



In a prior lifetime #2

winter, 2004

volume 1, number 2

Another fanzine entry from John Purcell, residing in the cyberspace continuum known as Texas. Such as it is.

This e-zine can be had via e-mail request or visiting Bill Burns' site, [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com), or even through the infamous snail mail if you desire a hard copy (for those of you wishing to remain anachronistic in your fanac). And of course, this zine is *always* available in exchange for a bag of sunflower seeds. I can be reached at [jpurcell@earthlink.net](mailto:jpurcell@earthlink.net) for these purposes. Read and enjoy.

### *CONTENTS*

- overviews
- uber views
- other views



### OVER VIEWS

It has been an interesting year. I survived teaching my first semester at Willis High School, which was not only interesting, but fun as well. Something happened that I did not expect: I actually *enjoyed* teaching English to a bunch of high school kids! Who'd a thunk it, eh? Of course, the fact that four of my six classes were Dual Credit English classes – meaning kids in those classes were earning college credit while in high school – made my job easier; those youngsters are bright and motivated. The two senior level

classes were my biggest challenges. Getting those monsters motivated and doing the work was the challenge there. As to be expected, about half of my level classes were fine students and needed little supervision, the other half required use of the electronic cattle prod to keep them on task.

And speaking of critters both human and otherwise...

## überviews

It was just another weekend at home with the family: the wife and kids, and the dogs, cats, fish, guinea pigs, a loud annoying bird, and the mole crickets.

Yup. Mole crickets.

Down here in the primeval swamps of Southeast Central Texas - or is that Central Southeast Texas? Either way, it's the Land That Time Forgot - there are critters and beasties that are, without question, unchanged from the age of the dinosaurs. We had a couple of these mole-crickets jump into the house a couple weeks ago. Until then we had never seen one before, let alone knew that they existed. We should have known better; every week we're discovering yet another denizen of the land wandering into our house. This time it happened to be a mole cricket. Actually, it was two of them.

One of our six cats, Toulouse, snared one, and played with it for about half an hour because its armored head and thorax rendered it quite invulnerable to getting whacked around the dining room by said Toulouse. Marie and Cucumber trotted out to witness the game, slapping at this oddity of nature when it came close. The other mole cricket had jumped into the trashcan by our computer station. My wife snared it with one of those science kit grabbers, plunked it into a container with a magnifying top, and we proceeded to examine it up close and personal.



*Not actual size.....but close!*

Like I said, the head and thorax are armored, and the entire front end looks like a lobster, complete with over-sized pincers that could have fed a family of four. Brown and thoroughly disgusting looking with black, beady eyes, the back half tapers into a sectional tail that ends with a scorpion-style stinger. The entire "thing" is about 2-1/2 inches long, comes out at night, has wings, yet can't fly very well, but makes up for that with a pair of powerful grasshopper legs that are three sizes too big in proportion to the body. Yes, it is one butt-ugly insect whose sole purpose - according to a website devoted to Texas insects - is to destroy grain crops, ruin lawns, especially those with St.

Augustine grass, and migrated to the US by stowing away on ships arriving from South America. (One more argument in favor of shutting the borders, but that's another story.)

Our eight year old son Daniel decided he wanted to keep it as a pet, and named it Spunky. Fortunately it died within a week, but by then he had brought it to school, which achieved his two desired purposes: making him look totally cool by having such an ugly creature in his possession while totally grossing out the teacher and all the girls in his class. Then he brought it home.

Our next door neighbor, the head groundskeeper for Texas A&M University's sports complex, examined the dead carcass and exclaimed, "Oh, yeah! I know these buggers. They're nasty. They'll wreck your lawn by burrowing underground looking for water. This one's an adult." We then discussed how long they've existed, and concluded they haven't changed since the dawn of time.

When I asked Leo about how to get rid of these buggers, he just sniffed and said, "Can't really do that. Gotta have a hard freeze, and down here, that just doesn't happen." I decided then and there to add "imminent Ice Age" to the prayer wall at church.

So, who needs to go to a con to watch prehistoric creatures run around on film, in masquerade balls, or down convention hallways? All we have to do is go out back on the patio, sit in our lawn chairs armed with gallons of bug spray, lawn poisons, golf clubs, mosquito netting, baseball bats, and our cats (suitably armored, of course), and observe geckos, snakes, armadillos, prairie rats, gigantic beetles, and mole crickets traipsing around our yard as if we weren't even there.

And why not? They were there first, and probably will still be there long after we've blown up the planet. I'm convinced that these creatures are well-prepared to survive whatever we can throw at them or each other. Who needs a film room with god-awful movies replete with crackerjack Harryhausen special effects? We have Texas: the REAL Land That Time Forgot.



*THE ANTI-MOLE CRICKET ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS, ANNOUNCES  
THEIR FIRST ANNUAL EVENT*

## Whack-a-Mole for Charity

*ON FEBRUARY 3, 2004  
LOCATION TO DETERMINED BASED ON  
EXTENT OF INFESTATION IN MEMBERS'  
YARDS.*

*GOH: JOSIE PURCELL  
(SHE SCREAMS REALLY GOOD!)*

Well. It has been years – 16 years, to be exact - since I’ve edited a loccol, so let’s see how I do. My little remembrance of getting Phyllis Eisenstein’s autograph at IguanaCon sparked numerous comments:

Dwain Kaiser wrote that he “enjoyed Dust from the Attic Redux. I had a similar situation getting some books autographed by Earl Kemp at a paperback show a few months ago. He had at least a few people in his line, but was signing at the same time Mickey Spillane was signing for *his* fans. Spillane’s line went out the building and around the block (or so it seemed), and despite starting an hour early and continuing almost until the end of the show the line just never ended. That would have been humbling to any author/editor sitting next to him. It was interesting to watch as I grabbed a chair and spent an hour talking to my fan friend Earl. He didn’t kiss me, however, but I did get invited out to lunch to continue our conversation.” [ Sept ‘03]

Arthur Hlavaty added “I trust you are properly grateful that you did not ask Niven or Pournelle for an autograph.” [Sept ‘03] Well, Niven would have been fine about it, but Pournelle would have been dodgy. In actuality, I never got around to doing so even when I lived in LA for a year and attended LASFS meetings when they were present. Oh, well. garth spencer added “I’m not surprised she got passed over at first; one of my grimmer jokes is that the force that binds and holds the universe together appears to be, not gravity, but marketing. And a lot of authors are not marketed very effectively. Perhaps Phyllis changed that? :)” [Sept ‘03] Which would be nice, but I don’t think so.

Of my other reflections in my first issue of *In A Prior Lifetime*, the ones about the loss of dear, old fannish friends caused folks to respond, too. dwain said that “the main downside of (the graying of fandom) is the loss of too many friends over the last few years. In the sense that fans tend to be timebinders we keep their memories alive within our hobby when we write about them. By all means, tell the story of your friendship with Lee Pelton.” Other respondents echoed that sentiment. So, in my next issue – whenever the heck that is – I’ll start running that story, which already is quite lengthy. Which is not surprising, since Lee and I knew each other for over 20 years. There are times I still think about him.

**The Infamous I Also  
Heard From Listing:**

Eric Lindsay  
David Langford  
R Lorraine Tutihasi  
Rich Lynch  
Geri Sullivan  
Jeff Schalles

Thank you, good friends.

