



# Littlebrook 2

**Littlebrook: Adventures in Time and Space** is a fanzine published by Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins (aka Suzle), to appear on an irregular and unpredictable schedule. The publishers' address is 3522 N.E. 123rd Street, Seattle, Washington, 98125; their phone number is 206-367-8898. Email can be sent to [littlebrooklocs@aol.com](mailto:littlebrooklocs@aol.com) (email of a titillating or personal nature may be sent to Jerry at [jakaufman@aol.com](mailto:jakaufman@aol.com) or Suzle at [suzlet@aol.com](mailto:suzlet@aol.com); however, there's no need to send locs to all three addresses. We don't need to receive three copies!). This second issue is dated April, 2003. *Littlebrook* will be available for the usual: a letter commenting on a previous issue, an article or artwork intended to be published in a future issue, or your own fanzine in trade. We will also accept in-person begging, the provision of a beverage, or \$2. We do not accept subscriptions. *Littlebrook* will also be available on-line in a PDF format at [efanzine.com](http://efanzine.com). If you prefer the electronic version, let us know, and we'll send you an email announcement when another issue is ready. (So far three people, two of them a couple, have requested this).

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# Bewitched, Bothered & Bemildred

## by Jerry

**W**e've been baking away like mad, this morning before Christmas. *Chunga*, *Floss* and *Joie De Vivre* have appeared in our mailbox. We are rife with holiday colors: green with envy, white with powdered sugar. (I couldn't think of a good thing to go with red.) We have a good issue in hand, however, and will no doubt be in print in another month, more or less.

Last issue was pretty good, we thought, with enjoyable material and only a few errors, which we fixed on the version of *Littlebrook* that appears on the efanzines website. Our zip code appears there, though it was missing from the print version. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* properly takes place in Sunnydale, not Sunnyvale. Debbie Notkin now receives her due as author, with Eli Cohen, of *The Mimeo Man*, as Asenath Hammond-Sternbach loses it. (Moshe Feder apologizes profusely.) And we reveal that *Littlebrook* is not the first home of Andy Hooper's "Sausage Time."

*Littlebrook* also demonstrated that it is a true Seattle fanzine of the times, and continues to prove it, by printing material from the same stock of Seattle-based or -beloved writers and artists as *Chunga* and *Floss*. For instance, if you like Randy Byers' "An Uneventful Day," in this issue and want to know more about Yap Day, you'll have to read "A Yap Day Party" in *Floss* 3. You also get a Luke McGuff movie review, Stu Shiffman on dime novel detectives, Andy Hooper with more fanzine reviews and strong opinions on Writers of the Future, and Lesley Reece on the Cold War mentality.

We also like drop caps.

It's quite possible that this issue of *Littlebrook* will appear too late to have any effect on the outcome of the TAFF race. It's equally possible that we'll get the issue into the mail well before the TAFF deadline and it still won't make a difference. We can but try.

A few of you may not be familiar with the TAFF phenomenon. The Transatlantic Fan Fund is a kind of fan exchange program. People on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean choose a person they want to send on a round trip to visit fans and conventions on the other side. One year we North Americans send someone to Europe; the next year the folks over there send someone else here. (In practice, it usually works out that "North America" is the United States, and "Europe" is Britain.)

There's a selection process, you bet. Each person that stands is nominated by five other people (some from each side of the ocean) and writes a one-hundred word spiel about him- or herself. All the spiels, or plat-

forms, are printed on one side of a sheet of paper; the other side has the rules. These ballots are distributed hither and yon throughout fandom, and fans send them back in with their selections marked, and a couple of dollars to help cover the costs of the trip.

I am a Randy Byers enthusiast. I think he should be our TAFF representative this year. Since I was too late to offer to be one of Randy's nominators, I offered instead to write his platform for him. The platform doesn't have to be written by the nominee; in fact, in order to preserve the often fragile modesty of TAFF (and other fan fund) nominees, I think it would be a great idea if one of the nominators always wrote the platform. This would also insure that at least of those nominators knew enough about the candidate to sound sincere.

Here's what I wrote:

Born into a family of itinerant philosophers, Randy spent his youth in such exotic locations as Yap, Germany and Portland, Oregon. He came to maturity and the fullness of fannish life in Seattle, Washington. Here he made a name for himself as a party giver, wit and world traveler. The Spirit of Fandom touched him frequently and in recent years took to whacking him mightily. Now Randy is becoming widely known for his brilliant fan writing and striking resemblance to Lenin. Send him to Britain while he is in the flower of his fannish career and manly beauty.

Randy wrote me to say he liked it. However, soon after he wrote me again to say that Victor Gonzalez, our current cruel but fair TAFF administrator, had vetoed giving me a credit for the write-up. This would amount, explained Victor, to a sixth nomination.

Randy wrote the following for himself:

I'm not an old fan and tired, but I'm approaching middle age and feeling a little worn around the edges. I look across the Atlantic and see a veritable fountain of fanac (not to mention fetishism) erupting over there, and I want to discover the source of it and seek restoration. Better yet if the source is the local ale, which I've heard is almost as good as Seattle's. Most of all, I want to hang out with my British friends, meet the folks I've read about, and tell entertaining lies about it later.

I'm slightly more prolix than Randy (98 words versus 94), and the words are slightly longer. Other than that, the big difference between the two pieces, of course, is that Randy actually is far more modest than he needs to be, and focuses entirely on why he wants to go

to Britain, while I talk about who I see Randy as being, and why the British would want to meet him. You can see the advantages, I hope, of having someone other than a nominee write the platform.

And if it isn't too late, you'll find a TAFF ballot stuffed into the envelope – and, while we're at it, maybe a D(own) U(nder) F(an) F(und) ballot, too. Read the instructions, the history, and the platforms of the other three hopefuls. Imagine what other people might have written about them. Then vote.

**T**he sun was rising at my back, coloring the clouds deeply salmon, as the ferry set off towards the Olympic Mountains. Dawn's little fingers stroked deep lines into the snow on the higher elevations, while the details of creases stood out with unlikely clarity as I began the final leg of my daily morning commute.

I don't talk about work in my fanzines too often, giving only the slightest hints of what I do. This won't be any different. I am an underwriter for a small insurance agency that specializes in placing insurance for different public transportation operations – anything from charter bus companies to airport shuttle services to limousines to jitneys. We need an underwriter because we have the authority from several insurance companies to bind coverage on their behalf if we follow their rules.

The agency used to be located in downtown Seattle. About two years ago, having reduced staff from twelve to four, the owners decided that they needed to move to a smaller office. Since they live on Bainbridge Island, in Puget Sound, they were tired of taking the ferry every day, and thought they could find smaller and cheaper offices where they lived.

They didn't, as it happened, find anything suitable on the island, but they did find an office they could drive to in the town of Kingston. (When I heard this, I began singing, "Got a little girl down in Kingston town.") Kingston is a trek from Seattle, but it's a pleasant one.

I rise at 5:45 am, do my morning routine, and catch a bus from our neighborhood at 6:45. This takes me to the Northgate Transit Center (just north of the Northgate Shopping Mall, reportedly of historical interest because it was the country's first covered mall), where I catch another bus that runs north all the way to the Edmonds Ferry Terminal. This is where I catch the ferry, usually the Walla Walla, the Puyallup or the Spokane. All told, I'm on the road or the water for an hour and forty five minutes. Lots of time to read, snooze or stare out the window.

The ferry ride is my favorite part of the trip – no surprise there. I get to be on the water throughout the year, observing the Sound in all its seasons. In the winter I get to see both sunrise and sunset; in the summers I enjoy the long daylight, the sun burning nearly overhead. The water's sometimes a little rough, but never as rough as it would be in the open ocean.

In fact, it's at its roughest when we cut through the wake of some other ship. There are lots of zippy high-powered speedboats, Coast Guard cutters, tugs, container ships and luxury liners. Sometimes boys on jet skis run alongside us, doing loops and swoops for our amusement. At other times, when security alerts are at their brightest, a Coast Guard vessel with machineguns mounted in its bow will march with us.

I've been most amused by the wildlife. Gulls, of course, are very common; they think the ferry has been provided for their convenience, perching all over it, gliding away if I approach the railing but returning to the same spot as I walk away. I've also seen many cormorants, apparently airing their wing pits on posts and stanchions. This is such a standard pose for them that there's a statue of a cormorant with wings outspread at the entrance to the little park in Edmonds that flanks the terminal. (I think that because of this, the cormorant is one of the many symbols of Christ.)

Other birdlife includes great blue herons, mallards, grebes, coots, wood ducks, buffleheads, kingfishers and the ubiquitous crows, pigeons and starlings. The starlings, or birds I think are starlings, mass together in December and fly in crazed flocks that look remarkably like computer simulations.

I helped rescue a kingfisher this past summer. I was walking around the upper deck before we left the Kingston side, and as I neared a sheltered area that had glass paneling on three sides but was open on the fourth, I heard a loud *thunk*. It was followed by the sound of surprised swearing.

I saw a large bird on the deck, with several young men near it. The young men, it turned out, were trying to shoo the bird out of the shelter, but the dazed and confused creature evaded them and flew beak-first into the thick glass again. I got closer to it, and saw the stocky body, long beak and crest of the kingfisher.

"We'll have to pick it up and move it, or it's just going to keep smashing into the window," I said to the guys. One of them offered to do so, but was naturally a little nervous about the damage the kingfisher could do to him. I offered to lend him my jacket to wrap around the bird.

It was unresisting as he lifted it and carried it a few feet, onto the unobstructed deck. The bird blinked a few times, shook its head a bit, and flew, with a distinct wobble, to some nearby stanchions. My jacket suffered no ill effects, and both the young man who carried the kingfisher and I felt very full of ourselves as Friends to Bird.

Twice now, the ferry has come across pods of orca trolling through the Sound. Once, the ferry had to come to a dead stop to let the pod by; the other time the pod was alongside and behind us. Somehow there is a touch of the utterly alien about these animals. They are huge, they live in an element that we can only visit for short periods, they have intelligence of some sort that we can't really comprehend in a degree we can't readily

measure. (What would constitute an IQ test for whales or dolphins?) We can't tell if they have emotions or culture, but some of us believe they do, others wish they did and yet others probably hope they don't.

I fill the trip by reading, napping, sipping morn-

ing coffee, walking around the upper deck, worrying about some file that had to sit on my desk overnight because I ran out of time or energy, and wondering about the inner life of killer whales. It's a nice life.✂

# The Old Cold War

## Or From Russia, with Lev

by Lesley Reece

**T**he only Russian I knew as a kid was my skating teacher. Every Saturday for a couple of years, I arrived at the rink, shivering in my ski jacket, and joined the huddle of freezing kids on a bench near the ice. As we were putting our skates on, Mrs. Chernovski would make her entrance, floating toward us in her ankle-length fur coat.

I was terrified of Mrs. Chernovski. She was probably about the size I am now, but when I was shorter, she loomed, enormous, scowling down at me through her black cat-eye glasses. Her brilliant henna hair always stayed in its bun—every hair, no matter how athletic she got. I thought it was probably afraid of her, too. From ten yards away, she shouted directions at us over the 101 Strings interpretation of Strauss. “Left! Turn! *Bennnd* the knees! No, Lesley, left, I said, left!”

My dad had a couple of friends from Yugoslavia, but beyond them, there weren't very many Soviets around. I heard my parents say the Soviets were behind an iron curtain.

The Soviets stayed there through the second cold war, too. That one was worse for me. I was older during the Reagan years, and I just knew old Plastic Hair would push the button. I made myself a t-shirt with a big target on it and the legend, “Drop Bomb Here.” I wanted to be a shadow on the sidewalk.

I kept going to work every day, though, and that's where I met a couple of other Russians, in 1983. A Russian fishing boat had been allowed to dock in Portland, where I lived, and the paper printed some pictures with an announcement that the sailors would be allowed shore leave.

The other clerk in the dime store where I worked was older than me, in her fifties. When I showed her the paper, she was incensed. “How can they let them do this?” she said.

“Do what?”

“Step on the land!” She stabbed a finger at the floor. “In *my* country!”

“Um...” I said, thinking of Dad's friends.

“You don't remember Stalin.” She wadded up the paper and threw it in the trash.

“Stalin isn't coming,” I said. “He's dead.”

She didn't talk to me for a while.

A few hours later, I was the only employee in the store. My coworker had gone to lunch, and there weren't many customers. When I heard the bell over the front door ringing, I thought, someone to wait on at last—until five very drunk men stumbled in. Great. What if they caused trouble? I didn't know what to do. The owner wasn't around. I figured I'd have to go next door to the liquor store and get some help. They, at least, were prepared for such an event.

I was ready to run when one of the men grabbed a Rubik's cube off the sale table in front. He held it over his head and said something to his friends—in a language I'd never heard before. I took a closer look at them. Plaid pants, platform shoes. They couldn't be from around here. And every one of them drunk as...a sailor.

“Omgod!” I said out loud. They all stopped and looked at me. “Hello,” said one of them.

“Uh, hi,” I said. They went back to taking Rubik's cubes off the table. The cube fad was over, but we'd goofed and ordered several cases just as it began to decline. We had dozens, on sale for ninety-nine cents each. Every sailor took an armful, and then they began lining up at the counter.

I rang them all up on the old manual register. It was a difficult process. American money all looks alike, and they couldn't understand that I didn't have change for five \$100 bills. At last I worked it out, with the help of the only one of them that spoke any English, the one who'd said hello. He was the shortest of them, about my size, with strange light blue eyes that reminded me of a husky dog's. He had a mean-looking scar down the left side of his face. How had he got that? A war, a knife fight? He must have seen me staring. He pointed to the scar and grinned, “Fish hook.”

Of course. They were fishermen. “Ouch,” I said.

When everyone's cubes were bagged up, he turned to me and said, "Thank you. Rubik's cube, we cannot get in Russia." Then they left.

I stood there wondering whether I had imagined it all. Then my coworker ran into the store. "Are you all right?" she said. "I saw them outside! Drunk! They were in here, weren't they?"

"I'm fine," I said. "They bought puzzles."

They liked puzzles, or maybe they had kids at home who liked them. Of course some of them probably had families, even the scary ones like Fish Hook. I'd never thought about that before.

The dime store closed ages ago, and I've moved here to Seattle. These days, I do administrative stuff at the University of Washington, for nuclear scientists who'd rather think about physics. It's not a bad gig. Plenty of brilliant physicists come to visit, even some famous ones who have equations and stuff named after them. I get a kick out of helping them use the copier and the email client.

It's hard to believe that almost 20 years have gone by since the day I sold Rubik's cubes to the sailors. Not because time passes, we all get older, blah blah, but because the world situation is so similar. The Enemy is back, and so are the nukes. So are some feelings I had hoped would stay in the past. In the last year, I've had some anxious days.

A couple of weeks ago, though, a visiting nuclear scientist arrived to give a lecture. Lev is an older guy from St. Petersburg. On the first day, he showed me his passport, which still gave his address as Leningrad. He pointed to the "СССР" on it and said, "See? S, S, S, R. Now, is Russian Federation." He shrugged. "Passport is old," he said. "Like me! Hee hee!" I liked him.

On the second day, he came to my desk and said, "Hello! How...are you *doing*?" and stood there grinning like gangbusters. I think he learned that from me on the first day, when I said it to him. But he'd come by for a purpose; he needed help with his Linux computer, so we went to his office. He said, "In Russia, all is...not like this." He waved his hand at the computer.

"It's a different system?" I said. He stood there for a second, and I could almost see his brain working as

he tried to find the English. Finally, he said, "Micro... soft. *Da*?"

"Windows," I said, nodding. "Bill Gates?"

His face lit up. "Yes, yes, Bill Gates!"

Over the following days, I helped Lev with the copier, and the phone, and the thing that makes boiling water for tea. He showed me where St. Petersburg was on the world map, and told me about the weather in Russia as compared to Seattle—apparently, we don't have "real winters." He's been a nuclear scientist for a very long time, he told me, but this was his first visit to the US.

On the day he gave his lecture, I heard a nice round of applause from the seminar room. Afterward, he came by the office. "Thank you," he said, "For your wonderful computer help, and help with other things."

"You're welcome," I said. Honestly, he'd been less trouble than some other visitors.

He reached into his bag. "I have a small gift for you," he said, producing a large bar of chocolate. "See," he said, pointing to the wrapper, "In Russian. You can read?" He grinned, then read it to me: "Dark... chocolate. Made in Russia."

"You're so kind," I said, "But you didn't have to do that." I tried to give it back to him.

"No, no," he said. "A small gift, for you. My helper." He closed my hands over the chocolate bar. "My friend."

He left the room. I grabbed a kleenex and pretended I'd had a sneezing fit. That's why my eyes were watering. Yeah.

Lev leaves tomorrow. I probably won't see him again; as he said, he's not young. He can remember Stalin, as well as Eisenhower, and Brezhnev, and Reagan, but he lived long enough to step on the land in my country.

Today, I pinned the chocolate bar wrapper up on my bulletin board. I added some Iraqi stamps I cut off an envelope that came in the mail. They're cool stamps, big ones, with yellow butterflies. I can't read the writing on them, but eventually someone will come visit who can read it to me. I know we have time. I can wait. ✨

## Me and *The Gleaners and I*

**T**he *Gleaners and I* (by Agnes Varda) is a documentary ostensibly about *gleaners*, people in France who follow along after the harvest and pick the stuff left behind. In the days before mechanized harvesting, they'd get a substantial portion of their year's grain this way. It used to be done by large groups of women, now it's done by smaller groups, if not

solitary people.

Nowadays, for crops like wheat, the harvesting is so efficient it's not worthwhile to glean the fields. But for potatoes, the gleaners go to where the farmers dump the tons of potatoes not commercially valuable -- they're too big, too small, or the wrong shape (heart shaped potatoes become a running symbol in the movie). All are perfectly



edible, they just don't fit the commercial requirements of produce stand potatoes. I was surprised these potatoes weren't being sold to packaged food manufacturers, but maybe France doesn't have as much of a packaged food industry as the US. Or, maybe the packaged food industry has strict size requirements so the potatoes can pass safely through the machines. I also wonder what happens to the potato harvest in the US. Tons dumped on the fields? Or potatoes not viable for produce markets sold to packaged food manufacturers? Varda, disturbed by the tons of potatoes in the fields, tells the soup kitchen in a neighboring town about it.

Most of the urban gleaners Varda interviewed were male. One guy, Alain, was particularly intriguing. He lived in a shelter in a Paris suburb. He'd come to the markets in the morning to help the farmers and sellers unload. Then he'd sell papers at train stops until the market closed. Then he'd go back to the market and wander around eating discarded produce. He's never gotten sick, either. He's a vegetarian, so he doesn't have the problem of eating meat gone bad. And with produce, it's easier to tell if it's edible. Anyway, Varda followed him back home and found out that he teaches reading to Senegalese and Malian (Francophone countries) immigrants.

As gleaning has become more urban, it's moved from food to objects. Varda talks with several artists who work with trash. One was a Russian man who builds towers out of junk. Most of the other artists were more formally trained. But they all had interesting stories to tell about finding their materials. How did they know one item out of a trash pile was worth their while to carry back to the studio? All the gleaning artists felt a resonance with their materials, they felt that *this* object in the trash pile had a story to tell, or an emotional potential that had yet to be found. The gleaning artists found the life in the objects they gleaned.

In France, the tradition of gleaning and the laws that support it date back to 1554. Are US fields gleaned? If not, is it because it's prevented from happening? What happens with the tossed-out produce at the Pike Place Market or the farmer's markets around Seat-

tle? What about potatoes from American farms? I know that most dumpsters in Seattle are chained and locked to keep people from rooting through them, that's probably true of any city in the US.

I got a partial answer to American rural gleaning a few weeks later. NPR was running a series on hunger in the US. The episode on Orange County quoted someone who managed the fields for a corporate-owned farm saying, "What can you do? You can't just open the fields to the poor people."

I remember, in the 80s, sitting in a downtown Minneapolis food court and reading an article about African famines in *Science News*. I looked up, wondering what would happen if the US were struck by famine. And then I noticed how much food was going into the waste bins, the pizza crust here, the couple fries left in the bag there, and how quickly it added up. I decided then that the rest of the world would have no sympathy for the US. The movie also made me aware of how much food I throw away that's likely perfectly edible.

*The Gleaners and I* apparently struck a chord with viewers around the world, because the DVD had *Two Years On*. In this feature, Varda followed up on some of the people she'd interviewed in the first film, and contacted some of the people who wrote her intriguing letters. She talked about how no film of hers has been nearly as popular, no film has had nearly as much of an effect.

For instance, she wanted to see an old painting of gleaners; the museum that owned it had it in storage, but they dragged it out for her to film. That resulted in the painting being restored and made the centerpiece of an exhibition of works that had been previously in reserve. Alain was still gleaning produce, still teaching immigrants French. But more people bought his papers, and a woman had introduced herself to him after seeing the first documentary. They described themselves as "companions". Most of the gypsies were out of the caravans and living in shelters and had mostly sobered up. Going from 10 to 15 liters of wine a day to only drinking a couple times a week is a vast improvement. The first film had spent some time on an African man and his Vietnamese friend. The follow up here was a little sad: Charlie, the Vietnamese guy, had died a couple months before Agnes Varda had looked them up again. The black guy now lived in a van.

Varda also showed many of the letters and artworks that she had received. From all over the world, people wrote to say that *The Gleaners and I* had changed their lives. Sometimes just that they knew they weren't the only found artist who would feel an emotional connection to one item in a heap, and take that item back to their studio. Other people had begun to work in shelters and food pantries. When I first watched it, I felt such a change in attitude come over me, too. I don't know how it'll be acted on, but I can say that this documentary has a power to reach into you and change your attitude to waste.✂

# DIME ENOUGH FOR CRIME

## OR, MEET THE BEADLES

BY STU SHIFFMAN

"Whom are you?" said he, for he had been to night school."

George Ade, (1866 - 1944), *Bang!*  
*Bang!: The Steel Box*, 1928

Sometimes the more fundamental of Doyleans and Sherlockians seem to think that Arthur Conan Doyle was the "onliest" father of the mystery story, that one fine day he struck his forehead and out leaped Mr. Sherlock Holmes, as Athena did from the head of the great god Zeus. Perhaps I am exaggerating a bit, but I have met a few among our scion who have no interest in Doyle without Holmes and lack the time-binding interest in the detective fiction that came before and close upon the Master's heels. Oh, they might know of the names of Poe's C. Auguste Dupin, Vidocq or Hawkshaw (from *The Ticket of Leave Man*) from references in and about the Sacred Writings. Maybe I'm just different -- I go mad for historical context, following the clues to histories of Queen Victoria's "little wars" and the Raj in India, Victorian true crime (Jack the Ripper and beyond), biographies of Conan Doyle and the works of the "Rivals of Sherlock Holmes".

Oh, I'm not even thinking of Gaboriau now or Sexton Blake but of the city cousins of the Wild West heroes (Ned Buntline's Buffalo Bill, Edward L. Wheeler's Deadwood Dick and their confreres) of the latter part of the nineteenth century. I'm not referring to the non-fictional Allan Pinkerton and his various volumes of memoirs, but the amazing adventures of dime novel detectives like Old Sleuth, Old Cap Collier, Old and Young King Brady and Nick Carter. I think that they prepared the fertile ground for the young people and adults who would be blown away by the character and adventures of Sherlock Holmes.

Old Sleuth had preceded Old Cap, for his first

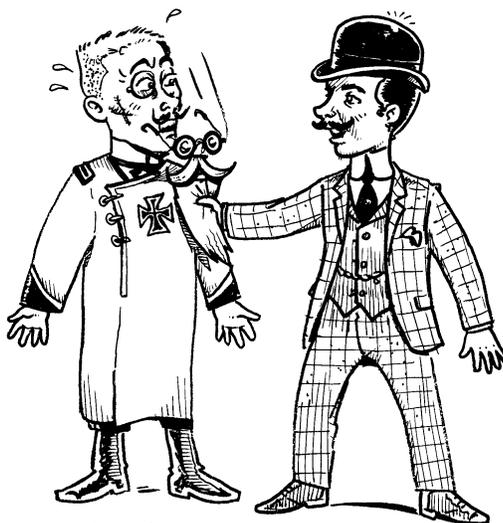
adventure, "Old Sleuth, the Detective" appeared in *The Fireside Companion* in 1872. He too was a master of disguise and, according to critic and essayist Edmund Pearson, "performs some exploits before which those of the Admirable Crichton and Baron Munchausen pale into insignificance." Eventually Old Sleuth had novels and a nickel library of his own.

Edmund Pearson, in his *Dime Novels; Or, Following an Old Trail in Popular Literature* (Little, Brown & Co., 1929 — thank you, Seattle Public Library!), wrote:

In brains, in powers of analysis, Cap Collier would not have had a chance against Sherlock Holmes, and still less again against Holmes' fat and lazy brother, Mycroft, whose intellect was as much greater as his physical strength was less than Sherlock's. But in action, in his extraordinary ability in a fight, and his love for all the hocus-pocus of disguise — sometimes assumed for the sheer joy of "dressing up" — he had the qualities that his boy readers loved.

Old Cap Collier was introduced in "Old Cap Collier; or, 'Piping' the New Haven Mystery" circa 1883 (the same year that Conan Doyle had "The Captain of the *Pole Star*" published), loosely based on a

true crime, and was soon the titular host of "Old Cap Collier Library," a popular nickel weekly published by Norman Munro. Old Cap Collier was a man without a history before he joined the detective force, and had many years of successful crime solving. I love mysteries set at world's fairs and would be fascinated to read "Infanta Eulalia's Jewels; or, Old Cap Collier Among the Crooks at the World's Fair" (*Old Cap Collier Library*, No. 498, 1893). Princess Eulalia and Prince Antonio of Spain are attending the



"Aha! Unmasked at last!!"  
~ Nick Carter saves the Day ~  
Shiffman

World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago and Eulalia's jewels disappear from her hotel suite. Naturally, Old Cap Collier, world-famous veteran detective, is also visiting the fair and is called in to investigate and solve the case. It seems like a number of current crimes of the century were fictionalized in the dimes: takes on the Ripper were featured in "The Whitechapel Murders, or, The Track of the Fiend" (*Old Cap Collier Library* no. 333, December 31, 1888), attributed to "Detective Warren," and in "Jack the Ripper: or, The Whitechapel Fiend in America" (*Old Cap Collier Library* no. 338, 1889), attributed to "Gilbert Jerome".

Irwin S. Cobb in his nostalgic "A Plea for Cap Collier" (in the *Saturday Evening Post* July 3, 1920 number; available as a Gutenberg e-text on the Web) dwells on the varied and positive pleasures given by Old Cap, Nick Carter and the rest of the vast regiment of manly heroes.

Sexton Blake's only American equivalent for longevity and number of recorded adventures was Street & Smith's detective Nick Carter ("the Little Giant"). Carter was like a Horatio Alger hero all grown up, a super-Boy Scout — physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight. At least Cap Collier would smoke a cigar or take a drink on occasion. Nick Carter, in the words of Pearson: "went everywhere, did everything, and was a universal hero. In a thousand years, he may very well have become a solar myth."

Nick Carter first appeared in "The Old Detective's Pupil; or, The Mysterious Crime of Madison Square," in the September 18, 1886 issue of the *New York Weekly*. In August 8, 1891, he appeared in the first number of the *Nick Carter Library*. The *New Nick Carter Library* appeared in 1897, with the latest marketing innovation — covers of four colors. The son of one of the founders of Street & Smith, Ormond G. Smith, provided John Russell Coryell with the outline of the first story. The first of many fathers of Nick Carter, Coryell wrote that first story and two sequels and then passed the character to a long succession of writers who would produce the many succeeding adventures. Frederic van Rensselaer Dey (1861-1922), writing under the "Chickering Carter" pseudonym, produced the most Nick Carter stories starting out The Nick Carter Library when it started in 1896. Nick Carter displayed his lack of personality, use of dogged coincidence in solving crime and magical powers of disguise into the pulp era, appeared on the radio show "Nick Carter; Master Detective," which ran from 1943 through 1955, in a series of 1940s comic books, movies, and in over 250 paperbacks from 1964 through 1990 in which he was transformed into the noxious Killmaster. What a man! Many of Carter's adventures were, by mutual contract between Street & Smith and Harmsworth in Great Britain, rewritten as Sexton Blake stories and vice versa.

There were detectives aplenty in these dime novels and nickel weeklies. Another was King Brady (and his son Young King Brady). Nero Wolfe's creator

Rex Stout wrote, on the back of the dust jacket for an anthology of Manning Coles' Tommy Hambledon stories (*The Exploits of Tommy Hambledon*, Doubleday, 1952): "The first detective story I ever read was a five-cent paper-bound affair—a daring and ingenious exploit of Old King Brady. That was on a Kansas farm half a century ago."

As you may deduce, I've been getting interested in a casual way in the days of the pulp magazines and their predecessors, the dime novels and nickel libraries (the story weeklies). Perhaps it's part of the classic divide between high and low culture, that the middle and upper classes should denigrate the literature marketed to the working masses, the "office boy" and "shop girl" that it was presumed were being ruined by schlock rather than uplifted by instructive legitimate books bound in boards. The "yellow-back novels" of the dime novels (penny-dreadfuls as they were called in England) provided plenty of action and adventure turned out by hundreds of writers for a public that cried out for more. Beadle & Adams, which had started out with dime song-books, soon found the market for cheap adventure literature, particularly in the James Fenimore Cooper mode (the first in June, 1860 with *Malaeska: the Indian Wife of the White Hunter* by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, followed by the super-success that summer of *Seth Jones; or, The Captives of the Frontier* by Edward Ellis), and made a fortune with sales during the Civil War years and many years after. Edmund Pearson, in *Dime Novels*, writes that "The Civil War was a fortunate event for the Beadles. Their books went to the soldiers by the million." Apparently, the Beadle dime novels were in great demand when Union and Confederate pickets exchanged goods between the lines, and many blood-stained copies were found on the dead.

Ah, if Erastus Flavel Beadle and his partners had known what they would start. They attracted many imitators of their salmon-colored books, including Norman Munro and Street & Smith (who eventually became one of the biggest publishers of pulpwood magazines by the 1930s). That just meant that the number of redskins (or owlhoots and other villains) killed per novel went up in competition. They were parodied with nostalgia by many in the years to come, when their time was long over, by humorists such as George Ade (*Bang! Bang! a Collection of Stories Intended to Recall Memories of the Nickel Library Days When Boys Were Supermen and Murder a Fine Art: A Collection*, Sears & Co., 1928) and Stephen Leacock ("Heroes and Heroines" in his *The Hohenzollerns in America*, 1919, as he did Sherlock Holmes in "Maddened by Mystery; or, The Defective Detective," *Nonsense Novels*, London: Lane, 1911).

As certain groups do today with computer games and internet use, all sorts of social problems were blamed on the evil influence of the dime novels (actually a very moralistic literature but with more gunfights than Horatio Alger) as they have in the years since on pulp magazines, comic books and television. John Wilkes

Booth was accused of being a reader of dime novels. True or not, he was also a devotee of William Shakespeare. At the time of the notorious trial in 1874 of sadistic murderer Jesse Pomoroy, it was suggested that he had been prompted to his crimes by cheap "literature of the dime novel type". This hypothesis was dashed by the revelation that the accused had never read such fiction. That annoying anti-vice crusader, Anthony Comstock (the original Comstock load), worried in his *Traps for the Young* (1883) that impressionable young readers would take the "pernicious" characters and stories as life role models; and referred to it as "Vampire Fiction" in an 1891 article of the same name in *North American Review*. Elite author William Dean Howells expressed the same fears. Thomas Travis wrote, in his *The Young Malefactor: A Study in Juvenile Delinquency, Its Causes and Treatment* (1908!), that "It is not unknown to find counterfeiting and even murder springing from bad reading... a child of ten... held up another and robbed him of three dollars. The robber had read dime novels from the age of seven. He was particularly interested in Jesse James, and knew more of him than of Washington." Oh please, the Dr. Fredric Wertham of the Edwardian Era! It was ever thus, I suppose, and will continue past the days when we will download the Sacred Writings and the latest *Baker Street Journal* directly to chip implants.

#### Additional reference:

I recommend the amazing Dime Novels & Penny Dreadful website (<http://www.sul.stanford.edu/depts/dp/pennies/home.html>) at Stanford University Libraries for further information. The Syracuse University Library holds the Street & Smith Preservation and Access Project, with website at <http://libwww.syr.edu/digital/guides/s/StreetAndSmith/index.html>. *The House of Beadle & Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels*, by Albert Johannsen is the definitive history of the genre's originator and may be found and read online complete at: <http://libws66.lib.niu.edu/badndp/contents2.html>. A webpage with information on *Dime Novel Roundup* may be found at <http://members.tripod.com/ddj9999/girlser/dnru.html>.

Billman, Carol - *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate: Nancy Drew, The Hardy Boys & The Million Dollar Fiction Factory* (Ungar, 1986) - fascinating book about Edward Stratemeyer and his empire, a heir of the dime novels. Founded in

1905, the Syndicate was responsible for 150 different series in its 77 year history.

Bleiler, E.F., editor, *Eight Dime Novels* (Dover, 1974) - includes a King Brady, Secret Service Detective story and a Nick Carter.

Bleiler, E.F., editor, *Treasury of Victorian Detective Fiction* (Scribner's, 1979)

Cain, James M. - "Man Merriwell," *Saturday Evening Post*, June 11, 1927, pp. 45-51 - the author reviews impact on him of the fictional Yale hero.

Nick Carter, *Detective: The Adventures of Fiction's Most Celebrated Detective* (Dell, 1965), introduction by Robert Clurman

Pearson, Edmund - *Dime Novels; Or, Following an Old Trail in Popular Literature* (Little, Brown & Co., 1929)

Reynolds, Quentin - *The Fiction Factory or From Pulp Row To Quality Street* (Random House, 1955) - a history of Street & Smith, well-illustrated but said to contain many errors,

Steinbrunner, Chris and Penzler, Otto - *Encyclopedia of Mystery & Detection* (McGraw-Hill, 1976)

Sullivan, Larry E. & Schurman, Lydia Cushman, editors, *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books and Paperbacks* (The Haworth Press, 1996) - a collection of essays from papers presented at the Library of Congress symposium of the same name held in 1995. Includes J. Randolph Cox on Nick Carter and Leona Rostenberg on Louisa May Alcott and her pseudonym, among other contributions of interest.

2/1/03 ✨





Jerry and I made a small bargain — I'd get the grinder out and extrude more fanzine reviews for Littlebrook, while he reviewed a handful of zines for Randy, Carl and I at *Chunga*. He's torqued-off at me now, because he got his reviews in a few days ago, and he's wondering if I'm EVER going to do mine. And not one word of appreciation for letting him pick his titles first! This is not a small thing, considering the post-Novacon surge has come and gone, leaving me with relatively few new arrivals. I disqualify all the fanzines with my own material in them, all the fanzines I help distribute to American readers, all the fanzines that denounce me and call for my enforced gafia, AND the titles Jerry chose to review — so what am I going to do, review fourteen issues of *Vanamonde*?

Happily, Jerry chose to stay away from the two fanzines that immediately spring to my mind from the last quarter of 2002. The first of these is *Banana Wings* #18, edited by Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer. I can think of no greater praise than to say I quite wish I'd published this fanzine, it seems to work in every possible way, and features contributors that appear to be working at the top of their form. This was the second issue of *Banana Wings* to appear in less than six months, and I can only hope that they will be able to maintain that pace.

I'm impressed by the variety of extremely distinctive voices in *BW*, and the artful arrangements that Claire and Mark make of them. I'm crogged at the insurgent impact of the two page-spread twinning Max's "Greying Fandom" with Cardinal Cox's "How Not to Become A Peer Of The Realm." Max is a wonderfully

effervescent writer, taking on the mantle of the snarling young neo with great verve. Never mind that our definition of "young" has become rather alarmingly elastic, I see Max as the kind of fan that can energize a group of fans toward great or at least entertaining things, like fanzines, conventions, etc. But I look forward to lasting another 20 years or so in fandom, so I can see Max confronted with lines like "Sorry grandma, you've got to drop off the radar to make room for the new," in 2025.

But what makes it even more fun to read Max's piece, is that it follows an extended exchange between Greg Pickersgill and Jean-Henri Holmberg about the impending death of fanzines and the fandom they represent. It doesn't undermine Greg and/or Jean-Henri, because their arguments are so well-reasoned and worded that you can't help but agree with some of their conclusions, too. And their item follows a piece in which Mark tries to explain what being a fan is to a colleague without using the word "fan," which itself follows a collection of strong, thoughtful fanzine reviews by Mike Abbott. I mean, quite honestly, pages 4 to 19 of *BW* #18 constitute just about the best debate on the nature of fannishness that I've read in 25 years in fandom. It filled me with the urge to put on a beanie and immediately begin work on a mimeographed one-shot.

This would be genius enough for most, but *BW* is also chock-a-block with sercon, genre-related writing, as well as pure aesthetics, like Claire's "Architecture explained through the medium of interpretive dance," which actually attempts to explain her emotional response to contemporary chamber music. Andy Sawyer's

“The Enchanted Duplicator and other fables of fandom,” is a meticulously referenced and ultimately very sympathetic essay on fandom’s passion for self-mythology. Mark’s “The Advance of Civilization,” and Tanya Brown’s “Remembering Dragons” were also very strong pieces with reference to actual science fiction.

A lot of this material would be very much at home in a mainstream or commercial magazine, and I’d probably go to press very happily right there, but Claire and Mark add two more completely unique and wonderful items that could only appear in a fanzine. Steve Stiles’ comic strip, titled “Steve Stiles, Martyr,” is really funny and disquieting at the same time, and Ron Bennett’s short “Left on the Shelf: Personal Experiences of the Public Library” is equally amusing. Neither has specific reference to fans or fandom; yet somehow, I can’t imagine them being published in any forum except a fanzine.

*Banana Wings* is an intense, dense fanzine; it does make demands of the reader; it refrains from crowd-pleasing idiocy and has a challenging lack of cartoons. All that being said, it would be a superb choice for a best fanzine Hugo, if that has not been rendered redundant by Claire’s Nova award.

From the warm afterglow induced by *BW*, we turn to something equally inconceivable outside the twilight world of fandom, where shadows of hero-worship and ambition still flicker in the flames of real science fiction careers. *Bento*, edited by David Levine and Kate Yule is typically charming and ephemeral, but issue #13 issue tips the scales at 36 pages, and describes major events in the editor’s lives, especially as relates to David’s burgeoning career as an sf writer. Their ongoing use of sub-digest sized layout is absolutely no handicap at this point, and *Bento* is far more worth reading than numerous “full-size” fanzines. Alas, *Bento* #13 also left me profoundly depressed and questioning my interest in science fiction itself.

The central event in question is David’s participation in the Writers of the Future program, sponsored by Bridge Publications, the publishing subsidiary of the Church of Scientology. The cover carries the title “David and Kate go to Hollywood”; David won second place in the 2001 Writers of the Future contest, which entailed the “prize” of

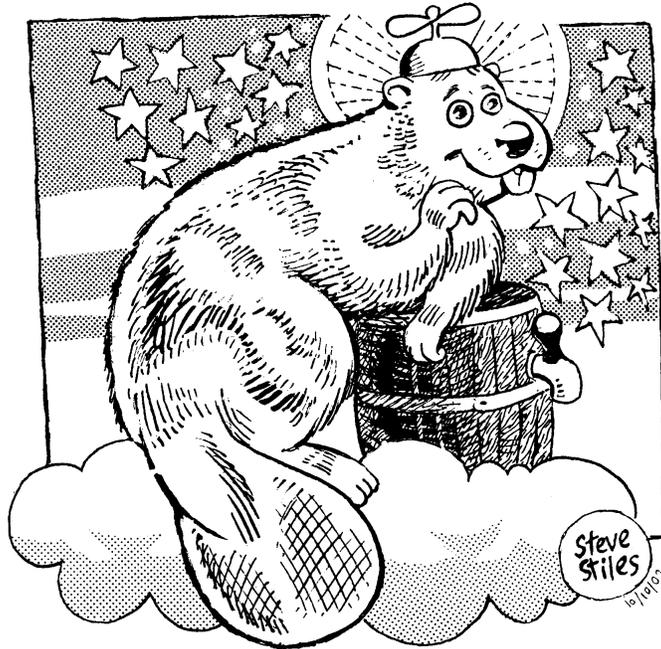
a week-long workshop with 16 other top contest participants, taught by novelist Tim Powers, and held in the heart of Tinseltown. David chose to focus on the instruction and ideas provided by Powers, which would be valuable in any context. But he is careful to avoid offering any moral judgment of workshop procedures such as the assignment of a “twin” or monitor to follow every student through the week of the class.

I ought to admit that I’m not open-minded about Dianetics or the Church of Scientology. I’m sorry to resort to hyperbole, but I see them as a baldly evil phenomenon. The church’s participation in criminal coercion and extortion are a matter of public court record, and many, many people are willing to testify that their methods have encompassed far worse. I personally feel that Dianetics and Scientology are a predatory embarrassment to fandom and the science fiction subculture, and the less we have to do with them, the better. My opinions may be particularly strong, and I may be rather florid in stating them, but I think it is safe to say that most science fiction fans are uncomfortable with the methods Scientology employs, and openly contemptuous of the cult status of L. Ron Hubbard.

The fact that David, Tim Powers, and a large number of people I genuinely respect as artists see this

## ROSCOE:

Roscoe incarnate takes on the form of a Beaver, symbolizing the mystic revelation that All True Fen are busy as beavers. His holy promise to those faithful is that of The Reality of Fanac, the Hope of Egoboo, and the Promise of Bheer; the one thing able to deny these rewards to fen is the Evil Principle, Oscar, represented by an evil muskrat. Even so, the influence of Oscar is ever fought by the Two Mighty Front Teeth and Sweeping Tail of Roscoe. (John-Henri Holmberg)



and choose to take the money and the attention Bridge offers anyway, is disturbing. But this is reality: Bridge offers very generous compensation for its instructors, and a powerful kick-start to the careers of its students. No one else is lining up to offer a similar deal. No one else offered to fly David to L.A., and put him in a room full of famous people, where Sean Astin asked for his autograph.

Give David credit for remaining unmoved by the blandishments of Dianetics itself, and his impression of the hysteria about Hubbard is as jaundiced as common courtesy will allow. I'm not sure how much money is really involved in the program, but I don't know if any amount could make me read essays on writing by Hubbard and say that I found value in them. Were I placed in a similar situation, I think I would have concentrated on the glamour and cleavage around me, much as David did. And we can keep telling ourselves: The work is what matters. But what does it say about the work that the award winners were encouraged to thank L. Ron for making their win possible? Does it matter that one's pursuit of truth and art and good things ends up serving the needs of such a great, stinking lie?

Ten years of listening to Joseph Nicholas hammer at the dialectical impossibility of interstellar empire did not dim my ardor for the stfnal strain, nor could decades of pallid sharecropping, nihilist technoporn that passed for cyber-innovation, or even the inexplicable popularity of Lois McMaster Bujold blunt my enthusiasm for speculative fiction. But David's wonderful adventure in Los Angeles has served to make me question just what I am doing by being a science fiction reader. Knowing that so many writers, editors and illustrators have received money, patronage and popularity directly as a result of their participation in a program that directly enhances the status of the Church of Scientology feels just a little like finding out your family are all pod people. But no one else interested in making that level of investment in science fiction — no one else has the cash reserves to produce a disaster like *Battlefield Earth* and just keep on without breaking financial stride. I'm not

angry or disappointed with David for making his choice — I'm angry and disappointed that there is *no other* intelligent choice to make, not if you want to make a living and tell your stories to the audience they deserve.

Because David is very, very good, and his stories deserve to be read by many more people than will ever get to see *Bento*. David and I are Clarion West graduates -- I think it helps to be named "David" at Clarion, as I recall the messianic David Marusek sold a story to *Playboy* out of the workshop in my year. Since his workshop in 2000, David (Levine!) has been on a steep curve of success, also winning the James White Award for his delightful story "Nucleon." How can I possibly not read his numerous prize-winning stories now and to come? And everything else he writes? This makes my head hurt.

There is other material in *Bento* #13, funny, sweet and intelligent stuff by Kate, and correspondent Anne Marie Merritt, and the glyptodont cartoon by Julie-Morgan Scott made me laugh, and you don't see a funny glyptodont every day. But those were fleeting pleasures in comparison to the days of muttering and resigned sighs which David's experiences inspired in me. Powerful things continue to arrive in small packages.

#### Fanzines Reviewed:

*Banana Wings* #18, edited by:

Claire Brialey, 26 Northampton Road,  
Croydon, Surrey CR0 7HA, UK  
& Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road,  
Croydon, Surrey CR0 6JE, UK.  
Presumably available for the usual.

*Bento* #13, edited by:

David Levine & Kate Yule,  
1905 SE 43rd Avenue,  
Portland, OR 97215, USA.  
Available by "Editorial Whim or by asking nicely."

1/26/2003✂



### Things you'll like

*New Routes in America*, by Peters Roberts, is still available from Jerry Kaufman, 3522 N.E. 123rd Street, Seattle, WA 98125. Only \$10 postpaid to be hurled back into the excitement and terror of Peter's 1977 TAFF trip to America. All profits to TAFF, natch.

It's no newsflash that Randy Byers has won TAFF this year. If you want to know more about Randy's background, style, experiences and fannish philosophy, you should get *Wassamatta U.: The Fannish Education of Randy Byers*. You'll be amused and mystified. Write to Randy at 1013 North 36th Street, Seattle, WA 98103 or rbyers@u.washington.edu and ask for a copy.

# An Uneventful Day

## by Randy Byers

*[In 1966, my father took a teaching job on Yap Island, in what was then called the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands and is now called the Federated States of Micronesia. We lived there for four years, from ages six to ten for me. In 1998, we all went back for a ten day visit, and the visit induced a mid-life crisis in my brother, Lonnie, who returned in February 2002 with his wife, Terry, their two sons, Ryan and Cody, and our niece, Jolie, for a six month stay. I joined them for two and half months. Many people on Yap looked after us, but our mainstays were Theo Thinnifel and his wife Antonia. The following is adapted from the journal I kept while I was out there.]*

**April 2, 2002**

**T**here have been a couple of times when I have stared out to sea from the front yard and found myself feeling that I have lived on this island my entire life. Everything feels perfectly familiar. The jungle-covered hills, the grassy hills, the mangrove mudflat swamps, the palm-lined shores, the tin houses hiding in the trees. The smells, too — the rot of the jungle, of the mudflats and the sea, of moldy paper and mildewed plywood.

More often, however — and increasingly this past week — I have felt friendless and homesick. I miss good beer, good coffee, and movie theaters. I miss the Big Time and the Pacific Inn and the Elysian. I miss my garden and watching the townhouses go up across the alley.

I don't have any of my own friends here, except for my family. Lonnie and Terry have Theo and Antonia. Theo is my friend, too, but mostly because I'm Lonnie's brother. He and Lonnie have a lot in common, especially the love of fishing. Whenever I have reminded Theo of our childhood friendship, he has said, "I'm sorry, but I only remember Lonnie, maybe because he was older." Makes sense to me. The only thing I remembered about Theo before we came out here in '98 was his name and the fact that we played together for a while. I'm not sure I even remembered that or whether I was reminded of it by my parents at some point.

Jolie has made friends with some Anglo twenty-somethings, particularly Chris, Tommy, and Kathy. Ryan and Cody have Theo's boys — and Marney and John from up the road.

Okay, so I've been a little bored lately. The first few weeks here were eventful and exciting, what with Yap Day, the typhoon, the dance at Gachpar, and the

turtle hunt. Since then, we've settled into more of a routine, which has laid bare my lack of options — or rather has exposed my lack of a plan. Other than snorkeling with Jolie and writing in this journal, there isn't much activity that I originate.

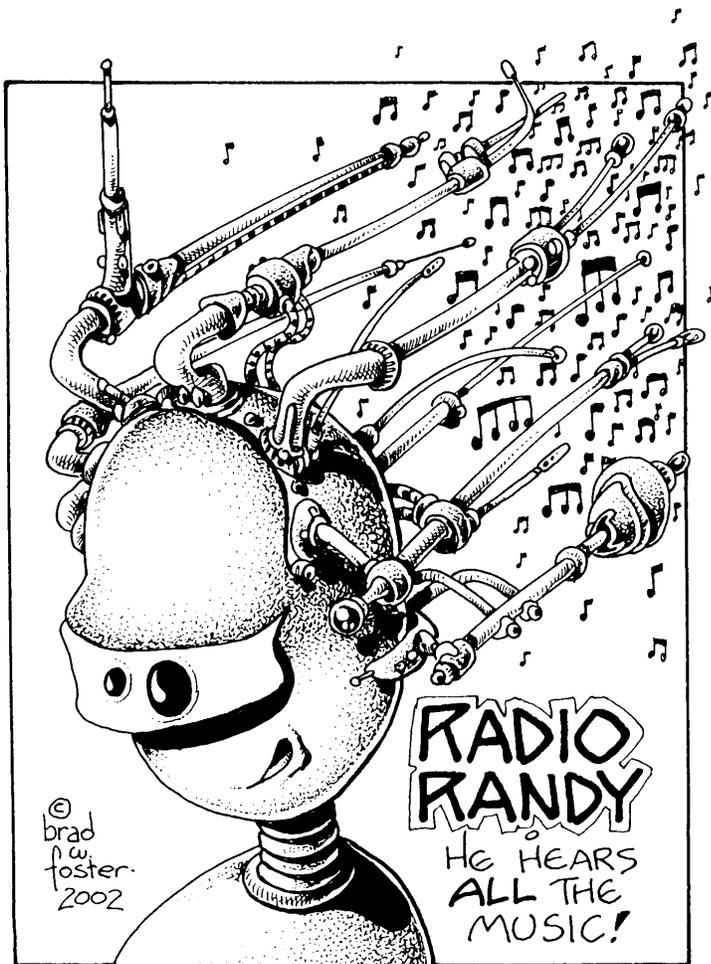
Whine, whine, whine?

I feel restless. Last Thursday I wanted to go to the computer lab at Alaw, but it wasn't open to the public until 1:00. By that time, the car would be needed to pick up people at school. So I gave up on the computer lab and went into town anyway to run some errands and see what I could see. I picked up the mail and filled the gas tank, which made me feel useful. There wasn't much else to do, so I decided to drive to Gagil to look for the beautiful sandy beach that we went to several times in '98. I left the milk purchase for later, since I didn't want it getting hot on the drive.

I drove north into the countryside of Tomil. The red clay hills reminded me of Theo's comment that if you look at a collection of zoris outside a door and any of them is crusted with red clay, you know that somebody from Tomil or Gagil is inside. The sights along the road were familiar from the drive to Maap over the weekend. There was the muddy complex with the electronics repair shop, store, and open-air pool hall — the Yapese equivalent of a strip mall. I had a fleeting desire to check out the pool hall, maybe shoot a couple of games, but it was hard to imagine doing so as a stranger and a foreigner. There, further on, was the Seventh Day Adventist school, where you *Enter to Learn* and *Leave to Serve*. There were two kids by a tetherball pole and one sitting alone in a *koyeeng*. It has always appeared abandoned before. Was it possible that they only had three students? But when I passed on the way back, the yard was full of kids.

Past the exit to Maap I came to the Marine Sciences campus of the College of Micronesia — former site of the US Coast Guard station back when I was a boy. There were people preparing for a drill of some sort. On my return I saw that they had started a big fire in an open concrete structure and were practicing putting it out.

Beyond that was the Yap Sports Complex that was built for the FSM Games and has otherwise apparently been largely unused. Some of the schools in the area will be using it for graduation exercises. The gate on the high fence was actually open as I drove past, and I saw a pickup parked inside. Probably a maintenance man.



It becomes a dirt road at this point. No villages in sight. I passed a big utility truck and exchanged waves with the driver in the middle of Bumfuck, Yap (you laugh!) The road narrowed, and I hoped I wouldn't run into any more big trucks. Here were signs of cultivation and habitation. The atmosphere was decidedly more intimate, more private, and I began to feel like an interloper. Did any of this look familiar from previous trips? Vaguely. I passed the turnoff for Gachpar in both directions without spotting it.

Here were houses and a school. The kids watched me drive past, without waving. A car pulled over to let me by, or perhaps to park, and the woman at the wheel watched me drive by. I feel watched in the villages unless I'm with a Yapese. People study you.

I rolled down to the seaside and saw the church, but didn't remember seeing it before. There was a nice house on the grounds, made of concrete blocks and raised up on pylons. I turned onto the coral road that runs along the beach. This looked more familiar, with hedges and old stone platforms and stone money lying flat on the ground. This village is called Wanyan. There are some nice houses on the beach, many on pylons, probably as protection against storms. There is evidence that the typhoon hit this area — on the eastern side of the

island — pretty hard. Most of these nice houses are made of concrete blocks. I couldn't identify the one where Steve the hydrologist lived in '98, where there was a joint party for a retiring Filipino carpenter and for Dad. I did not remember the nice wood house that looked like it was pulled from a suburban tract in the US. I vaguely remembered the traditional Yapese house with the stone money<sup>4</sup>, obviously uninhabited and displaying a sign that said you cannot take photos without getting permission from Pitmog, with his phone number listed below.

Everywhere, debris from the storm. A group of older men sit fatly in a roadside *koyeeng* and watch me drive past. A woman drives past without looking at me. Two girls walk along the side of the road and do not look. Was it really this far? The road is so narrow that I'm not sure two cars could get past each other, but there's always somehow a way. There aren't, however, any more cars.

Finally, I found the old beach. As reported, it is not what it once was. The diving platform and the walkway that led to a covered seating area over the water have disappeared completely. The roofs of the little beachside cabanas have come off and are sitting in the old sand volleyball pit. The stand where they sold beer and pop is more or less intact, although closed up. There is nobody around. The area appears abandoned.

I pulled into an open space by the hedge and parked. I walked down to the beach. It's still a nice, sandy beach, which is something that Sunset Park doesn't have. The water looks clean and clear. The deep hole where Jolie saw the shark looks much closer than I remembered — much closer than the holes at Sunset Park. Seabreeze Beach, it's called. It seemed like a relic from bygone days. That source of past pleasure can no longer be accessed.

They want money if you use the beach. There wasn't anybody around to take money. Were eyes watching to see if I jumped in the water? Later, Lonnie reminded me that you pay at the little store down the road. I hadn't even noticed it as I drove past, but I saw it on the return. A woman was stepping out and looked to be closing up. She gave me a stern look as I drove by. After Lonnie's reminder, I wondered if she had been on her way to ask me for money.

Back at the main road, I looked at the church from the front. There is a mural above the door. Christ is crucified in mid-air. On either side, Yapese men are offering gifts — the nativity and the crucifixion rolled into one. The painting is like a primitivist Dali.

I drove back to Colonia and ate lunch at Pathways. John and Madeline were sitting out front with Jimmy California. I chatted with them a bit. John has

“cousins” who go to the University of Washington. One of them has been going to school for ten years and keeps stopping to make money. He was laid off from Alaska Airlines a year ago.

I ordered the fish and black beans special, and it was delicious. (“Filipino food,” the Filipino waitress told me proudly when I praised the meal afterwards.) I read Barrington Bayley’s delightful pulp science fiction novel, *The Grand Wheel*. A couple of men sat down at a table behind me. They were joined by a woman.

“Did you see that man out front?” she asked her companions. “He looks like a native, and I guess he is. But he knows all about [she named a California city which I recognized but can’t remember], where I’m from. He lived there, and he worked for AT&T.”

Ah, that would be Jimmy California. I smiled smugly at her ignorance. Why would she think he was a native after she heard his stateside accent?

One of the men began to talk about a problem he was having. I caught only snatches of the conversation, but it became clear that they were divers (as almost all tourists out here are) and that he was suffering from an unknown malady. I never caught what the symptoms were. He was trying to decide whether to stay on Yap or try to catch the late plane out.

“Ultimately,” the other man said, “it boils down to how badly you want to dive.”

“Oh, I want to dive,” the first man assured, man to man, let there be no mistake about my commitment, “but ...”

I didn’t hear the rest. A strange trio. What was the relationship? Why the need to impress?

I took the milk back to the house, relaxed for a bit, then drove to the school to see the play that Jolie’s class was performing. It was “Rumpelstiltskin,” and Jolie had grown increasingly despairing about it as performance day approached. The boy playing Rumpelstiltskin, Frank, had not memorized his lines. Nobody was into it. Nobody understood what was going on in the play.

It was pretty funny. Nobody was able to deliver their lines naturally. Frank and the girl who played the other lead had to read their lines from the script. Both of them also read the stage directions — to themselves, not aloud, but it still led to gaping pauses before each bit of hot dramatic action. Some of the intonations were priceless. Every occurrence of the word “oh” was declared with a distinct and peculiarly Yapese form of surprise, even when the whole phrase was actually “oh, well” or “oh, no.”

But everybody was having fun, including the kids in the audience. The props and costumes were quite clever, especially the bird wings made out of palm fronds. They had also worked out some funny routines, such as the one for Rumpelstiltskin and his Shadow to express foot-stomping, falling-down rage. That one, however, was tricky and required a pause for them to get in synch. The second time they tried it, it was taking so

long to get in synch that the kid who played the prince came over and tripped Frank from behind. Frank went down and pulled the prince’s royal robe off on the way. All the kids hooted with laughter.

It was a disneyfied version of the story. Rumpelstiltskin is only lonely for a friend, and in the end the prince and the peasant-princess invite him to live with them and be their child’s playmate. Hooray, hooray! I wondered if it would have helped the kids to translate the play into a traditional Yapese context. Rumpelstiltskin would be a spirit of the jungle or a warlock, the girl would be a commoner, the prince a high caste chief. There I got stuck because I wasn’t sure what the implications of intercaste marriages were. Maybe the girl wouldn’t need to spin gold from straw, but would rather need to weave stone money from dried pandanus fronds. After the marriage, the two families would go through a series of ritual exchanges of food and goods, with different levels of each lineage line providing its relevant part in a carefully calibrated sequence of visits that lasts for days, while Rumpelstiltskin stands off to the side and loses the plot.

So went an uneventful day.✂

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*Department of Aesthetic Declarations:* “Not all the stories were to my taste, but even the ones I liked were all well written.”

Don D’Amassa, “Critical Mass”, *Chronicle*, February/March 2003.

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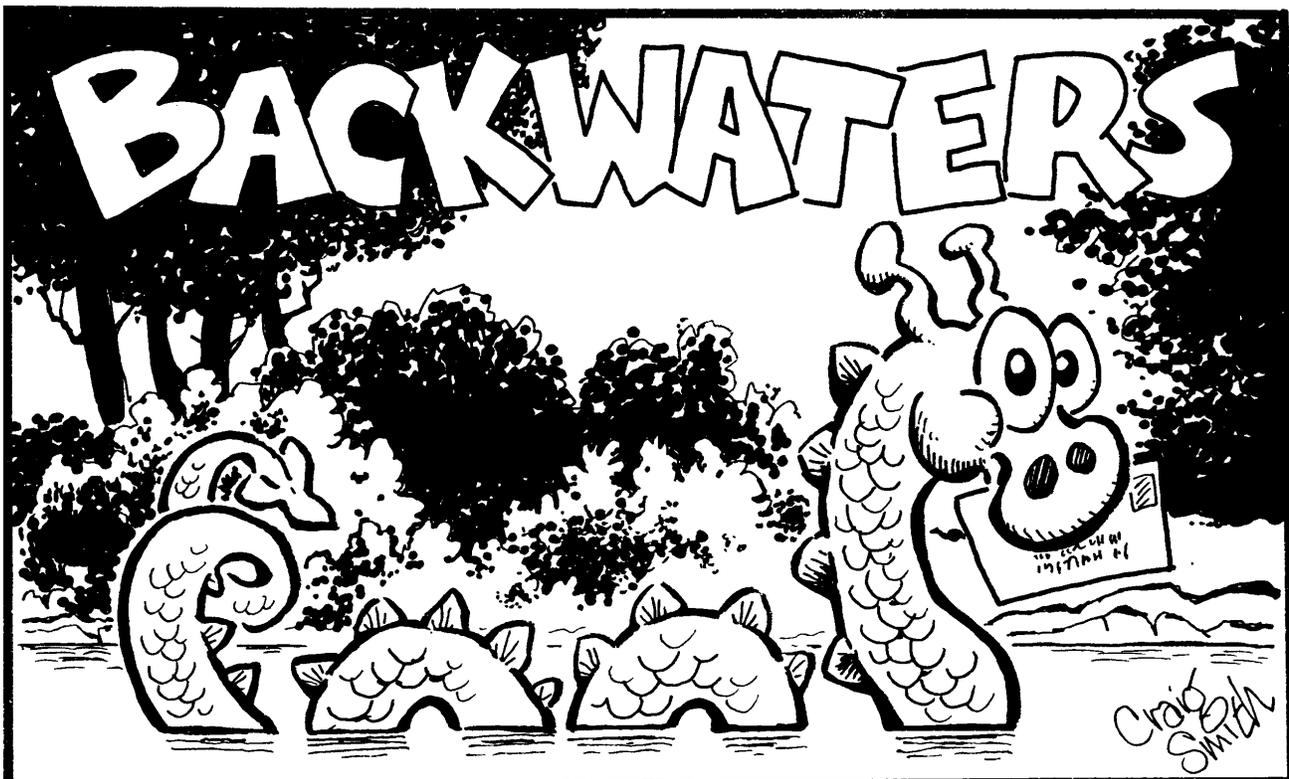
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### Ray Nelson

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Loved “Littlebrook” but loving something doesn’t mean one can think of something to say about it. Actually the only thing I can take issue with is the thing I liked the best, the essay “Bewitched, Bothered & Bemildred”. When you criticize the “Normal Again” episode of “Buffy the Vampire Slayer”, I think you’re missing the fundamental assumption on which the whole series is based, namely the assumption of alternate realities. There is a reality in which Buffy is a superhuman heroine, but there is also a reality in which Buffy is a catatonic schizophrenic. Even though the two realities leak into each other, they are not mutually exclusive. There is also an alternate reality in which Buffy’s friends are vampires, and one in which they are dead. When Buffy died, she went to a place where all her friends were safe, as she said. This could not have been heaven, as Christians might assume, because Buffy’s friends are still in the reality Buffy just left & thus far from being safe. In fact, making assumptions about the Buffyverse based on Christian beliefs can be very misleading. For example, Christian, Jewish & Moslem theologies are firmly monotheistic, whereas I don’t believe Buffy has ever spoken of God in the singular. With Buffy the nearest things to God ever mentioned are the polytheistic “Powers That Be”. We have actually met one of the many gods of the Buffyverse, Glory, apparently the reigning deity in some Hell universe who has been marooned here. Joss Whedon has not betrayed you. You just didn’t pay close attention, & the Buffy show bears paying close attention to. Whedon has long ago passed

the mild sort of reality shifts we saw occasionally in “Star Trek”. Whedon has moved on into the territory known as Philip K. Dick Land, a place I have visited myself in my books “Blake’s Progress” & “Timequest”. Really, the gate to Philip K. Dick Land has been open ever since the physicist Robert Oppenheimer propounded the Principle of Complementarity, according to which a photon can be both a particle (something with edges) & a wave (something without edges) at the same time. Since then the excluded middle of Aristotelian logic has ceased to be excluded & has instead insinuated itself into our culture so quietly it can be the cornerstone of a prime-time television show without a died-in-the-wool science-fiction fan noticing.

### Lee Hoffman

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In what I’ve read so far, your quote from Peter about how fans should be recognizable as such reminded me: The night before the Nolacon (1951) was to start, a bunch of us early arrivals were wandering around the streets of the French Quarter when a young man came up on us and asked if we were there for the SF convention. We admitted we were. He admitted he was also one, and joined us.

### Joseph Nicholas

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Another Buffy fan! In the UK, the sixth series has been screened on Sky digital satellite, but as we

don't have digital or cable TV we (well, me — Judith isn't terribly fascinated by young women in mini-skirts kicking vampires under the chin a lot) have to wait for it to appear on BBC2, which has shown all the previous series. (I assume it's bought the rights to the sixth; there'll be an outcry if it hasn't.) The fifth series ended its run in the spring; the channel is currently repeating the second; I wait to see how the writers will bring Buffy back from the dead (which of course generates another inconsistency vis-à-vis Slayers: her successor should already have taken over her duties). Your comments on the sixth series naturally give away some plot developments (I'll hazard a guess that one of the three techno-nerds is Jonathan), including the death of Tara. You say that Amber Benson, the actress, never got the billing she deserved, but I don't think her character was ever really essential — indeed, as written, Tara was a bit of drip. She's Willow's lesbian girlfriend! She's a fellow Wiccan! But, er, what does she actually \*do\*, exactly? Apart from a few gestures in the direction of possible evil-in-disguise in the fourth series — sabotaging one of Willow's spells, speaking for the Primal Slayer in Buffy's dream combat in the concluding episode — even the writers had trouble working that out. Dropping her resolves that dilemma — and perhaps demonstrates once again that, as far as American television is concerned (I read this recently, and I wish I could remember where so that I could quote the passage), lesbians cannot be shown as enjoying successful and enduring relationships. Male homosexuals are acceptable, provided they're depicted as non-threatening and comedic — all the way from Billy Crystal's role in Soap in the late seventies to whatshisname in Will And Grace today — but not female. (Television can't accept them even in real life: look at how the careers of Ellen Degeneres and Anne Heche nose-dived into oblivion after they came out.)

What surprises me about your response to the later chapters of Peter Roberts's TAFF trip report is that you still have the detailed notes of your own travels from twenty years ago on which to rely — indeed, that you had the time to make detailed notes while actually travelling! I rely (I always have relied) entirely on memory, reasoning that if an event is memorable enough then I'll recall it years later — whereas if it isn't memorable then no amount of notes will substitute, because they won't mean anything. But then I have to rely on memory, because I can't be bothered to keep a diary or personal journal — all that writing at the end of the working day, just for starters. No thank you! (And there in a nutshell is the reason why I'll never make the move into the on-line world of blogging and whatnot.) It probably helps that all the travelling we do now is of the tourist kind, so that when I come to assemble the album of the holiday in question — photographs, maps, leaflets, entry tickets, invoices, etc. — I have the guide books to refresh my memory on points of detail, such as when a particular building was constructed or an archaeological site first occupied.

## **Robert Lichtman**

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Like you, I enjoyed Peter Roberts' TAFF report; even though he was someone who came and went (so far as his active period is concerned) while I was on The Farm in Tennessee, his writing is good enough that he made his trip come alive for me. I got my copy from Dave Langford, but I'm happy to see you've reprinted it so that more faans can have access to it. As for your having sleep apnea, I was rather surprised. I thought that only, er, fat people got it and you certainly don't qualify in that department despite being a little more rotund than you used to be. But then, I have something akin to it myself that emerges in the wake of my 1999 auto accident. I don't know if that caused it or if it's just a coincidence, but when I was required to rest on my back during the healing process I found that my uvula would relax, blocking my throat, and whether asleep or just resting I would suddenly find myself gasping for air. Since I don't normally sleep on my back, this hasn't become a problem, thank ghod.

Although mildly disappointed that Andy Hooper didn't review the last issue of *Trap Door*, which came out around the same time as the zines he did select, it was a welcome pleasure to have his fanzine reviews back again — and I hope this becomes a regular feature of *Littlebrook*.

And Moshe's speech made for entertaining reading — and I \*loved\* “Corflu Fakefan.”

## **Karen Schaffer**

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The Buffy article reminded me, tangentially, of a complaint I've had with the Nero Wolfe series. Have you watched those? For some curious reason, they've chosen to use a stable cast of actors for the varying characters in each plot, like a rep company, I suppose, but it's been driving me crazy. I'm perfectly capable of separating an actor from a role, normally. But in this context, when a bunch of the characters (Wolfe, Archie, Fritz, Kramer, etc.) are played by the same actors every time, as one would expect, yet other actors assume different roles every time, well, it's messing with my belief system! I keep thinking, “Okay, he's already met her, no, wait, that was a different story,” etc. There's one distinctive fellow who will forever be ‘Binky’ in my mind, because that's who he was in the first episode I saw. The fact that they often end up playing the same sort of person, even though it's not the exact same character, only adds to the confusion. {{We have friends who really enjoyed the stable cast of characters and thought it added the feel and benefits of a theatre company. *Suzle*}}

Also curiously, they have different theme music and credit animations for every episode. It must be a

huge amount of work to produce those, and they are usually quite interesting, tailored specifically for that particular story. But it totally loses the usual effect that opening credits typically strive for of associating some particular music/images with a show. Curious decisions.

## **Steve Green**

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There's something endearingly fannish about your producing a fanzine in order to publish an article which then isn't ready on time to publish.

Jerry, I'm pleased you found space in your *Buffy*-inspired musing for a mention of Christopher Priest, one of the most accomplished exponents of this refocusing of reality. *The Affirmation* allows two entirely different (and equally legitimate) readings, the second accessible to anyone familiar with Chris's "Dream Archipelago" sequence of short fiction. His follow-up, *The Glamour*, features a truly disconcerting moment when the novel metaphorically twists round in your grasp and stares straight back at you. It's a piece of literary prestidigitation which he first displays in *A Dream of Wessex* and has been honed in virtually every book since. Regrettably, this seems to demand too much of a reading public acclimatized to bland plotting and soap opera histrionics: I've just heard that Chris's latest novel is going straight to paperback.

## **Joël Brink**

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{Joël, a good friend from our NYC days, has had many interesting careers, including the latest one in India. *Suzle*}



Almost two weeks ago I received *Littlebrook* with Stu's way cute cover drawing and your way feasible publication schedule. It will be interesting to see what happens if you do keep the %#\$&@ mask on all night. Will the page count of the nascent 'zine skyrocket on a new burst of energy? I await the results of the experiment in the forthcoming issue. {{The page count didn't exactly skyrocket, but it did double. *Jerry*}}

I've been working here in India for about ten months. I live and work in middle class South Delhi where most people speak English, so it's not that much of a change from working in Washington. Well, leaving out the periodic power and water shortages...God designed Delhi as a desert and She isn't giving up without a fight. But since you can't invade India from the west without passing through Delhi, over the centuries all sorts of ambitious foreigners decided it was a good place to build forts to keep out the next lot of foreign rascals. And the last lot, the Brits, decided to make Delhi the main rail junction for all of India, which displeased God a lot. But God isn't giving up without a fight. Hence, sandstorms (locally known as the *Loo*) sweeping over the grand avenues, embassies and shopping districts, chronic water scarcity, temps up to 120 degrees F in the summer, and other little desert-type reminders from heaven.

Actually, weather aside, there are a lot of good aspects to Delhi. It's a truly cosmopolitan city with more European influence than we have in the States. The embassies screen the latest films, and most of the recent US releases make it here within a few months. Also, Delhi is the world capital of English language publishing, so you get much cheaper local editions of US and British books as well as original editions from hundreds of Indian publishers. There are lots of big parks and wonderful birds. I particularly like the peacocks. We have about two dozen semi-wild ones on the IIT campus where I work. The adult males have about a six foot wingspan and fly with very a soft fluffing sound. One flew right over my head into a tree the other day, and I didn't even notice! There are two peacock flocks, and of course they hate each other — the Faculty Peacocks, who are based in the Director's garden, and the Student Peacocks, who are based in the trees near the dorms. Every evening they get up on roofs and yell at each other. Must be the human influence....

## **Lloyd Penney**

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Fanzines of various sizes are favoured by various people. I freely admit I like 'em all, big, little or in between. It all depends on what you have to say, or if you have scads of contributors (yeah, right) willing to shower you with reviews, conreps, etc., how much you're willing to sink into the publication of your issue, and I realize I'm talking in pre-.pdf terms. I like zines

like Challenger, which top 100 pages of articles, correspondence and fun, and small zines like this one, which are easy to read when I have little time, and are easy for you to afford and distribute, especially in this age of expensive publishing and postage. I'm usually short of time and money, so I can appreciate this small zine format even more.

I yawn through most of the day, stretch tired muscles, nearly fall asleep and am rarely alert through the day. Why? Because my job bores the bejesus out of me, and I wake up far too early in the morning to get to it. 5:15 AM should be banned by law. It doesn't help that I suffer from insomnia, usually in the summertime when it's too hot to sleep. Thinking about my rotten job also keeps me awake, too. Why can't I just win the provincial lottery, and be done with it? That would take care of the rotten job, and I suspect, the insomnia, too. And while I'm wishing, I'd like a pony, too... If I'd gotten all the sleep I've missed over the years, I would have done things better, smarter and faster, but in the long run, nothing important would have changed. Also, if I could get all the sleep I've missed over the years, no one would see me again until 2008. {{Why don't you have an air conditioner? The white noise alone should help. *Suzle*}}

I'd never received many issues of Rune over the years, but would be quite pleased to see it revived. It's a shame the death of Scott Imes brought this about, but I hope any continuation of the zine will be done in his memory.

My greetings to Moshe Feder...Actually, I had heard of Ozymandias 2. I did not attend it, seeing that I spent that summer on the West Coast, working to pay for my final year at university, but that con was Yvonne's second convention ever. I've been trying to do a little fanhistory research on the FAAn Awards, and I don't have all the information I need to make the list of the original FAAn winners complete. I hope you'll be my final source of information on this. {{Probably not. Andy Hooper worked up a list last year, but lost all his notes to a hard drive crash. *Jerry*}}

Both Andy Hooper and Arnie Katz have recently complained of the same thing... a little gafia has gone a long way, and both are just now inching back from the brink. As much as indulging in fanac regularly has its attractions, so does a little gafia. But once I take a little, how long will it be until I take a lot? Our own careers in convention management have taken a disastrous turn recently; as a result, both Yvonne and I, somewhat disillusioned, have decided to gradually retire from running and working conventions. We'll be commitment-free by 2004 or 2006, depending on who asks us to do what, and what we decide. The Glades of Gafia beckon, and its siren song sounds so appealing.

## **Henry Welch**

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I should let you know that you are only making a pretense at being macho with your sadly inferior electric chipper shredder. It takes at least an 8-hp gas model to properly qualify. This is a great way to pay homage to Tim "The Toolman" Taylor, more power means more destruction. {{But what would Red Green think? *Suzle*}}

## **Milt Stevens**

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I see Jerry is one of the numerous fans of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. I watched fifteen minutes of one episode once. I'm not really a fan of monsters. I also have trouble getting interested in a plot where the antagonists are inherently evil. (I have the same problem with *Charmed* in spite of the presence of three very attractive witches.) Like, what's the point of being inherently evil. I can understand evil for the purposes of wealth, power, or amusement. If good would gain you wealth, power, or amusement, then go with it. No, these characters have it in their contract that they must be evil at all times with no vacations, sick time, or pension benefits. Talk about a lousy contract.

As to writers who resolve their plots by making everything a dream or a delusion...GRRRRR!

They should be thrown into the same pit of molten lava that is usually reserved for mystery writers who only introduce the character who turns out to be the murderer in the last five pages of the book.

Although now that I think about it, *The Dead Zone* (which I like quite a bit) does suggest the possibility that the protagonist's apparent life may be a delusion. The protagonist (Johnny) has had two different brain in-

juries that have left him with psychic powers. He doesn't know how these powers actually work, but he can see all sorts of things past, present, and future. He may be seeing alternate worlds, or he may be detached in time, or (as he fears at one point) he may still be in a coma from his second brain injury. However, the coma seems to be the least likely alternative, and the thrust of the plot is to see how far he can go in choosing between alternate worlds.

I'm willing to believe that sleep apnea is a real condition. However, the comments on sleep apnea brought to mind that the medical field seems to have been losing ground lately. For every new cure they discover, they discover two new diseases or conditions. I blame this situation on the *Readers Digest*. For decades, *Readers Digest* was the country's leading purveyor of new diseases and conditions. Millions of people bought the magazine to find out what they were suffering from this month. Of course, it took a huge research staff to keep coming up with all these diseases and conditions. Then they hired copy writers from the fortune cookie industry to write-up symptoms that would apply to just about everybody in the entire country. In recent years, *TV Guide* has been doing weekly what *Readers Digest* used to do monthly. Every issue has one or more ads for wonder pills that may do something about something-or-other. "Flimflamate (Balonium Scamate) for people who suffer from gluttony, or laziness, or stupidity, or vile personalities." Actually, I don't know much about any of these pills, because the type in the ads is much too small for me to read. I doubt any of them offer to improve your eyesight.

### **Sandra Miesel**

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I have discovered the blogosphere as a replacement for the old pleasures of fanac, but with instant feedback. Some of the bloggers I look at turn out to be SF readers who use SF references in their remarks. As a result of a common interest in Andre Norton I made an internet friend and got a magazine assignment, for example.

A "suzlet" is surely some confection with a flavor that brings to mind crepes suzette? {{You were always good at interesting definitions. But I now regret not leaving out that "t". It was supposed to be SuzleT@aol.com, but in all lower case, it becomes "suzlet".}}

### **Eric Lindsay**

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Queensland 4802, Australia

I notice Bill Burns points to a PDF of your zine, so I guess it is time to download and comment. You

know, "download and comment" sounds almost military. Stu Shiffman always does a nice job of his art, doesn't he?

Jean used to have a chipper/shredder, back in the days when we lived in a house rather than hotel rooms. Just another piece of bulky machinery to fuss over and try to keep working I hated it as it was far too noisy. I was at Chicago in 1982, and recall at least the names and some of the characters you mention. Lots of crazy things happening then, as far as I can recall. I'd just driven up from Albuquerque with Walter Jon Williams and Peter --, in a car very much in the image of Fear and Loathing, packed with illicit substances.

I'm not sure I could sleep with all the connectors you mention in your apnea article. I've also been feeling tired, however I ascribe that to going to bed at midnight, and getting up at 5:30 or so when it becomes light. I must try to do something about the hour at which I retire.

Moshe did a nice Corflu speech. Wish I'd been there to hear it.

### **Jukka Halme**

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Finland.

My name is Jukka Halme and I'm a thirtysomething SF-fan from Helsinki, Finland and EU. I've been a fan of SF/F from an early age and more or less active in the Finndom from the late 80's. I've been a writer and an illustrator, reviewer, cover-artist and done lay-out, chaired clubs, panels and meetings, all the usual stuff. Though I have to admit I've never been neither a secretary nor a treasurer at a club/society. Lately I've been writing reviews and articles for Helsinki SF Society's semiprozine Tähtivaeltaja (Star Rover) and Finnish Tolkien Society's Legolas-fanzine. I've also been LoCing some US/GB fanzines as well as sending some illos to them too. I more or less found out of the fanzine-fandom in 2001, when I lived in Princeton, NJ for a year (with my wife Sari, who was doing research for her PhD at the U.) and received a few fanzines from people like Geri Sullivan, Steven Silver and the *Wabe* people. When I got back to Finland I found out that there's such a place like efanzines.com, which was/is most educational and helpful in a quest for more fanzines.

I found *Littlebrook* that way (as in efanzines-way) and dutifully printed myself a copy of it. I liked the overall attitude of the fanzine and especially your "Bewitched, Bothered and Bemildred" piece. It had all the qualities of good personal opinions, ideas and rants that I find to be most interesting in fanzines. Moshe Feder's GoH-speech was also good reading, thou I must assume that the original recitation was a lot more fun. I hope that one of these days I might be able to attend Corflu or some such occasion. So far my foreign cons have been very large (as in Worldcons).

## **Jack and Pauline Palmer**

P.O. Box 2432, Bellingham, WA

You bought a chipper? That's sort of like the Queen of England buying a pogo stick.... Actually, I'm jealous; I've always wanted one. What do the neighbors think of it?

The sleep apnea situation is fascinating and strange. I don't think I could handle the mask, being claustrophobic to start with. Better you than me, unfeelingly. I very much enjoyed the D. West art of the man with a bottle in an easy chair. {{The man was Peter Roberts, TAFF winner, at the end of his lengthy trip to the United States in 1977. You can read all about it by sending me \$10, in return for which I will send you Peter's entertaining *New Routes in America*. It includes more art by D. West, along with pieces by Dan Steffan and many others. Jerry}}

We have been out of fandom for too long to be able to follow Andy Hooper's "Sausage Time," though I would like to take potluck of the draw (?) of his selection. On the other hand, we enjoyed Moshe Feder's GoH speech without reservation *and* the column head illo by Craig Smith.

## **Sheryl Birkhead**

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Sausage.... When we first moved out to the farm, the phone was a shared one. I forget which ring was ours. My mother (a city transplant), was on the phone, asking about a sausage stuffer — a piece of equipment she had been assured would render (\*ahem\*) the pork bits into culinary treats. After getting an idea of how it worked she said thanks and hung up. Less than 30 seconds later, the phone rang — it was another party-line. "Missus Birkhead — I understand you lookin' for a sausage stuffer — we got one you kin borrow." My mother said yes and thank you. She later pointed out that if the eavesdropper had been gutsy enough to offer, she was willing to accept.

Ah Moshe — *Placebo*.... Ah, you say 32 years in fandom. Let me see...my first con was probably Pghlange 1968 or ('69), and I started getting zines in '69 or '70 — so we're about tied. Sheesh — all those cobwebs. {{1969 was the first Pghlange, actually, held out near the Airport. 1970 was the first one in downtown Pittsburgh, where our GoH Harlan brought his whole Clarion class, which included Vonda MacIntyre and Octavia Butler, with him from, uhm, Clarion, PA, where it had been his week Does this help your memory? Suzle}}

## **Sharon Farber**

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I agree — *Buffy* is my favorite tv show. But the episode with the mental hospital reminded me of the

*Deep Space Nine* episodes where Sisko was a fifties pulp sf author — and thus 30 years of *Star Trek* were merely the delusions of a disturbed writer. An interesting thought....

## **Teddy Harvia**

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Ok, what's the significance of the dog in Stu's cover art? I am always on the outside of in-jokes. {{You're not the only one to ask — so did Jeanne Mealy — but when we checked in with Stu, he said something along the lines of, "It just seemed like a good idea at the time." Jerry}}

Loved Craig Smith's art for Moshe's speech. But gawk! What an ugly Cupid.

## **John Berry**

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Many thanks for *Littlebrook* received this morning and read (in bed) in one bout of fannish appreciation; anything coming from Seattle is choice! Interested in your *Buffy* comments — as a 76 year old, I have watched *Buffy* every week, merely to ogle the heroine, but the denouement you announce, it was all a dream, is actually rather satisfying to the cynical viewer. Lovely Craig Smith illo on page 10 to accompany Moshe Feder.

## **Brad Foster**

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I was fascinated by your rundown of where the title of the zine has come from, because, when I first saw it, my own impression was that it was a clever play on *Mainstream*. That is, now that you were no longer going to be doing a massive genzine, the "main stream" one, we were going to be getting a "little brook" instead. Get it? Of course, then I flip to page two and find I'm totally off the mark on what I was thinking was my cleverly anticipating your reasoning behind the title. I give up.

**We also heard from:** Vicki Rosenzweig, Debi Kerr, Debbie Notkin (clearing up the authorship of *The Mimeo Man*), Karen Pender-Gunn, Marty Cantor, Guy Lillian III, Murray Moore, Steve Stiles, Mark Leeper, Evelyn C. Leeper (both of whom steered me to material by Mark about his experiences with sleep apnea), Gary Goldstein (who told about his sleep apnea experience), Gary Deindorfer, Kate Yule (with an article about a mysterious hammer head that fell from the sky — and was apparently thrown there by a massive chipper), Frank Denton, and Jeanne Mealy.

Many thanks to all. ✨

# On Co-Editing in the Computer Age: (a Suzlecol-ette?)

by Suzle

Years ago Jerry and I had another fanned challenge us about co-editing, as he could not fathom working on the actual editing of a fanzine with another person. While it was hard to explain exactly how we did it, we had been co-editing for so long that we didn't really think about it. We have somewhat similar tastes in material and general layout and graphics, so we usually agreed about the content and look of our zines.

Jerry was then, as now, the main acquirer of material and nudger of contributors. After the actual editing and layout, each of us carried out the various jobs needed to get the thing out. The work generally boiled down to Jerry cutting the stencils, my doing the hand work such as hand lettering and cutting in the e-stenciled (\*) artwork, and both of us running it off on the mimeo. One of my fondest fannish memories goes back to New York when Jerry was sharing an apartment with Stu Shiffman. We were all in the dining room, sitting at their big dining room table. I looked up and started to laugh as I realized we had formed the perfect fanzine production company -- Jerry was at one end of the table, mimeoing; Stu was across from Jerry, illustrating stencils at the light board; and I was at the other end, typing in corrections.

The move to Seattle eventually meant the acquisition of a Gestetner and then a Rex Rotary mimeo to replace the A.B. Dicks I had grown up with. Jerry took over more and more of the mimeo work, along with

typing up stencils. We were slowly dragged (not actually kicking and screaming, though) into the computer era (well, half era) and began producing the pages on our computer and printer, then e-stenciling them, and running them off. This still required pasting in artwork and my stencil cement was replaced by rubber cement (no more drying stencils draped all over the big bookcase!). And with the last issue of *Mainstream*, we finally gave up the mimeo and went photocopy.

Since starting *Littlebrook*, done totally on computer, I've come to realize that it isn't possible for us to co-edit as we once did. I work at this computer all day and can't bring myself to work on the 'zine at night. Jerry also works at a computer all day, but at least it's a different one in a different office. We still work together on the material and layout, but he is really far more responsible for the actual production of *Littlebrook* than I.

That's the nature of doing everything using one machine instead of many; only one person can do it at one time. Of course, an advantage is being able to hover over your co-editor with brilliant suggestions which can be implemented because, unlike stencils, once done, things CAN change.

I just want to thank Jerry for doing far more than his share on the first two issues, and be sure he gets credit for it.

(\*) For the first time ever, I looked at the word "e-stenciled", which I hadn't used in a while, and had a brain freeze — you know, e-this, e-that, e-stencil...✂

