

PIXEL



SEVEN
NOVEMBER 2006

November 2006

PIXEL SEVEN

Edited and published monthly by David Burton
5227 Emma Drive, Lawrence IN 46236-2742
E-mail: catchpenny@mw.net
Distributed in a PDF version only.
Available for downloading at efanazines.com thanks to Bill Burns.
A Noah Count Press Publication.
Compilation copyright © 2006 by David Burton.
Copyright reverts to individual contributors on publication.
AMDG

To receive an e-mail notification when a new issue of *Pixel* is published, send a message to catchpenny@mw.net, using **subscribe** as the subject. This is a notification list only; I don't send the zine as an attachment.

Editorial deadline for *Pixel Eight*: November 15, 2006

This issue dedicated to Bob Tucker.



“Nothing beats putting on a mask and prowling the streets at night.”

CONTENTS

Cover: photograph by David Lewton

- 3 Notes From Byzantium**
column by Eric Mayer
- 6 Much Nothings About Ado**
column by Lee Lavell
- 8 Whither Fandom?**
column by Ted White
- 13 Found In Collection**
column by Chris Garcia
- 14 Being Frank**
zine reviews by Peter Sullivan
- 17 Apathetic Competence**
humor by Dave Locke
- 19 Pixelated**
lettercolumn
- 29 Finis**
editorial by David Burton

ERIC MAUER

Notes From Byzantium

Corn Hut

Autumn has arrived in earnest. Most of the deciduous trees are bare. In a few weeks we will be used to it, but now the landscape feels strangely open to the pale light falling from skies of charcoal and ash. A gusty biting wind spins copper leaves across the roadway. Here and there a hedgerow shelters an alizarin bush.

This was the month when my grandfather built the “corn hut” in the midst of the frozen furrows in the back garden. Corn

shocks lashed to a wooden framework formed the walls and roof. Wheelbarrows-full of fragrant pine needles cushioned the floor. A canvas drop cloth hung from the doorway kept out the wind.

Inside, the air was a still, frigid pool, colder than outside, until you became accustomed to it. My friends and I would sit with a flashlight in the springy pine needles, exhaling luminous clouds, while we laid out plans for the week.

By the end of November, the garden was frozen. The remains of the hills from which the potatoes had been unearthed, the craters marking where the largest of the rutabagas had been pulled up, would remain, fossilized, until spring, along with the straight rows of corn stubble and tan-

gles of blackened vines.

We ventured out from the hut to explore. We always found a few enormous cucumbers and a squash or two that had hidden successfully beneath the vines and eluded harvest. By November, their camouflage had withered, and they lay exposed, misshapen, frost bitten and half translucent, preserved in the midst of decay.

It was in the corn hut that I traded my complete set of Davy Crockett bubble gum cards for some plastic trucks I can barely recall. I had collected the cards over the course of a sweltering summer. That was another world, and what had happened there no longer seemed important in November.

Confuse a Cat

This morning I was on the porch roof lathering cold patch into the cracks in the hardened tar pit up there. A few weeks ago, I'd already managed to hide the worst of the damage caused by our 28 ninety degree days this summer but it is supposed to rain tomorrow – a lot – for the first time since April or May so I figured the job had to be finished. Besides, we need the rain and last September, the day after I did the roof we got a 6 inch downpour. No kidding.

I wouldn't have been on the roof doing my repair rain dance if it wasn't flat because I don't like heights. Beyond the third rung of the ladder the atmosphere gets thin. I stayed

Illustrations by

BRAD FOSTER

hunkered down, and well away from the edge, as I slapped tarry gobs wherever I spotted wood.

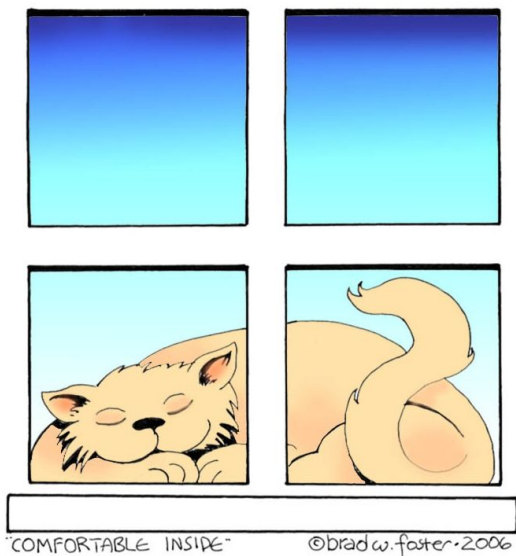
I was smack in front of the office window before I noticed our cat lounging on the sill. Sabrina's an inside cat. Who knows what she imagines the outdoors to be.

She raised her head and looked at me. I stared back.

Shock! Horror! Master's on the wrong side!

Or so I would've thought. Instead she regarded me for a moment with total disinterest, put her head down and resumed dozing. Heck, it's not like I'm on the roof every day. You'd think it would've been worth some reaction.

I guess nothing I do anymore surprises that cat.



The Truth About Halloween

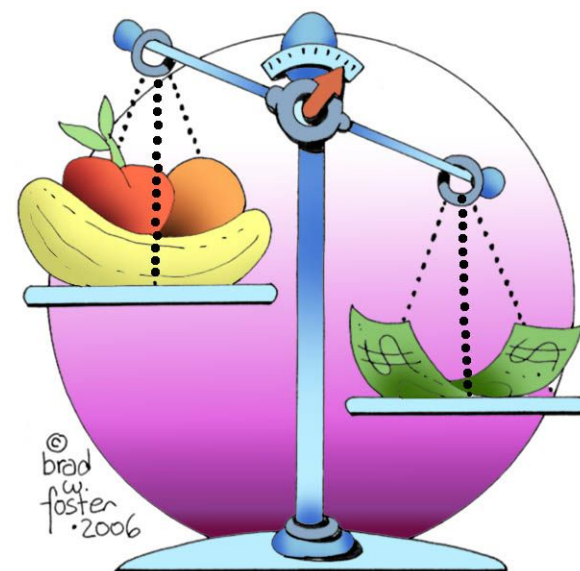
Halloween is here again. Nothing beats putting on a mask and prowling the streets at night. (Ask Batman.) Unfortunately I'm too old to do that without getting arrested. I can only recall fondly the distant days when it was a thrill just to be out after dark. The crunch of desiccated leaves under my feet, the skeletal trees leaning out over the sidewalks, the way night transformed the familiar neighborhood into a eerie, alien landscape full of secrets.

Oh hell...I'd never have gone out in the cold except for the treats.

I hate the cold. That trick-or-treat bag used to get heavy and my hand would turn numb hanging onto it. But when I got back home, upended the bag over the table and spilled out a mountain of chocolate and candy corn, that made the misery worthwhile.

Of course there were always apples. They fit in with the season. My friends and I hated people giving out apples. Apples were too heavy to cart around and anyway no one goes out in the cold for fruit. Our parents were always nagging us to eat fruit. Today fears about concealed razor blades have pretty much put an end to Halloween apples. I doubt kids are shedding any tears over that.

It was always the retired folks who had



HALLOWEEN PHYSICS
• FRESH FRUIT -vs- COLD CASH •

the bowl of apples in the hallway by the door. Naturally, they were the ones who always insisted we come inside and perform for our treats too. Back where I grew up the Puritans had got their oar in. It was more like work-for-treat. We were required to sing a song, or tell a joke or recite a poem. Somehow we never had the courage to explain things to these misguided adults. "I'm afraid we've got a little misunderstanding here. The way it works, see, is you hand over the treats or we come back and soap your windows, or smash a pumpkin on your porch. I don't know where you got this re-

cite-a-poem stuff from. What part of ‘Trick’ don’t you understand?”

We preferred the people who couldn’t be bothered to get into the spirit of things. The ones who opened the door a crack, tossed some money in our bags and sent us on our way. The money was what we preferred. A quarter would buy more penny candy than most people would give out. It was better value and lighter to carry. We couldn’t help noticing, the bigger the house, the more likely we were to get money rather than candy.

Some years my friends’ parents drove us to the upscale development nearby. The people up on the hill put dollar bills in our bags.

Ever notice how tall kids are today? I wonder, if I put on a mask, and slouched...

Naming Characters

I hate naming characters. Heck, I hated naming my kids. I hate my own name. Or at least I did when I was a kid. Which is probably why I hated naming my kids, because I figured they too would hate whatever names were picked.

When I was a grade-schooler I always wished I was named “Rod.” Now there was a name! In arithmetic class, when the teacher called on people, a name like that would’ve made things a lot easier.

“Who can tell me what 12 times 11 equals? Eric?”

Eric suffered agonies because he didn’t



know.

Rod wouldn’t have cared.

It made it easier for me to write because all my protagonists were named Rod. As in “Captain Rod of the Space Patrol.”

Now I waste hours going through lists, finding names for characters, because as

much as I hate naming them I can’t start writing until I know what they’re called. Mary just temporarily calls them “Joe” and plunges ahead. I’m sure all her characters hate her for that.

Windy Day

A cold front is moving through today. We woke to rain pelting the windows. Now the sun is out but the wind is bending the pines and the branches of the hemlocks outside the kitchen window are flapping like flags. According to the weather service we can expect gusts in excess of fifty miles an hour.

Out here in the country we lose our power on days like this. Trees and powerlines don’t get along. When we lose our power we lose our heat and the water from the well. Since our work depends on computers and the Internet, we can’t work.

So I’m on edge when the wind blows, waiting for the lights to flicker and fail. Will I make it to the end of the sentence I’m typing?

Well, that one, yes. And this one too. There’s a relief.

I used to be able to deal with such disruptions. Once, when I was living at home, and the electricity when off, I lit an oil lamp and read an Elric book by Michael Moorcock. •

Eric’s column this month is excerpts from his blog.

<http://www.journalscape.com/ericmayer>

LEE LAVELL

Much Nothings About Ado

The Teaching Gene

There have been references made to a “teaching gene” and I am going to postulate that such a gene actually exists and has had profound implications in the development of humanity.

The knowledge of the existence of such a gene is purely empirical. However, it cannot be denied that teaching seems to “run in families.” I am a good example of this. I was a teacher. My mother was a teacher. Her sister was a teacher. My grandfather was also a teacher. I don’t know any further back than that as far as my family goes.

Also, teaching seems to be a compulsion. If you are a teacher, you teach, even if you are not strictly in the teaching profession. If something needs to be learned, the teacher

is there to help impart either the knowledge of the subject or to guide the “student” to places where he can obtain that knowledge. If there is a blank there, the teacher is compelled to help fill it in. Again, a sample from my own life: I have a friend who still did not know how to drive while he was in his late twenties. He had the basic knowledge of driving but could never get behind the wheel without having an anxiety attack. I do drive, but had never taught anyone to do so and I had only the basic knowledge of anxiety attacks. Nevertheless, I taught him to drive. That need was there and I *had* to help fill it.

Many mammals seem to teach things, especially predators. But this seems to fall

within the category of a parent, usually the mother, teaching things to their young or what they consider their young. Mother cats teach their kittens how to hunt, for instance. This is generally kept within families and others can only learn if they observe outside the teaching circle.

Thus, I think, early man had only this outside observance of skills to guide him into the next generation. (“Go away, kid. Leave me alone while I try to flake this rock.”) So man progressed very slowly. Then something happened. All of a sudden there was Cro-Magnon Man, making leaps in his technology, producing art, improving hunting techniques, etc. Why did this happen so suddenly? The teaching gene developed, possibly as a mutation of the mothering (or parenting) gene. Instead of “Go away kid.” it was “Come here kid. That’s not the right way to flake a rock. Let me show you.” Knowledge broke out of the small family group and could spread to the entire clan and outward. From knowledge and communication of that knowledge came progress and off we went.

Perhaps that is why Neanderthal Man went extinct. He had been very successful but apparently he couldn’t adapt to change. Maybe he never developed that teaching gene that would help his race cope with a new environment and a new type of people coming into his area. There was no one to

tell him what to do when the weather got warmer and these strangers were getting all the good hunting grounds, and good places to live, and had all these new hunting tools. They were stuck where they were. There was no one to tell him what to do next. Things changed and they didn't, and now they are no more. Meanwhile Cro-Magnon, through teaching and communication, became us.

Some of us don't have that teaching gene at all. They hide their discoveries close to the bosom. A lot of us have it to a small degree but it isn't raised to the level of a compulsion. But those of us who have the full brunt of the gene teach. We have no choice. That is what we are programmed to do.

Paranoia Incorporated Conspiracy Department

I heard recently, for the first time, some odd remarks concerning the events that happened on 9/11. Suddenly, at least to me, someone was questioning the origin of the events. A conspiracy, they were saying, or at least possibly one. No longer was it Al-Qaeda to blame. Our own government, or just Bush, had set it up. There might have been bombs as well as airplanes. It had to happen. Any time a huge event occurs, conspiracy theories crop up. So we have suspicions about the Kennedy assassinations, about Pearl Harbor and even getting down to the ridiculous, Roswell and Area 51. Why does the human mind refuse to accept the most

simple, direct explanations and start going for the most convoluted?

Sure, I admit that there *are* conspiracies and 9/11 was one, but not one of our making. That is so very far-fetched and besides, do you think that Bush really has the intelligence to rig something like that? Now, getting into Iraq is another matter and there is just a possibility that was set up, although I am more inclined to think that Bush simply ignored any evidence that went against the theory that Iraq had WMDs and used this as an excuse for finishing up what Daddy had started. This is a little simplistic for a true conspiracy. It's just stupidity.

Conspiracies, by their very definition, involve more than one person and when multiple people are involved it is nigh on to impossible to keep everyone's mouth shut. People like to talk. Human beings by their very nature are blabbermouths and that is death to the secrecy of a conspiracy. In fact, many conspiracies are broken up beforehand simply because someone involved couldn't keep quiet.

Let's take Roswell as an example. A cover-up so big that it involves aliens from outer space and no one has talked about it from the inside and no objective proof has been brought forth! Ridiculous. Now, this is not to say that I don't think there was some sort of cover-up at Roswell (and a cover-up is different from a conspiracy), but certainly not one that involved UFOs

and little green – er – gray men. Here's what I think about Roswell, if anyone cares. The weather balloon thing is out, but there probably was some sort of high-tech balloon, and it carried something with it, something top secret for the Cold War days. Whatever it carried may have been living, perhaps testing how living creatures could withstand high altitudes, and maybe checking out a prototype for a space suit of some kind. But the experiment went bad. Then they didn't want to reveal who or what was in that suit. Now, the only reason I believe there was some sort of cover-up is the government kept changing its story...several times. If they'd stuck to the weather balloon no matter what, I would dismiss the whole thing. Since they can't make up their minds I can't be sure and the whole thing is so muddled now that perhaps even our government doesn't know the whole truth after all these years. Oh well, Roswell got a nice tourist trap out of it anyway.

So saying I shall now create a conspiracy out of whole cloth to demonstrate how easy one can be established. Because I watched the whole stupid trial I shall base this around the following premise: *OJ was innocent. He was framed, but not in any way that was brought up during the trial.* This is the way it goes.

(Continued on page 28)

Whither Fandom?

Let's hear it for the forgotten mimeograph!

At one time the humble mimeo machine was the backbone of fandom. It was never the sole means for duplicating fanzines, but it was for most of its reign the dominant means.

The mimeograph was ubiquitous. Every church had one. Every school had at least one. And the mimeo sat square in the middle of the hierarchy of duplicating methods.

At the bottom of that hierarchy sat the lowly hectograph. This for most people consisted of a pan, baking pan sized, filled with a shallow layer of gelatin. You created a master copy (by writing/drawing on it with a special ink, or by typing with a special ribbon) and laid the master sheet face down on the pan of gelatin. After a set period of time

you peeled off the master sheet and whatever had been on it now stared up at you, in mirror image, from the surface of the gelatin. The next thing you did was to carefully lay a fresh sheet of paper on the gelatin, smoothing it down into wrinkle-free contact with the gelatin, and then you peeled it off. It was now "printed" with the image in the gelatin. You just produced your first copy. Now do this again with another fresh sheet. And again. Around the fiftieth copy you'll notice the image is getting fainter. The process will produce less than a hundred copies. Each copy has been pulling ink from the gelatin.

My mother had a private kindergarten in the days before the public schools offered kindergartens. She hectographed

most of her school papers. It was my job to help her make copies by placing each fresh sheet on the pan of gelatin and peeling it off again. At some point after World War II she got an upscale hecto. This one consisted of a light metal frame over which was stretched a membrane with a permanent gelatin coating on one side. With pan hectos once you finished a page you had to melt down the gelatin before reusing it. With this new hecto you just changed gelatin membranes.

The strongest dye used in hectography was purple, but a variety of other colors (which produced shorter runs) were also available. It was almost impossible to work with a hectograph without getting your fingers, or indeed your whole hands, purple.

One step up – but a giant step – from hecto was Ditto™ or spirit duplication. Here too purple dyes were used the most, and for the same reasons. But for Ditto, the master was prepared in mirror image. This meant that when you typed up a page, you did so with a normal typewriter ribbon, but with a special carbon behind and facing the sheet. This meant everything you typed was mirrored on the back of the sheet. The "carbon" was dye-infused. You could also draw or write on the top of the sheet and the carbon would transfer to the back in the same way.

These "carbons" also came in a variety of colors. In addition to purple there was red, green, blue and "black" (a dark gray) avail-

able in the US, and yellow and orange available in Europe.

Once you had your master sheet ready, it was clipped to the outside of a drum on the spirit duplicator itself. The machine looked superficially a lot like a mimeograph: there was a paper feed tray and an arm to push the paper, one sheet at a time, into the machine. There was a drum and, under it, an impression roller to press the paper against the drum. And there was a receiving tray, to collect the “printed” sheets. The machine might be hand-cranked or have an electric motor. The difference between a Ditto machine and a mimeo was that it used no ink (except that which was on the masters being printed from). Instead it used a “spirit” or fluid made up of water and alcohol. Each sheet of paper was lightly moistened with this fluid as it entered the machine. The flu-



Spirit duplicator (ditto) machine

id acted as a solvent and as each sheet of paper went through the machine it removed a tiny portion of the “carbon” from the master.

Thus, like the hectograph, the spirit duplicator *transferred* ink from the master to the copies – and eventually would use it up. One advantage of spirit duplication was that it would produce over 100 copies – up to 200, if you had good quality carbons. But the last copies were a lot fainter than the first.

It’s also true that the dyes used in both hectograph and Ditto inks and carbons (they are somewhat interchangeable) will fade when the copies are left in sunlight for long periods of time.

Most schools had Ditto machines. And students who operated them quickly learned that you could get a mild buzz of sorts by inhaling the vapors that rose from the fresh-printed sheets as they came out of the machine. They were inhaling pure alcohol.

Some schools also had multiliths. My high school had one, located in the shop classroom, and used it to print the school literary magazine (of which I was an editor and the art director in my senior year). Multiliths were well above mimeographs in the hierarchy of duplication. They were complex machines and they didn’t come cheap. Few fans owned them. Lynn Hickman was one of those few.

A multilith is an “offset” machine. That

is, its master plates (which can be paper, plastic or metal) read normally and are not mirror-imaged. Each plate is mounted and clamped to a drum. So the image from the plate is printed on an *offset* (rubber) mat, mounted on an adjacent drum. This mirror-images it, and the image is printed onto paper from that mat.

But a multilith works on the lithographic principal, hence the “-lith.” There are three methods of printing which use ink: printing from a raised surface (set type), printing from a flat surface (lithography) and printing from a depressed surface (rotogravure). We’ll ignore gravure (an expensive and now rarely used process). Litho prints from a flat surface by sensitizing the image areas. Traditionally an artist drew on a litho stone with crayon-type material. It was greasy and repelled water. After the art was complete, the stone would first be bathed with water (wetted down) and then inked (by a roller). The ink would stay only on the image and not on the wet stone. After the stone was inked, paper would be laid over it and impressed on it (with a roller) and then pulled free, fully printed. (Multiple colors required multiple runs.)

In a multilith there are two sets of “fountains.” One distributes the ink (in a very fine layer) while the other bathes the plate with a water solution. The water solution blocks the ink from those parts of the plate which have no image, so only the image on the plate is inked. (It then offsets that image as

previously described.)

Most multiliths are built for professional use by printers, but Addressograph-Multigraph made “office” machines (which still cost thousands of dollars) in the ‘40s and ‘50s and probably well into the ‘60s. All of these machines had elaborate paper-feed mechanisms and accurate registration, but the “office” models cut a few corners which the professional machines did not, mostly in the paper-feed.

Multiliths used plates. The metal plates required “burners” and reproduced photo-images (of type, a photograph, or art). These were true “photo-offset” machines. But you could use plastic plates (images were “burned” on them via xerography) or paper plates. At my high school we used paper plates, and that’s what Lynn Hickman used. You could type on them with a special ribbon, or you could write or draw on them with either a special ink or a special pencil. The latter gave you the opportunity to “shade” artwork. But the typing looked somewhat grayed out, and if the typist had an uneven touch (some letters struck with more force than others) that would be faithfully reproduced. The typing would not come out a solid black. However, a multilith could print thousands of copies (the actual limit determined by the nature and quality of the plate), and if you watched your inking they’d all be identical.

At the top of the duplication hierarchy was letterpress – set type, printed from a

real press. This was not uncommon in ‘30s fanzines, and a few used the process in the ‘40s. The late Bill Danner used letterpress to produce his FAPazines until his death in the last decade. But probably the most memorable fanzine produced on a letterpress was Walt Willis’s *Slant*. Walt didn’t start off with much actual type, and basically had about enough to set one page (approximately half lettersize) at a time. Once that page was printed, all the type would be returned to its case and the next page would be set. This is a process which encourages patience.

And ultimately *Slant* went to mimeo text. Which brings us back to the mimeograph.

When I was in 8th grade I was fascinated by mimeography. I did not understand the process well, but I wanted to. I was given one chance to “cut” a cartoon I’d drawn onto a stencil for the school paper, but I didn’t do a very good job at it. I lacked, as it turned out, the correct tools. The cartoon did not end up looking very good from a technical standpoint.

So that summer – the summer of 1952, for those who track such things – I bought my own mimeograph. I bought it from Sears Roebuck for about ten bucks. It was a “postcard” mimeo – a little thing that would print sheets no larger than 4 inches by 6 inches. It was in essence a miniature mimeo. I got it with three colors of ink – black, red and blue – and my first experi-

ments were in cutting stencils.

Mimeograph stencils were in essence sheets of fiber which were impregnated and coated with wax. The idea in “cutting” a stencil was to cut through the wax (pushing it aside) without cutting through the fiber (which, if it was cut, would fall apart). When the stencil was placed on a mimeograph, ink would come through the wax-free areas and print. If you had a typewriter which chopped out the Os your printed page would be dotted with little black solid Os.

Most mimeographs consisted of a drum with a felt pad wrapped around it. This pad was inked – either before you applied the stencil, with a brush, on the outside, or from the inside of the perforated drum, by tilting a tray suspended inside the drum – with a runny ink. It was possible to overink or underink the pad, producing illegible results either way.

Gestetters and Rex Rotaries used a different principle to ink identical stencils. These machines had two smaller drums and a silk screen wrapped around them like a belt. The drums had smooth solid surfaces. A paste ink would be squirted on them, smoothed out by “waver rollers,” and pressed through the silk screen and the stencil mounted on it.

My early mimeos were the simple sort with felt pads.

I didn’t have much in the way of tools. I think I had one basic stylus to begin with. I got a second which had what looked like a

tiny gear mounted on its end. The gear turned freely and could be used to make a dotted line. But if you burnished it back and forth and moved it up or down a bit on each back and forth swing, it would create a series of close-set parallel lines – “hatching” – and if you did it again at a cross angle, you got “cross-hatching” or a way to shade in areas.

I had no light box. I used a window. You put your art under the stencil and then traced it with the stylus. You needed light coming through in order to see the art well enough to trace it. This was even more true once you acquired a “tracing plate,” a linen-finished thin plastic plate which went between the art and the stencil. Its texture allowed the stylus to make a cleaner line in the stencil. And I had no shading plates. These were plastic rectangles with raised patterns on them. When you placed them under a stencil and burnished them with a spoon-like stylus, you could get all sorts of neat shading patterns. So until I got my first shading plates I used sandpaper. (It was harsh on burnishing styli.)

My first experiments were in cutting art. Needing some kind of “art” for these experiments, I created my own, copying Superman’s various costumes (and the evolution of the “S” symbol on his chest). I used this to try out my two styli, my sandpaper shading, etc. Postcard-size stencils were easy to work with. After I’d cut a stencil to my satisfaction I would run it off. I even tried two-

color runs – Superman’s costume after all was blue and red – despite the poor registration available from my tiny mimeo.

Out of all that came my first “publication,” *The Facts Behind Superman*, a four-page pamphlet which I produced in the fall of 1952, mostly for the edification of a few of my fellow 9th grade students, but which I advertised in a friend’s fanzine and which found a few fellow comics fans in SF fandom – notably my long-time friend, Bhub Stewart, who was about to launch EC fandom with his *EC Fan Bulletin*, which he hectographed.

A year or two later I did a final version of my Superman pamphlet, running around a dozen pages and with three or four-color mimeography. I’ve seen this cited as a landmark comics fan publication and copies are valued at or over \$1,000. And I know that *somewhere* in a box I still have dozens of them...

At some point I upgraded to a Print-O-Matic postcard mimeo. I believe it cost me \$15.00. And in 1953 I put out the first issue of my first fanzine, *Zip*, which was a pocket-sized fanzine.

I wasn’t the only fan using a postcard mimeo to produce fanzines. A guy named Don Canton did a fanzine called *Micro* in that size, and the first fanzine I ever saw, *Brevizine* (from Warren Freiberg), was also 4” x 6”. So the use of this size and format had already been legitimized for me.

And at one point around 1953 or ’54 I

got a tiny postcard-sized flatbed spirit duplicator. I never used it for fanzines (too much trouble), but I did use it for experiments in 3-D art (blue-green for one eye’s image, red for the other) which Bhub had started doing in hecto. (But Bhub did not have binocular vision, so he couldn’t see the 3-D effect himself. He’d send me his experiments and ask me to look at them and see if they’d worked. It was this which prodded me into trying out my own experiments.)

I did five issues of *Zip* on the postcard mimeos and then moved up to a normal-sized mimeo, buying a Print-O-Matic through the stationery store (Falls Church Stationers) where I worked weekends and summers. By then I had a “mimeoscope” (light box), a dozen different styli, and many



Mimeograph and supplies

shading plates and lettering guides. The latter were plastic “stencils” through which you could trace letters. They came in a variety of fonts and sizes, and I quickly learned that the best were made by Speed-O-Print and ABDick, in the US, and Gestetner in the UK. (For years I had dreams of discovering caches of lettering guides in unique new fonts.)

I think the mimeograph fostered its own unique craft for artists working in that medium. I considered myself an artist in those days, and I hung out with other fan artists like Jack Harness. I learned how to cut clean and elaborate stencils, and many fan artists came to prefer my stenciling of their art over their own, Jack included. When Terry Carr moved to New York City in 1961 and became a regular at Towner Hall, my Greenwich Village mimeo shop, he and I traded art-stenciling techniques like a pair of old masters.

There were things you couldn’t do easily in mimeo, like thick black lines, or indeed solid black areas. But we knew the ways around that. You could get “blank” fiber sheets, for example – effectively mimeo stencils minus the wax – and you could use them. One way was to place the fiber sheet directly under the stencil. When you burnished the stencil you could drive the wax out of the stencil and into the fiber sheet. If you did this carefully you wouldn’t tear the fibers in the actual stencil. But for larger solid areas I’d simply glue a piece of the fiber

sheet to the stencil.

Electro-stencils put an end to hand-stenciling art. Artists preferred it; it meant ham-handed fanzine editors couldn’t ruin their work. It also meant they could work in more expressive styles – thick and thin lines, brush work, etc. – and their art would be effectively photocopied. But as this transition occurred the craft of hand-stenciling art began to disappear.

This year at Corflu a program item was introduced which echoed an item at the first (1984) Corflu. At that one Terry Carr and I were supposed to conduct a seminar in stenciling art. All the tools were there – lightscope, styli, shading plates, etc. – but we had no audience. No one cared. We gave up and joined the audience for another program item going on in the same room.

This year, when no one volunteered to try out the equipment Colin Hinz had set up, I sat down and tried my hand at stenciling a Rotsler. I was at first incredibly rusty. It had been at least 25 years since I’d last stenciled any art. But my hand remembered and it all quickly came back to me. When I finished tracing the Rotsler cartoon, I grabbed a shading plate and started adding touches of “Terry Carr-style shading” – just adding a bit of depth and modeling. It made me feel good. It felt *fannish*.

After me, others sat down at the

lightscope with fresh stencils to try their hands. Gregg Trend did a nice cartoon of a leprechaun – but forgot that a mimeo stencil is long enough to accommodate legal-length paper (14 inches long) and filled the entire stencil with his drawing. Colin copped my Rotsler for his FAPA-zine, which I’m told was published and circulated through FAPA, but which I’ve never received my contributor’s copy of – although I heard rumors it was to be sent to all Corflu members with a copy of the never-handed-out Program Book. Hope springs eternal in my fan-nish breast.

These days most fanzines are prepared like this one – on a computer. The art is in the form of gifs or jpegs, positioned with a mouse. No human hand touches it. There is no “collaboration,” for better or worse, between the artist and the fanzine’s editor. And from the artist’s perspective this is probably a Good Thing. After all, for every Terry Carr or Ted White among fanzine editors, there were always a plethora of faneds who seemed to cut stencils with their elbows, whose crude tracings of even the most simple lines betrayed them. They at least are now spared the chore of mangling the art they use.

But I feel more than a whiff of nostalgia for the Days Gone By, when a mimeographed fanzine could be a work of art, on a level now quite impossible. •

CHRIS GARCIA

Found In Collection

Back in April 2000, I was asked to go to BayCon and represent the Computer History Museum, which was called the Computer Museum History Center back in those days. I was happy to since I hadn't been to a con in a good while and BayCon was always one of my faves. The first panel I was asked to do was called The Future Ain't What It Used To Be and it featured David Gerrold, Poul Anderson, Brad Lyau and myself. It turned out to be a fun little panel. Poul and David told great stories and I added comedy where I could. There wasn't a single panel silence, which is often a problem. It still ranks as one of my four or five best panels ever.

At the same con, I had to run our fan table. I brought a few things to show off to the good folks at the con. A Mac Portable (which

worked for about 20 minutes), a piece of the Apollo Guidance Computer, a couple of parts from old machines, the original paper tape that Bill Gates punched with Micro-Soft BASIC on it, and a book. The book was the Ballistics Research Lab Survey of Digital Computers 1956, a listing of all the computers in the US as of that date. It's one of the books we reference the most in our day to day work. I brought it along to show folks some of the big machines we had at the museum.

Around noon on Sunday afternoon, the day after Poul and I had our panel, he and Karen Anderson came walking by.

"Hello, Rich," Poul said. It was OK, I didn't mind him calling me Rich.

"Hi there! Have you ever heard of the

museum?" I asked.

Poul and I talked for a few minutes, and Karen started looking through the BRL book. As Poul and I talked about antique cameras and an article that had recently been published in Smithsonian, it seemed like Karen was looking for something.

"You know, I used to work with a computer," Karen said.

"Really?" I asked. "You know which one?"

"It would have been the very early 50s. I just punched cards and handed the deck over to the technicians. Then I'd get the maps back."

"I didn't know that," Poul said.

"Yeah, at the U.S. Mapping Service," she said. "I never got to see the machine."

I picked up the book and turned to the back.

(Continued on page 28)



UNIVAC 1

Hagley Museum and Library and UNISYS

PETER SULLIVAN

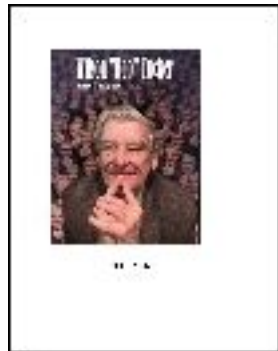
Being Frank

and furthermore 18 & 19

(John Purcell)

It's been a bad (i.e. busy) year for obit-fandom, but the death of Bob Tucker, just a few months after his wife Fern, still - rightly - has the power to shock. Issue 18 is a short two-pager, with John's immediate reactions to the news, quoting Jim Young's line that "we fans are all Tucker's children." The full memorial issue will be the next issue of John's main fanzine, *In A Prior Lifetime*

16. But *and furthermore* 19, meantime, catches up on letters of comment to previous issues, with Ted White explaining the evolution of the various meanings of the term 'sercon,' Chris Garcia talking about 'chicks in corsets,' and Lloyd Penney and Matthew Appleton writing in too.



Banana Wings 27

(Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer)

Claire's editorial explains how she doesn't collect sheep ornaments, oh no, and any reports to the contrary by GUFF delegates should be ignored. The lady doth protest too much, methinks. The longest article is a piece by Taral Wayne about the British science-fiction comedy *Red Dwarf*. Taral explains the background to the original TV series, and also provides a neat summary of the current speculation around when the proposed Hollywood film version, which might or might not ever get made. From the point of view of an editor, the benefit of snagging a fan artist as a writer is, of course, that they can provide their own illos, in this case an excellent *Red Dwarf* front cover, complete with Taral's signature faun. (Is she meant to be a faun? Whatever...) The problem page spoof article by D S Ketelby didn't work for me at all, I'm afraid, but that's the risk you always take with humour. There's also a series of short squibs throughout this issue by Nic Farey, a fan currently serving time in gaol for



driving whilst disqualified. It doesn't pretend to be *De Profundis*, but Nic still provides an interesting insight into a lifestyle that hopefully few of the rest of us will ever have to experience. The usual wide-ranging lettercolumn, including at least two TMOCs (that's Text Messages of Comment, you see) from James Bacon.

The Drink Tank 100

(Chris Garcia)

I suspect that *The Drink Tank* is probably not quite the fastest fanzine ever to have reached 100 issues, but it must be pretty close, having done so in slightly less than two years. To celebrate, the 100th issue has 100 items - a mixture of artwork, short pieces and longer material. Although there are



several names that are first-time writers for The Drink Tank, the overall mix is pretty familiar to regular Garcianistas. It's impossible to pick highlights from such a large selection, but I note that Chris is keeping track not just of issue numbers, but also Harlan Ellison jokes. The current total to date is 15, but Chris hopes to get to 100 "before I stop producing this zine altogether."

e-APA 30 (OE Peter Sullivan)

This is a bit of a cheat, but what's the point of having reviewer's privileges if you're not going to abuse them from time to time? e-APA, founded over two years ago by a chap you may have heard of called David Burton, has been probably the leading general SF electronic APA over that time, although now

possibly facing some friendly competition from the Vegas-based SNAPS. Normally members-only, the 30th distribution is an open one, available for all to download from the efanazines.com website.

eI 28 (Earl Kemp)

Earl Kemp was a professional publisher of pornography at a time when this meant small-press paperback books rather than glossy-print



magazines (say, up to the early 1970s) and *eI* is, as Earl puts it, "part of my in-progress rough-draft memoirs." Considering 'filthy books' as part of the culture of post-war America. This time there is a series of articles about Lawrence Block, author of the 'X-rated classic, *Ronald Rabbit is a Dirty Old Man.*' Back in the world of more conventional publishing, there's the second part of a definitive listing of the books published by the science fiction Fantasy Press during the 1950s, including the original(?) publication of E.E.Smith's *Grey Lensman.*

eI is always an interesting read, and I know that some people (mentioning no Chris Garcias by name) consider this to be the best fanzine currently publishing.

Nice Distinctions 15 (Arthur Hlavaty)

The perzine has probably suffered more from the shift to electronic fandom than any of the other various flavours of science fiction fanzines. In that weblogs have become a much easier way of getting out the sort of material that would have made up a typical 1980s-style perzine. So it's satisfying to see at least one perzine still sticking with the fanzine format. In fact, Arthur manages to play both ends

against the middle, in that much of the shorter material is recycled from his livejournal. However, the longer pieces work much better in the fanzine format. This time, he concludes with a piece describing his experiences in a social-action programme in the 1960s, which he originally enlisted in as an alternative to the Vietnam draft. His conclusion? "To be sure, the government is out to get us. To be sure, it has great and powerful resources. But be of good cheer, for the government is every bit as inept in doing evil as when it tries to do good. What they did was, they threw me in the briar patch" by sending him to San Francisco.



Skyrack 1-96 (Ron Bennett)

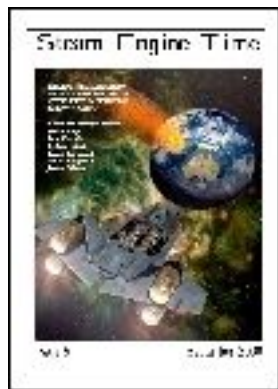
Having been inspired by Dave Langford's project to get all of the issues of *Checkpoint*, the British newszine of 1971-1979, available on-line, Greg Pickersgill has scanned and converted to HTML all the issues of *Skyrack*, covering 1959-1971. Together with *Ansible*, this means that the



whole history of British fandom from 1959 to date is now available on-line – an excellent feat of time-binding. I wouldn't claim to have read all 96 issues, but even picking random issues out can be interesting. The first London Worldcon in 1958 is too early to be covered, but there's a full report back from the 23rd Worldcon in 1965 in issue 83. And it's interesting to read contemporaneous reviews of now historic fanzines like *Hypphen*, *Xero* and *Shangri L' Affaires*.

Steam Engine Time 5 (Bruce Gillespie & Jan Stinson)

One of the first things that wives, boyfriends or significant others can be guaranteed to point out when they flick through your fanzine collection is how little the average fanzine actually talks about science fiction. The collected works of Bruce Gillespie, under whatever title he's using at the moment, is a clear part of the counter-argument to this.



Of course, science fiction these days isn't just books, and this fanzine reflects this, including an editorial by Jan Stinson on Babylon Five. Paul Kincaid has an excellent piece on Christopher Priest's *The Separation*, which makes me want to read the book. There's also a piece by Eric Raymond on the political history of SF - Eric is probably more famous in the mundane world

as one of the leading spokesmen for Open Source software. There are also several pieces on the theme of Censorship in Australia. For all that our freedoms are under threat in the post-9/11 world, it's still a salutary reminder of how far we've come to read of Roger Dard's battles with the Australian authorities to import US horror magazines as late as the 1960s.

Finally, Gillespie zines are famed for the quality of their letterhacks, and this issue is no exception, with 8 pages of high quality LoCs.

Vegas Fandom Weekly 86 (Arnie Katz)

The death of Bob Tucker makes the front page as last-minute breaking news, with a proper memorial issue promised for next time. Inside, Arnie is getting pensive about the name of his fanzine, noting that both the circulation and the content is getting less exclusively Vegas-orientated as time goes by.

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 21.

And it doesn't really matter that the frequency has slipped somewhat – by Arnie's calculation, to about 10 days between issues. There have been many paper fanzines that have been annual "quarterlies." And all Arnie really has to do is reinstate the original strapline, "The Sorta Weekly Newszine," to make it clear that weekly-ness, like many a virtue, is as much something to be aspired to as something to be achieved. •

Zine Details:

and furthermore... 18 & 19: PDF, frequent, 11 X 8½"
<http://www.efanzines.com/Prior/>
Banana Wings 27: paper, quarterly, A4, 59 Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7ES UK
The Drink Tank 100: PDF, weekly-ish, 11 x 8.5"
<http://www.efanzines.com/DrinkTank/>
eAPA 30: PDF, monthly, various page sizes
<http://www.efanzines.com/eapa/>
eI 28: PDF or HTML, bi-monthly, 8½x11"
<http://www.efanzines.com/EK/>
Nice Distinctions 15: PDF, quarterly, 8½x11"
<http://www.efanzines.com/NiceDistinctions/>
Skyrack 1-96: HTML.
<http://www.gostak.co.uk/skyrack/index.htm>
Steam Engine Time 5: PDF or paper, irregular, A4
<http://www.efanzines.com/SFC/>
Vegas Fandom Weekly 86: PDF, weekly-ish, 8½x11"
<http://www.efanzines.com/VFW/be-AP>

Apathetic Competence

I think the key to success in life is to promote an image of apathetic competence. As opposed to concerned competence, or apathetic incompetence, or concerned competence. You have your choice, you know.

The “Fonz” would call it being cool, but I call it apathetic competence. I have been trying to live that way for many years. I’ve always like to think that I was reasonably competent, but I’ve often been more empathic or emphatic than apathetic. You gain more objectivity than you lose by being apathetic.

If a new problem arises on your job you can be strung up in consideration of such things as time and priority, empathy and demand, conscientiousness and image, status and cost. But the apathetically competent individual will listen to the problem, then turns around and takes the easiest way out that will prevent the problem from

bouncing back and breeding other problems. He or she doesn’t get sidetracked with numerous other considerations, most of which compound a problem without actually having too much bearing on it. Things are simpler to the person who is apathetic. I find it a miasma of discontent to be otherwise.

Let us go into examples of how to be apathetically competent.

Presume that a friend of yours discovers that he has two widgets in his possession, and that in an entire lifetime he would be unable to use more than one. He then asks you if you can use the other one, gratis, no charge, with his blessing. Radiating friendship like crazy he extends his arm and holds out this widget to you.

The first thing that enters your mind is doubt as to whether or not you would ever

have any possible use for a widget. Maybe. Maybe not. So what do you say to him, as he stands there offering this gift?

Most people encounter a concerned anxiety. They begin to frantically contemplate such factors as: 1) Could I ever really use the thing? 2) On the possibility that I would never miss owning one, how much do I want to risk offending him by turning it down? 3) If I accept it, wouldn’t I really be depriving someone who might have a real need for it? 4) How could I decline graciously? 5) If I take it, how much should I thank him for it?

You might not spend too much time contemplating all of these possibilities, but such thoughts will be scanned by the insides of your eyeballs.

If you were a person of apathetic competence, however, you wouldn’t think that way at all. You would say to your friend: “Sure, I’ll take it.” To yourself you would say: “I can always give it away or throw it out if I don’t need it.” Besides, people might not give you things if you keep turning them down for such ridiculous reasons as not really need the items being offered.

Let’s be practical, after all.

If your in-laws have telephoned, and you have exchanged much small talk, and then they drop the exciting piece of news that they would like to come out and



Nick Carter

spend a week with you, how do you handle this kind of situation? If you like your in-laws, you have no particular problem. Otherwise, what do you say under the circumstances that there has already been thirty seconds of “dead air” on this collect telephone call?

You could tell them that you would rather watch flies copulate than to watch them wipe their feet on your welcome mat, but such honesty does not tend to promote marital harmony.

You might blurt out that the kids have the chicken pox and the house is in quarantine, but this may be a rather transparent excuse. They might reply: “What, again? They just had the chicken pox last year.” Or: “But you don’t have any children.”

Or you might turn coward and do something foolish such as actually inviting them out, and then deservedly suffer for it.

The apathetically competent person would simply hang up, then dash the telephone to the floor and jump on it until it was no longer serviceable. “Take that, you disruptive sonuvabitch!” The telephone company could then report to your in-laws, upon receiving their concerned inquiry, that your station did indeed seem to be out of order. You in-laws would then be forced to write with their question about coming to visit you, and everyone knows how terrible the mail service is these days.

If you are receiving computer billings, the billing is in error, and as the result of your letters you have decided that there is no a single human body operating within a quarter-mile of your revolving charge account, there are several courses of action you can take. All of them put you through much aggravation and many of them

waste a good deal of your time. The man or woman who possesses apathetic competence will realize that curses are wasted on a computer, and also upon people who have no idea that their computer is starting to tilt. What you need do is call attention to yourself so that a human being will be forced to contact you, or better yet, forced to correct your account before you cause their computer to blow out.

Never mind repeated letters or phone calls or trips down to the store. You might do one of those things once, just to show that you’re a reasonable person, but after that you’re under no obligation to assume the role of the put-upon consumer. Remember now, you are apathetically competent.

There are several things you can do which will cause the matter to be quickly resolved without great pain on your part, but with a reasonable amount of amusement, and here are just a few of them.

1. Go ahead and send them a check for the amount that they want, even if it’s \$20,000 and you only owe them \$2.00. Just don’t sign the check. The might even get all the way down to the bank with it before some teller spots the error and sends them back home. Chances are they do not have a computer program to crank out a form-letter to people who do not sign their checks. A human being will contact you. Tell the human being that you meant to destroy the check because it was probably for the wrong amount, but it got sent out by mistake. Send a check for \$2.00 to their attention. When he or she calls you again,

then tell them that the computer is wrong and \$2.00 is the correct amount. They will have the matter straightened out quickly, because they will be damned if they will be forced to call you a third time.

2. Send them a carbon copy of your original letter where you told them about the mistake, and attach a short note telling them that this has not been corrected yet. Mention that you will be moving in thirty days, and if the matter cannot be settled within that time they should address their letters to your temporary new mailing address: c/o Ralph Nader.
3. The next time you are downtown, run off fifty copies of your letter, stop by the store, and put one in every slot in their mail room.
4. Stop by your bank and have them run off 200 checks for \$0.01 each, all made out to this same company. Put all these checks in a shoebox and mail them to the offending business. Surely someone will notice.
5. Send your letter of complain in a 5’x8’ packing crate. Indicate on your letter that when they have fixed the computer you would appreciate their using the crate to send the defective parts to you as a souvenir.

The key to the whole matter, of course, is that such problems do not bother you. If they bother you, you are not apathetic. If you are apathetic about the problem, with your mind freed from worry there is no reason why you cannot turn it toward having a bit of fun with the situation.

Good luck and happy innovating. •

Pixelated

Lee Lavell

(leelavell at comcast dot net)

“Notes from Byzantium”: I had no use for libraries as a child because they didn’t carry the Oz books and considered them trash. So how could I trust them. I did get the Nancy Drew series. My parents didn’t really restrict what I read, at least that I know of. I know that by my early teens I read *Forever Amber* and *The Egyptian* which got me hooked on the Restoration and the Amarna period. My mother grew up reading Dickens from an early age. I think she may have had a vague interest in science fiction, probably set off by the Orson Welles “War of the Worlds” scare. As for the planets, I’ve always thought there should be a division between the rocky ones and the gas giants. After all they are two entirely different beasts.

“Whither Fandom”: The role of the fannish mother, I should think, would be to guide. I don’t see why there should be any competition if it is handled properly. As for Heinlein, remind me to relate my only experience with him sometime. I

gave up going to conventions when the attendance started getting into the thousands. My first Worldcon was Chicon II which approached a thousand, unheard of at the time. After that things went back to “normal” for that era. I was bound to be overwhelmed, neofan that I was, at Chicon II, but I really enjoyed the intimacy of the smaller cons.

While I enjoyed reading the Garcia and Locke pieces, I really don’t have anything relevant to say about them.

Glad to see Sullivan back. Missed him last issue. Sometime I’d like to see him do a really in-depth review of just one zine, or an essay on the ezine vs the printzine.

“Pixelated”: Gee, a new name for the lettercol. To those who commented on not understanding Bridge, I leaned to play because it was supposed to be this superior, intelligent game. I found it rather stupid. There are all those dumb bidding conventions to let your partner know what you have and everybody knows them, so why don’t you just come out and say “I have a lot of high hearts and no

clubs” and be done with it. I played long enough to make one grand slam doubled and redoubled (giving my partner, Jerry Hunter, a heart attack. I would have killed him if he had bid incorrectly) and quit the game for good. Sandy Black: There was an interesting program on The History Channel called “American Vesuvius” which dealt with “shock cocoons” and explains why those people on the stairway survived as well as those unbroken panes of glass. •

Lloyd Penney

(penneys at allstream dot net)

I was working on a letter of comment to Pixel 5 when I was given the call to work at a week-long conference at the local convention centre. Good hours, so even though I was nearly done with the LoC, off I went to the convention, plus my evening hours at the Globe and Mail...I’ve had a number of 15-hour days. And then, issue 6 came along, too. So, with what John Purcell and Chris Garcia like to call a Lloyd Penney-style letter,

E-mail addresses are “munged” to to avoid any possibility of harvesting by ’bots. So to use a real address, for example, change “catchpenny at mw dot net” to “catchpenny@mw.net”

Illustrations by
Manfred Klein

here are comments on issues 5 and 6.

Ted White's article is so personal, I'm not sure I can make any comment on it without sounding like I'm sticking my nose in where it doesn't belong, but the first comment that did come to mind was when I read that rich brown was at one time a financial reporter with Reuters. So many of us, like Ted, have made a living, or at least tried, in publishing and newspapers. I sometimes wonder if we really enjoyed the science fiction we read in earlier years, or if we just liked the publishing industry. The smell of the paper and glue, the physicality of the book/newspaper/magazine, the feeling that you're a part of the industry that brings you your favorite genre. I think that's what brings us into the industry, and why we so desperately want to stay with it.

It also makes me wonder (as I have elsewhere) about the happy fannish sedentary lifestyle shortening our lifespans. I am 5'4", I weigh about 215 lbs., and I should not be that size or weight. However, I have never been an athletic type, so perhaps my frame is used to the extra weight and lack of activity. I try to walk as much as I can, but I spend a lot of time trying to make a living and looking for work, and that takes place in this modern era in front of the computer. We all have to try to look after ourselves at least a little better if we want to hang around long enough to be a pain to our fellow fans, let alone our families.

I've always loved seeing my byline here and there, and perhaps that's one thing that keeps me in the local, the fact that if these letters are interesting enough, and sometimes they come close, I'll get it published with my byline. It was proof that I had created something with my brain and some tools to make it appear in print. (Maybe

this goes back to what I spoke of about publishing in my comments on Ted White's article.)

The commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks...I saw them on CBC "Newsworld." I can rely on the CBC to present what happened and be suitably sympathetically sad without being maudlin. Every so often, I'd go to CNN, and I'd see a whole lot of maudlin; anything for the ratings. Now I can say that we're (Canada) in Afghanistan, too, and it's turned from a reconstruction project into an all-out war against the Taliban. It's nearly unanimous...what is America doing in Iraq, and were those who said they wouldn't send their troops the right ones?

I like cats. And dogs, and I've had a pet skunk on my lap. They teach us so much. We learn to at least try to be responsible to them out of love when we are children, and when we grow up and old, they keep us company, make us laugh, make us love, and give us someone to be with, especially when we are alone. They cheer and comfort us, and they take our minds off our troubles. Most of all, because their lifespans are so much shorter than ours, they teach us to grieve, and teach our children about the fact of death. The last pet I had was a couple of gerbils, but I've enjoyed the pets of my friends, and there is one cat I truly miss because she belongs to friends, and she spent a whole weekend with me, soaking up all the love I cared to give her, which was a lot. And, I've sat beside a tiger, too.

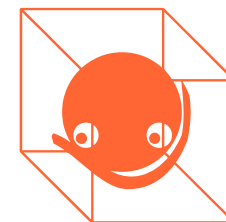
I haven't counted my fanzines at all over the years, but I do count the Bankers' Boxes I've got them in. Should be around 25 boxes or so.

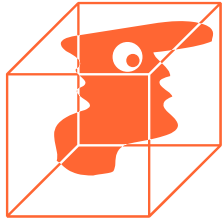
That's a lot of zines, but not nearly as many as other collections I could name.

Teachers certainly do deserve respect, for what they know, for how they transfer the knowledge, for the hassles they get from their ungrateful students, and for the optimism they show when it comes time to start another school year, often full of frustrations. I think they deserve the pay they get, but they deserve more cooperation from the rest of us. I think it's almost ridiculous that knowledge, literacy and intelligence are laughed at, that being ignorant is almost a virtue, and that those who are smart are abused by their peers. Who in their right minds would triumphantly proclaim that they don't read, or haven't read a book since school? Yet, there are so many who do. Teachers must wring their hands in frustration. (One local fan is a teacher, and Yvonne, some years ago, had the opportunity to be in her classroom. Many of the signs she put up in her classroom were full of spelling mistakes. I'd always wondered if she should be a teacher with her strange behavioral tics, and when she told me this, it just confirmed my suspicions. She shouldn't even be a dishwasher, let alone a teacher...)

It is a pleasure to see new names in the local, so welcome to James Vance and Sandy Black. (Well, new to me, anyway.) I remember getting zines from Indianapolis in the past, from the Circle of Janus writing group.

6...It's one thing to decide what's suitable for





kids, but what's suitable for modern kids. You don't want to talk down to them, but you also don't want to scar them. Much more chance of the former, much less chance of the latter, the more modern the kids are. I really don't think you have

to worry too much; some video games are scarier than a Druid sacrifice. The main reason my mother brought home science fiction for me from the library was that it was all in the adult section. Once I could get my own adult library card, I couldn't get enough, and I suspect a good percentage of what the Orillia Public Library had to offer.

Pluto was officially demoted as a planet while we were all at the Worldcon in Anaheim, so with good reason, the last party of the convention was the Dead Pluto Party. Not just any Dog would do... No matter what is decided, as long as the astrologers are scrambling for explanations, I'm pleased. I think they should keep Pluto, and add Ceres, Xena, and even Quaoar, and anything else they want. (Xena's official name is now Eris.)

Some of the writers I know do not necessarily read a lot of fiction. They do read a lot of science news on various websites to keep up with the latest trends, and add fresh science as the background of their next novel or short story. They keep up so their fiction has that cutting edge read to it.

I have met some children of fans, and for the most part, they seemed bored by all this fandom stuff to the point of being rude and irate. (Maybe

they were just imitating their parents...) Some just sat around and looked really, really bored until their parent(s) would break off and spend some time with them. Few I've met really took up the fannish mantle to follow in Mom or Dad's footsteps. Besides, they've got blogs and webcams to look after. I guess you have to find your own niche. If you do wind up having fannish children, there must be an element of pride in that...

Yvonne and I made it to Worldcon this year, and we had a great time. It was a family reunion for us in a lot of ways, for we saw people we hadn't seen in days, or years, or in the case of the Trimbles, decades. We saw Forry Ackerman and Ray Bradbury, both now in their late 80s. Ray spoke of his life in writing, one we could only envy, and he was coherent for most of his talk. Forry is in slightly worse shape, and he does have a tendency to wander mentally and talk off the top of his head. However, we were attentive and respectful, and we wanted to see them both because we felt it would be the last time we would see them. I hope I'm wrong, but I suspect I'm right. Yvonne and I have said it before, but I think LAcon IV will be our last Worldcon. We saved about C\$3500 to purchase US dollars (much more affordable then they were only a few years earlier), and we came home with about US\$400 left. We enjoyed every day of it, we went to the California Science Center, the gift shop at the LA County Coroner's Department, and the Proud Bird restaurant just outside of LAX just before the con started, and were sorry that it all had to end. (Our big convention next year will not be Worldcon in Japan, but the International

Space Development Conference in Dallas.)

I am terribly skeptical of psychic phenomena, although we don't know all about the mind's abilities, so I'll keep a skeptical, yet open mind about it. I spooked myself a little by writing an article for John Purcell's *In a Prior Lifetime* and lampooning Steve Irwin, the Crocodile Hunter. I wrote the article with a few Crikey!s in it, and fired it off to John. The next morning, the news broke that Irwin had died of a stingray barb to the heart. It was perhaps hours before his death that I'd written the article. Pure coincidence, of course, but still you expect Rod Serling to step around the corner and submit the whole event to an invisible audience for their approval.

A bug in the computer museum? As long as it's that Bug, that's fine. She was great in Toronto, and in Anaheim, too. I am looking forward to Bug's trip report, and with luck, we didn't embarrass ourselves too badly.

I have wondered about joining FAPA, partially because it's been a long time since I've been in apa, but whether or not I could truly take part in the conversations. Perhaps once my finances solidify a bit, I might e-mail Robert and ask for all the FAPA details. Also, Chris Garcia now has competition for TAFF; two others have stepped forward to run, and this campaign already has its unique flavour.

The local...Ted, you and Arnie and the rest of the writers with CollectingChannel had the gig that so many of us wanted, to write about your hobby closest to your heart. I understand your delight at doing it and getting paid, I know your disappointment when it shut down. Our own local science fiction channel has become a disappointment to me and so many more. I want to do

something for the channel, but what I can provide, and anyone else as well, is turned down at every opportunity.

Comments removed from the original PDF per Lloyd Penney's request.

Joseph Major...interesting that almost the entire class you referred to had no answer about who their favorite author was. They do not read; I guess reading books doesn't have that immediacy topping anything the Internet might have. They want the experience of having read without the actual reading. Could this be one of the reasons eBooks never really took off?

Sandy Black's comments on 9/11 reflect some of my own. There was the level of fascination from seeing something so serious and encom-

passing happen like that. I think it's unfortunate that conspiracy theories have arisen surround the event, and it's been turned into a melodrama with some of the movies that have been made about it. I remember Tom Clancy being interviewed about 9/11, saying that he had thought about putting the idea of planes crashing into the World Trade Center into one of his novels, but dismissing the idea as being too fanciful and unbelievable. Here's pure proof that reality can be stranger, and perhaps more wrenching, than any fiction.

Hey, Jan Stinson, MapQuest worked wonderfully well for us, too. We flew to LAX to enjoy a couple of days of touristy stuff before the Worldcon last year, and it was only due to MapQuest and Yvonne's previous experience in driving I-5 many years ago that got us from the Anaheim Hilton to the California Science Center, the LA County Coroner's Department and the Proud Bird restaurant near LAX, and back. SCIFI, Inc. gave me US\$500 for our CUFF trip report some years ago, and I think there was another bounty we tried to claim, but failed. I think the original idea of the bounty on trip reports was meant for TAFF and DUFF only, and perhaps GUFF. I think SCIFI, Inc. rewrote their bounty offer to include US-based fan funds, only. •

Joseph T. Major

(jtmajor atiglou dot com)

Notes from Byzantium: Somebody is going to object to everything. Note Connie Willis's story "Ado," where after winnowing Shakespeare

for anything objectionable to anyone, all the class can study of the plays is a half-dozen lines from *Hamlet*. And the teacher has to give equal time to the Baconian theory, which shows how behind the times Willis is (nowadays the hot theory of the "real author of Shakespeare" is that the Earl of Oxford did it).

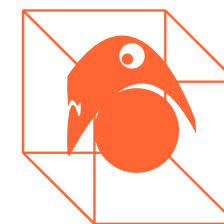
The definition of "dwarf planet" was "planet that failed to clear the area around its orbit." This could be read to mean that Jupiter, having four large and many small satellites, is a dwarf planet. Moreover, the same session of the IAU named Object 2003 UB313 "Eris."

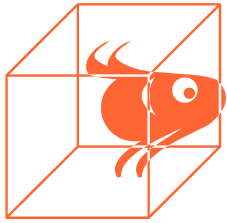
DIG UP THE IAU'S BONES!!!

"Whither Fandom?": WorldCon is so expensive today because of all the services needed.

I went to MidAmeriCon, which was considered the First Overlarge Worldcon by some. The con had one full track of programming and some other side-items. Most of the con was in one hotel, with two items being in the Convention Center next door; the play (which for some reason no one wants to talk about, though it was a major item in the program book and publicity) and Heinlein's Guest of Honor speech (I'll get to that).

I just got a letter of comment from Milt Stevens, who mentioned that there were a thousand program items at LA Con IV. That required use of the whole convention center, plus several hotel function rooms. The hotels which can handle these are geared to the business traveler.





That is, someone who isn't paying the bill himself; services and costs are set accordingly.

All these program items came into play because fans who liked *X* demanded that there be program

items, if not an entire track, devoted to *X*. *X* can be any one of a great number of things.

Some of these *X* can be pretty expensive. Whereas gaming used to merely involve a room full of tables, which would be filled the afternoon of opening day and stay filled, with little or no interaction with the rest of the con until shutdown time, nowadays they require substantial computer systems. ("Doodz!? That piece of shit!?! It can't play Duke Quakem V! Like, man, *everybody* plays Duke Quakem V now!") Similarly, now there have to be two movie rooms, one for movies and one for anime. Or maybe more.

The Worldcon is getting bigger and bigger because the fans are asking for more and more. The fact is that "more and more" costs more.

As for Heinlein's GoH speech: I was there. What struck me as most offputting was his little trick with the alarm clock; he put a clock on the floor and announced he would speak until it went off. Hence the speech, which struck me as poorly prepared; it was mostly a reprisal of his Naval Academy speech, which I had read in *Analog*.

Spider Robinson remembered it as a brilliant multi-threaded lecture with scintillating points of wit and wisdom intruded into the weave, which

wound up precisely on time. Which is why he is the one writing *Variable Star*.

"Being Frank": "[No-one] has ever bothered to start a fanzine called *Please Detach Along The Dotted Line and Return the Bottom Portion*." Someone will now.

"Pixelated": Ted White complains about the CollectingChannel being a dot.com mirage. There was a lot of that going around in the late nineties, when it was confidently predicted that all commerce would migrate onto the Internet, which would spread a new wave of freedom across the globe. What we have instead is innumerable blogs describing a bad day at the office.

John Purcell: I once went out to put the trash bags in the trash can and found a possum in the can. I just dumped the bag on top of him and hoped the trash truck would take care of the matter. Later possums started climbing up under the siding on the front of the house, which meant we had dead grass and other stuff falling out of the soffit until I borrowed the neighbor's ladder and cleaned it out, then stacked bricks under the loose siding at the bottom. Incidentally, "possum" is Latin for "I can." •

Chris Garcia

(garcia at computerhistory dot org)

I'm exhausted. I've been putting together a Cray-1 Supercomputer for the museum for the last couple of days. It's exhausting. So exhausting. I've been working hard cleaning and installing panels and going to TAP Plastics. It's

been nuts.

OK, enough about me.

Great cover. I like necks. I'm a big fan of necks. I've always said that no matter what kind of woman I'm with, she has to like being kissed on the neck. I just love necks...

As the kid of a librarian, I've always been pushed towards reading, no matter what it is. There's just about no regulation of what kids can read now. I remember telling Evelyn to take *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and a bunch of Anais Nin to the check-out lady as a gag... and they let her check them out!

Screw Pluto. Good for nothing not-quite-a-planet piece of rock. Great cartoon to go with that.

Ted's probably right about not being able to make your kid into a fan. I figure Evelyn will be a fan eventually because she loves things that fans like. She really loves cons and reading has become one of her more favourite things. I know this will raise some ire... but I'm fairly certain she'll be a media fan. I really wanna hear that Heinlein story of Earl's that Ted mentioned. It must be somethin'.

A Rotsler I'd never seen. Those are my favourite kinds of Rotslers, the ones that aren't his famous cartoon people. I desperately want a bunch of them to run in the *Drink Tank*. I've gone through all the ones I could gank from the web!

Once again, you've managed a wonderful issue that I'm proud to have my words appear in. I'm trying to get a TV show on CBS right now, so I'm

a little stressed, but I love that I now have a little time to relax and *fanac*... even if my fingers feel like they're about to fall off from all that damn Cray work! •

Eric Mayer

(maywrite2 at epix dot net)

Another superlative issue. Superlative writing. Superlative design. Superlative artwork. A Loccol that is...um...uh...dammit...I've run out of...well... you know...I gotta stock up before the next issue obviously.

The cover's very effective, but isn't that tattoo a sting ray? Naughty!

I enjoyed Ted White's column. Rarely do I have much comment because I haven't been involved enough in fandom to have anything worth adding. Ted manages to say things that irritate me from time to time. I think we are at opposites ends of some sort of spectrum or other. However, having read many of his listserv posts, and lengthy LoCs and, of course, his column here, I'd be hard pressed to name a fanwriter who had contributed more good stuff this year.

I enjoyed Dave Locke's reprinted essay about remembering his dreams – or not – but it makes me wonder, where have all the fanarticles like this got to? When I first discovered SF fandom back in the early seventies, one of the main attractions was the prevalence, or so it seemed, of the humorous essay. Some of these contained a vague nod to science fictional or faanish interests, like Dave's dream being bad SF, but often, as has been the case with most of Dave's reprints in *Pixel*, the subject matter involved entirely

mundane events colored by a sensibility which was sometimes described as faanish but was really just off-kilter. Which is to say, typical of humorous writing, faanish or otherwise.

I became a fan, so to speak, of humorists like Robert Benchley and James Thurber and by the seventies the sort of essays they specialized in were more common in fanzines than in mundane publications. In practically every zine I received, the editor or a contributor would at some point write about his or her life in a humorous fashion. (Which was also quite different from the personal angst which has always tended to dominate non-faanish amateur zines I've seen.) This is no longer the case.

Granted, I read only a small selection of today's fanzines, so it might be sampling error, but purely faanish subjects appear to have driven out the humorous personal essay. Today I see articles about attending conventions, fan history, personal reminiscences about the writer's adventures in fandom, faanfiction or supposedly humorous essays larded with faanish references which I found funnier when I first encountered them 30 years ago. Fans have always updated each other on what they've been up to, and still do, but my impression is that in the past they leavened the news with humor a lot more often.

Probably I shouldn't say that faanish material has "driven out" other things. There are plenty of articles around about non-faanish topics. See *The Drink Tank* or *eI* for example. It might be more correct to say fans are more inclined, when they write about themselves, to write about themselves as fans. Maybe it's to do with the extent to which many fanwriters

are immersed in fandom. I don't know.

At any rate these are broad generalizations. I'm simply offering my personal impression, not a thesis. I often enjoy faanish writing, as for instance, Ted's column I mentioned earlier, but it just strikes me that the humorous personal essays I used to enjoy as well are vanishing from fanzines and I wonder why. •

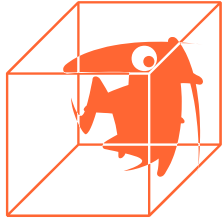


My own taste in "faanish" articles (and my recollection of how it "used to be") is similar to yours. I think that both with Catchpenny Gazette and Pixel I've published a variety of material along those lines. I would cite your own column as having just the sort of "humorous writing, faanish or otherwise" that I enjoy reading and publishing. I'm more interested in good, humorous (or at least "off-kilter") essays and articles and less interested in publishing material that is self-referent to fandom.

Robert Lichtman

(robertlichtman at yahoo dot com)

I'm quite certain I don't follow baseball to the extent Eric Mayer does – in fact, I really don't follow it at all – but when the season nears its end I do tend to notice where the two local teams are at in the standings. If either of them is a contender – as the Oakland A's are this season – I



get a little more interested. (And if they're not, I revert to ignore mode.) It was interesting how, when he lived close to the Red Wings stadium, "We always knew when something exciting happened...because then you could hear the crowd, a sound like distant thunder." We don't live too close to the Oakland A's stadium, but because we're up on a hill the sounds from it transmit pretty well. When there's an evening home game we can always tell when something *good* has happened and/or when the game is over and the A's have won. The sound of distant fireworks fills the air accompanied by a certain amount of cheering.

Ted White's column has really hit its stride with this issue, with three really solid sections each of which takes the time and space to develop its topic fully.

My mother never wrote anything for me, although I remember her reading me stories when I was very young – before I picked up reading on my own – but when my kids were young I used to make up bedtime stories for them, adapting freely from whatever was going on in their lives, our lives, and events around us. They seemed to enjoy these and would occasionally join in the creation with suggestions and alternate plot lines. One problem with this is that if they got *too* engaged it would wake them up again.

All my sons were and are aware of fandom and my long-time involvement in it – *and* they know that those many file cabinets full of fanzines are

valuable and not to be thrown out when I pass away – but none of them have shown any particular interest in getting involved themselves. The closest time this might have happened was during the very first Corflu at the Hotel Claremont in Berkeley. My ex-wife came around to turn two of them over to me, bringing them into the room where Terry Floyd and others were working on *Smocko*, a oneshot fanzine done in white ink on very dark paper. They were quite taken with this and have always remembered that occasion.

About Heinlein Ted write, "By 1976 [*he*] had written and published several truly terrible books." I certainly agree with that. And he kept doing it. When I left The Farm in 1980 I stayed for a time with small publishers in South Bend, Indiana, who also worked at the huge dusty warehouse of a book distribution outfit call, generically, The Distributors. They invited me to help myself from the huge stash of advance reading copies they kept piled in a corner. While digging out a bunch of *CoEvolution Quarterly*s and some other books I don't recall, I ran across a copy of Heinlein's *The Number of the Beast*. I'd been a Heinlein fan before moving to Tennessee in the early '70s and looked forward to cracking the pages of this, his latest work. Was I ever disappointed when I did! I tried hard, but couldn't get beyond about the tenth page before giving up. The same thing happened on several subsequent events, and the book now resides in one of my boxes of duplicates where perhaps someday it'll get auctioned off on eBay as a "rare advance reading copy, the true first edition."

My experience with attending Worldcons is pretty much exactly the opposite of Ted's. I first discovered fandom in the summer of 1958 and could have gone to that year's Worldcon, "South Gate in '58." But I was too new to fandom and fanzines and too shy to consider it –my loss, I've always felt. I've never considered traveling long distances to conventions to be my thing, so over the decades I've only been to five Worldcons, all of them in California (two in Southern California, three in the Bay Area –and one of the latter (in 1964) I technically wasn't at because I was boycotting the committee that had banned Walter Breen). I had an attending membership to LA-Con IV –bought when it was cheap and partly from the per diem funds I received when I was fan guest of honor at the 2002 Westercon – and toyed with the idea of driving down for it. But I never did. Although the expense of staying at one of the cheaper motels in the area (as I did in 1996), food and other incidentals would have been relatively minor (the trip itself is less than two tanks of gas), I simply didn't feel like immersing myself in a crowd of thousands in order to see the hundred or so people I might have enjoyed.

And I didn't spend even a moment that weekend wishing for what I might have done. I save that sort of regret for the times I don't make it to Corflu.

I found it amusing in Chris Garcia's column that he'd never heard of Bridget Bradshaw before meeting her at the BASFA meeting *and* that she in turn had never heard of his British nominators in his stand for TAFF. Considering that her last fanzine (other than a FAPazine during her brief membership) was in 2000 and that John Nielsen

Hall predates her by decades and that Peter Sullivan is still a relative neofan and mainly visible on-line, these failed connections make perfect sense.

In his review column Peter Sullivan writes, "It's worth noting that, for pretty much the first (?) time in its long history, FAPA not only has no waiting list, but spare places." Actually, it's been that way for quite a while now. The last time FAPA had a full membership roster was in November 1995. The last time it had a waiting list was the mailing after that in February 1996. As for "details of minimum activity requirements and postage dues": Eight pages a year in whatever quantity is called for by the Official Editor (currently 44 copies) and dues are \$14 for four quarterly mailings. Anyone interested in giving FAPA a try may contact me at robertlichtman@yahoo.com.

Ted White is correct in his LoC where he writes that Walt Coslet "was something of a dull fellow, a sort of prototype for Norm Metcalf. He was into collecting and indexing, and did not distinguish himself as a writer." Indeed, a strong case could be made that Norm's a much stronger writer than Coslet ever was. I'd like to add to Ted's mentioning Coslet was in both FAPA and SAPS that he served as Official Editor of both back in the late '40s and early '50s and acquitted himself well. He also published useful indices of the first two dozen SAPS mailings. •

John Purcell

(j_purcell54 at yahoo dot com)

In his latest LoC to me, Chris Garcia accused you and I of having the best fanzine cover art in our

recent issues. I don't know about my zines, but all I can say is that *your* covers are so dang stylish, and I love them all. Face it, Kyle Hinton is producing wonderful stuff. I really love his work.

And I also like the photographs by Dave Lewton that have graced a couple of covers very much, and will be using several more in the future (including the cover for this issue). I've been trying to get Kyle more involved with doing interior illos for Pixel, but he has a slight problem with meeting deadlines.

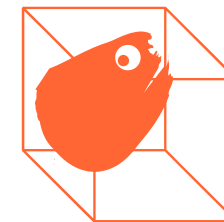
Eric Mayer's ruminations about determining books being "suitable for children" strikes home. My soon-to-be 11-year old son (as of October 7th - hey, that's tomorrow!) is now enjoying my old Hardy Boys books, which I loved at his age. Dan loves to read, especially *Eragon* (on his own, he's over half-way through it) since he's really interested in knights, dragons, and fantasy computer games. I stand ready to hand him my *Dragonriders of Pern* and *Chronicles of Amber* novels to read; *Eragon* is a fun book, and excellent reading for a kid his age and reading level (the school has Dan reading at the 8th grade level, and he just started fifth grade), but the way I look at it, if Dan likes *Eragon*, he'd like similar novels and stories that I believe are of higher caliber.

Hmm. "The Need to Read." A good reader feels this way. Writers are influenced by what they have read throughout their lives, but at one point they start to develop their own dis-

tinctive writing styles. A discerning reader may be able to detect certain writer's influences, but considering how long literature in all genres has been around, this should not be surprising.

Oohh... Ted White's talking about me! Well, then. Allow me to address him directly in response: I had no idea that it was you and Dan making some of the noises in that audience. As you noted, MAC was my first Worldcon, and I guess that in my con-going innocence at that time - only 3 years into fandom with only an admittedly poor first issue of a fanzine under my belt - I thought that someone like Heinlein deserved a whole bunch more respect from fans, even if his speech *was* long, rambling, and arch-conservative. I don't remember particular points that he made, but I definitely recall that his "speech" was extremely hard to follow; it seemed to have no logical organization, and did, in fact, verge on the cusp of a tirade at times. But I freely admit that I was a bit in awe of being in an audience listening to *Robert A. Heinlein*. Oh, fey youth that I was! Still, it's amazing to think of how recollections of our youth get clouded in a haze of nostalgia and rewritten by selective memory. Either you don't have that problem or you've turned into a nasty Old Phart after a lifetime of fanning.

Anyway. Thinking back at it all now from my current middle-age, seasoned by the intervening





years, I realize I was very disappointed not only with some fans' behavior at that time, but with RAH, too. It's easy to look back at it now – and I don't have the memory you do, nor the prior Worldcon experiences with RAH and

other pros like you, either – and say things like this, but I do appreciate your input as to how you and Dan felt about Heinlein's "speech." Funny thing, too; after *Stranger in a Strange Land*, I never really cared for much of what he wrote during the rest of his career. I really enjoyed his short stories and juveniles, though. In the 1960s Heinlein definitely placed himself on a pedestal and wrote Great Works through which he could pontificate. Oh, well. It's too bad that one of SF's best writers deteriorated so badly and so quickly.

Yeah, my MAC was vastly different from yours, mainly because we ran in completely different company during the weekend. But that's okay. It was a BIG convention and at times a bit overwhelming for me. Still, I had a great time.

Hey, your mention of Patia's *real* act reminded me of a strip bar my brother and I used to frequent in the late 70s in Hopkins, Minnesota. They had a couple gals there who, if you folded/rolled your greenbacks and held them out with your lips, would literally "snatch" the money from your mouth. To borrow a phrase from Dick Lupoff in *VFW*, "Them wuz the daze."

Okay. Back to our regularly scheduled LoC.

That schematic of the fannish brain on page 10

certainly explains a lot of behavioral problems I've seen in fans over the years. Currently, my "attend a convention" lobe is expanding, exerting pressure on the enlarged "publish a fanzine" section of my brain. A scan of Chris Garcia's brain would probably reveal how distorted his brain really is. Maybe someday they'll rename the "write a loc" segment after Lloyd Penney. It is also quite interesting to note that the "SMOF segment" is hidden. What else would we expect?

I am glad to read of Bug Bradshaw's visit to the Computer Museum. It certainly sounds like she had a very enjoyable TAFF trip, and I am looking forward to reading her trip report. Here's hoping we don't have to wait too long for it.

In one of your responses to Ted's LoC, David, I absolutely don't mind your obsessing about copy-editing. This is something that I should be more careful with in my zines. But, this is the faned's domain, and let's leave it at that, shall we? Further in Ted's LoC, I need to note that I had short-handed Fred Phillips' comment about coining the phrase, not the term itself.

Lee Lavell, if you ever do write that article on "what is right about being a teacher" I will be very interested to read it. I do enjoy teaching; being in the classroom interacting with the students is a lot of fun. It's that damned paper grading (I'm a composition and rhetoric instructor) that takes the most time and gets to be a drag. But that's a necessary evil to endure since it's part of the job. *sigh*

I had the same thought, and asked Lee

to write a "counterpoint" column, which she promptly wrote and that will be appearing here in a future issue.

Great issue, David. *Pixel* just keeps getting better and better. If you keep this up, your zine may be the first true e-zine to win a Best Fanzine Hugo – if you care about such hoopla. No matter what, I really enjoy reading your zine. So therefore, until next time, keep up the fantastic work.

*I'm ambivalent about awards, to be honest. Recognition from peers is, of course, a wonderful thing, but it isn't the reason I publish. I wouldn't think *Pixel* would have a snowball's chance in hell of even being nominated for a Hugo – I don't think it's the kind of zine most people voting for the Hugos would read – but I was pretty pleased at the 3rd place the zine got in the FAAn Awards last year. I was even more pleased at how well some of the regular contributors did. And that's what I hope to see next year, as well. Sometimes I view my role with *Pixel* as more of a "spectator" than anything else. Or maybe it's more like my last job as a production artist in the commercial art field, when I worked on food packaging. There my job was largely to take other people's work and put it in as attractive a format as I could, and for the most part that's what my "job" with *Pixel* is as well.*

Much Nothings continued from page 7

1. OJ had been beating up his wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, for years.
2. The Brown family knew about this but pressured Nicole to stay in the marriage because they were living high and easy off of



OJ's money, through her.

3. Nicole finally had enough and was going to leave OJ for good, and she wasn't too happy with her family for keeping her in the relationship for so long.

4. The Brown family panicked when they saw they were losing their meal ticket.

5. Denise Brown (Nicole's sister) was dating someone related to organized crime so they ordered a hit through him.

6. Denise, along with the rest of her family, had access to OJ's things through Nicole. This would include the gloves, which would be planted after the murder. They would also know OJ's schedule.

7. The Brown family backed OJ until he was arrested, after which they immediately went for custody of his kids, hoping to get

the money through them.

8. Ronald Goldman was just collateral damage.

See how easy that was? Just take a bunch of disparate facts, mix in a bunch of rumor and then make some uncalled-for assumptions and there's a nice conspiracy. Do I believe it? Absolutely not, but who cares. A conspiracy we have. I was trying to find some way to throw Ronald Goldman into the mix, but I haven't got that figured out yet.

So, folks, the straightforward solution is almost always the correct one. Stop trying to make things much harder than they really are. That's paranoia. •

Found In Collection continued from page 12

Flipping through, I found a page which listed installations of various machines. Now, by this point there were a couple of hundred different machines out on the market, but there were still few enough that you could list where all of them had gone. I found the US Mapping Service and discovered that they only had one machine: a UNIVAC 1.

The UNIVAC 1 was the most important machine of the 1950s without question. It intro-

duced the idea of a computer to the masses. It was used to predict the outcome of the 1952 election and it was right within 1/2 of 1%. It was featured in a Porky Pig cartoon. UNIVAC came to mean computer, which annoyed IBM no end because people would actually say things like "Well, they just got a new IBM UNIVAC machine." We had one at the museum in Boston, but it was on loan from the Smithsonian, so it never came out this way.

I opened the book to the UNIVAC page and handed it to Karen.

"That's the machine you worked on and didn't even see."

Karen studied it.

"That's the exact one!" she said, pointing out the caption that said 'UNIVAC installation at US Mapping Service.'

"Only about 50 years too late." Poul said, laughing a little bit.

They picked up our in-house newsletter and left. About 6 months later, Poul passed away. I've only run into Karen once and she actually remembered me showing her the UNIVAC picture. I smile whenever I think of that story because it was the first time working at the museum that I understood what we're really here for. •

DAVID BURTON

Finis

This issue is dedicated to Bob Tucker, the fan's fan and accomplished professional author (in several fields), who passed away in early October. Much will be written about Bob in the next month or so by people who knew him well, and I



certainly can't add anything to what they'll say in praise and admiration of him. I met Bob only once, at the 1970 Midwestcon. That was my second convention (the first was the St. Louis Worldcon in 1969), and frankly my teenage mind was in such a whirl with all the activity that I don't really remember much about the meeting. Virtually all of hyperactive Indianapolis fans at

the time were making a group trek to the con. Jim Lavell (a well-known scoff-law; he taught *me* to steal condiment packets from fast-food restaurants) enticed a very young Dave Lewton into helping him ~~steal~~ liberate a yard sign used by a local real estate company. The group then presented the sign to Bob at Midwestcon with some fanfare. Rumor has it that he took great delight in displaying the sign in his home for a number of years afterward, and made a point of showing it to fan visitors.

Most of my "contact" with Bob the last couple of years was in the fan listservs. He was not a frequent contributor, but when he did weigh in on a topic, it was with that gentle humor that had made him so well-loved for 70-some years.



Ted's column this month brings back a lot of memories for me. Like him, my first fanzine was produced using a post-card mimeo, although mine was less a "real" mimeo than his. Mine was more like a stamp-pad – you cut a stencil and attached it to a handle and inepad,

and rocked it on the paper to create your copy.

My first full-scale mimeo was from Sears, bought used from a friend. I don't remember whether it barely worked, or I just didn't know what I was doing (probably a little of both), but I produced the first issue of my fanzine *Microcosm* on it, and it certainly was typical of many first-issue fanzines – a real piece of crud.

I probably spent too much of my youth in the Lavell's basement, crouched over a light table, stencilling artwork, learning to use shading plates and lettering guides under Lee's patient tutelage, breathing in corflu. I used to think I was pretty darned good at hand-stencilling artwork, but looking back at those issues, I can see I was only adequate at best.

In some sense, Ted laments the passing of the mimeoed fanzine as a sort of handcrafted item, and I have to admit that I feel the same way. I don't know how the average fan felt when they received a fanzine, but I *knew* how much time and effort had been spent on even the worst crudzine, and I appreciated the actual physical work that had gone into it. I have to admit that I don't get that same feeling with these digital zines, although I'm sure I spend much *more* time working on *Pixel* than I did any mimeographed zine I ever did. I'd love to do a mimographed fanzine again, but the it would just cost too much to produce and mail.

I do wish someone would come up with a corflu-scented air-freshener, though. I'd happily use it while working on *Pixel*, to remind me of the old days. •