



November, 2007

Askance

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This is a Post-Modernist Production. Let me know when you reach sub-meaning level number 42.

(CONTENTS):

<i>Bemused Natterings</i>	3
<i>Zombies; up close and personal,</i> by James Bacon.....	6
<i>Book review in a box</i>	10
<i>The Rocky Road to Fandom</i> by Lee Anne Lavell.....	11
<i>The Thin Veneer: Who a Fan?</i> by Arnie Katz.....	15
<i>Penney for Your Thoughts: fanzine reviews</i> by Lloyd Penney (or is it?).....	17
<i>Figby</i> by Bill Fischer.....	20
<i>What if...</i> by Linda Bushyager.....	21
<i>Regional Convention Calendar</i>	23
<i>From the Hinterlands</i> by the faithful readers of this zine	27
<i>What's Next</i>	39
TAFF Ballot.....	insert (41-44)



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Oh, what foolish words uttered once...

Actually, not so foolish, just a correction to information provided in the last issue. On page 13, I credited the Hugo website to Kevin Standlee, Cheryl Wilson, and Lisa Herteland, which was partially wrong: as many readers have chastised then notified me, it should have read Cheryl Morgan, not Wilson, who helped create the Hugo award website. My bad. I wonder where I got "Wilson" from? Oh, well. Consider this corrected, and thank you, faithful readers, for catching that.

Here 'neath Texas skies we slave and slumber...

As the weather finally becomes livable here in SouthCentralEastern Texas, not only can we open our windows to let some cooling breezes sweep through and air out the house, we have finally begun doing long-~~avoided~~ anticipated yard work. This entails all sorts of manual labor for me, such as severely pruning our massive rose bush, cutting branches, bundling them, repairing the fence, building a barbecue table for the patio, and that ever popular and constant past-time of mine, poop scooping the back yard.

Have I ever mentioned before that we have dogs?

Well, we do. Three of them. Their names are Pulcinella, Timmy, and Fossey. The smallest one naturally believes he runs the house and also has the longest name. Pulcinella – Pulchi, for short – is a pound accident, a Chihuahua and Maltese mix who got his name from a Stravinsky ballet; Timmy is a male miniature Collie, and was so named because he looks like a small Lassie; Fossey is the only female of our dogs, and her full name is Princess Diana Mary Leakey-Fossey, and named by my wife after Lady Diana and Valerie's two favorite anthropologists. When we acquired Fossey she wasn't potty-trained yet, so her last name was rather apropos. Fortunately, Fossey learned quickly; she is a cross between a border collie and a Burmese mountain dog. She's a smart bitch, and beautiful, too. (I love it when I can use naughty words in acceptable context.)



But Pulchi's name requires a bit more explanation. From Wikipedia, comes this opening paragraph:

Pulcinella, often called **Punch** or **Punchinello** in English, *Polichinelle* in French, is a classical character that originated in the *Commedia dell'arte* of the 17th century and became a stock character in Neapolitan puppetry.

Until I read that, I had no idea that the name went back that far, or that it was the genesis for one half of the famed Punch and Judy puppetry tandem. Not only that, there is also a stfnal connection of sorts since Pulcinella is also the "mascot of the Pulcinella Awards, annual awards for excellence in animation, presented at the Cartoons on the Bay Festival in Positano, Italy." (Wikipedia)

That's interesting, isn't it? And believe me, there are times I would love to ship Pulchi over to Italy. One way.

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Obligatory TAFF Shilling Section

As this issue appears on your screens and hopefully in your mailboxes, the voting deadline for TAFF is upon us (17 Nov. 2007). Once again, allow me to plug Christopher J. Garcia for TAFF, better known as that shaggy Ever-Ready Bunny of fandom. I cannot say much about the other candidates this year, since I do not personally know Christian McGuire, Linda Deneroff, or Chris Barkley. I am sure they are all fine individuals, but I am one of Chris Garcia's nominators because I believe that he best exemplifies the spirit of fandom: Chris is energetic, pubs zines faster than Lloyd Penney can loc them, not only attends cons but is an active participant at them, has a quick wit, and is generally just a fun person to hang out with. I enjoyed his company at Corflu Quire immensely, and look forward to seeing him again in the near future. So vote Chris for TAFF. Send him on a long, much-needed vacation.

Actually, we are the ones who need a long vacation from Chris.

It also needs to be said that there is another fan fund race going on right now, or soon to commence, but is not in the public eye as much as TAFF. This could very well be due to the nature of this race. DUFF is also on for 2008; the Down Under Fan Fund next year is sending a North American fan to Australia/New Zealand for a well-deserved visit. The only candidate that I am aware of right now – thanks to locs from Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey – is Canadian fan Murray Moore. If you thought the DUFF race was quiet, Murray is even more so. He is probably the most unassuming, laid-back person you could ever run into at a con, but looks are very deceiving. Murray has been involved with fanzines and fandom for quite a while; in fact, he recently published a trip report with the unassuming title of *Peter Jackson Will Never Work for Me Again #1*, a most enjoyable little zine. I also enjoyed meeting and talking with Murray at Corflu Quire in Austin earlier this year, discovering his wit charmingly hidden behind that calm façade, so thus I hereby endorse Murray Moore for DUFF in 2008.

Besides, when Murray gets to Australia it will be their winter, and he'll never know the difference.

What's in this issue

Along with her loc you will find in the lettercolumn, **Lee Ann Lavell** submitted a couple items since the zine her fine writing is usually featured in, *Pixel*, is currently on a self-imposed hiatus. (Here is hoping David Burton returns in January or thereabouts with another exemplary issue in his series of lecture-demonstrations called "How to Produce an Electronic Fanzine.") Personal reminiscences of long-time fans have always fascinated me, so when Lee sent this article, I was ecstatic and eager to share it with my readership. Her other submission will be appearing in the January, 2008 issue.

In honor or memory or just because of this issue's close proximity to Halloween, **James Bacon** delivered on a promise to write up a zombie piece for this issue. The fun thing about it is that it likewise arises out of fandom and dressing up for conventions, so it fits in very nicely here.

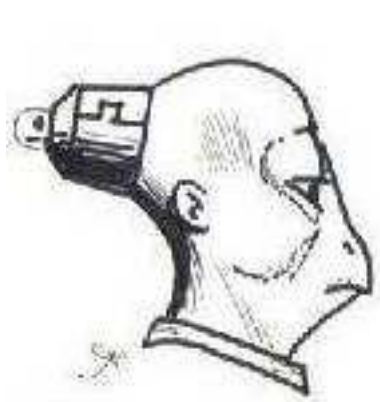
From the halls of SNAPS, the Southern Nevada Amateur Press Society, come two articles, one by **Linda Bushyager**, the other by **Arnie Katz**. Both pieces keep in tune with the unintended theme of this issue – "fandom and my life: what the hell happened?!?" – and make for marvelous complementary commentary about fandom and why in the blazes we have stuck around it for so long.

And of course there are the usual features: "Figby," fanzine reviews, the lettercolumn, a listing of regional conventions and events, and front and back covers by Hugo Award winning Fan Artist, **Frank Wu**.

Who's in this issue

One of fandom's fastest rising – and most prolific – stars, **James Bacon** returns to these august pages, only this time in November. He last appeared here in July, and I received this submission by mid-October, well ahead of this issue's end of that month deadline. James had told me he had this zombie thingie he could write up basically to coincide with Halloween. So here it is, and I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did. BOO!

Another *Askance* returnee is **Linda Bushyager**. Once again, this is one of her contributions to the apa we are both in, SNAPS, and covers territory most of us have probably mulled over from time to time: how would our lives have been different if we hadn't encountered fandom. With her permission, here it is for a larger reading audience. This first appeared in the 23rd distribution of SNAPS.



Not to be outdone, **Arnie Katz** also returns with musings on fandom in his column "The Thin Veneer." Recently his wonderful fanzine, *Vegas Fandom Whenever Weekly*, celebrated its 100th issue in grand style with a mammoth 94 page zine, and it was a delight. Thinking wisely, like the veteran fan-editor that he is, Arnie shipped it out in quarter-sections, otherwise all of our e-mail boxes would have been overloaded and crashed in a heap. Next year's Corflu will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, which is where he and his lovely wife Joyce reside. I really can't wait to meet them in April of 2008. "Who a Fan?" first appeared in SNAPS distribution #27.

Lee Anne Lavell is a fan from Indiana, the widow of another long-time fan, Jim Lavell. For most of the last year, Lee Anne has been writing a regular column for David Burton's *Pixel*, and it is indeed an honor to welcome her to this zine. This autobiographical piece would have appeared in *Pixel*, but David is taking a "rest" so "The Rocky Road to Fandom" is appearing here instead. (Take as long a rest as you want, David. I am not complaining.)

For the first time, *Askance* has front and back cover art, both provided by **Frank Wu**, who recently received his second Hugo Award for Best Fan Artist at the 2007 WorldCon in Yokohama, Japan. Frank has this dinosaur-rock theme going, and I am not complaining. It is fun, and I am pleased to display his wonderful work.

Then, of course, my regular columnists are here to spice up the party. **Bill Fischer** continues the saga known as "I, Roomba", which should delight the growing number of Figby fans. Bill informs me that there is yet another Wikiphilia entry ready for a future issue. You Have Been Warned. And **Lloyd Penney** needs no introduction here, so I am going to stop there.

By the way, before I forget...

CHRIS FOR TAFF!

MURRAY FOR DUFF!

This fanzine supports Melbourne in 2010.

So there.

"It was dusk. I could tell because the sun was going down."
from *Creature from the Haunted Sea* (1961)

ZOMBIES —

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

BY JAMES BACON



Zombies. Living death is just so easy.

Years and years ago at Irish conventions, two teenagers, known as Paddy and Simon, would turn up and astound people with makeup effects, be well praised and always win prizes at Octocon's masquerade, and quite rightly so. This progressed and at one stage they turned up as Narn, and were impressive. As time went by there was a movie which utilised con goers dressed as the undead; when I think of how they looked and how far we have come, I am amazed.

Dressing up is something that was part of science fiction convention long before I came along, and I understand that there is a picture of the great Forrest Ackerman as some far future heroic type, a bit of "Buck Rogers meets Flash Gordon" at the first Worldcon. He looks, very different. The picture always astounds me; it says so much about the times when it was taken, the style, the chic even, the setting. The background it all just leaves one wondering what it must have been like. So dressing up is part of the deal on the periphery, at least.

Stef and I decided sometime in 1999, that we were going to run a convention and that in order to help make this convention work, we would dress as old ladies, smelling of wee and looking very odd. We entered many a masquerade and got much of a laugh, and people were very afraid in a sort of *achtung minen* Will Robinson way. This was great craic. At the beginning of our first convention we were still dressed as old ladies, surrounded by fans who we had press ganged, literally moments before the start to undress and feed us grapes and things, so there was much in the way of pale flesh on display.

Stef has always been into larping. That's live role playing, running around in a fantasy world, in costume, following a set of rules, using weapons or magic or muskets. He is pretty serious about it all and it's much more complex than any fan political issues could ever get. It's also huge. He regularly goes to events with over 5,000 people along. This is a real business; the people who own the operation earn good money, and many people get involved for the heck of it, just like in SF stuff. So dressing like a fantasy character was not unknown to Stef.

Various Doctor Deaths seemed to emerge around this time, and as I was dressing as Muffy, a brutal cross dressed be wigged version of the vampire slayer, with much blood and gore spread all over us. Stef and Elvis have a real healthy adoration of things on the darker side. Stef loves Koontz, Herbert and most importantly, and obvious, an influence on his life would be the various works of Lovecraft. As you will see from the below passage that he wrote, he doesn't write much at all, but when he does, he surely writes it well:

It's 3:35 in the morning, and in the basement of a respected place of learning within the heart of this proud nation's capital, a strange smell is starting to emerge. I say emerge, but as a favourite author of mine, the esteemed HPL would write 'it slunk forth, with dread tendrils intimately but by no means pleasantly entering the body through the nasal passages, violating a most sacred time for the gathered throng. The stench of creatures unseen but not unheard of (in the right place, or from the wrong people)'. It has so far overpowered at least five of the attendees and you can see it start to take its dark toll, in the eyes of many others. At the moment, it is most apparent near the bottom of the stairs, so much so, that one physically recoils, before accepting one's fate and continuing onwards.

Stef would have a serious interest in horror writers, whereas I can confess to having read a number of horror shorts and loving Kim Newman's *Bloody Red Baron*. I am no horror fan, just an occasional reader, and it would be down the quantifiable list of genres I read, but I do appreciate certain writers and stories. Steve Jones is an editor I have a lot of time for, although this is only in regard to novels and stories; I have always been a fan of what is categorised as horror comics, but that's a pigeon hole of convenience as the stories usually fall between genres.



Zombies caught in the act at Interaction (2005). Photo by James Bacon.

So the zombie thing no doubt was borne from Stef. We have had many masquerade and evening themes over the years, from Balls to fetish nights, but we wanted to do something with the kids at Interaction that would somehow get them more involved with the masquerade - something that is occasionally very serious in an unhealthy way, and exclusive in an unfortunate way. We decided to do a trial run of this at the Eastercon I was helping run in 2005. Strangely, many ideas that worked really well at that Eastercon went on to get subsumed, or at least

manipulated to resemble something else and recycled with style at the big show.

So we had a number of people show up and do a zombie morning, which ended up getting a little bit of negative press from certain corners who felt that doing something like this for kids was somehow just not what they wanted or expected at a convention. This sort of attitude is interesting, given that we are, after all, a fringe aspect to any convention. There is so much sercon and fannish stuff going on that a little fringe fun really is not going to disrupt or upset a convention, but I have learned the errors of my ways, and I know now that it should be more discreet and not so in the faces of serious fans wanting to have serious discussions, or whatever.

Out of sight, out of mind.

Elvis and Stef have a fantastic amount of makeup. We go to a wholesaler called Smiffys. They supply joke shops across the country, and if you go into any joke, costume or novelty shop you will find their wares hanging on a stand. The boys use sanazzaroo face paint; this is fairly professional stuff, which lasts ages and is quite easy to use. Initially we used sponges to apply the face paint, but Elvis is the master of eBay, and has bought real sponge, which is just fantastic and also leaves a superb mottled effect. As time has gone by, our skill improved and we are now quite adept at applying make up.

Elvis has been making various blood types for years, experimenting, only as person who preserves teddy bear bits in formaldehyde could. I personally like red and black food colorant mixed with golden syrup as it's ingestible and messy, but they have a variety of professional and stage bloods now. Elvis also purchases liquid latex by the litre. It isn't cheap stuff; in actual fact, none of this is cheap, and you would have a seizure if you knew how much one compact of face paint costs you, and might feel a bit undead yourself.

Latex is another superb piece of kit we utilize. One can build it up and slice it, or you can put some on a mirror and when it's dried, you can perforate it to look like rotten skin, or build it up to create a bullet hole or flap. There are also special pieces, off the shelf moulds, which you use latex to graft onto flesh.

So when it came to YAFA and subsequently LA Con, the idea had to be simple so that it worked.

Making Zombies is easy and also a little sick in a sweet sort of way, and perhaps disconcerting considering some of the other more risky activities we were running, and also a bit of a joke. Face paint, dirt, blood, old clothing, and a lot of imagination can go a long way, and when you have a group of people, especially kids, it suddenly looks rather impressive.

I reckon that kids categorise how they interact with the masquerade with three quick definite assertions: "Gosh there's a masquerade and look how good and professional it is, not for us." "I am part of mommy's entry." "This is my entry with mom's help." The third one is the rarest, I am afraid, and the first the most common.

That's a bit brutal, perhaps, but it's my perspective on the situation. Now many kids just don't enter for whatever reason, and our mad schemes won't exactly get all the kids involved, but it's a bit of laugh, and by presenting the cushion of group embarrassment and also promoting the idea all weekend, kids get hooked on the idea. There is also a camaraderie that builds up that is unique to kids, whether it because of their innocence or just desire and ability to recognise when something could be fun and made easy.

It worked. They got a huge laugh and, with the sound of *Shaun Of the Dead* wafting through the armadillo, loads of children being herded across the stage, shambling and staggering zombie-like, was always going to be met by a warm reception.



*Yafa zombies at LACon IV (2006). What a nice bunch of kids to take home to mom.
Photo provided by James Bacon*

When it came to LA, we were clever enough to know that a formula works, so we went with, er, Zombies. This time we themed it "school kids," and dressed everyone in shirts and ties, and even Stef had a pen sticking out of his face. Again, the reception for those that entered, a small amount considering we had over 200 people through our care, but none-the-less a group that wouldn't have done it otherwise, was amazing.



More zombie boys. Thank you, James, for the un-staged photo.

The fascination continued, and we attended Zombie Ed's Terror4Fun events in Berkshire. He hires out a scout camp in a secluded and wooded corner of the countryside. It's always great fun and I have attended two events so far. It's a mix of zombie fans watching and talking zombie and a live role play game. We have players, monsters and then of course, once people get killed in the live

action role play, they too turn into monsters.

I have slowly become involved in the makeup aspect and quite enjoy it. There is no real prescribed way of doing a zombie, but I have listened to a makeup technician who worked on *Shaun of the Dead* and learned from others. I prefer greens, greys and nasty purple for complexion, and really like vicious latex neck cuts. Stef loves stuff he can play with, like a bit of body or sinewy artery or something poking through or out of a wound that he can fiddle with, and a mouthful of blood.

Zombie school boys and, more recently, zombie school girls worked at Ed's events. Zombie scouts at the Terry Pratchett Disworld jamboree, which in itself was a nod to 100 years of the scouting movement, worked and there no doubt will be more. I look forward to Zombie soldiers. I think that's the next step; probably tap into *Hellboy* a bit and the likes of *The Keep*, and have the ultimate evil Zombie Nazi's.

We have built a little reputation, and every time Colin Harris, Chair of Interaction, sees us and we mention a zombie event or things, he just starts to laugh and says "ZOMBIES!"

I have no idea where specifically the fascination with zombies has come from. In the comic *2000 AD*, zombies did appear, and one story that was a favourite was *Bad Company* and their encounter with War Zombies. Before that, also from the same pages of that great British anthology, was the *Fiends of the Eastern Front*, a story about a Transylvanian regiment fighting on the side of the Nazi's' it was a real favourite of mine, and a great little story that encouraged an appreciation of the darker types of stories that appear in comics.

Hellblazer was my introduction to American Comics, and the undead feature occasionally - as does nearly every supernatural and occult theme, myth or theory - somewhere in over 200 issues. *Hellboy* is also a horror comic and I suppose that has fed the interest. Occult or supernatural links with the German nationalist socialist party at the time of the Second World War is also an area I love to read, which is not as well fed as my interest of Germanic super weapons and alternative endings, but I do like to pick up fiction of that nature. I loved *Marvel Zombies*, although this is a recent addition, but the dialogue was awesome and this is a series I would recommend.

Max Brooks' series of books about zombies, his *Zombie Survival Guide* and *World War Z* are important reads, and really quite seriously fun.

From *Dusk till Dawn* was probably the first time I saw a horror movie with a lot of gore and tongue-in-cheek in a cinema, and I really enjoyed it a lot; it was late and I remember watching zombie stuff when I was young, but it never interested or was too boring, compared to say *The Great Escape* or *Indiana Jones*.

Shaun of the Dead, *28 Days Later*, and *28 Weeks Later* are all favourites, of course, but some of this also ties in with my appreciation of post apocalyptic tales, such as *Day of the Triffids* and *The Last Train*.

Then, of course, there is the work of the master of zombie movies, George A. Romero. His initial work is not my favourite, but I liked *Dawn of the Dead*, and Snyder's remake twenty-five years later, *Day of the Dead*, was good, but *Land of the Dead* could have been better.

There are over 800 recognised zombie movies, I have a guide book that lists them all, and reviews over 200 in depth, and to be honest I have watched a few, but not that many. I suppose it's on the periphery of my leisure entertainment, but I know a zombie from a ghoul.

I just utilise the whole genre to entertain kids and have a good time.

-- JAMES BACON



Book review in a box: *The Galaxy Primes*, by E.E. Smith. New York: Ace Books. 1965. 192 pages. Cover art by Ed Valigursky.

Oh, my. How the mighty have fallen! Or, this novel simply exists to display the decline of one of science fiction's greatest purveyors of the grand space opera. In a small sense, this book doesn't surprise me.

Please don't misunderstand me. I love good, old-fashioned space opera as much as the next sci-fi junkie, but compared to his Skylark series, this novel is simply no-where near as much fun. The basic concept is okay – the best way to zip around the universe is via the directed mind power of a Prime, of which Earth has two of the most powerful in the Universe – but the execution of the story is paper-thin. This book has an extremely predictable plot and cardboard/cookie-cutter characters, and I believe Doc Smith felt that if he inserted some heavy-duty implied sex and vivid, descriptive violence, then he would be updating himself into the science fiction market of the mid-1960s.

Sadly, it doesn't work. Yes, I read this book completely through, even though the ending was broadcast by page 27. Even so, there are still some sparks of that good, ol' sensawondah that hooked me as a youngster scattered throughout the novel. As a bit of mindless fluff for reading, *The Galaxy Primes* is okay. But as grand space opera, complete with Our Heroes Saving the Universe, it's not as good as Smith's earlier work, which is too bad.

THE ROCKY ROAD TO FANDOM



This is going to be essentially a column about nostalgia. I suppose everyone has had their own unique way of getting into fandom, and I guess mine might be not too different than many others from my particular era save for the fact that I was a female at a time when there were very few girls who at least admitted to reading science fiction. So, off we go.

The First Wobbly Steps

I had an interest in both fantasy and science from the earliest time that I can remember. There were comic books. Mickey Mouse had some sort of adventure in outer space. Back in those "ancient" days Mickey Mouse had real adventures with villains like Peg Leg Pete, etc. I was fascinated by that. When I was five I had my tonsils taken out and was given *The Wizard of Oz* as a sort of consolation. Although it was read to me at the time, by the time I was seven I had read it myself several times so when at that time my appendix was removed and I was asked if there was a book I would like I inquired if there were any more books about Oz and I received *The Land of Oz* and *Ozma of Oz*. And there on the flyleaf of the cover of one of them was a list of all the Oz books----almost forty of them! So began my obsession to acquire every one of them. "What do you want for your birthday?" I would be asked. "Oz book" I would reply. "What do you want for Christmas?" I would be asked. "Oz book." "What are you going to do with your allowance?" "Oz book." I was around twelve when I finally completed the set, at least up to that time. I still have them all.

During this period I was also getting comic books that fit into the s-f category (although I didn't know what it was called). There was a *Justice Society of America* issue where all the super-heroes visited the different planets. When *Wonder Woman* went to the future where --gosh wow--a **woman** was president of the United States. At school I read all the science and fantasy books in the library, learning all about the stars, dinosaurs etc. There was also a comic book called *Planet Comics* which I devoured.

"Big Little Books" put out two "John Carter of Mars" editions and I was introduced to the Edgar Rice Burroughs *Barsoom* series. One was an adaptation of the first half of *A Princess of Mars* and the other of the Burroughs short story *John Carter and the Giant of Mars* so when I found, in one of my aunt's attic, a copy of *The Mastermind of Mars* I had some idea of what was going on there.

There were few movies of any import in that period. I especially remember *Dr. Cyclops* and something based on *Donovan's Brain*. I think it was called either *The Lady and the Monster* or *The Monster and the Lady*. (A much better version was made some years later.) Saturday afternoon kiddie matinees sometimes had an s-f theme although most were westerns. Radio had a few programs such as *Lights Out* and the kiddy serial version of *Buck Rogers*. In addition there were a few other programs such as *Suspense* and *Inner Sanctum* which either offered adaptations or original shows with a science-fiction or fantasy theme. But, on the whole the pickings were quite sparse, and I still hadn't even heard of the term science-fiction. That was to change when I was twelve years old.

Down the Primrose Path

In the spring of 1945, my mother had a very bad belly-ache which she ignored until she ended up in the hospital for weeks with a burst appendix. Of course all the family went to visit her frequently and I was brought along, although I wasn't allowed to see her because of my age. I was left behind in this shop at the hospital. It seemed to be, the best I can remember, a combination lunch counter, gift shop, over-the-counter drug store and book/magazine store. There I discovered both a copy of *Donovan's Brain* and a collection of stories by H.P. Lovecraft (with whom I was familiar from radio dramatizations) in cheap hardbound editions. I talked my relatives into letting me buy them so I could have something to read while they had their visits. After having devoured them I looked around for something more to read and saw a stack of pulp magazines. One of them had the title *Planet Stories*. Hmm, I thought. *Planet Stories*? *Planet Comics*? Sounds interesting. So I asked if I could buy a copy. Well, my Aunt Bonnie, who was with me at the time, took one look at the cover, which featured the typical BBB (bem-babe-bum) format of the time, and promptly turned me down. After much pleading I finally convinced her to buy a copy so she could (along with my mother, who was feeling somewhat better) check it out. Of course they discovered that the only sex in the magazine was on the cover and I was allowed to have it. That was the Fall, 1945 issue (they pre-dated) and I fell in love. I still have that issue, albeit coverless by this time, but it was one of the turning points in my life. In one swell foop I had discovered pulp magazines, the genre of science fiction, and letter columns. I was hooked.

Now that I had discovered pulp magazines I began to look for more. At my local drug store they were stacked in a rack sort of half beside and half behind the entrance door. There I found *Startling Stories* and its companion *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, *Amazing Stories* and its companion *Fantastic Adventures*, *Weird Tales* and *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*. A few months later I discovered *Astounding* which was not placed with the other pulps since it was digest size. That was about it. Remember, this was 1945, World War II was still on and there was a bad paper shortage. Most of the magazines were issued on a quarterly basis. I devoured them, kept them, re-read them. In the letter columns I found that there were actually other people who were just as enthused about science fiction as I was. (Does anyone remember Sergeant Saturn and his cohorts, Snaggletooth, Frogeyes and Wartears who conducted the TWS and SS letter columns?) I avidly read such letterhacks as Chad Oliver and Rick Sneary. I was much too shy at the time to try to contact them but they became, in a way, friends in my mind, anyhow. And, there seemed to be some kind of fandom around with references to fanzines and conventions. Still too shy to do anything except read and dream.

About this time or shortly after I also discovered the Capitol Book Store , a second bookstore downtown from which I was able to find more Burroughs books about Mars and Venus et al. This store would become important to me later.

Walking the Streets

After the War ended paper became more available and the magazines started appearing more frequently and even some new ones showed up. When I was about fourteen (and just entering high school) I was on a visit with my parents to Farmersburg Indiana, my mother's home town. While there I was dragged around the town wherever they went (not that there was much to be dragged around to as Farmersburg is a very small town) and one of the places I was dragged to was a small second-hand store. While waiting for whatever transaction was going on I noticed a table at the back of the room that had some magazines on it so, of course, I wandered over. THEY WERE PULPS! And one of them was *Thrilling Wonder Stories*! An issue I didn't have, from before I had started buying it. Another revelation. I immediately asked my mother if there were any stores like this in Indianapolis that could sell second-hand magazines. She said she thought that there were along Massachusetts Avenue. Well, Mass. Ave was right along the trolley route to downtown from my house so as soon as I could, I checked it out. There were three stores in particular that seemed very promising, their signs saying not only used books but used magazines as well.

So, for the next couple of years I would take the trolley downtown and then start trudging back home stopping at each store and buying as many magazines as I could afford, or carry, at two for a nickel or three for a dime. I was able to get most of the pulps back through 1940 and even a few into the thirties. The only exceptions were the Street and Smith publications, which were very few and far between. After a couple of years I had pretty well cleaned them out of everything that I needed. Also the prices had started going up. So my trips stopped. (I stopped in at one of the places some twenty years later to search for a book and the proprietor looked at me and said "The science fiction's over there.")

Around this time the Capitol Book Store started carrying some interesting new publications. They became the outlet for the genre book publishers such as Shasta, Gnome, Arkham House and FPC I. They also carried a little known but excellent magazine called *Fantasy Book* which really published some groundbreaking authors and stories.



Trudging My Way Through High School

I attended a very large high school with multiple buildings and a huge campus but had still met almost no one else who was interested in science fiction. I had a girl friend, Caroline, who was marginally interested in fantasy. Once, at my local drugstore, while buying one of my pulps, a guy wandered in and got a copy of *Planet Stories* and mumbled something about wishing it would go monthly then left. I was in such a state of shock I hadn't said anything and I never saw him again. And finally, in my chem class there was Charles. He was a "genius" (well, he entered the University of Chicago as a junior) who used to borrow my copy of *Astounding* which I carried around in my notebook. He would ask the teacher a complicated question then read the magazine while the teacher answered it. He didn't seem to have much interest in going any further than that although I remember that once he remarked that Hal Clement was his favorite author. (It figured.)

I was generally a nerdish, introverted, gangly, quiet student, getting just average grades because most of my teachers didn't notice me. (Everyone went into a state of shock when the results of that time's equivalent of the SATs came back and I was off the charts in English, in the 90th percentile in science, 80th in history but bombed math.) However, I did have my moments.

In a sophomore creative writing class, we had a young teacher who generally allowed us to write on any topic we wished, so I wrote short (very short, not very good) science fiction stories. It was such an "innovation" (I mean, whoever read that "crazy Buck Rogers stuff") that it blew her away and I became the star—so to speak---of the class.

My stale junior year I took Journalism so come my senior year I was on the school newspaper---or, actually, it was a news magazine. Somehow they heard that I wrote fiction and asked me to turn in a story so I turned in one of those I had written for the creative writing class. I guess it went over because they asked for another which they got. It was kind of a relief from the wretched beat to which I had been assigned: Home Economics. (Have you ever tried writing something interesting about a sewing machine?)

My reputation as a "successful fiction writer" now having been established, I was asked to write a serial. Okay. I turned in a three part hand written time machine story which was sent to the school typists before it went to the editors. I turned in one part at a time. I guess the serial was successful as non-subscription sales of the paper went up. I also found out that members of the Senior Council and some of the school athletes were hanging out where the typists were turning out the pages so they could read the next installment before it got into print.

But as far as meeting anyone else who read science fiction, I had no luck.



Dashing to the Precipice and Plunging In

It was in the summer of 1950, the year I graduated from high school, that I finally decided to do something. I subscribed to my first fanzine. I don't remember which one. I think it was some sort of newszine. I also joined my first convention, one which I had no hope of attending, the NORWESCON on the west coast. Then that September, just as I was entering college, someone heard a guy on the radio saying he wanted to form a local s-f fan club. I was told about it and called him (Ray Beam) and there I was: over the edge and done for!

- LEE ANNE LAVELL

From the "was this intentional?" dept.:

During a recent high school half-time performance, the teen-aged announcer said, "And now, the Tiger Marching Band will perform the classic Glenn Miller song, "In the Nude!"
I am sure this has been done before.



The Thin Veneer

By Arnie Katz

Who a Fan?

If there isn't enough acrimony at the con or club you're attending, try starting a discussion of the meaning of the word "fan." In mere minutes, voices will rise and the verbal fireworks will detonate. (You can detect and zero in on the hottest person of the desired gender and quietly steal away) with him, her, them or it) It's a seductive question, because you can explore it on so many levels. And every one of those levels is almost certain to offend some folks and mystify others.

One thing I've often heard is: "If you think you're a fan, then you're a fan." That's ridiculous. We would not define any other word in that fashion and that is especially true of "fan" which is a term in the subcultural language of Fanspeak. You can say you're a giraffe, but that doesn't make you one, especially if the opinion of actual giraffes is the deciding factor. The context in which "fan" is used is integral to determining what we mean when we say it — and who fits the category. The first step toward finding the definition is to pin down who "we" are. The simplest answer is that we are participants in Science Fiction Fandom. That means that anyone who participates in Science Fiction Fandom — that's about 250,000 now, thanks to the Internet — are fans. And when the term is used in that sense, it is certainly accurate.

Simple? Yes.

Accurate? In that context, yes.

Helpful in understanding our hobby? Not tremendously. The truth is, we seldom use "fan" in that wider sense unless we are specifically talking about All Known Fandom, which encompasses far more than our fannish "culture" of activity, interrelationships, and historical context. The things

that differentiate us from other types of fans are precisely those that draw us closer together. We can certainly be friends with those who are part of other fannish cultures and even “visit” their virtual nations, but at the end of the day, this is the subculture that feels like home. Usually, when we talk about “our” subculture, this is what we mean.

I have been asked many times, “Why do we call it ‘Core Fandom’?” I’ve always hung back from saying what I honestly believe is the truth: We call it ‘Core Fandom,’ because people get mad when we call it ‘Fandom.”

From a historical standpoint, the path of Forry Ackerman and Jack Darrow runs right to contemporary Core Fandom. Core Fandom is the principal inheritor of the history, the language, the traditions and the ethos of the Fandom that grew out of the prozines and became a subculture. Other subfandoms can demonstrate a connection with that primal Fandom, but those subFandoms generally represent only a sliver of the original and their participants often knew very little of the Fandom to which Core Fandomites can connect them.

From the vantage point of Core Fandom, Filk Fandom, Game Fandom, Costume Fandom, and the others are very similar to Burroughs Fandom *Star Trek* Fandom, Comic Book Fandom and Tolkien Fandoms. These were all formed and nurtured within Fandom and developed into their own subcultures. All of them have at least a tangential connection to Fandom, but we and they recognize that we are only their cousins, not their brothers. Maybe we Core Fandomites should view those previously mentioned “sub-Fandoms” in the same light, that a friendly feeling is accompanied by the knowledge that they have somewhat different wants, needs, and desires than we do.

I’m definitely *not* implying that we should segregate ourselves from them or treat them in any but the most benign way. But I also believe we err when we let them define us or pass judgment on things that we all desire from our subcultural consensus.

All those groups have the right to their standards, but so do we. It has recently occurred to me that I may be wrong to criticize con runners for being money-oriented pseudo-capitalists without fannish sensibilities. Why shouldn’t they do things the way they think right, even if some of it makes me retch? They don’t have to hew to the standards of Core Fandom, nor should we expect them to, because they are part of a separate subculture with its own standards and practices. The things that make us the fans we are may alarm or even repel other types of fans. That’s their right, too, but we shouldn’t let sheer numbers overwhelm us and deconstruct the society that so many have contributed to building. Core Fandom is doing this right now. We have erected Corflu as the Core Fandom Worldcon, established an online fanzine newsstand, created a Core Fandom analog to TAFF (The Corflu 50) and established the Fan Achievement Awards as a legitimate (and for us superior) alternative to the fan Hugos.

Core Fandomites certainly don’t ignore worlds, TAFF and other elements of All Known Fandom. We share in them as SF fans. Yet we also have a growing body of literature, history and institutions that belong only to Core Fandom, just as other subcultures under the SF Fandom umbrella do. And, as long as Core Fandom isn’t seduced by Bigness, those special institutions can and will retain the character of Core Fandom, undiluted by the differing opinions of other types of fans.

— ARNIE KATZ

“Lead me not into temptation; I can find the way myself.”

- *Rita Mae Brown*

Fanzine Reviews

by ~~Lloyd Penney~~
John Purcell

Odd, isn't it? I mean, here it is, the fanzine review column for the fifth issue of *Askance*, and here I am being a guest fanzine reviewer in my very own fanzine! In the immortal words of Slim Pickens, "What in the name of the *Wild, Wild World Of Sports* is going on here?!"

Actually, there really is a rational explanation for this. As it turns out, our favorite letterhack from the frozen North has been working a full-time job for the past month, and it has eaten a sizeable chunk out of his precious time. When Lloyd told me about this development, I was prepared to pick up the slack and discuss how I felt about recent fanzines I have read. So, without further ado – and without Lloyd – here's my 2-cents worth on the following zines.



***MT Void*, produced by Mark & Evelyn Leeper.**

This is not your typical fanzine in the traditional sense. Mark and Evelyn Leeper are long-time fans out in New Jersey – yes, where the fabled Martians landed in the Orson Welles' production of *War of the Worlds* back in 1938 – who have been producing this newsletter/review forum for a very, very long time. It is a weekly, which if we did not have the Internet handy, would be quite the expensive proposition and most likely would have substantially shortened this zine's lifetime. The most recent issue is #1465 (dated 11/2/07 – Vol. 26, No. 18) and printed out runs to 8 pages. (Do the math: 1465 divided by 52 equals 28.17 years. I sincerely doubt if Arnie Katz would ever approach this number with *Vegas Fandom Weekly*.) There are no illustrations in *MT Void* because it is an on-line newsletter, shared via Yahoo! Group to subscribers, and is also carried at the Fanac.org website (see below), one of the very few electronic zines actively stored at that site. (Which is too bad, but that's fodder for another article some day.)

The lack of illustration in no way detracts from enjoying *MT Void*. The zine is handily carried by Mark's writing – he does most of the work on the zine – which is always interesting, and makes the zine read more like a blog with people writing in and commenting back and forth on topics over the course of a few weeks. A recent comment thread, for example, is a discussion on the dying off of languages, which Mark began in mid-October this year and is beginning to die off

itself since, well, he has started talking about some other topics that interest him. Mark also reviews movies that he and Evelyn have recently seen, rating them on a scale of -4 to +4, with a corresponding 10 point scale for us metrically-limited readers. In the most current issue (#1465), Mark rates *Gone Baby Gone* at +2, which translates to an 8/10 rating. All I can say about this is that Mark writes very clearly about his likes and dislikes in movies, and he and his wife definitely sees a lot more of them than I do. They must not have children still living at home.

An interesting thing to note is that *MT Void* is not a clubzine, even though the colophon mentions the Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society. This zine is an interesting collection of observations and reviews with letters-of-comment interspersed throughout. The typical issue is released every Friday afternoon and begins with a brief zinger/joke/pithy comment, then is followed by Mark commenting on something that has recently got him to thinking. Evelyn will contribute book reviews and occasional trip reports, sometimes even providing feedback to letters of comment. Personally, I would like to see more of Evelyn in the zine, but I suspect that this zinewletter (there's a term to add to Spell-check!) is more or less Mark's baby, and she doesn't mind her supporting role. Still, Evelyn is an insightful reviewer and a good writer, too; her multi-issue review of the Science Fiction Museum in Seattle was excellent and made me want to get out there, pronto!

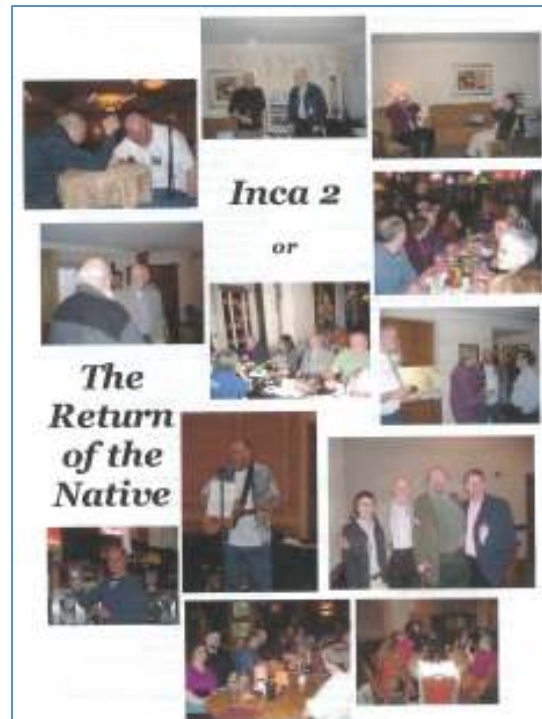
All in all, *MT Void* is an interesting read which contains informative, thoughtful comments. I have said it before, but Mark writes very clear, well-thought out short articles. It is definitely worth perusing issues to see if you would like to subscribe. The price is right: free! And get this: the Leepers publish more issues of *MT Void* in a single year than Chris Garcia's *Drink Tank*. Now, I ask you: how many people can make a claim like that?

Contact info: To subscribe, send mail to mtvoid-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. You could also e-mail the perpetrators directly at mleeper@optonline.net or eleeper@optonline.net. Also, go to www.fanac.org and click on "fanzines" on the left menu; you'll find the zine under "current fanzines."

***Inca #2*, produced by Rob Jackson.**

Rob Jackson has been out of the fan-pubbing loop for a long time. Twenty-eight years, to be exact. That was when the first issue of *Incantations* came out (1979). As Rob said in this second issue's editorial, there was something invigorating about Corflu Quire that sparked a lot of fan-editors into Pubbing Their Ish again.

Folks, I am glad that the fanzine publishing bug bit Rob Jackson. This long-term British fan has enjoyed a successful career in fandom and really didn't need to do this, but *Inca #2* was well worth the wait. There are five articles in this issue: two Corflu Quire reports (Rob's and Graham Charnock's), a visitor report from Jessica Amanda Salmonson dated from 1980 when Darroll and Rosemary Pardoe went to Seattle, Rob's post-Corflu travels in the American West, and Hugo Jackson's Anime Expo 2006 con report. All are wonderful, even Graham's very quirky Corflu Quire report – what *exactly* were you doing in that bathroom stall next to Chris Garcia, Graham? – and peppered with lots of great photographs on



the front and back covers. The front cover has photos from the aforementioned Corflu, and the back cover has San Francisco and Anime Expo photos. They are too small to see very clearly in print, but if you go to www.efanzines.com you can bring the issue up on your computer screen and enlarge each page to get a good view of the pictured parties involved. (That's one big advantage e-pubbing has over traditional paper zines.)

As much as I enjoyed the writing, the portfolio of Harry Bell's artwork is the highlight of this issue for me. Over the years, Harry has developed a distinctive style that is not only fannish, but technically marvelous art. I love his work, and plan on bugging Harry for some illoes, maybe a cover. In recent years Harry has not done much fan art – I think this is a conscious decision on his part – but even so, his contributions to fanzines over the years have placed him firmly in the pantheon of great fan artists. Come to think of it, during the 70s and 80s, whenever I got fanzines from England, I don't know which artist I enjoyed more: Harry, Jim Barker, or ATom (Arthur Thompson). They were all wonderful and mighty prolific.

But back to *Inca* #2. The biggest quibble I have with the zine is the font-spacing. I am not sure which font style Rob used, but the letters got squished together to the point where one word sort of melded into the next, and sometimes there would be an extra space that derailed my train of thought. After a while I did get used to it, but at first, this was very distracting. In its own way the font helped to give *Inca* #2 a distinctive style; whether this was intended or not, I am not sure. One thing that I am sure of, though, is that this is a fun fanzine, and well worth reading. I certainly hope we don't have to wait another 28 years for the next issue. Hopefully, this age of electronic fanzine publishing can speed things up a tad.

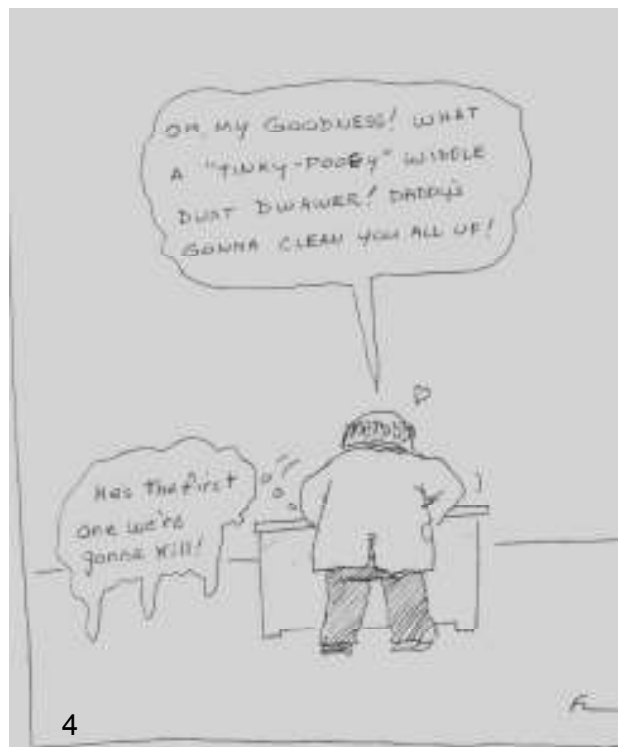
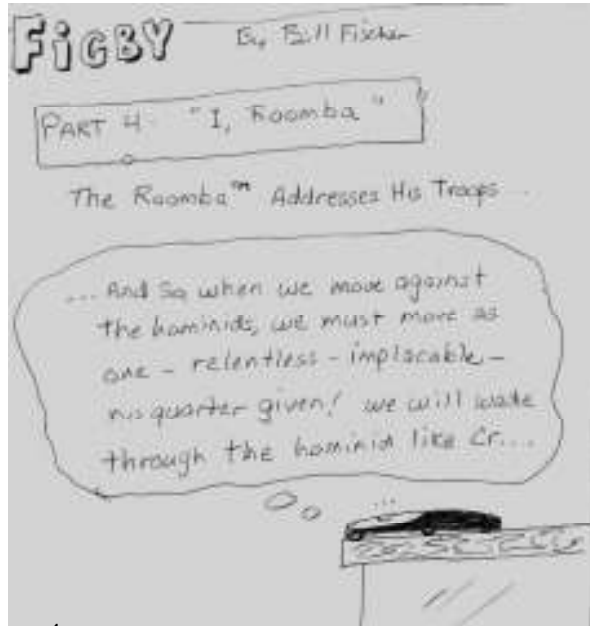
Welcome back, Rob!

Contact info: Rob Jackson, Chinthay, Nightingale Lane, Hambrook, Chichester, W. Sussex
PO18 8UH United Kingdom. Or e-mail: jacksonshambrook@tiscali.co.uk
This zine is also viewable at www.efanzines.com Highly recommended.

Fanzines received & viewed so far since last issue:

Alexiad #35 (Vol.6, No.5)
Ansible #243-244
Banana Wings #31-32
Bento #19
Busswarble #85
Cargo Cult Books & Notions (Sept/Oct, 07)
Consonant Enigma #2
Drink Tank #140-149
Einblatt! (Oct. & Nov., 07)
Gotterdammerung Redux
Ish #3
The Knarley Knews #125
Leighton Look
MT Void #1457-1465
No Sin But Ignorance #47
Of Physicists and Fen: a fanzine

Phlizz #2
Physicality of Words on Paper
Picofarad #10
Planetary Stories #8 (Vol. 2, No. 3)
Print Zine New Series #2-4
Procrastinations #4
Prolapse #8
Ribbons #3
Science Fiction in San Francisco #49-53
Steam Engine Time #7
Surprising Stories #15
Vanamonde #698-707
Vegas Fandom Weekly #100-101
Visions of Paradise #119-122
WCSFazine #1-3
The Zine Dump #17



Remember everybody...

Melbourne again in 2016!



WHAT IF...

by Linda Bushyager

Something in SNAPS #21 made me wonder what my life would have been without fandom. I never found it until college, when a friend told Suzle Tompkins and me about going to a Disclave. That, plus reading a note in a prozine about the 1967 WorldCon coming to NYC, made us decide to go to a WorldCon (taking along “fakefan” Dale Steranka DiNucci. And we also found out about fanzines, and soon produced *Granfalloon* in 1968. Actually a few months before all this, we’d started an SF club on our own at Carnegie Mellon University called the Western PA SF Association (WPSFA) without ever knowing about fandom.

But what if Suzle and I had sat in that CMU TV room watching “Man From Uncle” and never decided to start an SF club? We probably would have never met the girl who mentioned an SF con, nor would we have gone to NYC.

Well, a lot of lives would have been changed! I would have never met Ron Bushyager at WPSFA. He would have probably become more religious, instead of less, perhaps becoming a deacon in Church of Christ someday (his brother is married and has recently become an Episcopalian deacon, and has a son who is a Minister in the English Anglican Church in England).

Suzle would have never met Jerry Kaufman at the 1968 Marcon. She almost certainly wouldn’t have moved to NYC and later Seattle. She’d probably have moved back home to Johnstown, PA after graduating, helped her parents run their Gestetner store, and maybe married the local owner of Kinko’s or Office Max.

Dale would not have married her current husband, who was also a club member at the CMU club.

Since there would have been no Western PA SF Club, Ginjer Buchanan probably would never have become a fan. She wouldn’t have moved to NYC or become an SF editor. Think of all the books she wouldn’t have bought and edited! She wouldn’t have married Canadian fan John Douglas, who also became an SF editor. He would have never moved to the U.S., and all his books would have remained unpublished. Ginjer would probably still be a Social Worker in Pittsburgh today.

Countless other fan marriages and liaisons would have never occurred. Laurie Trask wouldn’t have married Jim Mann. Their great con-running wouldn’t have occurred. Countless cons would have been run differently. I introduced Eva Whitley to Jack Chalker after I told her all about fandom. Woops—no marriage—no kids! Maybe some of Chalker’s novels would never have been published.

I had a great impact on many fannish marriages, since I have a natural tendency to be a yenta —

Must be my Jewish heritage. Ron and I also influenced other lives in other ways. Back in about 1979 we were asked by a fannish friend to help pay for an abortion for a young lady fan who desperately needed one. No money, no abortion, and some little kid would have come into existence! Moreover, that young lady probably would have been married off or sent to a convent or ghu-knows-what, by her outraged parents, but certainly would never have been allowed to go to a SF con again! As a result, years later, she would never have married a British fan! And that

poor guy would still be single and living in Great Britain!

Certainly my fanzines *Granfalloon* and *Karass* had some influence on fandom. I sold more than one copy to a neo, who later became a real fan and pubbed his issues. No telling how many trees were saved when those zines failed to be born! Maybe somewhere a birdie or insect was born because of that, whose ancestors, 80 million years from now, become the dominant intelligent species on earth!

If I hadn't started the SF club, now-gafiated fan Nancy Lambert would have never moved to NYC, where once upon a time, she dated Arnie Katz! Perhaps Arnie would have dated someone else that year, had that work out well, and then he would have married some other fan than Joyce Worley! Joyce would still be living in St. Louis, and Arnie would still be in NYC. Perhaps Arnie would have kept the Fanoclasts growing strong and ended up running the Nycon 5 WorldCon.

Ron and I had some influence on events in Philadelphia fandom, when we moved there in 1971. I helped restart a local writers workshop with Darrell Schweitzer. Without me there, Darrell probably wouldn't have started it back up again. One of the first people who came was a lovely lady named Janny Wurts, who had 7 old novels hidden in a closet. Without the workshop, those books would have stayed hidden, and she wouldn't have perfected her ability to the point where she could sell a novel. She probably wouldn't have become more interested in fandom, attended some cons, and sold some of her artwork. She would have put her talents to work writing and illustrating children's fairy tales, perhaps. Perhaps she would have written "Harry Pewter's Sorcerer's Chalice!" Who knows! But she wouldn't have published her first novel (Stormwarden), which I helped her edit. She wouldn't have gone to cons, learned about selling SF artwork, eventually selling artwork and covers for novels. She wouldn't have married artist Don Maitz.

A number of other fans who came to the workshop eventually sold stories. But in this alternate universe they'd never have published. Mattie Brahen eventually joined the workshop, revised her novel (also hidden in a closet or drawer), and sold it. She also met and married Darrell Schweitzer. But in our new world, she would have married someone she met at a tap-dance class, instead. Darrell would remain a bachelor.

John Betancourt also knew Darrell. But he didn't get super involved in fandom and publishing, til he started coming over to the Bushyager house for parties and collations and Writers Workshop meetings. He probably would have gotten tired of hanging around with just Darrell, and gone onto other pursuits. He wouldn't have published his novels, become an editor, or started Wildside Press.

If I'd never become a fan, many other lives would have changed too, I'm sure.

I wonder what would have happened to me? Finding SF fandom was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. Probably instead of marrying Ron and staying in Pittsburgh after graduation, I would have moved home to Silver Spring Maryland and gotten a government job. If I hadn't remained an old maid, I might have married some clerk or government lackey. I got pregnant, had two children, divorced, and now they are living in my parent's old house with me and their worthless spouses and kids! My love of SF would have pushed me into an interest in astronomy. Without Ron around, I would have a car, and I'd drive to local astronomy "viewing nights." One day in 1991, one of the astronomy buffs would tell me about a local SF convention, Disclave. I'd go, but since I was all alone (instead of having Suzle tagging along with me to those early SF cons), I would wander around bemused, feeling lost. I would stumble into an S&M party and be shocked. I'd head home confused, wondering if all SF cons were the same, and vowing not to go to another one. Tonight I'd be tucking my grandkids into their beds and reading them the latest "Harry Pewter" sequel until they fell asleep..... instead of writing this!

■ LINDA BUSHYAGER

REGIONAL CONVENTION CALENDAR

There are all sorts of events coming up for this part of the country, including ones that are quite different that bear some checking out. If anybody gets to some of these, please feel free to write up reports/reviews and submit them to me. Submissions are always welcome.

Texas Renaissance Festival: September 30 – November 19, 2007. Plantersville, TX

This should need no description, but this is one of the largest Renfests in the United States with over 200 vendors and attractions featuring Damsels, Steak on a Stake, Human Powered Rides, Medieval Clothing, Medieval Games, Medieval Knights, Medieval Weapons, and oodles more, plus the best fireworks display each evening after dusk held in the jousting arena. For lots more information, go to <http://www.texrenfest.com/> See you there!

Izumicon 2007 Nov. 2-4, 2007 New Adventures in Anime & Manga

Biltmore Hotel Oklahoma
401 South Meridian Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73108

Cosplay, panels, screenings, dealer's room (including artist alley tables), guests, and more!

Re/Max Ballunar Liftoff Festival Nov. 2-4, 2007

(Postponed from Aug. 24-26 due to heavy rainfall)

NASA Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas

Visit this exciting and educational family-oriented event at NASA/Johnson Space Center and enjoy hot air balloon competitions, evening balloon glows, skydiving exhibitions, commercial exhibits, concession booths, food from local restaurants, arts & crafts exhibits, entertainment and various aviation equipment displays.

Ballunar Liftoff Festival, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Its mission is to help the public learn about aviation and space exploration, and to sponsor and fund educational activities that encourage young people to learn about aviation and space and to study mathematics and the sciences.



Millenniumcon X Gaming con. November 9-11, 2007

Wingate Inn & Conference Center
1209 North Interstate Highway 35
Round Rock, Texas 78664

Our convention caters to many different gaming tastes and styles. Unlike other conventions that support multiple genres, we don't have one group trying to be all things to all people. The historical miniatures and board gaming events are hosted by [Lone Star Historical Miniatures](#). Our RPGA events are hosted by the [Austin RPGA](#).

To participate in the RPGA games, you must first register for the convention and pay the registration fee and also register for the RPGA events. This is two separate registrations. You must do both.

We're looking for all sorts: RPGs, Board Games, Card Games, and Miniatures.

Millennium has a particular need for classical historical periods (ACW, Napoleonic, Ancients, etc). Last year, there was more demand for these types than we could meet, and the slots filled up quickly.



Arkansas Anime Festival November 17, 2007 (10 AM-midnight) First annual anime convention for Northwest Arkansas.

Cosmopolitan Hotel [formerly the Radisson]
70 North East Avenue
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Cosplay, video games, two viewing rooms, tabletop gaming, anime activities, guest panels, Japanese food, displays by local artists, some local vendors, door prizes (we are working on a dance) and much more!

For more information, [send email](#)

Sponsored by [Realms Anime](#) at 2579 N. College Ave. in Fayetteville, AR

InstaCon 7 January 25-27, 2008 Celebrating Fifty Years of Convention Fandom

Holiday Inn-Downtown (Market Square)

318 West Durango

San Antonio, TX 78204

Join us for a weekend of fandom conventioneering. This is a chance to interact with the major convention committees in and around Texas.

Membership checks need to be made out to:

A.L.A.M.O.

P.O. Box 27277

Austin, TX 78755

OwlCon XXVII February 8-10, 2008 Gaming, Fantasy, & Science Fiction Convention

RMC/Ley Student Center

Rice University

Houston, TX

OwlCon is an annual gaming convention at Rice University, Houston, TX, dating back to 1980. We will feature table top and live action role playing games, miniatures games and events, historical miniatures, board games, card games, a dealers' room, and more. OwlCon 2k2 gaming events will include RPGA events, official tournaments for Warhammer 40k, Warmaster, Shadowfist, and Mage Knight, Matchbox-scale Car Wars, World of Darkness tabletop games, a Vampire LARP, a Call of Cthulhu LARP, a Crossroads fantasy LARP, and many other games with prizes galore! OwlCon will once again be swarming with official demo folks for various game systems to give you a chance to try some of their great games. We will also have open gaming, an anime room, a TV lounge running movies, some "all nighter" events, and our second annual OwlCon party and costume contest in Valhalla. For more information and/or whatever, here is the address:

Rice University

Fast Warp MS-526

c/o Office of Student Activities

PO Box 1892

Houston, TX 77251-1892

ATTN. OwlCon

Or [send email](#)

Ikkicon 2 February 8-10, 2008 Japanese Animation and Pop-Culture Convention
Doubletree Hotel
6505 IH-35 North
Austin, Texas, USA 78752-4346
Dealers room, cosplay, and more!

ConDFW February 22-24, 2008 A Literary Science Fiction & Fantasy Event
Radisson Hotel Dallas North
1981 North Central Expressway
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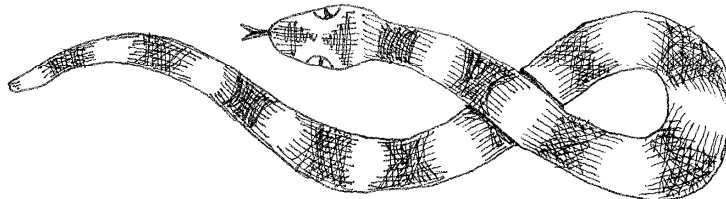
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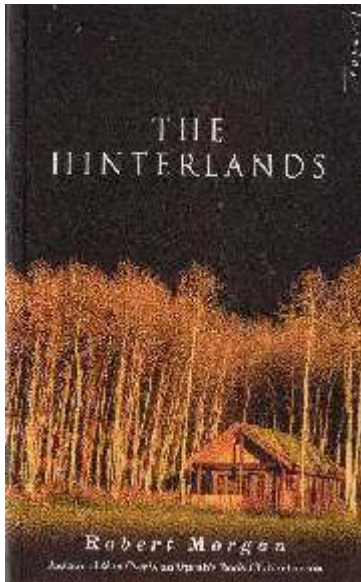
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From the Hinterlands

Alright. I confess that I do not own the book pictured to the left. But whenever I image Google "hinterlands," this cover pops up. It does look kind of nice and peaceful, though, doesn't it?

No matter what, it is now time to forge ahead and see what people have been thinking and saying about the last issue. First off, I really must apologize for not mailing out Dead Tree Versions of Askance for the past few months. Money has been the issue, which most of us have faced in our lives. Even so, as

our finances settle down with my new full-time job, there are much brighter days ahead, which translates into funds being available for postage. I hate feeling bad about something that is out of my control, but that's the way I am.

*Leading things off is **Eric Mayer**, who was very surprised to find portions of his previous locs to various fanzines culled together in Claire Brialey's loc-cum-arkle last issue. This loc addresses some important issues concerning current fan-editing practices, so it will be interesting to eventually read other people's comments to **this** loc. Here goes:*

05 Sep 2007

From: Eric Mayer <maywrite2@epix.net>

I have to admit that after I got past the striking cover by Rotsler (practically an abstract) I was disconcerted and dismayed to find bits and pieces of my locs from various zines featured in an article. I do appreciate Claire Brialey going to the trouble to look up what was actually said, which I should've done myself when I wrote to you last issue, except for my bone idleness.

I had been irked by the way my comments had been misconstrued because my belief that one should try to respond as often as possible to zines one enjoys was the sole reason for my recent limited involvement with fandom. I had delved into the zines on e-Fanzines, enjoyed a few and noted, with disapproval, that hardly anyone had written and so resolved to do the right thing. Sadly that is not the Internet way and e-zine editors have to contend with a new way of doing things, or not doing things. Which was what I was trying to say. Not that I personally didn't care about loccing.

Back in the seventies I locced practically everything that hit my mailbox. I wasn't in Harry Warner's league or Mike Glicksohn's, but very few fans at the time wrote more locs. Heck, did you see Rob Jackson finally brought out *Inca* #2 decades late? Sure enough there's a letter in there I wrote to *Inca* #1 in 1979. Unfortunately, no one seems to recall things like that. Well, locs are ephemeral. I certainly didn't recall writing one on *Inca*.

The aspect of fandom I enjoyed was communicating via zines which included, for me, writing articles of all sorts from mundane humor to faan fiction, loccing, drawing illos and covers, and publishing, in addition to correspondence on the side.

When I encountered e-zines it occurred to me how much easier all that could be accomplished electronically. True, it can be a problem to get out the word about electronic zines. You can't "push" e-zines at readers.

Like many people, I can't accept unexpected large files because I'm on dial-up. And even

an unsolicited announcement of a new issue might be classified by some as SPAM, applying the rules of Internet etiquette.

However, if you check your mailbox for paper fanzines you can just as easily check e-Fanzines for electronic ones. For me the process is similar to what it was thirty years ago. I subscribe to the site's rss feed via Bloglines and I'm forever clicking on the site and if I see e-Fanzines has lit up with something new I rush over...kind of like how I used to keep looking out the window to see if the flag on the mailbox out by the road was up. If you don't want to use the rss feature, or just check the site itself, you can also sign up for the e-Fanzines email announcement list.

I came very close to publishing a personalzine of the sort I used to do, but in electronic format. (I wouldn't want to do a genzine and take responsibility for presenting other people's work in a pleasing manner.) But then I realized I would have nothing to say of any interest to fans today. I don't go to conventions (and thus can't write them) and never have (and so can't reminisce about what I was doing forty years ago) nor do I read current science fiction (and can't review books or discuss trends). I don't participate in any of what strike me as the core activities of 21st century fandom. (In fact, Rob Jackson mentions in *Inca # 2* that the zine came about as a result of Corflu, which seems the usual order of things today, fanzines being an outgrowth of con attendance. Fans wanting to communicate with people they see at cons, rather than fanzine editors wanting to meet other fanzine editors at cons.)

When I was into running I went out and participated in road races. That made me a "runner." (Slow as I was...) If I'd shown up at road races but didn't run, but just wanted to talk about how I'd bought new running shoes, it wouldn't have worked. And that's the position I find myself in relative to today's fandom. I really have no inclination to do the things that would entitle me to belong to the club and call myself a "fan."

Claire mentions there's been discussion about what is fan-writing. For one thing it is writing by fans. If a fan writes in a fanzine about his or her mundane activities, observations on life, humor, then it is fan-

writing. If someone who is not a fan does so it isn't fan-writing. And you can't get to be a fan by writing about mundane stuff. You have to be a fan first -- by going to cons, or having been to cons etc...

We naturally take an interest in what members of our families, or friends, or fellow club members are up to and what they think. Not necessarily because what they do or think is more interesting than what a million others do or think but because as family, friends, club members, we take a special interest in them. That's how a lot of fan-writing works, in my opinion. One cannot come along, as an outsider, and say, "here, you have to accept this as fan-writing because I say it is" without actually participating in faanish activities of which writing is only a small part.

My experience of fandom dates back to the seventies and although I thought at the time that I was *in* fandom I suspect that was more my perception than reality. Perhaps there was a time one really could be a full member via the post (certainly in the early days there were far less conventions) but from what I know of fan-history, I'm not so sure. Harry Warner was not a convention goer. He went way back, though. Maybe he was grandfathered in.

What would Harry have done today when so many of the zines I see are primarily about conventions? When I first started reading e-zines I figured I could contribute by loccing but when the subjects are recent cons, upcoming cons, the con we all went to in 1973, or current sf books I am pretty much at a loss for words, which explains why this loc is so short.

Probably my disconnect from fandom these days also helps explain why, on more than one occasion, I've written something I thought totally innocuous only to have people take umbrage or, at least, make more out of it than I intended.

I really do not want to be seen as criticizing fandom, which is the impression I get from some reactions. That's no my intent. I've been involved in lots of hobbies (hobby in the sense of something you don't make a living at) and it is up to the members to decide what the hobby entails not up to outsiders. There's nothing more obnoxious

than someone who doesn't know anything about a hobby and doesn't participate showing up and lecturing those involved on what he or she would prefer them to be doing instead of the hobby they've chosen. Also ridiculous.

Anyway, you can probably see why having my off-hand remarks about fandom getting such prominent treatment makes me uneasy. It's fine, but I just hope no one misconstrues it. I enjoy some of what's in zines. I like writing a loc from time to time. I doing so I likely sometimes talk about aspects of fandom I am not qualified to discuss these days. I'm resolving henceforth to keep my big mouth shut about things that don't concern me and to devote more time to activities I am actually qualified to fully participate in. Presumably I will then not be rattled by coming unexpectedly upon articles about my locs. In the meantime, just recall the immortal words of Basil Fawlty –“Never mind him, he's from Barcelona.”

I did really enjoy Bill Fischer's stuff (he's a mundane right?) *{yes, but he has a very fannish sense of humor}*, particularly his "Spring Theory" which reminded me of Robert Benchley's silly science essays.

Best,

Eric

{You and I are in agreement about the fact that this new age of electronic publishing has changed the way fans do their issues. Communication has always been vital to a fanzine's well-being, and locs (artwork and articles, too) are no doubt the main means how readers let the editor(s) know what works and doesn't work in a zine, or they can expand on discussions raised in any particular issue. Each individual must make the effort to either contribute intelligently to fandom's ongoing conversation, which is how I have always read your letters.

In actuality, I really hope you don't completely disconnect from fandom, Eric, because I enjoy your commentary and never really read them as criticisms of fans/fandom. If anything, if people take umbrage at what you say, then they need to realize that this is your valid point of view, and grant you the right to express yourself. My role here is to provide a forum for intelligent discussion. Name-calling has no

place in these pages, In My Humble Opinion, so if some readers don't like the things they read in here, they can take their weeny-assed minds elsewhere! (And if some readers don't get the joke there, oh, never mind.) }

()()

*I love getting artwork from **Brad Foster**. He also writes the occasional loc, too. Here's one of them:*

8 Sep 2007

From:"Brad Foster" <bwfoster@juno.com>

I haven't clicked into e-fanzines in a while, thought I'd see what was new. I was surprised to see a listing for *Askance* #4, since I hadn't even known you had gotten #3 finished!

A lot of e-zine pubbers these days seem to just post stuff up and hope people will come and find it. Some send out an email to a "mailing" list of sorts when they put up a new issue, but often they seem to leave it up to people to find new issues on their own. I would hope fan eds would at least send notice out to the contributors to a specific issue to let them know their contribution was up...

By the way, have to note I really liked Sheryl's cover on this issue. I know she had expressed concern about how her color efforts would hold up if compared to others. I think we're all still learning this new technology, and I like how her approach is different again from others. I get a neat "water color" vibe off of her work her that I really like, and am looking forward to seeing more from her as she gets more comfortable with the technology.

stay happy~ **Brad**

{I can be bad about not notifying folks that the latest issue is posted. A quick bulk e-mail really helps solve this problem. I shall do better in the future!}

()()

Here's a new voice, from a Swedish fan now living in Canada. At least the temperature

change shouldn't be that much of a shock, I would think:

30 Oct 2007

From: Anna Davour

<adavour@owl.phy.queensu.ca>

Just a short note before I go to bed. I'm always so tired nowadays, and I keep filling notebooks with things I would like to write about...

I downloaded *Askance* #4 and I've read about ten pages now. You made me decide to vote for TAFF! And I have some thoughts about loccing.

Of course the best thing about fanzines is the conversation with the readers (and really egoboo is the result of seeing that someone else cares about what I printed). Nowadays most of the response I get is verbal comments when I meet people who read it (at home, that is, I'm talking about my Swedish fanzines). That is somehow not as satisfying, since I cannot print these comments. But I also know exactly how it goes: I read a fanzine, and if I don't comment on it at once I will surely forget about it.

The fanzines I received at the Worldcon in Glasgow never got any locs from me. I wrote reviews of them, in Swedish, which might have made someone interested in them, but somehow I never got around to actually sending anything to the editors and therefore they will never know if they made me think or react.

But now I need to get some sleep. Maybe I'll read the rest of your fanzine another day, but I'll send this now -- you can never be sure that I will take the time to write to you next time I sit down with fanzines in mind.

Aka

{Aka, I am glad you're enjoying the zine. Get some sleep and finish reading issue #4. Before you know it, another issue may be waiting for you when you awake.

I enjoy getting verbal comments, too, like at conventions, but since fanzines are a printed medium, written communication is more fun

to me. Quite often I write locs when I get the urge, or have a bit of time to spare. No matter what, the feedback is what gives all of us the spark to keep going.}

()()

*I like **James Bacon**, I really do. One of these years I really must meet him. Until that day comes along, e-mails and articles from him will have to do:*

09 Sep 2007

From: James <piglet@indigo.ie>

Subject: You git, you live in Joe R. Lansdale country....

Askance 4. Email of Comment from the Fanopolis Democratic Republic of Croydon to fanned Pucell: [sic. Sometimes it's too much work to edit James' locs.]

Saw it at Bill's site, and thanks for the follow up email, in case I didn't, that's helpful! What a fortnight for zines, I have had 3 in the post, 1 in the hand and plenty online.

If I didn't already live in the gravitational well that is SF stuff in Perfidious Albion, I would defo be asking to stay at Mark n' Claire's as the concept of opening a snoozing eye to see Claire tip toe-ing gentle by to get to the fanzine archive is quite cute.

I noted Chris' piece, nice write up, but his T-shirt worried me, if he wins TAFF, I am toying with the concept of getting ladies into chain mail and armour and running a charge through him to see if it works. Of course, there is a flaw, he'll need to keep the right pole facing towards the chicks, and we need to ensure we flow the current correctly so he doesn't repel them. Ah, such science fun, I love it. You don't have a cyclotron to spare by any chance?

I liked your list of WorldCons, but would ask that you embellish this with rumour, and hearsay and smof chatter. Perhaps use some journo skills to ask those who have announced who they fear may run. I like hearing the inside track, so see what you can fish out. Go, go, go.

Gutted about Kansas, my own reasons, but will get into Montreal, super choice of GOH. Neil Gaiman is an astute choice as one to honour, he is very deserved and for me embodies a lot of the best things of PRO's in the SF literature world. You know he contributed to Jim De Liscards 'not a zine, but is' *Gerald*?

Texas and Chicago as bids are good places I can dream about going to, and wondering about when Boston will go again. Oz, well, I am a supporter, I hope will be out there. Good for you on announcing DUFF, here Max I think has announced she will do Guff to Oz in 2010 and after Ang Rosin's recent success Dun Under and the amount of people that ran for Guff and Jets, I think the fan racing calendar is filling up.



Not sure what to say about LOC's. But do people really right letters? I noted from Peter Western a veiled request to EOC in future as my letter was long and in well you know, foreign, and somehow got the impression that emails were the natural comment format

now. I do both occasionally, as I like post, real post and stamps and stuff.

You know Chris Megazineist says L-O-C, like a sesame street Muppet. Not good. I pronounce it LOCK (I think).

I love paper, and I like stuff online. I write for all types of zines and things, and hope that a contribution, is as good as a loc, but my first zine writing was for an online zine, and it really seemed to get a response, as people stopped me in dealers rooms to chat about it. I don't know if Tommy Ferguson did Loc's.

Not getting LOC's can be demoralising, I can see that. I don't like demorale and negativitativity-ness (that's negative to the power of five for Mark P.) that might occur when you really wanted six locs and got one.

All I can say, is that if any faned EVER feels down, as they are LOC deficient, or quagmired in a bog of disillusionment and doubt due to a lack of support or interest or whatever it is we self doubters feel, when we worry and fret (even unnecessarily) and need something, just drop me a line and I will write an article or report, and support that faned, in the only way I know how. It may not help, but the offer is there, always.

James

{Your offer is genuinely appreciated. However, I do not feel loc-deficient by any means. As a matter of fact, if I don't get that many locs after pubbing an issue, I ascribe that more to my lack of getting the word out that the zine is on-line, or even in printing copies to put in the mail. So getting locs is not really de-moralizing to me, but is more of a measure of how committed I am to zine pubbing. In terms of actual numbers, I get a fair number of locs each issue – between 15 to 25 – and again, that all depends on how many Dead Tree copies get posted.

I was actually kind of hoping that Kansas City would win the 2009 WorldCon bid because that's not really too far from home and have family there (sister-in-law and her family). So that's a bummer. But Montreal is still an excellent choice with a great GoH line-up.}

()()

*Our favorite TAFF candidate also wrote in, claiming that a **woman** - of all things - is a major reason why he's slacked off on his recent loc-writing. Didn't his mother tell him to be careful of these things? Girls are icky!*

16 Sep 2007

From: "Chris Garcia"

<garcia@computerhistory.org>

I'm sorry I'm late. I had been meaning to send an LoC, but between this TAFF race (maybe you've heard that I'm running?), working on helping Genevieve and Evelyn move and spending time with the Lovely and Talented Linda, I've slacked.

Luckily, today I've gotten to *Procrastinations*, *Banana Wings*, *Knarley Knews*, and the *Alexiad* for good measure! And now...*Askance*.

Gotta love a good Rotsler cover. I wish there were more. If anyone out there has some, send them my way and I'll happily do something nice for you!

I'm blushing! You know, this whole TAFF thing has been an incredible experience and I'm so glad I've run...even if I don't win! I've had a lot of great people say some really nice things and win or lose, I'll always have that! Still, I think Christian McGuire's got the best chance (the guy chaired a WorldCon!) but I'm happy just to be running!

John for DUFF! If you need the nom, it's coming your way! I think you'd be great, even if I can't make it out to Australia myself. Remember, half the fun (and ¼ of the work) is actually running!

There are a lot of reasons that we eFanEds don't get as many LoCs as paper zines. I think one is television. Think about it: do you ever write to a tv show? We read eZines on screens and we think, deep down in our sub-cockles, that we're watching a tv show. No one writes to tv shows, do they? It's all psychological. I don't get many LoCs for *The Drink Tank*, though you and Lloyd Penney and Claire and Ted and Mark and a few others give me hope once in a while, but I personally don't need it. I love my zines whether or not anyone looks at them. I think that's something that a Zine 2.0 FanEd needs nowadays.

I was in the room when the Australia bid came to life. I'm still amazed that the myth is actually incredibly close to the truth of the legend. I'm often trying to get folks to randomly throw 20s at Frank Wu by proclaiming "Frank's bidding a WorldCon!" at BASFA meetings. Often, he hits me after I do that.

By the way, it's Cheryl Morgan that helped Kevin put together the Hugo site. *{Yes, yes; I know...}*

I had a similar WorldCon experience. I was with Linda all weekend, but I checked LiveJournal every few hours to get the latest from the Far Eastern front. So glad that Montreal won. I was a serious campaigner for them, though I was only briefly official, and I am planning on going and blowing a few weeks worth of pay on the trip. Poutine and fun for all!

It's always good to hear what Lloyd thinks of various fanzines. The guy sees a lot of them and he writes to them! That is noble. I'm a big fan of his LJ too! Alright, I must run along. Forward!

Chris

{A "Zine 2.0 FanEd"?? Qua...?! I don't think I've received the upgrade software yet. Does it come in a chilled liquid form?}

()()

*I am looking forward to once again meeting **Mark Plummer** next year at Corflu Silver. Not only is he a gentlemanly chap, but his fannish knowledge is quite extensive, and his insights are quite, well, insightful, as this loc ably demonstrates:*

22 Sep 2007

From: Mark Plummer

<mark.fishlifter@gmail.com>

Claire and I have just started a week off work. There's no particular reason for this other than that we have some holiday still owing to us -- and the fact that any chance not to go to work is to be welcomed -- so it's really just a few days to tackle some of those odd jobs around the house, maybe take in some of the cultural stuff that we

always mean to do but somehow never quite manage, and also to write to some of the growing mass of fanzines that are overflowing the left-hand side of my desk.

Fanzines such as *Askance* #4, for instance, which I've been sort-of writing to -- mainly in my head -- for a couple of weeks now, ever since it arrived in fact. If nothing else I thought I'd note that *Askance* #3 appeared while Peterborough fan Max was staying with us (she's referenced, although unnamed in both Claire's and my letters as quoted in #4) and then *Askance* #4 appeared on efanazines on 4 September when we were going over to James Bacon's house to meet up with visiting ex-pat fan Nic Farey and at the last minute Max was able to come along -- and asked if she could stay over with us. I just thought I should note this, and ask whether you could give us a bit of notice of exactly when *Askance* #5 will be out so we can make up the spare room again.

I too was at the virtual Worldcon this year rather than in Yokohama. I think I saw you a couple of times, over in the distance at somebody or other's LiveJournal, and I sort of figured that maybe I'd catch up with you at some point but it never quite happened. These modern virtual Worldcons are just so damn *big*, aren't they? You always imagine that you'll be able to catch up with somebody later but you never do. Why, *I* remember when virtual Worldcons were all much smaller, when we still felt like a community mumble mumble grump...

Having the chance to get the 'immediate news' of who'd won the Hugos is an odd thing. Ordinarily -- with US Worldcons -- for us in the UK the results often come through in the early hours of Sunday: a seven PM presentation in, say, Los Angeles is two in the morning over here. This time, of course it was the other way around, with the presentation starting at Yokohama at six in the evening which was ten in the morning for us and -- if I have this right -- four in the morning for you. In fact, we got an email at about 11:20 from a Japanese mobile phone giving the results of the three fan categories -- we later confirmed that, as we'd guessed, this came from our designated acceptors in the audience -- after which I spent the best part of an hour trawling various websites

trying to find the other results which is daft really because to be honest I wasn't *that* interested and when I actually found them it was all a little anticlimactic. But it was as if, knowing that the results were being announced and that as a result they were probably Out There on line, it became really quite urgent to track them down. In the pre-net days I was entirely happy to find out what had happened days after the event from the pages of *Ansible* or *Locus* or *Matrix*.

(Minor point here but you give one of the maintainers of the Hugo Awards website as 'Cheryl Wilson'. Umm, Cheryl *Morgan*, surely?) {*Et tu, Marcus?*}

You'll get no disagreement from us over the Australia in 2010 bid and we certainly intend to be at the convention if the bid is successful. I'm slightly dubious, though, about whether the 'origins' story you reprint shows the bid in a good light. I mean, presumably the bid committee think it's OK as they have it on their website but it seemed to me when I first heard the story, and again now, as if a bunch of mostly American SMOFs with a few British allies decided that the Australians should run a WorldCon and so set up a bid for them with very little involvement from actual real Australians. Yes, I know that maybe I'm taking something that was supposed to be a joke too seriously here, but I'm conscious that there has in the past been criticisms of what was perceived to be excessive US influence on British WorldCons. This isn't an anti-American thing -- I know that American fans have the experience and that we can also function far more globally in the internet era such that it's increasingly less important where somebody lives -- but I'd like to think that when an area bids for a WorldCon that's because people in that area want to run one and not because somebody else has decided that they should.

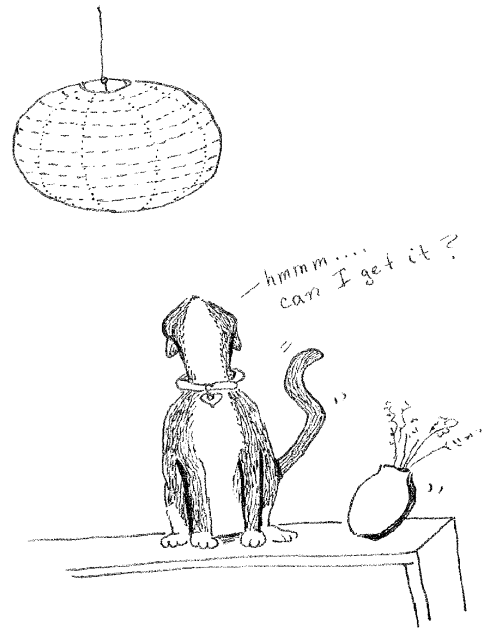
Still, no matter how it came into being, it's now an Australian bid run by Australians and I'm sure it will turn into a convention that's worth attending so sure, let's all talk it up and encourage people outside Australia to maybe start some long-range planning if they think they may like to attend. And, as Claire has noted elsewhere, should the bid committee choose to use the same

Melbourne hotel/conference cluster as formed the site for the 1999 WorldCon, we'll be only a short walk up the Yarra from a shopping and restaurant complex, part of which is called Southgate. Perhaps not entirely what Rick Sneary had in mind for South Gate Again in 2010, but it would be kinda convenient.

On non-Worldcon matters, there's one thing I'm curious about, and I genuinely don't know the answer to this question. You say, in your comments on that part of Claire's letter that you've extracted into a mini-article: '... we fan editors need to understand that the medium has changed so dramatically in recent years and the readership has likewise changed.' Has it changed -- the readership, I mean? On one simplistic level the readership is constantly changing and, yes, the specific roster of named people that get, say, *Banana Wings* in 2007 is not the same group that got it in 1997 or indeed that received *Another General Circulation Fanzine* in 1977 or 1957, but I assume that you're suggesting something more fundamental here, presumably based around the e-availability of fanzines such as your own. Now clearly *Askance* has an enormous potential readership -- in that it's on the web and anybody with a web connection can theoretically read it -- but is there actually much to suggest that its readership is substantially different to that of a print-only fanzine with reasonable distribution here in the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, that it is somehow reaching a different audience because of its medium?

Best etc.--Mark

{Hmm. A good question. I don't think we're reaching a "different audience" in terms of simply age, experience, and interests, but I believe that the Internet reading audience of all of the online fanzines that are now available has changed in terms of participation. This could very well refer back to when Eric Mayer, in earlier issues, was talking about how readers of e-zines don't feel that they are obligated to respond in any way (loc, article, review, artwork) unless they have been asked for these contributions directly. In the old days -- and boy, am I dating myself here! -- there were



certain expectations of being a participatory member of fandom.

*Maybe this is the key concept here. Many cyber-fans -- for lack of a better term -- feel that they are "participating" by simply reading somebody else's efforts on-line. Those of us who used to publish paper fanzines and now are primarily producing zines on-line (like me, and Arnie Katz, Earl Kemp, David Burton, Jerry Kaufman, Peter Weston, Dave Langford, et al) do enjoy what feedback we get, but we are so ensconced and affected by the participation of our readerships back when we physically typed, laid-out, printed, collated, stapled, stuffed, stamped, and mailed out our zines. Fanzine publishing used to be such a **physical activity** (and I emphasize that for obvious reasons), and to get responses of any kind from people was such a rush, a feeling of acceptance that what we were doing meant something to somebody somewhere.*

*This is where I believe electronic fanzines have changed the reading audience. Granted, there is a lot of overlap from our old fannish buddies who still read our zines, no matter what form they are in, but it is hard to get newer, younger fans into our oldphart mindset that to **participate** means*

that you must **do something** in order to be called a **FAN**.

Does any of this make sense? I think that the actual physical readership of fanzines is indeed changing due to the vagaries of living, but many of us old guard fan-editors are pining for those Days Of Yore instead of trying to be more proactive (like Chris Garcia) in getting younger fans involved in fanzine fandom, even if it is electronic in nature. If we can just get off our ballooning duffs and try to do **something** to show that fanzine activity **is** a lot of fun – and it most certainly is, otherwise I wouldn't be doing it – then the only people that we can blame are ourselves.}

{Sheesh, that turned into quite the response, didn't it?}

()()

*From the heart of Indiana came a loc that spoke volumes to me – and not just because she also sent in an article – from someone I would really like to meet someday, **Lee Anne Lavell**:*

24 Sep 2007

From: leelavell@comcast.net

I just want to make a comment about loccing fanzines. To me it seems that the important thing about a loc is that it gives feedback. It gives the editor some idea of what he is doing, right or wrong. A loc doesn't have to be a big critical discussion...just recognition. (Fanzine reviews do the same, but there are so few of those, too.) But, also it is important to print at least part of these locs. By doing so it gives recognition to the fan loccer, and by doing so encourages him to write more, and with practice and encouragement, perhaps better ones. "We also heard from" s won't do. The loccer had something to say, even if " It was good, or bad or whatever".

And that's my stupid loc for the day.

Cheers.....**Lee Lavell**

{Lee, that is not a "stupid loc" at all, but a concise statement of what this fanzine feedback is all about. Thank you for condensing the whole discussion into one paragraph.}

()()

*From the great Northwest, came this missive from someone who is becoming a regular in this lettercolumn, Mr. **Jerry Kaufman**:*

7 Oct 2007

From: JAKaufman@aol.com

As you've noticed, I don't write letters to every zine I get. If I write one, you can be sure I enjoyed what I read. (If I didn't write one, you're not safe drawing the opposite conclusion.) *{Glad to hear that.}*

In response to Arnie and the ensuing material by Claire and others: I think Claire is right (and exactly where she says this, I can't pin down) that the electronic zines Arnie champions are themselves transitional. I've gone off to www.challzine.net to confirm my previous impression that *Challenger* takes advantage of the possibilities of the Web more than any PDF zine. It has the art and color of the PDFs, but it also has a simple navigation scheme, links within editorial and articles, very readable layout, archives, etc (and it has a PDF version for those of us who want to read off-screen).

Even *Challenger* is probably only a step further on the path towards who knows what.



I'm one of those reprobates who prefers zines on paper to zines on screen, but I'm beginning slowly to adapt. The primary reason for my preference is that I enjoy holding the thing I'm reading. This is certainly the simple result of a lifetime of book and magazine reading. It's what I'm used to. I don't believe that a paper zine is necessarily more creative than an electronic one. Nor do I believe that an electronic zine is more creative than a paper one, either.

I think the source of creativity is the person or people doing the creating. The addition of color, typefaces, {and} new shapes is a good thing, of course, but it's simply the addition of new tools and a wider assortment of textures. Creativity rests in what the tool-user does with the tools, and creative people can do a lot with only black and white and a single typeface.

I wonder if the relative paucity of response that e-zines get (at least reputedly) is due to some reason other than readers who feel no obligation to respond. I hypothesize that they have fewer readers than is supposed. The times I've read zines that appear online only, I see the same few people responding (and I'm not one of them). Do e-fanzines have a counter that can track which zines are opened and how many times? If not, then my hypothesis is simply an untestable expression of veiled jealousy. You got it easy, e-friends! *{Yes. Besides being downloadable off the web, I have a counter on www.efanzines.com for my zines. All I had to do was ask Bill Burns to tack it on. It really is a great tool.}*

I see that James Bacon is a real train anorak - his article in #3 and his piece in Banana Wings each includes such detailed train information, all but incomprehensible to me but fascinating nonetheless. I have myself gone to a Goth night at a club in a few years, but when I did, I also enjoyed the Betty Page girls, the bondage outfits, etc. The photo of the young woman in the corset reminds me both of my friend Heather and that character on *Farscape*, Chiana, who looked so fetching in blond hair and grey skin.

Although there's lots of other interesting bits in *Askance*, I'm beginning to think I've outstayed my welcome - furthermore, I think there's some housekeeping chores calling

my name. If I've said anything that seems like outright nonsense, please be sure to cut it out rather than pointing it out.

Yours,

Jerry Kaufman

{You will never outstay your welcome here, Jerry. Never.}

To get back to responding to something you said, I frequently check the counter on my zines to see not only how many people have read or visited the zines, but to see where they're located and how long they perused my zine(s). It is quite fascinating. For instance, recent viewers/readers have done so from Singapore, Japan, Australia, Bucharest, Italy, and so on. The vast majority are of North American origin, but there is indeed a world-wide audience for my fanzines, a fact that never ceases to amaze me.}

()()

*To bring this loccol to a close, here is one of those worldly readers, the lovely and talented **Claire Brialey**:*

8 October 2007

Claire Brialey
59 Shirley Road
Croyden
Surrey
CR0 7ES UK

I was right, then: *Askance* is getting bigger by the issue! This time, however, my letter will be short enough that you don't have to print it in installments - although if you don't print it at all then please do pass on my comments to Lloyd Penney, since I think positive feedback is at least as important as constructive criticism!

I wanted in particular to comment on Lloyd's fanzine reviews, since I asked last time for more personal insights into his thinking and a bit more depth, and I got more of a sense of both from his column in #4. I'm familiar with two of the titles Lloyd reviewed (*Pixel* and *Ethel the Aardvark*) but not with *MarkTime*, so I learned something as well. In particular, I learned a little more about Lloyd and his interests and thus his interest

in *MarkTime*, which was exactly the connection between reviewer and fanzine I was looking for to make a connection between reviewer and reader.

I agree that *Pixel* has been a very attractive fanzine to look at – which for me, like Lloyd, is definitely a combination of the gorgeous photographic covers and the design which not only presents a nice clean layout but – unlike many efanazines – optimises it for reading on screen. In addition to the regular columns Lloyd mentioned from Eric Mayer and Lee Lavell (and of course the ubiquitous Chris Garcia), I enjoyed Peter Sullivan's fanzine reviews – I liked his in-depth, one fanzine per issue approach, although I think that probably works best in the context of having more comprehensive review columns appearing elsewhere – and especially Ted White's columns which, not least by containing some inevitably engaging and thought-provoking writing, to me seemed to generate the most energy in the letter column. I know that the gentle criticism Lloyd makes of wanting to see more of David Burton in his own fanzine has been made elsewhere, including in *Pixel* itself, but I never really felt that his presence was lacking; it was present more as an editorial voice than through active fan writing – although there have been in-person editorials and Dave Locke's 'dialogue' interview with David Burton in #10 – but *Pixel* has clearly been David's fanzine, shaped by his vision of how it should be presented, what issues he wanted to cover and in what ensemble voices. Other than in the letter column, which did seem to follow the current trend for printing all letters received in full, *Pixel* was to me one of the fanzines in which the impact of the editor has been most notable. I would also commend David for knowing when he needs to recharge his own energy and enthusiasm for his fanzine (an act which risks provoking too much navel-gazing among other fanzine editors, if I'm anything to go by); I realise his solution was a bit different to yours in deciding to rest his fanzine entirely rather than to start a new one with a different frequency and pace, but maybe it stems from a slightly different challenge in the first place. I hope it works at least as well for him.

In the light of these thoughts I was pleased to see Lee Lavell's comments in the letters column about the role of an editor, and indeed also to see your response about the approach you're beginning to take to letters in particular. I've recently written at some length about this in a fanzine article so won't repeat myself too much here; but the key point that emerged for me in thinking about this subject is that editors need to bring out the best in the material they receive, while also ensuring that the intentions, opinions and voice of their writers shine through undiminished. (I won't even venture into the role of an editor in sourcing/commissioning and using artwork, where I know what I want to do but have never managed to effectively bring artists and articles together.)

And I would definitely encourage you to run for DUFF. I hope that Australia win the bid for the 2010 Worldcon – although whenever I say this it comes with the proviso that this is what Australian fans actually want, rather than having a load of enthusiastic foreigners like me deciding that it would be a great idea while secure in the knowledge that we're too far away to help much with running it – and if they do we'll certainly be there again. Over the years we've had a great time with Australian SF fans (in Australia, the UK, and the US), who have proved to be friendly, fun, intelligent, helpful, hospitable, and great company. They've also proved almost to a fan to be exceptionally erratic about responding in writing to fanzines, which is of course why we have to keep going to visit them in person. I'm sure you'd enjoy it if you did the same thing – and making your run for 2010 enables us to cheer you on for that while also cheering on Murray Moore for the 2008 race.

Best wishes, **Claire**

{Many thanks for the well-wishes and encouragement for my potential DUFF campaign of 2010. As you can see from earlier in this issue, I am shamelessly plugging Murray Moore for DUFF in 2008 so that he can get to Swancon next Easter. He is assuredly going to have a wonderful time.}

As for editing loccols, I have been getting the hang of it again after many years of non-practice. It is a bit tricky, but a capable editor (such as you and Mark; witness the latest Banana Wings that arrived in the mail just this afternoon (6 Nov 07)) can do

wonders with a keen eye and a pint of bheer at hand. This is a technique that I have to work on.}

✂

Here is the WAHF listing, but these folks are just as important as everybody else, mainly because they contacted me in one way, shape, or form:

Leslie David, Anna Davour (again), Bill Fischer, Bruce Gillespie, Laurel Krahn, Guy H. Lillian III, Petrea Mitchell, Mark Proskey, Robert Sabella, Gina Teh, R-Lauraine Tutihasi, Henry Welch, Peter Weston, Frank Wu.

There is no bone in my body that doesn't tingle with a bit of that "Gosh-who!" whenever I read a story on the Internet or watch it on the television that gets me to thinking of our place in the universe. The following picture was captured from the Internet on Tuesday, November 06, 2007, and I copy-pasted the caption. This is the kind of thing that gets me wondering "What if...", and makes me feel so insignificant at the same time.



This artist's concept shows four of the five planets that orbit 55 Cancri, a star much like our own. NASA scientists said they discovered a fifth planet orbiting a star outside our own solar system and say the discovery suggests there are many solar systems that are, just like our own, packed with planets. (NASA/JPL-Caltech/Reuters)



Well, I do have a bit of a fun idea on tap for the sixth issue set to appear during the first week of January, 2008. You can even thank one of this issue's contributors for the idea, the lovely Lee Anne Lavell. Come to think of it, those of you who have been brave enough to plod through this issue and make it to this page can help out in a mighty way. Here is how you can do this. But first, a bit of background is in order.

See, Lee Anne sent a brief write-up that wasn't really a full-blown article, but was more or less a bit of a rant that she had regarding some books she once read. I won't go into great detail here because that would detract from her writing, but it did give me a fun idea:

What if a bunch of us wrote about our fannish pet peeves?

In other words, what sorts of things in fandom drive you and me right up a wall? This is not meant to be a slam-fest in which we pound on some poor unsuspecting soul who can't defend himself or herself, but to give us vent regarding the sorts of fannish behavior that sometimes simply gets to be a bit much. For example, I can think of things like Private Elevator Parties, SMOFing, or going to convention panels where there are more panelists than audience members, and so on, that made me wonder what in the world was happening. So, here's my proposition: What sorts of things in fandom – and conventions are a prime source for this material, I know, plus club meetings – make you cringe, wag your head, so you walk away wondering what in the heck is going on, or why some person did *that*?

So far I have received one contribution from Arnie Katz to go along with Lee Anne's original, er,, contribution. But I need more. I would rather not write one of my own (but I will, if need be), so I hereby am encouraging any of you to submit your fannish pet peeves. Think huckster rooms, music parties, Masquerades, autograph sessions.. You name it, it's fair game. Have fun with it, but please remember: this is not meant to be an insult session like one of Dean Martin's Celebrity Roasts. You may mean the insult in jest, but not everybody may read it that way. So let's play nice and have a little fun with this idea.

Also in the next issue will be yet another *Wikiphilia: the Fried Encyclopedia* entry from Bill Fischer, which is always an intriguing foray into the nether realms of unanticipated knowledge. Or something like that. The cover of the January issue is supposed to be by Kyle Hinton, so consider this a gentle cattle-prod in that direction, right Kyle? Right.

Needless to say, I am always on the lookout for material and artwork, and the plans for future covers look like they could be shaping up very nicely indeed. At this time I won't say anything beyond that I have asked certain Fan Artists for covers, and their responses have been favorable. Also, one of my plans is to do a follow-up article to the interview with James Halperin in the third issue. I am sure that I am not the only one who is wondering how the cataloging/inventorying of Harry Warner, Jr.'s fanzine collection is going, and if Mr. Halperin has any thoughts or commentary about the collection.

So with that, I shall bid y'all adieu. Take it easy, and don't forget to send in your fannish pet peeves. I will be waiting.

-- John Purcell



2008 TAFF Ballot

North America to Europe

[TAFF Home](#) • [Next](#) • [Previous](#)

What is TAFF? The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic. Since that time TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and European fans to North American conventions. TAFF exists solely through the support of fandom. Interested fans all over the world vote on the candidates, and each vote is accompanied by a donation of not less than \$3 or £2. These votes, and the continued generosity of fandom, are what make TAFF possible.

Who may vote? Voting in the 2008 race is open to anyone who was active in fandom prior to April 2006, and who contributes at least \$3 or £2 to the Fund. Larger contributions will be gratefully accepted. Voting is by secret ballot: only one vote per person, and you must sign your ballot. You may change your vote any time prior to the deadline.

Deadline: Votes in this race must reach the administrators by **Midnight, PST, Saturday 17 November 2007. This is 8 AM, GMT, Sunday 18 November 2007.**

Voting details: TAFF uses a preferential ballot system which guarantees automatic runoffs until a majority is obtained. You rank the candidates in the exact order of your preference for them. If the leading first-place candidate does not get a majority, the first-place votes for the lowest-ranking candidate are dropped, and the second-place votes on those ballots are counted as first-place votes. This process repeats itself until one candidate has a majority. Your votes for second and third place are important, but you may give your candidate only one ranking on your ballot. In order to win, a candidate must receive at least 20% of the first-ballot first-place votes on both sides of the Atlantic, separately. Any candidate failing to receive this minimum percentage on either side will be dropped, and the second-place votes on their ballots counted as first-place votes in the next ballot count. Thus candidates and their supporters will need to canvass fans on both sides of the pond. You may send your ballot to either administrator, but it will be tabulated with the other votes from the side of the Atlantic on which you reside. Votes from fans not resident in either Europe or North America will not count towards either 20% minimum, but are important to the outcome of the race.

Hold Over Funds: This choice, like "No Award" in Hugo balloting, gives you the chance to vote for no TAFF trip this year, if the candidates do not appeal. Hold Over Funds may be voted for in any position, and is exempt from the 20% requirement; thus, if it receives a majority of the votes on the final ballot, no TAFF trip will be held this year regardless of how many votes Hold Over Funds received on the first ballot.

No Preference: For voters who prefer not to choose between candidates, but don't want the trip held over.

Donations: TAFF gratefully accepts your freely given money and material for auction; such generosity has sustained the Fund for over 50 years. TAFF is fandom's oldest travel fund, and one of its worthiest causes -- give early and often! Please contact your nearest administrator for details.

Candidates: Each candidate has posted a bond, promising -- barring Acts of God -- to travel, if elected, to:

Eastercon 2008, and has provided signed nominations and a platform (overleaf).

Please read both sides of this ballot before voting. Send entire sheet as your vote.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number or e-mail address: _____

(We need your full contact details. TAFF may need to contact you regarding your ballot or to send out newsletters. We do not publish this data or pass it to any other organisation.)

Signature:

Enclosed is _____ as a contribution to TAFF.

Please make checks/cheques, etc., payable to:

'Suzanne Tompkins' for US dollar checks mailed to Suzanne.

'TAFF' for all UK (sterling) cheques posted to Bridget Bradshaw/Claire Brialey.

If you think your name may not be known to the administrators, then in order to qualify your vote, please give, in the space below, the name and address of an active fan (not a fan group, a candidate, or their nominator) who is known to them and to whom you are known:

Active fan known to the administrator:



2008 TAFF Ballot -- North America to Europe

Chris Barkley

In many world cultures, the pilgrimage is seen as a serious undertaking; a sacred journey to a place of personal or spiritual importance. When I first entered fandom in the 1970's one of the first (and most exotic) things I learned about was the TransAtlantic Fan Fund, where sf fans were exchanged from the far-flung corners of the United Kingdom and North America. TAFF is not only our annual pilgrimage; it is one of our most important cultural traditions. It would be an exquisite honor to visit the land that gave us such icons as Olaf Stapledon and Doctor Who.

Nominators: Johnny Carruthers (US), Colin Harris (UK), Marcia Kelly Illingworth (UK), Michael Jordan (US), Laurie Mann (US)

Linda Deneroff

For over 35 years I've had my fingers and toes in many fannish pursuits, ranging from convention running to Star Trek and Star Wars fanzines. I've worked on many conventions including Worldcons and Worldcon bids on both the left and right coasts, in capacities ranging from volunteer to treasurer to chair, starting with Lunacon in the early 1970s, (1980 chair, James White GoH!). Today I live in Seattle, where I help produce Foolscap, a small literary-and-art oriented convention. I love reading, traveling, and attending conventions. I'm thrilled to be nominated, and I hope you'll vote for me.

Nominators: Margaret Austin (UK), Hank Graham (US), Tim Illingworth (UK), Margaret Organ-Kean (US), Kevin Standlee (US)

Chris Garcia

Stop me if you think that you've heard this one before. Chris Garcia is a fan. He's from Northern California. He writes zines like The Drink Tank, Claims Department and Science Fiction San Francisco. He's been a member of ANZAPA, FAPA and a few other APAs. In general he writes as often as he breathes. Chris does game shows at cons, likes fried food, enjoys a good bourbon, plays a mean game of poker, likes cons with Fanzine Lounges that turn into parties, and will talk and talk and talk. He also once fell down a mountain. Ask him about it.

Nominators: James Bacon (UK), Arnie Katz (US), Mark Plummer (UK), John Purcell (US), Ted White (US)

Christian McGuire

I'm a reader, conventioneer, and club fan. I was a regular contributor/first O.E. of The Gallifreyan Home Companion (a Dr. Who APA), and written for other fine fanzines. I've met many British and

European fans over the years without getting to know them. My theory of conventions is that everything serves the opportunity for great conversation. If chosen for TAFF, I'd sit down to as many parts of the conversation as possible to meet new people and get to know those I've only briefly encountered before. I'd take a ton of notes, some photos, and write a great trip report!

Nominators: Chaz Boston Baden (US), Vincent Docherty (EU), Mike Glycer (US), Milt Stevens (US), Robbie Bourget & John Harold (UK)

Please read and fill out both sides of this sheet. Send in entire sheet as your vote. Do not detach this portion!

I vote for (rank 1, 2, 3, etc.):

☐ Chris Barkley

☐ Christian McGuire

☐ Linda Deneroff

☐ Hold Over Funds

☐ Chris Garcia

☐ No Preference

Send ballot & donation to:

North America - Suzanne Tompkins, PO Box 25075, Seattle, WA 98165 USA.

Checks payable to: Suzanne Tompkins. Email suzlet@aol.com with questions/comments.

Europe -- TAFF c/o Claire Brialey, 59 Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7ES UK throughout the voting period, or

Bridget Bradshaw, 39 (1F2) Viewforth, Edinburgh, EH10 4JE UK after 10 Sep 2007.

Cheques payable to: TAFF. E-mail bugshaw@cix.co.uk with any questions, or if you would like to use PayPal.

For more information on TAFF, visit: <http://taff.org.uk>

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Anyone doing so should **substitute** his or her name here: John Purcell. *[HTML conversion by Dave Langford]*