

PIXEL TWO

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May 2006

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AMDG



pix·el (pīk'səl, -sēl') n.
The basic unit of the composition of an image on a television screen, computer monitor, or similar display. Short for **Picture Element**

Special Thanks to:
Dave Locke, Dave Lewton,
and Lee Lavell

"Fanzines can't evolve without
ceasing to be fanzines."

Notes From Byzantium

FANZINES ARE DEAD

Why am I writing for a fanzine?

Fanzines are dead. At least as a living art form or mode of communication in the twenty-first century. No one cares about fanzines today except for a few oldpharts and the sort of young people who might latch onto silent movies, or 19th century Italian opera or the computer text adventure games Infocom produced back in the eighties before home computers could handle graphics.

It's not that all these forms of artistic expression don't possess their own idiosyncratic and irreplaceable virtues. They do. So does prehis-



toric cave painting. But does anybody crawl into caves these days and charcoal stylized animals onto the rocks by the light of a fire?

Probably some enthusiasts, somewhere do, and they likely have websites covering their activity. Not fanzines, certainly.

Compared to the fast and flexible forms of electronic communication we now have at our disposal, fanzines are slow and rigid. Dinosaurs. Fossilized dinosaurs. Most of their virtues are in their limitations. Unlike websites or blogs, each issue of a fanzine is complete, or some would say, static. Contrary to the free-for-all of Internet boards and lists, the editor exerts artistic control of a fanzine and imbues it with his own personality. How undemocratic!

Fanzines can't evolve without ceasing to be fanzines. Posting fan essays to a blog or a website might be a good idea but won't turn the blog or website into a fanzine.

As for PDF fanzines – they're nothing but a way to emulate paper on a computer. A ridiculous idea when you think about it. Still, I enjoy pretending to turn discrete pages that aren't there, don't have to be and serve no useful purpose, and I'll continue to do so, just as I'll some-

times click on my old Atari emulator and revel in the ancient beeps and crude pixellations of Pac-Man or Demon Attack that seemed so magical in a time long ago, but more recent than the age of fanzines.

PUBLISHING PRATFALLS

IBooks has gone into bankruptcy. I wonder, does that make their mass market paperback edition of *Four For A Boy* a valuable collector's item?

I'm disappointed. It gave me a thrill seeing one of the historical mystery novels my wife Mary and I have written lumped in with all those Asimov reprints and other SF titles IBooks specialized in. When I was a kid I figured I'd naturally grow up to make my living writing SF. Also, it was kind of nifty to be able to say we were published by an imprint of Simon & Schuster.

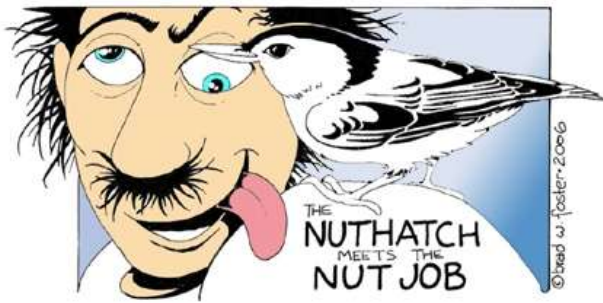
More importantly, to me, that paperback was, in a certain visceral sense, our only real book. Of course, the beautifully produced and durable hardcovers published by Poisoned Pen Press are in every respect superior to mass market paperbacks. They have long lives on library shelves, garner reviews, and earn more royalties. Plenty of well established writers of paperback originals yearn for hard covers. But, as a reader, I've rarely been able to afford hardbacks. So most of the books in my life have been cheap little mass market types.

Eric Mayer

Illustrations by Brad Foster

All the time I've spent browsing the paperback shelves in bookstores, sorting through tables and boxes full of them in thrift shops, reading while draped over a comfy chair at home or perched on a hard bus seat, have imprinted on my mind the particular size and heft, the feel of the pages and binding, probably the smell of the glue and paper. For me, all those sensory clues add up to "book."

I suppose our detective is disappointed too. The various editions of the other titles were identified as "John the Eunuch" mysteries. The IBook bore the more dignified appellation, "A Lord Chamberlain Mystery."



NAMING NATURE

This afternoon Mary and I watched a nuthatch hopping around on the roof outside the office window. I was able to identify our small visitor immediately. The gray body, the distinctive black head and white face, the long straight bill, were unmistakable, even to me. Nuthatches used to frequent the family birdfeeder during the winters when I was growing up.

Although I find nature aesthetically pleasing, I'm bad at putting names to any of it. I'd be hard pressed to identify most of the trees surrounding the yard let alone the ones on the hills. I can

tell a pine from a maple, and a cardinal from a blue jay. I know what a crow sounds like and that the yellow things in the lawn are dandelions. For the most part, though, the nature I see remains unclassified in my mind. It's just there.

To be able to merely label a thing is not very useful, I think. The hosta along the back of the house certainly don't know or care that we have given them a name, or that I spent some time last year scratching my head until I recalled what those familiar leafy plants were. The fact they have a name doesn't change them in any way.

The value in identifying a thing is that it allows one to learn more. I could look up nuthatches to find out what they eat, what our visitor hoped to find amidst the twigs left scattered by the melted snow on the eroded shingles and cracked tar. Whatever the nuthatch was looking for, he apparently didn't find. He didn't stay long and hasn't returned. I suppose it's his own business and he probably doesn't care if I choose not to probe into his affairs.

A COLORFUL HOME LIFE

Last night I spent an hour watching Marie Bonnard in the bath. Her husband, Pierre, was a painter during the first half of the last century and what he mostly painted, to judge by what I came across, was his wife at her ablutions.

Marie wouldn't have made the *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue*, judging by the pictures. She was wide in the hips. Her legs were a bit short. She had a tiny, impish face. Her husband painted her stretched out in the tub, bending over it, drying herself, getting dressed, getting undressed, looking into the bathroom mirror. He painted himself staring into the bathroom mirror too, I'll give him that. It's hard enough to look at yourself in the morning let alone paint what you see.

The Bonnards seemed to have lived a life of exceptional domesticity, by an artist's standards. Theirs was obviously not a brief affair. They didn't marry until thirty years after they'd met and then stayed married for nearly 20 years until Marie's death. Marie ages perceptibly in the paintings.

Even when he wasn't painting his wife, Pierre tended to depict other homely subjects. There are paintings looking through windows, and out back doors, and at tables set for meals.

What is striking about the works is the color. The sedate scenes are rendered in fauvist style. They squirm and flash and flicker with wild, clashing hues.

I was reminded of my own writing. Not that my writing is on a par with Bonnard's art, and not that I write wildly or colorfully. But I often take my own, uneventful life for my subject and do my best to color it with humor or to discern something interesting and pull it into the light by technique.

I'm not an art critic. I tend to read paintings much too literally. For all I know Pierre Bonnard had not the slightest interest in his domestic surroundings. From an artistic standpoint, Marie might have been nothing more than a familiar object upon which Pierre could practice his theories of light and color.

It pleases me to think otherwise. There's something admirable about an artist's inspiration being his wife in the bath or otherwise. In one painting Pierre displays himself, nude, having just gotten off the bed. At least I hope it's him because the woman sprawled languidly on the bed is obviously Marie. She's being joined by two small cats. The tableau is touching for being so unglamorous.

There's where Pierre and I part company. Even though I often take my own life for my subject, I'm not about to let it hang out in public like that even figuratively let alone literally. •

Dialog With Two Fans

A CHAT WITH

Buck Coulson

Originally published in a somewhat different form in *Outworlds*, 1984

Anything that might normally be mentioned by way of introduction to Robert S. Coulson is already included in the body of this Dialog. It comes out along the way. For most of you it doesn't make any never mind, anyway. You already know Buck or know of him, and an introduction might be superfluous to you.

My acquaintance with Buck goes back to 1961 when I blurged into fandom; I came in, and there he was. I met him, I got his & Juanita's *Yandro*, and later I was doing a column for *Yandro* and exchanging occasional letters and shooting the shit at the infrequent meeting. I even visited the Coulson Mansion once, and boggled at the various things there are to see.

Buck, and Juanita, are Electifen. As Buck wrote in *Mainstream* #9, October 1983:

"I've just realized why I can never be a trufan. The trufan has a well-developed social consciousness; he/she worries about the state of fandom, as well as the problems attendant upon all these fakefans standing around isolated while aping their betters.

"Electifen soon find out they don't fit anywhere"? Funny, that never happened to Juanita and me and we've encompassed fanzines, conventions, filking, Star Trek in the early days, becoming dirty pros, huckstering... is there anything we've missed? We even got invited to a Dorsai Thing once; but didn't go; as I recall, I'd already used up my vacation time. (Oh, yes, I'm a stf collector too ... Juanita has this file cabinet full of Golden Age comics ...) Okay,

we're not masqueraders, though I did participate in one masquerade and have been a judge at two others, and Juanita has judged several. (My one masquerade appearance, by the way, was in a Star Trek costume – no, not with the ears. I picked the side of the villains, naturally. No, not Klingons, either. And we collect fan and pro art.

Buck Coulson, as I know him – and I don't admit to knowing him as well as those who see him most often – is a fan who enjoys his shtick. The image he bears, and plays at fostering, is that of one of fandom's resident hardasses. While Buck can be as much of a hardass as the best of them when occasion demands, it doesn't take long to see behind the party mood and recognize a person who is much more balanced than the occasional image-tending would allow. In general: I find him a sensible man, possessed of a wide variety of interests including a great depth of knowledge in history and natural history as a consequence of being a buff and one of the most-read (goes beyond well-read) people I know, a person who speaks his mind without excitement or deep passion or acidity, who speaks clearly and without great embellishment, who delights in discovering the offbeat, has little patience for bullshit and naivete, and enjoys finding people to discuss mutual interests. He is neither argumentative nor dedicat-

Dave Locke

Photograph on page 6 by Michael P. Kube-McDowell;
page 10 unknown

edly purposeful, his writing style betrays a droll light touch even when he's riding his shtick, and he always has time for anyone who makes a reasonable approach. Buck strikes me as an interesting, down to earth person who is as much an institution in fandom as the propeller beanie. The casual joke is that Buck's motto is *End discrimination, Hate Everybody*, but I know for a fact that he's never killed anyone worth knowing.

It's time for me to crank up the temporal drive and travel back to a few months ago when I began this hot-typewriter dialog with Buck. My typewriter is in Cincinnati, Ohio. Buck's is in Hartford City, Indiana. Let us begin.

Dave

You've been a fan since before dirt was invented, and when I gafiated and had my back turned for a couple of years you became a pro while I wasn't looking. Let's ignore the professional writing for a moment and focus on the crifanac. What is your personal view of fandom and which of its activities do you enjoy the most?

Buck

What do you mean, I've been a fan for so long? It's a damn conspiracy; the Worldcon just stuck me on a panel with a bunch of the people who invented fandom, like I was part of their generation. It's only been 30 years; that's not too many ... okay, so it's been 31 years. I was a rank neo in 1952, and there had already been 6 or 7 fandoms before me. Okay; my personal view of fandom; it's a good place to meet friends. I'm not sure I care much for any of fandom's activities. My preferred fanish activity is meeting friends and occasion-

ally finding new ones. "Meeting" in the broad sense; via person or mail. One of our reasons for going to Baltimore is to meet Susan Shwartz; she's probably the only close friend of ours whom we haven't met in person yet. Fanzine publishing and con-going are both for the same purpose; I think I prefer meeting people by mail first, so fanzine publishing probably has the edge.

Dave

I think I prefer meeting fans by mail first, also. Interestingly enough, or perhaps not, I've never met a fan I disliked in print and then liked in person. The reverse has happened; some fans I liked in print I didn't care much for in person, for whatever reasons. (taste buds, probably).

This is one of the things, likely unique to fandom, which I've been fortunate having over two decades to observe" the relationship between a written personality and the balance of the owner it came from. I find these observations ever intriguing, and follow each development as it unfolds. The first fan I ever met, a correspondent back in 1961, turned out to be an individualist who liked to fuck cows. He told me all about it.

Any high-water marks for you? Who most surprised you with the difference between how you had perceived them and how they turned out to be?

Buck

Yeah, I've met fans who were interesting in print but not in person; none who were interesting in person but not in print. Generally, though, I think that letters are a good introduction to people. Differences in person and print ... offhand I can't think of any major ones. I've met fans who were aggressive in



Buck huckstering at a con, 1985

print but shy in person, but usually I don't care much for either facet so I'm not even sure I could name one now. I suppose the biggest initial difference was in Gene DeWeese. When we first got acquainted, he wrote voluminous letters to loads of people but would barely say two words in a face-to-face contact. (A friend of mine met him once, and after he'd left, asked, "Does he talk?") But Gene loosened up in subsequent contacts, so there wasn't that much difference in real personality. Also, I met Gene in person before I'd had many letters from him. No, I can't really think of anyone who harbored any deep dark secrets not revealed in letters.

Dave

Not deep, dark secrets. Just differences. I've heard for example that, without meeting the person, in the steadily receding long ago you introduced someone to Chicago fandom who proved to have unacceptable social graces (at least, to Chicago fandom). I've even heard that this was the reason you wanted to meet Jackie Causgrove (then Franke) before exposing her to fannish joys other than writing letters to Buck Coulson. I would assume your earlier correspondent must have displayed significant differences in persona between the ink and the presence, and that's the kind of thing I mean.

Care to take another whack at it, or to tell the story of the correspondent who bombed in Chicago, or to respond to Bill Bowers' accusation that you and Juanita were responsible for getting him into fandom?

Buck

To be honest, I don't remember what the woman was like in print. I'm not even sure that I got an impression; she may have just

written to ask if there was a club in the Chicago area. I got a fair number of questions like that when *Yandro* was monthly, and gave out a fair number of addresses. So, this one happened to be a nerd, *according to Chicago fandom*. I never got all that much of an impression of her in person because I never talked to her much; said hello at a few cons is about all. (Chicago fandom is undoubtedly correct, but I can't say from my own knowledge that there was any difference between the in-person and print personalities. I got such a strong reaction from Chicago fans that I was very careful for awhile about recommending the club to prospective members.) Maybe that's why I don't notice personality changes; I just don't pay a lot of attention to most fans. Unless they strongly attract or repel me, they could have a change in personality and I wouldn't know it.

Well, Bowers say that Juanita and I got him into fandom; that's his story and he's stuck with it. (I wouldn't know if he'd had any other fan contacts before he wrote us; I never did attend all the conventions *or* read all the fanzines. I take his word for it.) Same way I take George Scithers' word for the fact that we were his first fannish contacts and responsible for his succeeding career.

Dave

Yandro is an institution in fandom, and a Hugo winner, and still one of the most readable zines that passes through my mailbox. It's even older than your son, who is an adult now. After all these years and all those issues, despite a lengthening interim between issues in recent years, you and Juanita are still doing it. How do you view it these days, how did you view it in the beginning, and what are some of the major high and low points in its history

that you've had to enjoy, contend with, or live through?

Buck

Low points? I can't recall any, for *Yandro*. Except maybe right now, when it's been almost a year since we've published. Right now I view it as an overdue obligation, like an unpaid bill, but when we're on a more or less regular schedule it's just one of our activities. Not quite like setting out the milk bottles in the morning (I think that was Tucker's phrase) but a major part of keeping in touch with people. In the beginning – well, I wasn't there in the beginning, but when I first started writing for it with issue #11, it was a chance to get my idea of humor down on paper, a chance to visit with DeWeese and bounce puns off each other; we used to write our fanzine material by the alternate paragraph method, though it was never quite that formal. Editing was something I got saddled with when I married Juanita; my first editorial was a half-page long and "written more or less under protest." I got over that attitude, though. High points? Well... finding out that book publishers send free books to fanzine reviewers. Discovering Liz Fishman, George Scithers, and Jackie Causgrove. (George, incidentally, started out in *Yandro* and fandom as a cartoonist.) Meeting a good share of our close friends. (All of our good friends came out of fandom; not all of them came via *Yandro*.) I suppose getting on the final Hugo ballot in each of the first 10 years that there was a final ballot isn't exactly a point, but ... As far as quality goes, we haven't had points, we've had cycles. Every letter I've received from a new reader saying "Where have you been all my life?" is a high point.

Dave

I understand that *Yandro* is going to be printed, not mimeod, in the future. What's the story? Is Juanita developing one arm that's twice the size of her other arm?

Buck

For some reason, Juanita finds it difficult to write successful novels, cook meals, clean house, take care of the garden, keep up her guitar practice and singing, and do most of the stencil-cutting and all the mimeographing of a monthly *Yandro*. I guess she's getting old.

Dave

Must be. Of course, as Dean Grennell points out, that's better than the alternative.

You've reviewed more fanzines than anyone I know or have heard of. Though in general I find virtually all fanzines reviews not worth reading for one reason or another – usually because they're so damned uninteresting or ambitiously inept, or both – yours I've always enjoyed. In fact, I thought the second and last issue of *Devlin's Review*, your short-lived fanzine review zine, was the most interesting fanzine I read in the year it came out. Independent of that judgment, Jackie expressed the same feeling, and I've encountered similar statements of appreciation from other fen. Speak to the subject of *Devlin's*, how it came about and the nature of its short life, and to the matter of how you approach fanzine reviewing.

Buck

Devlin's Review. Well, I explained it pretty much at the time. I was getting so many fanzines that they took up too much space in *Yandro* and I thought that putting the fanzine reviews in a separate publication would solve

the problem. It didn't; it created so much extra work that the first issue gave me a mild trauma and the second issue only came out because I'd promised fanzine editors that it would. I've never been fond of fanzine reviews; mine or anyone else's. I did them out of a sense of obligation to the editors who sent zines. After *Devlin's* I decided that the only way to keep the fanzine reviews from crowding out more interesting material in *Yandro* was not to review everything.

Dave

It has been said that you like to eat neofans for breakfast and pick your teeth with crudzines. I even recall a Bob Tucker article entitled "The Heart In Hartford City" which enumerated your charms in this regard. There's a story concerning that article. Tell it, and anything else that comes to mind on this facet of your shtick in general.

Buck

Ah yes, "The Heart In Hartford City." Published by Linda Bushyager. Only fanzine I ever got with a rather nervous letter of explanation enclosed. Linda said afterward that she knew the article was a joke, but the letter sure didn't sound that way. Tucker was a trifle disgusted at the next con we both attended; he thought Linda was taking it seriously, too. I particularly enjoyed a comment in the next issue from Mike Glicksohn, saying in effect, "he's not that bad." I suspect Mike was taking it seriously, too, but he *might* have been going along with the gag. When I told Don A. Thompson about it, he said it was too bad that he wasn't taking the fanzine, because he would have written in saying "He is too that bad!" Other aspects ... Sandra Miesel con-

fessed that at the first con she and John attended, I was pointed out to them but they were afraid to come up and speak to me. And when Dave Jenrette and his wife attended a Midwestcon several years ago, Dave's wife admitted that there were several midwestern fans that she hadn't been too keen on meeting, and I was one of them. (On the other hand, several fans have said they look on me as a father figure – though I suppose if I wasn't around there's always Darth Vader.) And one Midwestcon, I was with a group including Don A. Thompson, Bob Gaines, Bill Conner, and one or two others, when Ed Wood came up. Don and I talked to him; the others quickly left. Afterwards, Don was muttering, "Here we are, the two hardest-nosed reps in fandom, and we're the only two willing to put up with Ed; something's wrong."

Dave

I wonder, though, about the concept of "putting up with" people in general fanzine fandom (as opposed to in an APA, which is built on a roster). Ignoring someone here is easy and generally not even detectable, because there are no obligations to address anyone as we parade in front of each other. Unless we come right out and say we're going to pretend someone doesn't exist any longer, it's doubtful anyone would notice. In other areas of fandom – APAs, cons, local activities – it's impossible to quietly ignore someone without everyone being aware that you're doing it.

Buck

Oh, I never claimed to *quietly* ignore someone I was fed up with. (Or at least, I don't think I did; if I did, I lied.)

Dave

I can't resist doing this to you. Indulge the fantasy. Hundreds of neofans have gathered around a guru who sits atop a mountain peak, and are waiting to hear his proverb and give it to the world, or at least to fandom. You play the guru. Bear in mind that they already know such basics as "never type a ditto master before removing the crudsheet," and "please don't write around the illos." What wisdom would you pass on to them, oh Guru?

Buck

Okay; my Words of Wisdom: Fandom is never going to put any bread in your mouth (and science fiction probably won't, either), so quit taking it so Goddamned seriously. Either it's fun, or it's nothing.

Dave

The guru speaks a core truth and speaks it well. For that matter, you've said it all.

We're still free to dream. What is it you would like to see, given a full range of your druthers, when you open the mailbox and look inside at fanzine fandom?

Buck

That's a two-parter, really; my druthers on opening the mailbox are (1) seeing a check for a manuscript that I've submitted, (2) discovering a free review copy of a book I've heard about and decided I *must* read, (3) getting a letter from Susan Schwartz, Bob Briney, Lee Hoffman, Jackie Causgrove, Joe Hensley, Roger Waddington, Dave Piper, or a dozen or so other people, or (4) if you really want to fantasize, receiving a card that announces "You have just won the XXXX Sweepstakes." But if you want to restrict it to fanzines ... (*any* fanzine ranks below the above items) then I'd

like to see *Hyphen*, *Destiny*, anything from Bob Leman, *Scottishe*, or a genzine from Grennell. For current fanzines, I suppose I enjoy *Debris*, *Stefantasy*, *Groggy*, *Amra*, *Dynatron*, *Wahf-Full*, and *Weber Woman's Wrevenge* the most.

Dave

That's a wide spectrum of fanzines. What is the common denominator that ties them all together within your taste?

Buck

Why do I like all these divergent fanzines? Damfino. Basically, I think, it's because the editors are obviously having fun, and also making their enjoyment amusing to the reader.

Dave

If this isn't the same reason everyone else likes a particular fanzine, it's probably close enough.

Who should be driven from the glades of gafia, if only to stay in touch?

Buck

I dunno... Bob Leman would probably be my first choice. Then Willis, the Irish John Berry, Earl Kemp. Grennell hasn't exactly gafiated, so I can't exactly list him.

Dave

If you had to do it all over again, what would you do?

Let the question arbitrarily confine you to fandom.

Buck

If I had to do it all over again, I'd probably do it pretty much the same. Only "might have been" I can think of is that I should have done more pro writing in the one 3-month period I was off work, when I first discovered that I

had high blood pressure. No regrets for anything I've done in fandom. I might well have discovered it sooner, but that leads to all sorts of ramifications, and I'm pretty satisfied with the way things are, fannishly.

Dave

Let's investigate the poles. What do you like best about fandom, and what do you dislike the most?

Buck

Like best? Finding people with mutual interests, senses of humor... compatibility in general. Like least? Finding that all the interesting people at a con are at the filksing, where I can't talk to them. (This is assuming that I'm in a mood to talk instead of taping the music.)

Dave

Are all the interesting people at cons usually in the filksing? How distressing. Where do I go for voice lessons, or isn't it required that I be able to carry a tune? My own tendency at a con is to stay in the bar, waiting for enough fans to come in so we can shove tables together and start a bar-con, though I do sing out when it's time for another round.

Buck

No, all the interesting people aren't *usually* in the filksing, but there have been times when everyone I wanted to talk to was either singing or listening. (You don't need to sing; the singers appreciate an audience. But a listening audience, not a talking one.) And of course, late at night, most of the sober people are in the filksing, and drunks are automatically uninteresting to talk to, no matter how brilliant they are when sober. That's why I mostly stay *out* of the bar; drunks are only



Buck, not at a hotel bar.

amusing to other drunks. (No, not everyone in a bar is a drunk, but you have to admit the proportions are higher. Also bars are too god-damned noisy for decent conversation, a good share of the time.)

Dave

Well, the hotel bar is usually quieter and more comfortable than the room parties. Not to mention the filksings... My own tendency was to start or join a bar-con or two during the course of the afternoon, and then wander off to other things when it either broke up or had more than ten tables pushed together. In the evening I'd play serendipity with the room parties. Then I'd go to bed and get up in the morning in time to say goodnight to most everyone else. This approach served me well, and had the added benefit that I could slide into Monday with minimal transition problems and without looking like death warmed over. I can remember cons in the early and mid Sixties where I had to go back to work just to rest up. These days I go to Midwest-con for a Saturday, and maybe a Friday evening, and do things like standing around talking to people like you. I take that back. There is no one quite like you in fandom, if we don't count Roy Tackett.

Buck

An awful lot of hotel bars aren't quieter than room parties, because they have a jukebox, or a radio, or a TV, or a live orchestra in the fancier places. At parties, I can usually at least hear the person I'm taking to; there have been bars where I couldn't. (Most bars also expect patrons to buy drinks, and I hate to waste good book money on alcohol. To each his own addiction.)

Dave

I stay out of bars that play music, and curse the concom that isn't farsighted enough to have bar music written out of the contract (it can easily be done; I've done it). The acoustics in a hotel room are different, and so are my ears; get more than six or seven fans together in a room party and all their voices blurge together and become indistinguishable. Which explains why I don't care much for most room parties.

If you decided you had something in particular that you might want to say or talk about, and passed me a note containing your ringer question, what would it say and how would you answer it? (My interviewing technique makes Barbara Walters look good.)

Buck

I suppose you might ask: "Is there any form of reading that you like better than science fiction?" and I, ignoring the quick answer of "Checks," would answer in all (well, in most) seriousness, "Yes, history."

Dave

Where did the nickname "Buck" come from?

Buck

In grade school, a group of boys played "cowboy and Indian" to the extent of adopting "western" names; Tex, Curly, Deuce ... and Buck. None of the others stuck; possibly the fact that there were 3 Roberts in my grade is the reason that I've been "Buck" ever since the 5th grade. The name followed me through two of my major jobs (despite the fact that in one of the jobs there was *no* connection with anyone from a previous job or from school, which is interesting.) Hasn't followed me to

my current job, though the postal clerks and one bank executive call me "Buck," and some coworkers do so on rare occasions. I'm not positive how it followed me into fandom, for that matter, though DeWeese did have brief contact with one of my high-school friends, which is the best possibility.

Dave

When did you come to accept it, and adopt it as your own?

Buck

Same answer as before; grade school. I can't recall the grade; somewhere between 4th and 6th. (I said 5th grade before; good compromise, but not necessarily exact.) I accepted it from the start; I didn't exactly adopt it, but if other people hung it on me I didn't object. It's never been strictly fannish; I answer automatically whenever someone uses it, fan or non-fan.

Dave

You're not only a vile huckster but also a dirty pro, though at least it's true that you no longer shag pigs. Say something about what you're written, and what you want to write but haven't tackled yet.

Buck

Say something about what I've written. Well I have copies of it all for sale, if anyone is interested... (Not true, entirely; there are a couple or three short stories that I own only in file copies. But I do own extras of all my books.) There are several books, six of them written with help. (Or maybe five with help and one with hindrance ... no, I will not explain that further, though I will chuckle over it to myself.) That is, six of them had co-authors; mostly the co-author was Gene DeWeese. Cur-

rently I'm writing a book review column for *Amazing Stories* and a column of science fiction magazine reviews for *Comics Buyer's Guide*, and they – and the reading they require – keep me too busy for writing fiction. Maybe when I retire from my regular job...

As to what I'd like to write but haven't even begun yet; I want to do an alternate-world novel in which McClellan captured Richmond and won the Civil War in 1862, before the emancipation proclamation, and before the industries of the North had been given such a big boost. I think it would have meant as many differences as a victory for the South – though not always the same ones. But it would take more research than I have time for at the present.

Oh yes; I also do a column for the fanzine *Anvil*, to keep my fannishness honed up.

Dave

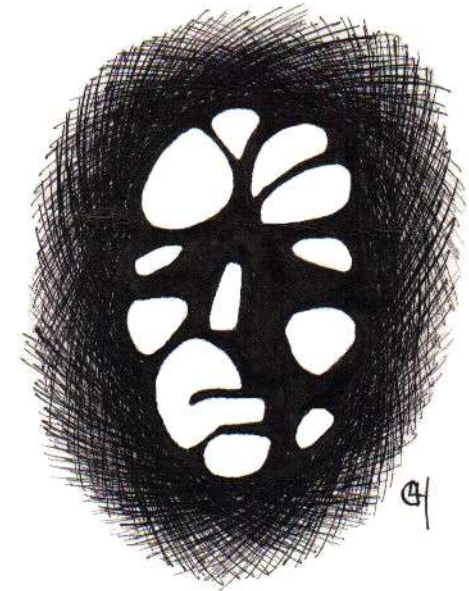
Your fannishness is honed up just fine. And I like the edge that you've got on it.

Also, being a fan of Ward Moore's *Bring The Jubilee*, a novel which did the most with the alternate-world sub-genre of the South winning the Civil War, I personally hope you pursue and capture this very interesting and apparently overlooked inspiration of having the North win the Civil War too early.

I've muchly enjoyed this sidebar to our regular, irregular correspondence. Were we in the same room I'd take my glass and clink it up against the side of your filksong tape-recorder, but in the absence of that I'll say cheers to you, Buck, and certainly I should thank you for being an interesting and important part of what comes to mind when I think of this Goddam Hobby we call fandom. Certainly, too, it would be a less interesting place

without you. This statement is not to be mitigated by the fact that the same could be said of Claude Degler.

Clink. •



Much Nothings About Ado

In-jokes seem to be prevalent throughout most areas of creative activity. That many authors, like Tucker, insert the names of friends into their stories is well known as is the practice of some directors to appear in cameos in their films. These things are easily detected and explained, especially if you know something about the person involved. Some things are more obscure, however.

For instance, mystery and science fiction writer Fredric Brown often plugged his science fiction stories in his mysteries. Most of the time these references were quite overt, but not always. I particularly remember that in his novel *Here Comes a Candle* one of the characters is mentioned reading a certain issue of a science fiction pulp. I thought “Hmm...” and promptly looked up my copy of that issue, and sure enough, the lead novel was Brown’s *What Mad Universe*. Brown wasn’t the only one who liked to plug his own stories. Ed McBain (Evan Hunter), once in one of his “87th Precinct” novels had a character who liked to quote the first lines of prominent novels. As the scene was ending he was quot-

ing one to which he never had a chance to attribute the source. Again, I thought “Hmm...” and looked up my copy of *The Blackboard Jungle* by Evan Hunter. Yep. Hunter-McBain-et aliases also had another quirk which I have never understood. I have read a lot of his fiction and I suddenly began to notice the frequency of one name, Lipschitz. He was never a major character and sometimes merely a name on a police form or something equally minor, occurring through about 50%, at least, of his stories, no matter what pseudonym he used. What was Lipschitz to him, and why? I guess I’ll never know.

Films also have their in-jokes. Most of these are in the body of the movie and are usually easily recognizable. Less obvious ones are found in the end credits, which I learned a long time ago not to ignore. Two examples: In a rather low budget slasher film there appeared extensive credits for an underwater sequence. The only problem with that was there was no underwater sequence. I can only figure they wanted to get a bunch of people’s names in somehow. Another example happened in the middle of the usual long end

credits of another film where there suddenly appeared the sentence “If you’re still reading this you must really like movies.”

Which brings me to an in-joke I don’t understand... Well, I understand it but I just don’t understand why. What was in the author’s mind when he did it? I discovered it with the confluence of two different things, some years ago. I had gotten a book about TV situation comedies which covered all the classic ones going back to the beginning and which not only summarized them but also included the casts and all the production people. I had just finished that and then decided to re-read one of my favorite books, Richard Condon’s *The Manchurian Candidate*. Now, if you are only familiar with the current movie remake starring Denzel Washington, you really haven’t gotten the full flavor of the novel or, for that matter, the first film production of the story. It is a biting, acerbic, sometimes funny, sometimes tragic comment upon McCarthyism. Briefly, the hinge point of the story concerns an American platoon in Korea which is captured by the Red Chinese and brain-washed. So, I’m reading the book and as I get to the platoon something goes click click in my mind. The names of the platoon members look familiar. *Too* familiar. I go back to my situation comedy book and look up *You’ll Never Get Rich*, also known as *The Phil Silvers Show* and *Sgt. Bilko*. And there it was. The platoon in *The Manchurian Candidate* had the names of the cast, characters or production staff of *Sgt. Bilko*. I would dearly love to know the story behind that. Ah, the mysteries of life... •

Lee Lavell

Found In Collection

What once was lost, now is sitting on my desk. That should be my motto. It's not though, mostly because they like me to keep my work area tidy. There was such a situation lately that deserved to clutter up my desk a bit.

MAD Magazine isn't exactly fannish, but I'm betting that many fans were readers at one point in their lives. I read it when I was about 10, and again in middle high school, and later while I was in college. Recently, I've bought a few reprint issues. It's never a surprise when an issue makes it into the collection; they've done quite a few comedic bits (pun intended) on computing and computers over the years, but there was something I didn't expect to find mixed in with a short stack of *MADs* from the 1990s.

An issue of *Omni*.

Omni was the magazine that helped me along my path towards science appreciation. While I was never good at science in school, I loved reading science articles and the like. The first editor was Mr. Ben Bova, while it was published by the wife of Bob Guccione of *Penthouse* fame. The magazine had an interesting slant that set it apart from most of that period. *Omni* presented science articles in a way that had never really been done. Some describe it as Gonzo science

reporting, but I'm of the opinion that it was simply good writing about science. The other part featured science fiction. Bova was the main man there in the beginning, but Ellen Datlow took over in 1981 and never looked back until *Omni's* death they did part in 1998. Some would say that *Omni* was the *Wired* of the 1980s, which I'd kinda agree with. It was the cutting edge mag, much like *Make* is right now.

The issue I found was from January 1991. Most think that *Omni* was starting to slip-slide away by that point. The issue had a lot of stuff in it that interested me. The first thing was an interview with Jaron Lanier about virtual reality. It was a solid article and it really explained what we've been talking about in the Futurist community for the last twenty years. There was an even more interesting article on the Dalai Lama where he talks about his resolutions. There's even a very nice article on the potential of organ regeneration and it's possible use in the near-term to build libraries of organs to use in times of shortage. An interesting concept.

I didn't have to read too far before I found out what we'd possibly want to have this issue for. There was a long section on computer graphics. The articles talked about all the advances and what not that had been made since

the 1960s. While the images they presented would seem pretty simple compared to today's high-res graphics, they would have been astounding in 1991. The museum did a huge exhibit on computer graphics in 1992, meaning this was certainly part of the research for that. The copies of *MAD* would have also been for the same thing, mostly because there was an issue with a parody of computer animated stuff in several of the issues.

The section that I liked best was the special section on electronic games. Video games were hot business and the PC market was very hot. The home video console had just been re-energized by Super Nintendo and Neo-Geo (which really didn't do much in the long run) and there were endless add-ons to the various systems. There's a lot of talk about "The Secret of Monkey Island" by LucasArts, one of the most important PC games ever made. It's a good look at the industry at the time when things were about to explode. Computer games (which is my historical area of expertise) really came into their own when it became obvious that the Windows OS was going to take over, and that was in the very late 1980s and early 1990s. This peek at that world is really interesting.

I loved *Omni* and wish I could find a good long run of it for my own amusement. In a lot of ways, *Omni* was replaced by *Wired* and *Discovery*, both of which are good mags, but they don't have the same feeling. I'd love to restart it (it's number two or three on my 'If I have fifty million dollars' list, behind bringing back *In Search Of*) and get back that feeling. Until I get around to searching eBay, I'll just take a look through more of the museum's boxes. •

Chris Garcia

Under The Influence

The Abyssinian Prince 300 (Jim Burgess)
paper, 3-weekly, 11x8.5", 56 pages, \$1.50
within USA, \$3.00 overseas.

Jim Burgess, 664 Smith Street, Providence, RI
02908-4327, USA

Also on the web at

<http://devel.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP/>

The 300th issue didn't run to the threatened 100 pages, but is still a fairly meaty package. Instead of the baseball talk that has been the main theme since the Boston Red Sox's win in 2004, Jim returns to his roots with reprinted and original material about music. Especially The Mekons, and other Jon Langford music – all of the games in the zine have always been named after Mekons songs, with the most recent postal Diplomacy game-start being called (appropriately) "Spirals of Paranoia." Jon is of course the more famous brother (by mundane standards) of *Ansible* editor Dave "more Hugos, fewer Grammys" Langford. I note that Jon's Wikipedia entry doesn't include what was probably his first award, a 5th place finish in the Best British

Fan Artist category of the 1977 *Checkpoint* Fan Awards.

Games currently run in *TAP* include Diplomacy (x4), Breaking Away (cycling), plus a number of other games in the sub-zines. Waiting lists for new games are open for Diplomacy, Breaking Away and Nuclear Yuppie Evil Empire 7x7 Diplomacy.

Ansible 225 (Dave Langford)

paper, monthly, A4, 2 pages, SSAE

Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 5AU, England

Also on the web at <http://news.ansible.co.uk/>

I was fairly rude about the Hugo Awards electorate with respect to the fan awards last time (I always say, if you're going to insult, go for it big time). But I have to say that the fact that Dave has twenty-six silver rockets on his shelf at home proves that, to borrow the immortal words of Hunter S. Thompson (in an entirely different context), even a blind pig can find a truffle from time to time if it searches long enough. Or, if you prefer, even Hugo Award voters get it right sometimes. Ac-

tually, I'm not sure if that does actually come across as a compliment to *Ansible*, but it's intended to be.

The Drink Tank 75 (Christopher J. Garcia)
PDF, weekly, 11x8.5", 10 pages.

<http://efanzines.com/DrinkTank/index.htm>

My perception is that *The Drink Tank* has slowed down its somewhat frenetic pace so far this year. Which is probably true, and yet there's still 15 issues already for 2006 on the website. And Chris is still working behind the scenes on the listings fanzine *Science Fiction/San Francisco*, has managed another issue of *Claims Department*, and is fronting a hoax Worldcon bid for 2008. This issue of *The Drink Tank* has a good write-up of Chris' latest trip to Las Vegas (infringing on the subject matter of *Claims Department*, surely?), and a couple of long letters of comment from Lloyd Penney and John Purcell. Chris also raves about a US comedy television show I've never heard of. Given the quantity (high) and quality (low) of most US comedies that seem to infest the cable channels over here, this either implies that Chris is being massively overly-enthusiastic, or that UK cable TV buyers are missing an opportunity here.

Ode 274 (John Marsden)

paper, 5-weekly, A4, 18 pages, 85p within UK,
£1.10 surface mail overseas.

Peter Sullivan

John Marsden, 91 Westwood Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9RS, England.
Placeholder website at <http://users.breathecom/jandcmarsden/Ode-online/Index.htm>

A busy issue on the games front, but with the non-games material squeezed somewhat due to both space constraints, and John being busy (as a Liberal Democrat local organizer) with preparing for the local elections in May. John does however, drop in a throw-away comment at the end of the editorial – “Perhaps I’ll be less constrained” (for space/postage costs, that is) “if I go PDF?” Is this dramatic foreshadowing of a major change of direction for one of the stalwarts of the British postal games hobby, or just a bit of Marsden teasing?

Games currently run are Diplomacy (x9), Gunboat (Diplomacy variant), Vain Arts (Diplomacy Variant), Mercator (Diplomacy Variant), Diplomacy Bourse, Bus Boss (x3), Railway Rivals (x7), Acquire, Maneater, Puerto Rico (x2), Hare and Tortoise, 1830 and 1837.

The Tangerine Terror 33 (Howard Bishop) paper, 6-weekly, A5 booklet, 24 pages, 75p in UK & Europe, £1.50 rest of the world.
Howard Bishop, 43 Guinions Road, High Wycombe, SP13 7NT, England.

Howard picks up on my review of *The Tangerine Terror* in the last *Pixel* to do some postal games zines reviews of his own this issue. Of science fiction fanzines, he writes “Some of these things come out weekly. Blimey, do these people have lives?” Well, pointing to the mote in God’s eye, there have been several fortnightly postal games zines (the most famous/longest lived probably be-

ing Ryk Downes’ *Back to the Dark Ages*) and at least one genuinely weekly postal games zine I’m aware of. This was Rip Gooch’s *The Suits*, each issue identified by a playing card rather than an issue number. This therefore ran for exactly 52 weekly issues over a year, featuring four games of Railway Rivals (12 turns + 1 set-up turn each game).

Games currently running in *The Tangerine Terror* include Railway Rivals (x2), plus a large number of other games, which are either Howard’s own invention or his postal adaptations of board games. Waiting lists for new games are similar, plus Scramble for Africa 1880 (Diplomacy Variant).

Vegas Fandom Weekly 72 (Arnie Katz) PDF, weekly, 11x8.5” 16 pages.
<http://www.efanzines.com/VFW/>

It occurs to me that the Vegas content in *VFW* is something of an oddity. In that it’s clearly the stated purpose of the zine – as they used to say on *Blankety Blank*, “The clue’s in the question.” But it’s not really central to *my* interest (and I’d guess the interest of the many other non-Vegas readers) in the thing. We read and respond because it’s a focal point letter zine of whatever numbered fandom we are up to by now. I guess it would be wrong to call the Vegas content a shtick, in that it’s important to the zine and to Arnie. And, given that one of the biggest problems with a weekly zine must be the ongoing grind of facing a blank piece of paper every seven days, I guess that, if nothing else, the Vegas content gives Arnie a theme to get started with every week, before handing over to the hordes of eager letterhacks. In the case of this issue, by page 9. •

ROCKET SURGERY

(continued from page 21)

It was interesting to see, as I read those 14 issues, how my memory had made the zine much better than it actually was. I remembered it as being something special, and certainly much better than it actually was. I did publish some good writing in it, but my own is pretty embarrassing.

It lead me to think, though, how really “public” a person’s growing up can be in fandom. For me it was only a year of my life then, but there are many people who’ve spent nearly their entire adult lives – 20-30-40 or more years – in fandom, publishing or writing for fanzines, fanzines that are still available in one format or another. (And just think of all the zines that have been published through the years that have completely disappeared!)

Theoretically it would be possible to “track” a person’s maturation (or lack of same) as they grow up just by reading the corpus of their fan work – I can’t think of an analogous situation outside fandom. The closest I can come would be people who write professionally over a similarly long time, but for the most part fan writing is considerably more personal and would give you a much more accurate view of the *person* rather than the *work*.

I suppose the boom in personal blogs and journals on the Internet may in some way parallel fan writing in that respect, but it’ll take many years, decades maybe, before you could have the same viewpoint on an individual. While blogs may be transitory, chances are with the Internet archive sites like The Wayback Machine those blogs may be available for a long time to come. •

Epistles

ERIC MAYER

I appreciate Brad Foster's terrific illos. I'm not sure how he manages to come up with actual cartoons that relate to the stuff in the column but add their own humor and commentary. But it's certainly a good thing.

The written highlight of the issue may be Dave Locke's article – an inspired farrago of nonsense – but I have no comment at all, except, man, he was doing great stuff before I even got into fandom.

Jim Lavell's article on fanzine burning needs to be updated, I fear, to take into account e-zines. Are you sure you didn't have this article in mind when you changed your format? If *Pixel* isn't reduced to paper it can't be further reduced to ash. Then there is the problem of burning hectoed zines thoroughly coated with gelatin. I suppose one might end up with a fanzine in aspic.

Chris Garcia had me wondering whom I might have met who has since become famous. Actually now I'm wondering whether I just misused "whom" and "who." The wonder of the Internet is that I can immediately go, and after 56 years, finally learn how to use

"whom" and "who" properly. The wonder of being human is I can be too bone idle to bother. Anyway, I can't think of anyone but I hope Chris lets us know if he ever gets a reply.

As for Lee Lavell's contribution – alas I stopped watching TV entirely when we moved out here where there's essentially no reception without cable and I keep seeing reports about shows that sound like they can't possibly be true. That sleep-talking conversation about the cat was hilarious by the way.

I hope Peter Sullivan will have the stamina to continue these zine reviews. I hate to admit it but I am actually behind on reading the zines going up on efanzines and he's just reminded me of a couple I downloaded but haven't read because I keep being distracted with distasteful chores like work. I have to say, I have no time for games. I have had to give up writing/playing computer text adventures at least temporarily for lack of time. I can write about 3,000 pretty decent LoCs in the time it takes me to code one lousy text adventure.

In the LoCol Ted is right that I was exaggerating for humorous effect when I recalled that old rejection slip I got from *Fantastic*. It only *seemed* like all the boxes for various sorts

of criticisms were checked off. However, I wasn't exaggerating about the "numerous" (certainly 4 or 5) scribbled notations denigrating the manuscript. (I wish I still had it but I used to toss rejection slips. You'll just have to believe me when I say that the comments could not have been interpreted as constructive by anyone!)

My opinion, generally, is that it is best to just stick to the standard, boilerplate "sorry" style rejections. While I appreciate that more elaborate forms are meant to be helpful they also allow more leeway for mischief and, anyway, one reader's cardboard cutouts are another reader's well rounded characters. If I'd believed what the first agent had to say about our first mystery novel we would never have sold it.

Magazines do have a problem in that people who have no business wasting the time of professional editors (people like me back in

ERIC MAYER
CHRIS GARCIA
TED WHITE
LEE LAVELL
JOHN PURCELL
LLOYD PENNEY

ILLUSTRATION BY
WILLIAM ROTSLER

the early seventies) will flood them with manuscripts. I can see how someone could get ... shall we say ... discouraged wading through a pile of such stuff.

But I have no respect for someone who feels the need to go out of their way to discourage (or humiliate) a beginning writer. Yes, I'm sure there are people who need to be discouraged from writing, but you can't even make an attempt to judge a writer's potential unless you know what stage they're at and what their experience is.

There's obviously no way the editor can vet everything his or her slush pile readers are sending out of course. I knew that at the time. I was kind of envisioning it as the work of some snotty kid who was piling up rejections himself and taking out his frustrations on other wannabes. Its kind of amusing to find out thirty odd years later that I might've been insulted by some author I've heard of.

Well, it's an example of how you can try to do the right thing and someone will undermine the effort. I'm sure in 99% of the cases the more personalized forms were used correctly and appreciated.

Ted's remark about his 1998 mystery that hasn't been sold yet is a good illustration of what I was getting at when I was trying to explain why writers are loathe to abandon series and try something new with no guarantee. People have a misconception that if you write a publishable novel it will be published or that to get published you have to learn how to write a novel that's good enough and once you learn, then of course, you can keep on getting published. Unfortunately many, many perfectly wonderful novels never get published for reasons entirely unrelated to their merits. Being able to write publishable mate-

rial is no guarantee. Publishers, so far as I can see, really don't care about your professional credentials unless you've just made a lot of money for someone, and recently at that. You might have a little easier time getting people to look at your stuff, but that's about it. And the longer you go without a breakout best-seller ...well ... the "experience" you might think you're gaining just counts against you from the viewpoint of most publishers. Which is why writers tend to be happy doing what the publishers they have want, unfortunately.

Ted is also right about the dominance of female readers in the mystery field. Some publishers are trying to combat that. Hard Case Crime which specializes in noir and PI and the sort of stuff that used to come out in paperback in the fifties springs to mind.

I'm only a dabbler in reading mysteries, but it seems, as I check out the shelves at the library, that there are a lot of women writing them as well. Even assuming that a certain percentage of them might be men using a female pseudonym (as Ted suggests he might do with his unsold novel), it still seems that this is a field the ladies are having a lot of "luck" getting published in.

CHRIS GARCIA

Jim notes that fanzines have, at times, created havoc in the world that is fandom. I can't argue. The tale you reprinted was a fine bit of humor, though I was taken aback when I saw that 1057 was identified as being after the Norman Conquest, which happened in 1066.

These things usually don't bother folks but as a Historian, I must object! Of course, the changing of the words of Willie S. didn't bother me at all.

Jim mentioned the "French Inquisition" as well. I let both "errors" stand because Jim may have made them intentionally, just to see who would notice. Lee told me it wouldn't surprise her if that wasn't the case, as well. That Jim, he was a sneaky barsted!

Wonderful Sputnik reference by Brad 'Why won't he draw for *The Drink Tank*?' Foster. I laughed a lot. Math was always my weakness. That is to say I could get the philosophical underpinnings but Lord help me if I had to multiply. [Eric] mentions the need for more people with a grasp of History and Ethics. Well, I've got the grasp on History, but that other part... I've found "The Ballad of Floyd Collins" online and it's an interesting story. I must remember that when I go deep into the bellies of the computers around here.

Passions is freakin' weird. The living doll bit was awesome, though sadly the day after his role on the show ended the little guy passed away. He had also starred on *Ally McBeal* and a few other shows. It's one of those soap operas that I could watch and feel like I'm not losing brain cells. *One Life To Live* is my personal story. It uses a lot of weird flash-arounds as well. I remember a time when Dorian was sent to the Titanic and had to explain to her mother what a movie was. It's a fun little show, though it's more straight Soap than anything else. It also has had some of the most beautiful women ever as cast members.

Ah, Peter has entered the world of fanzine

reviews joining John Purcell and myself. Good on you. I must find out more about *The Abyssinian Prince*. It sounds like a zine I could enjoy. Oddly, I'm not a fan of *Ansible*. I know that's shocking, but it's true. It just feels like another newszine that doesn't really supply me with much. Now, I know folks who feel the same way about *Emerald City*, which I love. Still, I do like Dave Langford's longer writings which don't appear nearly as much as they should. The latest *Banana Wings* was a good read, though for some reason I was having trouble finding the exact hook to comment on it and still haven't managed an LoC. Go figure.

All over great stuff and I'm sure you'll be rewarded in the future. How likely is it that there'll be a Best eZine category in some future FAAn Awards?

Do we really need a new category for digital zines? It seems like one more way to artificially separate them from paper zines. I could see a "Best Web Site" category being meaningful, though.

TED WHITE

Eric Mayer mentions Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea* and remarks that "the style was clunky." He's right, of course, but Verne can hardly be blamed for that. I mean, Verne wrote the book in *French*. His English translator must carry all blame for the prose style, and I've heard that the English translations of most of Verne's books were execrable and involved serious editorial changes and cuts -- all but butchering Verne's original work. So we should credit Verne with a narrative vision that somehow shined through the awful

translations.

That said, I preferred the book's sequel, *Mysterious Island*. But I was only eight or nine when I read it, and I liked it precisely because it seemed to echo in spots both *Robinson Crusoe* (which I found tough going at that age, but read straight through) and *Swiss Family Robinson* (which I loved at that age).

Eric's thoughts about writing a book a year and how much time it occupies take me aback. As I said in my LoC, I wrote my books far faster. But they (mostly) required little research (the exception was my juvenile, *Trouble on Project Ceres*, for which I did a lot of research on the Amargosa desert in Nevada, and on desert reclamation work in general). As I said, my goal was a chapter (about 3,000 words) of finished copy a day. When I set out to write a mystery novel in 1998, I relaxed my goal to a chapter a week, but found I was usually writing two or three chapters a week. It took me about five months to write that book on a "relaxed" schedule.

Peter Sullivan's fanzine reviews are solid and readable, and I'm glad to see you running them here. His blend of fannish and gaming fanzines is unique and enlightening. But he is mistaken when he says "All knowledge is in fandom." The original quote (from Burbee) is "All knowledge is contained in fanzines." This was originally stated as irony, but has been quoted as if it was Ghod's Truth. Maybe it is. Over the years the quote has been corrupted until the version Peter used is, if anything, more common. But it's still incorrect.

And John Purcell says, in passing, "BS&T [Blood, Sweat & Tears] wasn't commercially viable." This will come as a shock to Columbia Records, which saw a number of hit singles in succession from the second BS&T

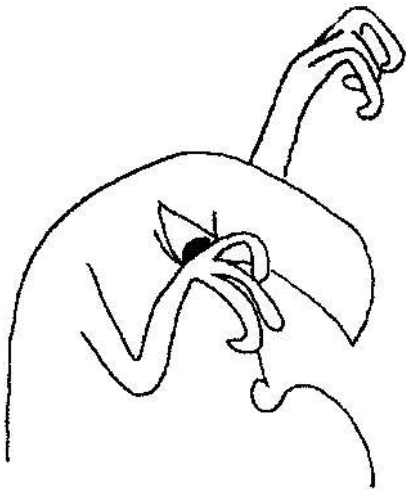
album. The post-Kooper BS&T lacked the breadth of the original Kooper-led group, but did put out one stunningly good album (the second, their first after Kooper left). And then a succession of increasingly dull, formulaic albums which did not reward listening at all. *Sigh*... The same is also true of Chicago (Transit Authority): two really decent albums, followed by a succession of less and less interesting, formulaic albums. Deciding when to stop buying the albums of both groups and to stop hoping for a "comeback" in quality was like deciding when to stop banging your head against a wall.

I say that as a big fan of Al Kooper's. I bought all the Columbia albums released in the late '60s with Kooper's name on them -- even if it was only in small print on the back cover, as the album's producer or arranger. They were all worth having. Kooper was a strong element in the creative ferment in rock music in that period. We went our separate ways about the time he started producing redneck rock bands like Lynyrd Skynyrd.

So I was fascinated when I watched the recent TV documentary on Bob Dylan and they finally got to the point where he "went electric" and there was Kooper, talking about how he lucked into that recording session. He'd gone to it as a guitarist, but Dylan already had Mike Bloomfield and didn't need another, lesser guitarist. So Kooper, who had never played one before, volunteered to play the organ, and did, with noteworthy (pun intended) results. I'd heard versions of that story before, but never from Kooper.

As I mentioned last issue, I recently read Kooper's musical autobiography, Backstage Passes and Backstabbing Bastards,

and recommend it if you haven't read it. Kooper isn't the greatest writer in the world, but he has a breezy, entertaining style with a lot of humor (some of the photo captions are very funny), and he has much "inside information" about the music business. Lots of interesting anecdotes from someone whose entire life has been spent in the music business from different perspectives – as a songwriter, a performer, a producer, and a teacher. What I particularly enjoyed about it was that Kooper didn't always portray himself as the Good Guy in situations that went awry. As you note, he didn't start out on keyboards, and he was always amused at people imitating his "style" on the early electric Dylan records because it wasn't a style – he didn't really know how to play the organ.



I watched that show (which I taped) with my son, Aaron. Aaron is now 18, and we watch DVDs and videos of rock concerts together. (When he saw my DVD of *Stop Making Sense*, he started downloading all the Talking Heads tracks he could find.) While we were watching the Dylan documentary I had to keep hitting the pause button, so I could tell him, "I knew him," or "I knew them," every time someone like Izzy Young showed up on the screen. I moved to Greenwich Village in the summer of 1959 and lived there until 1962. I knew all the Village jazz and folk clubs, and I'd seen Dylan, in fact, during his busking days. I was at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival where Dylan went electric live, too. So I gave Aaron a kind of running commentary.

LEE LAVELL

"Notes From Byzantium" – Please don't get me on a tirade about public education. Besides, I'm thinking of doing a column on that sometime in the future. I disagree with his statement that "ideas are the most important aspect of fiction". This would be true of non-fiction, but characterization is equally as important in fiction. One can exist without the other, but it is rare and usually unsuccessful.

Locke - amusing, as usual.

"Much Nothings" – One small correction in your footnote, Dave. "Passions" runs its new episodes on NBC not CBS.

"Being Frank" – (Shouldn't that be "Being Peter?") Liked the reviews but wish they were organized a little bit better as far as topic etc.

"Found In Collection" – I have recently renovated my house and in the process found

many things I had completely forgotten about and which jogged up many memories.

"Epistles" – I love letter columns. Some of the locs can be as interesting as the articles and columns. I do want to cite Eric Mayer's comments about "Pet Sematary". I am a great Stephen King fan and have re-read many of his books when I'm in the mood, but not that one. It really bothered me!

JOHN PURCELL

I thoroughly enjoyed Jim Lavell's historical overview of the practice of fanzine burning. It doesn't surprise me, but Jim explored quite thoroughly practical applications of zine burning, such as heating and cooking. He's right, too, in that certain zines would probably burn faster, slower, or emit acrid smoke (*Holier Than Thou* would probably make eyes burn, noses run, and stomachs churn from its smoke). And I hate to admit this sort of thing, but over the course of many a move over many a year, my pile of fanzines has dwindled to next to nothing. Plus, I know for a fact that after mom and dad sold the house in St. Louis Park, Minnesota (21 years of residency), then packed and moved to Lake Havasu, Arizona, back in 1984, they chucked all sorts of good shit that my brother and I had accumulated over the years. Gone were our records, comic books, baseball cards, most of the fanzines I had acquired during the Seventies, and so on. And we were children of the Sixties, too, so you can just imagine all of the fine, *fine* stuff that was tossed. We were supremely pissed, but there was nothing we could do about it. *sigh* Such fond childhood memories you've brought back to my mind.

Eric Mayer has once again touched on a sore point in me. No, no, I'm not referring to the rotator cuff impingement syndrome that locks up my left shoulder in excruciating pain each morning, but I'm talking about education. I, too, was never much for math and hard sciences, even though I thoroughly love reading "hard" science fiction from time to time, my best subjects were English, History, Geography, Philosophy, and Music. Oh, I so agree with Eric that this country needs a healthy dose of education in Ethics and History! This country definitely needs to make sure that education is a right we all deserve, and our children should be encouraged to pursue their natural, inquisitive natures into whatever fields they shall eventually evolve into. I just can't stand the direction our educational system is heading. Since I'm a college English teacher, all I can do is do my job, encourage my students to question, analyze, interpret, and evaluate what they are learning, and stop simply spitting back up what's being shoveled down their uncaring maws.

God, I love teaching. I really do! When these young men and women get on a roll in a classroom discussion - lately its been the new immigration law, besides the ongoing debate on Mess O'Potamia (to borrow my favorite graphic from *The Daily Show*) - class time just flies by. *That's* when teaching is so much fun, and they're all learning and using communication skills at the same time. Mighty fine moments, those.

Okay, I may have to check out *Passions*. My first wife was a soap opera junkie - and this is probably the nicest thing I can say about her - who was literally glued to the set from 11am to 3pm. Monday through Friday. I thought *Passions* went off the air a few years ago.

Hmm. This sounds like an interesting show, and I really loved *Dark Shadows*. Self, take a memo.

Good to see that you've enlisted Peter Sullivan to review fanzines for *Pixel*. I look forward to reading more of these. This first installment has a nice assortment of zines, with a bit of a British leaning, which doesn't surprise me considering that Peter's British. These are all good zines, and remind me that I woefully lacking at present in being in contact with British fanzine fandom. Must rectify situation.

Chris Garcia's incidental contact with famous people doesn't surprise me. Once in a while that happened to me when I lived in Los Angeles back in '86. Stood next to Doc Severinsen at the Burbank International Airport once, and saw Ed Begley, Jr., in a restaurant, but my favorite brush with the famous was when Gallagher came into the Denny's Lori and I were eating at with his family! That was so cool.

I am glad that Ted White has regaled us with the genesis of the form rejection letters that he used while editing *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic*. It really didn't bother me getting them in the mail, I would just like to point out; I was merely saying that I was able to construct a fleet of paper airplanes out of them back in the mid-70s.

LLOYD PENNEY

On Catchpenny Gazette 15:

The idea of digitizing *Warhoon 28* and putting it on efanzines.com sounds daunting at best, and a nearly never-ending project at worst. That's going to have to be multiple

PDFs, and perhaps placed in a ZIP file. A digital *W28* is going to be a monster download. I've got my own copy, but I can imagine there's few bound copies left. I'd have to ask Joe Siclari. A digital version would be excellent for newcomers to download and peruse.

I like Chris Garcia's idea that we're part of a new movement of fanwriting. Appeals to the ego, I guess. Okay, Chris, what would you call this movement? (Extra points for creativity, subtract points for anything scatological.) A Web Guide to SF? Heck, no, I'm just the idea guy. We hafta find someone to do all the grunt work.

On Pixel One:

I luv fanzines, me too. My schools had suitable reproductive equipment (and I don't mean props in sex ed, either), but their policy was students would keep their grubbies off it, no exceptions. If I was ever to get my hands on a mimeo or ditto, I'd need an extensive owner's manual to make sure it didn't explode. Peter, looks like you'll review fanzines that are out of our ordinary, so it should be interesting. If fun cons and fun zines are the wave of the fannish future, will sercon stuff be relegated to scholarly publications and conferences?

Chris Garcia is Harry Warner III? Heck no, that's me, Chris, get it right...We all want to be significant at what we do, and as long as we're all trying to be the top dog in the field, the field will be healthy. •

Rocket Surgery

By the time this issue of PIXEL hits efanzines, it will be very close to the voting deadline, but I'd still like to encourage all PIXEL readers to vote in the 2005 FAAn Awards, to be announced at Corflu 23 in Toronto. This is *the* award in fanzine fandom – the people voting in the FAAn awards are more knowledgeable about fanzines than those who vote in the same categories in the Hugo awards.

Murray Moore, this year's administrator, writes at Trufen.net: "Vote for a maximum of three fanzines/fans in a category. If you are casting multiple votes in a category, you must rank your choices 1, 2, 3. Your ballot must include your real name. If you are uncertain that you are known to me, give as a reference the name of another fanzine fan. Emailed FAAn ballots must be received before midnight, Wednesday, May 3: send to corflu23faan@yahoo.ca. Ballots also can be delivered by hand during Corflu 23 up to the end of the Fan Fund Auction on Saturday, May 6.

The 2006 FAAn categories are:

Best Fanzine
Best Fan Writer
Best Fan Artist
Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Award for Best Fan Correspondent
Best New Fan"

A number of regular contributors to *CPG* should be prime contenders in several categories. In no particular order, Dave Locke, Eric Mayer, Peter Sullivan, and Chris Garcia should get your consideration for Best Fan Writer (for their work appearing here and elsewhere – even in their own zines), and with the exception of Dave Locke (who LoCs very few zines), they should all be considered for the Harry Warner Jr. award as well. And my own choice for Best Fan Artist is Brad Foster.



Two issues ago I wrote about reconnecting with several friends (fannish or otherwise) from the past. I've connected with another: Dave Lewton, who was the youngest of the three "Indianapolis Daves" of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Dave published a fanzine called *Infinitum*.

Fortunately for me, Dave is a pack-rat. (Okay, he calls himself an "archivist.") He apparently saves everything. He's almost certainly the only person on earth who has a complete run of every fanzine I did in the past – not only did he have all 14 issues of my fanzine *Microcosm*, but he also had a number

of one-shots, non-SF zines I did (including a mock-up of an underground magazine titled *Green Genes*, and the music zine I published (*Sounds – Rock 'n' Roll News*) that was sold at concert venues and headshops (remember those?) around Indianapolis, and which featured Len Bailes and Greg Shaw as record reviewers. In fact, he'd even saved a "test sheet" I'd done to try out some mimeo techniques and some stationery I'd designed for my father's business. And a one-shot published when I ran away from home once. I'm sure I thought it terribly clever to title it *Underground Railroad* as I listed the various "injustices" my parents had done me. I don't have any recollection of it, but Lee tells me that I showed up at the long-suffering Lavells carrying a suitcase containing 3 pair of clean underwear and my fanzine collection. Was I a trufan or what?

I'd been trying to locate someone with copies of my old zine ever since I got involved with fandom again a few years ago; other than a copy of the last issue that Robert Lichtman xeroxed for me, though, until I connected with Dave I hadn't had any luck. At a great deal of his own time and expense, Dave scanned and printed color copies for me, for which I'm extremely grateful (probably not Eternally, but surely for a Long Time anyway).

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David Burton