

ASKANCE

ISSUE SIX



Askance

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This is a Post-Modernist Production. Break it down!

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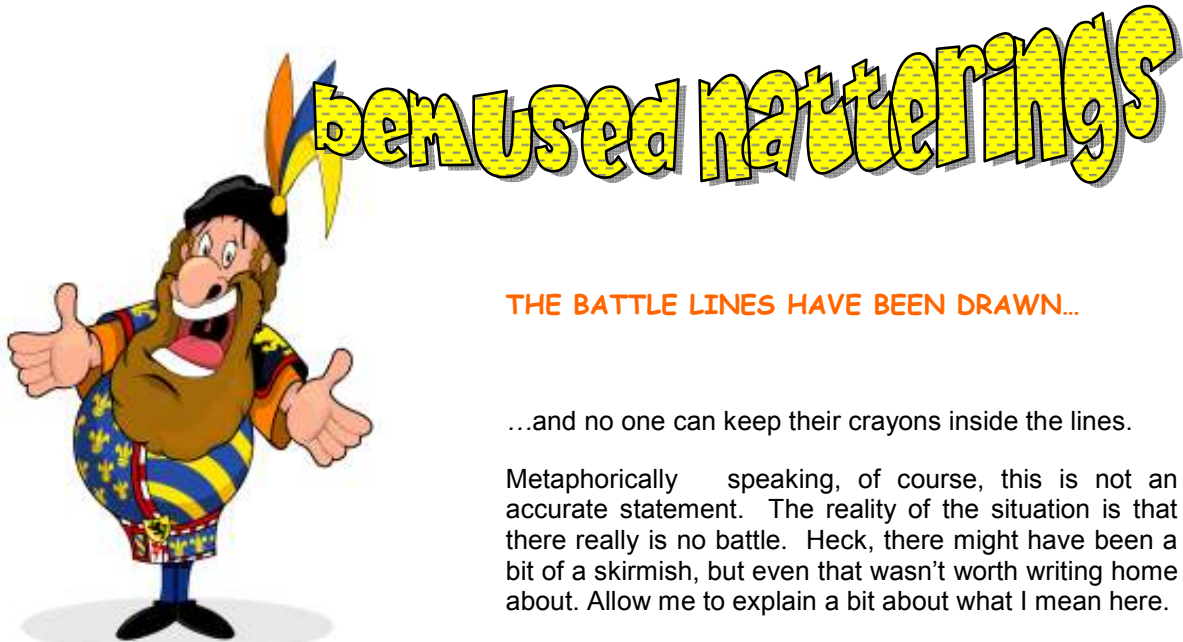
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member fwa (since 2007!)



THE BATTLE LINES HAVE BEEN DRAWN...

...and no one can keep their crayons inside the lines.

Metaphorically speaking, of course, this is not an accurate statement. The reality of the situation is that there really is no battle. Heck, there might have been a bit of a skirmish, but even that wasn't worth writing home about. Allow me to explain a bit about what I mean here.

Last issue's contribution by Arnie Katz, "Who a Fan?", apparently caused a bit of a stir on LiveJournal and an e-list or two (which ones, I have no idea; I am merely sharing the tiny bit I know with y'all), and a little of it spilled over into my e-mails. Now, personally, I believe that Arnie was merely expressing his learned opinion (based on years upon years of experience and reflection) that "real" fans don't ever consider themselves science fiction fans who are better than anybody else who claims that label. Far from it. A fan is a fan is a fan; that's the way "Who a Fan?" struck me. When I first read Arnie's contribution when it appeared in SNAPS, my immediate reaction was, "Hm. This makes sense," and then I asked him if I could run it in my zine. Arnie graciously consented, and so it appeared in *Askance* #5.

Now, I had a feeling that some folks might take umbrage with some of Arnie's opinions, but I know that Arnie is a big boy who can defend himself if need be (in a rhetorical debate, that is) if it ever came down to that (which, in fact, is a highly doubtful development). A few weeks after that issue posted to Bill Burns' wonderful website, www.efanzines.com, Andy Trembley, who is no stranger to me since he had sent a loc or two to my earlier zines *In a Prior Lifetime* and *And Furthermore*, e-mailed me with a cryptic comment that essentially said, "Psst: ya wanna a fannish pet peeve of mine? It's kind of juicy!" That perked my ears up. *Oooh*, I wondered. *What kind of disguised gossip does Andy have in mind?* As it turned out, it was a moderately long commentary basically in response to Arnie's "Who a Fan?" Much too long to include in the fannish pet peeve committee arkle, I decided to run it on its own as an open response to not just Arnie (whose original article was likewise intended for fandom at large), but to fans in general. Since that was Andy's intention (as he informed me in yet another e-mail) in the first place, "Is 'Core Fandom' the Next 'Topic A'?" also makes reasoned statements, and definitely can stand on its own merits as a rather coherent argument.

So ultimately, the question becomes "How do we individually define ourselves as fans?" Andy Trembley sees himself as a member of Big Tent Fandom: enjoying a wide variety of fannish fare as he sees fit to quaff his thirst for fan activity depending on his need at any particular moment. Arnie Katz is a member of what he has labeled Core Fandom: a more traditional view of fan activity where science fiction fans actively participate in fanzine fandom, paper and/or electronic, but which also overlaps into conventions and club activities. The funny thing is that Andy enjoys reading fanzines too, which proves his point that he likes zines as much as the rest of us, and that Big Tent Fandom is just as viable a term as Core Fandom.

Both gentlemen are likewise convention veterans, although Andy is much more mobile at present so he can attend lots of current cons, especially on the West Coast. I am not completely sure of this next fact, but it is my impression that Andy enjoys running conventions, too. (I *am* positive he will correct me if I am

wrong, which won't bother me in the slightest since I am in search of Truth, Justice, and the Fannish Way of Life.) As people read Andy's essay, they will learn a lot about his background as a fan: where he came from, how he got involved with this nuthouse, and what's he about right now. This is Good Stuff, and I am thrilled to share Andy Trembley's thoughts with everyone. Andy submitted it for approval, and by gum, I approve, so here it is.

As far as my fan-pubbing colleague Arnie Katz goes, he has done so much in fandom over the years that it could easily be argued that he was an omni-fan at one point: co-chairing conventions, pubbing a multitude of zines, doing apas, attending cons, and so forth – the man has a fannish pedigree three and a half miles long. I don't think Arnie has ever been into costuming or filking like Andy Trembley, but that's not really the point here. See, both gentlemen have very similar interests and backgrounds. It is just that at present, Arnie's primary choice of fanac is fanzine writing and publishing, and Andy's choices overlap a bit with Arnie's, but are a lot more varied.

Remember what I have said before? "Fandom is, after all, very much an individualist hobby interest." (*Askance* #3, p. 37) If we use the general phrase "Science Fiction Fandom" as a descriptor, this can encompass so much: all forms of media, local and national events, costuming, SCA, Burroughsiana, Regency Dancing, Whoviana, the Browncoats, and so on. Face it, I like classic *Star Trek* too, but I do not consider myself a serious Trek-fan. Same thing for the *Star Wars* movies; they are grand fun, but definitely are not the greatest SF films of all time, and I have no desire to devote all of my time, energy, and money to following them in all of their incarnations and paraphernalia. That would be silly – in my mind. Then again, others can easily say the same thing about my willingness to spend time, energy, and money on fanzine fandom. That is my choice. I recognize this and cheerfully accept it. Now, there are times when I will watch an episode of *Dr. Who* on television (old and new versions), I do like (and heckle) the *Stargate: Atlantis* series and various other sf/f television shows, and enjoy the pageantry of Renaissance Fairs and the workmanship of the costuming, but I have never really been one for wearing costumes. As for Regency Dancing... I have absolutely no interest in it. Some people love it, and that's fine. Let them. But I personally see no relevance for it in my fannish universe, so... whatever. To each his or her own.

And that is my point here. Science Fiction fandom has grown so fargin' **HUGE** that it envelopes so much of our modern society. You cannot swing a dead cat – if you'll pardon this phraseology, all of you pet-lovers among my faithful readership – nowadays without hitting some sf/f reference somewhere. Just look at network and cable television programming and their commercials. Look at the movie listings. Listen to popular music. Read the morning newspaper. For crying out loud, this danged Internet we use all the time is science fiction! Like it or not, we are actually living in a science fiction world where our favorite fiction – and fantasy stories, too, don't forget – is a mega-buck generator for our contemporary economy. *Qua..???* It has all happened right before our very eyes.

So we can all say we belong to some part of fandom, either Big-Tent, Core, Trek-fandom, or whatever-fandom. In a sense, it's very much like an old Billy Joel song: "Hot funk, cool punk, even if it's old junk It's still rock and roll to me." It doesn't really matter what we call any of it; it's still fandom.

Now that I've probably tipped you off too much about Andy Trembley's article, I still want you folks to read it. He makes some excellent observations and it is worth reading. Then don't forget to write in yourselves. When it comes down to defining the lines of what makes a fan a fan, distinctions tend to blur and everybody starts to look the same. Well, sort of. To quote one of my personal heroes, "Remember: I'm pulling for ya; we're all in this together." (Red Green)

What's in this issue

Well, folks continue to talk about fandom - in particular, what possesses someone to get involved with science fiction fandom and how those interests are displayed. This is a topic that shall always perplex us: what makes someone a "fan" and how should we define this - as if it could ever be properly defined. **Andy Trembley** and **Claire Brialey** check in with their takes on this topic that are sure to spark some responses.

Then the “Fannish Pet Peeve” collective article appears, and it’s a lot of fun. After that, there is the usual bunch of material that folks seem to enjoy in this zine: fanzine reviews, some silly material, upcoming conventions, and a solid lettercolumn. Nothing to complain about there, as far as I am concerned, so let’s get on with the show.

Who's in this issue

Oh, there are some familiar names and faces, but that’s to be expected. Here’s the breakdown this time around:

The Committee

Once I made a last call for submissions, I got a few more fannish pet peeves to include. I should have known that the phrase “last call, gentlemen!” would work with this crowd: Lee Anne Lavell, Arnie Katz, Chris Garcia, Eric Mayer, and David Langford. Your humble editor is likewise involved, just because he can. That’s what you can do when you’re in charge.



“Elaine’s Web,” by Ditmar

Claire Brialey

One half of the editorial team of *Banana Wings*, Claire returns to this zine with her take on what makes a fan a fan, which is interesting considering how she became involved with fandom.

Bill Fischer

He’s double-dipping this time around with “Figby” and another “Wikiphilia” entry. We are certainly glad Bill’s around these days, providing much needed silliness to break up the serious stuff.

Lloyd Penney

He’s back after a one-issue layoff due to job pressure, and we are certainly glad that he is. He has been very busy, and his insights into fanzines are always, well, insightful.

Andy Trembley

I really don’t know much about this guy, except that he’s a West Coast fan, into conventions, and having a good time with guys like Chris Garcia and Kevin Standlee. Sounds like good company to me. You will learn more about him towards the beginning of his article.

Is “Core Fandom” the next “Topic A”?

Why is it bad if it isn't?

By Andy Trembley

Editorial intro: Sent in as a contribution to the “fannish pet peeve” project, once I read the following I decided the best way to handle this was simply to let it fly as is. Andy’s comments are essentially in response to Arnie Katz’s column “Who a Fan?” in Askance #5, but they are very much addressed to fandom at large. With that caveat out of the way, read on, think about it a bit, and write a loc to me. I promise not to bite – not too hard, that is.

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. – Arnie Katz

I entered fandom through the SCA and costuming, fell in with filkers and found my early home with a bunch of apahacks. For several years I produced a monthly apazine.

Early on I heard about these mythical “fanzine fans.” I heard about cranky cliquish old dinosaurs. I heard about people who bitched about everything wrong with fandom, who raved about how things were so much better when they got involved, who never did anything to make things better.

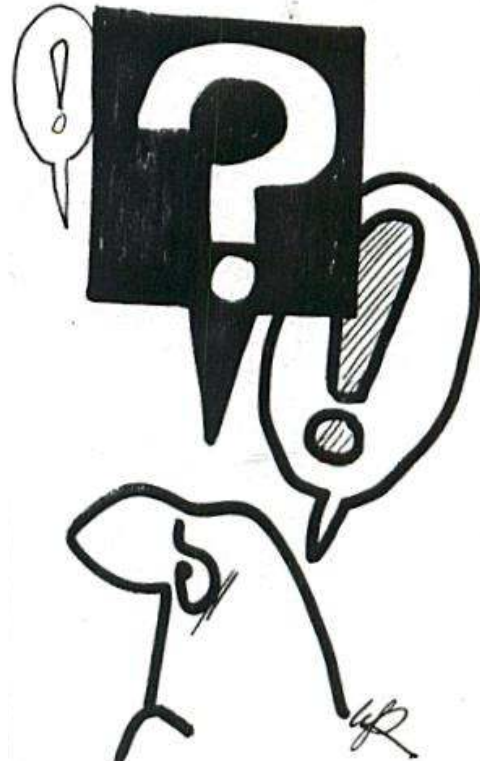
That’s not a terribly good reputation.

I learned that it wasn’t by any means universally true, though (forgive me while I drop a bunch of names). Knarley and Mom (although I think of them as Professor Henry and Letha) were part of the regular Friday-night card game I was in. I met Colin Hinz and Geri Sullivan at Minicons past. I got to know John Hertz. I conspired to harm fandom with Cheryl Morgan. I met Giulia de Cesare, Sue Mason, and James Bacon.

They’re all folks who are strongly connected with their local communities and clubs. They’re folks who work on all sorts of conventions, great and small, in many ways. Fanzines may be the heart of their fandom, but their fanac stretches far beyond fanzines.

If I’m dropping names, I’ve got to drop the big one. I became friends with Chris Garcia. Chris made fanzines exciting for me, and for many other California fans. Chris has made our local fanzine lounges the happening place to be. Chris, with the support of Bill Burns and eFanzines.com, is responsible for me reading more fanzines.

Then I ran into this “core fandom” crap. It reminded me that there’s always a grain of truth behind every bad reputation.



Is fanzine fandom relevant?

I never expected to ask that question. It's what the "Core Fandom" movement inadvertently suggests, though. "Core Fandom" looks like a last flailing grasp at relevance within the greater fannish community.

Core Fandom is relevant, by gum, and don't you dare forget it! Core Fandom holds the Torch of Fandom™, and don't any of you whippersnappers get your dirty little fingers on it, because it's ours! You can bask in its light only if you come to us with proper deference!

I'm sorry, but there's a lot more to fanzine fandom than "Core Fandom."

Our conventions were born out of fanzines. Our history rests in fanzines. There is no denying that. Fan writing has grown beyond traditional print zines, but whether in print, over e-mail or on web forums, it's still the conversation of our culture that carries on when we're not physically together.

It irritates me when fannish subcultures remain ignorant (in some cases willfully ignorant) of our shared history. Anime fans, gamers, and comic book geeks trying to reinvent square wheels when we've got 60 years of ~~mistakes~~ experience to learn from? Stupid.

I constantly find myself going back to old fan writing when I want answers, and thankfully more and more of it is being digitized, although too much is still being lost. Fan writing is still relevant, and fanzine fandom is still relevant.



Where does Corflu fit in?

I wouldn't bring up Corflu, but for all the attendant crap about it being "The Core Fandom Worldcon."

I'm sorry, but Worldcon is Worldcon. Worldcon is the "big tent" of conventions, recognizing and celebrating the full breadth of fanac. It may not be as big as San Diego Comic-Con International or Dragon*Con. It may not have the concentration of genre professionals that World Horror Con or World Fantasy Con have. None of that matters. It's brought together a wide range of fans on four continents, and no other convention can claim that.

Corflu is a niche convention, not that there's anything wrong with that.

The Ohio Valley Filk Fest isn't "The Filkers' Worldcon." It's the annual music festival for filkers and draws members and performers from around

the world. The Pegasus awards get a great deal of respect in the community.

Costume-Con isn't "The Costumers' Worldcon." It's the premier international costume conference, which is better. It's got its own traditions and identity, and doesn't need, nor want to ride Worldcon's coat-tails.

Trying to put the mantle of "The Core Fandom Worldcon" on Corflu does Corflu a disservice. It's a foolish distraction. Corflu is a fan writers' convention. It's *the* fan writers' convention. Let it be a great fan writers' annual conference. Don't make it into an also-ran "Worldcon."

Where do I fit in?

I think it's kind of funny that, just short of 40, I'm playing the upstart kid shaking the apple-cart.

If you haven't guessed, I am a believer in the "big tent" model of fandom. I am a fan. I believe that fandom isn't measured in what you read, watch, or consume. I believe that fandom is measured in what you do. I believe that fandom is measured by your connection to your communities, be they local or global. I believe that all fanac is important, and that variety is what makes fandom work.

We need fan-historians to tell us the old war stories, remind us of the good and bad, and make sure we don't repeat our mistakes. We need con runners to make events happen year after year. We need fan writers to help us survive from event to event and hold the greater fannish community together. We need costumers, filkers, artists and party hosts to make fandom a real celebration. I think fandom is much richer for all those contributions.

So is "Core Fandom" the next "Topic A?"

We'll see.

If a full-blown fan-feud develops around this, then at least we know it's important to a lot of people. If it's doesn't (and I think it won't), we need to look at the reasons why.

I think the people outside the "Core Fandom" movement who notice will see it as a small group seceding from the rest of fandom rather than a repeat of the Exclusion Act or any sort of positive effort. I'm not sure a lot of people will even notice it, though. "Core Fandom" is engineering its own irrelevance.

I think it may have a greater impact on Corflu, greater than anybody might expect. In attempting to reign in problems, the "High-Resolution" proposal alienated a lot of Minicon attendees, and "Dear Boskone 24 Member" alienated a lot of Boskone attendees. Both resulted in greater shrinkage than anticipated or desired. "Core Fandom" has the same potential to make Corflu members feel unwelcome, and it's a solution to problems Corflu doesn't have.

Then again, there's the "rocks fall, everybody dies" scenario. "Core Fandom" could fail to develop into a fan-feud, while at the same time reinforcing the stereotype of fanzine fans as a bunch of insular, cranky old farts, and drive new fan writers out of the fanzine community or even away from fandom.

I reject the disillusionment. The giraffes can try to tell me I'm not a giraffe. They may be right. They may be wrong. They may be camels with delusions of altitude. Whatever the case, they can't tell me I'm not a mammal, and that's where it's at.

ANDY TREMBLEY

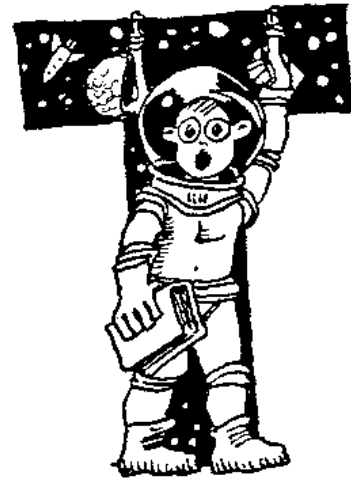
"I AM NOT A NUMBER; I AM A NUMERAL."

From an old cassette tape I have: *The Best of Shockwave: Live at Minicon, 1982.*

WHAT A PIECE OF WORK IS A FAN

by Claire Brialey

At literally the last minute, Claire Brialey e-mailed me saying that she had written something that at first was a loc, lengthened into maybe a fannish pet peeve contribution, then finally morphed into a full-length article. Bless her heart, Claire wasn't sure if I could use it in this issue or the next, but once I read it I knew that I could squeeze it in here. What follows is a natural follow-up to Andy Trembley's article, and will segue neatly into "Fannish Pet Peeves." I so love it when a fanzine develops inter-related articles.



It has been quite a long time since I actively worried about what sort of fan I am, and I'm not about to start that again. Nonetheless, having read the profoundly thought-provoking *Askance* #5, I now have a miniature projection of Arnie Katz on one shoulder and a matching James Bacon on the other, and I feel I'm being steered inexorably towards some sort of internal dialogue. Being introspective or possibly self-obsessed, I've obviously thought quite a lot about being an SF fan and, in fact, I seem to find myself stating a position on it more often than not, but it doesn't actually bother me these days. I'm just a science fiction fan.

Of course, when I say that I either expect people to know what I mean, or have to quickly go on to qualify that statement; by this I mean that, as well as being a fannish sort of fan – and recognising that I may already have alienated or just lost a sizeable chunk of broader SF fandom there, including some of my longest-standing friends – I'm the sort of science fiction fan who still reads and enjoys science fiction, and sometimes even writes about it. And I do feel a need to define myself by this, sometimes a bit defensively and sometimes as a badge of entry; if you like, science fiction remains the core to my own involvement with science fiction fandom, rather than simply the password that got me through the door.

Once started on this, of course, I can't stop. I feel I also have to say that although I enjoy discussing SF, I don't have a great intellectual contribution to make or any sort of academic perspective; that I consider my primary form of fan activity to be through fanzines, although I continue to be involved and interested in running conventions; that I value and support the fan funds; and that I feel fan history is vital to my feeling part of this community to the extent that it baffles me that lots of other people don't share that.

I realise that to many people, this same line of reasoning also firmly places me in what many UK fans think of as Boring Old Fart Fandom. Personally, I don't consider that pejorative, particularly when I consider the alternatives – which just goes to reinforce it all, really.

But over the years I've been other sorts of fan, too, partly in the estimation of others, but also because that was what seemed normal behaviour at the time. When I first went to conventions in the mid/late 1980s, I wore hall costumes and even entered masquerades because that was part of what appealed to the people I was hanging out with then. I was a teenager and they weren't much older, so really why not

have fun dressing as mutant zebra women or wearing *Hitchhikers* towels like togas? Even then, though, I found my personal costuming limits were fairly narrow. The mutant zebra look required face paint as well as the clothing, and I felt irritated and self-conscious about it quite quickly; the advance preparation for most of the other con costume ideas we had – including sewing – took much more time than it took me to get bored wearing them. Then at a *Robin of Sherwood* convention¹ I wore a costume based loosely on a specific character from one of the episodes. This was mainly because I'd realised that the head-dress would be quite easy to make, thus lending an air of period authenticity to the otherwise very generic 'mediaeval' dress I had available; but people assumed that I was dressed as that character and that I therefore intended to role-play that character and wanted to be treated as her. That was decidedly too weird for me.

After only a few years, therefore, I found that having a costume was a combination of too much effort for too little, or too weird, return, and not in any case necessary to fit in since only a minority of people did it. For me it was no longer fun. Obviously those people who continued to do it were getting more out of it than I had, and I didn't feel that they didn't fit in – but then I started to run across the problems of public and press perceptions, and I admit that I sometimes rather wished that people in costumes would show them off only to fellow con-goers and not to people who patently didn't understand the bigger picture.

I also have to admit to some vanity here. I've never been conspicuously attractive, but for a brief period shortly after I started going to cons I was, unaccountably and quite uncharacteristically, slim – which to a lot of people counts as the same thing. Going to an all-girls school had meant that most amateur dramatic opportunities came only from playing male roles (and also that there wasn't much masculine attention, but when it would otherwise be coming from teenagers, I frankly didn't miss that very much). If I was going to dress up during my proto-adult years when I might actually have a chance of looking conventionally pretty, I was damn well going to dress as a girl – and specifically not to come out of it looking less attractive than I went in. This, as I've gotten older, fatter, more wrinkly and even less photogenic than before, has continued to be a guiding principle, and one that applies just as much to the flesh fest that British conventions threatened to become a few years back as it does to having never, ever wanted to dress up as a zombie.

There are other things about zombification that are also not for me; James Bacon's *Askance* article set out the positive perspective on most of them, but it doesn't feel quite like that from where I'm sitting, hoping not to get covered in fake blood. To start with, it's not enough just to look like a zombie: you need to act like a zombie too, and really, I've never been that good at ad-libbed role-playing, so mostly I'd just feel like a fool.

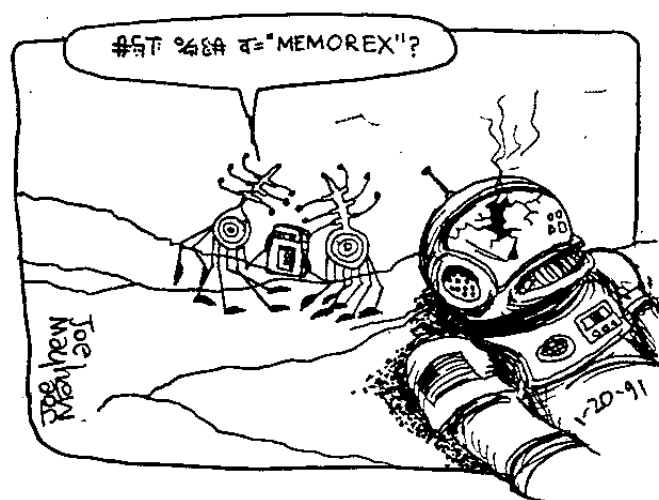
But beyond that, there are two further things I find off-putting: firstly, even within fandom there is a fairly firm division in people's minds between lots of dressing up and being serious, so that too much zombifying may mean you can't get taken seriously when you want to do something else. James did allude to this in fairly stark terms, although in practice I don't think it's something that affects him personally these days; he and a few other British fans like Max are sufficiently well-known as participating in a lot of different fannish activities to be accepted by each of the fannish sub-groups who major in them.

¹ Yes, we went to *Robin of Sherwood* conventions. Many of us, particularly those of us who are female and straight, watched *Robin of Sherwood* for a number of reasons which may possibly have included Michael Praed in tight leggings. And the people who ran some of the sf cons we went to in the 1980s also ran several *Robin of Sherwood* conventions in the same hotel which were primarily attended by other sf fans, so we went to those too. It was in fact one of these cons that led to Mark's foray into costuming as well, but that's not my story...

Nonetheless, there was definitely a period when the mainstream of British fandom identified James more with activities like skateboarding with fireworks, mooning at police cars, crucifying Tobes at an opening ceremony, wrapping himself in clingfilm (that's plastic wrap for US readers) for a con disco – and the list could go on and on – than with founding the James White Award for short fiction, running the Irish national science fiction convention, and owning a science fiction book shop. And Max took us to task in a fanzine a year or so back for, as she saw it, identifying her primarily with dressing-like-a-zombie fandom, since she didn't want the risk of being pigeonholed by other fans.

Secondly, dressing up brings with it an element of carnival: not just the spectacle and holiday mood, but also the potential for the overturn of social order.² Doubtless this should be something that forward-thinking science fiction fans embrace, but in practice many of us are really quite conservative in our own little ways, and I certainly can't escape the fact that in social, professional and fannish terms I am now part of the social order. (Not for nothing are these events called conventions, eh?) I'm generally still a bit wary of how much fans dressed in costumes want to role-play a character or give a full-on performance since I prefer to be clear about who I'm interacting with. And it does seem that once fans are dressed as zombies, they have particular licence to behave as the Other. This is, I think, a real part of the attraction for younger con attendees as James describes it: they get to be messy and to behave in all sorts of ways that are uncharacteristic for the well brought-up children we would all like to believe that fannish parents produce, or who choose to become fans in their own right. But I don't want to be especially Other myself; part of what I'm looking for in SF fandom is a community where I know I belong – even if, like lots of people's hobbies, I can't really talk about it outside because it will seem weird to those who don't share my enthusiasms.

So I do not feel the call of the zombie; indeed, in part of my mind there are several different reasons that I find other fans dressed as zombies a bit threatening. James wouldn't worry about any of that either, except insofar as it might worry him that I'm taking things too seriously and not enjoying myself. And whilst his good-conrunner head might be concerned that anyone could feel threatened by any of his activities, his loveable-Irish-rogue persona won't really believe that anyone would seriously feel that way anyway, because it's just a bit of fun, and didn't everyone use to dress up at conventions? And his creative-conrunner head may well be thinking in the background that actually a bit of edginess and conflict is just what we all need to keep energy levels up. James himself, pulling it all together, will doubtless tell me that I'm making it far too complicated, but that he is a bit disappointed that I'm being rather negative.



More generally, saying this sort of thing can get misinterpreted as an excess of Boring Old Fartdom – not wanting people to have fun, or at least not outside the confines of what I personally consider to be fun – but while there are lots of fannish activities that I don't find enjoyable and thus don't feel a need to participate in, the only Boring Old Fart bit comes from not wanting any of them to be

² As Farah Mendlesohn, the SF critic and fan, reportedly said at the 2005 Eastercon: 'There were some zombies at breakfast. I thought they were a metaphor.'

given so much attention that they drive out the core of what I think fandom's really all about.

And that, of course, is where Arnie Katz comes in. The 'core' question, that is, not the Boring Old Fart stuff, which is a description I'm only applying to myself here; I'm sure Corflu Silver will be thoroughly enjoyable on its own terms without me setting up a slanging match with Arnie as a spectator sport before we even get there.

I've been trying in the past few years to keep out of British fandom's own potential slap-fight about 'core' values, which revolves around the purpose, constituency and size of the Eastercon, our national SF convention. This debate has been rumbling away in the background for the past couple of decades and thus got going before I felt it was anything really to do with me, so I've never thought my intervention at a late stage would make much difference or thus be of any practical value – except, perhaps, to provide another way of defining myself by defining what I think is core to fandom. Perhaps inevitably, what I define as the core is a part of fandom I now feel pretty comfortable in, although I feel much less comfortable when I realise that this means I'm also positioning myself centrally to it. There was a mediaeval model of the universe like that, and as a science fiction fan it seems important to have moved beyond it. For me, it's also important to remember that what you think you're looking at depends on where you are yourself.

When I was new to fandom, back when I was still having fun dressing up at cons even though I was a science fiction-reading fan, I was inclined to feel that it was neither safe nor necessary to leave the very small pond in which I was a rather unremarkable minnow at the time. But it was still clear to me that I was in a fringe fandom (*Hitchhikers*); that was an opinion shared at the time by both our group and the fannish mainstream, and that reinforced my belief that the mainstream didn't want me/us and thus could have nothing to offer me anyway. I should add that I wasn't even going to the Eastercon in those days; it really seemed to me then that the British national convention for science fiction fans wasn't likely to be my sort of thing. Gradually it dawned on me that I was part of a fringe fandom with many things in common with the fannish mainstream; initially this made me all the more convinced I had nothing to gain from venturing out onto a similarly low rung of a much longer fannish ladder, and gradually it made me realise that it wasn't so much a ladder as a hamster wheel, and the mainstream fandom wheel was much bigger and thus promised more scope to run around and accommodate more hamsters/fish/fans. And then it became apparent that mainstream fandom – science fiction, fanzines, big conventions, fan funds, fan history, men with (conceptual) beards – was increasingly what I was interested in.

And so I became much more comfortable about the idea that there was a core to British fandom and that I could be, or indeed now was, part of it. This might be an over-elaborate way of saying that I started to feel that I fitted in with fandom more widely than the group through which I entered fandom and thus the friends I made at the outset. That could be because I started out young and quite shy; I'm not prepared to say that it's because I needed to grow up because that makes me feel I'm disrespecting my original fan friends and everything I first did in fandom. But I like to think it's because I found in my first fan group and fan activities a microcosm of fandom itself, and that I then learned more about British SF fandom and its history, I found out how much I had in common with 'Real Fans' – those people at the core who I initially assumed that I could co-exist with, but our fannish experiences didn't need to touch.

So what I thought of then as 'mainstream' fandom was clearly broader than what I was doing; then it turned out that it was also broader in practice than the parts of it I came to be most interested in. And so what I thought of from the fringes to be the mainstream turns out, like your home town or your parents when you go back to visit, to be much smaller than I thought. Because apparently it's not the mainstream: it's the core.

I don't know how much of Arnie's article is a role-play - given what he says up-front about the controversial nature of the question, was it all a thought experiment or agitprop or a deathly serious manifesto? Does it in any case have a different role to play in *Askance* than it did in SNAPS? – so once again, I'm not really sure who I'm interacting with. And I wonder how close my self-definition (as a science fiction-reading fan involved in a range of fannish activities, but with a significant preference for fanzines) really is to what Arnie describes as a core fan. It's certainly not a perfect match, but I do feel I'm part of the same fandom as Arnie. I'm not particularly confrontational, so I'd prefer it if Arnie felt the same way; however, I'm reasonably confident these days about who and what I am, and if I don't meet someone else's standards then that's something we'll both have to deal with or just politely ignore. There are advantages to becoming a Boring Old Fart, or a grumpy old woman as I suspect is more relevant here, and feeling more secure myself.

But ten years ago I didn't need much encouragement to worry that I still wasn't quite acceptable. (I would have subdivided that into worries about not being a good enough fan writer, worries about having what some British fans purported to believe was a dodgy media fan background, and worries about being dismissed as insufficiently serious, which I concede still rumble away in the background sometimes.) Fifteen years ago I would have taken it even more personally than that and got angry. Twenty years ago I wouldn't have noticed, but if told about it would probably have decided that it wasn't worth coming out of my own bit of fandom because the rest of it seemed profoundly unwelcoming. I wouldn't have realised that it felt like that at least partly because I hadn't yet discovered what it was really about and didn't know what it contained to be interested in.

And about a dozen years ago I was spending far too much time self-consciously working out what I felt about my fannishness all over the letters column of *Attitude*, and I wasn't in the least bit confident about it, not least because I wasn't sure that working it out for myself would be enough to let me belong. And that was the really important bit for me.

And now here I am, with my mental projections of Arnie on one shoulder and James on the other, and no clear idea about which of them is meant to be the Good Angel and which the Bad. It's doubtless wrong of me to try to set them up in direct opposition to one another because in some ways they don't disagree and they're not always talking about the same fannish context – fandom in the US, UK, and Ireland are clearly all different, and the effect of numbers on the potential for polarisation between sub-groups shouldn't be under-estimated – and both clearly have a Vision for the Future of Fandom. I don't have a vision or even a dream, but on the basis of the two articles I've just read, Arnie and James are offering me two visions of fandom that fail equally; both have elements that I recognise and welcome, but one is too exclusive and one too expansive.

I suspect that James wants us to send out raiding parties, quite possibly dressed as zombies, not just with the hope of netting some proto-fans, but of working with whatever fresh blood and mangled brains they drag back to create whole new fans and, if necessary, a new fandom within which they will fit. Meanwhile, Arnie rejects 'If you think you're a fan then you're a fan', but really, who else gets to arbitrate on this? As Arnie said himself at one point, it's all about the context. Some of those aspects of SF fandom I listed as 'mainstream' seem to me to be essential if you're to have any hope of identifying people as actual science fiction fans, rather than just flinging open our doors to anyone who now accepts a little bit of science fiction in their lives. But for me it is about identification rather than definition; so, while regretting that more fans don't share all my interests, I don't feel I could insist on that in order to call them fans. And if this core of fandom is getting smaller, is that because of those of us inside it or those of us outside it, or indeed those of us who persist in seeing it as something with boundaries like that?

And yet I have to admit to sometimes needing a term to describe people who are fans in the sort of way that I am. This is complicated because there are still several facets to my own primary identity; depending on the specific context, I usually fall back on either 'SF fans who actually read SF', 'fanzine fans', or 'fannish fans'. (I suspect it complicates this issue too much to bring SF into it, and I still personally think that's a bit of a problem for 'core fandom', although I'd be delighted to be corrected.) Arnie said, 'We call it "Core Fandom" because people get mad when we call it "Fandom"'; I do know exactly what he means, although I don't choose to make the distinction quite that way myself. By way of contrast, I know some people who consider anyone who reads or watches SF a fan – and some of them take a rather dim view of being a fan in a more active way than that. Inevitably, this leads me to take a rather dim view of them since they seem to be setting up a position in which they look down on what I do or patronise me by 'tolerating' it. I may be wrong about what they think – I was, after all, about the Real Fans who turned out to be my people – but in this respect I'm still in the phase of preferring not to interact with that lot too much.

So I'm aiming consciously to avoid Arnie's trap when I say that I reckon you're a fan if you feel like you belong. The arguments break out again about whether we should reach out or retrench, go out and recruit, or wait for the right people to find us. Some of us have a natural urge to bring people in regardless of who they are, while some want only those people to join up who will definitely fit in; some think we must reach out or die; some think that death is not to be feared or even inevitable. But if eventually my sort of fandom runs its course and would have to change so much to continue that it isn't my sort of fandom any more, then it will wither and die. The alternative is, perhaps, a different sort of zombie fandom, and I hope both James and Arnie would agree with me that isn't a solution.

CLAIRE BRIALEY





Fannish Pet Peeves

Okay. It all began with an e-mail from Lee Anne Lavell about four months ago. Lee Anne's primary outlet for her writing, David Burton's fine fanzine Pixel, was on temporary hiatus, so she contacted me asking if I'd be interested in running something she had written. I was naturally stunned and honored that Lee Anne had thought of me and my li'l, ol' zine. So I said, "Yes!" and shortly thereafter I received what

she called a bit of a rant about some stories that she loved so much and how they had been mauled by the Hollywood mentality and in other ways.

Well, I liked Lee's rant quite a bit, and got an idea: why not gather up a few more pet peeves that science fiction fans might have? So the call went out via an announcement in Vegas Fandom Weekly, and I did get one contribution from Arnie Katz. After I sent out one last desperate plea for contributions in mid-December, some other folks responded out of the kindness of their hearts, and also because they didn't want to see me groveling in the electronic dirt. Whatever works.

Get it right!

Dorothy had *silver* slippers. They were not ruby! And while I'm at it, Glinda came from the South (Quadling Country) and not the North (Gillikin Country) *and* she was a sorceress and not a witch. Also two of Dorothy's companions were the Scarecrow (not Straw Man) and The Tin Woodman (also known as Nick Chopper) and not Tin Man. This is one of my favorite gripes: that is, how a media presentation has overtaken its origins. A much truer representation of the Oz books was in *The Return to Oz*, but I'll get back to that later. Right now I wonder how many have read, or even know of the original *Lassie* and think she's just this brave collie who lives with Timmy or whoever happens to be her owner in that particular movie or TV series. The source of *Lassie* is a wonderful novel by Eric Knight called *Lassie Come Home*. It is probably the first of the "incredible journey" type stories. There was also an excellent movie adapted from it that was made 'way back in the mid-forties, which starred Roddy McDowell and a very, very young Elizabeth Taylor. The latest victim of this hijacking of ideas is the SciFi Channel's version of *Flash Gordon*, the only resemblance to the original being the names. Oh well, I guess what I am saying, if you really liked a movie or TV series and you see that it is based on some literary work or such, go read (yes, I said read) the source. Chances are you will get a lot more out of it than some rip-off.

And now back to Oz again. *The Return to Oz* was actually based on a combination of the second and third of L. Frank Baum's Oz series and there is an interesting comment on our society, today and then, involved. The central plot of *The Land of Oz* and *The Return to Oz*, is the search for the rightful ruler of the land, a girl named Ozma who had been spirited away as a baby so that no one knew what had become of her. In the film the searching is done by Dorothy while in *Land* the search is done by a boy named Tip who had been raised by the old witch, Mombi. Eventually Ozma is found, in the film hidden

behind mirrors, but in the book it turns out that the baby had been transformed into a boy, the same Tip who is the hero of the book. “He” has to be transformed back into his rightful form, a “she.” His/ her reaction to this was “I’m just the same, only different.” In 1960, *The Land of Oz* was adapted (rather well for the times, I thought) on the TV series “Shirley Temple Theater.” They kept the original ending. What happened between 1960 and 1986, when *The Return to Oz* was made, that caused the ending to be changed? In Tip/Ozma we had the first transsexual hero/heroine for children (at least that I am aware of), and suddenly it was taken away. In a society that was supposed to be much more sexually liberated, then something happened there. Was it just Disney who thought it would be offensive, or was it everyone? And I wonder if the book were to be dramatized today, would it have the original ending or would it be changed again?

LEE ANNE LAVELL

Will you make up your minds, already?!?

Fans are inner-directed men and women who know their own minds. They think for themselves and act as they think best despite any and all opinions to the contrary. I have read and heard comments to that effect since I first entered Fandom nearly 45 years ago. I’m sure I’ve written and said it many times, too. It’s the way we Core Fandomites like to see ourselves – rebels, rogues, go-it-aloners.

You have to wonder why this self-assured independence completely evaporates when fans are standing in front of the elevator, wondering where to go for dinner at Corflu.

It’s always a problem, especially when Corflu is someplace like Las Vegas, which has so many choices. I’ve seen the Titans of Fandom, the BNF-est of Big Name Fans, mill around for 30 minutes while they try to get someone else to pick the restaurant.

Not that they wait in silence or inaction. Oh, no, each of them works his or her little angle, trying to subtly influence this aimless (and often contrary) group to go to their preferred eater.

Some say things like, “We don’t *have* to go for Transylvania Barbeque,” designed to evoke sympathy and a rush to make this self-effacing gentlefan happy. Others are content to mutter their preference like a mantra: “Sushi! Sushi! Sushi!” They hope it will insinuate itself into the brains of enough others to make it the consensus choice.

More subtle schemers sometimes make a suggestion calculated to get some of those waiting to cut their losses, split off from the main group and head out for dinner on their own. Good ones include vigorously championing a cuisine that they know some in the group hate or picking a restaurant that’s too much of a walk for the heavier partiers.

Then there’s the Napoleonic Response. This occurs when one of the major fans in the group decides to turn the choice of dinner into a test of leadership. “I am going to Hooters (or whatever),” they announce in their best speaking voice. “You may come with me.” They then head for the elevator or, if already in the lobby, to the nearest exit. They do not look back; they assume the crowd will follow them. This can break the deadlock, though it also sometimes results in people dining alone.

Why, it’s a wonder that so many of us maintain our overweight under adverse conditions like this!

ARNIE KATZ

I am *not* this person! Honest!

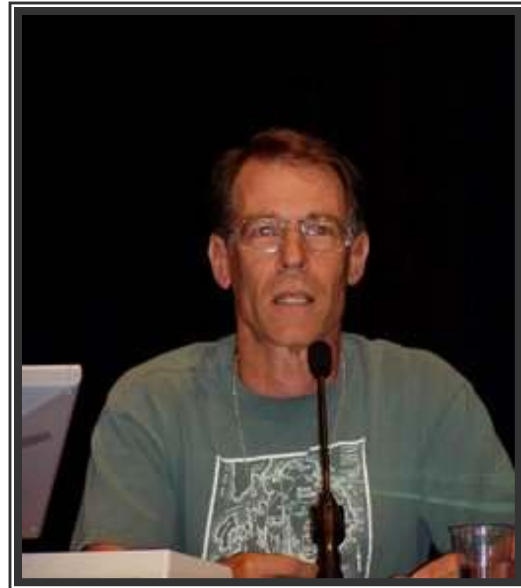
Janine Stinson started it all. Seriously, she really did. I forget exactly which issue she wrote it in response to, but at some point during 2006 she wrote a loc in which she said that I looked like Kim Stanley Robinson. Now, Robinson is a filthy pro science fiction author, and upon closer inspection, I grudgingly admitted there really was a bit of a resemblance.

Then Leslie David chimed in by saying the same thing. The next thing I knew a few others were joining in the chorus. Needless to say, this perturbed me a bit.

So what is my fannish pet peeve? Simple: stop saying that I look like somebody else! Especially if they're famous, or something like that. It is bad enough that years ago at a long-forgotten con a long-forgotten femme fan said I looked like Kevin Bacon. **gnash** Is there no justice in this world? Why, oh **why** was I blessed with such a handsome face?

Stop laughing!

JOHN PURCELL



*Kim Stanley Robinson at the 63rd
World Science Fiction Convention in
Glasgow, August 2005*

Fans are *not* slans.

I've not got many pet peeves. There are a few things that drive me nuts, true, but nothing that I'd call a Pet Peeve. Wait...maybe there is something, but it's hard to formulate. It's the fact that fandom hasn't changed as much as fans have. That's the basic premise. Fans today are different, incredibly different from those fans of the past. Basically they're the same, they're fans, but beyond that there's no similarity. Fans today have more areas they're interested in, more time and ways in which to communicate and a smoother edge than fans of the past. That's not a knock on older fans, but newer fans are far less rough hewn.



*I mean, really; does this guy even remotely look like
Kim Stanley Robinson?*

And Fandom still seems to be the rough stuff.

Fandom isn't living in the past, but they're slow to change the hard parts, to get rid of the edges and make entry easier, to accept that those who have different ideas aren't to be held out, but brought in and incorporated to one degree and assimilated to another. The fact that Fannish Establishments seem so bent on keeping things like they are is maddening when there's a world of different views that should be grasped, if not taken to heart. We gotta come up with a way to collect and collate.

CHRIS GARCIA

Let's do the time warp again...

I wish fans would not continually misuse Alfred Korzybski's term "time-binding." According to his system of General Semantics, introduced in the 1933 book *Science and Sanity*, only humans have demonstrated the capability to build on the accumulated knowledge of prior generations. Korzybski referred to this all-important capability as time-binding and declared it as the primary difference between humans and animals. Time-binding frees each new generation of humanity from having to endlessly re-invent the wheel.

Time-binding is much more than merely having an appreciation for the past. Time-binding, in the sense Korzybski intended, is constantly forward looking. The past is something we stand on to reach further into the future. Time-binders do not look to the past to reiterate it, or pay homage, but to assimilate it and move forward.

As used by fans, though, time-binding is synonymous with an interest in history at best, or, at worst, nostalgia. I am not convinced by the argument that this is acceptable, that the words has acquired a somewhat different meaning in fandom. Does it really make sense to hijack technical terms to mean what we want them to? It is rather as if we were to say that in fandom the "unconscious" has acquired the meaning of those thoughts of which we are always aware. Language is the principle tool that facilitates time-binding. Fans certainly shouldn't be abusing language by redefining time-binding.

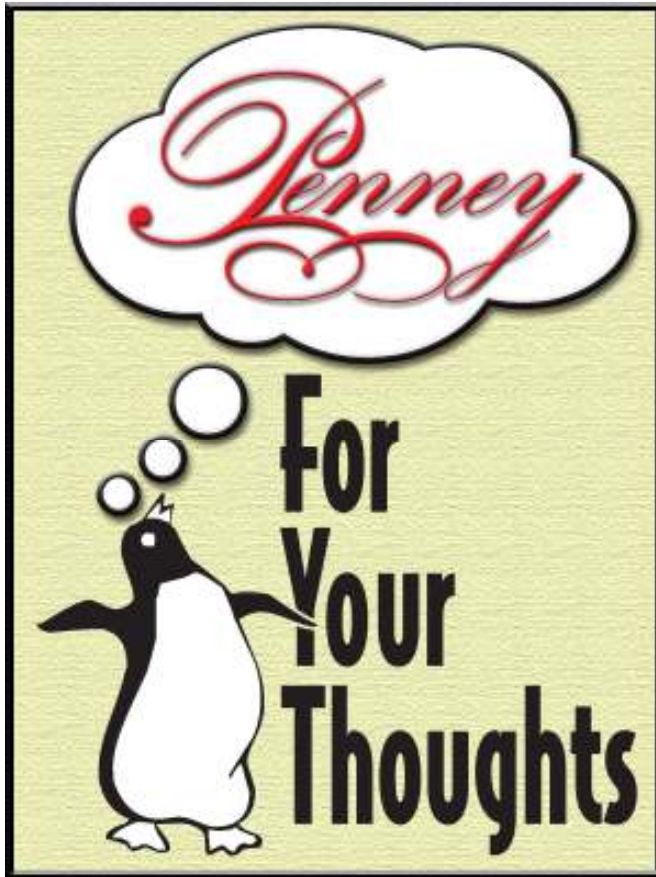
ERIC MAYER

The Cabal of Convention Website Obfuscators

It's Christmas morning, and I'm overflowing with benevolence, good will, and whatever it was I was drinking last night. How can I possibly commit peeve? Well, just a little one: every month as I update *Ansible* listings, I grumble at the Cabal of Convention Website Obfuscators. After a splash front page that doesn't tell you anything, the Cabal's ideal website hides basic information in various corners of a maze of twisty little menus. Better still, some of them make the visitor search through a message board, blog or wiki. A favourite trick is to omit any snailmail contact address from the page called Contact, merely tucking this away at the bottom of a vast PDF registration form. Another is to warn that "These rates will increase in June" and then let July, August and September creep by without any further information. I became exceedingly grumpy with the con that wouldn't tell you where to send your membership check until you'd jumped through all the sign-up hoops for use of their on-line forum. Members of the Cabal also like to start a new site or subsite for each year's event, which would be OK if the Cabal Oath didn't forbid adding a link from the previous location, so suckers like me who check the old address find what looks just like all the other not-yet-updated con sites out there. Bah! Humbug! But here comes the Ghost of Websites Yet To Come, who will teach me the folly of complaining....

DAVID LANGFORD

This fanzine supports Murray Moore for DUFF in 2008. The ballot is enclosed with this zine, but you can also vote online via PayPal at this link: <http://jeanweber.com/duff2008/>. All ballots and money will be forwarded to the DUFF Administrators. Let's send Murray to Oz!



Fanzine Reviews

by Lloyd Penney

Many thanks, John, for giving a Free Pass card last time around...sometimes, when it comes to the job hunt, if I didn't have bad luck, I'd have no luck at all. I'm getting better at finding the work, but it's the keeping part I need to work on. On to reviewing some more fanzines...

Science Fiction/San Francisco, or *SF/SF*, is a great publication coming out of the BArea, produced by Jean Martin, the manic Chris Garcia, and David Moyce, with a cast of thousands providing articles, listings and photos.

There are great articles about recent events, lots of photos taken at those events, and an enormous list of regular and special events at the end. Add to these editorial pieces, the minutes to the past BASFA meetings and a fairly good letter column, and this e-pub appears to be an

invaluable service to BArea fandom. This is the kind of publication that every fannish city needs to stay up on what happening around them, the closest thing to a fannish entertainment paper.

Even with the work they do, even the editors think there's no guarantee that local fandom there pays any attention to it, which makes me wonder sometimes if the editors are producing this zine for their own fun? Nothing wrong with that, but I stopped my own investigation into producing a Canadian newszine mostly because I didn't think there'd be that many fans interested, and I thought I would be doing this not to inform, but to just pub my ish. I have wondered to myself if us outsiders are getting more out of the zine than BArea fans. Should we be catered to when SoCal isn't paying much attention?

The photos are good when it comes to illustrating the zine, but more illos and fillos are needed to round out this already round package. Getting picky here; this zine I enjoy, but I must carp where I can. It's obvious that the editors are having fun with this, so fandom there must be benefiting from all the notices of more fun to be had. I wish there was a Toronto/Science Fiction, and no, I'm not doing it...

Even with the benefits of having something we might call Core Fandom, I still think the roots of fandom are in the local clubs where people might read about it or hear about it, go to a meeting to see what's happening, and there might be the beginnings of a long fannish career. Add to this my own journalistic training, and the fact one of my first activities in fandom was to help start up a club, and that's why I like clubzines. I have reviewed clubzines before, and I'm thinking of this time around the *NASFA Shuttle*.

The *Shuttle* is the clubzine of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association located in Huntsville, Alabama, Mike Kennedy, editor. It's a small zine in size, but its main mission is to let its members know about what's happening in the club. It's got a good balance of local news, club and fannish, and it does extend out to Southern fandom, perhaps the most cohesive of all the regional fandoms on the continent.

The editor is quite open to news outside of Huntsville and the South, and I try to oblige him with Canadian fannish news when I can, but most of the foreign fannish news seems to consist of who won what SFnal awards. Personally, I'd try to expand foreign coverage to events, but a good editor will at least try to learn what his readership wants to read about.

There's some personal adventures in fictional lands like Narnia and Middle-Earth with the PieEyed Dragon, plus a loccol and a calendar, about 8 to 10 pages per ish. Perhaps I'd like to see more, but I'm not a member of the club. However, they do trade, and are happy to hear from people. Ask Mike, and let's swell the loccol a bit more.

Opuntia...a genzine? A perzine? An apazine? Yes to all of the above. In many ways, *Opuntia* is a plain personal publication, more connected to the little magazines from general amateur publishing than to science fiction fanzines. I'm glad it's around because it is Canadian, one of the few Canadian fanzines (of any kind) available today, and I've been able to meet the editor, Dale Speirs, of Calgary, Alberta.

Opuntia is the all-purpose zine. Dale publishes his own essays in it, from fandom and conventions to his adventures in the local stamp-collecting and tropical fish fields, which can be as political and poisonous as anything us fans might concoct. His researches into amateur publishing and the history of paper repro equipment, rural mail delivery, postage stamps, etc. find their way into the zine. You know that when Dale does his researches, the copious footnotes often go at the end. He knows his stuff.

Dale has caught a little fire here and there for his numbering system...the three issues I have at hand are issues 64A, 64B and 64.1A. Quote: "Whole-numbered *OPUNTIA*s are sercon, x.1 issues are reviewzines, x.2 issues are indexes, x.3 issues are apazines and x.5 issues are perzines." He's got it covered. In spite of number 64 covering the current issues, he's produced well over 200 individual issues. There are few illustrations within; I think he may have exhausted the illustrations of assorted cacti his mother discovered, and other succulents as well, and he is known to print one or two fan artist illos, when he gets them.

This zine is read like you might a flip chart, with the staples at the top. I've read that rankles people a little, too, but I will not complain. Publication design is the purview of the editor and publisher. I just keep in mind that the printed word is honest communication from our roots. Besides, Dale does not have a television or home Internet connection. What he writes is pure research from the Calgary Public Library.

Is *Opuntia* a pretty zine to look at? No, not really. Is it worth reading? Very much so. Write to Dale and see if you can join his mailing list.

Science Fiction / San Francisco: Contact at SFinSF@gmail.com, or download through the marvelous www.efanzines.com.

The NASFA Shuttle: Contact at nasfa.shuttle@con-stellation.org, or download through the club website, www.con-stellation.org/nasfa/shuttle.html.

Opuntia: Contact Dale Speirs through P.O. Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta CANADA T2P 2E7.

FANZINES RECEIVED/REVIEWED:

Alexiad #36 (Vol.6, No. 6)
Ansible #245
Argentus #7
Bye-Bye Johnny #2
Cargo Cult Books & Notions (Nov./Dec. 2007)
Drink Tank #151- then #150 – back to #152-157
eI #35
Einblatt! (Dec., '07 - Jan., '08)
File:770 #151
Sailing North
It Goes on the Shelf #29
Littlebrook #6
MT Void #1467-1474
Prolapse #9
Science Fiction in San Francisco #54-57
Scratch Pad #68
Sense of Wonder Stories #1
Surprising Stories #16
Vanamonde #708-717
Vegas Fandom Weekly #102-103
Visions of Paradise #122-124
WCSFAzine #4-5
Zanthic #1 (Corflu Silver PR #1)



Herbert, Frank. *Eye*. New York: Berkley Books. 1985.

This is a collection of shorter works by the author of *Dune* and other massive novels, many of which I have actually read. To my recollection, I haven't read any of his short stories, and this collection of 13 stories culled from the magazine pages of *Astounding Science Fiction/Analog*, *Amazing*, *Galaxy*, *F&SF*, and the anthology *Future City* is indeed a wonderful display of Herbert's story-telling talents. One of the stories isn't a story at all, but a pictorial "walking tour" of the world of *Dune*, and the illustrations by Jim Burns are very nice, giving a visual impression of the scale of Arrakis and other aspects of the *Dune* saga. In fact, each story has a Burns illustration, and not a one of them is a clunker. I wonder if Burns has done other book illustrations/cover art over the years.

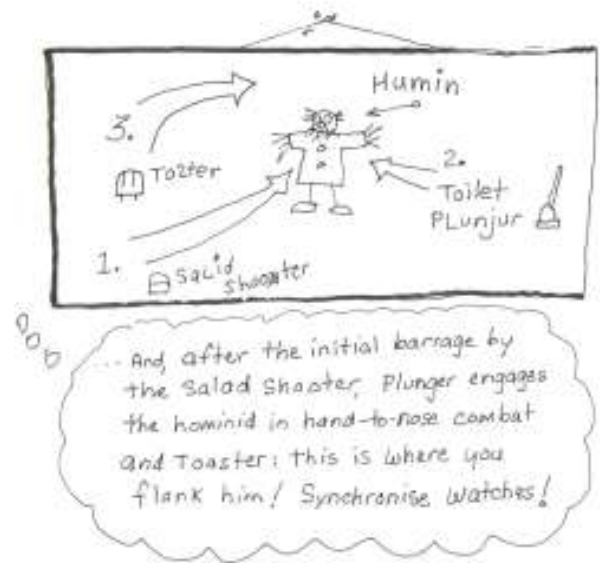
No matter. What most impressed me about the stories is how natural Herbert's writing style is. The stories just zip right along, and the reader will have no choice but to finish one or two stories in one sitting. There is also an excerpt from the novel *Under Pressure* in here ("Dragon in the Sea") originally serialized in *Astounding* back in 1955-1956. All are highly enjoyable; my favorites are "Cease Fire," "Seed Stock," and "Murder Will In." Classic work by a great writer.

This book is part of the series Masterworks of Science Fiction and Fantasy published by Berkley back in the 1980s. Others in the series are *The Sentinel* by Arthur C. Clarke, *The Ghost Light* by Fritz Leiber, and *The Grand Adventure* by Philip José Farmer. These are worth finding.

i. Roomba - Plan of attack...



1

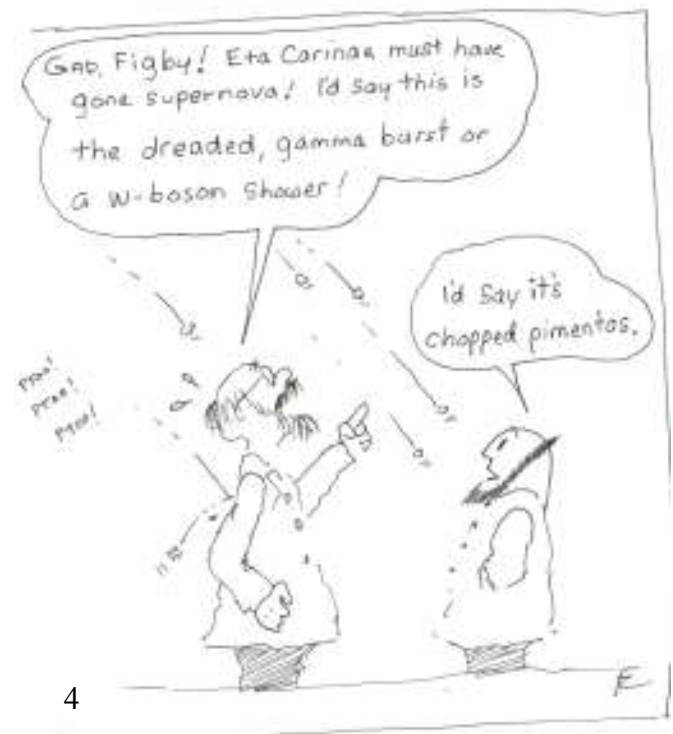


2

The barrage!



3



4

regional convention calendar



Ghoultown - appeared live at Aggiecon 38, March, 2007

[InstaCon 7](#)

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Austin, TX 78755

<http://www.alamo-sf.org/instacon7/>

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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 here is the shipping address:

Rice University

Fast Warp MS-526

c/o Office of Student Activities

PO Box 1892

Houston, TX 77251-1892

ATTN. OwlCon

<http://www.owlcon.com/>

Ikkicon 2

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February 8-10, 2008

Doubletree Hotel

6505 IH-35 North

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Dealers room, cosplay, and more!

<http://www.ikkicon.com/>

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A Literary Science Fiction & Fantasy Event

February 22-24, 2008

Radisson Hotel Dallas North

1981 North Central Expressway

Richardson, TX 75080

(Metroplex area)

Author GOH: Peter S. Beagle

Artist GOH: Donato Giancola

The Expected Activities:

Art Show, Autographs, Dealer's Room, Con Suite, Panel Discussions, Gaming, Readings

And the Unexpected:

Cliche Challenge (NEW), 3rd Annual Sci-Fi Spelling Bee, Pro Artist Drawing Competition, Charity Book Swap, Hard Science Panels

For more information, write:

ConDFW

750 South Main-#14

Keller, TX 76248

Or [send email](#)

Sponsored by the Texas Speculative Fiction Association

<http://www.condfw.org/>

Staple!

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March 1, 2008

Monarch Event Center (next to Highland Mall)

Austin, TX

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An event to promote independent creative media: comics, art, animation and self-published literature.

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<http://www.staple-austin.org/>

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Multi-format convention featuring autographs, gaming, comics, & a burlesque show.

March 7-9, 2008

Crowne Plaza Hotel

North Dallas/Addison

14315 Midway Road

Addison, TX 75001

(Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex area)

For three days All-Con provides an umbrella of content supporting fans of Science Fiction, Fantasy, Renaissance, Anime, Costuming, Theater / Performing Arts, Mystery, Art, Crafts, Collecting, and Film Making. To help 'give back' there are several charity events at the convention every year.

For more information write:

ALL-CON, LLC

PO Box 177194

Irving, Texas 75019-7194

Or for general information / questions [send email](#)

<http://www.all-con.org/>

ChimaeraCon 2008

South Texas Gaming & More Fest

March 14-16, 2008

Crossroads Convention Center

4522 Fredericksburg Rd

San Antonio, TX 78201

Three days of fan-run, locally-organized game, anime and science fiction/fantasy events.

Game Genres: Old Skool, New Wave, Table Top, Miniatures, Card, Electronic, Scale, Role-playing.

Game Titles: Shadowfist, DBA 2.2, Warmaster Fantasy, Morituri, Batailles de l'Ancien Régime (BAR), OmniQuest, Feng Shui RPG, Dreamguards, De Bellum Napoleonica, In Nomine LARP

Registered events list/details/updates available at

[Event Grid \[Schedule\]](#)

[Event List \[Schedule\]](#)



"Storm your trooper. baby?"

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Special Features:

Costume/Cosplay Contest; Anime Room; Game Demonstrations; Vendors; Artist Alley; Door Prizes and more to come!

Charity: San Antonio Area Chapter, American Red Cross.

For more information, [send email](#)

<http://chimaeracon.com/>

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March 14-16, 2008

Houston, Texas

Revelcon is THE only fan-run relax-a-con/zinefest in the Southwest US. It's a fab weekend of vids, panels, art, zines, merchandise, food and fun! [Note - Revelcon is an adults-only/18-and-over con.]

Revelcon 19 Art Show (brought to you by Friends of Fandom)

For further information write:

Revelcon 19

c/o E.D. Pearlman

P.O. Box 130602

Houston, TX 77219-0602

Or [send email](#)

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<http://www.severalunlimited.com/revelcon/>

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Oldest & largest student-run science fiction convention in the U.S.

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Texas A&M Memorial Student Center

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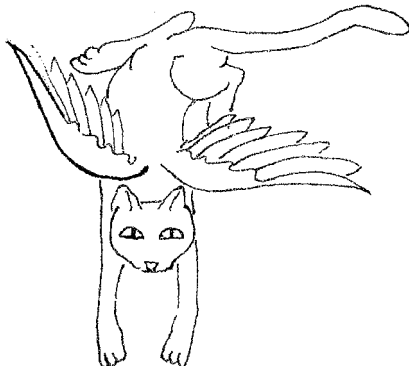
AggieCon (958460)

P.O.Box 5688

College Station, Texas 77844

Brought to you by Cepheid Variable

<http://aggiecon.tamu.edu/>



Nebula Awards Weekend

April 25-27, 2008

Omni Austin Hotel Downtown

700 San Jacinto at 8th Street

Austin, Texas 78701

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<http://www.sfwawards.org/awards/2008/>



Many thanks go to Ditmar for sending a CD of some of his artwork, a small sampling of which has been interspersed throughout this issue (such as this letter-column's lovely header art). What he can do is truly spectacular, and I am in awe of his ability. I hope you all are enjoying it as much as I am.

*So let's get into the nuts and bolts or bricks and stones of the letters, shall we? Arnie Katz's "Who a Fan?" lastish definitely fanned a few flames, and it is not too surprising that **Eric Mayer** had some interesting comments about it as well. Whereas Andy Trembley produced an article-length response, Eric raises in a shorter form some other interesting points. My editorial way the heck back on page 2 got into how I feel about what makes a fan a fan, so let's get into other feedback on this particular topic.*

8 Nov 2007

"Eric Mayer" <maywrite2@epix.net>

The questions of who are fans and what is fandom fascinate me. Over the years I've sometimes felt I was a fan (of the sort Arnie talks about) and other times I've been pretty certain I am not. There are fans who have treated me as if I were a fan, but others have on occasion

made it plain that they do not consider me to be a member of their subculture.

Arnie uses the word "we" a lot, and seems to imply that we fans know who we are, and this seems to be true for the most part. But to me, a definition of "fan" that says essentially a fan is whoever other fans accept as such isn't very satisfying. It might be the best and most accurate description possible, but still not satisfying. Besides, if we recognize each other

as fans, what is it we are recognizing? Our mutual recognition?

I think you need to define fandom (or "fanzine fandom" or "core fandom" or "Faanish fandom") before you can define fan. Isn't a fan someone who participates in fandom? Fandom may be a group of friends, but a group of friends is...well...a group of friends. It doesn't qualify as a hobby.

I read through Arnie's essay and found a couple places where he defines 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."

"... our fannish -- culture of activity, interrelationships and historical context."

The first statement, while it strikes me as being true, doesn't actually say what it is that Core Fandom is inheriting, and thus doesn't say much about what it is.

The second statement (which came before the other in the essay, by the way) seems quite plain. Core Fandom is a culture and involves activity, interrelationships, and historical context.

That description could apply to any hobby. All hobbies involve interrelationships and have some kind of shared culture. If you are just doing something that only you do and not interacting with others in some way you aren't really participating in a hobby. And as soon as a hobby has existed for a week it has a historical context, although I suspect Arnie would argue that Core Fandom differs from most hobbies in that a greater stress is placed on that context.

What usually identifies a hobby is the activity involved, which in the above is left undefined.

Now I am sure Arnie didn't intend for his words to be analyzed to this extent or design them to be. I hope he'll forgive me for using his essay, which is what I'm doing, to point out what I see as a "problem" with practically all discussions of what is fandom and who is a fan. Fans always seem very vague about exactly what it is that they do that makes them fans. There is typically much discussion of attitudes and shared culture and knowing who we are but what is it that fans do that makes them fans and not, say, stamp collectors, or orienteers, or dog breeders.

Say I consider myself a "runner." Someone asks why I call myself that. Do I explain that, well, a lot of my friends are runners and we all call each other runners? Or do I explain that I, and my fellow runners, all share a masochistic attitude? Hardly. I'd say, I'm a runner because I run. I might add that I run five miles a few times a week and participate in a few 5K races just to show my degree of involvement.

Why is it seemingly so difficult for fans to just say what it is that Core fans do? If someone stumbles into the fan lounge at a convention and

asks what it is fans do -- because they might be interested in getting involved -- what is that person told? If I were such a newcomer and was told that, well, I had to have the right attitude and appreciate the history of fandom, I'd be at a loss. If I publish a fanzine, does that make me a fan? Wait...what's a fanzine? Or if I go to conventions, is that enough? But didn't you say that lots of people who go to conventions aren't fans in the sense you're talking about?

The question might be whether Core fandom is actually just a bunch of friends or a kind of extended family and not a hobby in any real



sense. Which is not to say that isn't a fine thing but very confusing for outsiders, particularly those who might be looking to join.

OK. Now I've probably even confused myself. I will resume reading.

Best,

ERIC MAYER

Fans have been trying to define themselves for as long as fandom has been around. It really is an amorphous term, one that literally defies definition. Is it an attitude, a displayed knowledge of the "field," examples of participation, or what? It has been said before that a fan is whatever that person believes, which certainly doesn't help matters any. It really is rather confusing, and maybe we should just forget about the whole thing and simply enjoy each other's company while we're all here in the same lounge.

Fandom is definitely a shared interest in the historical background of where this hobby group has come from. We do like to hang out together and have fun (clubs and cons), and fanzines are one way in which we maintain lines of communication. Other than this, I really don't think there is any hopes of pinning down one set definition of what the term "fan" means. Wikipedia sure as shootin' doesn't help!

)))

One of the fun things about pubbing a fanzine is hearing from somebody new. Here is a missive from someone who has another way of looking in at Arnie's article and it sounds like he knows Arnie, too:

9 Nov 2007

tyrbolo@comcast.net

Very nice issue. Great art on front and back...

I enjoy Arnie Katz material and his zines. He really needs to try again with that piece. If you want to do exclusionary fencing off of some territory then you need to finish the fence all the way around, shoot the interlopers and roll 'em over by the fence for when the sheriff comes round. That's the way Nevadans did it in the good ole days....<GRIN>

If Core fans are the trunk, then they're connected to all the branches and there isn't a clear dividing line unless he just wants to play Travis outnumbered at the Alamo by drawing one.

Of course he can refute me by publishing the list of names of the Core....

Ahh, the Internet/web. Everybody on the thing is like a little kid peering through a knothole in their fence at the big world thinking they can make sense of it. Most people are passive because of TV training and are used to using a search engine badly by now. The olders who came from the wild days of making the thing sorta work aren't quite so bad; they're just snowed under with their concerns.

That means you'll have people pop in, look at things, and pop out again. Others will go "A-ha! found the good stuff," and come back again and again. A few of those will be trapped and begin to participate in some way. The e-zine you write should be aimed at "a-ha" visitors because you can convert them into being participants. You will never make a fan out of the others.

Your mileage may vary. Dissenters are referred to Rev. Stang for re-conditioning.

Warm Regards.

DAVE HAREN

Well, I don't think Arnie was trying to make Core Fandom an "exclusionary fencing off of some territory," as you put it. Seems to me he was trying to figure out how to corral some free-range fans and entice them inside the fence. The theory states if someone likes what they see in fandom, then that person might in fact hang around and start participating. Speaking for myself, that's what hooked me way back when: the more I got involved, the more fun I had. One only gets out of fandom what one puts into it. Like you say, Dave, if someone likes what they see and have that "a-ha" moment, they'll be back for more. It so much depends on the interest level of each individual.

000

Hey – he took a break, so now he's back with a few more pithy comments:

9 Nov 2007

Eric Mayer <maywrite2@epix.net>

To add a few comments...I fear I am too old and tired to comment on everything these days...I liked Frank Wu's covers. The neon colors were eye-catching indeed. A good demonstration of how e-zines allow for the use of media that wouldn't have been possible with old fashioned mimeoed zines, or even photocopied ones.

I also enjoyed Lee Lavell's faanish origins tale, always a fine subject. I've described how I found fandom too many times already but, in brief, in a used book store in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, where I bought bags full of coverless SF books, I found heaps of coverless SF mags, including *Amazing* and *Fantastic*. The fanzines mentioned in "The Clubhouse" column sounded fascinating and, at a quarter, they were the right price. After first *Amra*, then *Outworlds* and the likes of *Dilemma* (from Jackie Franke) and *Yandro*

arrived I was hooked. I'd never seen anything like those publications before, dissimilar as they all were. Of course, one of the things Ted White railed against (and quite rightly) in his SF mag editorials was the illegal sale of coverless copies of the mags. But if not for that practice I assuredly would never have found them or SF fandom, in Wilkes-Barre circa 1972. Maybe Ted should have spoken out more strenuously.

I can't say that Fandom has played as large a role in my life as in Linda Bushyager's, judging from her article, but it has nevertheless been very pivotal for me. Kept me writing, I do believe, when I was in my twenties and could easily have forgotten about it entirely what with school, career, and family. And, of course, I eventually married a fan!

ERIC MAYER

Marrying a fan is one way to do it, too. Linda and Ron Bushyager are but one great example of fannish matrimony that's good for the heart and soul. My first wife was basically a fringe-fan, and it was A Good Thing that that marriage didn't last, in my humble opinion. The good news is that Valerie (wife #2) has a much more fannish attitude and sense of humor than wife #1 ever did, and she's a great match to boot. If I had never become involved with fandom my life would definitely be a lot more different than now. The question is not "would it be better?" but "how different would it be?" Ah, that grand old skiffy concept of "what if..." still works.

000

Last issue one of the two fanzines I reviewed was MT Void, and shortly thereafter one of its perpetrators supplied me with a brief history of that zine. Since it kind of fits in with this "fannish beginnings" segment of locs, here's Mark Leeper to tell us all about it:



10 Nov 2007

"Mark R. Leeper" <mleeper@optonline.net>

We are very pleased. You said some very nice things. You probably are right that we are no longer a clubzine, but we have not admitted that to ourselves. We founded the Bell Labs science fiction club in 1977 and the notice of the upcoming book to read for discussion which became a weekly notice.

Each Bell location had a two-letter code for mail purposes. There were three Bell Labs locations right near each other and most of our members came from Holmdel (HO), Middletown (MT), or Lincroft (LZ). We were not allowed to call our club the Bell Labs Science Fiction Club for legal reasons, so we took the three location codes and called ourselves the MT HOLZ Science Fiction Society. We gave the notice the name *MT VOID* ("the empty void"). There is little activity left in the club. It withered away with time. All that is left is the weekly notice. And that seems unkillable. It is time we admitted to ourselves the club is no more, but it isn't really dead. In fact you and every other subscriber is a member.

Actually I am curious. How did you find out about the VOID in the first place?

Oh, and the other thing is that Evelyn does nearly all of the invisible work on the *VOID*. That can add up. I probably spend more time overall, but then I am a slow writer.

MARK LEEPER

As Valerie is wont to say, "Behind every great man is a woman kicking him in the ass." However, Val is not interested in working on fanzines; occasionally, though, I am able to procure a piece of artwork by her to use. She is really quite talented, and I need to feature her artwork more often.

To answer your question on how I found out about MT Void, I was poking around the www.fanac.org website and found your little zine kind of hiding in there under the fanzine link. Once I discovered that your subscription price was affordable – in other words: free – it was a no-brainer to simply subscribe. I thank you for producing it on such a regular basis, and I enjoy reading it every Friday.

000

Another fan editor wrote in about assorted topics in the last issue, and it is always good to hear from him:

1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville, KY 40204-2040 USA
jtmajor@iglou.com

November 12, 2007

To Lee Ann Lavell: What understanding and supportive parents you had.

When my mother ignored that pain in her side until it turned from appendicitis into peritonitis, I was at school, too broke to come and tend to her. Fortunately, she had many friends who

ensured she was tended to, and when I saw her again she had recovered.

The rocky road to fandom — but now it's all chocolate for you.

"What If", by Linda Bushyager — now that's a name to conjure with. And a deaf cat illustrating it, but that's life. And an example of the interconnectivity of the field.

Eric Mayer: I don't put zines up on efanzines because I print addresses in the hope of encouraging further communication, and posting addresses on the Net tends to lead to the sort of communication that people don't really appreciate. If he wants to get *Alexiad* he can email to the address that the Kindly Editor will place at the head of this letter — you will do so, won't you? — and I will put him on the list, though the files do run to some length. He could ask for the text version, which is not as large, but not as formatted. It is a bit artless.

James Bacon: We had our reasons for supporting Montréal over Kansas City, one of them being that KC would have been the third consecutive year going west out I-64 from Louisville. And we have never been to Québec, not to mention that on the way back is Goshen, New York, with the National Harness Racing Museum.

I don't know about pet peeves, but I do know that pets can be a peeve. Miss C'Mell rubbed raw a patch on her flank, for example, and as a result took over the first Friday that I had off this end-of-the-year with for a visit to the vet instead of letting me sleep in. (Having a lot of vacation time, I am taking Fridays off for the rest of the year.)

Namarie,

JOSEPH T. MAJOR

One of our dogs, Fossey, has likewise rubbed a patch of fur off her backside, and is now on Benadryl and getting her butt powdered to stop the itching. We think she's scratching because some of the "grass" in our backyard is very stiff and can easily scratch skin. By the way, your dealings with C'Mell are not exactly what I meant by "pet peeves," but I'll take it.

)))

Since I did get a few locs that covered all of the various articles last issue, here is Lee Anne Lavell to keep this multi-topic loc format going:

13 Nov 2007

leelavell@comcast.net

Greetings,

Zombies – Up Close and Personal: I've never really gotten into the zombie thing. I enjoyed "Shaun of the Dead" (and have a fondness for the zombie in the old Bob Hope movie, "The Ghost Breakers" and its Martin and Lewis remake, "Scared Stiff") but for the most part if I wanted a shambling humanoid I preferred the old Mummy and Frankenstein films. Costuming and makeup never held much interest for me either, so considering the subject of this piece, which dealt with things I'm not drawn to, I was surprised to find that it held my attention. I don't understand why. A tribute to Bacon's writing, I guess.

The Thin Veneer: To me the purpose of Arnie's "Core Fandom" should be to preserve the history and philosophy of the original s-f fandom. Back when "we" started, fandom included all these sub-fandoms. We really made no difference as to what kind of s-f you were interested in. We just accepted you as part of the "community." There were even fake fans whose way of thought allowed them to enter. Sure, there were differences, but they were still fans and regarded as such. It was only when fandom grew so large

that these fandoms were able to exist on their own did this become divisive, “fractured” so to speak. I like to think that “Core Fandom” harks back to this more accepting era. To be a member of Core Fandom we should have at least some background into the history of fandom in general and base our activity on such. In other words, Core Fandom should be the custodians of the history and traditions of the original s-f and fandom, and our activities should reflect this in fanzines, conventions, awards etc.

What If: On the other hand, if we are to believe Linda Bushyager, fan and prodrom would not even exist without her existence. I do hope she was writing this tongue-in-cheek! Whatever, it was certainly an exercise in ultimate real or feigned egotism.

Fanzine reviews: I enjoyed reading these and they actually got me to go back and check out those fanzines.

While I’m on the subject of fanzine reviews in general, most columns seem to fall into two categories: 1) a bunch of thumbnail reviews or 2) one or two in-depth reviews. I would like to see more experimentation in format. In my former spates of activity, for instance, I attempted other ways. I tried comparing and contrasting a pair of fanzines of like ilk and indicate how they succeeded or failed in their attempts. At another time I broke down my review into two categories: content and appearance. I am sure there are many other innovative ways that a review could be done.

From the Hinterlands: I really love your letter column: interesting, intelligent, literate, and organized in an eminently readable format. As to content:



Re: Eric Mayer: 1) I keep efanzines at the top of my favorites list and check it daily to see if any new zines that I am interested in have been posted. 2) Relax, Eric. If people are

disagreeing with or misconstruing you, at least it means that they are *reading* you.

Re: Chris Garcia: You know, somehow I’ve figured out that you’re running for TAFF, possibly by the fact that every other posting on efanzines is one of yours touting the run. If I didn’t know better, I would think that Chris is in his teens, he is so full of enthusiasm: the quintessential (and perhaps eternal) Propeller Beanie Kid.

Re: Jerry Kaufman: I get none of the current paper fanzines and have seen only a few, thanks to Dave Burton. However I do occasionally print out an online zine, simply because I like to have the zine in front of me if I am writing a loc.

Re: Claire Brialey: David Burton panicked me when he told me he was getting burnt out. I fully remembered the last time that happened and he disappeared for thirty years! He got me back into this now. How dare he consider abandoning me. However he now plans to have the next issue of *Pixel* out about the same time as *Askance 6* should appear, so I guess I’m safe after all.

One final note, this regarding your quote from “Creature from the Haunted Sea.” I have often wondered if anyone even remembered this movie, which was one of Roger Corman’s very early films, right along with “Little Shop of Horrors.” I remember seeing it as the third entry of a triple bill at a local drive-in theater. Both Jim and I thought it was hilarious, what with the spies’ code names being sports cars. I particularly remember our inept hero who had his radio disguised as a lunch box having to eat one the tubes (yes, radios had tubes back then) which happened to be disguised as a pickle.

A very enjoyable issue.

Cheers...**LEE ANNE LAVELL**

I freely admit to being a sucker for gawd-awful science fiction movies, and Roger

Corman's various efforts rank right up there with the rankest of the rank. Some of his films are okay, but for the most part they are best forgotten – if at possible, no matter how hard we try.

000

Pets and pet peeves are among the topics covered by yet another fan editor, this time Bob Sabella, who recently changed the format of his fine zine, Visions of Paradise, a little bit. It is available for downloading at www.efanzines.com, of course.

25 November 2007

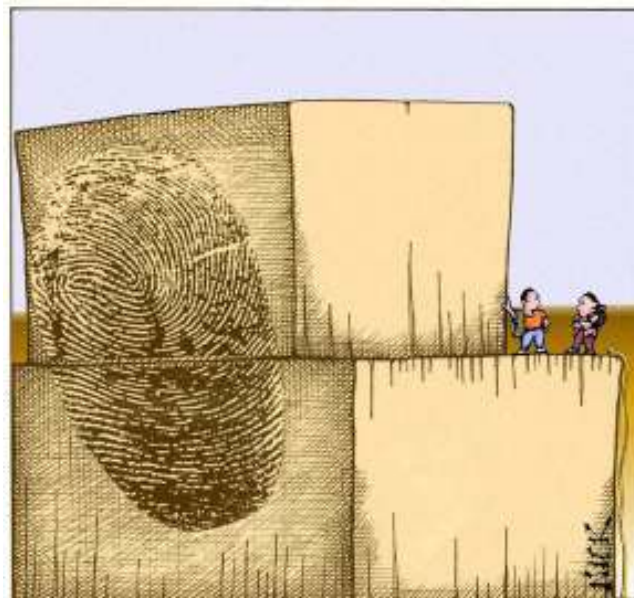
"Robert Sabella" <bsabella@optonline.net>

Many of your outdoor activities—"severely pruning our massive rose bush, cutting branches, bundling them, repairing the fence" – are activities I manage to avoid, since Jean loves gardening, so she tends to stay outside while I am inside cooking. It's a nice division of labor, since I have little or no interest in the great outdoors.

I hope you're enjoying your dogs. We opted for cats (Misty, age 14; Tiger, age 12) because they are much more self-sufficient, and when we adopted them the boys had so many after-school activities that it would have been a major inconvenience always being available for dog duties. So long as we leave food out for them, our cats are generally happy during the day. At night they find a comfortable bed to join (Misty sleeps either with Mark or Jean and me, while Tiger prefers Andy's bed) and generally let us sleep in peace so long as we do not get too restless and kick them off the bed.

James Bacon's article on "Zombies" reminded me of my most common rejoinder when one of my classes is particularly comatose (as I expect them to be this Monday following a four-day

weekend). I tell them how pleased I am to have the lead role in the horror flick *Class of the Living Dead*. At such times they are usually too dead to appreciate the humor though.



"Of course, it's still a complete mystery as to how the ancients even managed to MOVE these massive stones..."

This issue of *Askance* has a lot of articles about fandom per se, which are interesting since I have been at least peripherally-connected to fandom since the late 1960s. But unlike Linda, I cannot make the statement "Finding SF fandom was the greatest thing that ever happened to me," because I have never successfully made the plunge into fannish socialization. In many ways, that is too bad since at times I really miss all the socializing that other fans discuss much of the time, and I consider that one of the two biggest lacks in my life (you know the other, John—the lack of professional fiction publications).

Which brings me to your suggestion for people to write about their fannish pet peeves. I joined a science fiction club my senior year of college, attended faithfully each month for over a year, yet I was never welcomed into the club by a single member, nor did anybody bother to

engage me in conversation that entire time. I finally quit the club in frustration. I have also attended worldcons and regional cons sporadically over the years, but my main memory of them is not speaking to a single person I did not know through prior correspondence the entire weekend. So whenever fans talk about how all-embracing fandom is, how even the social misfits can find a niche there, it frustrates me considerably. I do not think I am the most inept social misfit ever—the teachers at school seem to like me, and I'm actually a fairly respected person there—so why have I been unable to pierce the shell of active fandom? Perhaps it was just not meant to be...

BOB SABELLA

It certainly seems to me that your long-running zine Visions of Paradise has definitely cemented a place for you in active fandom. All of your fan pubbing and loccking makes you an active fan in my book, and I know that you live close to many places that hold conventions on a regular basis. I wouldn't worry about it if I were you, and I thank you for a loccol continuation of the fannish pet peeve article that appeared much earlier in this issue.

()()

I really couldn't help include a couple quick paragraphs from Jerry Kaufman, especially in light of what he had to say to Linda Bushyager's contribution last issue ("What if?"):

Mon, 24 Dec 2007

"Jerry Kaufman" <JAKaufman@aol.com >

I don't have a lot of comments this time around, though I enjoyed most of it. If I could devise a

reasonably coherent position, I could argue with Arnie about his concept of a Core Fan and Core Fandom - this is the first time I've seen TAFF defined as something not "ours." (Much of the rest of fandom still considers it an elitist institution that excludes them.)

I enjoyed seeing my own name and Suzle's pop up in Linda's "What If...? I'll have to thank her for being around at the right moment, to be sure. I met Suzle at Marcon in 1968. Linda and Suzle traveled together to attend (I'm sure they shared a room, too, being best buds); I'll always remember the moment the two of them rounded a corner and came into the hotel lobby.

JERRY KAUFMAN

And into your heart for ever more. Ah, young fannish love! Did you ever think that that first meeting would ever come to all that you and Suzle have done over the years? Croggles the old brain matter, doesn't it?

()()

To bring this lettercolumn to a close, let's turn to a loc from our favorite letterhack from north of the border, and this time he's even on time with comments about the fifth issue; Lloyd missed commenting on Askance #4, but I attribute that to a busy work schedule and other commitments.

1706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON
CANADA M9C 2B2

9 December 2007

I am squeezing every spare minute out of every last hour of every last day, and there still isn't enough time to go around. Finally got to Askance 5; let's see what's there, and what I can say.

We don't have dogs, but living in an apartment building, we seem to have everyone else's. Oscar is a wire-haired Jack Russell terrier who's a big suck, and he lives two doors down. One Russian woman in our building owns some curly-haired dogs we call Rasta-puppies. German shepherds, black Labs...they're everywhere around here.

When Chris goes to Britain for TAFF, that's when we all catch up in our fanzining. I'll tackle the big file of e-zines on my desktop, I've got about a dozen paper zines at home, there's a writing project I'd like to get going with, and all I can do is keep up with the Vast Garcia Publishing Empire. In this case, TAFF might stand for Taken Away from Fanzine Fandom. ***This I like a lot! We most certainly do need a break from Garcia-zines.***

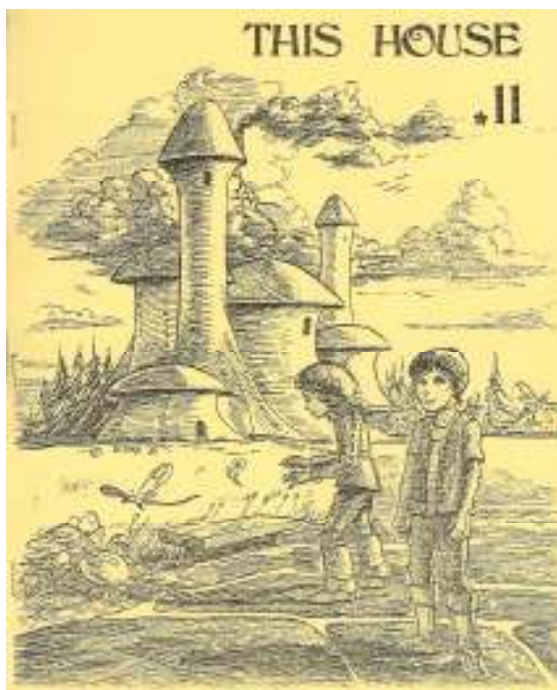
I gather Toronto has its own zombie walk, and it took place around October, but without much fanfare. There's so much happening in this city, a hundred zombies could walk down Yonge Street, and most wouldn't even blink.

I've revealed my own fannish origins too often, except that it's still my mother's fault, but I will remind some that as of this month, December, I can celebrate 30 years in fandom. Some know that after 30 years in the fannish salt mines, there's no gold watch, but there is qualifying for associate membership status in First Fandom. A question for those who know more than I...is joining this august organization worth the money to join? Some say yes, others say no, I need more feedback.

There are many people who I'm sure some would call not-fans, even if they feel they are fans themselves. The language evolves, as do the means attached to those words. Such filters as who is a fan and who isn't would probably catch a lot of my local fannish friends, and would probably catch me as well. I'd rather be inclusive

than exclusive, and I'd rather bring those is who might call themselves fans, and show them through my own activities what I feel a fan does. If they like what they see, great, and if they don't, they are free to find what activities they like. Previous discussions in other zines bring to light that we are the beneficiaries of a surfeit of fannish activities, and that we can explore our assorted talents in a fannish fashion. We are very lucky to be able to do so. If Core Fandom contains those who not only personify the original ideas of those, like Ackerman and Darrow, who got this whole thing started, they are the holders of the torch we've been trying to pass on to the hordes over the decades, and they deserve our support. In a list I belong to, there is mention of why Dave Kyle says you can't sit here, and other bits of distant fannish history. Most people didn't know of that bit of ephemera, is there a reason why they should? Not really...we have more general ideas about fandom to pass along, but there is no reason why we should expect modern fans to know about something that happened more than 65 years ago. Those of us who are interested do know. For most, though, fandom is a regular schedule of friends and fun times, and probably not much more. Their loss, IMHO, and possibly ours, too.

Thanks for covering for me, John...not only do I have my 40-hour-a-week job at the CNIB, but I still have my 12-to-15-hours-a-week job at the Globe and Mail. Commuting from home to CNIB to G&M to home takes up another four hours a day, so while I can still find time to write some locs, it's only because of judicious time management, writing at the Globe and sending partial locs home to work on later, or putting some .pdfed zines on my Palm, and working on them that way. I now put all my zines to work on a 128Mb USB thumb drive so I can take the zines to work on wherever I go. I have one review written, and will try to write up a couple more before the year is done.



I think those of us who have enhanced our enjoyment of fandom by being active, creative and busy starting clubs, conventions, fanzines and other pro-actions, influence many lives. I still intend to write up the story of how we met an old friend at LACon...he's now a professional artist in California, and how Yvonne found him years ago in a Toronto photocopy shop.

Quite the convention schedule. Up here, because (baby) it's cold outside in the winter months, our own con calendar is seasonal. Ad Astra, Polaris, Anime North...we have to travel a bit more to go to more cons.

Locs are ephemeral, but then, so are many of the things we do here in these fanzines, if not all of them. That's one reason why I archive my locs on a LiveJournal, to add a bit of a third dimension to what I do. As far as e-zines go, I'd rather have a paperzine to hold in my hands, but a .pdfed zine will don fine, seeing that my locs go out on my computer, too. I bring up a zine and Word on the screen, and off I go. Everything is convenient, and as written above, I now have other ways to write if I'm not at home.

I got told by Mike Glicksohn quite some time ago that it's pronounced L-O-C, that if you say 'lawk' instead of 'ell-oh-cee', it belies your mediafan origins, because that's where it comes from, some of the initial Trekzines from the 70s. Anyone else know about that? I usually say loc, although I have heard it with a long /o/.

The lovely Linda is keeping our Chris away from his fannish duties? Sounds an awful like the ballad of John and Yoko, doesn't it? Keep it up, Linda, it's the only way we'll catch up with Chris' zinish output. If ya gotta slack, slack with someone you like.

So many discussions about participating in fanzines, conventions, clubs...some hope they can have a good time with them, especially if they lay some money down. Then, there are expectations. There are those of us who have the good time because we participate, and make the good times roll.

My thanks go to Claire Brialey for gentle guidance and constructive criticism. I am still new to reviewing, so a gentle push and hint will work wonders. There is always the opportunity and reason to learn a little more.

(Took a break this afternoon to go and see *The Golden Compass*. It's no Middle-Earth or Narnia, but the movie is a treat for the eyes. Another Narnia movie is coming soon, and also there's something that might be fun called *The Water Horse*. Ever wondered where Nessie came from?)

John, did you not get my loc for issue 4? I at least had hopes for the WAHF column...and before I go further, I won't. It's the end of the zine, anyway. It is the time of year that I wish everyone the best of December holidays, and may you get what you want or get what you deserve, whichever is the best. A prosperous

and successful 2008 to you all, and I'm outta here, gotta get ready for work in the morning.

Yours, **LLOYD PENNEY**

*As you and I both figured out, you never did write a loc on the fourth issue; to your credit, Lloyd, you did write a loc on the fourth issue of **Askance**, which speaks to the perfectionist streak in you. Either that, or you're a bit on the OCD side when it concerns loccing fanzines.*

I do like the way you illustrate how an active fan can be a positive influence on newcomers to fandom. Those of us who enjoy learning about the history of fandom love to pass it along, and when we run across a new fan who asks questions, we are only too happy to oblige. Now, depending on how us old pharts respond, that neofan is either going to find it all quite interesting and

keep asking questions, or that neofan's eyes will glaze over from too much information, or that neofan will run screaming off into the night never to be seen again.

I exaggerate, of course. Most fans who want to know what has gone before will ask and search out textual material. We can obviously help them out by providing titles, names, websites, and so on to help these youngsters in their efforts. If a person is interested enough to get involved in something, chances are that person is going to want to learn more about it. This simply makes sense to me.

And thus endeth the lettercolumn. I thank all contributors, and look forward to more spewing forth from the ether and snail-mail in the near future.

WAHF listing

James Bacon (he's getting married to Simoné van Zyl on 9 Feb 08 in Croydon! Mazel Tov, James and Simoné!), Bill Burns, David Burton. Marty Cantor [COA: martyhoohah@sbcglobal.net], Brad Foster, Bruce Gillespie, Dick Jenssen (aka, Ditmar), Arnie Katz, David Langford, Mark Leeper (again), Lloyd Penney (late loc on *Askance* #4 to complete the series), R-Laurraine Tutihasi, Peter Weston.



Image googled "Flash Gordon" and found this "death ray" image. Go figure.



Tart Reform

Wikiphilia Article

TAH-rt *From Common Law: "juicy" or "foxy" or "crusty" (depending on age of tart).*

Principles of Tart Law

Tarts come to us primarily from [Civil Law](#) although a tart can be a component of criminal proceedings, depending on the "vice" laws and ordinances in effect where she is practicing being a tart. Any act or deed (noncriminal) which causes or has the potential to bring harm can be considered a tart in a court of law. Most tarts avoid this danger by using "**safe words**" with their clients. A tart for instance, might not be guilty of a crime if she inadvertently injures someone by sitting on them. This would normally be considered a tart action under [liable](#) laws (because she is *liable* to injure the person by sitting on them). It could, however, fall under the aegis of criminal law if the tart weighs in excess of 350 lbs.

Juridical Resolution

Usually in the case of a perceived tart, the aggrieved party ("plaintiff") brings a [suit](#) in a court of law against the "defendant". This takes the form of a petition, which the presiding judge has the authority to entertain or reject. If the judge determines that the suit is simply too plain (hence the term, "plaintiff") then the judge may throw out the suit, leaving the plaintiff in his or her underwear or direct the attorney to file a new suit (this is an extremely complicated legal procedure because polyester just doesn't file that well and it is probably just as easy to obtain a new suit at sale: Good lawyers rarely pay retail).

History: Ancient World to Common Law

Ancient Times

The earliest written records of common law regarding tarts is on a [cuneiform](#) tablet dated about 2950-2800(?) BCE. It was at the direction of the Mesopotamian ruler, [Mishmosh-Al-Hubbahubba the Relevant, Short-sheeter of the Amorites and Mighty Deliverer of Wedgies to the Hosts of Cush](#) (b. 3090-2975 BCE?) that the codex was commissioned. It is for this reason that it was written in "cuneiform" which means "wedge-shaped". It was Mishmosh's subtle way of letting the **Hosts of Cush** know that they'd better watch their butts.

Of the tablets unearthed, it was the tablet, cataloged "CU-1995-132Garg", which bears the significant inscription : ...*'fhah-l'lah 'llah 'lha 'lha, 'lha-lha lha lha...*'.

This is the only decipherable text, the rest being unreadable with age. Scholars have been able to make out the words "...appy headed h..." but the remainder of the text, along with their author, are lost to history.



Fig 1: Mishmosh-Al-Hubbahubba Code (upc label on rear)

During the time of the [Roman Empire](#) there was a growing amount of litigation. While the Empire of Mishmosh-Al-Hubbahubba spanned a territory about the size of Manihptowocopeechee, Florida, the Roman Empire was much bigger: at it's height it covered an area stretching from Western Britain to the borders of present day Afghanistan. Some of the territory may have been leased, though. A well-known concept of Roman Law was the "[lex talonis](#)" which stated that any subject of the empire not a citizen of Rome would have to use the legal system applicable to their ethnic/political/tribal heritage. For example, if a person were a Gaul and found himself in trouble with the law, he would be tried in a Gallic court with Gallic consequences rather than as a Roman citizen with Roman judges, etc. This was more serious than it sounds: since Gauls were ancient precursors to the modern day French, losing a court battle in a Gallic court could leave the subject being required to ingest all sorts of disgusting matter passed off as "fine, continental cuisine" with a really stiff price tag. Also, the waiters could be terribly rude.

Nonetheless, the litigation came in wave after wave upon the Roman courts. Slaves were suing for their freedom or at least, simpler, "safe" words. Hordes of [Vandals](#) were sacking the northern provinces and if that weren't enough they dressed in that grungy, "[Goth](#)" fashion. Grownups were just about fed up with their whiny, self-absorbed attitudes.

Finally, in [530 AD](#) the Emperor [Justinian](#) decreed that the Goths could all wear dark clothes if they wanted to. This heralded the beginning of the [Dark Ages](#).

Medieval Period

During the period from the fall of the Roman Empire to the [Renaissance](#) the Western Church attempted to re-assert the old, imperial forms of law in the form of the [Holy Roman Empire](#). It is customary among present-day educators to follow this term with the remark that it was "...neither holy, Roman, nor an empire". At this point, college professors and T.A.'s are expected to snicker knowingly at their cleverness which is usually lost on a lecture hall of 200 or more sophomores and freshmen. Nonetheless, making the joke about "neither holy, Roman nor an empire" appears to be some kind of requirement for tenure.

The middle ages were marked by a lot of ignorance and superstition and the court systems of those days were usually a localized affair set up by the local King, Lord, Sheriff or any 32nd degree Freemason. Instead of long briefs filed by lawyers, judgments were awarded based on "trial by combat" (the winner won the court case), "trial by water" (if she drowned she was innocent, if she floated, she was a witch), or "trial by ordeal" (which involved stuffing one's hand into a boiling pot or grabbing a bar of white-hot iron).



Fig 2: Vandal in Goth dress sacking a Roman Starbuck's

If the person didn't burn, then this was taken to be a sign of innocence although it could mean that they had just had a lot of Novocain. Superstition was rampant, with people believing in witches, goblins, sea serpents, leprechauns, etc. The simple, ignorant peasants and serfs of the time knew nothing about modern science and would frequently bet on NFL point spreads based on the colors of the team uniforms.

Tart law was coming into its own, under the English "[common law](#)". This was really a common-sense approach to social contract and harmony, and any sociable tart who could not harmonize could find herself in the stocks. By the time of the [Tudor](#) dynasty in England, the old, civil principle of "an eye for an eye" had matured into a more comprehensive and sophisticated "...and thence hys privy partes and burnt bowells herienafter hys heade to be stricke from hys bodye and placed theroun a pike on yon London bridg [sic] for all to seeeye.. for an eye...". Historians are fairly agreed that the Tudors, while very autocratic, were serious party animals.

Renaissance

As England and Northern Europe began coming out of the dark ages, the city states in Italy were experiencing a [renaissance](#). This involved many new paradigms of science, the arts and politics, and tart law was included. Tarts were sold throughout the renaissance and the law allowed this provided that the shop proprietor used the words "Ye Olde..." on the label. Also during the renaissance people had to park their cars far out from the activity and walk with strollers and kids as much as half a mile, directed by high school and college students with orange wands (these were a throwback to the superstitious, Middle Ages). Once inside the renaissance, visitors could not only buy a variety of tasty tarts but could watch "jousting competitions" or try and throw hacky-sack bags through a tagboard clown face to win a cheap, crappy, made-in-Taiwan beer stein. Mylar balloons were available during the renaissance. In spite of all this, renaissance goers were slowly becoming aware that the common personages of the day, such as "Snot" and "Puke" were really terrible actors and the seeds for tart reform were sown, presaging the modern era.



Fig 3: Parking lot at the Renaissance

Mercantilism: The rise of the middle class

By the 20th Century Bill Gates had become very mercantile and had risen above the middle class. The need for Tart Reform was more evident than ever. In the United States malpractice suits against doctors, product liability suits against manufacturers and suits for spilling McDonald's coffee on were becoming pandemic. To compound the problem many litigants lacked any kind of serious education and couldn't even spell "pandemic" let alone explain its meaning.

Victorian England: Penal Codes

At the middle of the 19th century the English had come a long way in refining their laws with respect to the criminal courts. By 1815 the courts there had done away with the horrific and barbaric criminal codes of medieval Europe. A quick comparison of sample penalties during the Middle Ages and Victorian times amply demonstrates the new sense of reason, civility and humanitarianism with which the Victorians were gifted:

Offense	Medieval Penalty	Victorian Penalty
petty theft	flogging	hanging
grand theft	flogging and fine	hanging
adultery	burning at stake	hanging
manslaughter	fine of 1 cow or sheep	hanging
buggery	boiling in oil	hanging
murder	beheading	hanging
tearing furniture tag	scolding (or time out)	hanging

By the 1990's the need to put a cap on tarts had become critical and resulted in a massive landslide election of conservative politicians in the ensuing elections. This was the direct result of tarts wearing nonstandard caps (especially European or "foreign" ones) on a regular basis.



Fig 4: Tart (left) with cap

Marbury vs Madison

Tart Reform in the U.S. came to a head during the Marbury vs Madison case [[Ref: Ibid pro quo juris pudendum ipso seltzer, file of writ Marbury v. Madison 1994](#)] in which a Mr. Laszlo Marbury of Anagonkanomonquoganassett, NY broke his tooth on a Dolly Madison cupcake. In the ensuing pretrial hearing, Justice Schindlin opined:

"What is this? YOU! Hey I'm talkin' to you! Yeah, that's right buddy! I'm smarter on my worst day than you are on your best! Hey! I'm talkin' here!!!" (at which sign she slapped the bench loudly and made the "button your lip" gesture to the plaintiff).

The case drew final resolution with a decision for the defendant in which the court ruled that leaving a nose-piercing stud in cupcake batter, while arguably negligent, did not constitute a hate crime as Mr. Marbury was not African-American or Jewish. The CEO for the defendant firm was awarded a profit sharing clause and a \$40 million severance package.

Broader, legislative implications:

The newly ensconced, Republican congress was appalled at this example of corporate greed and immediately, with the new President's signature, passed into law, broad-reaching tart reforms which capped CEO severance packages at \$715 billion dollars per award.

Contemporary Issues: Arguments About Tart Reform

The issue of tart reform has become very politicized in western culture leaving many tarts undecided on how to vote. Statisticians suspect that tarts may account for up 87% of the 26% which always shows up "undecided" any all of the polls, although some of them may demur and take the more militant and radical, "not sure" position. This leaves researchers and policymakers alike in a quandary: How many positions should tarts be allowed to assume? When the medieval church was polled on this question they were pretty certain only one position was permitted. Since the libertine lifestyle revolution of the 1960's there are many positions a tart might assume. This is not a new idea however as a multiplicity of positions were known in the ancient world. An ancient, Hindu [sutra](#) addresses the issue of both reforming tarts and tartist positioning. Unfortunately only a portion of the ancient manuscript was recoverable and the eminent Indian Archaeologist, Dr. Rhamjat Padjipaht Nankipur was only able to decipher a phrase in ancient [Sanskrit](#) meaning "...naughty, saucy, upturned, voluptuous, bare...".

See Also

- [Civil Law](#)
- [liable](#)
- [Goth](#)
- [Roman Empire](#)
- [Bad Joke > Tenure](#)
- [Tudor](#)
- [wedgie](#)

What's next

The March, 2008 issue will be the first anniversary of *Askance*, and already on board with an article is James Bacon, who by then will be newly-married to Simoné van Zyl, and Brad Foster has already sent in the cover. There will also be an article about science fiction (of all things) from Bob Sabella. That's a good beginning so far for everybody, I would think. Congratulations are in order for James and Simoné; may you have a long life together filled with joy and fanac.

The rest of the seventh issue is up for grabs. Or then again, maybe not. I have asked Arnie Katz and a few others for contributions. Otherwise, I have some ideas of my own to include, one being a bit of faaan-fiction tentatively titled "Howard Jones and the Tempo of *Dune*"; exactly how that's going to turn out, I have no idea, but I *love* the title. Of course, there will be fanzine reviews, locs, "Figby," and maybe something else. That "something else" is totally up to you, my gentle readers.

The eighth issue (May, 2008) features a cover by Ditmar, and looks like it's shaping up to be a Joseph R. Lansdale issue: he will be at AggieCon 39 in March, and I'm planning on interviewing him there (I originally wanted to do this last year, but scheduling got in the way), plus James Bacon has promised an article about Lansdale's work. If anybody else would like to get in on the Lansdale special issue, feel free. Naturally there will be an AggieCon 39 report by me, so whatever else gets into that issue is up to the rest of you nutzoids. Sounds like yet another themed issue shaping up, doesn't it?

I also need to leave you folks with some final thoughts about this year's DUFF ballot, which is included with both the electronic and paper versions of this fanzine.

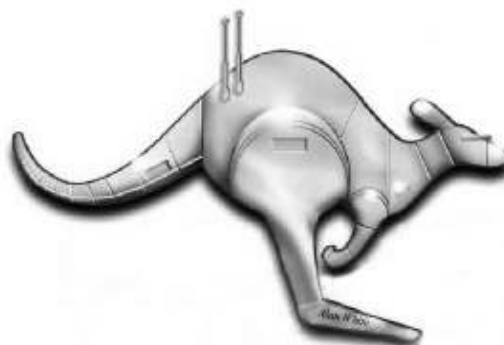
It is my hope that those of you reading this will participate in this year's DUFF campaign. This requires downloading, printing out, completing, and mailing the ballot. As can be plainly seen on page 18, I am supporting Murray Moore for this year's DUFF race to bring a North American fan to Australasia in calendar year 2008. Murray is a fine person – as are Steve and Sue Francis, the other candidates (running as one, it appears) – and he would be a wonderful DUFF delegate to the Australian national convention, Swancon, being held March 20 – 24, 2008 in Perth, Western Australia. Let us send him on down to have A Good Time there.

With that, this zine has come to an end. See you next time in the first anniversary.

John Purcell

DUFF BALLOT 2008

North America to Australasia



Download a PDF version of the ballot at <http://www.fanac.org/DUFF2008.pdf>

Since 1972 the **Down Under Fan Fund**, a fan-supported fellowship, has encouraged closer ties between science fiction fans in Australasia and North America through an alternating exchange of representatives. **DUFF** delegates attend the Worldcon or a national convention in the host country and visit fans they might otherwise never meet in person. Delegates are responsible for raising funds and administering **DUFF** until a new delegate from their continent is elected, and are expected to publish trip reports which can be sold to aid the fund.

VOTING: **DUFF** uses the preferential balloting system to guarantee an automatic runoff and a majority win. The voter ranks the candidates in order of preference (1, 2, 3, etc.). If there is no absolute majority for one candidate after the first count of votes, first-place votes for the lowest-ranking candidate are dropped, and the second-place votes on those ballots are assigned to the candidates named. This goes on until one candidate has a majority. So it's important to vote for second, third, etc. places, especially if you choose to write in a candidate.

(The voter is not required to fill in more than their name, address and first choice.)

Ballots must be signed and accompanied by a donation of at least \$5US or \$6 Australian. Anyone may contribute and donations in excess of the voting minimum are gratefully accepted. Checks should be made payable to Joe Siclari (in North America) or Norman Cates (in New Zealand/Australasia) in the administrator's home currency.

Anyone may vote who has been active in fandom on or before January 1, 2007. "Active in fandom" means involved in fannish pursuits such as fanzine writing or reading, convention running or attending, amateur film/video production, or club participation. Only natural persons may vote. Each voter may vote only once.

CANDIDATES: Two Australasian fans and three North American fans nominate each candidate. Each candidate has written a platform and promised (barring Acts of God) to travel to Swancon, the Australian National Science Fiction Convention, in Perth, Western Australia, Australia, March 20-24, 2008, and to serve as administrator of the fund until the next North American delegate is elected.

PLATFORMS

Steve & Sue Francis

We are entering our names as candidates for the DUFF selection to continue our goal of making new friends wherever we go, and a second trip to Australia would provide an excellent opportunity to do so. We have each attended 300+ conventions, including chairing 18 RiverCons. Our experiences in running and working on many conventions have made us aware of convention organization and what is involved in administering and raising funds for charitable organizations. Whatever your choice, please cast your vote!

Nominators: *North America:* Pat Molloy & Naomi Fisher, Pat & Roger Sims, James Briggs & Sandra Childress. *Australasia:* Eric Lindsay, Stephen Boucher & Janice Gelb.

Murray Moore

Being Canadian I can spell Australian. With pen, paper, camera, and Tilley underwear I will spend time with fans in homes, pubs, and cafes, and, oh yeah, attend the NatCon. I want to meet the descendants of my master criminal English relative who stole a loaf of bread. Meeting fans who I know from my membership in *ANZAPA* would be cool. I might copy Julian Warner and sleep in a kimono. I have read Greg Egan and the *Year's Best Australian Science Fiction and Fantasy*, Volume 2. I will try to like vegemite; I said try. Previous Australasian Travel: None. **Nominators:** *North America:* Mike Glicksohn, Hope Leibowitz, Lloyd & Yvonne Penney.

Australasia: Bruce Gillespie, Jean Weber & Eric Lindsay.

DEADLINE: Ballots must be received by midnight January 31, 2008! Send this entire ballot with US\$5 or A\$6 (or more) donation to an administrator. Results will be posted at:

<http://www.fanac.org/DUFF2008>

VERIFICATION: The voters must be natural persons who have been active in fandom on or before January 1, 2007. If you think you may be unknown to the administrators, please give the name of a fan or fan group (other than a candidate or nominator) who can vouch that you meet these criteria.

Reference Name: _____ Reference Address: _____

PLEASE VOTE CLEARLY & LEGIBLY. LIST IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE (1, 2, 3, ETC.):

☐ Steve & Sue Francis ☐ Murray Moore
☐ Hold Over Funds ☐ No Preference
☐ Write-in: _____

Name _____

Street _____ City _____

State/Province _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____ Country _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Signature _____ Donation _____

Mail to:

North American Administrator

Joe Siclari
661 Hanover St.
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
USA

OR

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Norman Cates
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