

Hard Science Tales

Ninth Issue

When old fans talk about the mimeograph with love and nostalgia, I note that the newer ones look at us with an air of puzzlement and disbelief. Although there's always quite a bit of talk around about the machines, and discussion of their inks and special papers, it occurs to me that perhaps it would help if I explained the technology to them. Although it may seem primitive by today's standards, in fact they were quite nice for their day, and represented some great steps forward in small-press publishing.

After the demise of the hand-set type printed fan-zines, fans mostly were stuck with hectograph – pans of goo that sucked ink off the typed master, thus creating a mirror image of wet ink on top of the jelly. Editors pressed single sheets of paper against the jelly-ink image to laboriously create a severely limited number of purple printed pages, and unknown myriads of indelible purple stains on themselves, their clothing and their moms' best bath towels.

The mimeo quickly dominated fanzine fandom, with its cleaner, less labor-intensive reproduction. The manufacturer loaded the drums and shipped them off, ready to spin, and the fan editor typed a stencil. In plain language, that means he cut, either

with a typewriter, pen point, or fancy special styluses, word-shaped holes into a paper and wax film which then got stretched over the drum of the machine.

The mimeo, being loaded as it were with thousands of

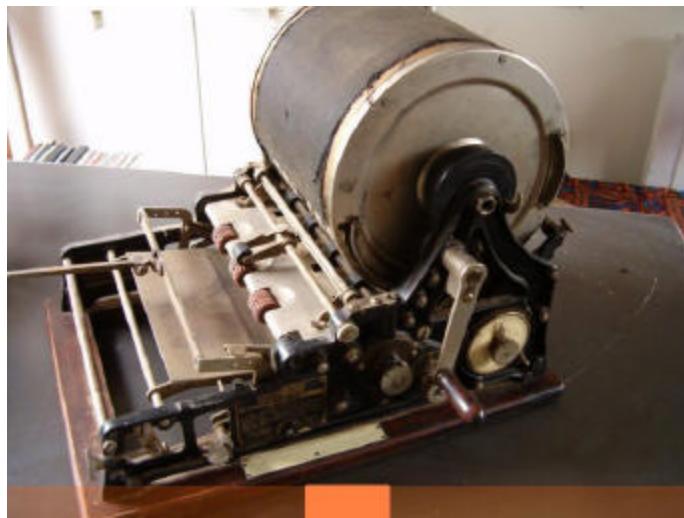
words, would flip through its barrel of ranks and rows of words, to find one that matched up with the holes cut into the stencil, press the words through their slots onto the paper, and thus prepare relatively clean copies.

There were all price-levels of machines, based on

Hard Science Tales Whole Number 9 comes to you from Joyce Worley Katz, PMB 152, 330 South Decatur, Las Vegas, NV 89107, on October 22, 2005. This is created for SNAFFU members and other Vegas fan friends, for the seventh distribution of SNAPS (The Southern Nevada Amateur Press Society.) Hard Science Tales is also posted to www.efanzines.com for the amusement of the rest of fandom. Thanks to Arnie Katz for production help and for this nifty template. **Back cover by Alan White.**



the number of words in the drums. Although you could get a cheap machine, you might find it running out of words you tended to use a lot, like “science fiction”, or “transidental meditation.” This led some fan editors to invent a lot of abbreviations, like StF and TM. Someone with a really erudite vocabulary, like Redd Boggs, might empty



a machine of important concept terms in a year’s fanac. Heck, just one “antidisestablishmentarianism” could use up a cheap mimeo’s total supply in an article.

(I once thought that the machines would quickly run out of such common things as articles, but in fact the manufacturers supplied more of those than anything else. I have an old mimeo, given to me by Alan White, which once belonged to LASFS. Shake it, and all you can hear are “a’s, an’s” and “the’s” rattling around in it like pieces of sand.)

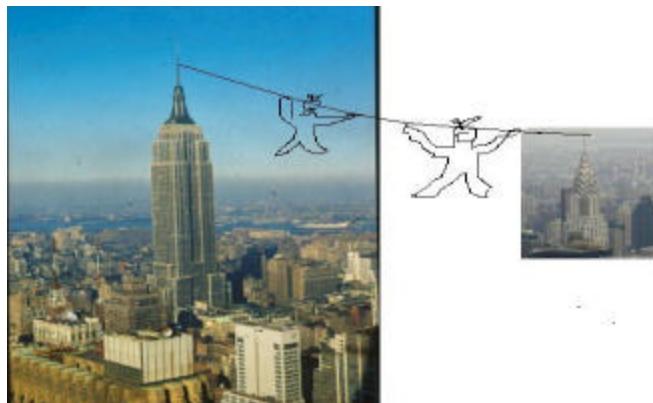
Technology did improve things. Eventually, I can’t remember if it was Mr. Dick or Mr. Gestetner but it was one of those inventor guise, someone found a way to load the machine with a lot of prefixes, clauses, and common word combinations, like anti- and contro- and qu- and tion.” That made the word supply a lot more flexible so the machines lasted longer. In fact, that caused quite a stir.

You can imagine how excited fans were to learn of this. And when they got word that the prototype was hidden away on the 57th floor of the Empire State Building, Ted White and Bill Donaho decided they had to see it. Of course, it was all top-

secret and hush-hush stuff, and there was no chance two scruffy Villagers were getting into that office. But both fans were pretty obsessive about fanzine publishing and mimeography, so they hatched a plan. They chose a warm summer night at the dark of the moon, (being science fiction fans, they knew about such things.) Then they went to the top of the Chrysler Building, where anyone can go without challenge. They waited until midnight, then they hand-over-handed it across the long silver John Nebel Bridge that runs between the Chrysler tower and the Empire State Building.

It was uphill, but fans on a mission are pretty intrepid, and they made it. Then it was a simple matter to go across the Observation Platform on the Empire State Building, take the back steps down to the 57th, and snatch the top-secret mimeo.

There’s a sort of interesting follow-up to this. They obviously couldn’t just waltz out the front door with the mimeo under their coats. But they’d planned ahead. They brought a couple of ropes. They tied the ends to the doorframes, tossed them out the window, then just slid down. Landed on



the pavement across the Street from Macy’s, where a crowd was gathered watching Betty Furness open and close a new self-cleaning oven in the window. They didn’t have a way to pull the ropes down, so they just left them hanging. But, it worked out ok – that’s where someone got the idea to do a Spiderman comic.

I don’t remember exactly which year this happened. Late 1950s, early ‘60s. You could ask Ted; I’m sure he’ll know. **

Alien Voices (Mailing Comments)

Profane Revelations (Charles Fuller) Depleted Lithium? Interesting. I thought that by the very nature of elements, they could not be broken down further. Raises a question about other elements, which might also be altering because of the impact of outside forces. We know the fumes we exhale are changing the air we breathe; the chemicals we dump are altering both soil and water. As the earth is being changed, so are we. As we grow taller and stronger, our feet get longer and wider – perhaps also more stinky, though since we're so close to them, we might not notice.

Yes, perhaps all the elements are being subtly changed and, like the lithium, becoming lighter. If so, that might mean we're not becoming larger in the true sense, but just more diffuse, until eventually we will all become so much less dense that we will float on the breezes like the blossoms that fall from magnolia trees.

Then again, maybe the lithium was just tired, and not letting down all its weight.

D'Clutter Bug (Laurie Kunkel) Your essay on the coming of Fall is evocative. This was my least favorite time of the year, when I lived in Missouri. Fall signaled the start of winter, the end of summer's merriment. The beginning of the rainiest season, tears fell from the sky, mourning the beginning of the school term. But I came to love Autumn in New York (pause now and sing a verse....) picture pretty, clear, crisp, dry, from September to December.

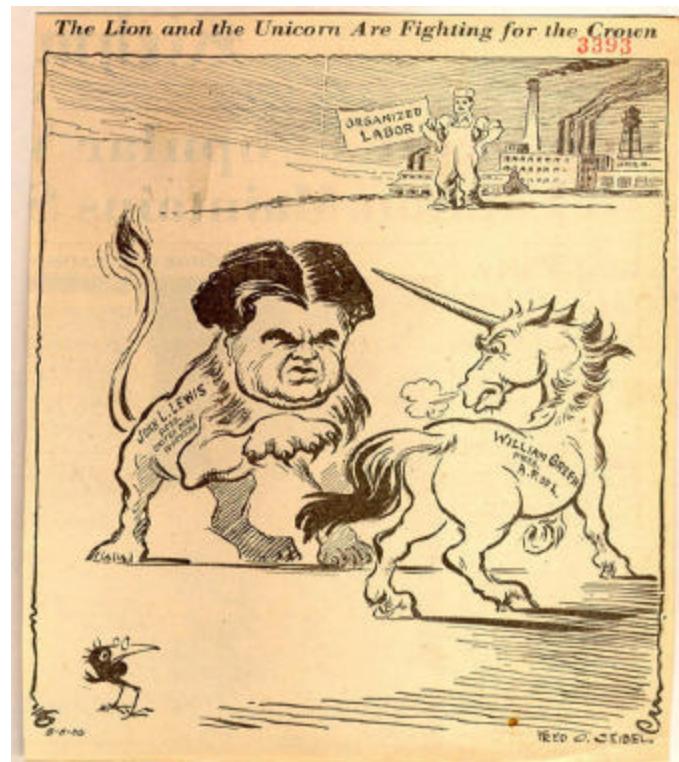
I can't wait to read Bill's "Confessions of the Game Doctor" The early years of Electronic Games and the advent of home video games were among the most exciting of my life. The Game Doctor was player-on-the-spot for all those years. I'm sure reading those columns will be an interesting and time-binding experience.

Your new trailer sounds like a classy digs. I'm sorry you are moving to Michigan – you'll both be missed – but I'm glad you'll have such a nice place to put yourselves.

Bat Signals (Teresa Cochran) OK, I'll bite

(or would like to): What's a pepperoni roll, and how do you make it? I like West Virginia (or what I've seen of it) but would have expected you to be eating more mountain-ethnic food while you were there.

Did you actually go into the mine? I don't think I could do that. Although I was in many caves as a young person, I've developed Fear of such places in my old age. (Of course, you proba-



bly don't suffer from fear of being lost in the dark.) And, old John-L-Lewis tales-of-terror about the mines would keep me away from those artificial (and oh-so-collapsible) manmade caves.

Sounds like you had a wonderful time. I hope you do go to Corflu next Spring; you'll find a similar spirit of camaraderie.

Sidewinder (James Daugherty) The Burning Man event sounds fascinating. I'd like to see the art. I think I did see a TV broadcast from the event a year or so back, and the pieces that were shown ran heavily to hobo-art, found sculptures among the junk. This seemed to work well in the gigantic natural environment.

Mid-life Crisis (Linda Bushyager) I liked your Stages of Life compilation. I had seen

some of them before, but not all. – I agree with you that time seems to be more scarce as we get older. Here I am, essentially retired, but I seem to have less free time than when I worked. Part of it is because it takes longer to get things done, but at least part of it is what you suggest – too much television. The ability to time-shift programs with the VCR means I seldom miss anything I really want to see – but it also leads me to watching things I would have passed before. Some of the newer science fiction programs come under this head. Well, I'm cutting back on those – we didn't care for Threshold, have given up on Invasion, and are not watching reruns of Battlestar Gallactica. I am still watching Surface and Lost, but I'm not sure I'm going to stick with them all season.

My real joy of the season isn't science fiction – it's ROME, on HBO. No surprise that it's excellent – it was done by the same crew that did Deadwood. It's a magnificent look at the age of emperors. It may not be quite up to I Claudius in excellence – but it certainly isn't too far off the mark.

I wouldn't like to see SNAPS go bi-monthly. I think that would probably kill the apa by diffusing the momentum. If anyone (self-included) just can't quite make every mailing, well that's no problem – there are no requirements to be here every month.

I note that you have frequently remarked about the large number of fan events. While it is true that there are a great many activities in Vegas fandom, no one expects anyone to attend everything – and in fact, I don't think anyone does make it to every gathering or outing or into every publication. But it's a mark of a large friendly fandom that people like to get together so often, and like to do things together. I think we should just enjoy it while it's happening. A look at other cities' fan histories would seem to indicate that this state won't last forever.

One thing for sure, you certainly do enhance the success of everything you participate in. I really enjoy your Mid-Life Crisis, and hope you continue for a long long time to come!

Softcore Fantasy Adventures (Arnie Katz)

The Story of Percy Fankind cautions us from trying to expunge the less-glamorous fan phi-

losophies from our group – flush away commercialism and we're left with altruism, but no cash in the coffers; stifle the insurgents' remarks, and we're left with cloying lack-of-discernment and taste. Without sercon fans,

our ties to our founding literature would break. The tranquility of truffannishness pales with no fire to light it. I always thought it was a shame that Mr. Hyde's passion for life had to be discarded so completely. You've got to admit he was a fun guy at a party.

On the other hand, we could probably do with a little less of the gullible spirit that thought the story was based on a real Vegas fan.

Barnesine (Joelle Barnes)

I was interested to read about your path to fandom; I had never known how you came into contact with the local group. I suspect that, by this time, you've seen quite a few faces of the multi-faceted local fandom. Las Vegas has a little bit of everything, from fans who are primarily interested in the literature, to those who are mostly only interested in social gatherings.

Perhaps you've also had time, by now, to realize that not everyone is charming and friendly – we're like a den of bears, disturbed in mid-winter. Some of us just scoot over and make room for the new cave-mate; others grumble and growl but give up a little space, and others try to push the new arrivals out the door. But it's all part of the process, and bears know not to take each other too seriously.



I think you're an interesting addition to Vegas fandom, because you have a lot of unusual opinions and attitudes. That gives us something to talk about – and as I've said before, one of your nicest traits is the way you listen, and give consideration to, other people's opinions.

I certainly expect that eventually you'll find the perfect relationship. But until then, I am happy that you are with us, building friendships and acquaintanceships. I hope you stick around, even if grumpy old bears sometimes growl in the night.

Der Fliegender Hollander (James Taylor)



I think you make a very important point, when you mention that there are fans who go to the LASFS meetings who never enter the clubroom (especially not on meeting nights.) Certainly the same is true in every city. Here in

Vegas, there are fans who'd rather die than go to a book discussion, or attend an authors panel. I'd about as soon be boiled in oil than go to a meeting that follows Roberts Rules of Order. I believe all fans are brothers, but some of us are more comfortable at the family table than others.

It's obvious you have many fine fannish memories of your first fandom, in Los Angeles. But I'm glad you drifted out of LASFS and into the Vagrants, and can't help but hope you get stuck with us for a long time.

PERSONAL NOTES

I've passed a major milestone in my recovery — the hard cast was cut off my right leg. In its place I now have a nifty "walking cam-boot". It is weighty, but I'm allowed to remove it to bathe,

sleep, and even in those moments when I just feel too restricted. This is wonderfully freeing, after the cast.

On the other hand, I can't yet walk. I'm allowed to just barely put my foot on the floor, and forbidden to put all my weight down. During the next six weeks, I will gradually increase, until I am fully weight-bearing by December 1. At that point the doctor will see new x-rays and hopefully allow me to walk and drive the car again. By Christmas, I should be, if not completely recovered, at least nearer to my norm.

It's been a tough recuperation, after a bad injury. But hopefully, it's almost over.



WorleyGigs

I've only missed two columns in the last 18 months, in my freelance assignment at Exhibit City News. I write a monthly piece on convention Destinations, describing the city, its facilities, and tourist attractions that conventioneers might enjoy. I didn't even miss a month with the original injury, but the cardioplasty was too close to deadline date, as was the ankle surgery in September.

This month I'm back on the horse; the editor asked for a column about Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto. It was sorta strange to be writing about Toronto. Here I am, all pumped about the city, but knowing that Arnie and I are extremely unlikely to see it first hand, at least not for Corflu 2006.



Where will Corflu be in 2007? I'm planning already, in optimistic hope. **

Letters:

From the frozen north, here's a letter about HST 8, proving it's never too late to write a loc:

Lloyd Penney:

So many people have a distrust of science, and I'm not sure where it comes from, from being taught that distrust from parents, being afraid of something you don't completely understand, or afraid of something that fails from time to time, like the shuttles. Most people seem to live in fear of the real world...and they laugh at those sci-fi freaks...

That pattern of volunteering and them becoming disillusioned is nothing new, I suppose, but I guess I wanted to do my part to make the good times roll, and I have. I don't think we want to break away from convention running circles, but we just don't want to do the hard work any more. 25 years of working cons sounds more like a sentence than an achievement. We've had our fun, and right now, it's not as much fun any more. We are moving back until we each provide an aspect of the whole convention, although I am doing some research into doing an information desk for the convention. Soon, we will be done. Right now, I am having much more fun writing for the letter columns of many zines, and it's good to know my work is appreciated.

You say to Teresa Cochran that many neofans are turned off by realizing there's a Great Big Fandom out there. When I first found this out, I was very intrigued by it, and hoped that I might get to go to these mysterious Worldcons, and maybe vote on those wondrous Hugo awards. I also wondered if I might visit with some of these fans around the world. If these were my fannish dream, I've made them all come true, and then some. It is very important for me to participate in a community, and I hope I have here.

The more I watch television, the more the horror stories come from New Orleans. This disaster has brought out the worst in some people; a rescue helicopter full of supplies couldn't land in an established landing area because there was a gang of about a hundred looters with guns, just waiting

for the bird to alight before attacking. Bush says this is the greatest natural disaster in American history, and I don't doubt him. Now to see if he can be a true leader and focus on this reclamation of New Orleans, or if he'll just let various agencies handle the rebuilding, and he'll continue on blathering about Iraq, liberty and freedom, which seems to be the only three words he uses these days.

My happiest day in convention fandom was when I realized that I no longer am expected to work on con committees. That was wonderfully freeing!

From the time I learned about fandom, I never doubted that it would be important to me, and I fully expected to be part of the community. I recognize that same ideal in you.

Eric Mayer reminds me that it doesn't matter what you do so much as that you know what to call it...

Eric Mayer: (Blog: <http://www.journalscape.com/ericmayer>)

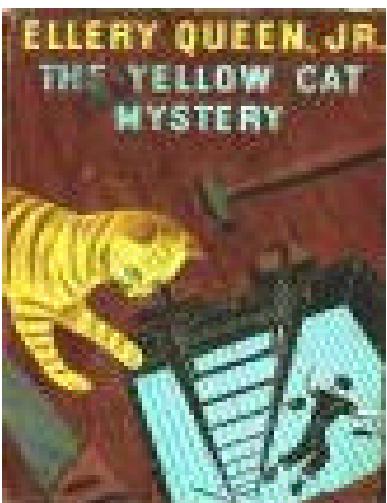
From your opening remarks I reckon you may be a Swedenborgian. Not that I know much of anything about the religion. I ran across some information while researching something else. But I liked the idea (as I understood it) that God, being a loving God, doesn't want to see anyone sent to hell and doesn't, in fact, send anyone there. At death, the world we envision, becomes the world we inhabit (as we pass into the



nonphysical existence where thought becomes reality) and so those whose thoughts are of hatred and violence, for example, create their own hell to inhabit, of their own free will. They choose to live in hell. A nice idea, for sad to say, those sorts of people, in reality, are the ones who tend to make this world a hell that we all have to live in. Yes, to allow them to spend eternity in the kind of world they want (all by themselves) strikes me as a very satisfactory thing.

Dave Hall sounds like one of those people who never managed to accommodate himself to the sorry world we live in or find a niche where he could get along in spite of it. (And there are also those who just give themselves up and embrace the whole mess) Your story was interesting

and rather touching. I'm glad you were able to commemorate (if that's the word) the faanish career of someone who ended up insulting you. (Perhaps it was the illness you say killed him shortly afterwards) I'm not always comfortable with the fan memoirs I've seen. Brutal honesty or the airing of dirty laundry



may serve a purpose when a real historian is writing about public figures, but in a faanish context it is just gossip committed to print, and as often as not self-serving. As we all age and begin to depart, a shrinking number of fans will be writing about an increasing number of those who are gone. A little restraint and goodwill, as demonstrated here, may be in order. Besides, who can say who will be the last one left to tell the story?

Count me as one who is not fond of large dogs. They make me nervous. And large dogs salivate in the presence of nervous people. I'm sure. I am not enamored of small, nervous mean dogs either. Give me a cat any day. I only once encountered a mean, claw your ankle soon as look at you, cat. That one belonged to my grandmother and he only got ornery after he was all but torn in half by two dogs.

It's strange to contemplate the final reports on fandom, coming as they will from the aged, sick and (probably) absent-minded. Perhaps that will lead to the last tales being about the enchanted fandom, filled only with cordiality and contentment, as all the bad memories are shuffled away. I wouldn't count on it, though.

Arnie and I had one mean cat, Foo-Manchu, back in Brooklyn. Foo would attack guests, once ripped Andy Porter's trousers from knee to ankle (Andy picked on him first) and would chase fans up and down our hallway. He was very playful, but a bit rough.

And now....is it true? Has Harry come back?

Chris Garcia:

Another fine issue from another great Distribution of SNAPS. I'm really happy that we can get to see what the APA is putting out. It makes me think that a new type of APA could arise, where the generally population could see PDFs of much of the content with the Mailing Comments being produced strictly for the participants. It's an interesting theory and one that I may have to take on in some form at some time.

I've seen the Ray Nelson cartoon you mentioned, though I can't honestly remember where. I know it wasn't in its original form. Maybe someone reprinted it in one of those "How Far We've Come" things that seem so popular.

The story of Dave Hall and family tells me just how much the laws of having someone committed have changed in the last many years. My Pops, during his rather imbalanced times due to being hit by a car had himself committed, but due to odd red tape, the only ones who could legally get him out were either me or my Mom, who wasn't about to do anything to help Pops at that point. Luckily, someone realized that he should be let go anytime he wanted, since he had self-committed, and he walked out about a week after he had first tried. Dad had a friend a lot like Dave, a fellow also named Dave, who turned rather sour shortly before his death in 1989 or so at the age of about 45. He was a prolific writer of letters. My Dad was not. He would always answer a letter with a phone

call. About a month before he died, Dad gave him a call and got an earful for being disrespectful by not writing back. Dad, whose spelling is even more suspect than mine, just sat on the phone and listened to his yelling before making small apologies and hanging up.

Robert Lichtman mentions one of my favourite wineries! I'm always glad to hear people talking about Buena Vista. As a Silicon Valley guy, I have to go to the Wineries at least once a year (mostly during the Sonoma Valley Film Festival) and BV is my favourite. A wonderful old building and liberal pourers!

And I don't care what Eric claims, I know he's writing thousands of LoCs trying to be the next Harry Warner!

I believe electronic publishing may be the salvation of the apas (which seem to be dwindling from...err...apathy.) SNAPS is certainly not the only one going, but I hope those receiving it are taking note of its ease of execution and distribution. It's a real pleasure to assemble it – a matter of minutes to put it together and distribute it.

The Ray Nelson cartoon has been widely reprinted since its original publication in Odd, in the revival issue of Odd (#14), then in various memoirs of Odd, and in at least one anthology of Ray Nelson cartoons. And, if I could lay my hands on it again, I'd republish it here, just because.

And now, Lloyd Penney comments on the price of salvation.

Lloyd Penney:

Eternal salvation for only a buck? Hey, you're cheaper than all the televangelists I've seen on TV! Cheap at twice the price! Sign me up! How can I tell you've been hanging around Arnie, hm?

My telephone book (fills an 8½ x 11"

binder) is full of names of people who flashed brilliantly in fandom, and then went out just as quickly, and gafiated, mostly because it wasn't quite right for them, or life caught up and demanded their full attention, or fandom was seen as fun and games, and being an adult was dealing with real life. Also, some of them were a little disgusted by some of the characters they saw in local fandom and elsewhere, and wanted away from them ASAP. David Hall sounded like the poster boy for ADD before the disorder was even considered. I had higher plans for my own life, and few of them came to fruition, and there has been some disappointment, but I remember what achievements I have, and I am pleased. I am also pleased that others may have achieved their goals, or even gone beyond to some fame and fortune. Dave Hall may not have been able to take that perspective.

I would imagine that Jason Burnett is pleased to be living in Minneapolis, given the disastrous hurricane that has ravaged New Orleans and much of eastern Louisiana. Minneapolis may get its share of precipitation, but for about half the year, you've got to shovel it away yourself.

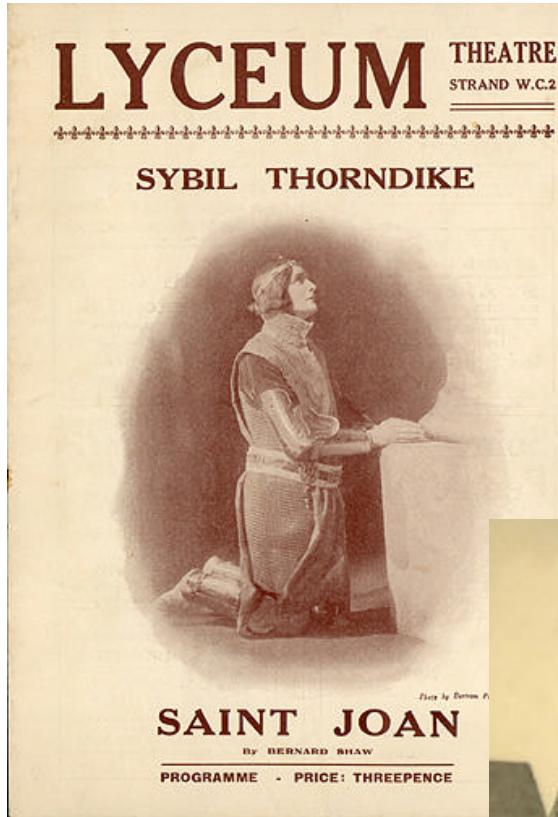
I think we're all saddened by the ones who went away. But it's heartening how many of them come back eventually. I think fanzine fandom has enormous staying power!

Finally, a word from that sparkling new fan from Over There:

Peter Sullivan:

Hey, if JoHn Hardin gets Eternal Salvation for a dollar, how much would I get for a sticky quarter? (I may even have one somewhere in my desk left over from my last trip stateside, so this may not even be just a hypothetical question.) Would I end up like the English soldier in George Bernard Shaw's play St. Joan, who gets one day a





year out of Hell for having handed the burning martyr a crucifix?

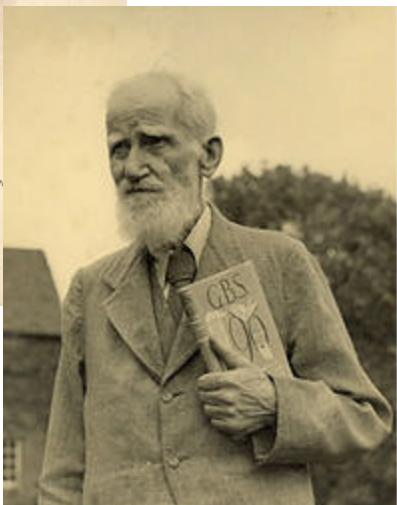
Hank talks about people being told they did things at conventions that they don't remember at all. This has happened to me several times. I was involved in running a board games convention for almost ten years in various capacities, and I keep being "reminded" of conversations I allegedly



had with people that I have absolutely no memory of. All I can assume is that the concom secretly had me cloned, and that

whilst I was upstairs trying to reconcile the cash I'd banked to the membership slips, my doppelganger was downstairs roistering in the bar.

Marrying close family members: I seem to remember a quiz I saw somewhere on the internet (yeah, I know, that narrows it down, NOT!) for "Are You a Redneck?" One of the questions was "Does your wife, mother and sister add up to less than three people?" Also, as far as European royalty goes, I'm too lazy to look this up properly, but I believe that Prince Charles has Queen Victoria as 9 out 16 of his great-great-grandmothers. No further comment.



I think for one sticky quarter, you should get one-quarter of eternity. How's that for a bargain?

I doubt that Vicky was multiple great grandmothers to Charlie, but I believe she is multiple aunts.

I've had good luck with deadlines; always make it in time. But I cut every possible corner, waiting 'til the last possible moment. Only the pressure makes me produce copy.



Thanks to all who sent good wishes and encouragements in the last months. I've really appreciated hearing from so many friends.

