classical music (really art music – classical is a period in music, from the late 18th to early 19th C., a particular style of composition), not until his last years in college. He’s a Vice-Consul in the US Foreign Service (since 2000). He went to many Worldcons, but was only interested in the cities. My first wife, Monica, was interested only in the art shows, the masquerade, and the movies (& touring the cities). She never read SF and didn’t like most of the fans in the local club, either.

I wish someone could come up with a term for “classical” music that was more accurate. I don’t really care for the generally-used alternatives “serious music” or “art music,” only because they imply that other forms aren’t serious or artistic. My own listening for the past year or so has been almost exclusively from the late Baroque and

Classical periods; I’ve been rediscovering a love I had for the music back in the early 1980s. My particular favorite from the period is Haydn. I’m especially fond of symphonies, and it’s interesting to see how Haydn, with a vast body of work written over a period of 40-some years, developed the form.

My 2nd wife was an SF and mystery reader but knew nothing of fandom until she met me in 2004. Since then we’ve been to all the Worldcons and one major local con every year. She particularly likes the science programming and filking (because she’s a professionally trained singer who still performs in a secular choir). Unfortunately, we can’t go to Corflu this year because it’s during tax season (she manages an HR Block office & has been an IRS Master Tax Preparer for 16 years). She used to be a computer operations consultant, but she gave up on the crazy scheduling of the world-wide company she worked for in December 2005.

Hmm, what else: Oh, Ted somewhat implies in his history of Corflu that Corflu was the first con to be oriented to Core Fandom (mostly, but not entirely fmz fans). Even Corflu Cincinnati (#4), acknowledged (as the runners were there) that Autoclave in Detroit, starting in July, 1977, through 1981 (skipping 1979 because of a personal/business problem with the registrar!), was *the* first fanzine fan con.

I also ask: whither Ditto, the Core Fan con of the Autumn. Not as popular as Corflu but interesting. So far I’ve managed to attend exactly 2 Corflus, 2 Dittos, between 1987 and 2006.

The FAAn Awards: this is strange, I didn’t vote for those, this year, because...the only fmz I read were those posted to efanzines or with links to efanzines...yet I noticed that Arnie Katz, in *Vegas Fan Weekly*, that he *only* mentioned those, too. There have to be more zines being published...and where is a

listing, more complete than efanzines?

I get only a handful of printed zines regularly – Alexiad, Chunga, Trap Door, and Littlebrook come to mind immediately. There are probably more titles being published as print zines than as digital ones – only a relatively small number of zines make up the bulk available at efanzines. I doubt that even in these days of fewer zines anyone gets (or reads) them all. As far as I know, no one publishes a list of all zines available, which would be helpful when voting. But, even with a list of all the zines that might be eligible, you can't realistically vote for what you don't see. So if digital zines are what you're familiar with, then I guess you should vote for them.

OK, as you see, your zine has stimulated me to write a LoC (frankly, ezine or paper-only, it's content that matters), one of the few I've written in the last decade. Most of the time I'm just too busy with mundane work to respond. I sometimes ct to the fanhistory lists: Trufen, Fmzfen, (I've belonged since it was Memoryhole) & Timebinders (I belong to one other, but it is so small that I almost always have time for it). Late in the game I tried to get into InTheBar (because i saw so many references to it on the other lists) but Harry Bell had closed it because it was getting too ponderous (1000s of postings/week!). •

Claire Brialey

So many people at Corflu Quire last weekend were speaking so highly of *Pixel* that I resolved to catch up as soon as I could.

I keep hearing Good Things about Banana Wings, too, but I've only ever seen one issue... (wink wink, nudge nudge)

I'd briefly skimmed #9 when it came out, but time pressures

meant I was never going to manage both the additional concentration I need to read properly on-screen and a slot in which to respond. This does now give me the advantage of having seen, for example, both Jan Stinson's response in #10 to Ted White's column in the previous issue, and Ted's own #10 comments on the continuing Jeff Redmond saga. As set out, it seems that both Ted and Jan have been moderate and gracious in their comments and explanations as more facts emerged, and I was very pleased to see that this misunderstanding avoided its apparent potential to develop into a feud – which might, after all, have been just what Mr. Redmond had intended.

Yet I can't be certain of that. I saw Jeff Redmond appear on the Fmzfen mailing list, where I lurk (mostly, again, because of lack of time compared to many of those who are active in posting), and I was initially surprised at the way in which several list members seemed to go on the attack as soon as he arrived. I still don't appreciate how much of a red rag mention of the N3F may be to some fannish bulls, but as an outsider in that respect it did seem to me as though someone new, or an outsider in some other way, had come along, made a few naïve comments, and had instantly been shunned or even hazed. Maybe people's troll-antennae are far more finely tuned than mine, but in those first few days it seemed intolerant – and also rather foolish; if this character had been, instead, a journalist posing as a new fan, we could have ended up with a different kind of trouble. As Ted and Jan both commented, maybe Jeff Redmond would always have behaved thoroughly badly in fandom, and maybe he even started out on Fmzfen with such intentions; but I, too, will never be entirely sure how much of his behaviour was shaped by the way he was greeted there.

Setting aside the specifics of this incident, I was very tempted to ramble on gently for several paragraphs about the British Science Fiction Association and the way in which it has become

something ‘parallel to fandom’ (as Ted described the N3F in #9). Heartfelt though my views are about how an organisation started nearly fifty years ago to attract new people into fandom, and which has always needed a significant amount of fannish assistance to keep going, should now seem to feel it needs distance from fandom, I suspect for many *Pixel* readers it would need too much background explanation to sustain interest, and could in any case just smack of fan politics. So I shall note the connection and leave it there.

Chris Garcia, meanwhile, admirably set out his fannish philosophy of not being a SMOF. Before he gets to chair that Worldcon, I hope he’ll be the sort of fan who puts on a Corflu in a few years’ time. If I’m asked what sort of a fan I am, though, my first thought is that I’m a science fiction fan – something which seems to be a little out of favour in *Pixel*. Where I go after that, if pressed, depends on who’s doing the pressing and what will make sense to them; but I’m most likely to identify as a fanzine fan, albeit a fanzine fan who still both produces fanzines and reads SF (that sercon woolly vest that Peter Sullivan mentioned in his round-up of FAAn award prospects). Yet I have run conventions – including working on Worldcons – and I do work for the fan funds; I review SF books and despite everything I’m still involved with the BSFA. So what sort of fan *am* I?

On which note, the “Dialog with Two Fans” in #10 was hugely useful for me, as an all-too occasional reader of *Pixel*, to get more of a sense of you and thus of the editorial force behind the fanzine. (Unless I’m misreading your voice in the interview, of course, and it’s all much more deadpan than I imagine! I’ve misread Chris in *The Drink Tank* already today, and that’s after three days of hanging out with him at Corflu...) That might sound a bit like an echo of Guy Lillian’s “Where’s the editor?” comment, which you quote, but I think editorial presence in a

fanzine isn’t only about the actual personality of the editor nor, of course, only revealed through the editor’s own writing. Reading your thoughts here on fanzine design and on your own involvement with fanzines does add another dimension to my own observations of what you’re doing, though; as does your explanation of your preference for less personal fannish contact in this incarnation of your fan activity.

I’m not sure I have less preference for “personal fannish contact” this time around; just that the opportunities for it are more limited.

Re-reading the Dialog with Dave, I come across as more serious (maybe even more earnest) than I actually am in person. One of the hazards of doing an interview conducted in writing instead of live and in-person, I suppose – the subject has more time to think about the answers and polish them up a bit.

I have used slightly fewer than my usual number of semicolons in this letter. Here, therefore, are a few extra which I’d be happy to donate to Eric Mayer: ;;;;;

I can’t promise to have turned over a new leaf as a frequent correspondent, but I hope to be in touch more often. As a return favour, might future issues spell my surname correctly? •

John Purcell

Thank you for sharing the information about The Hunger Site. Since my family has sometimes depended on local food shelves in crunch times, I always try to donate food items there; clothing and gently used toys likewise get donated when we get on cleaning jags to create room in our house. This website you’ve shared is a wonderful thing to do and takes hardly any time at all to do. I encourage one and all to partake of what could be

literally called Click and Save.

Well, I think Eric Mayer is trying to scare me off my intentions of becoming a published author. In all likelihood, it probably won't happen; I'd have to sell some fiction first to get to the point of worrying about writing novels and going on book-signings and all that promotional rot. We shall see what develops over time. In the meantime, I use spellcheckers all the time; I firmly believe in the use of semicolons, too; don't you?

You and I got into fandom at almost the same time (1973 for me), but you did the old flash-and-crash routine it sounds like. Your first go-round was quite active, and I for one am glad you re-connected in 2003 via the Internet. Again, that year was when I rediscovered fandom. You and I have very similar timelines in the fannish continuum. Interesting. Further on in your dialog with Dave Locke, you talk about the trend of fan-writing to be focusing on fandom. This is fine by me, but I would like to see more non-fan-centered fannish writing. By that I mean topics outside the immediate realm of fandom, but treated with a fannish sensibility, if there is such a critter. Eric Mayer's "Notes from Byzantium" columns are prime examples of what I'm talking about, as are various contributions from Lee Lavell and Dave Locke in past issues of *Pixel*. It is almost as if these fans look at life askance and write with that viewpoint. Sounds like fanzine title in there, doesn't it?

Eric and I have been talking quite a bit about fan writing past and present recently, and how a different sort of writing, exactly the kind you describe, seemed to hold sway formerly. Not so much writing about fandom, but writing about any topic with that "fannish sensibility." It's the type of writing I enjoy reading, and hope to keep publishing here.

It seems as though "the Jeff Redmond affair" is coming to a

resolution, one that is very much against Mr. Redmond, who did receive, I noticed, a vote for Best New Fan on the FAAn Award tally sheets. As we all too painfully know, there are those who seek recognition in fandom by being assholes, or at least through playing devil's advocate from time to time. For folks like this, negative recognition is still recognition, a trade-off that I, for one, don't subscribe to. As Bob Tucker once wrote – and I hope my paraphrase does his original wording justice – fandom will continue spinning merrily along years after the fuggheads and ne'er-do-wells and the rest of us are long gone.

I do like the way this installment of "Whither Fandom" was put together. It was great meeting Ted at Corflu, although I never really got much of a chance to do any real talking with him. Okay, then. Next year in Vegas. I mean this, I really do. Gotta talk jazz with him.

Harry Bell's "Something" reminded me of an old *Family Circle* cartoon, in which this mythical person named I. Dunno created various messes around the house. Nice little piece.

After sharing a room with the bloke, I am pleased to report that Chris Garcia in no way, shape, or form resembles a SMOF. He's too nice for that. It is precisely his niceness and willingness to help out that makes Chris such a presence in fandom. Such a nice kid! If he's smart, he'll never be fool enough to chair a Worldcon. That would kill his persona, for sure.

One last final comment, and it's about your cover photo. It bears a striking resemblance to large chunks of Texas. Was this a deliberate choice of subject considering that Corflu was about to commence in Austin? Curious minds want to know. •

Nope. I've only been through the panhandle part of Texas, and then at night – does Texas really look like it was shot on infrared film??