

PIXEL
AUGUST 2007

PIXELSixteen

Vol. 2 No. 3 (whole number 16)
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Distributed in a PDF version only.
Available for downloading at efanzines.com thanks to Bill Burns.
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Editorial deadline for the next issue: **December 30, 2007**

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NOTE

This somewhat small issue is going to be the last of *Pixel* for a while.

I've become a little burned-out doing a monthly zine, so I've decided to take a break until at least January of 2008 before the next issue. That should give me a chance to "recharge my batteries" and recoup some of the enthusiasm for the zine that I've lost lately.



David Burton

Notes From Byzantium

THE WRITER'S VISION

Claude Monet developed cataracts late in life. Edgar Degas suffered from an eye disease that warped his central vision. An article at LiveScience.com, "The Blurry World of Claude Monet Recreated," details the efforts of Stanford ophthalmologist Michael Marmor to discover through computer manipulation of images how these painters' failing vision might have affected their work.

According to Marmor, as Monet began to see the world in a monotone some of his paintings displayed uncharacteristically strong colors.

"Monet may have used strong colors in these paintings because he was only using them from memory, picking colors by the name on the paint tubes, or because he was overcompensating for his yellow vision by adding more blue...So his vision was becoming progressively more brownish in essence...It was getting harder to see, it was getting blurrier, but he was probably more bothered by the progressive loss of color vision than the blur alone."

In the case of Degas:

"...as his vision steadily blurred,

the outlines and shading of his work became coarser and more irregular and fine details were lost.

"But to him, the blur smoothed out this coarseness, so the form of the subject, which was his focus, looked similar to his earlier works, according to Marmor's computer manipulations. So it is possible that he was unaware of how the later paintings appeared to others.

"But friends, family and art critics noticed the dramatic change from his earlier works, and pointed it out to Degas."

Marmor concludes:

"I think it does not say that the paintings are good or bad or answer to the question as to how much they were trying to change their style... But I think it points out

ERIC MAYER
ILLUSTRATED BY **BRAD FOSTER**

CLAUDE MONET



IMPRESSIONIST ARTIST
-OR- CATARACT SUFFERER?

very dramatically some physical limitations that they had, which both limited their ability to paint, to put paint on canvas directly, but also to interpret what they were putting on a canvas-they couldn't really judge what they were seeing.”

We often speak of an artist's “vision.” But, to an extent, this vision is beyond the artist's control and he or she may not be entirely aware of its effect on the audience.

Writers don't try to reproduce the effect of light on their retinas by placing pigments on canvas which, they hope, will have an effect similar to that light on viewers. But we do try to capture what we see in words and so can inadvertently capture our own idiosyncratic perceptions.

For example, until it was pointed out to us, Mary and I never realized that in all the mystery stories and novels we have written, the culprit, once unmasked, is seldom turned over to the authorities. Almost invariably, it is the investigator who administers appropriate justice, not always of the Mike Ham-

mer bullet-in-the-belly kind.

This is probably because, in the world I see, government institutions wouldn't recognize justice if they tripped over it and, perhaps more importantly, do not, to my way of thinking, possess the moral authority to mete out justice anyway. So, for me, an ending where the villain was handed over to a criminal justice system would be highly unsatisfying.

The endings we paint look right to me, but perhaps to a typical reader, due process would look better.

ADVENTURES WITH WINDOWS 3.11

Nothing knocks me back like some good old fashioned computer woes. Especially when they are coupled, as they almost always are, with a large, important project which should have been done yesterday.

You might wonder if computer woes should be described as "old fashioned?" Perhaps not. When they involve Windows 3.11 they might better be described as "ancient" or even "eldritch" in the Lovecraftian sense.

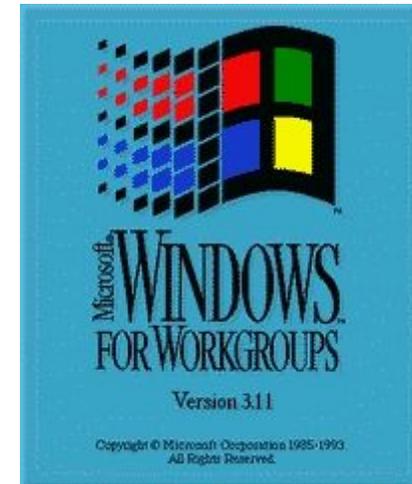
All computer glitches fill me with Lovecraftian dread and horror. I know there is something terribly wrong but I can't say what. On more than one occasion Mary's computer has appeared to be dead, but as it turned out, was only sleeping.

Yes, Mary has the distinction of being the last person on earth to be using Windows 3.11. Or at least so I assume. I found a tech site that keeps track of visitors' operating systems and out of 37,000 only one was running Windows 3.11. Mary was probably looking for tips on how to keep the machine going.

Where are we going to find another Baghdad battery (<http://xrl.us/wqai>) for it?

Last Saturday I made the mistake of trying to do an "upgrade" for her by installing a better Netscape 4X era browser. Unfortunately I forgot that while she has been using an historic Netscape browser, she has been getting online with the dialer from a defective old Internet Explorer.

Her hard drive is littered with the electronic bones of extinct browsers. There is even the Winweb our



Rochester ISP gave us when we first ventured online. It didn't work worth a damn even then. All I could ever see was a page saying "Yahoo!" and I recall thinking, what kind of crap is this? Yahoo? What's that supposed to signify? This is what I'm paying \$25 a month for? Yahoo?

It turned out I had inadvertently removed the dialer. I guess I must have set it up but that was a long time ago in another country. Before figuring it out, I spent a lot of time sorting through all the dead software, futilely looking for signs of life. We also made several calls

to our ISP. They helpfully explained to us, just as they had seven years ago, that we must be deluded; Mary could not be online using Windows 3.11. They didn't support Windows 3.11. It was impossible.

When the problem was finally isolated there followed much undeleting of files, and cursing, and renaming of files, and cursing, and rewriting of .ini files and cursing. I have been hoarse for a week.

Finally, a day and a half after disaster struck, Mary dialed in and email began to pour through the phone lines again. A miracle!

I suppose the old computer should be replaced but the chipped flint case is kind of attractive.

I was going to write about all this last night but a bumblebee got into the kitchen.

WHO ARE YOU CALLING A CHICKEN

Now scientists are calling Tyrannosaurus rex a chicken. According to a LiveScience article:

An adolescent female Tyranno-

saurus rex died 68 million years ago, but its bones still contain intact soft tissue, including the oldest preserved proteins ever found, scientists say.

And a comparison of the protein's chemical structure to a slew of other species showed an evolutionary link between T-Rex and chickens, bolstering the idea that birds evolved from dinosaurs.

It was bad enough when scientists removed all the Martian canals and replaced them with a lifeless, rust colored desolation. When they outlawed faster than light travel and made it impossible to traipse from galaxy to galaxy I was crushed. Being told that time wasn't something you could travel through was disappointing (although at least I could stop fretting about going back, stepping on an ant and snuffing myself and the rest of the human race).

But turning T-Rex into a big chicken is simply unforgivable. The king of the dinosaurs was the world's greatest predator, the most deliciously vicious, diabolical creature that ever shook the lawns we fled across shrieking as children.

Even those terrible old silent films we had snippets of on Super 8 reels used lizards tarted up with cardboard fins to portray dinosaurs. Lizards are appropriately cold-blooded reptiles. Not chickens.

T-Rex was no chicken. He didn't get eaten. He ate. T-Rex roared. He didn't cluck! T-Rex was too tough to just lay down and die for some weaselly rodents. It took an asteroid to blast him out of existence. Or so I thought. I'd much rather imagine T-Rex going out in a blaze of glory than devolving into a chicken.

Maybe human beings are devolving. In a few million years intelligent felines will be surprised to discover that the small, hairless, idiot creatures they breed for snacks are the descendants of the violent species that once ruled the world.

A bit of T-Rex's dignity has been spared. Very little of the protein was preserved. Unlike past-its-due-date mammoth, T-Rex is not going to be chowed down by gustatory adventurers. Not that it matters. We know what T-Rex tastes like now. Chicken. •

Much Nothings About Ado

WHAT MAD UNIVERSES

Far back in those “archaic” days of science fiction, 1948 to be exact, Fredric Brown wrote a novel which first appeared in *Startling Stories* and shortly after was republished in a hardbound edition by Dutton. The novel was called *What Mad Universe*. It is a classic and if you have not read it, find a copy and do so.

The novel is also notable because, so far as I know, it is the first instance of professionally published faanfiction, that is, it is about SF and fans. (I am excluding from this category *Rocket to the Morgue* by Anthony Boucher, which, although it did appear earlier, deals

more with writers and publishing than fans. Incidentally, if you have not read this mystery novel, it’s another one that you should put on your list.)

What Mad Universe would make a fantastically good movie today except for the fact that it is hopelessly outdated technologically and historically.

Let me briefly summarize the plot and you will see the problem. In 1954 (seven years into the author’s future) the first attempt to send an unmanned rocket to the moon was made. It failed and fell back to Earth. It contained an advanced electrical device that was supposed to explode and fire off such a bright light that it could be seen on

Earth. Unfortunately, when it crashed it landed directly on Keith Winton, the editor of *Surprising Stories*, a science fiction pulp magazine. He also handled the letter column as “The Old Rocketeer” (think Sergeant Saturn, if that means something to you). Winton wakes up from the explosion and finds himself in an alternate universe of the of the space opera kind that he edited in his magazine. The world is filled with friendly purple monsters from the moon, inimical Arcturians, with whom the Terrans and their friends are at war, Model T Fords, teleportation by sewing machine, space ships, and a genius Hero named Dopelle, his sidekick, a mechanical brain named Mekky, and his luscious girlfriend, who incidentally seems to resemble the editor of some love pulps at Winton’s publishing house. *And yet the year is still 1954!* The novel recounts Winton’s attempts to get back to his

LEE LAVELL

own universe, which he finally does – almost.

The book is exciting, funny and as I have stated would make a great movie if only there were some way to update it. Pulp and a Captain Future type universe just wouldn't be understood nowadays. The only way I can think of (with the help of David Lewton) is to move it to the world of the Internet and gaming. The device to transfer him to the parallel universe would also need to be changed, but that would be the easiest of the problems. I'm sure something could be scrambled up there.

Since I am not a gamer and am pretty much of a novice with computers as well, I can't go any further with this solution than that. I know nothing about gaming fandom, which would be essential.

So I am wondering, is there someone out there who might have some ideas on how to make this relevant to today? This is just an intellectual exercise you know, but a nice thing on which to ponder on when there is nothing else to do, like when one is drifting off to sleep. Think. If not gaming, what other field could it be transferred to that would have the gosh-wow fans that would be

essential to the story?



While thinking about *What Mad Universe* I also started remembering many other stories and authors that seem to be almost forgotten now but were very prominent in early pulp science fiction and really helped to form the field. Sure. Everyone remembers Robert Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury and Isaac Asimov. Philip K. Dick remains in memory because so many of his stories have been adapted into film, but how many people have read his works? Alfred Bester, oh Alfred Bester! Have you read *The Demolished Man* and *The Stars My Destination*? (...“Tension, apprehension and dissension have begun” and “Gully Foyle is my name, Terra is my nation...”) Wonderful! Murray Leinster, Jack Williamson, Clifford Simak. Where would science fiction have been without them? You can't forget Stanley G. Weinbaum, not only his short stories but his *Black Flame* novels. How about Eando Binder and his *Adam Link* stories?

Let's not forget Lester del Rey, Mack Reynolds, Damon Knight, L. Ron Hubbard (before Dianetics and Scientology),

Gardner F. Fox, E.E. (Doc) Smith, Manly Wade Wellman, Eric Frank Russell and so many others.

Special mention to Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett and also to Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore. (How many are aware that the latter pair wrote a collaboration in *Weird Tales* (in the thirties) in which Northwest Smith met Jirel of Joiry and therein appeared the first rudimentary version of the song *The Green Hills of Earth*, most often credited to Heinlein?)

I guess what I am saying is that we must not forget our roots. Much of fandom today seems to be about fandom but where would fandom be now without those pioneers of science fiction upon which we have built our present?•

Pixelated

ERIC MAYER

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Brilliant cover photo. What a remarkable sense of depth. And the markings on the bamboo add a bit of mystery.

Lee Lavell has a point about those changing television characters. And did you ever notice that the replicas are never quite as good? Look at Curly from the Three Stooges. By the time you get to Curly Joe every bit of the sophisticated wit is gone. And how about the second Mrs. Heriot in *All Creatures Great and Small*. (Anyone remember that show?) She just wasn't as sexy as the first. Granted, that would've been difficult.

So that was indeed the same font as the dreaded decaying X in the logo Xerox paid several hundred thousand to have developed. When that logo

appeared it was certainly a striking graphic representation of the state of the company and its work force in Rochester, NY.

In regards to Robert Lichtman's query about where I got my clover information...well, as with most of my blogs, from my perhaps faulty memory. When I was living in Rochester, the neighbors would have lawn care companies spraying poison on their lawns. Practically all the yards on the street were decorated with little flags warning people off. The grass was for display only I guess. I was surprised that in print and television advertising these lawn care folks cited clover as one of the vegetation villains being targeted. I found it odd because I recalled my dad planting and repairing lawns with bags of "clover mix" seed. Looking it up on the Internet, I see there

is a division of opinion today. Although some lament their clover problem and there are poisons available, clover has its champions. Whether that's always been the case, whether it was true back in the fifties when our lawn was all clover, I can't say. I wasn't aware, back then, of anyone out to get the clover I took for granted. I would've been horrified.

Claire makes a good point when she notes that "Unprofessional and non-professional aren't the same thing." I would add that I find it annoying when people use the term "professional" to mean "good" or having achieved some

ERIC MAYER
LEE ANNE LAVELL
JOHN PURCELL
JOSEPH T MAJOR
ROBERT LICHTMAN
LLOYD PENNEY
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MANFRED KLEIN

standard higher than that indicated by “amateur.” I realize that the word can be used to denote something skilled or competent, but when people talk about writing, such usage confuses matters. Depending on one’s individual tastes and subjective standards, writing can be professional in the sense of having been paid for but not professional in quality and vice versa.

As to striving for excellence rather than perfection, I think her approach makes sense. It really is impossible to achieve perfection in writing. No matter how many times you rewrite something there’s always another way and who is to say whether it is better or not? Deadlines impose a limit on the amount of tinkering we can do. Perfectionists, I suspect, tend to be unproductive and unreliable writers. Besides, who reads fanzines for perfection? I value spontaneity in fanzines, personally speaking.

LEE ANNE LAVELL

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“Found in Collection”: Most coincidences are just that and mean nothing,

although at times they can be a bit unnerving. I am reminded of my blue flowers incident. I had, yea these many years ago, a purse with some plastic blue flowers attached as decoration. I also had a headband with matching blue flowers. I had attended a con with these accessories, and on the trip home had car trouble, had to wait until the next day to get it fixed, stopped for lunch along the way, and found, when I got home, that I had lost the flowers off the purse. I was somewhat annoyed because it broke up the set, but that was it until, a couple of months later, an out-of-state fan came to visit, carrying with him the blue flowers which he had found in the parking lot of the restaurant, and recognizing they belonged to me he had brought them him. Now, this means nothing, except to me, but I found it weird. Like, somehow could plastic flowers have homing instincts?

“Notes from Byzantium”: Letterhacking is an art form and I think much of it is being lost as people just sit down and immediately reply by computer. Much of it seems to be just off the top of the hack’s head, with little depth or thought.

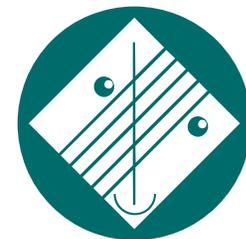
(And I am not excluding myself from this criticism.) Good writing is good writing and I hope the immediacy of the computer doesn’t destroy that!

“Being Frank”: Ghod! I admire you, Peter Sullivan! You actually read all five of Garcia’s “Drink Tanks”. Sheesh! I find that just getting through the chaos of one is chore. Although I will say that someone seems to have gotten hold of it and organized its appearance for an issue occasionally.

“Pixelated”: To Claire Brialy: Sorry about that. If I write about my eye again I’ll try to remember to put a “Danger, Claire Brialy” disclaimer at the beginning.

Cover: I love your photographic covers and it seems they are becoming a trademark of *Pixel*.

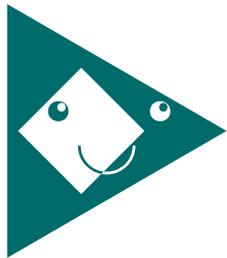
Cheers, Lee **Anne** Lavell (Please note the “Anne”, Guy Lillian. That’s a feminine name! I have not, nor have I ever been a “he.”)



JOHN PURCELL

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Your latest effort is, once again, full of good material. Taking things in order, Eric Mayer's musings about what Walt Willis would have done with or thought of the Internet was interesting. This is a good question. I never met Walt – got a couple LoCs from the gent way back when – but I think he would have made good use of the medium. His writing style and observations probably would not have changed much, and I am confident that he still would have put a lot of thought into his Live Journal entries, bloggings, listserv contributions, and so forth. By never meeting him in person, I have definitely missed out on the company of a man who has been described as one of fandom's kindest and wittiest



souls. Based solely upon what I've read of Walt's writings, I am sure he still would take a lot of thought and care in whatever

he produced for the Internet.

However, I do disagree with Eric's closing rumination on whether or not the Internet will produce fan writers like Willis, Tucker, or Burbee. The Internet has nothing to do – or very little to do – with producing top-quality fan writers of this ilk. That is up to the fan writers themselves. And the fan editors, too; can't forget about them here. Eric focuses on the speed and ease of composition, publication, and response thanks to the Internet, and there is no argument there about the effect of these components on fanac. Cyber-fanac is definitely thriving, no question. However, the way I look at it, being a good fan writer is up to the individual. I honestly don't think we'll ever see another Willis or Tucker, Burbee, Laney, Shaw, Carr, etc. They were all wonderful individuals who added their distinctive voices to the fannish mix through the printed medium of their times.

In the same regard, the Internet will simply add new voices to the ongoing conversation of fandom. I think making comparisons like, say, Chris Garcia to Terry Carr are just not going to make it.

There is no comparison since they are each distinct products of their respective times. Each fannish generation has its voices, and I think that's all that needs to be said.

But it *is* interesting to think about this kind of "what if" situation, isn't it? Eric still made some interesting observations about how the Internet has affected his writing, and I am positive that if Walt Willis was around still actively producing fan-writing today, his basic *modus operandi* would not change – or at least, not very much.

There is an interesting correlation working in Lee Lavell's column this issue, that being UFO's, government conspiracy cover-ups, and soap operas are all basically related in spirit. I can see that. Besides, any rational human being who watches day-time television could tell you that the aliens are in control of the programming. If Chris Garcia ever gets his wish to run his own television station, then we will know for sure that the End of Everything is upon us. **station break** "Welcome to the all-Arecibo space network. Our latest caller is from the smaller moon orbiting the fifth plan-

et around a dwarf star in the Cygnus constellation..."

Whoops! The station changed on me there.

Chris Garcia's column reminds me of that phrase "six degrees of separation." Not only that, maybe this is one of those alien cover-up conspiracies that Lee Lavell was talking about. I have always thought that the aliens have been keeping close tabs on that Garcia kid. Ever since I met him at Corflu Quire, I can understand why they would.

This naturally segues into Peter Sullivan's review column of spending "a month in *The Drink Tank*." Peter should be grateful it was a slow month for Chris; five issues in one month is nothing. Now the big question is whether or not there will be another TAFF candidate for the West-to-East race for 2008. Only 8 more days left for at least a second candidate to file in order for the race to be held. By the time this loc sees print (maybe) in *Pixel* #16 we should know the full skinny about TAFF.

By the way, Peter, if you think reading and reviewing five issues of *The Drink Tank* in one evening is bad, try sharing a

convention room with Garcia and hanging around with for a weekend. Whoowhee! The kid's a vortex of energy, sucking the life-force out of everybody around him. Take a look at the pictures of his effect on me in *Askance* #1. This is documentable proof of something I hinted at a couple paragraphs ago: Chris Garcia is an alien conspiracy. We really should be very, very afraid.

"Pixelated" has some interesting stuff, too, notably the responses of Eric Mayer, Chris Garcia (him again!), and Claire Brialey to the topic of fan-writing. Their consensus conclusion appears to be that defining fan-writing is best left up to the individual, which is fine by me. No matter how we all look at and define fan-writing, if it's good stuff, we'll enjoy it and say so. If there is one thing that I have truly enjoyed about fandom over the years, it is the ongoing conversation within the community of fandom. Being connected with this bunch of loonies has brought a lot of joy to my life, and I am glad to be a part of it.

Either that, or *all* of us are space aliens and just don't know about it thanks to brain-washing electromagnetic waves

that seep into our minds while we watch soap operas and infomercials on daytime television.

Holy cow! Lee Lavell was *right*!

JOSEPH T MAJOR

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"Notes from Byzantium": Not only have you missed the argument about Yngvi, but half the list members have quit after discovering they have been subscribed to other mailing lists without their knowledge. Getting Big Mail no longer requires much effort. And by the time you've properly crafted your discussion of who sawed Courtenay's boat, the list has undergone two purges and is now solely for soliciting subscribers to people's naked pictures of themselves.

Tucker would participate, if at a low pitch. He noticed one of my interests, for example, and sent me a link to a webcam at the South Pole. And in return, I notified him when he won the Retro-Hugo – rushed to the Internet lounge, signed on, and zap, click, away it went.

"Much Nothings About Ado": I hate to rain on your parade, but *The Burns* &

Allen Show did that recasting bit in the fifties. But then, there was a surreal attitude about the show. When George wanted to figure out what Gracie and the neighbors were doing, he'd withdraw to his study, turn on the television, and watch – *The Burns & Allen Show!*

In a sense, this was continuing their radio-show tradition. For example there was the time Gracie started a quest for her brother. Other radio shows would be interrupted by Gracie, dropping in and asking if the characters had seen her brother. She really did have a brother, who had mixed opinions about the whole affair.

“Pixelated”: Eric Mayer: In other words, *Please Don't Eat the Daisies*. The movie and TV show were mostly about the house but Jean Kerr had a lot more



to say. Her dramatic reading of a Mickey Spillane novel for example. (“What'll you have?” “Straight Drano. I'm clean inside.”)

Chris Garcia: I've been stung by bees a number of times, most notoriously on my eyebrow. In those days doctors took walk-ins and I walked straight to my doctor's. It's the bad eye, but not for that reason, I think.

Robert Lichtman: I read a friend's collection of *Trumpet* (it was before my time) and while it did have high production values, there were also some good articles. The one that sticks in mind most readily is Larry Niven's “Down In Flames!”, which had his modest proposal for showing that the Known Space series was built on lies. Considering what he did do with it after that, perhaps he should have written that ending.

John Purcell: Since we're all confessing, I'm 52 and Lisa is <DELETED>.

Lloyd Penney: I remember hoping I could get to Louisville in time to see “Star Wars” at the good theater, the (now closed) Showcase Cinemas. And I did, too. Several times. And I wasn't working then, either. But then I remember not paying much attention to it at their show at MidAmeriCon. Not that anyone else did either. So much for SF's grasp of the future.

ROBERT LICHTMAN

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Eric Mayer wonders what Willis would have made of the Internet. That's one of those unanswerable questions, since Walt passed away just as fandom was jumping on board in cyberspace in a big way. Since he wasn't in the best of health in his later years and had slowed down considerably, it's likely his participation would be like Eric surmises: “I can hardly imagine him, in his later years, tossing off hundreds of half-formed notes for lists. Or rambling daily in a blog. How many graceful columns could he have maintained for multiple weekly fanzines? Could *Hyphen* have been produced every week?” The answer to all these questions and musings would be No. It was stfnal enough for Walt that he got an Amstrad computer and was able to do revisions on-screen instead of having to retype things.

From my point of view, it was a delight to occasionally receive a blue air letter from Walt and to eagerly open and read it. Not long before he passed away I sent him copy number one of *Fanorama*, the

collection I did of his fan columns in *Nebula*, the Scottish SF magazine that appeared in the '50s. He was quite happy that I was doing the project. As he wrote in a late 1997 letter, "Yes, it's quite okay by me for you to reprint my fan columns from *Nebula*, and thank you for asking. I'll look forward myself to the result, since I seem to have lost about half of them." Unfortunately, by the time he received that copy he was in pretty bad shape and, I think, probably didn't get to enjoy rereading his columns after all.

Well, as Eric concludes, "There's no way of knowing."

In reviewing *The Drink Tank* Peter Sullivan notes that Jerry and Suzle sent Chris "a batch of left-over Rotslers,

sticking to the rules of Rotsler...that art should be passed on if not being used." I wonder if this is art that they'd previously used in *Mainstream* or one of their other fanzines, because another of Rotsler's rules is that all his artwork should be published in a paper fanzine before being used on-line.

LLOYD PENNEY

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I have enjoyed Walt Willis' writings as well, mostly because he never took the whole thing too seriously, and he was so laid back as to be nearly horizontal. We've had to learn how to write for the immediacy of the Internet, and I don't think we really enjoy having to do that.

We'd rather have the time to form opinions, word and phrases, to not only say what we want to say, but to perhaps entertain with the way we say or write it. I don't think Walt would have anything to do with the Internet, and it's best that he wasn't around to see written fandom jump onto the Net. (Was there a line missing from the end of page 4?) Balancing frequency and quality is one thing...balancing your fanac with your life is another. I want to write letters as quickly as Warner and Coulson did, but I can't. There's the demands of a large number of zines, some most people never see, but also the time demand of job-hunting and a life with Yvonne. There's local fandom, too...I am not as active locally as I used to be, but I do have some

Errata and Corrections:

In #15, the following (in italics) mysteriously got dropped from Eric's column: Arnie and Joyce Katz put out *Wooden Nickel*, a one page fanzine, every week for a year. *That was practically a magician's trick.*

In the lettercolumn, I neglected to indent and italicize my comments to Robert Lichtman's letter. The paragraph on page 18 beginning *Here in the Midwest* and ending *he's not particularly fond of it.* is by me, not Robert.

presence. All we can do is do our balancing acts, and create fanwriting with as much quality and insight as we possibly can, and not let the inherent speed of the Net affect our finished product.

There's no way to know for sure who's on the edge of breaking and going on a murderous rampage. All we can do is look for the signs, but not go so far as to jail someone for what they might do. Minority Report is supposed to be science fiction, after all. Also, no one turns a particular colour so we can tell when they're on that edge. We need to learn what to look for. Unfortunately, those who do break are often loners, with no one to see what's happening to them until it's too late.

What's Chris Garcia's secret? It's multiple layers...he's got the time to create like crazy at a job that allows him to do it, he's got a high level of involvement in BArea fandom, and here's the real secret...he's hyperactive. Most of us get over it when we get out of our childhood days, but Chris never did. I'm sure he's got Duracells in his back; the bunny just keeps going. How's the cheerleader costume fitting, Chris? Peter, me asking

for an illo of Chris in the cheerleaders' costume wasn't foolish at all. More grist for the Chris for TAFF mill.

Chris calls Rob Sawyer the head of Neanderthal PR? All I can say is that Rob did his homework, as he usually does for his novels. Rob and his wife are in the Yukon Territory in Whitehorse, and Rob is the writer-in-residence for the town, staying at the Yukon home of late Canadian writer Pierre Berton. I believe as soon as his stint is done, they are off to Beijing. Rob has fans everywhere.

John Purcell convinces me...we've all got to become the pickled heads you used to see in *Futurama*. Our heads will all be in bell jars with labels on the front, and we'll somehow get together regularly and yell at each other. This aging thing sucks the galactic muffin, and it's just got to stop!

I like the idea of fandom as community as much as Claire does. In all my readings of fanhistories, community is all. However, I see less of it all the time, and I have to wonder if we're become a large group of small enclaves. Worldcon brings us together every year, but many are tired of Worldcons, or just can't af-

ford them. Communication, be it paper or e-, keeps community going, but so many fail to realize that.

Two spoonfuls of Marmite for Chris everyday...I've tried Marmite, same as I have for Vegemite, and I'm pretty sure this is covered by the Geneva Conventions somewhere. After Chris hinted that he'd shave his beard off, maybe the Marmite might assist in that facial baby-smooth look the ladies like...