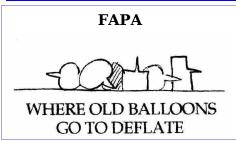
A Propos de Rien

For the August 2004 mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association by Jim Caughran, 43 Dingwall Avenue, Toronto Ontario, M4J 1C4 Canada; caughran@rogers.com. Illo page 1 by Rotsler. Font change: new fonts are Bitstream Vera Serif and Bitstream Vera Sans-Serif. (These are open source fonts.) Dingbats are FFDingbests.



We are seduced by little things. "I'll spend a few minutes reading the email, then work on my Fapazine." A few minutes, of course, turns into a couple of hours, then something else comes up requiring attention, and the mailing comments are forgotten.

After getting fired in January 2003, I tried to find work and discovered that my applications were

greeted with total silence. It was like throwing a sponge into a fog bank. I did a small bit of contract work and collected unemployment.

Meanwhile, the stock market was improving, and I discovered, early this year, that I can afford to retire. "Hot fout!" I said to myself, "I'll have time for fanac. I can write a loc every day, and make every mailing!" Sure.

Shaw Festival July 8, we went to Niagara on the Lake to see *Man and Superman*. I would have liked to have seen the full 5-hour version with the Don Juan in Hell act included, but the dates didn't work out for us. Shaw was witty, but what was outrageous a century ago is fairly mild now. Acting was good and the minimal sets were interesting (and they allowed a quick view of the Hell set with the announcement that the scene was omitted).

The Niagara peninsula is Ontario's fruit area. We visited a couple of wineries and picked a couple of pounds of cherries from the B&B's trees. The B&B people were "semi-retired", which means they let out rooms and run a limousine service. They had a chance to buy a Jaguar, then a Rolls Royce, and it went on from there. They have 3 RR's (2 working, one for parts), a Bentley, an English Daimler, a TR-3, a few Jaguars, a full stretched limousine, and more. It must add up to more than a million worth of automobiles.

Friday we drove to the Welland Canal and watched the Kwintebank move through lock 3. (Even a ship has a website these days: http://koti.mbnet.fi/hhl/00-kwintebank.htm) Then we drove toward Lake Erie and spent some time walking about in Welland next to a previous version of the canal.

Renovations We've been beset by renovations. After more than five weeks of trying to live in two rooms, dust and dirt, clutter everywhere, I'm tired of it. The contractor got sick, then had truck problems. A firm called "Stair Trek" delivered a new stairway, but finked out on the railings. Things should have been done by now (June 16), but it looks like more than another week. July 2: contractors are finished, but we've got to paint. It goes on forever, like a bad battery commercial.

Scrabble: A new hobby is competitive Scrabble. Janet and I used to think we were moderately good players (we knew the two-letter words and played parallel to already played words), but after joining the Toronto Scrabble Club, it's clear we are only so-so. Life is a continuing opportunity to learn things.

Raccoons: The other morning, the cats meowed for food loudly. There should have been some in their bowl, but it was empty, and we couldn't find the bin where we keep their supply. Then we discovered that the balcony door was open, an invitation for raccoons to visit and mooch. But the whole bin? Today we found the bin, empty, outside in the garden behind a tree. There was no clear path from the balcony to the garden, down 3 metres or so from the balcony.

Format your fanzine to be read online

(reprinted from trufen.net May 28)

Given that many of us read fanzines online, we should make our fanzines as attractive and readable online as we can. Some of us, including John Foyster and Earl Kemp, have designed their fanzines for the computer screen. Most of us design for paper and ignore the fact that our zines are read online.

Kemp and Foyster use different approaches in their design. Kemp designs his fanzines as web pages. There is no attempt to lay out text and pictures in 'pages.' Foyster laid his fanzines out in two-columned pages with a screen-like aspect ratio. The page is visible as a unit, and can be read without scrolling.

It is possible to use different HTML styles for different purposes. CSS, the HTML style language, is quite flexible and allows you to use one format for the screen and another for printing.

The basics of using a different stylesheet for printing than for screen display is set out in A List Apart,

www.alistapart.com/articles/printyourway/. There is nothing terribly difficult, and the CSS/HTML approach works quite well. Text can flow around illos and sidebars (W3 CSS standard for visual rendering, www.w3.org/TR/REC-CSS2/visuren.html) and you can control widows and orphans, keep related things together and set gutter margins (W3 CSS standard for paged material,

www.w3.org/TR/REC-CSS2/page.html).

For something like Kemp's eI that was intended for screen display and written in HTML, those who insist on printing their fanzines would have a better looking paper copy.

But on paper, double-column text is easier to read and has some other formatting advantages. There seems to be no way to take advantage of it for HTML-based documents. Text simply doesn't flow vertically from one column to another. Short of writing fairly sophisticated script to put text into boxes, or using a print program to put two "pages" side by side on a sheet, there doesn't seem to be a way to continue text from the bottom of column one to the top of column two.

There are lots of references to twocolumn HTML pages online, but what that means is putting the main text in one column, and a menu or sidebar in a second.

If we start with a paper version and want to make it attractive on the screen, it is not overly difficult to make two versions of a fanzine that has more text than illos. There is little reason not to accommodate both paper and screen readers, using an HTML version with a print style, an HTML version and a paper PDF, or a paper PDF and a screen PDF.

For online design, narrower columns are usually easier to read than wide columns. Online, it doesn't matter how long a page is; you can scroll forever with a finger on the down-arrow. So maybe online docu-

ments should be long and skinny. With an HTML document, the reader can adjust the window size to her preferences.

On the other hand, if you're using doublecolumn format on paper, you may want a similar appearance for the screen version. If so, a page with two columns should fit on a screen, eFNAC-style.

To start with a paper fanzine and modify for the screen, first create and print your paper version, on paper and on PDF. Then save another copy of your zine as a screen version and reformat. In Word (which I'm familiar with), I would do this reformat as follows:

- 1) Note the places where I want fullsized images: the cover, large illos, maybe some other visual effects.
- 2) Divide the document into sections around the full-sized "pages". Sections is a powerful Word feature that's underused. It allows very different formatting in adjacent parts of the docu-

ment. In this case, the different formatting is going to be page size.

There are a couple of ways to insert sections in Word. The straightforward way is Insert/Break/Section break (continuous or new page). Then reformat each section. The easier way is to select text and apply formatting. If Word needs to create a new section, it does. For example, select a bunch of text and apply a different page size to the selection. Word creates a section break before and after the selection, and reformats the inbetween to fit on the new size.

- 3) To change page size, File/Page Setup/Paper Size.
- 4) Print a screen PDF.

I think that to ignore the fact that your fanzine is distributed by the Internet is to deny reality. People will read your fanzine on the screen; make it good-looking and as easy to read as possible.

Manuscript found in a Bottle

When I was quite young, I addressed a message to persons unknown, put it into a catsup bottle and cast it into the North Platte river. I imagined it would flow with the river, traveling to the Platte, merging with the Missouri and passing out of the continent with the Mississippi. Who knows, it might travel across the Atlantic and be found by someone in Europe!

But it probably still lies buried in a sandbar in western Nebraska.

I don't remember what was in the message. Probably not much more than my address, scrawled in an eight-year-old's recently-learned alphabet.

Many years later, Augusto and I used to sail off the west coast of Puerto Rico. We sailed a Rhodes 19, a seductive boat that gave the feeling it could navigate waters it really shouldn't. We went to offshore islands, notably Isla Mona,

but more often Desecheo, a rock somewhat closer to Mayaguez.

The winds were, as always, less than perfect. On each trip, some hours would be spent drifting and windless. We might do a little work on the boat, or strip off clothing and swim. While you might suppose that swimming far away from land or reef, 800 fathoms from the bottom, might be dull, in fact it was fascinating. There were no reference points; looking down I saw water extending forever. The sun's rays converged toward infinity.

One time I was loafing in the boat while Tuto was scraping weeds and barnacles off the bottom. Suddenly he jumped out of the water and landed in the boat, exclaiming something about a shark! Small fish had converged to eat the scrapings, then larger fish to threaten the small fish, and so on.

Often we would drift toward an area where garbage would collect in the sea. Logs, grass, too much styrofoam and plastic, would be held by currents, congregating in a floating dump. I don't know the mechanics of it, but somehow everything drifted together.

Does something similar happen in rivers, so that the catsup bottles of children's imaginations collect on a common sandbank? Is there a treasure of hopes of communication, circled by catfish and carp?



February Mailing

TRIAL AND AIR—Waite

By postmailing, yours was the first Fapazine received of this mailing, by a long shot.

I met Thomas Merton once, long ago in another life. He was at the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani, and invited the men of the Quaker meeting in Lexington Kentucky to visit. To be honest, I didn't really know who he was, but it sounded like an interesting day, so I agreed to go.

Merton, in fact, wanted to talk about current affairs, mostly things we had already talked out. Trappists don't have a lot of chances to talk current affairs. It *was* an interesting day; it brought me an awareness of monastic life. It was no more than a few months before his death.

Your paragraph on the amzaing power to read text despite permutations of the letters makes proofreading very difficult. * The Harry Warner and John Foyster memorials are appropriate and appreciated. Examples of Harry's clear exposition and understated humour should be pre-

served. I suppose the anthologizing of fanzine articles Harry mentions in the article about Fapa has been reallocated to Corflu special publications. Good Stuff!

NICE DISTINCTIONS—Hlavaty

American soldiers who leave the military in protest against the Irag war are deserters; seems Bush left the military in order to do his own thing. Doesn't that make him a deserter? Or is desertion something only people without political connections do? (There is a legal definition which is, I think, 60 days overdue.) I received an email today asking that we insist that the Pres restore marriage to its Biblical statepolygamous, with concubines, valid only if the wife is a virgin (penalty for misrepresentation, death), etc. It gave full Biblical references. $\frac{1}{2}$ I managed not to see a single replay of the bare nipple. I don't know if that's virtuous or simply a sign that I'm out of touch. → People Magazine and the tabloids, by referring to movie stars by first name, try to make the reader feel she knows these people and their private pains intimately. "Private pains" might, I suppose, include the article writers.

YHOS—Twidner

Enjoyed your ramblings. I looked up Kenniwick Man online, to discover that not a whole lot is known about him, largely because the status of his bones is still in court. The first guy to get the bones created the "Caucasian" and "Picard" labels, but he probably did not know enough to say so, and the note I saw implicitly questioned his competence. Chauvenet has been missed.

ALL SINKING—Burnett

"All Sinking" sounds like the capital of Finland. At Peary's time, the location of the North Pole was probably fuzzy, so he might be forgiven for missing it. A Russian tried to ski to Canada via the North Pole last year or this, and failed; for

him, the North Pole admits only a metre or so of error. I was surprised to see a lot of people smoking in a spaceship in the film *Alien*. Logic should forbid the cost of cleaning the air from cancerous particles. These days, there seem to be all kinds of interest groups on the web, one or more of which might appeal to me almost as much as fandom. But here I have tenure and inertia.

ALPHABET SOUP—Stevens

Acting: the last couple of plays I saw (*Cooking at the Cookery, The Syringa Tree*) each required an actress to play many roles with very different personas. (This was written before the Shaw review above.) So it was evident she was acting, and evident that she was doing it well. The high cost of acting seems to mean that plays have few actors, and those few must be very versatile. In movies you can take it more for granted. Remember how often Windows 98 crashed, and you may not want to return to it. I expect that in time, Microsoft will make it difficult to continue using my Windows 2000, and I'll switch to Linux. My favourite example of cultural diffusion is halal pizza, widely available near here.

SYNAPSE—Speer

Referring endnotes back to page numbers wouldn't be all that much more difficult, if the publisher's software is designed for it. Lately, endnotes seem to add chapter titles, which is at least a little better than just the chapter number. Referring to "what you quoted" doesn't tell the reader much about what you're talking about. ♦ "Eventually all of Latin America except Cuba became free." If you mean they aren't Marxist, okay, but that is not synonymous with "free". (You could say that Pinochet freed Chile from Allende, but Chileans wouldn't agree.) The governments in several Latin American countries are more friendly to US corporations than they are to their own people. A This word processor does strikeovers. *--

FELINE MEWSINGS—Tutihasi

We left the last computer we discarded in front of the house. It disappeared a couple of days later; I hope someone found some use for it. (Hard drives, etc., had been removed.) Low blood pressure got me out of compulsory ROTC at U. Cal in 1958. I checked the "fainting spells"

box on an information form based on having fainted when rising quickly. ROTC had had some problems with people fainting on the parade ground, and dumped me. I was glad to be dumped. I think the stresses of life have raised my blood pressure back to normal since that time.

WEIRD TALES—Everts

I suppose that if you are forced to look through old census records, you have to do *something* with the information.

SAFARI 3.3—Kemp

feel human, even if required by the boss.

BEN'S BEAT 76—Indick

I liked your alternatives to fanac: watching TV sitcoms or wrestling matches, or playing solitaire with the computer. I probably would not have seen the Rings movies were it not for the teenaged children. Having seen them, my main reaction is, "So?" Why we need another King Kong: KK2 had the gorilla climbing the World Trade Center, and since that is no longer there, obviously he has to climb something else. I always enjoy your brief theatre reviews. Elrief technology note: I wanted to look up Eric's zine after your reference, but I have no idea where that mailing is. Solution: eFanzines.com.]

SMOKIN' ROCKETS—Katz

Feeding pigeons and seagulls seems like feeding flying rats. They're disease-bearing scavengers, damn it! So at least one of Ben's alternatives to fanac is real for you. Can one in fact play solitaire at a casino there? I have been addicted to Solitile and to FreeCell at various times, but recently, I play a vocabulary game to reinforce Scrabble words. * Aaagh! I just tried FreeCell to see if I could remember it. Unfortunately, I could. Hynne Truss says, "It is customary in the UK to blame all examples of language erosion on the pernicious influence of the US." Apparently it is customary for fans on either side of the Atlantic to blame a perceived loss of fanzine quality on those on the other side. Why, aside from that custom, would Arnie lament the influence of Britfans yet not be able to give up contact with a dozen of them? But he's on the right track with his gonad solution; if fans keep each other satisfied, we will all write fannish masterpieces. Andy Hooper's revelations that one can sell 89¢ toys for several dollars could kill his business, if others rush out to KMart to join him. Stinson's complaint about undue publishing of parts of private email returns us to yesteryear, when people said the same things about paper letters. Funny how even though everything's different, nothing has changed. While Lloyd Penney seems to have a wish list for Santa Claus, I think his fantasies of what to do if he won a lottery is what the lotteries are selling—that is, they're selling fantasies.

VICK IN NICK—Vick

I thought that Nick Farey was the author of this for a few seconds, a delusion not contradicted by colophon. As I said up there somewhere, a good printer can print collated copies (reverse print order and print the even-numbered sides first), but if a printer feeds double or otherwise gets out of synch, all is lost. Almost any printer can print 68 identical copies on one side, then 68 on the back side, leaving its human to dance around a table filled with piles of paper. Most drawing is easier on paper, then scanned, rather than trying to draw with a mouse. "Drawing with a mouse is like drawing with a bar of soap." My daughter Sara said that to me; I don't know who said it to her, if anyone. 3 After the Tylenol poisonings, a manufacturer in a litigious society like the US has to protect against adulterations. Thus your sealed shampoo.

SWEET JANE—Eklund

It's ironic that after the US spent so many billions in the cold war, the opponent countries fell to *nonviolent* populist movements (except for Rumania, which was violent, and China, which was not successful). * Democracy is a loaded word. I suspect every country in the world calls itself democratic. About all it means is "our side". "There has never been a war between democracies" is, therefore, meaningless. Ending war reguires justice, and unless there is some economic leveling, being a democracy won't help the US. As an example, if the US had used one or two of those billions to make clean drinking water available to everyone, the world would be safer than it is after they wasted it on all those nukes and aircraft carriers. * Killing Muslims won't create

peace. I'll go with A. J. Muste: "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."

CRAZY FROM THE HEAT—Vegrants

Time to play another FreeCell. Damn you, Joyce!

I'll let rich brown get excited over the Lord of the Rings movies. I saw them, I tried to read the book once, and it all seems tedious. Alleen has been spoiled by California, it's plain. I suppose much of what she saw in Iowa would have been familiar to me in Nebraska when I was young, but I would have accepted it as natural, not repelling. Parts unknown might be a welcome break. How do I stand for PUFF? Good stuff, all of it.

UNSALVAGEABLE TRAJECTORY—Hinz

I hadn't noticed classical or other music in Toronto's subways, save for the licensed buskers who play a wide range of things (with a wide range of qualities).

"Intelligence plays some role in an organism's sexual conduct." How do animals—geese, say—who mate for life select their partners? 🖹 Collections: "The cost of climate control is less than the harm caused by poor climatic conditions." Perdue once let Ellik and I look through his collection for duplicates, housed in an open cellar under his house. I opened an old icebox, and found a treasure of early Astoundings. Bjo drew a cartoon of it, "What about these Astoundings in the refrigerator, Meyer?"

The McMichael curators continue to try to put modern art into the museum, while the heirs of the McMichaels continue to sue to limit the collection to paintings only a little bit abstract. There was another court decision only a month or two ago. X I wish you could spell "its".

TERMINAL EYES—Marion

Visually stunning, as always. I liked the Mota cover, in the middle of the zine. The Martin Luther King quotation is quite powerful, and, yes, it applies to Bush's war. The parallels of Iraq with Vietnam are getting more and more disturbing. In the Trufen group, it was revealed that if the walls need painting, you have space for more bookcases. Your hearing loss may be partly caused by your musical preferences. I

think we're raising a generation of near-deaf people due to loud music. Anti-depressant medication is a wonderful thing these days, though they should probably be reserved for chronic depression rather than immediate reactions to reality. There seems to be some thought among psychologists that worrying about depression makes it worse. A new field is Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy, which combines meditation and programming your mind to deal with things. / Don't rely on either governments or corporate pensions to fund your retirement; the former is inadequate and the latter disappears too frequently these days. A "Queer as a three dollar bill." It was said of Jack Harness that with Dianetics, he was as clear as a three dollar bill. The extremists in the women's movement made pornography a dirty word.

EDGAR'S JOURNAL—Ogdens

I've been in, I think, in each of the states in the US except Hawaii, Alaska, North Dakota, Vermont, Rhode Island, Alabama, Mississippi and North and South Carolina. I've not been in almost as many provinces; need to travel more in Canada. The Dream Pillow was good. I didn't care for the Steven King novels I've read, and that feeling is not apt to change since he's on my Ignore list. Vou expect consistency from Benjamin Franklin? I wish you could spell "its".

A FISH IN THYME—Cantor

It is to be noticed that Teddy Roosevelt wrote his letter allowing criticism of the President after, not during his Presidency. I don't think he cared for Wilson's ideas. * The US certainly bombed North Korea, and there was a question, having driven NK and the Chinese back to the previous border, whether to continue. They did continue, so they invaded NK. Call it response if you must. ♦ Sabella writes, "Rules of grammar are only..." traditional usage which have become codified." Ignoring the questions of split infinitives or endof-sentence prepositions, the goal is to communicate. Those ways of writing which are recognized by most literate people communicate better than other ways. As more people have become literate, the rules have become firmer and more violated. "You should only measure an aeroplane's speed in knots if it is being towed by a rope." You should measure an airplane's speed in the navigational units its officers use, which would be nautical miles per hour. If you are going to measure angles in degrees and minutes, it's much easier to measure distances in nautical miles (a minute of arc measured on the surface of the Earth). I suspect the creators of the metric system wanted to put 100 degrees in a right angle, and thus the circumference of the Earth is 40,000 km.

"A two-party system needs both parties to somewhat overlap in the middle with the majority positions of [each] party slightly to the left of the center - the Democrats - and slightly to the right of that - the Republicans." In Britain and in Canada, a conservative party has been governing for the last several years. Each can point to the Conservative party off to the right, and say that that other party are the conservatives. In effect, the people's party has been taken over by business. In the US, it's much the same except that the Democrats have not been able to hold on to power and there is no left party of any consequence. Proportional representation has been proposed by the smaller parties in Canada, and the larger parties have not ruled it out completely. It would make minority governments the rule rather than the exception - there have been few governments which took a majority of the votes. That would probably be a good thing. The ruling conservative party, the Liberals, feel they have the right to form the government, unhindered. The limits of spirit duplication were indeed among the reasons the membership was restricted to 50 people. It was later, when duplicating improved, that the limit was raised to 65. Should we change the idiom to "I'm all eyes" in our visual medium? * "Temporary book stores" put me in mind of the toy stores that appear in November and disappear in January. Since most toy stores are lucky to make expenses most of the year and make their profit in December, it seems like cheating. What is the book season? \(\sqrt{} \) Jefferson and Lafayette must have corresponded with a frequency like that of Fapa mailings, if they were lucky. I suspect the British Empire in the 19th century was largely a stable rule primarily by military force.

↓ "Most non-American Fapans are probably only peripherally interested in American domestic politics." When Kennedy was assassinated, the whole world cried. It became apparent that the American President was the leader of the Western world, if not the whole world. This is more the case now

than it was then. The rest of the world has to pay attention to American politics to some extent. Americans, aided by their poor news facilities, pay little attention to the rest of the world.

LOFGEORNOST—Lerner

Enjoyed the account of your trip to Nova Scotia by ferry. There is now a ferry (the Breeze) running between Rochester and Toronto. A newspaper account made it not particularly attractive--CA\$240 for round-trip car and two passengers, no time saved. 🌣 I visited a different Nova Scotia about 1987, mostly the Cabot Trail around Cape Breton. 🗏 J.B. Post says, "if anyone can get almost any book, what good are community standards for local libraries? Drives the censors nuts." It may be that community standards are defined by what people ask for, or it may simply be the case that the censors are afraid that people will learn how babies are made by browsing the books on the shelf. - "Because neither their successes nor their failures are as clearly defined as those of internists or surgeons, it is easer for ... psychiatrists to exaggerate both their competence and their benevolence." Most psychiatrists these days no longer do much listening, but give people pills to regulate their emotions. They have more or less the same methods as internists for much of their practice. There is overprescription and misdiagnosis in each. Are any online journals recognized to follow your location and permanence criteria for scientific record? Ø I recall debating federal aid to education in high school, 45 years ago. As now, the issues were control and the need for money. I don't think it unreasonable to set standards for education—perhaps in class size if not content.

VOICE OF THE HABU—Wells

Usually, the solidus (/) should allow a line break between two words so separated, but this word processor doesn't. One solution (if it matters) is to put 1-point spaces on one or both sides of the slash. (I used the trick with em-dashes in a couple of places here.

OPUNTIA—Spiers

Consumption communities -- surely they antedate the middle 1800s in the areas of intellectual endeavours (e.g., physics) or class-specific interests (e.g., recreational sailing). There is no religious bigotry in Canada but be careful what language you speak in a public place." Hmm. Speak-

ing French in Northern Ontario or English in rural Quebec would target you, but hearing dozens of languages in Toronto is totally accepted. Does Calgary not accept the "salad bowl" view of cultural diffusion? See my comments to Cantor about political parties in Canada. I'm guessing that Crichton's prediction of the end of the 1993 mass media was based on the rise of the Internet. I doubt that people in 1465 yet had any idea that printing existed, let alone what effects it would have on society. While most educated people have now heard of the Internet, I don't think we can forecast what it will do to culture.

ARIMONIITTI—Halme

Welcome. I suspect that a a general finder *could* be developed, if everything had a transmitter in it. That seems to be the way retail checkouts are going. X For Fapa—Lindsay. Canada is half-converted to metric. US manufacturers package things in pounds or ounces and mark the container for Canada in ridiculously odd grams or millilitres. That must be the worst of systems. On the success side, highway distances are firmly kilometres and gasoline is sold by the litre. No one brags of their gasoline consumption, however.

THE ANNEX—Searles

Enjoyed your verse. In think many of us suffered from bad teaching of poetry by teachers who themselves didn't appreciate it. I've tried to expand my appreciation as an adult, but only with limited success.

DREAMTIME BY AIR—Lindsay

Enjoyed your trip report. I marked down, "wish pictures >", but then noticed you gave a web address, which I can't access now. (I typed this first on a palmtop computer.)

GEGENSCHEIN—Lindsay

Those who use cell phones seem to think everyone has them, so they wonder why your telephone didn't receive the text message they sent. Do the more popular museums, zoos, aquariums, etc., subsidize less popular attractions in Australia? I don't think popular taste should be the main criterion in what things should be able to be seen, or what should be remembered.