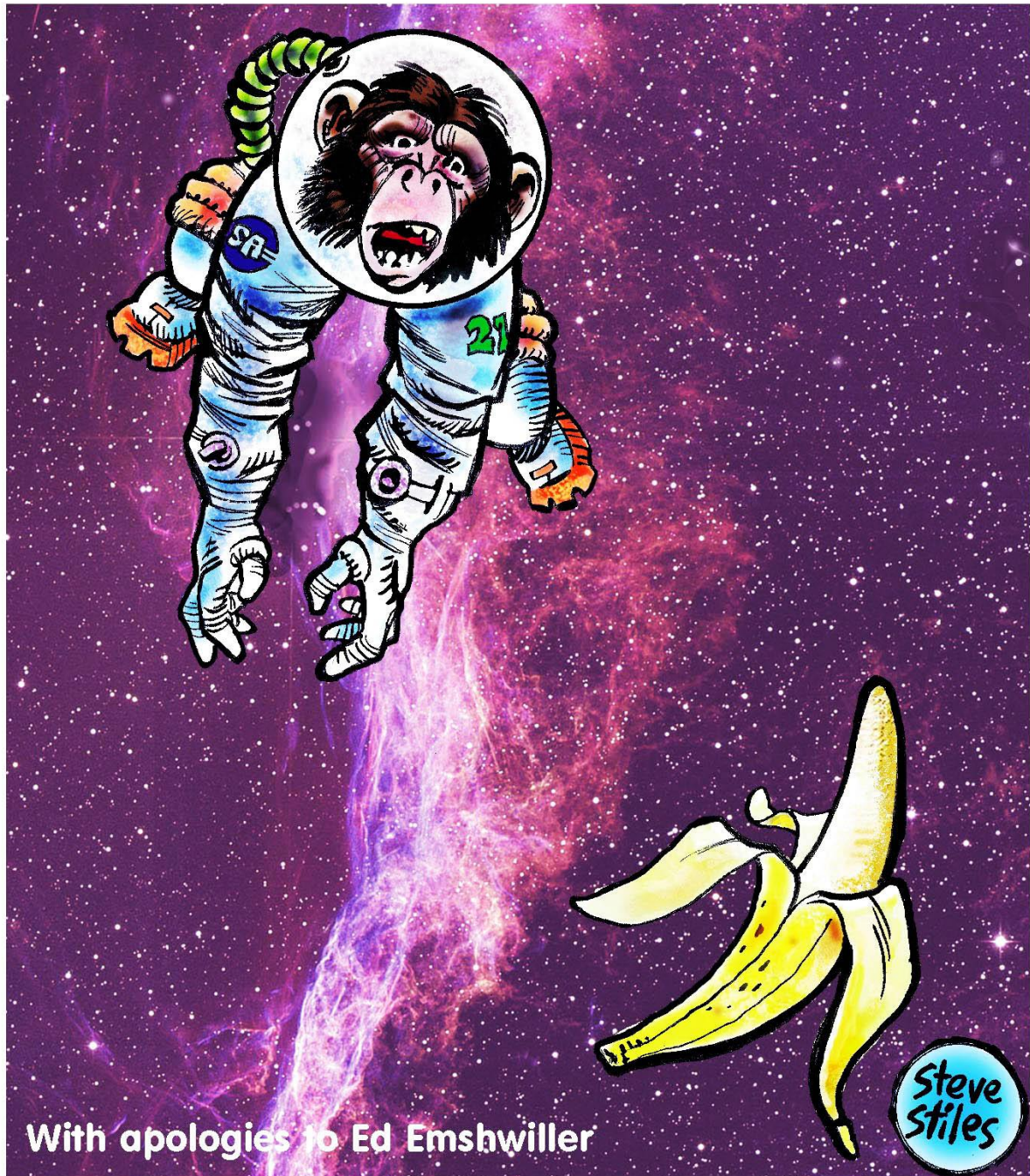


ASKANCE



With apologies to Ed Emshwiller

September 2008

Askance

Edited and published by John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845

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Contact information via e-mail: j_purcell54@yahoo.com

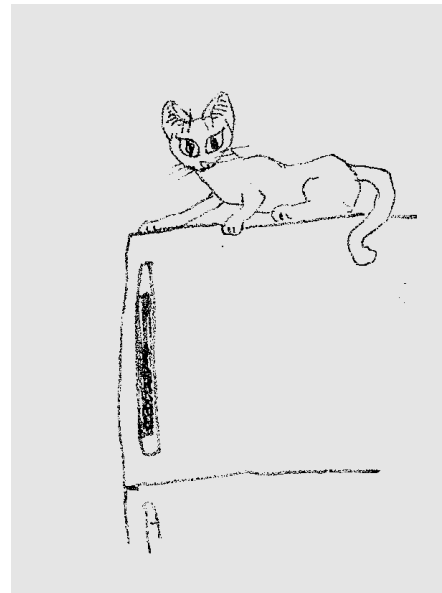
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I really am making print copies to mail. Really, I am. Ask for one of these if you'd prefer a paper-only zine.

oo

Contents:

<i>Bemused Natterings</i>	3
<i>Fielding Practice</i>	
By Eric Mayer.....	7
<i>Judd Apatow Stole My Life</i>	
By Chris Garcia.....	10
<i>Bumpy Byways, Part 2</i>	
By Lee Anne Lavell.....	12
<i>The Thin Veneer</i>	
By Arnie Katz.....	14
<i>Adventures in Speerology,</i>	
By Patricia Rogers.....	18
<i>Penney for your Thoughts</i>	
Fanzine reviews by Lloyd Penney.....	21
<i>Figby,</i>	
By Bill Fischer.....	23
<i>From the Hinterlands</i>	
Letters from you guys.....	24
<i>Regional Convention Calendar</i>	34
<i>Hungary for those Kicks,</i>	
A trip report, sort of, by Bill Fischer.....	41
<i>What's Next</i>	45



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BAMUSED NASTIER INGS

Whatever...

Sometimes my life definitely feels like it has been turned on its side – like the heading to the left – and its innards dumped unceremoniously on the ground. So far, this semester has been extraordinarily hectic. Granted, the first two or three weeks are always a bit nuts, but this time around it just seems crazier than usual. Not only that, but while making the final push on this issue, Hurricane Ike decided to make landfall in Texas (Friday, September 12, 2008), so that made things even nuttier. After I worked on this ish for a couple hours that morning, I went outside to gather up loose ends in the yard and batten down the hatches. So much fun...

It was also the weekend for ProtoCon, the fall gaming con held at Texas A&M University's Memorial Student Center, so when TAMU officials decided on Thursday the 11th to shut down the school for the entire weekend (Friday morning through Sunday night), that effectively cancelled out ProtoCon. That didn't bother me since I was not planning on attending – FenCon V up in Dallas in a few weeks, yes; that's worth focusing on – but it got me to wondering if the concommittee simply moved the event off campus to some other venue. Like I posted to the Southern

Fandom Classic listserv and my LiveJournal on 11 Sept 08, I envisioned the con chair dressed up in full Admiral Farragut regalia, perched on the balcony in the MSC, and exhorting the gathered fen and gamers below in the flag room to "Damn the storm-pedoes! Full con ahead!"

That vision is definitely worth an illo. Picture Marc Schirmeister drawing it – or Kenny Mitchrone, Dan Steffan, Charlie Williams, or any other fine fan artist – and, like me, you will crack a smile.

It's crying time again...

And no, you're not gonna leave me, but this is a great line to lead into a brief recap of the 2008 Hugo Award winners. Normally, I could care less about these things, but some interesting results came out of Denvention 3 last month, the biggie being Dave Langford's streak of consecutive wins in the Fan Writer category has finally come to an end.

If I am reading my *Ansibles* correctly, it sounds like Dave is actually relieved that John Scalzi took this award. The pressure to repeat is finally off, I guess.

More than anything, this proves that people are aware that there are other fan writers worthy of praise. Not to open the Fan Hugo can of worms again, since that discussion is *passé*, I just want to say that I appreciate John Scalzi's comment that we are way overdue in spreading the wealth around in some of these award categories. Whether anyone reading this considers John Scalzi a bona fide fan writer is a moot point at this, er, point. In my mind, anyone – amateur or professional – who writes for fan publications (non-payment) is a fan writer. But I digress. It is my belief that Hugo voters are always too provincial and narrow-minded when it comes down to nominating and voting for these awards. That being said, it is always an honor to be nominated, and even better to receive an award. I am reminded of Pat Paulson's 1968 Presidential campaign slogan: "If nominated, I will not run. If elected, I will not serve."

Anyway... My congratulations to all the winners and nominees. Just in case you haven't seen the listing yet, copy-pasted from one of the many listservs and websites providing them, here are the 2008 Science Fiction Achievement Award (Hugo) winners as presented at Denvention 3 this past August:

Novel: *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* by Michael Chabon (HarperCollins; Fourth Estate)
Novella: "All Seated on the Ground" by Connie Willis (Subterranean Press; *Asimov's* Dec. 2007)
Novelette: "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate" by Ted Chiang (Subterranean Press; *F&SF* Sept. 2007)
Short Story: "Tideline" by Elizabeth Bear (*Asimov's* June 2007)
Non-fiction Book: *Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction* by Jeff Prucher (Oxford University Press)
Dramatic Presentation, Long Form: *Stardust* Written by Jane Goldman and Matthew Vaughn, Based on the novel by Neil Gaiman, Illustrated by Charles Vess, Directed by Matthew Vaughn (Paramount Pictures)
Dramatic Presentation, Short Form *Doctor Who* "Blink" Written by Steven Moffat Directed by Hettie Macdonald (BBC)
Professional Editor, Long Form: David Hartwell
Professional Editor, Short Form: Gordon Van Gelder (*F&SF*)
Professional Artist: Stephan Martiniere
Semiprozine: *Locus*, edited by Charles N. Brown, Kirsten Gong-Wong, & Liza Groen Trombi
Fanzine: *File 770*
Fan Writer: John Scalzi
Fan Artist: Brad Foster
Campbell Award: Mary Robinette Kowal

Side note of note: In one of the listservs I subscribe to, Andy Porter posted the link to all the nominating and voting results for this year's awards, and I was pleasantly stunned to discover that *Askance* received 11 nominating votes for Best Fanzine. **blush** My sincerest thanks to those of you folks who nominated my zine. That made me feel really good. (~~By the way, your checks are in the mail.~~)

Speaking of mailing things...

So, uh, where's that hard copy you promised me?

Nothing pains me more than not getting copies mailed to people who have been patiently waiting by their mailboxes for their copy to arrive. This is especially harrowing and dangerous for my Canadian readership, so I really need to explain what's happened and what got me to thinking about this particular aspect of *Askance*.

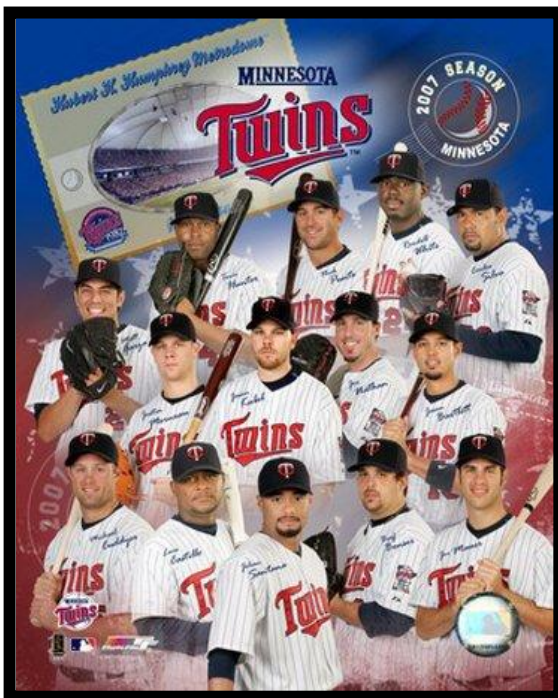
First off, I really do make hard copies of this zine. My problem is very simple: I keep forgetting to put them in the mail. It is not that I can't afford it – money is basically a non-issue any more – it is just that by the time I get around to it, the next issue's deadline is looming before me, but the major reason why is that my dissertation work (and job duties) get priority billing around here. Those two responsibilities are huge and demand a lot of time and effort.

So imagine my chagrin when in the latest issue of *The Knarley Knews* I read Rodney Leighton's loc wherein he implied that I have either dropped him from my mailing list or forgotten about him. Nothing could be further from the truth. This made me feel really bad, and I

apologize here, now, and publicly for my inability to get my butt down to the Post Office to get a dozen of these suckers in the mail.

Therefore, I am going to redouble my efforts to get hard copies off to those folks who want to read my zine but do not have access to the Internet. *Askance* is primarily an online publication, but the format is such that it is also paper-friendly. (Now *that* comment should elucidate some epithets from readers!) What I mean is that this zine looks good both on paper and on screen. Thus, if an online reader wants to print out a copy, being in .pdf format, a hard copy should look pretty spiffy when you have it in your hands.

Please remember that I still enjoy paper zines, of course, so I print out lots of e-zines. There really is something comforting about holding an issue of *Prolapse*, *Littlebrook*, or *Whistlestar*. Even *Vegas Fandom Whenever*. But I no longer print out copies of any zines produced by Chris Garcia: can't afford the paper!



I know, I know... Santana and Hunter are no longer with the team. But this is still a great picture to plonk on this page.

strength, but for the most part, anybody with any kind of athletic ability can play this game. I have always enjoyed playing baseball, and I am not a great ballplayer. My brother was much better, but this did not detract from my enjoyment of simply being part of a ball team and playing. It was fun, and that's the bottom line.

So whenever I coach any of my son's ball teams – baseball, flag football, or soccer – I try to emulate my own father's coaching philosophy: Everybody plays. That's why these kids signed up: to play. Winning is fine and dandy, but it is not the end-all of most Little League or Pony-Colt teams. We are out there to have fun. So batter up, and play ball!

Hey batter, hey batter, suh-WHING, batter....

Confession time: I am a baseball junkie. Eric Mayer knows this, as do others who read my LiveJournal entries about my favorite team, the Minnesota Twins. (Well, *that* figures...)

What completely floors me is that at this time of the season, when the races for post-season play are at a fever pitch, my Twinkies are still in the hunt for first place in the American League Central Division! This is despite losing one of baseball's most dominant pitchers, Johan Santana, and a premier outfielder and team leader in Torii Hunter, to the New York Mets and Los Angeles Angels, respectively. (The Angels clinched their division a few days ago, just FYI.) It has been an exciting season for the Twins, and I wish them well.

Truth be told, I enjoy baseball because it is a game that does not require a lot of skill to play. Oh, sure: it does require a good deal of hand-to-eye coordination, some speed and

Who and what's in this issue...

Once again, we have a good selection of folks involved, especially in the repeat offenders department. To modify the old saying: here are the Usual Suspects, *Askance*-style.

Bill Fischer

Bill is one of my favorite non-fans, but the man definitely has a fannish sense of humor. In fact, he does read science fiction, but he has never attended a convention. I will have to rectify this situation someday. Here he is with a new “Figby” and a trip report from one of his recent excursions to Europe. Fink!

Chris Garcia

It is always a treat to have something in a zine from this fella. Here is a small piece that Chris apparently wrote in his sleep and forced me to image Google “Judd Apatow.” I mean, the name sounded familiar, but my aging and fading memory failed to make a connection. Now I have it. So what do I do with it now?

Arnie Katz

In response to an “idea” that I had – reflecting on time spent in fandom, plus how one got involved with this nuthouse in the first place – Arnie developed it into yet another *Thin Veneer* column. It's Good Stuph, as usual, and quite enjoyable.

Lee Anne Lavell

Lee Anne continues her trip ~~and fall~~ down memory lane as she recounts her early years in fandom. Some year I really must meet this lady; she sounds like a wonderful person.

Eric Mayer

Like me, Eric is a baseball junkie. We natter back and forth sometimes in my LiveJournal or via e-mail about our favorite teams (while I'm a Twins fan, Eric's a Yankees fan (tough season this year)), and so along this line of thought, Eric sent this delightful piece about playing baseball with his father. This should make a personal connection with some of you readers – maybe.

Lloyd Penney

Well, I'll be hornswaggled... He's back! Our favorite loc-writer from the Great White North returns with a couple fanzine reviews, and we are all grateful. Maybe next issue he'll accost us with perceptive comments on three fanzines. Lloyd has been busy working a couple jobs, so we'll have patience with him just so long as he gets these reviews to me on time. Right, Lloyd? Right?

Patricia Rogers

From probably the most active listserv I have had the pleasure to be involved with (Southern Fandom Classic), Patricia has posted numerous accounts of helping Ruth Speer sort through Jack's massive collection of things fannish. She entitled these postings “Adventures in Speerology,” and so far there have been four installments. This is the second of the series; the first was to appear in the September issue of the *Southern Fandom Bulletin* (edited by Warren Buff), and the other installments are slated to appear in Guy Lillian's *Challenger* and Shelby Vick's *Planetary Stories*. With a grateful heart and a heartfelt nod to Ruth Speer, and in memory of Jack Speer, I thank Patricia for her permission in reprinting these postings to share with fandom at large.



My dad and I never got along as well as we should have. We were too much alike and I didn't want to admit it. Both of us probably neglected a lot of important things for our art, in his case watercolors, in mine, writing. Then he got sick and after the better part of a lifetime it was suddenly too late to rectify matters. One weekend in the early spring I found myself alone in a hotel room with HBO. At the end of *Field of Dreams*, where father and son play catch, my eyes teared up.

My family leaned towards aesthetics rather than athletics, but when I was growing up baseball was part of childhood's landscape, along with scraped knees, bicycles and crayons. Even skinny, near-sighted bookworms played ball in the backyard when they didn't have their noses in a Tom Swift Jr. adventure.

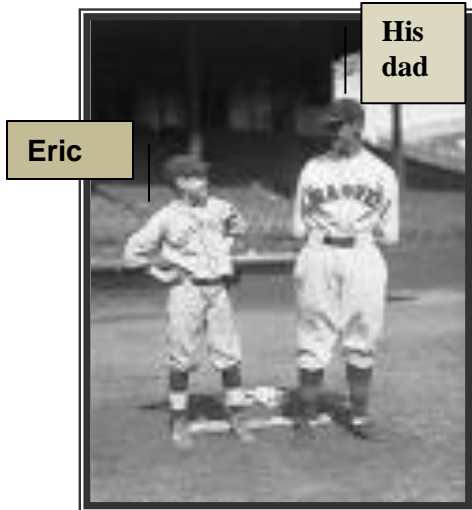
There was also a history of baseball in the family. My grandfather had a reputation as a tough local ballplayer back in the early part of the twentieth century. An old buddy of his recalled him not only as an accomplished pitcher and catcher but the best fighter in the county. An important skill in an era when games tended to end in brawls.

Before one important pick-up game the priest who was sponsoring the team promised a reward if my grandfather hit a homerun, which he did. The catcher's mitt and bat which lived out in the barn behind our house, just inside the door, amidst the rakes and shovels, had been my grandfather's payment, or so my dad said.

By the time I was old enough to play ball my grandfather was too sick to. Dad let me and my friends use the bat and mitt when we took an interest in them after my grandfather was gone. We venerated that ancient equipment. It was impossibly old. The catcher's mitt resembled its modern counterpart about as much as a trilobite resembles a trout. It was a round, leather pillow, scuffed and bleached by age, with a deep baseball-sized depression in the middle. It had no flexibility and no amount of Neatsfoot oil gave it any. You needed to get the mitt in front of the ball and then keep the ball from popping out with your free hand. Which wasn't easy since it weighed enough

to sprain a scrawny wrist. We figured it must have been one of the first mitts to drag itself out of the pre-Doubleday ooze onto the emergent baseball diamonds, though, in reality, it didn't go back quite that far.

The bat was prehistoric too. It had met baseballs that were around when Babe Ruth was still setting records and calling his shots. The wood felt harder than anything to be found in the bat racks at the local sporting goods store. The barrel was massive. Even the handle was thick enough to drive a ball. At 42 ounces, the bat lived up to its "Louisville Slugger" label. Although maybe "Louisville Club" would have been even more appropriate. My friends and I could hardly lift that much lumber let alone swing it.



Nevertheless, we used to haul the bat -- or as we called it, in hushed tones, the Bat -- out into the field behind the house for games and practice. At critical moments, with the score tied, or when Mickey Mantle was due up during a simulated World Series, we'd toss away whatever little stick we had been using and ceremoniously take up the all-powerful lumber. It always felt like it was filled with magic from the baseball's age of legends. (Or maybe my grandfather had put some lead fishing weights inside) Once we got the bludgeon in motion we had a little bit of the Babe and the Mick in us. The slightest contact with the pitch would send the ball into the weeds at the end of the field. A miss and the weight carried the batter around in a circle. He usually ended up on flopped on his back in the dirt, doing his best "shot dead at the O.K. Corral" routine, which at least ended the game dramatically.

I never played organized baseball, not even Little League. My brother did and I still remember watching him hit a double in a big game at the end of the season. I didn't have the coordination, or strength, or self-confidence.

My one moment of horsehide heroism came when I blasted a homerun in the bottom of the ninth during the informal "Boys Club" game my best friend's uncle arranged for local kids every Saturday. Actually "popped" would be a better description than "blasted." It was what we called a "Chinese homerun" -- which meant "cheap" as the labor of Chinese immigrants had been, I guess. The ball traveled about fifty feet into the thicket on the hillock behind the first base rock. I rounded the bases before it could be found and disentangled from the brush. In newsprint, in the "Notes From Our Neighborhoods" column at the back of the local weekly, it looked like I had sent the ball soaring out of the park. A lot more impressive than the Methodist Church bake sale or Mrs. Brown's niece visiting from Schenectady.

My dad never pushed me into organized athletics. In fact, as a high school art teacher he was pretty much against sports. His kilns and paints had lost out to new football uniforms at too many budget meetings.

We played catch sometimes. He slung the ball sideways. Any other way hurt. One day when he was in his early twenties he'd spent a whole afternoon throwing to a visiting friend who had played some semi-pro ball. My dad showed off his curve for hours -- a darn good curve according to the friend -- and the next day he couldn't raise his arm. His shoulder finally stopped hurting but he never could throw right again.

I liked fielding "practice" better than catch anyway. "Practice" was a euphemism. Since I never played ball except with my friends I really didn't have anything to "practice" for. I enjoyed it for its own sake, like most of the writing I've done over the years.

Summer evenings, after my dad got home from work, I'd don my glove and position myself on the back lawn and he'd hit me flies, pop-ups and liners. He started by sending the ball right to me, then gradually he placed it to one side, further back, or maybe a long ways in front of me. I needed to take a few steps, then trot after the ball, then run all out.

We'd be out there until dark. Sometimes I was disappointed as the ball grazed my glove and fell to the grass, hit a few inches too far for me to make the spectacular grab I envisioned. Other times, I tracked the ball down but was sure I could have run a couple steps further if I'd had to.

Twilight fell. The pines around the edge of the property became black sentinels and the lawn filled up with night. I could barely see my dad. It was a second after the crack of the bat before the ball emerged from the darkness of the yard into the pale gray sky.

I always wanted just one more chance. I was looking for that perfect catch. The catch where I judged the ball's flight precisely, pivoted as quickly as possible, raced as fast as I could, stretched out to my full length, at exactly the right instant, and sprawled on the ground, half the ball sticking out of the webbing but held firmly.

No matter how many good catches I made, it always seemed there was a far better one, some ultimate catch -- a Willie Mays tracks down Vic Wertz' World Series drive catch -- still out there somewhere.

My dad kept hitting balls into the fading light until, finally, I would hear the sound of bat against ball and stay where I was, staring up into the sky, unable to see anything but a stray firefly. I doubt he wanted to spend so long hitting baseballs after teaching all day. Maybe he understood my quest.

Artists, whether they work with words or watercolors, or play an instrument, or whatever other form their efforts might take, spend their whole lives trying to make the perfect catch, trying to find the elusive limits of their own abilities. There's always a better painting or story barely out of reach. Next time we'll be able to track it down.

But maybe that's just me. I wonder what Dad would think if I posed the theory to him. He'd probably disagree in no uncertain terms and then we'd argue.





Judd Apatow Stole My Life!

By Chris Garcia

I recently went to the movies. I often go with Linda or a group of friends, but this time I was on my own. It was a Judd Apatow film called *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*. It was a really funny little movie. Jason Segel played the lead character, a talented musician who does dark and ominous music for Crime Scene, a CSI rip-off starring his girlfriend, Sarah Marshall, played by the lovely and very thin Kristen Bell. She dumps him for a hot new rock star, he gets depressed and has a string of one night stands leading to his leaving for a vacation in Hawaii, where Marshall and her new man are also vacationing.

There's more to it, but something strange hit me about ½ way through: Judd Apatow has

stolen my life concept.

I've always believed in one thing: positive thinking turns problems into disasters. Yes, I know that's a dark sentiment, but think about all the times people have declared themselves ready to weather the storm only to get washed away. It's much better to see the problems, dwell on them and then when they happen, you're far more prepared.

Apatow's main characters all seem to have something in common. They all are talented guys (for the most part) who mess everything up once they get a little confidence. It's obvious with Ben in *Knocked Up*, and even more so with Dewey Cox in *Walk Hard*. I completely relate to that. Every time I've found myself thinking I'm good enough to do something, it blows up on me, usually in the worst way possible. It's a pattern and a rough one to deal with. What if success can only come to you when you're pissing your pants out of fear, but the moment you know you can slay the dragon you're doomed to be fire-roasted? It's hard and every one of Apatow's characters has that problem. And so do I.

There's more. I'm a slob, just like almost every one of Judd's characters. I'm a guy who enjoys fun, video games, a good scotch, and anytime I can just shut my brain down and enjoy the moment. About the only thing I don't share with a majority of Judd's characters is I'm not a weed smoker.

I've written of the ways in which I'm the Forty Year Old Virgin...only I'm 33 and not a virgin...I'll pause for the shocked gasps...and I don't work in an electronics store. I work in an electronics museum! I've discovered that his way of dealing with fact that he couldn't connect with woman was to shut them mostly out and live in a world of action figures, video games, apartment Karaoke and comic books. These are all things I've enjoyed throughout my life, yet I've never used them as a hiding technique. To me, they're how I build bridges to more and more people. I've always loved hanging with the geeks, as it were, and you need to have a podium on which to build a connection. A shared language if you will.

Ron Burgundy, the main character from Apatow's *Anchorman*, and I have a lot in common. He likes a good scotch; I like a good scotch. He loves a good suit and I love a good suit. He's got a voice that could make a wolverine purr and I'm the voice of a Giant Space Chicken. What's not the same. He falls in love with Miss Veronica Corningstone and he doesn't know how to handle being in love and staying the guy he's been. I've had that problem once or twice myself, and I know a lot of guys who have that happen. Luckily, I'm much better about that now. The bad parts of Ron Burgundy, the brash language, the brutal self-importance, the complete disregard for human kind, are things that I've been accused of in the past.

If I could build a character that was me, I think I would start with Weird Al Yankovich's George from UHF. He's a good hearted guy with imagination who gets control of a TV station and bends it to fit his world view. It's the kind of character that you both love and fear and wonder if it would really be possible. He's also supported by a group of friends, including a guy with an unhealthy obsession with a mop, and they're the ones that make the magic happen for him.

Follow that up with Val Kilmer's character from *Top Secret!*. Nick Rivers is a brilliant singer, something I am not but always wished I could be, and then add to that the fact that he runs into adventure with the French Resistance while singing and dancing around Europe. It's a really funny performance.

And after that, Val Kilmer's character from *Real Genius*. Tech savvy to a degree that was unheard of in those days and a wise-ass to boot! What's better than that.

And if I could have the silver tongue, amazing presence and witty comebacks of Val Kilmer's portrayal of Doc Holiday, that'd be perfect.

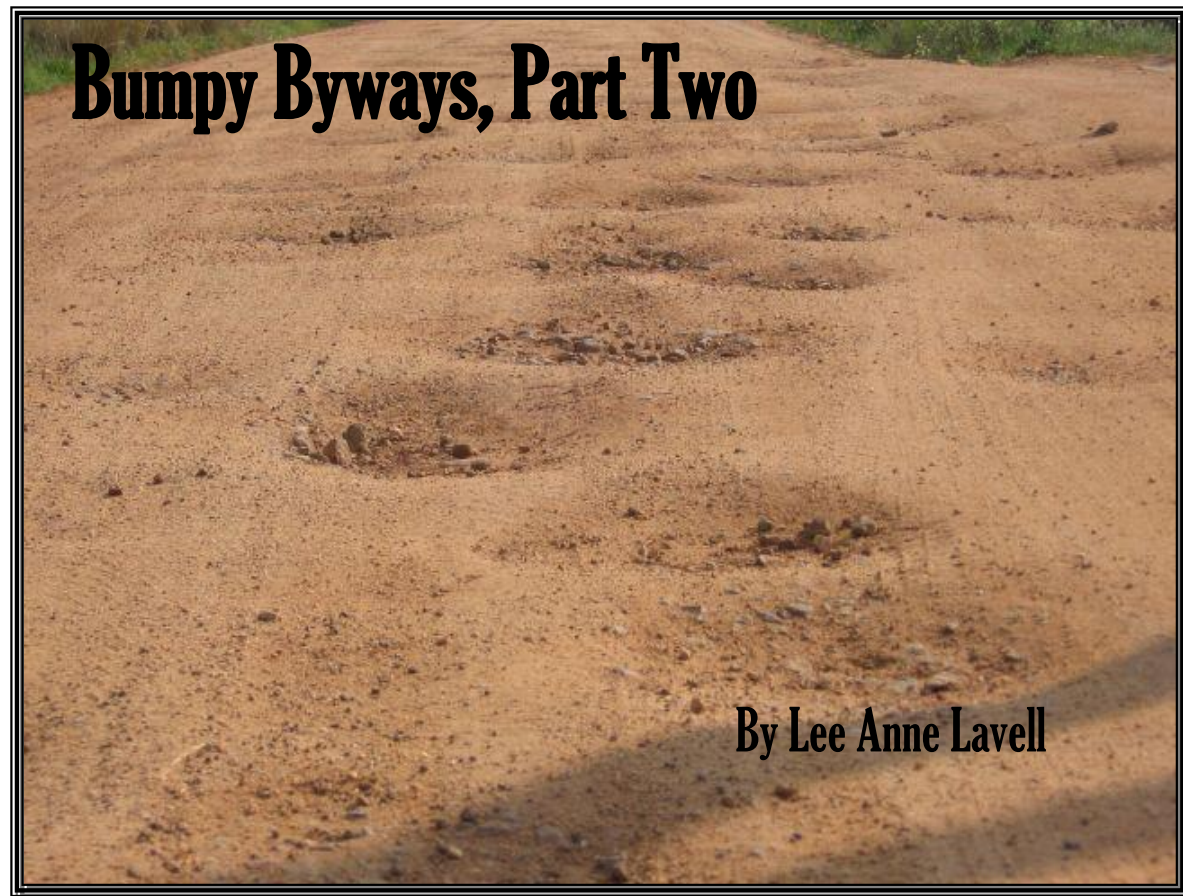
So, I'd much rather be Val Kilmer's character choices than the combined characters of Mr. Judd Apatow. Go figure!

-- Chris Garcia

I did mention in my editorial blathering that this particular issue was largely put together over the weekend of 12-14 September 2008, the very same weekend that Hurricane Ike came ashore near Galveston, Texas, and essentially wiped large swatches of that city off the map. Believe me; I do not mean to minimize the loss of life and damage, especially since my home and family were also in the line of fire. We were fortunately spared the brunt of the storm and sustained hardly any damage. Others were not as fortunate.



So for this reason, because I spent a lot of time putting this issue together while it rained heavily outside and winds gusted to 60+ miles per hour in College Station, I dedicate this issue to those fen who had their lives uprooted not only by Ike, but also by hurricanes Gustav and Hanna. You people and your families are in my thoughts, and I hope everyone is fine. Take care of yourselves. And I thank all of those who e-mailed me wishing my family the best while we hunkered down to ride out the storm. That means a lot, and it is most appreciated.



Traveling Second Boulevard

The second incarnation of Indiana Fandom was actually rather uneventful.

After the first ISFA died I continued to be active in a minor way in fandom, going to conventions, keeping up with friends, that sort of thing. I don't remember exactly why things re-started, but there we were. Another ISFA. I can't recall whether we were the Indiana Science Fantasy Association, the Indiana Science Fiction Association or the Indianapolis Science Fiction Association. Each of our three incarnations had its own individual name I think, but it didn't really make any difference. We still drew from that same core of die-hard fans in Indiana. Back were myself, Jim Lavell, Jerry Hunter, Ray Beam (whose Gleeps had gone glump), the Coulsons (now married), and Jay Crackel, but others had departed. The three Broad Ripple Boys were gone, replaced by the three Purdue Boys (we always seemed to attract trios). Most of the other original members had disappeared or moved away.

However new members appeared to replace the old. Les Gerber, a sixteen-year-old student at Indiana University in Bloomington would come up for meetings. Ted Cogswell, who taught at Ball State University in Muncie, would come down. Bob Madle had moved to Indianapolis temporarily and attended. Joe Lee Sanders was a regular member. (He once told me, as I was driving him to a Midwescon, that his mother had warned him to stay away from cigarettes, liquor and wild women and that he guessed that he was breaking all three.) We also had a couple of young ladies (early college, I think), Sandy Mitchell and Mary Rita Schlichte.

This latest incarnation of ISFA really did nothing outstanding, even less so than the first one. There was no great spate of fanzine publishing. Juanita and Buck were publishing *Yandro* which Juanita's *Eisfa* had morphed into after they were married, but that could hardly be counted as coming through the aegis of ISFA. I was editing a zine called *Space Cage* which featured our meeting notices - or half of them as they alternated with a one page meeting notice called *Space Page*. Through the latter Mrs. Pboth was born. Jim was doing the editing and publishing of *Space Page* and in one issue he thought it would be funny to compare Mary Rita to a character in *Peanuts* (I think it was) so he had as a running joke the phrase "Mary Rita Schlichte pats birds on the head". He ended the notice with the acronym for the above: MRS/PBOTH. However several people didn't catch it and wanted to know who Mrs. Pboth was. And thus was she born and continued to issue the meeting notices.

About the only other thing this ISFA did was have a running joke about bidding for a worldcon which we called Circon. No one ever ever *ever* considered it seriously and we only put in one bid, and that at the request of the favorite so they would have another city backing them.

This manifestation of ISFA was just ordinary. We had meetings in which we *sometimes* discussed s-f but more often not, just talked and had fun. I went to worldcons, Midwescons, corresponded etc. Just ordinary and dull to write about. After a few years the club just sort of died a natural death. This phase was hardly a bump, rather more like a ripple.

-- Lee Anne Lavell



A few months back, I sent an e-mail around to a batch of folks on my mailing list to see if anybody would be interested in writing a brief recap of how they perceived fandom the first time they encountered the beast. A couple people actually responded! Arnie Katz turned his into a full-blown column (starting on the next page). Here is the other response::

"I was 15 going on 16 when I sent away for my first fanzines from listings in Robert Bloch's "Fandora's Box" column in IMAGINATION. The first three were Gregg Calkins's OOPSLA!, Dean Grennell's GRUE, and L. T. Thorndyke's SPHERE. I don't recall my impression of the latter in any detail, just that I didn't like it that much. The others were what I later learned were "fannish fanzines," and I liked them a lot. What's not to like about (for instance) Walt Willis writing from Northern Ireland, Redd Boggs writing about WILD WEST WEEKLY, and Fred Chappell's hilarious parody of THE IMMORTAL STORM (even funnier after I actually read Sam's history)?! I wanted more, and I wanted to do my own fanzine. It was like an open "secret society" and that appealed to me a lot as an alienated teen. So I did, still do, and haven't ever regretted my involvement in fandom." (12 Sept 08)

- Robert Lichtman

The Thin Veneer



The Epiphany of the Elephant

by Arnie Katz

In its vastness and variety, Fandom is somewhat like the old joke about three blind men trying to describe an elephant. Each man touches the elephant's body at a different place and each gets a wildly different idea of what it looks like.

Fandom is like that, even more so today than it was when I first encountered it over 45 years ago. Yet even in those simpler times, when Fandom was much more cohesive and homogenous, first impressions of the hobby could vary tremendously.

Fandom did not come upon me in one blinding, revelatory flash. I didn't see the full panoply of Fandom in one crystalline image. I perceived it in a series of high-impact insights. Some of them were thrillingly pleasant, some were more uncomfortable and a few were a lot like having my foot stepped on by that elephant.

Let me tell you about the first of these partial epiphanies.

Lenny Bailes and I grew up on opposite sides of the same street in New Hyde Park, NY. He lived about four houses down and we went to the same schools. Through a quirk, he was a year behind me in grade, though we were fairly close in age. We shared many interests and hobbies, among them a liking for science fiction.

I had a long siege in the hospital, due to a detached retina, about age 13. (Those familiar with current surgical practice may wonder at this statement. This was pre-laser and occupied my life from early May to the opening of school the following fall, totally and completely.

Lenny and I had had a short falling out prior to the accident that caused the detached retina, probably over something dumb I'd done, so I didn't see him until late in the summer. He appeared at the door to the kitchen. He said he was still angry, but that he didn't know anyone else who'd appreciate what had happened.

Left mostly to his own devices during my confinement, Lenny had mastered the intricacies of the New York City subway. With characteristic thoroughness, Lenny learned it *all* and could guide us to any destination reachable via the labyrinthine system.

Suddenly, we were free from our suburban neighborhood and saw the possibilities of New York City open to us. So it wasn't long before we took our Mutt-and-Jeff act across the nearby City Line that separated Queens from Nassau County.

Just across Lakeville Road, hardly more than a couple of blocks away, we found the end of the Q-44 bus line. We took the long, bouncy bus ride down pothole-marked Union Turnpike to the IND subway station at the end of its route. There we could catch the F (Sixth Avenue) or the E (Eighth Avenue) that took us into the heart of Manhattan.

Lenny had already done quite a bit of exploring, so we started by visiting the offices of DC Comics, where the affable Bailes had already become something of a mascot. We also went to the offices of *Mad*, with pleasant, if less spectacular, results.

Also high on the list was a tour of the backdate magazines stores that then lined Sixth Avenue – it didn't become the Avenue of the Americas for a couple of more years.

Lenny and I had developed the habit of taking long walking tours of all the newsstands within a couple of miles of our homes, so it seemed natural to apply the same technique to checking out the used magazine places. We started up around 42nd Street and Sixth and walked all the way down to the low 20's where they petered out.

Who knows how many New York fans had visited those stores before us and denuded them of classic pulps and even the better postwar titles like *Astounding*? I vaguely recall a mention in Sam Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm* about New York City fans picking the stores clean even before the first World SF Convention.

Sixth Avenue was somewhat low-rent and dingy when we began to mine it for science fiction. The elevated line that had once kept the street in perpetual semi-darkness had gone, but it lingered as a pervasive feeling of decay. Changes had started, including some much fancier new buildings, but the old Sixth Avenue still wheezed and lived.

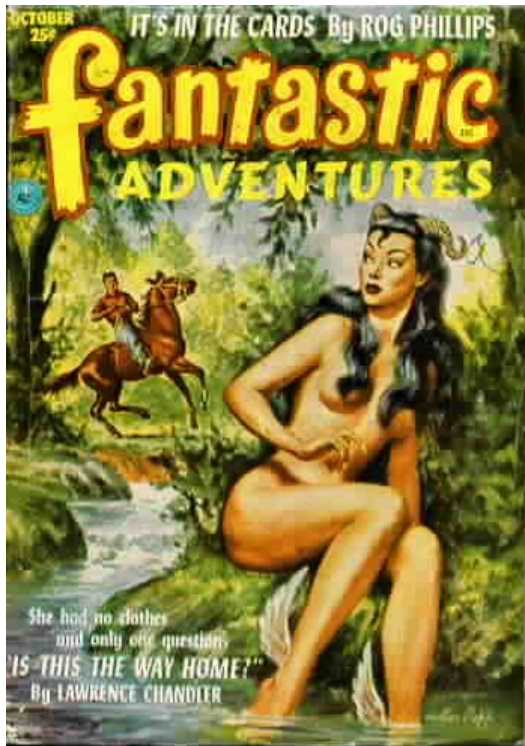
The backdate stores themselves ran the gamut from pretentious shabby to indoor Town Dump. They were poorly lit, seldom swept or straightened and arranged in systems understood only by whoever filled them with magazines and books just before opening day.

We found science fiction and fantasy magazines in abundance, but they were all digest-size mags no older than five or six years. There were some copies of the Lowndes titles like *Future* and Larry Shaw's excellent *Infinity*, but mostly they had *Amazing* and *Fantastic*.

Hugo Gernsback founded *Amazing Stories* in 1926, making it the first all science Fiction magazine. (*Weird Tales* preceded it, but that was fantasy/horror.) Poppa Hugo's brainchild took a serious tone and emphasized extrapolative science and engineering in prose that mixed stilted construction with goshwow enthusiasm.



Ripped from Gernsback and out-done by subsequent entries into the field like Street & Smith's *Astounding* gradually slid toward the low end of the market. It became a ragged-edged pulp, swerved into preoccupation with the Shaver Mystery and eventually settled into a format that featured lots of lightly humorous and action-oriented stories likely to appeal to a teenaged audience.



Fantastic, under its original name of *Fantastic Adventures*, was Ziff-Davis' attempt to extend the pulp line with a flanker title for *Amazing* (and *Mammoth Western*). Initially somewhat higher in quality than *Amazing*, *Fantastic* in the mid-to-late 1950's featured lots of Walter Mitty-esque wish fulfillment stories, breezily written, slightly titillating and devoid of nuance and meaning. *Fantastic* did so well with this approach that Ziff-Davis even published a few issues of *Dream Quest*, which was entirely devoted to stories about shlumps who get super powers and use them for important stuff like winning their high school sweetheart or spying on the women's locker room.

Whatever their flaws, those magazines had one outstanding and incontrovertible virtue: they were unbelievable cheap, less than half the price of the then-current issue of *Amazing* on the newsstand. (Little did I know that I would one day be Associate Editor of both of them.)

The magazine covers were lurid enough to entice a horny teen like me, but the stories seldom delivered on that promise. As an erudite young

scholar, I quickly learned that literary quality didn't have a very high priority. I was so thrilled with the idea of science fiction magazines that I read every one that passed into my clutches.

It didn't take long to discover that I liked the departments better than most of the stories. And of all the departments and features, the one that captivated and mesmerized me was "The Clubhouse," conducted by Rog Phillips in *Amazing* and Phillips' "The Revolving Fan," written under his real name, "Roger Graham," in *Fantastic*.

The magazines weren't stingy with space for these features. Phillips had about the same number of pages a short story would've occupied. I probably read it for the first time, because I didn't want to leave all those pages unread. My mother had taught me not to leave anything on my plate lest it somehow negatively impact the children allegedly starving in Europe and I applied the same "clean plate" philosophy to those SF magazines. I even read the Rosicrucian advertisement.

It was with absolutely no expectations that I started to read "The Clubhouse" for the first time. I was unaware that Phillips started the column shortly after World War II and that this was a mid-1950's revival – and it wouldn't have meant anything to me if I had.

So I read the column and all the others contained in the small stack of digest SF magazines I'd bought. The reviews of fanzines and comments about conventions thrilled me beyond measure. Phillips' columns put almost all the stories in the shade, not to mention *Amazing's* other departments.

Lenny read them, too, and had pretty much the same reaction.

Fandom sounded wonderful. Suddenly, there was the prospect of meeting people who liked Science Fiction as much as we did. Even more alluring, though, was the idea that those people

liked to write and did their own little magazines. Lenny and I both had writing ambitions, so the idea of fanzines caught our teenaged imaginations and held on like a limpet.

"The Clubhouse" was, of necessity, somewhat value and esoteric, because even eight-10 pages only stretched so far and he had a lot to cover. He assumed a certain amount of common knowledge, information that I most definitely didn't have.

Ah, but I didn't have to face the unknown alone. I had my sidekick Lenny Bailes, the smartest pariah at Great Neck South High School. We had no doubt that our Fine Minds, honed by thousands of games of "Clue," would prove equal to even this arduous task.

Together, our mighty intellects minutely analyzed every scrap of information contained in "The Clubhouse" and "The Revolving Fan." We even found a few similar columns by Mari Wolf -- we didn't know she was Mrs. Rog Phillips -- and Robert Bloch. We discussed and debated, speculated and deduced.

We treated it as a vast and intricate puzzle. We carefully sifted through the data, connecting facts in one column with data from another. The more we delved into our limited stock of prozine fan columns, the surer we were that we needed to find Fandom and take our places within this.

We came up with a variety of schemes to contact Fandom, none of which worked. The problem was that those columns were all five years old or more. It would've been easy to use them to contact Fandom in 1958; it was a lot tougher in 1962.

We finally decided that the only way for us to find this glittering group was to publish a fanzine. As a frequently published letterhack in the Z-D twins in 1962-63, I could work plugs into my letter. Some helpful fan would see it and, realizing that our hearts were pure, reach out and take us into the unknown world that beckoned just inches from our fingertips.

We produced our first fanzine, *Cursed #1*, and sent a letter of comment mentioning it to Cele Goldsmith Lalli, editor of *Amazing* at the time. She published it and, in due course, an actual fan wrote to me and sent me the first fanzines I'd ever seen.

Everything we knew was wrong. OK, not everything, but our double-spaced, printed on one side of the sheet spirit duplicated fanzine was very little like the issues of *Free Radical* that Judi Sephton sent me. Judi's zines weren't great by any means, but they sure gave me a crash course in Fandom.

Ah, but *that* epiphany must wait for another time, perhaps another installment of "The Thin Veneer."



-- Arnie Katz

Read Askance #10: the only zine pubbed during Hurricane Ike.

ADVENTURES IN SPEEROLOGY

BY PATRICIA ROGERS

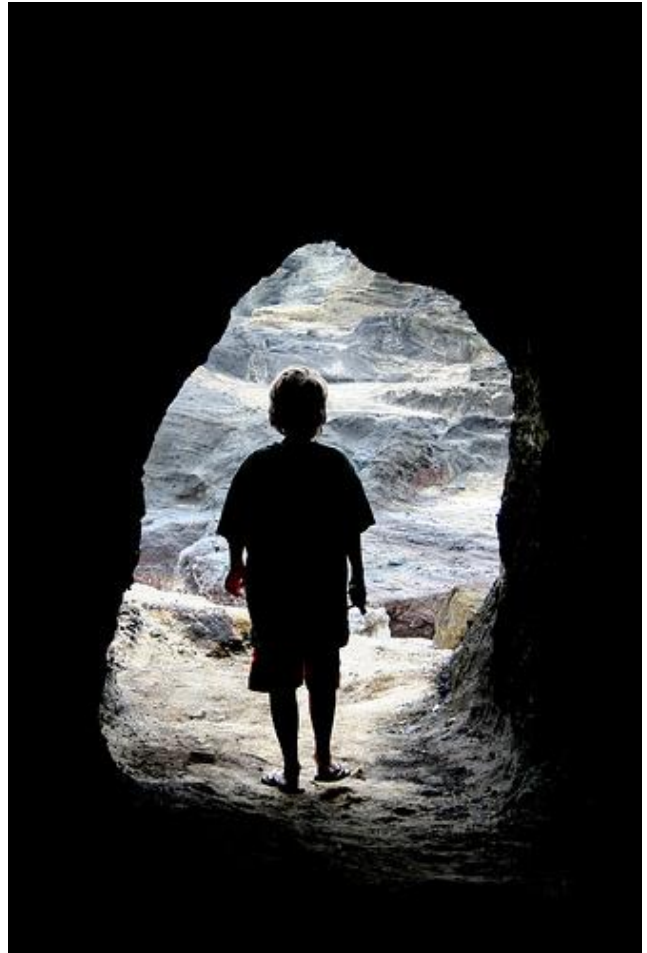
If y'all don't mind I will share with you my adventures in helping Ruth sort through Jack Speer's papers. Maybe I should be writing this up as a continuing saga for a fanzine, as this process is going to take awhile. If y'all have suggestions on a fanzine vs. posting it here - please let me know. I will forward this over to Mike Glycer too.

In my heart I think every day I spend with Ruth, and going through Jack's papers on my own, will bring amazing discoveries. Today was packed full of them and all in the space of about 3 hours.

I had told Ruth I would drop by around 3pm, and out of respect for Jack's noted punctuality I arrived at 3pm on the nose. Ruth had 3 boxes of papers waiting for me in the living room. In the first box there were half a dozen envelopes of photos labeled with dates ranging from 1938 to 1951. The first one we opened was chock-full of treasures, wonderful photos of Jack and several that looked to me like folks at SF meetings. I stared at them thinking: Is that Ed Hamilton? - Is that Henry Kuttner? (And, YES! I am going to scan them for y'all to see.)

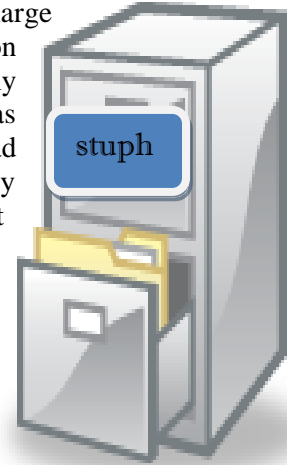
The next envelope contained photos from Jack's years in Algeria, the envelope was dated 1945. The small black-and-white photos transported me to Rick's Cafe and had all the energy of a street bazaar. Photos of camel caravans, narrow streets with a Moroccan feel, marketplace scenes, Bedouin traders having afternoon tea, ancient ruins crumbling into the desert sand, and a few lovely ladies - one even in a belly-dancing costume. I was completely enchanted. Every envelope held treasures, both for Jack's family and for SF Fandom. Ruth told me stories and we laughed a lot; it was lovely. We especially had fun trying to figure out who all the shapely young ladies were in the photos, and one in particular who was in many of the photos. (These photos were taken long before Ruth met Jack!)

The next box was full of fanzines - no surprise there. But wait...there was a surprise: they were all addressed to Roy Tackett! Several of us in the SF club here had wondered what happened to Roy's fanzines. We thought maybe some of his collection went to the



Williamson Collection at ENMU in Portales but no one was sure. Ruth said to me, "Jack was the executor of Roy Tackett's estate." "Oh My!" I thought as my brain reeled. "Is it possible that Roy Tackett's fanzine collection is here too?" Certainly the bag after bag of fanzines that had been mailed to Roy make that a real possibility.

Next we went into Jack's office. There was a five-foot-tall stack of large boxes, each in the shape of a filing cabinet drawer. Written in pencil on each one was my name: "Pat". Ruth said Jack had started writing my name on boxes of SF papers he wanted to make sure I found. That was the only moment of the afternoon that really had me close to tears. I had no idea he had been doing that and it made me think, "Wow - he really did trust me to do the right thing." I have to work very hard not to let him down.



Ruth took me to an outbuilding and in the afternoon heat we unlocked and slid the doors open to reveal (in the words of Howard Carter) "Wonderful Things", and many more boxes. Some were labeled FAPA, but Ruth said that is not necessarily what is in them now. I had already seen all the boxes in the garage but have not been up to the attic yet, where Ed (Jack's son) tells me there are even more boxes. We have our work cut out for us, but for me it is a labor of love to make sure Jack's papers are preserved and stay together for future Science Fiction fans to study and enjoy.

Ruth did tell me about the two Great Floods. When they were living in Washington State around 1950-1960 the basement of their home flooded on two occasions. Ruth said Jack did not throw a thing away but as I picked up a file folder of papers that had been glued together with ancient mold I flashed on how the first researcher of the Dead Sea Scrolls must have felt... Just how are we going to unscramble this?

Ruth and I talked photos some more and she told me about some she knew they had of Jack Williamson sitting under their apple tree in the backyard of their first home in Albuquerque. I'll let you know when we find those. We also went into the closet and looked for Jack's beanie hat. We did find one, but not the one we were looking for.

Finally I loaded 4 boxes of stuff into the car and headed home. Ruth said it would help her if I would take the boxes home and store them as she goes through stuff, so she has work space. That is fine... I will just make my guest room into Speer Storage Land until we get stuff packed up and out to the library.

Half way home I got waylaid by a traffic jam caused by an accident. I-25 became a parking lot and we all just sat in our cars for close to an hour. I thought, "Gee - what shall I read?" I reached over my shoulder into the backseat and like the "Claw" of a carnival game machine grabbed what was on top and brought it up to see what prize I had won.

In the inch of papers I picked up was -

CORFLU progress report #1 1993
Trans Atlantic Fan Fund newsletter 1992
The Space Collectors Catalog
Scientifiction First Fandom Report Fall 2001 and Winter 2002

ASFACTS NM newsletter May 1993
Notes for Bob Peterson #49 March 1993
First Fandom Membership Roster 2002
DUFF Corroboree #4 February 1993
WABE #1 and #5
File 770 #53
Minutes of 1984 WSFS Business Meeting
Terry Hughes eulogy
Science Fiction Five Yearly Nov 2001

I started reading the *Science Fiction Five Yearly* and found an article by Greg Benford entitled "How to Write a Scientific Paper". At one point, I was laughing so hard I wondered if my fellow waylaid travelers were worried about the crazy lady in the car beside them, laughing hysterically. That didn't slow me down... I just kept reading and laughing.

I can see that sorting Jack's papers is going to be a wonderful learning experience for me. I'm just sorry he is gone and I can't share my joy with him.

- Patricia Rogers

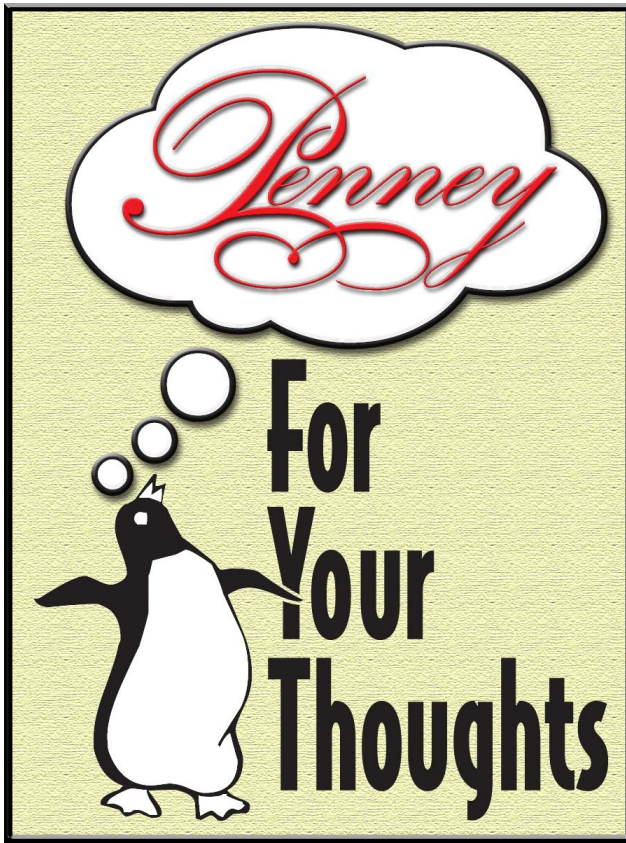
P.S. - Every zine had pencil corrections by Jack of punctuation and spelling errors. It made me smile every time I saw one.

Folks, this is the second installment of Patricia's findings. If you enjoyed reading this section, here is where the others can be found:

The first installment is in the September, 2008 issue of the *Southern Fandom Bulletin*, edited by Warren Buff. The third installment is slated for the next issue of Shelby Vick's *Planetary Stories*, and then Guy H. Lillian III will be running the fourth (and last?) dangerous installment in the next issue of *Challenger*.

Seek ye out these zines and enjoy Pat's discoveries.

"The idea of Goth-Western seems to be nearly summed up in steampunk, perhaps with a little more attitude, and more eyeliner, too..."
-- Lloyd Penney (in his loc)



Fanzine reviews!

By Lloyd Penney

Corflu Silver in Las Vegas this past spring was a great time, and the best thing about it was hauling back home to Toronto a big stack of zines. Reviews this time are on a couple of the zines I brought back, titles I either haven't seen for a long time, or at all.

I picked up Lenny Bailes' *Whistlestar* 7 at Corflu. Issue 6 came out 6-7 years ago, so it was a pleasant surprise to see Lenny pubbing his ish again. At the first glance...lots of

artwork to break up the blocks of type, and that's always an eyepleaser to this old j-grad, who also got lots of training in publication design. Artists within include Harry Bell, Bill Rotsler, Alan White, Brad Foster and Dan Steffan. The best artwork brings a wtf? to mind, and that's the Bell front cover.

This issue shows that not only is Lenny a fan of SF, but also comics and fandom. There are updates of the on-going Core Fandom discussion, the late, lamented rich brown waxes floridly on one of my favorite movies, *The Princess Bride*, Ted White reviews Michael Chabon's *Kavalier & Clay*, and there's part 3 of Andy Hooper's "Fanotchka" to round out the contents. The locol is a little small, but hey, it's been six years or so. Hey, Lenny, I archive all my letters, so next time you lose one, let me know, and chances are I can re-send it to you.

A pleasure to see, and I always like familiar titles coming back to life. If our editor could do that, we'd see more issues of *Bangweulu*, wouldn't we, John? *{No, we won't. – ed.}*

The second issue of *Random Jottings* by Michael Dobson also was released about six years ago, and the first issue? Thirty-five years before that. So, here's something probably few of us have seen, unless you've got a heckuva zine collection, the third issue.

One big article dominates, and what attracts me to it is that it's something totally outside of our own experiences. As an honorary member of the real group The Samaritans, Michael traveled to the Middle East to help award four medals of peace, one to Shimon Peres, president of Israel. The rest is a trip report like none of us have ever written. The report has extensive photographs, but a

fannish artist is part of the story, anyway...Steve Stiles is the designer of the medal awarded. An admirable effort, and anything that can say peace in the Middle East is worthwhile.

Rounding out the issue is a remembrance of Gary Gygax and some background into the history of TSR, a catalogue from Highly Inappropriate Toys that raised a smile or two, and a six-year old locol.

I'd never heard of this faned or this title before now, just a reminder that I may be nearly 50, but I am still very much of a young 'un in comparison. New titles (to me) are always of interest. Hey, Michael and Lenny, let's hope it's not another six years until we see more from you.

Whistlestar 7

Lenny Bailes
504 Bartlett Street
San Francisco, CA
94110
lennyb@speakeasy.net

Random Jottings 3

Michael Dobson
8042 Park Overlook Drive
Bethesda, MD
20817-2724
michael@dobsonbooks.com

Other zines received/viewed:

Alexiad #40

Ansible #253-254

Banana Wings #35

BCSFAzine #422-424

Bento #20

Drink Tank # 175 -181

eI #39

Einblatt! (Aug. & Sept, 2008)

Фантастика ў Фенісу #33-34

Feline Mewsings #33

Interstellar Ramjet Scoop (Aug., 2008)

Knarley Knews #129

Middle Tennessee SF Society #71

More Balls #2-4

MT Void # 1503-1510

Nice Distinctions #17

Procrastinations #6

Prolapse #12

Science Fiction in San Francisco #71-73

Sense of Wonder Stories #2

Space Cadet #1-2 & #11

Surprising Stories (Sept.08)

Taboo Opinions #111-113

Time and Again #5

Vanamonde #758-762

Vegas Fandom Weekly #109

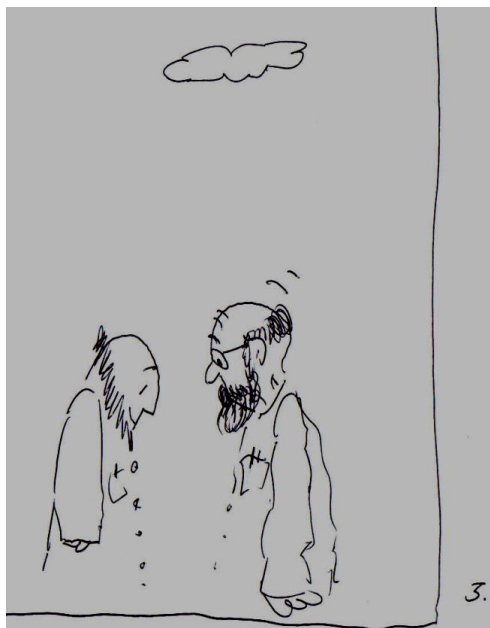
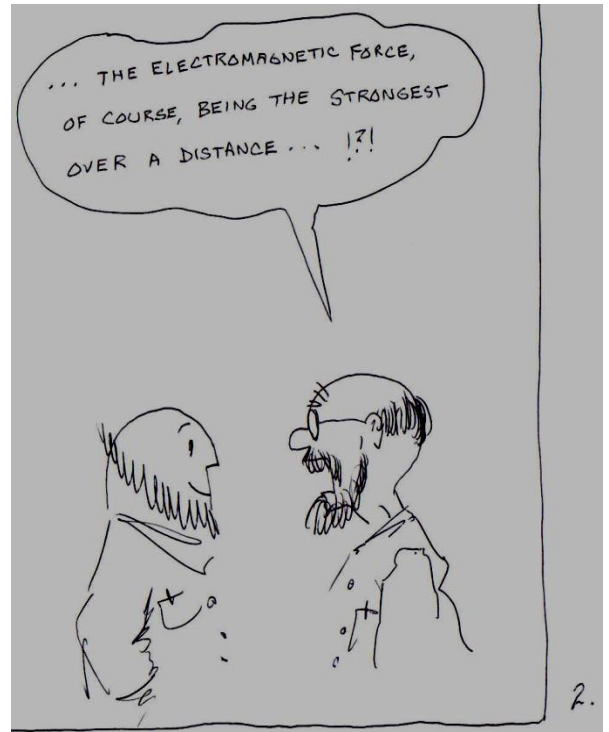
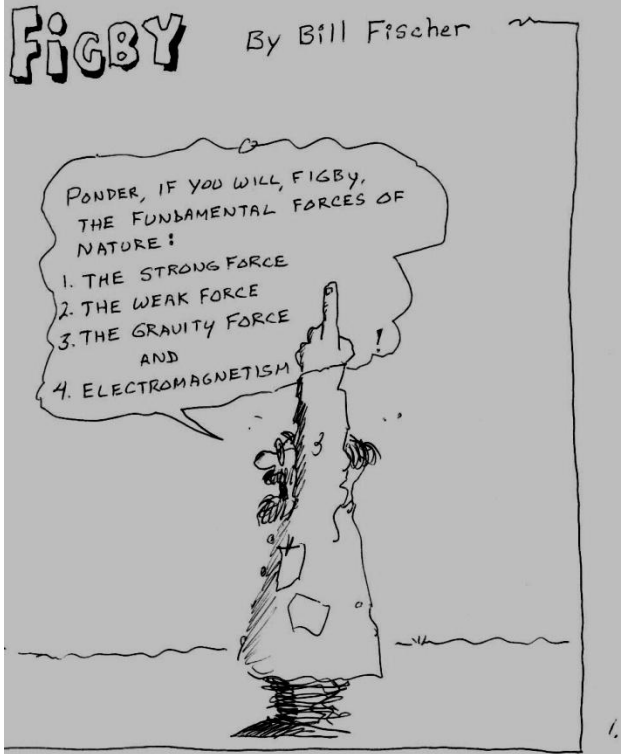
Virtual Tucker Hotel #14-17

Visions of Paradise #131-132

WSCFAzine #12-13

Zine Dump #20





from the hinterlands



Here there be letters, e-mails, brickbats, and other items that made me duck and cover since the previous issue was posted to efanazines. It is quite easy to hide behind a keyboard and a computer desk, just in case anybody's interested.

Let's start things off with a little bit of ketchup, er, I mean catch-up from the newly relocated Henry Welch, whose new address in Califunny can be found back in the WAH listing. Henry, what have you got for us today?



From: "Henry 'Knarley' Welch"

knarley@welchcastle.com

September 2, 2008

Thanks for the most recent *Askance* {Issue #7, he means, folks}.

I don't know if the classification of science fiction is as strict as Robert Sabella implies. I prefer a mix of science

and technology in my fiction as well as non-science elements.

Arnie Katz's take on core fandom is interesting. I agree with the distinction he makes, but his two options are too simplistic. While I have experienced the "not a good fit" option, I have found that some are too aggressive in rejecting those that do fit their preferences and that can discourage those who might be open to embrace it. This is clearly embodied in the KTF review which can do much to discourage a potentially good prospect.

Until next issue.

Henry L. Welch

Editor, *The Knarley Knews*

<http://tkk.welchcastle.com/>

{It is always good to hear from you, Henry, even if you're behind due to the cross-country move. I do agree that there are some fuggheads floating about who tend to look down their noses at neos or whoever, but most of the fan folks I hang with don't act that way. Come to think of it, I can't think of many who do. Of course, it has been many, many years since I attended multiple cons in a year and been an active SF club member, so my recent experience is limited. Still, my main recollection of "not a good fit" for me lasted about a year or so back in 1973-74, but once I started actually fanning a fair amount, that became a non-problem.}

)))

And from the frozen tundra – well, not yet – here's a loc from our favorite Canadian letterhack.



From: "Lloyd Penney"
penneys@allstream.net>

1706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON

CANADA M9C 2B2

August 22, 2008

Here we are again! First, a loc on your apazine, and then a fanzine column for the next issue, and now a loc on the issue at hand, *Askance* 9. Great Taral cover...not only could I tell it was his by the technique, but also by the licence plate. 967-11-11 is the telephone number

of Pizza Pizza, the most popular brand in town. But, I digress...

Good gravy! Heavens to Betsy! Showing your age there... Congrats on a bumper issue. Patience is a pain, take it from me. Instant gratification takes too long, as they say.

I checked my book shelves, and not a single Joe Lansdale book do I have. Yet another author I need to catch up on. Oh, well, I read for enjoyment, so I shouldn't make it sound like I've got homework. World Fantasy Conventions are expensive, and as literary as I like to think I am, it really is a conference for professionals, and not fans. I attended WFC in 2000 in Montréal as staff, running the green room with Yvonne, and it was enjoyable for the atmosphere. WFC will be in Calgary this year, and I hope it works well. The idea of Goth-Western seems to be nearly summed up in steampunk, perhaps with a little more attitude, and more eyeliner, too... *{With six-guns and two shots of sasparrilley..}*

Greg Benford learned what so many others have learned, that when television networks ask for great television, they really want television with great ratings. The networks never underestimate the intelligence of their viewers; in fact, I think they help drive down that level of intelligence with their programming. There is no learning on The Learning Channel, and I can't remember when the Arts & Entertainment Channel actually had any arts on it. PBS tried their best, but when funding is continuously cut, it's near impossible to carry out your mandate and terms of your broadcasting license.

Lee Anne Lavell makes me wonder how many fans had their first Worldcon in Chicago? My first was Chicon IV, but I'd already been in fandom five years.

I never meant to leave gaps in the string of my reviews, but I have, and I have already taken steps to make sure that the current gap doesn't get any wider. You have my reviews for issue 10, and I hope they fill the bill, along with two pages or so in issue 10. I must ask about Фантастика и Фентэзи, whatever that might be. Looks like Russian, but there are now so many places that use Cyrillic lettering a fanzine might come from. *{Refer to my fanzine review column in VFW #108, in which I discussed "Science Fiction and Fantasy" (literal translation there).}*

Speaking of lettering...Sexual favours for a fanzine? I thought we asked for The Usual, not The Unusual. I can understand why some fanzine fans would demand a little more importance for this fanac in the form of Core Fandom, but I do find it exclusive. I know so many fans who indulge in any of a dozen or more different kinds of fanac, and I wouldn't presume to tell them that because of my own fanac, I'm more of a fan than they are. In my own fannish career, I've run cons, con suites and green rooms, and been involved with other fan activities that have gotten me lots of good times and good friends, and would probably exclude me from the narrow definition of trufannishness that Core Fandom assumes.

I spoke to Rob Sawyer the last pubnight here...he said he wandered into Chris Garcia's fanzine lounge, and it wasn't a room, but an open area close to registration at Denvention. I get the feeling this isn't the kind of room Chris

wanted, but it's the space he got, and he did the best he could with it. We did go to Polaris 22, and we actually did have a good time there. Lots of old friends wandered in, we found a few panels we wanted to go to, and the literary aspect of the convention is actually increasing.

I understand Lee Anne Lavell's eye problems...I can tell that the sight in my right eye is getting a little worse. Probably the evolving cataract there, but I'm not an ophthalmologist. I will be going to see mine in the new year.

There's THAT picture. Planning a takeover? Heck no, we're franchising.

I must wonder, with Patricia Rogers combing through Jack Speer's collection of fannish stuff, just what did Jack hang on to? Not just zines, but everything else that goes into a typical fannish collection, I guess. You mention Tucker, Brown and Bowers, and I wonder what's become of their collections. I wonder what will become of mine! I have no idea who or what would take them. Paper ephemera isn't as popular as once was at universities, especially up here.

All done, according to my promise of this morning. Take care, and see you next zine, whichever one you choose to send to me.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

{I believe I have a good idea of what will become of my fannish ephemera once I shuck this mortal coil – many, many years from now, I hope! – and that is to donate it to my BA & MA alma Mater, Iowa State University. Hopefully, it will help form the core of a SF & F collection up there. The

Texas A&M University SF&F collection is getting much larger, but I have no real affinity for TAMU. My heart remains up north, and I have fond memories of my time at ISU.}

(((

Bob Sabella reminds us of "how it used to be" and moves on to Greg Benford's article in the last issue.



From: "Robert Sabella"
bsabella@optonline.net>

July 29, 2008

52 pages! Do you remember the old days of mimeograph zines when a few brave faneditors used to produce giant-sized fanzines like that? Isn't web-pubbing great by comparison?

Greg Benford's "An Odyssey Galactic" almost reads like sf itself. I can picture his discomfort standing on a busy street shooting the introduction coping with bag ladies and teenaged gangs. Dealing with media must be an incredibly frustrating experience, although you would expect a documentary to be somewhat easier than fiction. If Greg's experience is any indication, that might not be so. It is too bad "A Galactic Odyssey" never received American exposure, whether in edited or original form, since I am sure a lot of people, sf fans and otherwise, would have enjoyed watching it.

Greg's cautionary advice at the end of the article is worthwhile, but I wonder how many authors have high enough profiles to be able to demand some of those things? Perhaps Asimov and Clarke in their primes, but unless

Stephen King or J.K. Rowling go into scientific documentaries, it is unlikely many other writers have that type of clout.

Overall, a very good article, and the highlight of the issue.

You seem to have become a prime fanzine reviewer, what with your column at VFW and at least temporarily having taken over the duties at *Askance*. A lot of fan editors will soon be kissing up to you, Mr. Purcell (but not me. Anonymity has served me well for 20 years so far!)

Take care,

Bob

{You are not as anonymous as you think, sir. Besides, my main fanzine reviews are for VFW; I only fill in here when Lloyd is simply swamped with too much work up in Toronto. At least, that's the reason he gives me. Now you've got me wondering if Lloyd does this to give himself a chance to catch up on loc-writing. Hmm...}

(((

My fellow beisbol natterer, Eric Mayer, makes a stunning claim about the last issue, and then promptly disproves it in the very same loc!



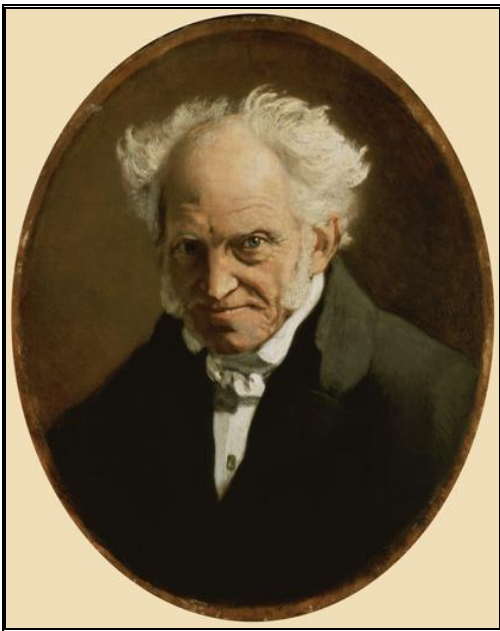
From: "Eric Mayer"
<maywrite2@epix.net>

July 27, 2008

Here come the words that crinkle a faned's stencils. An excellent and enjoyable issue, but darned if I can find comment hooks. Particularly since I

have always taken the Harry Warner that-reminds-me-of approach.

For example, I laughed at Bill Fischer's cartoon with the evil roomba conferring with Hitler in Paraguay. But what does that remind me of - except that I can't spell Pargugay? I have never battled a roomba. In fact, I thought Bill had made roombas up until I checked the Internet. Nor have I ever visited Paraguay. Although I did once subscribe to a series of short, soft cover books devoted to geography which came with picture stamps that you glued into the appropriate spots and one was about Pauruquy.



Also my college philosophy professor was from Germany. He was older than Schopenhauer (which I also can't spell). He had come to the United States after fleeing Germany when Hitler came to power, before Hitler met with roombas. He had wanted to go to that small land-locked country in South America but, alas, for some reason he was denied admission and had to come to the United

States instead. Maybe the Nazi's had booked all the rooms in advance just in case.

I don't know why anyone would want to go to Paraquay rather than the United States. My prof had obviously never read that geography book I had or else he would have known that the country is lousy with wild boars which makes it pretty lousy in my opinion. One of the picture stamps showed two boars. That's four deadly tusks-worth of boar. I should think it would be pretty difficult to contemplate metaphysics if you had to be worrying about being savaged by stray boars all the time. They are not very interested in metaphysical questions like "what do I mean when I say I see red" but if you run into them on the way to kitchen you are likely to see red and it will be all your own.

His class was amazing. I loved arguing about the nature of consciousness. The phenomenon of consciousness has always fascinated me. Unfortunately I've never figured out anything useful to do with it. Once, as we were leaving class, the prof said to me, "Mayer, you're a born philosopher." Or was it "bullshitter"? He asked me to major in Philosophy. Actually several profs asked me to major in their subjects. Profs do love to bullshit. My history prof wanted me to take up History, which reminds me of Bill Fischer's article on the Croutonic Knights. Weren't they defeated when the enemy unleashed -- not the legendary Greek Fire -- but rather the little-know Italian Salad Dressing? The poor knights were reduced to a soggy mess.

Just to hand out some egoboo, the information on Joe Lansdale, with whom

I was totally unfamiliar, was therefore quite interesting. Taral certainly makes Van Loon seem a less than nice guy. I thoroughly enjoyed Lee Lavell's account of entering fandom (heck, I was born in 1950 when she discovered fandom) and am looking forward to the next installment. And finally the Benford article was brilliant. His experiences are far, far removed from my own. It must be fascinating to be involved in projects like that. It was fascinating to read about. What a coup for *Askance*!

Excuse me now, I think I hear a wild boar outside.

Best,

Eric

{My readership in ~~Paregay~~, ~~Puaraquey~~ Parkay, Paraguay will probably take offense at your miss-spelling of their nation. And I wouldn't blame them at all.

{I was quite thrilled to get Greg's article. It is definitely one of the highlight's of this zine's brief career thus far. In a few weeks' time, I hope to hook up with him again at Fencon V in Dallas. That should be a fun time.}

(((

Eric wasn't the only one who found nothing to talk about in the last issue. Dave Locke also had the same problem.



From: "Dave Locke"
chimera@flashmail.com

27 July 2008

John –

That's quite a nice cover which Taral has done for the 9th ish. But I'd have to add some background before that statement has any meaning other than as an "attaboy". I'm not a fan of anime, so his art usually has no appeal to me. Obviously, given that, where I'm coming from is to say that, personally, there are only a few items in his passing fanart which do have an appeal, and yet it's obvious that his talent has grown to where he can get occasional egoboo even from a guy who would rather be run over by a horde of porcupines than see another piece of anime artwork. Nice work, Taral. That's okay, I'll send you a bill in the morning.

Sticking with the art for a moment, I've been aware for a couple of months that in my own zine I need to do better in crediting the art when an item strays outside the border of being done by a fanartist. I've been toying with that, and leaning a bit too much on David Burton's phrase "nicked from the net". Looking at how you do it, I wonder if a blue-sky session among faneds would arrive at any elegant consensus to tread the ground between inadequate and overly lengthy? Perhaps it's just a creative writing exercise in ensmalling the credits without making them useless. At a minimum, I believe I need to think it through some more...

I see you're quite happy that your editorial pantry is filling up with articles and covers and such. Soon your cup will runneth over. Other faneditors will run behind *Askance* hoping to lap up any spillage.

You also seem happy that your own personal fan-writing level is producing a flush year for your word-whipping

appearances in other genzines. Well, that is good. Not just as a fan-pubber, but as a reader, I consider it a Good Thing when better fan-writers produce more material. I suppose I could be perverse and wish on us that fanzine fandom be inundated by a flood of material created by people who should stick to grocery lists, but somehow I'd find that counter-productive to most anything. Wouldn't you? So I'll just be happy when the output looks greener.

I like your "Who did what and why in this issue..." introductions. They're good to read even when I don't particularly need an intro to a given writer. Beyond that, I picked up that Lloyd Penney "begins a second part-time job", which explains his absence, and that suddenly makes me flash on quite a few years where part-time jobs seemed like a way of life. Part-time jobs were all there was. I'm sure I've stated this with a better memory back closer to the time, at least on the number, but I seem to recall working five part-time bartender jobs after I blew past 18 in upstate NYok. But a regular job plus two part-time jobs sounds like a real bite for a married guy. Hang in there, Lloyd.

I've been thinking of getting hold of a Joe Lansdale novel or two, particularly after being quite taken with the movie *Bubba Ho-Tep* which I watched for the third time just a couple of weeks ago. After reading the first pages of *Bad Chili* which James Bacon's article links to, I think I know which one to start with.

Lee Lavell's historical piece was interesting to read. Also interesting, to me at least, was that she says her first convention was Chicon II in 1952. Mine was Chicon III in 1962. Lessee, #I was

in '40. #IV was in '82, #V in 1991, and #VI (which doesn't seem to want a venue number, if NESFA's "Long List of Worldcons" is any indication) in 2000. I was actually in Chicago in 2000 when the con was being held, but I was there for a non-Worldcon related fannish party (well, unrelated except that some party attendees were primarily in the area for the convention). Having already attended three Worldcons by that point, I passed this one up without regretful feelings.

You speak of Sandra Bond's 5 year issue gap on *QuasiQuote*, and Rob Jackson's maybe 17 year gap on *Inca*. I've got a 22 year gap between issues #2 and #3 of *Time and Again*. I can't remember the details, unfortunately, but I believe Roger Sims makes all of us look moderately speedy when it comes to gaps in publishing. Forty some-odd years comes to mind as Roger's record, but I could be quite wrong about that.

Eric Mayer writes: "It strike me that very often, people who attempt to define fandom begin with the assumption that fandom consists of their friends or those of whom they approve and then work backwards to find a definition that will justify that initial assumption."

I believe he's right. I don't believe I personally have ever gone after a universal definition, but even so I do believe that everyone has their own fandom. Fandom keeps evolving, as most things do, and no two people are in the same fandom. There are many rooms and halls in the mansion, and the people we see might be in one or five or seven of them from time to time. David Hulan, a wise man, told me early on that if you don't like the people, then you

won't like the group. You can, however, make friends and good acquaintances anywhere in fandom's groups, and the areas you're active in - and the people you're active with - comprise your fandom.

When I look at someone else's view of what fandom is, I generally can't agree with much of what they're saying. That's not *my* fandom...

The view that everyone has their own fandom works well for me. My fandom is the "good parts version" (to steal from *The Princess Bride*) of what I've encountered through the years. No one can take it away from me. They can't power-grab it, they can't steal it, they can't ruin it. Portions of it can be lessened in enjoyment via deaths and gaffiations and disagreements, but that's a part of life and a major "push" in anything a person is involved in. Hell, I continued corresponding with gaffiates, so even gaffiation can be mitigated...

Very good issue, John. I enjoyed it, even when it didn't reach up and attack me with comment hooks.

All best,

Dave

{For someone who found little or no comment hooks, you certainly were a bit long-winded there, hey?}

*{Long gaps between issues used to be the "fannish" thing to do; some fans wear that gap as a distinct badge of pride. If I revived **This House** (which is unlikely) that would be a gap of nearly 20 years since the 15th issue appeared. Granted, it's tempting, but I won't do it. Askance is the kind of zine*

that I really enjoy producing right now. How long this will run is anybody's guess. Once it no longer becomes fun, then it's time to hang up that metaphorical Gestetner.}

)))

It is always a pleasure to hear from Lee Anne Lavell, even when strangers come a-calling at her house.



Lee Anne Lavell
leelavell@comcast.net

July 27, 2008

Greetings,

Askance 9 arrived amidst a bit of turmoil around here. I had just gotten my new reading glasses and my eyes were going "eep! Things are different!" So, I was just getting used to that when some SCA members, who use my place for storage decided to unload some of their stuff from a recent event without telling me they were going to do so. I reminded them that they must not forget to call about coming or, if I cannot tell who they are, I might just call the police, which I almost did until I recognized them. Finally, my computer started giving me fits and I could not tell what was wrong and Comcast was no help, saying they don't accept Mozilla Firefox and they don't know anything about it. So I briefly switched to Internet Explorer and got an email out to the Lewtons, and David Lewton's son, Andrew, who is a computer whiz extraordinaire, managed to get it fixed by giving me phone directions. Turns out that it was all Comcast's fault and the problem hit a bunch of people. At any rate, throughout all this I had managed to print out *Askance 9* and was taking notes

for the LoC while reading it. So here goes.

First of all, a small suggestion: it would make things easier for us'ns who like hard copies if you would put all those con notices (which don't really apply to the zine) at the end. *{Well, it all depends on the "flow" of the zine as I feel that amorphous concept developing. Most of the time the con listings will drift towards the rear of the zine, although it really does depend on how any particular issue "falls" into place.}*

The first things I noticed about this latest issue were the great front and back covers.

The Joe R. Lansdale group of articles:

Quite frankly I had never heard of him until now. I am not a fan of the gore genre (despite the fact that Stephen King is one of my favorite authors---but that's not why I read him), nor am I into Westerns (save for the old "Wild Wild West" tv series), and I haven't been into comics/graphic novels for many years, so I guess that explains my ignorance of his works. "Leather Maiden" does sound mildly interesting, so I might look it up if I ever catch up with this backlog of books left from my eye problems. I will say that I did enjoy the interview. I am always fascinated by what authors say about their own works.

An Odyssey Galactic: I don't have much to say about Benford's adventures into the "scientific television" medium save that he struck me as rather naïve not to have expected what happened. Just from watching such shows it is apparent that compromises are made. If they are too bad I just stop watching the show or series...or go griping to someone about

it. (I get especially annoyed by those that say, "Scientists think..." What scientists? What are their qualifications? On what basis do they think this?)

Clair De Loon: Since I haven't read any van Loon, and have little desire to do so, I can't really make any intelligent remarks about this. I did read the article. Interesting? Eh...

Bumpy Byways: I have one small quibble on my own article. On page 28, paragraph 3 - first line as printed: "The following Spring I went to my first Midwestcon..." *Midwestcon* should have been spelled *Midwescon* minus the "t." (The parenthetical comment following doesn't make any sense otherwise.) I'm not sure when the name of the convention changed, but somewhere along the line it did, but it was originally *Midwescon*. *{My fault there. By the time I got into convention fandom, it was known as Midwestcon; I simply forgot that the original name was minus the 't'. Sorry about that.}*

Penney for your Thoughts: If Lloyd continues to be so busy that he doesn't have time to do reviews, perhaps you could persuade your daughter to do them. Then you wouldn't have to change the title.

Figby was, as always, fine.

I haven't gotten to the Croutonic Knights thing yet. I will eventually but right now I'm just not in the mood. I *will* show it to my friend, Marcus Loidolt, as this is right up his alley.

As always, a great issue. Looking forward to the next one!

Cheers.....Lee Lavell

{Many thanks for the kind words, Lee. In a way, your loc sounds a bit like Eric's and Dave's: not many comment hooks. Interesting – especially considering the length of the locs you three wrote. Imagine how long your locs would be if I actually put comment-worthy material in an issue!}

)))

To bring this loccol to a close, Mark Leeper provides clarification on exactly how long his and Evelyn's zine MT Void has been running. No matter how you slice it, the zine has been continuously pubbed for a very, very long time!



From: "Mark R. Leeper"
mleeper@optonline.net>

July 27, 2008

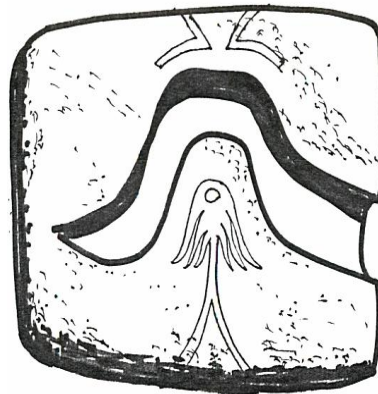
Congratulations on another fine issue of *Askance*.

A quick comment. You count back 1500 weeks and find it is 28.9 years that the *MT VOID* has been a weekly. That is nearly correct, but not quite. It took a

little while for the zine now called *MT VOID* to go weekly. There was a stretch in which it was two issues per Bell Labs SF Club Meeting and club meetings were every three weeks. In actual fact while we just passed one milestone, that of the 1500th issue, we have another milestone coming up. The first issue was Thursday, August 10, 1978. We are just about to hit our pearl anniversary. I may comment about it in the notice, but since we just had one milestone, another one seems redundant.

Mark

{Happy belated 30th Fanzine Anniversary, Mark & Evelyn! This is one heckuva feat. Let's see many more happy years to come.}



Here be the promised We Also Heard From List:

Greg Benford, Arnie Katz, Curt Phillips, Steve Stiles, Taral Wayne
COA: Henry Welch 18345 Skyline Blvd. Los Gatos, CA 95033
knarley@welchcastle.com
<http://tkk.welchcastle.com/>



Regional Convention Calendar

Here there be listings of cons and events in the Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana, and Arkansas area. The photo at left was purloined off the internet by Googling "Denvention 3." Somebody get that big blue bear a membership; it looks like he wants in on the party. Hopefully this time the con-titles- are-links idea works.

[ProtoCon 10](#)

Gaming con
September 12-14, 2008
Memorial Student Center
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas

ProtoCon is an all-genre gaming convention run by gamers just like you. On top of all the games that everyone is familiar with and love to play, ProtoCon has an additional focus on independent publishers and prototype games. Our special events include the 2nd Annual Prototype Game Design Challenge, a Game Design Panel, and a live-action game design event (really, I kid you not).

We have a Dealers Room and a Game Auction on top of all the great gaming!
You can find the fun and familiar and the new and exciting all at ProtoCon!

[BroKon](#)

Gaming convention offering Living Greyhawk RPGA Scenarios
(Presumably September 2008)
(in the greater Shreveport, LA area)

To sign up as a player or judge, please visit [Warhorn Sign-ups](#)

[Starbase Houston Annual Chili & Dessert Cook-Off with Collectible Auction](#)

One-day (1 PM-4 PM) annual fundraiser for Starbase Houston
September 28, 2008
Harris County Precinct 1
Christia V. Adair Park Community Center
15107 Cullen Blvd
Houston, TX 77047-6713

Houston, TX area

Cash Prizes and Awards for best Chili, Dessert, and Exotic Alien Dish. Starbase Houston's mission is to advance, promote, and sustain all the various facets of Star Trek, Star Trek Houston Fandom, and all things sci-fi. \$5 per person for food. There is no charge for entering the cook-off.

FenCon V

A Fan-Operated Science Fiction and Fantasy Literary and Filk Convention in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area

October 3-5, 2008

Crowne Plaza Hotel

North Dallas/Addison

14315 Midway Road

Addison, TX 75001

(Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex area)

GOH: Gregory Benford

Artist GOH: Real Musgrave

Music GOH: Three Weird Sisters

Fen GOH: Gerald Burton

Toastmaster: Howard Waldrop

Special Guest: Jay Lake

ORAC Special Guest: Doris Egan

Plus many more guests

Fan-run convention featuring dedicated Filk Track and Costuming Tracks, Demos, Gaming, an Art Show & Auction, Panel Discussions, Science Programming, our annual Short Story Contest, Open Filking, the legendary FenCon Cabaret, a Writer's Workshop, over 100 Program Participants, and Much More!

FenCon is a production of the Dallas Future Society, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of science, literature, and music for the future of all mankind.



Shimakon 3: Curse of the Dragon

Rio Grande Valley's first Anime Convention....We are run by fans for fans.

October 3-5, 2008

Bahia Mar Resort

6300 Padre Blvd

South Padre Island, TX 78597

(South Padre Island, TX / South Texas area)

There's everything from gaming to Cosplay to brunches with special guests. Dealers Room, Guests, Video Rooms, Table Top GAMING, Video Game Room with Tournaments, Autographs, CosPlay Competition

TrickConTreat 2008

Fan-run convention dedicated to Halloween culture.

October 3-5, 2008

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Oklahoma City

6200 North Robinson Avenue

Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Literary GOH: Craig Wolf

Artist GOH: Dirk Strangely

Horror GOH: Dr. Ignatius Faust Fear II

Special Guests: Dawn the Butcher, Count Gregore, Bill Allen, Steven Wedel, and many more!

Browncoat Ball

October 10-12, 2008

Firefly fandom

Omni Austin Hotel Downtown

700 San Jacinto at 8th Street

Austin, Texas 78701

Re/Max Ballunar Lifftoff Festival

October 31-November 2, 2008

NASA Johnson Space Center

Houston, Texas

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

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

Arkansas Anime Festival

Anime con for Northwest Arkansas.

November 8-9, 2008

Springdale, AR

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

For more information, [send email](#)

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

Millenniumcon 11

Gaming con.

November 14-16, 2008

Wingate Inn & Conference Center

1209 North Interstate Highway 35

Round Rock, TX 78664

Round Rock / Central Texas area

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

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

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

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

Road Runner Gaming Expo & G-Kon III

A gaming, anime and science fiction and fantasy convention with a major focus on gaming of all kinds.

November 14-16, 2008

Dallas Market Hall

Renaissance Dallas Hotel

2222 North Stemmons Freeway

Dallas, TX 75207

(Dallas / Fort Worth, Metroplex area)

Presented by Texas Gamers

Oni-Con 2008

Anime con

November 21-23, 2008

George R. Brown Convention Center

1001 Avenida de las Americas

Houston, TX 77010

Hilton Americas

1600 Lamar

Houston, TX 77010

Anime Music Video Contest, Art Show, and more!



[Izumicon 2008](#)

New Adventures in Anime & Manga

November 21-23, 2008

Sheraton Midwest City and Reed Convention Center

5800 Will Rogers Rd.

Midwest City, OK 73110

Oklahoma City, OK area

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

[Con-Jour](#)

Gaming con. January 30-February 1, 2009

University of Houston, Clear Lake

Houston, Texas

Greater Houston metropolitan area

Presented by the UHCL Gamer's Guild in partnership with the UHCL Film & History Club.



Just to give some of you an idea of what happens at a gaming con, this is a typical scene. Captured from the Internet, this is a scene from Gencon Indy (I think) in 2003. The game being played in the foreground is "Giant Settlers of Catan," which is – naturally – a game I have never heard of before. It looks interesting, though.

OwlCon XXVIII

Gaming, Fantasy, & Science Fiction Convention

February 6-8, 2009

RMC/Ley Student Center

Rice University

Houston, TX

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



Ikkicon 3

Japanese Animation & Pop Culture
Convention

February 6-8, 2009

The Hilton Austin

500 East 4th Street

Austin, Texas 78701

Anime Idol, Anime Music Video(AMV)
Contest, Anime Poetry Slam, Dance Contest,
Media Gallery (Artist Alley & Exhibitions),
Dealers Room, Art Show, and more!

ConDFW VIII

A Science Fiction & Fantasy Event

February 20-22, 2009

Crown Plaza Suites Dallas - Park Central

7800 Alpha Road

Dallas, TX 75240

(Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex area)

Author Guest of Honor: Jim Butcher

Author Guest of Honor: David Weber

The Expected Activities: Art Show, Autographs, Dealer's Room, Con Suite, Panel Discussions,
Gaming, Readings, Freebie Tables

And the Unexpected: Annual Sci-Fi Spelling Bee, Pro Artist Drawing Challenge, Charity Book
Swap, Hard Science Panels, Short Story Contest, Beauty Pageant...of Sorts..., "Late Night Double
Feature", Sci-Fi Pictionary

Sponsored by the Texas Speculative Fiction Association

[Furry Fiesta](#)

Texas' only furry convention, and the first one in the state of Texas in over four years.

February 20-22, 2009

Crowne Plaza Hotel North Dallas - Addison

14315 Midway Road

Addison, TX 75001

(Dallas / Fort Worth / Metroplex area)

Dealer's Den, Artist Alley, Video Room, Charity, and more!

[All-Con 2009](#)

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

March 13-15, 2009

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.

[REVELcon 20](#)

The Little Con with the Texas-Size Heart

March 13-15, 2009

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/Friends of Fandom Art Show](#)



Hungary for those Kicks*

Bill Fischer, creator and artiste extraordinaire of Figby and the purveyor of those Wikiphilia entries, sometimes goes to Europe on business trips and/or vacations. Here's a sampling of what he usually does on those "business trips." This might have been a working vacation. Who knows for sure, anyway? Does anybody really know what time it is? Does anybody really care? – ed.

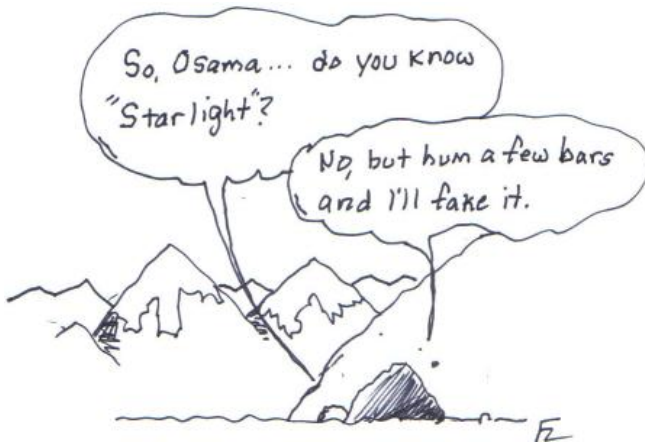
*with apologies to Paul Revere and the Raiders.

Hi John!

Well, I blew in from Hungary (via Vienna and Amsterdam) Thursday evening.

The airlines managed to find the *remaining* 2/3 of our luggage (that's for *all* of the passengers on the 767) and retrieve it from the Air Jihad™ baggage cart in Kabul and get it to us on Friday.

Including my beloved banjo... no telling who was pawing it!



We were then told by the luggage people at



that it was a computer glitch...

But it is written: Do not kill the infidel if he can play "Starlight". Just torture him a bit by making him watch reruns of "The View"...



In any event, they ain't getting my banjo back!

Hungary was great: We had two days with the kids in Budapest while staying at the Reformed Church of Hungary Seminary Dorm in Ràday street in Budapest. While there I showed them the statue of that all around fun guy and party animal, John Calvin. We also took them to the castle district where they got to see the 1,000 year old cathedral of Saint Matthias and the 'Fishermen's Bastion' where the Fishermen of Budapest stopped a Turkish onslaught in the 1400's. The kids were a little disappointed

that Mickey and Goofy weren't at the castle to greet them. American college students – they're so sophisticated!



Then we took them to the camp and while there toured the 900 year old abbey at Tihány. Balatòn is a beautiful lake and a hugely successful tourist trap for unwitting Austrians and Germans (and an occasional American).



Tihány *{pictured here to the left}* was built to protect the abbots from the Mongols in the 1200's. It has the tomb of King András II, who decreed that a lot of vowels in Hungarian would forever after have to have funny little marks above them to confuse Americans. You can see the beautiful Lake Balatòn behind it.

We also spent a day in Bratislava (capital of the Slovak Republic) with the students and a day in Vienna (capital of hovering waiters). One big difference between Hungary and Austria is that in Hungary

they have lots of "walking" streets, which like the Nicollet Mall *{in downtown Minneapolis, MN}*, don't permit regular traffic so you can walk around without getting run over; but in Austria, they drive up on the sidewalk, between café tables, up the escalator. No one on foot is safe in Vienna.

Vienna also is proud of their cultural history, as the following, typical conversation shows:

American: Say, buddy, can you show me the way to Hofbürg (*Hapsburg capital palace*) ?

Viennese person: Mozart? Oh yes! He is our most famous person. Can I offer you some Mozart chocolates?

A: Uh, no, I just want to know the way to the Hofbürg. Is this the RingStrasse?

V: Ah yes! The RingStrasse! Mozart loved to stroll along the RingStrasse! His apartment is just over on that street.

A: Ummm, yeah. That's cool. But I hear you have a good exhibition at the art museum of the works of Gustav Klimt.

V: Oh, Mozart just loved art! You can see many paintings of Mozart at the museum!

A: Ok... So did Maria Theresa actually live at the Hofbürg?

V: Oh, I don't know if Mozart really knew her. What a stupid whore she was to not know Mozart! Can I sell you some tickets to the Mozart concert?

A: I think she probably heard of him. He lived within her lifetime.

V: Ach! What a lucky woman she was! What a noble and brilliant empress to have personally known Mozart!

A: Look, I'm really not interested in Mozart right now...

(At this point the Viennese person glasses over and his skin becomes mottled with purple, apoplectic rage. Not unlike what you'd see in a Berlin bunker as the Red Army tanks rattle noisily a few blocks away. The Viennese regains a little composure and explodes:)

V: !!!! Help! Poliezi! Arrest this criminal right now! Stop him!

(Viennese cop arrives)

Cop: What is going on here?

A: Dude, chill. I'm just looking around at Vienna and this geek keeps trying to shove Mozart at me.

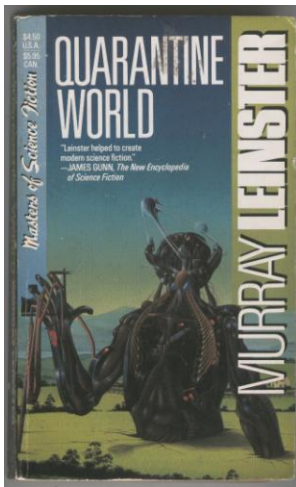
C: What! You're not interested in Mozart? Get out! Get out of my city you Üntermensch! Get out before I deport you to Kabul, with your banjo!

They have gold or silver or white, spray painted “Mozart” mimes on every other corner in the center of Vienna. I wonder what they’d do if I dressed up like Elvis and spray painted myself gold and busked on the RingStrasse...

And speaking of mimes – that may be my next Wikiphilia article.

Talk at you later.

Bill ☺



book review not in a box

Quarantine World, by Murray Leinster. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1983. 266 pages.

I have always been a sucker for space opera. You know: someone or *something* is threatening a planet, mankind, the universe... the whole shebang is up for grabs, and only one man stands in the way. One of my all-time favorite space operatic writers was Murray Leinster (the *nom de plume* of Will F. Jenkins (1896-1975)), and about a year ago I found this edition of *Quarantine World* on the clearance shelves at the Half-Price Bookstore in town for \$1! A bargain, to say the least, so I snapped it up and, using my teacher’s discount card, bought the book for 80¢. No complaint made.

At any rate, if you have never read any of the four novellas included in this book – “The Mutant Weapon” (*Astounding*, Aug., 1957), “Plague on Kryder II” (*Analog*, Dec., 1964), “Ribbon in the Sky” (*Astounding*, June, 1957), and the title story, “Quarantine World” (*Analog*, Nov., 1966) – you are in for a treat. All are eminently readable, linked together by two characters, a man and his *tormal*. There are other stories in this series not collected here: “Med Ship Man” (*Galaxy*, Oct., 1963), “The Hate Disease” (*Analog*, Aug., 1963), “The Grandfather’s War” (*Astounding*, Oct., 1957), and “This World is Taboo” (*Amazing*, July, 1961). The collection *Med Ship* (Baen Books, 2002) includes all of the stories mentioned above, making this a fine addition to any SF fan’s collection.

Alright. So here’s the deal with the stories in this particular book. The basic premise is that mankind has scattered around the galaxy, and in order to remain healthy and viable – and in touch with other human colonies on other planets – the Med Ships ply the interstellar waters. Calhoun and his *tormal*, Murgatroyd, are on the med ship *Aesclipus Twenty*, and (from the back cover) “at every planetfall, they risk their lives, as they fight not only plagues and epidemics, but human enemies bent on wholesale death and destruction.” Of such stuff are great stories spun.

The neat thing about these stories is the concept of the *tormal*, a creature best suited to accompany the med ship doctors as they make their stops at assorted human colonies. The *tormal*’s immune system possesses the unique ability to immediately combat any infection by creating an antibody in its blood system. That way, Calhoun can isolate whatever nasty plague/epidemic is affecting the population and find a cure. Of course, it is never that easy, otherwise these wouldn’t be fun stories to read, now would they? By the way, Leinster makes Murgatroyd into a fun alien character that a reader can identify with, which isn’t easy to do in science fiction.

Quarantine World is an easy read, very much like reading medical detective stories set on other planets. If you get a chance to read these stories in any of their various incarnations, do so. They are very enjoyable light reading.

What's next

Well, I certainly hope that the eleventh issue is not assembled in part during a hurricane, much like a sizeable chunk of this issue was. Coming up in the 11th issue (November) is the third part of Lee Anne Lavell's fannish autobiography "Bumpy Byways," and most likely a con report about FenCon V (October 3-5, 2008; see the con listings for more info and contacting them). The cover is by the incomparable Marc Schirmeister, and Bill Fischer informs me he has yet another Wikiphilia entry ready, this one about the history of mimes. That should be interesting.

Now to share a legendary fannish story with everyone. On September 13th, while Hurricane Ike raged, I kept working on this issue. Taking a break, I posted this to the Southern Fandom Classic listserv:

"...It's early Saturday morning, and our power is still on - for now - but it's pretty nasty outside (heavy rains and winds approx. 43 mph, gusting to 60+ mph), and we are dry and fine. It's supposed to be like this all day and on into the night. The Tropical Storm Warning is on until 7 AM tomorrow morning.

So like a true fan, while we still have power I'm gonna work on Askance #10 for a bit - mostly offline, but a fan's gotta do what a fan's gotta do. With luck and God's grace, I'll be on the SFC chat tonight to let everyone know how we're doing."

Robert Lichtman then wrote this in response to my posting:

" You remind me of Mike Rosenblum, an English fan who published a zine during WWII called FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST. One issue carries the interlineo: "Read Futurian War Digest; the only fanzine produced during an air raid..." or words to that effect. Mike had been at home working on that issue during the Blitz when a German night-time air raid sent his family scurrying to the Anderson shelter (air-raid shelter) in their backyard. Mike carried his typer and stencils with him, and by candlelight and the illumination of some of the nearer German bomb blasts, carried on with his fanwriting. Today in far-off Texas, you carry on that same noble tradition. Good on yer, mate!

Kinda makes me wish I'd loc'ed the previous issue..."

Well, there is no way that I can top Mike Rosenblum's effort. Talk about fannish dedication! I remember reading this story in Harry Warner, Jr.'s book *All Our Yesterdays*, but I had to share this story with you folks.

And so to wrap this issue up, I am grateful that all is well as can be in the week just after a major storm. Things are slowly getting back to normal in this neck of the woods, but my thoughts and prayers are with everyone who are still waiting for their power to come back or to return to their homes and begin the cleanup. Take care folks, and I will see you next issue.

■ *John Purcell*

