

In a prior lifetime #19



January, 2007

Yet another incarnation from that fanzine creationist, **John Purcell**, whose current level of being is on a plane best identified as **3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845**

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Homepage: under construction – again.

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This explains a lot!

Current recommended zines to read:

- eI #29 – *Who Killed Science Fiction?*
- Science-Fiction Five-Yearly #12
- Prolapse #4

Current books being read: *The Feel-Good Curriculum*, by Maureen Stout, Ph.D.

Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences, 3rd edition,
by Jacob & Patricia Cohen (does this one come in comic book format?)

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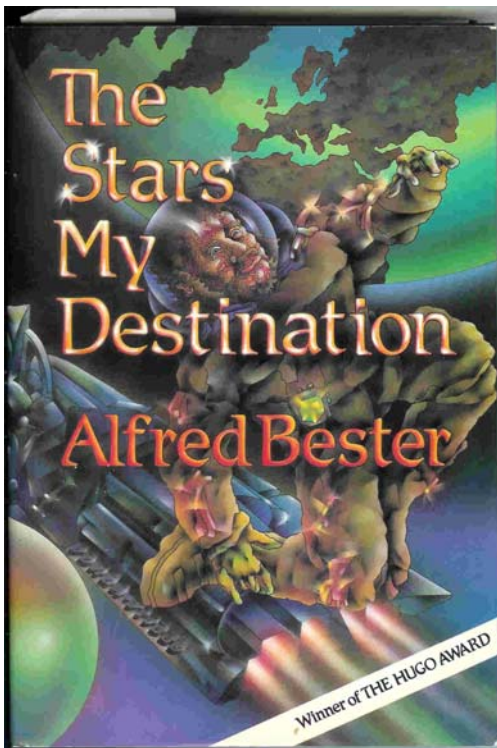
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“Who was that revolving door I saw you with last night?”

bemused natterings

I continue to read classic science fiction for relaxation. Last issue I told you folks about three of the books I read between semesters: *The Immortals* by James Gunn, *Brother to Demons, Brother to Gods* by Jack Williamson, and *A Morbid Taste for Bones* by Ellis Peters, which is not SF, but is a fun mystery novel. Another book I just finished reading was *The Stars My Destination*, Alfred Bester's classic Hugo-award winning novel which I had not read in positively years, and thoroughly enjoyed it, too. And so a question has popped into my bemused mind to help jump-start this issue and get me going on this column: Why am I doing this? What is possessing me to read old SF novels? (Okay, that's two questions, but they're strongly related, so there!)



The answer, I do believe, is fairly simple: it reminds me of my youth. Those younger days of self, lost in the depths of antiquity, when I was fresh and new to the wonders offered to me through the pages of *Analog*, *Galaxy*, *Worlds of If*, *Amazing*, *Fantastic*, and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and paperbacks from my dad's bookshelves. Those were glorious years when I attempted to devour as much science fiction as I could.

Maybe I am attempting to relive my past. As they say, middle-aged men are most likely to try to reclaim their glory years – read: their late teens, early twenties – by being kids again. While I admit there is a certain truthfulness to this theory, another contributory cause is the enjoyment factor, which makes perfect sense when you think about it. Why read something for pleasure if you don't enjoy it? Face it: many of us Old Pharts hold a fond spot in our hearts for books and authors we loved as kids, teens, and/or young adults. There is nothing wrong with this. The fact that I enjoyed reading *The Stars My Destination* again is a testament to that story: strong plot,

interesting characters, adventure, cool concept to base the narrative upon, believable dialogue, and unexpected twists that logically follow the premise and preceding action. (I truly hate it when an author uses the *deus ex machina* ploy to make a story work.) All in all, *The Stars My Destination* definitely meets my criteria for maintaining classic status in the science fiction field.

This last point is probably why I am re-reading a bunch of old novels and stories, to say nothing of old books and authors that I have never had the time to read before: to get acquainted with the "classics" in SF literature to base my appreciation of fiction currently being produced in the field. It is best to know what has gone before to understand what is going on now and to be prepared for what is to come.

So I am reading more science fiction again. This won't last long, mainly because in June I have my preliminary exams for my Doctorate in Education. Wish me luck. Thank Ghu there are a couple conventions to attend first!

dust From the arctic redux

The Internet is definitely making it so much easier to contact old friends than ever before in human history. Case in point is a new feature that's beginning in this issue, "Figby," a cartoon series that Bill Fischer and I once produced. Recently I received an e-mail with the subject header "Ponder if you will, Figby" from someone named Bill Fischer. My response to him was a reserved "SON OF A BITCH!" I had not heard from Bill in something like 20 years, so to get this e-mail - with a Figby cartoon attached, to boot - from out of the blue was a great Christmas gift. And now, you readers will get the story behind the story. So sit yourselves down, grab a cold one, and get ready to be ~~bored to tears~~ mesmerized. . .

In the mid-1970s, just as I was getting involved in science fiction fandom on the local scene - read: Minn-stf - I was an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota.

Everybody who has ever earned a college degree knows that you had to have at least a full year of a foreign language as part of your degree plan. At Minnesota, it was a full 3-quarter year series: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced. Since I had taken Russian during my senior year in high school, I decided to pursue that language, figuring I had a head start on it. That full year in high school was basically the first quarter at the Multiversity of Minnesota (hereafter referred to as the "Multiversity"). As a result, I sailed through Fall Quarter, 1974 (Russian I), and then struggled a bit in Russian II (Winter Quarter, 1975). (Yes, the Multiversity used the archaic 3-Quarter system at that time; I think they finally abandoned it by the late 1990s.) Intermediate Russian was tough, but not impossible; Mrs. Prokopof (I think that was her name), a slight, older woman from Ukraine, was tough and still possessed her Soviet-era sense of humor (read: none). The only thing that made that class bearable was meeting Bill Fischer.



Bill was a twenty-something married man with medium length dark hair cut in a John Denver hairstyle, and wore glasses that were remarkably similar to the kind worn by John Denver. In recent issues of my addendum zine, *...and furthermore*, I have written of joining Bill and his friend, Michael Johnson, to form a folk-trio, Johnson, Fish & Company, just as the disco craze was taking off during the mid-70s. One of the schticks we did was a version of "Thank God I'm a Country Boy" in which Bill imitated John Denver very well, belting out "Thank God for my Golden Voice." Bill played rhythm guitar and sang, Mike was our lead vocalist (he had a *nice* voice), and I played lead and rhythm guitar, also providing vocals. However, back to my story in **this** fanzine.

As you can probably guess, Bill Fischer had a silly and fannish sense of humor. One of our classmates in Intermediate Russian was Mr. Chen. Yes, that's right; a Chinese national who was learning Russian. Makes sense when you realize that this story is from 1975. But listening to a Chinese person trying to speak *Russian*, of all things, was highly entertaining to Bill and I. Sometimes it was very hard for the two of us to keep a straight face when Mr. Chen tried to pronounce those back glottal sounds and other harsh Slavic pronunciations. (I know, I know; I shouldn't make fun of Oriental people, but I'm just

relating a story from my past here, so please excuse me.) One particularly hot day that quarter, Mrs. Prokopof asked, in Russian, "Mr. Chen, would you please open the window?", and he nearly fell through the window when trying to unlock the latch by standing on top of a desk. (Heck, anybody would have to do that, the windows were so tall in that old building.) Bill leaned toward me, and whispered conspiratorially, "Very clever, these Chinese!" I nearly choked while stifling the giggles.

This is also the guy who picked up his pencil in class, looked directly at me, and said, "очень карандаш." This translates into "very pencil" and why last issue's year-end numbers article had that as its title. There is no doubt in my mind that Bill made that class enjoyable. We both passed, but I did not take Advanced Russian in Spring, 1975, due to a class scheduling conflict, and I didn't really like Mrs. Prokopof that much anyway.



Now, Bill was also an artist; actually, a cartoonist would be more accurate. He produced little sketches here and there in his Russian notebook, at one point creating a pair of characters: an egotistical, self-indulgent, bearded professor in a long, white lab coat, who constantly was upstaged by his diminutive, unassuming lab assistant whose name was Figby. Eventually, these little sketches became cartoon panels, which we showed to my old high school buddy, Steve Glennon. Since most of these cartoons dealt with topics such as astronomy, physics, chemistry, engineering, and other esoterica, Steve

recommended that we take them to the *Minnesota Technolog*, the quarterly student publication of the Multiversity's Institute of Technology, where Steve was enrolled as an engineering major.

So we did. The editorial team loved the cartoons and started running them. For the next two years (Spring, 1975 to Spring, 1977), Bill and I produced *Figby* cartoons, which were featured on a full-page every issue, three or four strips to a page. Very quickly, the cartoon became one of the favorite regularly appearing items in the *Technolog*. In the Spring of 1976, after appearing in four consecutive issues, Bill and I were informed that *Figby* had received an award presented by the Engineering College Magazines Associated (ECMA) for Third Place: Best Recurring Feature. Now **that** blew us away. We were just having fun and had no idea that such an organization existed. After Bill graduated in December of 1976, the strip died a slow, painful death - I tried continuing it solo, but my artistic talents are nonexistent - and *Figby* thus descended into its own Inferno, then eventually the dustbin of memory. Until now.

I am not sure if Bill still has any of those old issues of the *Minnesota Technolog* where the original series ran. If he does, I think it would be fun to reissue them all under one cover. If not, I am sure that it is possible to contact the I.T.'s *Technolog* staff at the Multiversity to inquire into getting those issues from Spring, '75 to Spring, '77. We shall see.

In the meantime, I hereby present a new incarnation of *Figby*, courtesy of my old friend, musical collaborator, and conspirator, Bill Fischer, who has offered to contribute these as a regular feature in my zine. I hope you folks enjoy it now as much as we enjoyed creating it all those years ago.

FIGBY BY BILL FISCHER



Up-coming Texas convention calendar

Owl-Con XXVI: Feb. 9-11, 207 = Houston, TX

Gaming, Fantasy, & Science Fiction Convention held on Rice University campus

Corflu 24: Feb. 9-11, 2007 = Austin, TX

GoH: to be determined by luck of the draw during opening ceremonies

ConDFW 2007: Feb. 23-25, 2007 = Richardson, TX

Guests: Emma Bull, Will Shetterly, Harry Turtledove. / Artist GoH: Bob Eggleton.

ChimaeraCon 2007: March 9-11, 2007 = San Antonio, TX

The Annual South Texas Gaming & More Fest

RevelCon 18: March 16-18, 2007= Houston, TX

media fanzine convention; no announced GoH's at the present time

Aggiecon 38: March 22-25, 2007 = College Station, TX

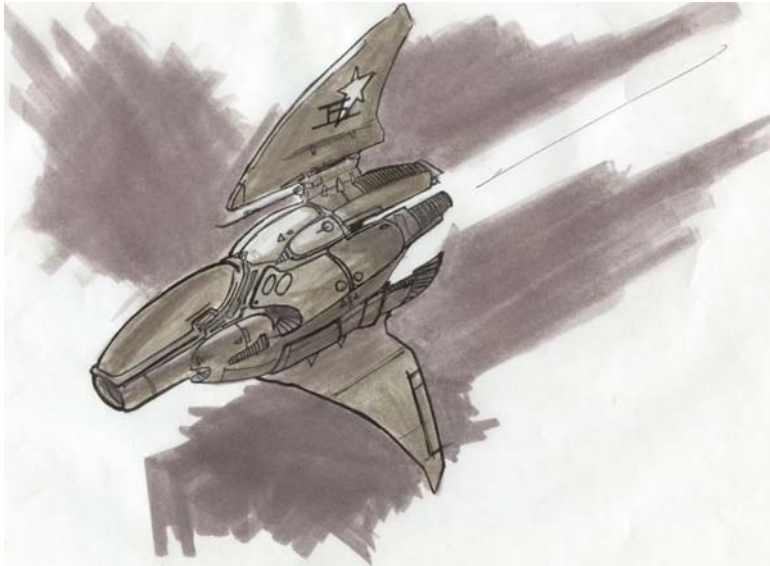
Comic Artist GoH: James O'Barr / Artist GOH: Ruth Thompson / Major Guest: Jana Oliver

ApolloCon 2007: June 22-24, 2007 = Houston, TX

GoH: C. S. Friedman / Editor GoH: David Hartwell / Fan GoH: A.T. Campbell III

There are also quite a few Animé cons on the agenda this year: Anime Matsuri (Houston, 4/27-29); A-Kon 18 (Dallas, June 1-3); San Japan (San Antonio, 7/13-15); AtsuiCon (Houston, 8/3-5); Realms Con (Corpus Christi, Sept).

Other area cons of note: Conestoga 11 (Tulsa, OK, 7/20-22); ArmadilloCon 29 (Austin, TX, 8/10-12); Bubonicon 39 (Albuquerque, NM, 8/24-26); ProtoCon 9 (College Station, TX, Sept – gaming con); FenCon IV (Dallas, TX, 9/21-23)



from the hinterlands

Ah, it's the letter column! There weren't many electronic epistles received in response to the last issue, but that's to be expected from a zine published mainly on-line. As I institute a "specified recipient" mailing list for hard copies, the response ratio hopefully will increase. We shall see. So, here goes with the ever-present and irrepressible, Chris Garcia!

Date: Thu, 21 Dec 2006 20:36:04 -0800

From: "Chris Garcia" <garcia@computerhistory.org>

To: "John Purcell" <j_purcell54@yahoo.com>

As always, I'm excited to see that you've released yet another IAPL for us to read. And quite a hefty issue it is.

My grandparents have a 1990 Cutlass, which they lovingly refer to as a Jew Canoe. You've got a good kid if you've raised one who would mutilate your car insignia into something that is hilarious. Josie's got a good talk on her too. It's important to get kids talking in the proper method at an early age.

Bob Bergstrom! Now there's a name. Growing up in the South Bay in the 1980s meant that I had to know Tony Hawk, Christian Hosoi, Lance Mountain, Bob Bergstrom, Stacey Peralta and most importantly Steve Caballero. He's a great guy and I knew him when I was young and I got to interview him again this year for my documentary. Good stuff. *{Actually, I made an error here, and Daniel corrected me; the name should be Bob Burnquist, not Bergstrom.}*

Gotta love a kid who can quote James Earl Jones too!

Hey, it's Tall Kevin! There are two Kevins in BASFA: Kevin Roche (Evil Kevin) and Kevin Standlee (Tall Kevin). Kevin's always got good stuff to say. I've had the chance to talk to a few other recentish WorldCon Chairs, like Dave Clark. *{Only if we can catch him.}*

Kevin's start period is an interesting one. It was the period that featured a large influx of fans from Stars Trek fandom peaking and Star Wars Fandom starting in earnest. I totally believe that WorldCon is still the Fannish Family Reunion (read my post-LACon Drink Tank) and I'm glad that I'm not the only one who still feels that way. I'm in the "Only when I've got the money" camp. That means close (like West Coast or Las Vegas) or I get lucky and a family member buys me tickets for my Birthday or Christmas (which is why I'm getting to go to both CorFlu and NASFiC). I stay at cheap hotels ******(by the way, I've got a room on hold at the CorFlu hotel, but if you've got a cheaper place, lemme know)****** and eat as cheap as I can. I'll be going to Denver in 2008 because I've got family who'll put me up less than two miles from the con! It's always nice to have new voices in fanzines and Kevin's voice is a nice addition (and the boy can sing too!)

172 pages this year! Impressive. I'm not sure what my total yet (I think it's something around 400 pages) The amount put out by us, Arnie and Earl alone is crazy! I've not counted my LoCs, but it's gotta be around 150 or 200. I'm not sure. *{Better check your numbers, roomie. I produced a lot more than 172 pages of fanac last year.}*

I loved SFFY. I'm looking forward to the next one. I'm hoping that I'll be able to put out my SFFY-tribute zine at CorFlu!

Penny's thinking about marriage. That's scary territory, but I'd be happy to perform the ceremony for free to save you on that cost! *{No rush.}*

Oh, and make sure the wedding planner doesn't add in undercoat for the wedding dress. You gotta be careful with those types.

Chris

{I always thought undercoating is what you put on your car when you winterized it. Shows you what I know about planning for a wedding...}

{Not to be ignored – as if I could – right before Christmas I got this loc from a mystery-writing fellow out East, who had some interesting comments to make about writing, both fan and professional.}

Date: Sat, 23 Dec 2006 20:05:39 -0500

From: Eric Mayer <ericm@epix.net>

To: j_purcell54@yahoo.com

Well, a quick pre-holiday note. Yes, parts of fanac have become easy. Electronic pages don't jam on their way out of the feed tray, electrons don't stain your fingers like ink, you don't have to lick stamps for email. The worst problem I have is a few hours of heavy typing, sitting at an awkward angle to accommodate a cat on my lap, makes my shoulder sore. But your fanac output for last year still astounds me. Never mind that there's no physical production involved. I can only come up with so many words (and ideas) so fast. I'll finish the year about 100 LoCs behind you, and a couple fewer than I wrote in less time last year, oddly. Well, I have purposefully limited my fanac so I can continue to enjoy it. And I also put a lot of effort into my blog and leaving comments on the blogs I read. The blogs I look at regularly are almost like a daily fanzine, composed of contributors I've selected myself. And I just finished the first draft of our seventh mystery novel, so I have cranked out the words this year, even apart from all the legal words I make my living at.

Sounds like your family has a huge year coming up educationally. Kind of like Dungeons & Dragons, you're all going to soon be promoted to a new rank or something. I never had to go through the PhD process, luckily. I do have a Juris Doctor. Law school being three years postgraduate work they decided to designate it a doctorate but it is just more school -- you don't need a thesis. Too bad I don't write sf, I could be E. "Doc" Mayer. *{Just another country doctor to the stars.}*

Your daughter's mixed metaphor is a work of genius you know. Let's see, I used to drive my parents' cutlass supreme a million years ago. But that wasn't a cut ass. That was, I thought, a cool looking vehicle. The front was much wider than the back. They haven't made them like that for a long time. As for your son – ah, how I wish I could regain the optimism of youth. But skate boarding...man, that would worry me. It takes some guts, I will say.

As a noncongoer (is that a word?) *{Sounds like one to me.}* I can't say much about your talk with Kevin Standlee. I was once on a convention committee, though, when the Rochester Orienteering Club put on the United States Orienteering Federation Annual Convention, in Canada, weirdly enough. That was nearly a week long, in the summer, built around a national level meet. There were workshops (in the woods) and panels of various sorts, and recreational offerings. It didn't cost anything like a WorldCon, and I took advantage of the free camping to attend. Orienteering doesn't have any pros in the US but I did meet Peter Snell, who was "the world's fastest man" back in the early sixties and now is an orienteer who has moved from Australia to Texas. As I said it wasn't the WorldCon. I think we handled something over \$50,000 dollars of income.

Eric

{That is a substantial sum of money. From my experience, working on any kind of a convention, be it fannish in nature or otherwise, takes a lot of time and requires commitment. It is still something to put on one's resumé, if one is so inclined.}

Hey, he's back yet again, only this time with commentary on only one issue, which is fine. Let's hear it for the Letterhack Who Came in From the Cold, Lloyd Penney!

From: "Lloyd Penney"<penneys@allstream.net>

To: "John Purcell" <j_purcell54@yahoo.com>

Subject: In A Prior Lifetime 18

Date: Sat, 30 Dec 2006 22:22:50 -0500

Just a short day before the end of the year, and a quiet party with fannish friends just up the street, so there's still time to tackle a Purcellzine, and comment on *IAPL 18*.

(The strangest things come to you mind then you're tired, like I am...I never watched Seinfeld, but I thought of the Loc Nazi. "No locs for you!" I can see Brad Foster doing something like this... Bed is coming up shortly...)

Josie is quite the man-handler, isn't she? Sounds like she's been reading some interesting websites. Perhaps my lack of faith is disturbing, too...*choke* *{I have a bad feeling about this loc...}*

Makes you wonder how that Standlee guy got so much experience in con running, hm? I never got a chance to chair a WorldCon, but I do have 25 years' experience in con running. For the size it has become, WorldCon has had to become a business out of necessity. His first convention was my third WorldCon, LAcon II in 1984. I did find that if you were relatively new to WorldCons, you were sometimes shunned by strangers, especially if you wanted to help out. Later came acceptance, especially if you also had some experience with local cons. I am forced by financial pressures that we'll probably never get to another WorldCon. *{Welcome to the club. This is exactly how I feel, and many other fans as well. The creature known as WorldCon has grown into – dare I say it? – a monster. (There, I said it.) But considering its evolution, this is not unexpected, merely disappointing for so many of us. Oh, well. Core Fandom seems to be puttering along just fine despite this development.}*

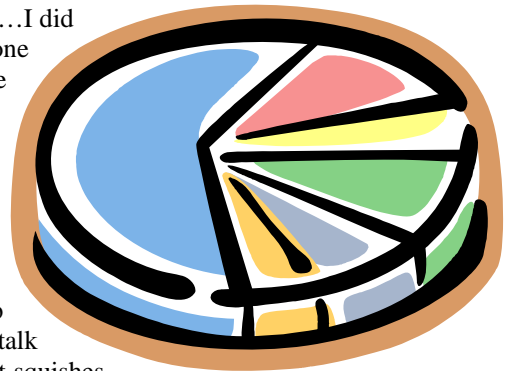
Everyone's doing their indexes or indices this time of year. For myself...I did 250 locs last year, and aimed for 260 this year. If I do another one tomorrow, I shall hit 270, and then I shall rest. In the new year, I have to spend more time job hunting, so I know I can do the quantity. It's the quality that I have to work on now, and there's some article I have in mind... *{Hint-hint, wink-wink, eh?}*

I think we all agree about zines, e- versus paper. They have become cheaper to produce, and perhaps that has eroded their value. They have become yet another internet disposable. It's good to know that once someone like Chris Garcia talks about zines at BASFA club meetings, the zines become part of the background fanac, and people talk about it. Perhaps, they might even want to dabble in it, and see how it squishes around their fingers. (You wanted mangled metaphors? You got it.)

Hope's computer died, but she now has a new (or less-old) one that is allowing her to be online without fuss or mushroom clouds escaping out the back. *{That's good news. In this day and age, a working computer capable of handling the Internet and file sizes is a necessity. Hope is another person I am looking forward to seeing again at Corflu after many long years.}*

My loc...my eye has filled with fresh vitreous, and while the lids still sag shut, I can open them by hand and I can see. It will take a month or more to get back to normal.

My greetings to Dr. Ben Bova! It's been a long time since we've seen you and Barbara in Toronto. Wish you could come back.



It's getting late in the day, and tomorrow morning, we have to get a few things ready for a great party tomorrow night. Yvonne and I wish the whole Purcell family a happy new year, the Year of the Boar, and we'll see if we can't resume this zine-and-loc relationship sometime in very early 2007. See you then.

Lloyd

{Well, it certainly appears you can't keep a good letterhack down. I am very happy to hear – or read about, that is – that your recovery is nearly complete and you appear to be doing quite well. And I thank you for agreeing to review fanzines in these august pages starting in March. “Now is the winter of our discontent...” Oh, fuckitalltohell. I am not in the mood for quoting Shakespeare. Methinks it's time for another bbeer...}

And thus endeth the lettercolumn. Not much in quantity, but it's the quality that matters. This reminds of this commercial for a classic rock radio station in Des Moines, Iowa, back in the early 90s: “90,000 watts of power; KDMS – 91 FM. It's not the size, it's the frequency.” This statement was immediately followed by the sound of a woman's voice going, “Oohhh!!!”

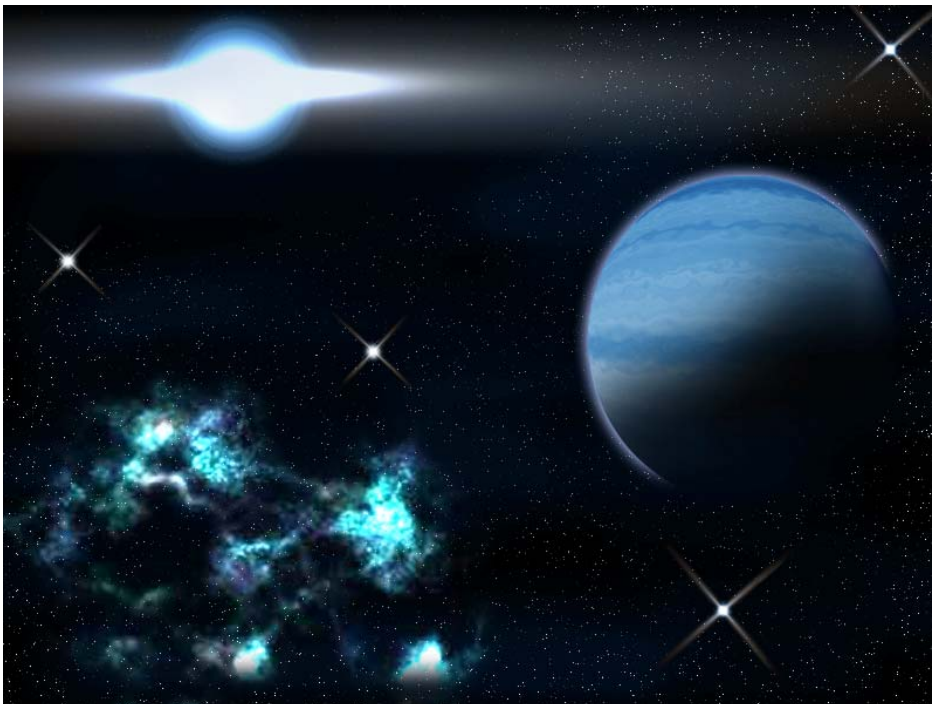
I also heard from:

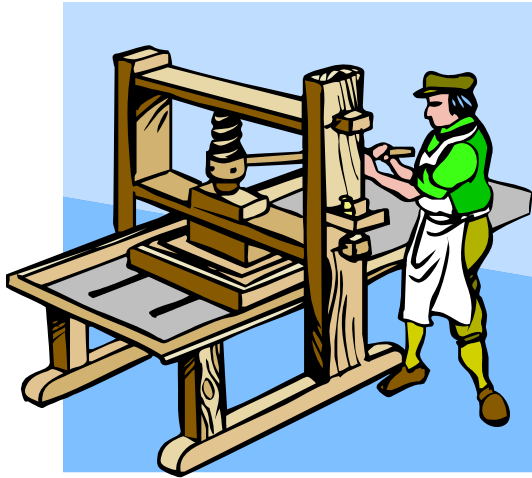
Steve H. Silver – *Who thanked me for giving him my current e-mail address, and wondered why Mike Glycer used Steve's old e-mail address in the latest File 770.*

R Laurraine Tutihasi – *Good to hear from you!*

Henry Welch – *Congratulations on 20 years of The Knarley Knews!*

Peter Weston – *Soon to appear at a Corflu near me.*





fanzine reviews

Unless you're a fanzine fan who has been living twelve feet under a rock, you should know by now that the next Corflu – the 24th in the series, officially known as Corflu Quire, but a part of me still wants to call it Corflu Lone Star – is just around the corner, which means it is time to cast votes for the 2006 Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards: the FAAns.

Normally I would review just one or two fanzines in this section, but this time around I want to share some of my observations about the current state of fanzine fandom and the FAAn categories. I will make no pitch in support of certain individuals, but will mention names of those fans who I feel are deserving of nomination. This statement should act as a sufficient disclaimer, I hope, and disarm those of you who might get the urge to hurl bricks at me.

In general, fanzine fandom appears to quite healthy. Many people have predicted the death of fanzines as on-line communication has grown exponentially in the last decade or so, but observation indicates that such is not the case. In fact, the ease of on-line pubbing – a potential topic of discussion at Corflu Quire - has brought a lot of folks back into pubbing zines again and new fans to give zines a try. This is A Good Thing, and I for one have been enjoying the show. Dead-tree fanzines are still being pubbed as well, and most of these end up being posted at Bill Burns' website, efanzines.com, which has become a focal point for fanzine fandom. This is another Good Thing. Core Fandom, being a group of people who pretty much know each other in one way, shape, or form, thrives on having a place where everyone has a voice. Fanzines are that place, and efanzines.com provides a much-needed forum. So I am quite pleased with this development.

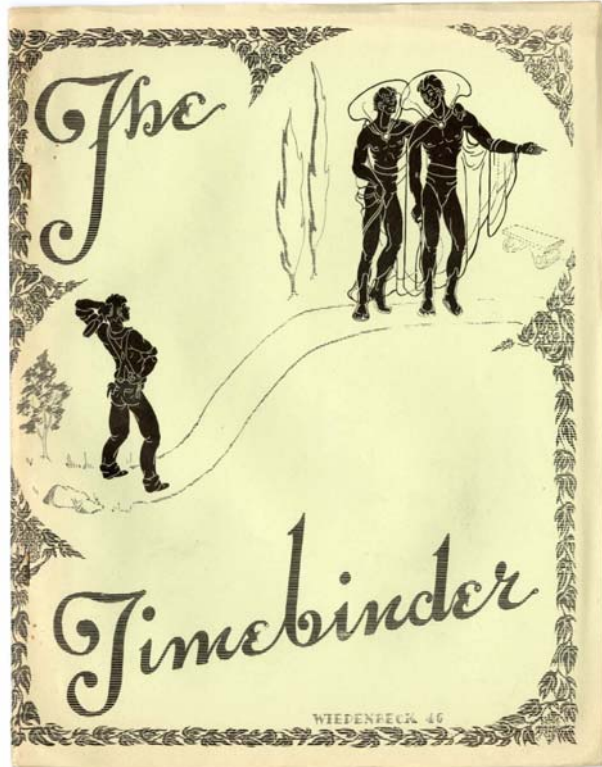
The categories for this year's FAAn Awards are thankfully nowhere near as plentiful as the Hugos. There are only five categories: Best Fanzine, Best Fan Writer, Best Fan Artist, Best Letterhack, and Best New Fanzine Fan. I shall briefly consider the possibilities, as I see them, of each category.

BEST FANZINE

This is the toughest category of all. There are so many wonderful zines to consider. The paper zines are so strong that if on-line pubbing didn't exist, the choice would still be damned difficult. Just a quick listing of what I've received is a heckuva list: *Alexiad*, *Banana Wings*, *Bento*, *Chunga*, *File 770*, *The Knarley Knews*, and *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly #12* make this a strong field. Add in the following e-zines and the choice becomes almost impossible: *Argentus*, *Drink Tank*, *eI*, *In a Prior Lifetime*, *No Award*, *Peregrine Nations*, *Pixel*, *Prolapse*, *Some Fantastic*, *Vegas Fandom Weekly*. This is easily the strongest category, and I had a difficult time casting my vote. No matter which zine walks away with this award, I know that I'll be happy with the result.

BEST FAN WRITER

Another exceptionally strong field. The leaders here are probably Claire Brialey, Randy Byers, Graham Charnock, Chris Garcia, Arnie Katz, Earl Kemp, Lee Lavell, Richard Lupoff, Eric Mayer, Cheryl Morgan, Mark Plummer, and Ted White. Tough call. These are all wonderfully talented people, and while I do have my favorites in this category, I will not be disappointed with the results either.



BEST FAN ARTIST

Here's a category that is going to be interesting to watch. I suspect that Brad W. Foster is the front-runner, but strong contenders are Ken Fletcher, Kyle Hinton, Stu Schiffman, Marc Schirmeister, Dan Steffan, and Frank Wu. I really hope people don't forget some folks who have been producing consistently good work for many years, such as Sheryl Birkhead and Alan White. This is a good category, but when *SFY #12* plunked into our mailboxes in November, the contributions of Fletcher, Schiffman, and Steffan pushed them all up into view. Remember also, folks, that Steve Stiles withdrew his name from consideration for this award. The result is that this could easily be anybody's game.

BEST LETTERHACK

Tough choices. Whoever wins this award needs to understand that this one is known officially as the Harry Warner, Jr., Memorial Award. I don't know about the rest of you, but knowing that

really humbles me. Lots of good people will be considered for this one: Randy Byers, E. B. Frohvet, Chris Garcia, Robert Lichtman, Eric Mayer, Joseph Nicholas, Lloyd Penney, Mark Plummer, Ted White, and maybe even that old phart from SouthCentralEastern Texas, old whatshisname. Roll the dice to see who wins out here. Again, a difficult choice.

BEST NEW FANZINE FAN

This category is the slimmest of the bunch, but the choices are nonetheless good ones. Thanks to lots of fan activity out in the Bay Area, we have Jean Martin and España Sheriff, both who work on *Science Fiction in San Francisco*; John Coxon made a strong first impression with *Procrastination* last year, and should get many votes. A couple Las Vegas fans will most likely be considered: Theresa Cochran and James Taylor. Past this bunch, I have a tough time thinking of other newbies to the fanzine fold. I am positive that the future for all of these people is bright.

Wrapping it up:

So what do I see as fanzine fandom's biggest needs?

First of all, I would like to see Core Fandom get more proactive in getting some more people producing artwork for fanzines. This is where I think fanzines need the biggest kick in the pants. The artistic possibilities current technology makes available can make fan art not only visually interesting, but a lot

more fun. Additionally, if we get ourselves out to cons and show some youngsters – read: high school and college students who like SF&F and only come out of the woodwork for convention parties – that fanzine production is *fun*, then the future for fanzine fandom can be secured. People who read science fiction and fantasy tend to be highly creative individuals, and we need to play that up, be proactive in making our hobby interest appealing to youngsters. And oldsters, of course.

But I personally would enjoy seeing a lot more people getting involved in fanzines. Don't we all? As the old saying goes, "the more, the merrier." We are a close-knit bunch, and I know I would welcome new faces with open arms while twisting their arms for contributions.

Old habits die hard.

fanzines received &/or viewed:

Drink Tank #110-113; 2006 Garcia Index; Argentus #6; Scratch Pad #63-65; Prolapse #4; MT Void #1367-1368; MT Void #1423 ("I just discovered that when I calculated the whole number for the MT VOID, I forgot to include the 1985 issues. So the whole number has been corrected, starting with this issue." _ Evelyn Leeper.); Vegas Fandom Weekly #90; Surprising Stories #13; Visions of Paradise #110-112; Motorway Dreamer #3; File:770 #148; The Knarley Knews #121; Einblatt (January, 2007); Corflu Progress Report #2; Science Fiction in San Francisco #37.



some closing comments

Now that it is mid-January, I am starting to get really revved up for Corflu 24 next month. (What a surprise.) The semester is just about to start, and the expectations are high.

When I consider the year just past and look ahead into 2007, I feel good. At the same time, trepidation creeps into the picture, cautiously poking its ugly little head around the corner. Since I have my preliminary doctoral exams coming up in June, this feeling is not to be unexpected. This is both exciting and scary. As Dr. Ben Bova told me in an e-mail a couple months ago, "relax and stay calm." At the same time, I will keep reminding myself that I know what I'm doing and that I will be just fine.

Even so, there are some changes that I find myself considering right now. For instance, the astute readers out there have probably noticed that this issue is six pages shorter than the average length of *In A Prior Lifetime*. The main reason is that I really didn't feel up to writing book reviews of the old science fiction novels I have been reading, and also I have been working on short stories again. Every morning – if I can – I try to write at least 500 words on a story. Three days ago I got on a roll and wrote about 1200 words on one story, then brainstormed a full page of single-spaced notes on a new idea. Where these efforts lead, I haven't a clue, but if I stick to it and try to read my own writing *critically*, maybe publication success shall follow. All I want to do is give fiction writing an honest effort.

Another thing I want to say at this point is that I asked Lloyd Penney to write a fanzine column for me, and he has graciously accepted the challenge ~~the fool~~. His first effort should appear in March. Also, to ease the writing burden on myself, I plan on asking for contributions at Corflu and other conventions I plan on attending this year (see page 6 for a listing of potential cons that are in a one-day's drive from College Station). My goal is to get other people involved in my zine, make it more of a genzine with a personalzine slant.

Another reason for this being a shorter zine is that I really, really, *really* want to hand out the 20th issue at Corflu. That means I have a little over three weeks to get it done and copies made, including a full color cover. (Oh, how I hope that turns out well. The artwork that I found on the Internet is awesome!) That issue will probably only consist of an editorial, locs, maybe assembling all of the Lee Pelton articles into a single piece, and little else. So the 20th issue will also be shorter than usual.

Now I think I'll put this issue to bed, even though it's late morning on Sunday, January 14, 2007.

Thank you one and all for allowing me to inflict this zine on your computer screen, and I look forward to doing this again. See a bunch of you folks in Austin.

John Purcell

