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ASKANCE THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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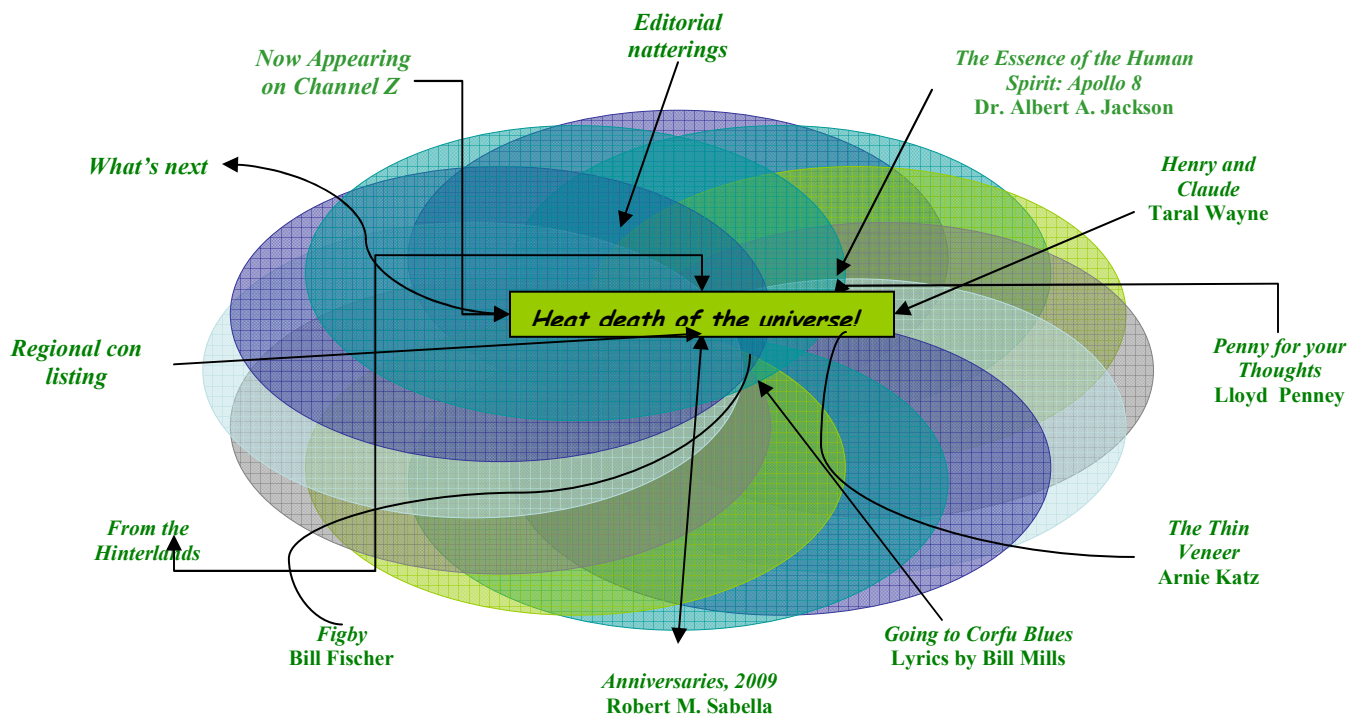
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What you have here in your hands (or on screen) is another Mythical Publication. Copies of this fine, bimonthly fanzine can be had for The Usual, which means expressed interest, submission and eventual inclusion of articles and artwork, letters of comment, expressed interest, and cold hard cash in the amount of \$2.00 USD. Bribes are also accepted, natchery. Of course, if you send in locs, articles, and artwork, you've earned a life-time free subscription. Heckuva deal, eh?

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"Oh, no! Claude Degler with a computer!"

It's annoy Bill Burns time! a.k.a., the table of contents. Start at the top and go clockwise.



Covers: Brad Foster (1 & 7), Alan White (2), Sheryl Birkhead (3), Bill Rotsler (4), Frank Wu (5), Kyle Hinton (6), Ditmar (8 & 12), Taral Wayne (9), Dan Steffan (10), Marc Schirmeister (11). Thank you, one and all!

Interiors: Alexis Gilliland - 4, 19; image googled "Claude Degler" (illo by Dave Rowe) - 12; image googled "Henry Argasinski" - 14; Alan White - 15; Bill Rotsler - 16; Tyler Martin - 17; photo by Eric Lindsay - 21; clip art - 22,23,34,41,50; photo by Gary S. Mattingly - 23; "Corflu Zed" logo by Dan Steffan - 23; image googled "Dave Langford" - 27; image googled "Hinterlands" - 29; image googled "The Prisoner" - 38; image googled "anime" - 43; image googled "sf conventions" - 44; Seattle Worldcon bid logo - 45; image googled "Japan" - 45; www.cartoonstock.com - 49; image googled "space station" - 51.

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Bemused Natterings



And so it goes on...

I never thought this zine would take off like it has. For the past two years, ever since I decided to fold up shop on über fanzine production with *In A Prior Lifetime* and *...and furthermore* to begin this zine as a bimonthly, the results have far exceeded my expectations. In fact, this fanzine is still just as much fun to produce now as it was when I began it in March of 2007. Possibly even more fun, which is hard to imagine. A large part of the enjoyment is

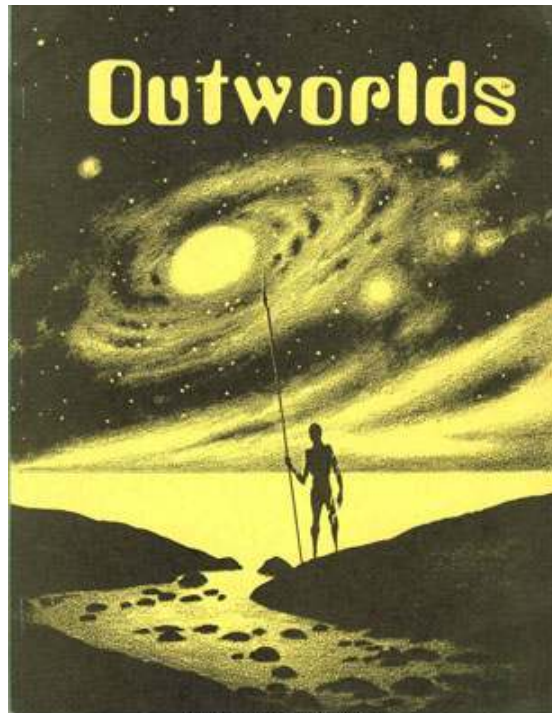
due to you, gentle readers and contributors, so for all of your efforts and support, I thank you. It is completely true that a zine lives and dies by reader response, and *Askance* is definitely hale and hearty. Some year it may end up on life support and require having the plug pulled, but that appears to be far off in the future. Or so I hope.

I really have to thank a lot of people who have been extraordinarily supportive of these efforts. In no particular order, my heartfelt gratitude goes to Chris Garcia, the best con roomie I've ever had and an ardent supporter of my zines; Brad Foster, fan artiste extraordinaire (to say the least); Arnie Katz, a long-time fan and wonderful correspondent who can hold his own in an intelligent debate; Bill Fischer, my long-time silly friend and *Figby* creator; Lloyd Penney, who knows his way around a fanzine – and lettercolumn – with the best of them; Taral Wayne, a frequent contributor and 2008 Rotsler Award winning artist; Bill Burns, the gent who maintains that indispensable website www.efanzines.com, and has given me excellent technical pointers over the years; and Ghu knows all the rest. All of you folks who read this zine on-line or in hard-copy (when I remember to send them out, that is) are equally at fault for making *Askance* such a joy to work on. Then there's my wife, Valerie, who really doesn't understand this "fanzine fandom" thing very much, but lets me indulge in my silly hobby interest. With all my love, I thank her the most.

Without any of these people, this zine would be a bust. Even those nameless Internet masses who read this at www.efanzines.com are responsible. Now if only some of them would actually write to me once in a while, that might make this an even more interesting zine. I can dream, can't I?

Why a fanzine...

Indeed. Why do this? I guess you can always blame my fannish forefathers who churned out their turgid, purplish prose in wonderful fanzines like *Rune*, *Outworlds*, *Hyphen*, *Odd*, *Warhoon*, *Mota*, *Le Zombie*, *VOM*, and so on ad infinitum.



My fannish eye-teeth were cut on some of these zines when I first got involved with fandom back in 1973. They were great learning texts from which I gleaned the past history of science fiction fandom and clued me in on the current myths being created. This was how I learned who sawed Courtney's boat, which mad dogs kneed us in the groin, who was excluded in 1939, the Breen Boondoggle, to say nothing of what it meant to say "Minneapolis in '73", what "Big MAC" meant to a fan, and so forth. Becoming a fan in the mid-70s was wondrous. Even now, looking back at those days, those experiences haven't lost any of their magical luster over the ensuing 36 years.

So why produce a fanzine? That is a good question that deserves a reasonable answer.

It was Fred Haskell who got me started writing the occasional book review for *Rune*, which he began editing some time in 1974. (I think that's right; hopefully Fred will read this and correct my memory if it's wrong.) That was also the time I began loc-writing at a pace that pales at what I can do today with the aid of the Internet. (This makes me wonder how many locs Lloyd Penney would write if he had to rely on a typewriter, paper, and postage stamps. That might slow him down a titch.) Seeing my name in print in *Rune* and other zines like *Mota* and *Granfalloon* gave me the idea to start up my own zine, which I called *This House*, so-called because I was living at home at the time while attending the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Instead of repeating my entire life story, I direct you to www.efanzines.com where you can read more of my fannish autobiography in the two zines archived there: *In A Prior Lifetime* and *...and furthermore*. If you're lucky and can find old issues of *This House* and *Bangweulu* – many of which can be located in the famed Eaton Collection housed at UC-Riverside and the Mike Horvat Collection at the University of Iowa – there are other bits and pieces in those zines about my early years in fandom.

The bottom line to "why a fanzine" is that it looked like a lot of fun, and it most certainly was. After Valerie and I were married in 1989 (in May of that year I pubbed the last issues of *This House* and *Bangweulu* as an Ace Double zine), I still attended a few cons, but essentially began my drift out of fandom, which concluded at Minicon of 1992. It wasn't until March of 2006 that I went to another convention (Aggiecon), but during those 14 or so years I never forgot about the friendships forged in the fires of fandom. Plus, I never forgot how much fun it was to get fanzines, letters, artwork, and even articles in the mail. Apparently, once the mimeo ink gets into your bloodstream it never leaves. It left an indelible stain on me that could not be washed or flushed out no matter how hard I tried. And believe me, I have! Repeatedly.



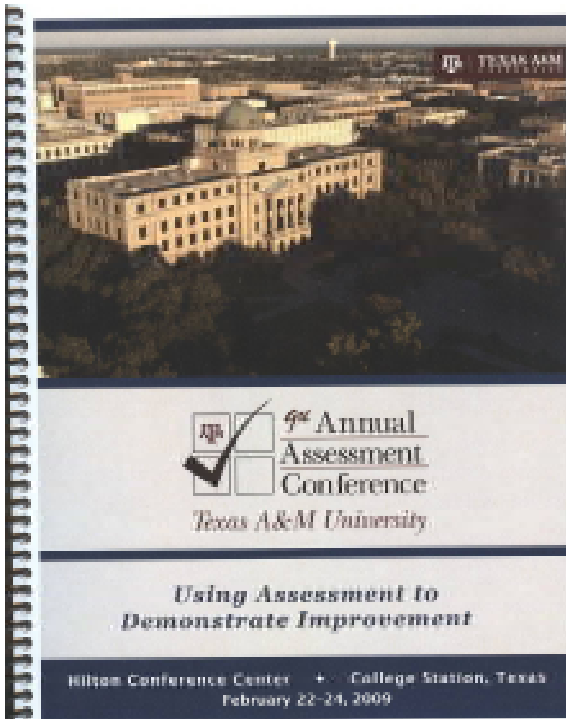
So I am doing this fanzine for the love of it. No longer is there the need to cut stencils, ink up the mimeograph, crank out the pages and slip-sheet away - figuratively speaking, that is. Most of my zines from the 70s and 80s were Xeroxed because my brother Rick was the head printer at Apache Corporation in downtown Minneapolis at that time. The thing is, those were great times, and the Internet makes producing zines much easier and allows me access to many of my friends still knocking about.

That last subordinate clause contains the real reason why, though: my friends. Without them, I definitely would not be producing *Askance*. This one is definitely for **you**. 🍌

A-conning we will go...

That header means it is once again convention season, both professional and recreational. So thus I was able to head off to yet another academic conference, traveling the whopping distance of 7.5 miles from my house northward to the College Station Hilton Hotel and Convention Center – which is a mere 4.5 miles from the Blinn College campus I work on in the other direction from the Hilton. Big whoop, but when one considers that my school footed the bill for me to attend (registration was \$175, plus other amenities), how could I refuse?

It was actually quite interesting. This was the 9th Annual Assessment Conference hosted by Texas A&M University, and it was really different going to a conference that began on a Sunday morning instead of a Friday afternoon. Definitely odd, but the turnout for the General Education



Assessment workshop I attended was large. The 9:30 AM start up time certainly didn't deter folks from showing up. The table I sat at had folks from El Cerrito College (CA), Tyler Junior College (Tyler, TX), Tarleton State University (Stephenville, TX), and New York City College of Technology (guess where they're located?). It was a good group of people, and the speaker, Dr. Mary J. Allen, of California State University, Bakersfield, presented well. Dr. Allen was also the Monday morning plenary speaker, and gave an informative and entertaining speech on faculty assessment.

I should mention here that sitting at the next table during the GE workshop was a gentleman who looked exactly like Lester Del Rey – only twice as tall. That kind of croggled me since you really don't see too many people in this world who could be a doppelganger for Lester Del Rey.

Sunday night's highlight was the two hour schmooze and booze session – as one of my Blinn colleagues put it – where the vendors displayed their wares while the Hilton provided free food and four (count 'em, four) cash bars strategically placed around the concourse. Blinn had paid for two free drinks for their representatives, and I dutifully cashed mine in for two Shiner Bock beers. They nicely washed down the buffalo wings, the cheese-stuffed jalapeno poppers, fruits, salad, breads, and cheeses. Your basic bar food type of deal, but quite yummy, and at the right price (free), you had better believe I made the most of it.

Besides the free food and beer, it really was cool to get personal demonstrations of assessment software. I walked away with a couple CD's to practice and play with different assessment tools. Some of these could really make a difference in streamlining grading procedures of student papers and other on-line assignments; a lot of what I teach is web-enhanced, and I am always on the lookout for that better mouse trap or methods to streamline the grading procedure. There weren't any freebie books available either Sunday or Monday, but I did learn that Tuesday morning (while I was teaching), one publisher put out a couple dozen copies of a textbook that disappeared just as rapidly as those boxes of free SF paperbacks at FenCon last October. Oh, well.

All in all, it was worth the time to go. At least I didn't have to drive forever to get to it and have the school spend oodles of bucks on a hotel room. For that, I shall hang onto my Blinn-allotted \$400

travel funds for another conference later this year. The next TCCTA conference is slated to be in Galveston, so those funds will come in handy then. Yes, it is true that I love my job. One cannot complain when your institution pays your way into conferences, gives you travel money, and even provides for food and beer. No complaint is forthcoming from this corner.

Who, what, and why are in this issue....

Wonderful people, who else? Oh. You want particulars. Well, then. In that case, here are the capsule summaries:

Bill Fischer

Even though Bill has graced every single issue of *Askance*, it has become *de rigueur* to mention my old friend, who may not be a fan in the sense that we define science fiction fans, but Bill's sense of humor is definitely fannish. Without a doubt, he is a very silly person, and it is always A Good Thing to have another installment of the continuing adventures of our favorite lab assistant, "Figby".

Albert A. Jackson, PhD

Guess what? There is a real rocket scientist in this fanzine! Last October I had the distinct pleasure of meeting Al Jackson at FenCon V in Dallas. One of the last surviving members – at least, of those who admit to it – of Dallas Fandom in the late 1950s (along with Greg and Jim Benford), Al has been employed by NASA since 1966 (read his personal note at the end of his article), and has graciously allowed me to reprint an article he wrote to mark the 40th Anniversary of Apollo 8. My thanks also go to the publisher of the *AIAA Houston Horizons* journal for their permission to reprint. Well, since *Askance* #13 is an anniversary issue, the article makes sense. Come to think of it, there's another 40th anniversary this coming July 20th, I do believe...

Arnie Katz

Now that he has officially called it quits on *VFW*, one of the first zines I started reading when I re-entered fanzine fandom four years ago, Arnie has graciously provided yet another installment of his occasional column, "The Thin Veneer." All I had to do was ask, and he responded. Look for his next fanzine project, which he has entitled *Quibble*.

Bill Mills

Another good friend from Las Vegas fandom, and the brainiac who began The Voices of Fandom website, which in turn spawned the Virtual Consuite during Corflu Silver, this gent definitely has a bent sense of humor. Bill also likes to sing, and really does play guitar, I found out. With his permission, I happily present for posterity the full, unabridged version of the "Goin' to Corflu Blues."

Lloyd Penney

Oh. He's back again with more fanzine reviews. Good enough. Lloyd is also threatening to pub a zine of his own, so we'll see if he does. If this comes to pass, five bucks sez he locs his own zine.

Robert M. Sabella

This was a real surprise submission. Robert asked if I would be interested in pubbing an infrequent column, a continuation of something he once did for Dick Geis' Science Fiction Review ages ago. I am very happy to be the repository of the list-meister's efforts.

Taral Wayne

Sending in yet another unsolicited submission, Taral solidifies his position (in my mind) as a potential Fan Writer Hugo nominee for this year. Quite different from his last appearance in *Askance*, this is the kind of article that just makes you go, "huh; how about that?" Taral is also the Fan Guest of Honor at the upcoming WorldCon in Montreal, Anticipation. Somebody give him a hug for me when you see him there, okay?

[As noted on the previous page, it is my honor and privilege to present a reprint of the following article. Instead of retyping and attempting to reformat the article, here it is in .pdf, just as it appeared in the Winter 2008 issue of the **Houston Horizons** journal of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (only not on an angle, drat it all!). A sincere thank you goes not only to Al Jackson, but also to Hal Hall, the curator of the Science Fiction Collection at Texas A&M University, for directing me to this article. A heartfelt thank you likewise goes to the AIAA and the publisher of the **Houston Horizons** journal for their permission to reprint. – JP]

Apollo 8 40th Anniversary

The Essence of the Human Spirit: Apollo 8

DR. ALBERT JACKSON

"Please be informed there is a Santa Claus"-- Jim Lovell (Post TLI December 25 1968)

"Sir, it wasn't how you looked, it was how you smelled." -- Navy Seal frogman to astronaut William Anders, explaining his reaction to opening the Apollo 8 capsule.

Imagine that you have been mandated with going to the Moon before 1970 and you are faced with the following: a launch vehicle that had seventy anomalies on its last unmanned flight, three engines that had failed, and severe pogo problems, and yet it is required to fly with a human crew. You have a spacecraft that has not made a manned flight yet and has been re-engineered after a terrible disaster. You have a whole suite of on-board and ground software that has never been tested in a full non-simulation mis-

sion. You have a large ground tracking network not yet used to work a manned mission at the lunar distance. You have only four months to plan and train for a manned flight no one has ever done before. Four months out, the Pacific fleet was expecting a Christmas break, and no recovery ship might be available. The crew would have no Lunar Module 'life boat'. No human had ever escaped the gravity of the Earth. Facing a terrible array of unknowns, your decision? 'You' are George Low, Manager of the Apollo Spacecraft Program Office, no hesitation... an orbital flight to the moon! [1, 2, 5]

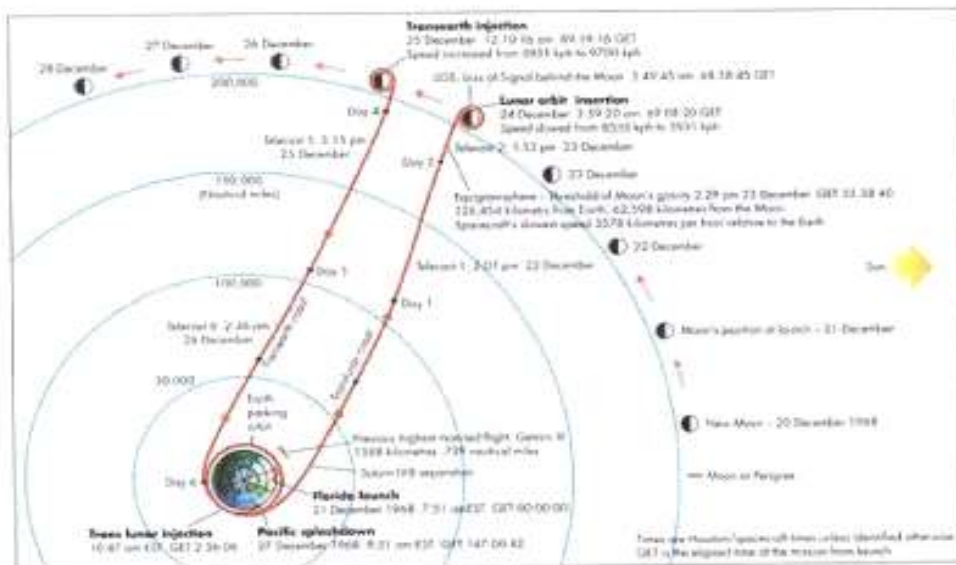
Problems with achieving a landing mission in 1969 to the Moon made themselves manifest in the spring of 1968 when the delivery of the Lunar Module slipped. However troubles with the Saturn V during the Apollo V launch test seemed on the way to being solved by



late spring. The concept of circum-lunar flight goes back to Jules Verne with the technical aspects laid out by Herman Oberth in 1923. In the 1960's all the flight planning documents for the Apollo program had laid out all the astrodynamics of the trajectory [7]. Problems with the Lunar Module looked as if the first Moon landing might be pushed off into 1970. Placed against this situation, the Soviet Union was still actively pursuing a lunar landing, particularly the possibility of a circumlunar flight in 1968. In April 1968 both George Low of the Manned Space Craft Center (later JSC) and Director of Flight Operations Christ Kraft started thinking about a lunar flight in April 1968, and by August of 1968 George Low decided the only solution to a lunar landing in 1969 was to fly to the moon before the end of 1968. [1, 2, 5]

The 9th of August 1968 was a very eventful day; between 8:45 AM and 10 AM, Low, Gilruth (MSC director), Kraft, and director of Flight Crew Operations Donald K. Slayton after a breathless morning meeting at MSC set up a meeting at Marshall Space Flight Center with its director Werner von Braun, Apollo Program Director Samuel C. Phillips and Kennedy Space

Upper right: Apollo 8 crew patch
Below: Apollo 8 trajectory (Figure used with permission of Hamish Lindsay)



Flight Center director Kurt Debus at 2:30 PM that same day. At this meeting they finalized a plan to present to senior NASA management that if Apollo 7 were successful Apollo 8 not just go circumlunar but into lunar orbit in December of 1968. [1, 2, 5]

On that same August 9th, Deke Slayton called Frank Borman and had him come to Houston from California to ask him if he wanted to go to the moon. He said yes, went back to California and told James Lovell and William Anders; they were enthusiastic. They all came back to Houston to start training. [1, 2, 5]

On August 15th Deputy Administrator Thomas Paine and Director of the Apollo Program finally got approval from the Administrator for Manned Space Flight George Mueller and NASA Administrator James Webb to go ahead with the Apollo contingent on the Apollo 7 mission. Therefore, before a manned version of the Command and Service Module had flown, a decision to go to the moon had been made. Planning and preparations for the Apollo 8 mission proceeded toward launch readiness on December 6, 1968. [1, 2, 5]

On September 9, the crew entered the Command Module Simulator to begin their preparation for the flight. By the time the mission flew, the crew would have spent seven hours training for every actual hour of flight. Although all crew members were trained in all aspects of the mission, it was necessary to specialize. Borman, as commander, was given training on controlling the spacecraft during the reentry. Lovell was trained on navigating the spacecraft in

case communication was lost with the Earth. Anders was placed in charge of checking that the spacecraft was in working order. [1, 2, 5]

September, October and November of 1968 were three months of intense planning, training and work by Mission Planning & Analysis Division (MPAD), Flight Crew Operations Directorate (FCOD) and Flight Operations Directorate (FOD). The Manned Spacecraft Center, Marshall Spaceflight Center and the [Kennedy Space Center](#) had a lot on their plates! [1, 2, 5]

Marshall had to certify the Saturn V for its first manned spaceflight.

MPAD had to plan for the first manned vehicle to leave the earth's gravitational field.

MOD and FCOD had to plan and train for the first Lunar flight.

MIT had to prepare for the first manned mission using computer to perform guidance, navigation and control from the Earth to another celestial body.

The various Apollo contractors had to prepare every hardware aspect of a Command Module for both transfer in Earth-Moon space and orbit operations around the moon.

The MSC Lunar scientists had to formulate a plan for photographic exploration of the Moon from Lunar orbit. The science community had to examine and plan for the radiation environment in trans Earth-Lunar space.

KSC had to plan and train for the first manned Saturn V launch.

MSC and Apollo contractors had to plan for the first ever hyperbolic reentry into the Earth's atmosphere of a manned spacecraft.

Those were just some of the

Tracking stations

Apollo 8 was a milestone flight for the MSFN, since it was the first test of the network during a mission to the moon. Prior to the mission, concerns were raised regarding small terrestrial errors found in tracking tests that could be magnified to become much larger navigation errors at lunar distances. For assistance in the matter, MSC turned to JPL to look into their navigation system and techniques. JPL personnel, experienced in lunar navigation, proved very helpful as they assisted in locating tracking station location inaccuracies within Houston MCC

software. These erroneous values would have manifested themselves as large tracking measurement errors at lunar distances. The tracking station location fixes were implemented less than two days prior to the launch of Apollo 8.

Of special note was the Honeysuckle Creek near Canberra in Australia. It had a prime role for many of the first time critical operations, acquisition of signal after Lunar Orbit Insertion, prime for post Trans Earth Injection and prime for reentry. [3]



Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station near Canberra, Australia



problems to be solved! The success of Apollo 7, flown October 11-22, 1968, paved the way. On November 10 and 11 NASA studied the Apollo 8 mission, approved it and made the public announcement on the November 12.

Apollo 8 was launched from KSC Launch Complex 39, Pad A, at 7:51 AM EST, December 21, on a Saturn V booster. The S-1C first stage's engines underperformed by 0.75%, causing the engines to burn for 2.45 seconds longer than planned. Towards the end of the second stage burn, the rocket underwent pitch oscillations that Frank Borman estimated were of the order of 12 Hz. The S-1VB stage was inserted into an earth-parking orbit of 190.6 by 183.2 kilometers above the earth.

As Bill Anders later recalled [4]:

Then the giant first stage ran out of fuel, as it was supposed to. The engines cut off. Small retro rockets fired on that stage just prior to the separation of the stage from the first stage from the second stage. So we went from plus six to minus a tenth G, suddenly, which had the feel-

ing, because of the fluids sloshing in your ears, of being catapulted by — like an old Roman catapult, being catapulted through the instrument panel.

So, instinctively, I threw my hand up in front of my face, with just a third level brain reaction. Well, about the time I got my hand up here, the second stage cut in at about, you know, a couple of Gs and snapped my hand back into my helmet. And the wrist string around my glove made a gash across the helmet face plate. And then on we went. Well, I looked at that gash and I thought, 'Oh, my gosh, I'm going to get kidded for being the rookie on the flight,' because you know, I threw my hand up. Then I forgot about it.

Well, after we were in orbit and the rest of the crew took their space suits off and cleaned their helmets, and I had gotten out of my seat and was stowing them, I noticed that both Jim and Frank had a gash across the front of their helmet. So, we were all rookies on that one.

After post-insertion checkout of spacecraft systems, the S-1VB stage was reignited and burned 5 minutes 9 seconds to place the spacecraft and stage in a trajectory toward the moon, and the Apollo 8 crew became the first men to leave the earth's gravitational field. [5]

The spacecraft separated from the S-1VB 3 hours 20 minutes after launch and made two separation maneuvers using the SM's reaction control system. Eleven hours after lift-off, the first midcourse correction increased velocity by 26.4 kilometers per hour. The coast phase was devoted to navigation sightings, two television transmissions, and system checks. The second midcourse correction, about 61 hours into

the flight, changed velocity by 1.5 kilometers per hour. [5]

In the words of Jim Lovell [4]:

Well, my first sensation, of course, was "It's not too far from the Earth." Because when we turned around, we could actually see the Earth start to shrink. Now the highest anybody had ever been, I think, had been either—I think it was Apollo or Gemini XI, up about 800 mi. or something like that and back down again. And all of a sudden, you know, we're just going down. And it was—it reminds me of trucking—driving—in a car looking out the back window, going inside a tunnel, and seeing the tunnel entrance shrink as it gets—as you go farther into the tunnel. And it was quite a—quite a sensation to—to think about.

You know, and you had to pinch yourself. "Hey, we're really going to the Moon!" I mean, "You know, this is it!" I was the navigator and it turned out that the navigation equipment was perfect. I mean, it was just—you couldn't ask for a better piece of navigation equipment.

The 4-minute 15-second lunar orbit-insertion maneuver was made 69 hours after launch, placing the spacecraft in an initial lunar orbit of 310.6 by 111.2 kilometers from the moon's surface—later circularized to 112.4 by 110.6 kilometers. During the lunar coast phase the crew made numerous landing-site and landmark sightings, took lunar photos, and prepared for the burn maneuver to enter the trajectory back to the earth. [5] William Anders had this to say [4]:

[T]hat one [view] is sunk in my head. Then there's another one I like

Above: Apollo 8 spacecraft
Below: Apollo 8 crew, Frank Borman, William Anders and James Lovell



maybe [and this is] of the first full Earth picture which made it again look very colorful. ... [T]o me the significance of this [is that the Moon is] about the size of your fist held at arm's length ... you can imagine ... [that at a hundred arms' lengths the Earth is] down to [the size of] a dust mote. [A]nd, a hundred lunar distances in space are really nothing. You haven't gone anywhere not even to the next planet. So here was this orb looking like a Christmas tree ornament, very fragile, not [an infinite] expanse [of] granite ... [and seemingly of] a physical insignificance and yet it was our home...

According to Frank Borman [4]:

Looking back at the Earth

on Christmas Eve had a great effect, I think, on all three of us. I can only speak for myself. But it had for me. Because of the wonderment of it and the fact that the Earth looked so lonely in the universe. It's the only thing with color. All of our emotions were focused back there with our families as well. So that was the most emotional part of the flight for me.

During the flight William Anders said, "Earthshine is about as expected, Houston." Kraft said he shook his head and wondered if he'd heard right. Earthshine! [1]

On the fourth day, Christmas Eve, communications were interrupted as Apollo 8 passed behind the moon, and the astronauts became the first men to see the moon's far side.

Later that day, during the evening hours in the United States, the crew read the first 10 verses of Genesis on television to earth and wished viewers "goodnight, good luck, a Merry Christmas and God bless all of you - all of you on the good earth." [5]

On Christmas Day, while the spacecraft was completing its 10th revolution of the moon, the service propulsion system engine was fired for three minutes 24 seconds, increasing the velocity by 3,875 km per hr and propelling Apollo 8 back toward the earth, after 20 hours 11 minutes in lunar orbit. More television was sent to earth on the way back and, on the sixth day, the crew prepared for reentry, and the SM separated from the CM on schedule. [5]



Where will the S-IV go!

After the S-IVB executed the TLI maneuver, the CSM separates from the third stage of the Saturn V rocket, then performs the transposition and docking maneuver to extract the LM. An evasive maneuver was then performed to provide a safe separation between the CSM and the S-IVB. Then Trans Lunar Injection is performed, the Command Module is on a free return trajectory, meaning that if the Service Module engine fails a safe return to the earth is possible (if the Service Module power system does not fail as happened with Apollo 13!) A free-return trajectory is a path that uses the earth's and the moon's gravitational forces to propel a spacecraft around the moon and back to earth again. It's called a "free-return" because it is, in

essence, automatic. With some minor course corrections, a space craft will automatically be whipped around the moon, and pulled back into the Earth's orbit, simply because the Earth's gravitational pull is so strong. The Earth's gravitational pull is so strong; in fact, that a spacecraft traveling at 20,000 mph when leaving Earth's atmosphere will have been slowed to less than 5,000 mph by the time it reaches the moon. The moon's gravity will temporarily grab hold of the spacecraft, but as soon as the craft rounds the moon, the Earth's gravity begins to pull it back again.

But where does the S-IVB go? It also comes back to the Earth! For a while no one had thought about this, the possibility of a danger from impact on the earth is small, it would most likely go into an ocean. To obviate any risk the S-IVB makes a tweak maneuver that places it on a sling shot trajectory into Solar orbit. (After Apollo 11 the S-IVB impacted the Moon for seismic measurements.)



Above: The first photograph taken of Earthrise over the moon. Note that this photograph is in black and white.

Be sure to check out the Apollo 8 flight journal at <http://history.nasa.gov/ap08jf/>

The Apollo 8 CM made the first manned "hot" reentry at nearly 40,000 km/hr into a corridor only 42 km wide. Parachute deployment and other reentry events were normal. The Apollo 8 CM splashed down in the Pacific, apex down, at 10:51 AM EST, December 27, 147 hours and 42 seconds after liftoff. As planned, helicopters and aircraft hovered over the spacecraft and para-rescue personnel were not deployed until local sunrise, 50 minutes after splashdown. The crew was picked up and reached the recovery ship U.S.S. *Yorktown* at 12:20 p.m. EST. All mission objectives and detailed test objectives were achieved. [5] Frank Borman said [4]:

We hit the water with a real bang! I mean it was a big, big bang! And when we hit, we all got inundated with water. I don't know whether it came in one of the vents or whether it was just moisture that had collected on the environmental control sys-

tem. ... Here were the three of us, having just come back from the moon, we're floating upside down in very rough seas -- to me, rough seas."

Of course, in consternation to Bill and Jim, I got good and seasick and threw up all over everything at that point.

To which William Anders responded [4] :

Jim and I didn't give him an inch, you know, we [Naval Academy graduates] pointed out to him and the world, that he was from West Point, what did you expect? But nonetheless, he did his job admirably. But by now the spacecraft was a real mess you know, not just from him but from all of us. You can't imagine living in something that close; it's like being in an outhouse and after a while you just don't care, you know, and without getting into detail... messy. But we didn't smell anything...

Christopher Kraft recalled in the Apollo oral history:[4]

The firsts involved in Apollo 8 almost were unlimited, if you stop to think about it, from an educational point of view, from a theological point of view, from an esthetic point of view, from an art point of view, from culture, I don't know, you name it, that event was a milestone in history, which in my mind unless we land someplace else where there are human beings, I don't think you can match it, from its effect on philosophy if you will, the philosophical aspects of that.

References

- [1] Kraft, Chris . *Flight: My Life in Mission Control*. New York: Dutton, 2001
- [2] Gene Kranz, *Failure Is Not an Option*, Simon and Schuster, 2001
- [3] Hamish Lindsay, *Tracking Apollo to the Moon*, Springer, 2001
- [4] Oral History Project , Johnson Space Center, 1997 – 2008 (Ongoing)
- [5] Apollo 8 Mission Report, MSC-PA-R_69-1, February, 1969.
- [6] Robert Zimmerman, *Genesis: The Story Of Apollo 8*, 1998.
- [7] APOLLO LUNAR LANDING MISSION SYMPOSIUM, June, 25-27, 1966 Manned Spacecraft Center Houston, Texas

Personal Note: I was 28 years old in December 1968 and had aimed myself from when I first read the Collier's magazine spaceflight series. The first issue was March 22 1952 when I was 11 years old. The series came to an end in April 30, 1954 issue, Can We Get to Mars? I was 13 then and remember Werner Von Braun writing that it would take 25 years to get to Mars, I was downcast! That was too long. I came to the Manned Spacecraft Center in Jan 1966 and in time became an instructor for the Lunar Module training simulator. I did not train the Apollo 8 crew but I was in Building 4 Christmas Eve at a second floor small remote control room listening to the flight controller's loop. It was very exciting, after Lunar Orbit Insertion, to hear acquisition of signal and confirmed orbit at approximately 4 am Houston time. I walked over to building 2 (building 1 these days) and got a cup of coffee. On the way back I looked into a cold, about 35 deg F clear Houston night sky at a Waxing crescent Winter Cold Moon for about 15 minutes and thought wow! There are humans in orbit up there.

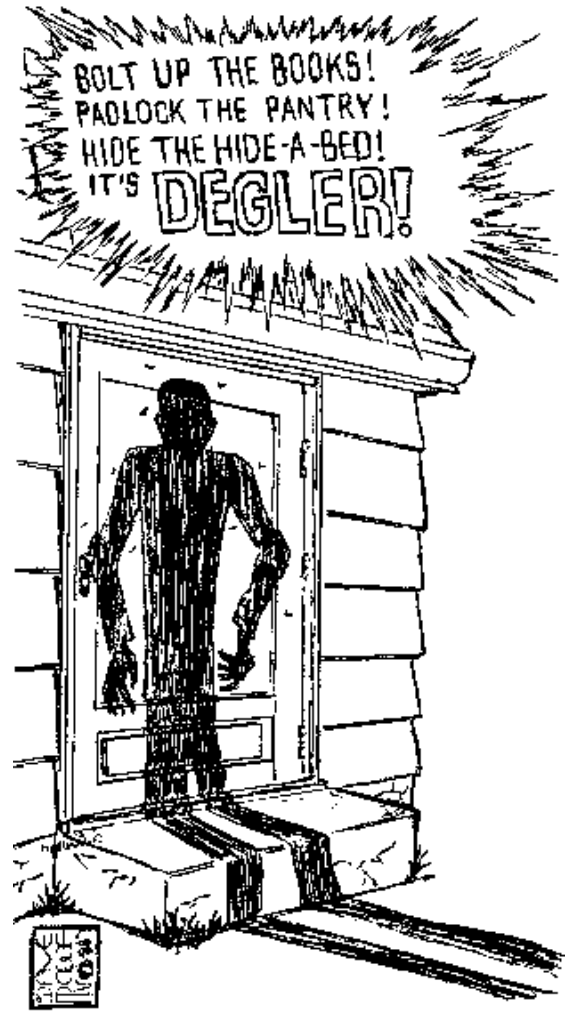
- DR. ALBERT A. JACKSON

{In the interest of fannishness, I think it is only right that a fan article like this follows an article like Dr. Jackson's. Makes sense to me. – JPJ}

Henry & Claude

by Taral Wayne

On a site called **Fandom Wank** there is an article of interest -- "The Cosmic Circle of Wank" -- www.journalfen.net/community/fandom_wank/1157179. It's about Claude Degler, a familiar story to us. As an aside, the author also brings up one Henry Argasinski as a later day Degler. The full story largely quotes Teresa Nielsen Hayden, who must have had it from Patrick. Henry would be known only to older Toronto fans and Patrick was living here at the time this happened. To be frank, I have to blame myself for much of Henry's meteoric rise to and subsequent fall from absurdity. Mea culpa.



Claude Degler is of course the iconic model of what fans should *not* become. He was instantly recognized for what he was in his own day, but because Claude was so much further out than "over the top" he earned a place in history. There had always been minor characters of his type. They are as old as SF fandom, if not as old as Man. And there continued to be types like Claude long after the Cosmic Circle was revealed as a sham. But in making his mark on fandom he remains the most successful of all our most colourful kooks... if successful is the right word.

Henry Argasinski, on the other hand, was a purely local phenomenon. Keep in mind that the Toronto fandom of the 1970's was a similarly large and diverse a body, perhaps, as SF fandom was in 1944. His inferiority to the legend of Claude Degler then is not just a matter of numbers, nor a matter of quality even. Once a myth has been created, though, it cannot be supplanted easily. Claude was the myth, Henry can only be compared as an also-ran, and that is his ultimate downfall as a legend. If Claude was the Shakespeare of clowns, Henry was only the comic-laureate of Herzegovina.

Mike Glicksohn taught math at Humberside Collegiate in those days, and Henry was one of his students. I think Mike sponsored Henry's school SF club. For whatever reason, he pointed Henry in the direction of the Ontario SF Club (OSFiC). Initially I tried to encourage Henry in positive ways. He imitated the newszine I was publishing for the club at that time. Flattering at first, his attention to detail became annoying. If I broke up text with lines of // or +, so would Henry. He copied my digest covers and full page insides. Even the style of editorial comment, and my way of organizing content came in for imitation. But he would have had few other models, I told myself. I contributed a few drawings to Henry's zine-of-various-titles, and

some short bits of writing as well. (This included fanzine reviews meant as a broad hint.) I also ran a bit of Henry's stuff in the club monthly. For his age, seventeen or eighteen I think, his writing was simultaneously precocious and juvenile. But there might have been potential there that was worth drawing out. After a few months, it was evident that there wasn't.

Among other signs that not all was well was that Henry would change the title of his zine, but essentially publish the same material over and over. His imitations of other club members grew into something rather unsettling. It was as if he had no ideas of his own, but was determined to out-do those who did have them. He invented an artificial language that could not be understood because the meaning of words depended on ever larger contexts, ad infinitum, so that a sentence was never actually finished. Particularly disturbing was his imaginary world, which was populated by one "supermind," with a gigantic brain the size of a pumpkin, and a race of mindless slaves. His super-brain alter ego evidently lived alone in a stone castle, sat on his throne, and supervised the lives of every other being on the planet. I suppose it was about then that I decided enough was enough. I began to cultivate his instinct for self-destruction instead.

That Henry was a nuisance goes without saying. But he was tolerated at first because none of us were perfect... few of use would call ourselves even normal. But Henry was an order of magnitude less well adjusted. He was a distraction at best and a concern at worst. Now, at the time, I was only marginally adjusted myself. Ten years later, I would just have kept my distance and pitied Henry. But in my early 20's I was quite a lot more proactive, but far less foresighted than later. I had been reading heavily about past fan history, and in particular the story of Claude Degler was on my mind. The match was perfect. I sent Henry his first letter from "Claude" through a mail drop in Ohio. Rather than use my own, identifiable typewriter, the letters were composed on Victoria Vayne's Selectric. Posing as Claude Degler, I claimed that Henry's own small "cosmic circle" had come to my attention. Not only was Henry an obvious "slan", but his own organization looked as though it were an ideal candidate for a merger. I not only held out membership in the parent organization, the original Cosmic Circle, but equity! In subsequent letters I outlined plans for in-breeding desirable genes, for political takeovers, for collectivist communities of telepathic fans, etc. All right out of the 1944 book, so to speak. I began to drop hints that Degler was aware of OSFiC as well, but regarded it as an unimportant and obsolete sort of fan body that would fall by the wayside. Henry ate it up, and began making broad allusions to his future importance around the club. His zines and other miscellaneous manifestos proclaimed his connection with the Cosmic Circle. Things had gone far enough, in other words, and one way or the other the hoax had to be brought to a stop.

We might have done it gently, or we might have done what any bunch of insensitive, brash, cliquish young pseudo-intellectuals would do. I don't think I need to ask you to guess. You probably know which way we took. How much of the subsequent event was premeditated I don't recall, but it could hardly have been planned to crush a liberated if misguided spirit more cruelly. During the club's summer Toronto Islands picnic, we produced all the carbons of "Claude's" letters, told Henry who the Ohio address really belonged to, explained how everything about the Cosmic Circle had been taken from a book written years earlier, and revealed that Claude Degler himself had disappeared decades ago, and never been seen since. You wouldn't think a 17 year old kid laughing hysterically for 20 or so unbroken minutes would be quite as unsettling as it was... And like the humanitarian super-brains we were, we picked him up bodily and threw him in the lake to cool him off. It was the perfect end to a perfect afternoon, and a perfect hoax.

It wasn't the end of Henry Argasinski, nor our encounters with him. He formed his own high school club, with about three other members. One, with a knife fetish, was nearly as disturbing as Henry (but seems to have straightened out in later years). Henry continued to publish his little fanzines with the same contents from issue to issue. I was finally forced to cram him against a wall, and threaten to knock his teeth out, if he ever used any of my old contributions again -- and that seemed to work. Finally, perhaps as an act of revenge, or maybe just a projection of his sense of importance, Henry ran for mayor of Toronto. Indeed people did vote for him. I don't know about second place, but he came in above the bottom of the ballot. Doubtless he'd learned

enough not to mention anything about mind-control, or communities of supermen to the voting public.

By now he'd be a middle-aged man, likely taking a lengthy prescription of mood modifying drugs, and might well be a respected member of your school board or riding association. It's food for thought.

□

Out of curiosity – that besetting fannish vice – I decided to google Henry's name. Not expecting much, I was surprised to find a couple of pages of "Henry Argasinski". My first flush of excitement died down when I noticed they were all involved in real estate in the U.S. Not the same guy, I thought. But I kept reading.



Actually, they were my Henry Argasinski. Oh, the photo looked respectable enough, but if I squinted the slightly foolish smirk emerged. I noticed the long ears, and nose that would likely have the characteristic droop if seen from the side. He was no longer a gangly adolescent and had gained a few pounds. If I imagined the wavy hair of the original blow-dried in a modern "power" cut, the old Henry was visible in this refurbished model. It may look new, but there were plenty of miles on the odometer. If I need more proof, it was the name he chose for his website – *Paperchips*. Paperchips was the name he most commonly used for his high school fanzines.

His business resume is impeccable. He runs a small computer data service for the real estate market, and is located now in Michigan. He had designed this and that, and worked for such and such company, and was recipient of some industry award or other. Henry had always been ambitious, and in retrospect much of his bizarre behavior can be seen in light of trying to win attention and respect, without any idea how to do it right. Given enough time, it looks as though he'd learned how finally.

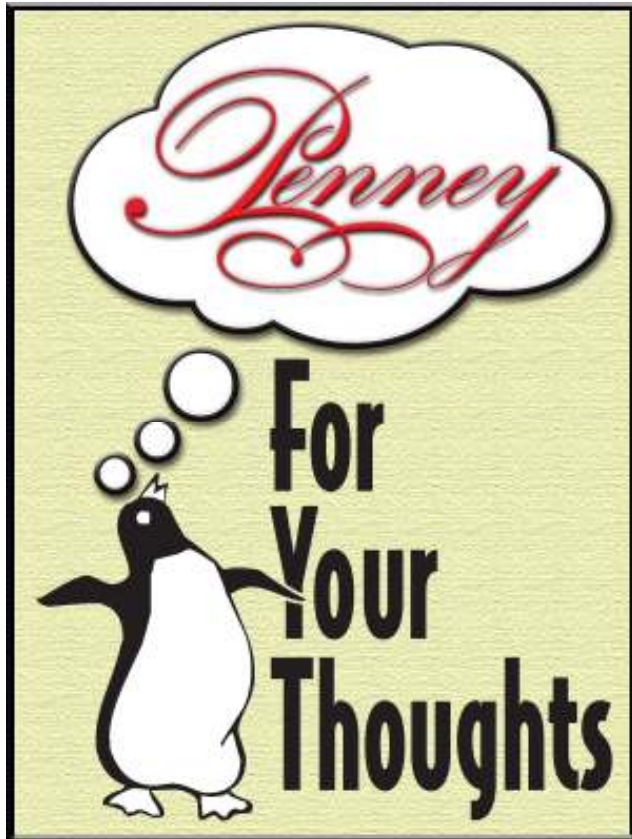
Scrutinized more carefully, a few cracks appear in the body work though. He had been vice-president of his college student union, but I noticed that he didn't have a degree. His company was categorized as having a sales range of under a half-million dollars, which sounds impressive. But *how much* under? \$300,000? \$450,000? He is stated as having 1 to 5 employees, but the only employee listed is Henry. So I think we're looking at a small business man who employs only himself, and for all I know works out of a spare room. Why not? You could run a business like that from a lap top that would fit in a bedroom drawer.

Trying to read between the lines, it would appear that Henry worked as a security guard for a few years after leaving college, and managed in time to get some entry level work with the computer. Then he worked himself up, employer by employer, until Henry could go into business for himself. Admirable, really, considering how messed up he was. But hard to evaluate. Maybe he lives by himself, has no social life, and only just makes ends meet. Or maybe he has a large, happy, two Mercedes family in a fashionable, 12 room, post-modern home in a gated community. To be honest, I don't really think I want to know which.

Henry ceased to be any of my business a long, long time ago.

And with that reading of the statute of limitations, we must bend our heads and tend to our own sins.

- Taral Wayne



Fanzine reviews!

By Lloyd Penney

Two more fanzines this time around.

With the modern technology available to us, many have said that it's nearly impossible to make a modern-day crudzine. That tech is all around us and readily at our fingertips, but in the long run, it's the content that makes the zine good. Two examples of neat little zines are *Visions of Paradise* and *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop*.

To the best of my knowledge, *Visions of Paradise* has been an apazine at some point in its history, but now seems to be a stand-alone zine. I've received this zine long enough to know that it used to rotate formats: one

issue would be the life of editor Robert Sabella, plus the lives of his students at the school he teaches at; another might be commentaries on SF books, shows and movies, plus opinions on books and authors; then the next issue might be all locs. Now each issue has some of each, and IMHO, that makes each issue more balanced, and you feel that you're caught right up instead of lagging months in some area.

Visions of Paradise is a plain little zine, and I do not mean plain in a bad way. There's enough type, and some artwork in the latest issue, #137, by Brad Foster and Terry Jeeves. *VoP* doesn't have the colour many other zines have, and it doesn't seem to need it. It does seem to look more like a Word document sometimes, but it has the contents to overcome the lack of graphic flash. Maybe we've just forgotten what a perzine is supposed to be about: simple communication with your readers.

The bottom line is that Robert communicates with his readers, tells them about his life and his students, the books and movies he likes, and the letters of his readers is a traditional local conversation. There's a lot more you could have, but is there any more that you need?

bsabella@optonline.net, get *Visions of Paradise* at eFanzines.com.

And then there's Bill Wright's *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop*. The latest issue is the February 2009 issue, and it's Australian, which is a plus in my book, and it's also got some beautiful art, courtesy of Ditmar at the front, and David Russell at the back. *IRS* is an apazine for ANZAPA, and is distributed outside the apa.

There's a lot of type here, and small photographs that break up the type a little bit. It's not the flashiest zine, either, but it's got the content I like. And, it has a lot of content.

This may be called an apazine, but it's got a table of contents most fanzine would envy. Bill's got it all. He's got columnists, locs, guest authors, book reviews, a convention list, clerihevs, and lots

of little informative bits to keep you interested and wondering what's next. At the centre of Bill's February apazine is Taral Wayne, who has been very visible in lots of places since being announced as the Fan GoH at Anticipation. I enjoyed his article on stamps featuring superheroes and cartoon characters, especially since I'm a collector, too.

IRS is plain in the same way that *VoP* is: little flash, but lots to say. I dare say that some may find a plainer zine okay in an apa, with a limited audience, but in the long run, one must consider substance over packaging, and both of these zines have plenty of substance.

Interstellar Ramjet Scoop goes to all ANZAPAns, and can be downloaded from eFanzines.com.

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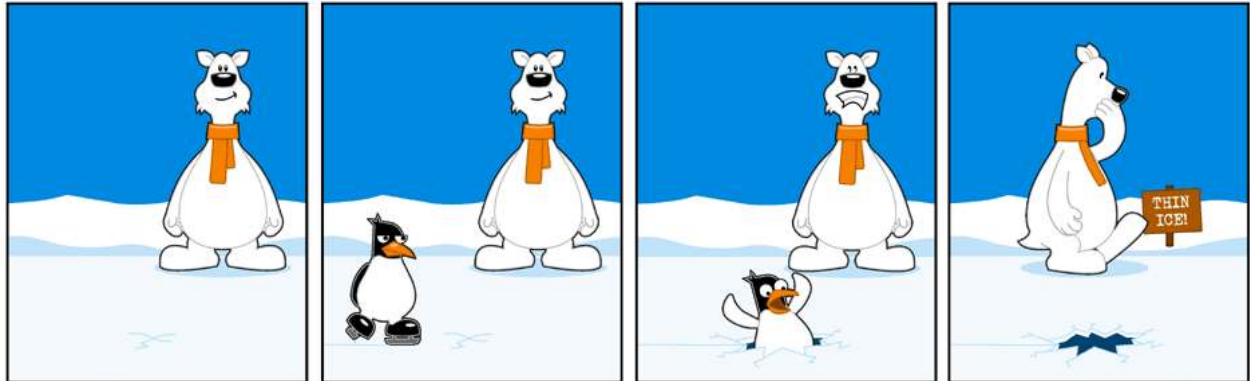
Once again, here's the alphabetical listing of fanzines I have received via snail mail or viewed on-line at any number of sites, notably www.efanzines.com. I am sure that I have forgotten a few, too. *sigh* What can I do?

Alexiad #43
AmaZed & CorfluZed #3
Ansible #259-260
BCSFazine #429-430
Consonant Enigma #4
Drink Tank #196-204
el #42
Einblatt! (Feb., '09)
Futurian War Digest #28-35
Idle Minds #2
Knarley Knews #130-131
MT Void #1527-1535
Nashville SF Club Newsletter (Jan., '09)
Orphan Scrivener #55
Relapse #13 (formerly Prolapse)
The Reluctant Famulus #68
Science Fiction in San Francisco #79-81
Siddhartha #9
Southern Fandom Confederation Update #2
Steam Engine Time #10
This Here #10
Time and Again #8
Vanamonde #773-777
VFW #113
Virtual Tucker Hotel #22
Visions of Paradise #137-138
WCSFazine #18

"Zines are great for what they reveal, not for what they display."

- R. Graeme Cameron (from his loc)

THE THIN VENEER



WallyAndOsborne.com

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HITLER AND ME

by Arnie Katz

The central incident of his life, as often recounted by Adolph Hitler, involved his wartime service during World War I. He frequently told how, while serving near the front lines, he had heard a voice telling him to get up and walk a short distance away. He followed this unseen prompt. When he returned, he found that everyone in the foxhole was dead, killed by an exploding shell.

Adolph relished this story, because he felt it showed that the Hand of Providence was upon his shoulder. He claimed that his “miraculous survival” of that explosion, as well as his later escapes from assassination plots like Operation Valkyrie, marked him as a Man of Destiny.

When John Purcell called me to ask for a contribution for the *Askance* anniversary, I immediately agreed. “What kind of thing would you like?” I asked, pointing out that I had done everything from serious fan sociology to unbridled nostalgia.

“Something fun,” he replied quickly. I think John is sometimes a little scared of my philosophizing. We talked about it a little more, kicking around a few possibilities. He liked the idea of me writing about the Fanoclats, always a source of warm fannish memories.

I indicated my understanding about what he wanted. When I thought about it later, I felt like I’d written about the Fanoclats quite a bit already. I could do it, and probably will in the future, but I reviewed my fan career in search of something suitably “fun” for this fanhistoric issue of *Askance*.

I reviewed my fan career in a quest for a suitable topic. I identified a number of fannish crossroads and pivotal points in my relation to Fandom. These were delicately balanced moments in time when I could have left Fandom or somehow failed to develop into the fan I ultimately became.

The realization that some things that happened to me in Fandom were highly improbable was immediately succeeded by the shock of recognition. At least two forks in the Road of Fandom were no less miraculous than the story Hitler so loved to tell.

This thought came both unwelcome and unbidden. There were a couple of unlikely occurrences that drastically altered my fannish career. As an agonistic and a skeptic, I won’t claim to be a

Child of Fannish Destiny, but in softer-headed moments, I wonder if I got through these crises in some way due to the unseen force of the Spirit of Trufandom. I leave it to the mystics among us.

Let me tell you about the “choke points” of my fannish career with emphasis on the two that perhaps partake of the miraculous.

I contacted Fandom as a result of careful calculation and dogged persistence. Lenny Bailes and I knew Fandom was out there, thanks to those backdated mid-1950’s prozines we bought; we just had to find a way to get to it. We eventually found our way to it by publishing a fanzine and getting mentions in the letter column of *Amazing*.

If Fate took a role in my First Contact, I can’t identify it. You might call it a miracle that fans didn’t run screaming when they saw *Cursed #1*, done before we’d ever seen a fanzine. I’d chalk it up to the tradition of being kind to neofen.

I devoutly and sincerely believe in that concept. I recall with great affection the many established fans that treated me so wonderfully my first couple of years in the hobby. In fact, the title of this column (“The Thin Veneer,” if you’ve forgotten) derives from a very early meeting with a pair of BNFs, Dick and Pat Lupoff.

I’d gone to a meeting of the Eastern Science Fiction Association (ESFA) in Newark, NJ. Except that when I got there, I discovered that the aging cabal that ran the formal SF group had canceled the meeting for some reason. Sadly, they hadn’t bothered to inform peons like me.

The trip from my parents’ home on Long Island to the meeting was quite an excursion, too. I walked three blocks to the bus, which gave me a 40-minute jouncy ride to the Union Turnpike subway station. There I waited for the E train to carry me into Manhattan, a one-hour trip. I entered the Port Authority Bus Terminal, located above the 42nd Street stop of the E train and bought a ticket for the next available Public Service Bus to Newark, NJ. After about an hour, the bus deposited me in downtown Newark, about a block from the YM/YWHA that allowed ESFA to use one of its meeting rooms.

Finding out that there was no meeting after all that traveling broke my neofannish teenage heart. I just couldn’t face the return trip for home without doing *something*. Since ESFA was my only solid link to New York area Fandom at the time, I felt like I’d been rebuffed by Fandom. I could’ve easily stepped back from the whole thing and, when I went away to college the next year, become an ex-fan without having done very much in the hobby to merit even that sad designation.

When I got into Manhattan again, I took a chance and telephoned Dick and Pat Lupoff, who lived in the chi Upper East Side. Had I known that another young New York neo had become infamous as “phonephan” for his bumptious calls, I might not have risked it.

Although I didn’t know the Lupoffs, I already felt a slight kinship with them. I’d had a heated argument about them in correspondence with Seth Johnson. The old NFFFugghead kept telling me that the Lupoffs were demons or something of the sort and I kept pointing out the holes in his case against them. For instance, he attacked them both for sending out their fanzine *Xero* very widely and also for being elitist and condescending. He also said they were “apa snobs,” whatever that meant to him, despite the fact that they weren’t in any apas.

I introduced myself to Dick on the phone and, with characteristic generosity, he invited me to visit. I accepted the invitation and headed for their apartment.

My thoughts, as the subway rocked down the tracks, were a conflicted jumble. I’d alienated one of my earliest fannish correspondents; I wanted to see what this twosome might actually be like. It was one thing to deflate Seth Johnson’s paranoid delusions, another to learn the truth firsthand. I

knew that Dick and Pat had won the "Best Fanzine" Hugo, so I was prepared for the kind of fans who controlled things at ESFA and the Lunarians. (I attended a meeting of the latter club with Lenny before he moved to Charlotte, NC.)



The Lupoffs couldn't have been more different than either Seth's weird imaginings or the stuffed shirts of my foreboding. They were a friendly, intelligent and stylish couple that exuded confidence and good will. It did not make me like Dick less to discover that he was a big amiable fellow, not unlike myself, who had somehow won the love of maybe the hottest woman I had ever met.

I went home in a much better frame of mind. Instead of slinking off to Mundania, I became determined to explore even more aggressively now that I knew there were fans like the Lupoffs.

Shortly after that Sunday afternoon encounter, Dick wrote somewhere that I seemed like a nice young man "under his thin veneer of sophistication." I thought it was hilarious, hence the name of this column. (The Lupoffs and I have been friends for about 46 years now...)

Still, that wasn't exactly the Fannish Finger of Fate. I wouldn't want you to think I was being... frivolous.

The first seemingly miraculous occurrence took place just a few months later. I'd met Frank Wilimczyk in N'APA, the N3F apa, and had taken keen notice of his references to and accounts of the Fanoclasts. The prospect of a whole club composed solely of talented fanzine fans.

Having tried the area's other clubs without finding a home, the Fanoclasts looked like both the best and last hope. Summoning my courage, I sent Ted White a short introductory note in which I asked if I could come to a meeting of the invitational, informal club.

Enter, the Hand of Fannish Fate.

As related to me subsequently by rich brown and Mike McInerney, Ted received the note and put it on his desk, where it festered amid the kipple (perhaps including genuine *Kipple* from Ted Pauls). What with one thing and another, including the low priority he probably assigned a solicitation from a stranger, he didn't act on it. In fact, he eventually decided to let events look after themselves and tossed it into the waste basket.

It just so happened that Mike McInerney and rich brown were visiting Ted when Mike spotted the card in the trash. Figuring that it had simply escaped the desk clutter, he fished it out and read it.

Unlike Ted, Mike *had* met me, first at ESFA and then at Lunarians. Then as now, Mike was friendly and approachable, so we'd had pleasant conversations like fans do when they're waiting to hear a speaker at a con or club.

Mike is also an exceptionally nice guy. I suspect my neofannish supplication pierced his tender heart. Mike's plea on my behalf, seconded by rich, got me a brief note in which he said that he thought it would be all right if I came to a meeting.

If Mike hadn't been there or if had failed to rescue my letter from the garbage, I would've taken silence as a "No" and abandoned my hopes for in-person fanac. More importantly for my future as a fan, I wouldn't have had the tutelage of Ted White and rich brown, not to mention access to their fanzine collections.

That could well have been the first step toward – you guessed it! – Gafia.

Yet Mike *did* save my note and Ted *did* send that invitation. I went to Fanoclasts and they took me in and socialized me to Fanzine Fandom. If that's not the Spirit of Trufandom at work, I don't know what else to call it.

Even with this highly unlikely turn of events, I still might not be a fan without a second, possibly even more miraculous event in my fan career.

A less miraculous, but equally vital tipping point is the one that brought me back to Fandom in 1989. It was not so much a miracle as one hell of a longshot.

My gafia began in late 1976 and became total within a year. By the 1980's, I had no contact with anyone in Fandom. I felt like the fannish part of me was dead, A pleasant chapter now safely locked in the memory vault. I didn't go that vault very often, either.

A postcard reached me at my new Las Vegas address from a fan, Mark Blackman, whom I'd met once, briefly, back in New York. I generally didn't pay much attention to the fannish mail that still somehow found me; I didn't even open manila envelopes or unstaple fanzines that without envelopes.

To my deep shame, I didn't reply to a letter from Walt Willis in which he invited me to break out of gafia and write an article for *Hyphen*. This would've fulfilled my greatest fanwriting dream, but I didn't write back.

Yet I not only stopped to read a postcard from a stranger, but I actually accepted his invitation to participate in the 25th anniversary of TAPS, an apa Lenny Bailes and I started in the mid 1960's. If I had let that little white card slip into the "to be ignored forever" pile on my desk, I might not have returned to Fandom.

Like I said, a longshot, but not truly redolent of the miraculous.

It's hard to say the same about the next thing that happened.

Joyce and I looked in vain for Las Vegas Fandom after we returned to activity. It didn't exist. I needed cataract surgery in early 1990 and didn't read anything or worry about finding Fandom until the end of May.

Who knows how long we might have remained unaware that a club had formed during my down-time? SNAFFU (Southern Nevada Area Fantasy Fiction Union) had neither knowledge of, nor connection to Fandom, so they were unlikely to find.

What happened is that Mike Glicksohn roused himself fro 20 years of gafia to write me a letter to ask about a local Las Vegas convention that he had absolutely no plan to attend! He informed me that something called "VegasCon" was listed in the *Locus* convention calendar and wanted to know if Joyce and I were in charge.

I didn't read *Locus* much even when I'd been a fan, since I have little use for news of the science fiction and fantasy world. However, I'd noticed that Tower Records had it in their display of ground-level publications. We bought a copy and, sure enough, found the notice.

I called the phone number and got VegasCon co-chairman Sean White. Sean was a comic book and war-gaming enthusiast who appeared to have a deep distrust of science fiction and its fans. As I learned later, he was also a bit of a fugghead.

He could have turned me over to his co-chairman, Anthony (not yet Woody) Bernardi, but he didn't want to give out the information. I kept him on the phone, kept him talking, as I used my persuasive powers to infiltrate his defenses when I couldn't breach them outright.

Finally, Sean conceded that he had heard of a couple that he thought might have something to do with science fiction. (This was a lie; he knew the couple pretty well.)

Despite White's lukewarm attitude towards this unnamed couple with a nebulous connection to "sci-fi," but I was willing to take any chance, track down even the faintest lead to anything resembling Fandom in Las Vegas.

So I called the number around 11 AM with the intention of leaving a message and following with a phone call that evening. Instead, I woke up the couple up in the middle of their "night." Sean hadn't thought it necessary to mention that she was a dealer at the Hilton and he was a night manager at a sports bar.

Jolting people out of a sound sleep isn't actually the best way to meet people for the first time. Nevertheless, we established contact with what turned out to be the undisputed leaders of local Fandom. Ken Forman, whom I quickly dubbed "The Mainspring", took to the whole idea of fandom quicker than anyone I've ever met before or since. Aileen was a little slower to let down her guard, but she, too, has become an exemplary fan.

Ken was so hospitable that Joyce and I soon attended our first local fan event. I distributed a special fanzine, the first true Vegas fanzine since Dwain Kaiser left town in the 1960's.



We became close friends with the Formans and the two couples cooperated to create the local fan scene. Before long, Joyce and I hosted the first fan-run convention, the NonCon and then the monthly Socials and, a year or so down the road, launched Las Vegants. *Apa V* and *Wild Heirs*.

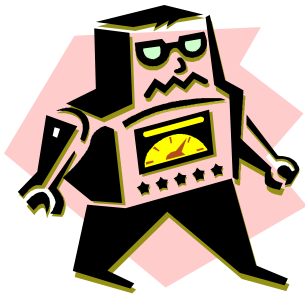
Call it a miracle or a longshot as you will.

And so I've come to think of my fan career as the best possible result of all those crossroads. I like the way things turned out, by and large, and I am pleased that blind luck, or the Spirit of Fandom or whatever, worked out the way it did.

--- Arnie Katz

"Chris Garcia...seems to have acquired all the hair Guy [Lillian] lost." - Joe Majors [from loc]

Eh?



The 25th Core Fandom World Con

**CORFLU
SILVER**

April 25th - 27th, 2008

Las Vegas, Nevada

THE GOJN' TO CORFLU BLUES

lyrics by Bill Mills © 2008

Editorial comments: If I had been at Corflu Silver (in April, 2008), the plan was for me (and my guitar) to join Bill Mills (on guitar and lead vocal) and JoHn Hardin (on piano) in a rendition of the following song. As fate played its nasty hand, however, alas, that was not to be. I couldn't make it – making my final decision less than two weeks before the con – so there went my first ever performance at a Corflu. Bill still performed the song, but without verses four through six, which I was supposed to sing. The result was still a lot of fun, and an allegedly lip- and guitar-synched version can be viewed on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YB0PAwystHs>). Even more stfnal, it was broadcast LIVE on The Voices of Fandom Website as part of the Virtual Consuite. The Corflu Silver version is available therein, if you're into that sort of fan-historical mish-mosh. So with Bill's permission, here are all the verses, complete with lead solos noted. Some year this may yet be performed live. You Have Been Warned!

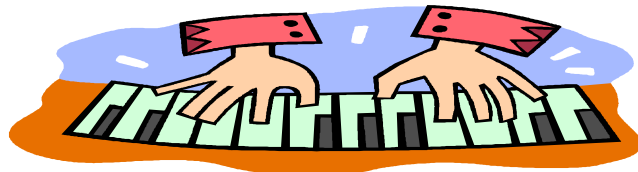
Bill Mills sings:

I'm off to a convention, the one they call Corflu,
yeah I'm off to a convention, the one they call Corflu,
They're gonna gather fanzine fandom, do what fanzine fandom do!

I packed up some old fanzines and a bottle of Jim Beam,
Yeah, I packed up some old fanzines and a bottle of Jim Beam,
I'm gonna party till I'm "Tucker-ed", then drift away in fannish dreams.

They call it fanzine fandom, but it is something more,
Well, they call it fanzine fandom, but it is something more,
Yes it's true they call 'em Trufen, 'cause they're fannish to the core!

Piano solo here



John Purcell sings:

These Core Fans sure are friendly,
though you still must wear your
pants;

Yeah, these Core Fans sure are
friendly, though you still must
wear your pants.

But if anyone does get naked, I'll pub
the photos in *Askance!*

Now Corflu's like a hoedown, so
everybody dance;

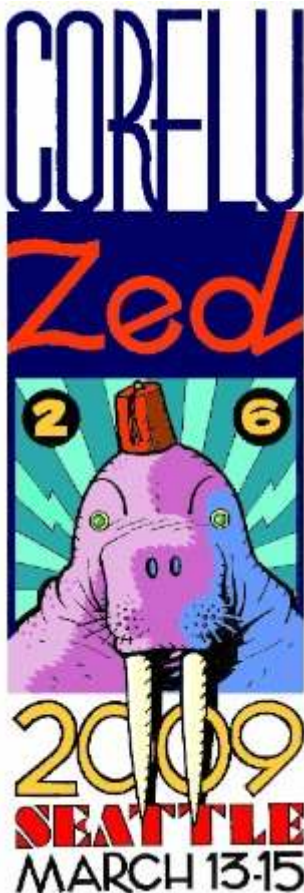
Yeah, Corflu's like a hoedown, so
everybody dance.

Then go write me an article to publish in *Askance!*

I'm sure I'll get to Corflu on wings of luck and chance;
yeah, I'm sure I'll get to Corflu on wings of luck and chance.
And if by chance I'm lucky... I'll make the deadline for *Askance!*



A friendly Corflu greeting from Earl Kemp to Nic Farey.



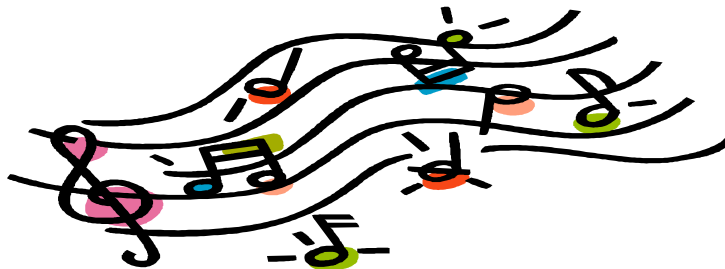
Guitar solo here

Bill Mills sings:

If you're a fan of fanzines, you'll find lots of friendly fen,
Yeah, if you're a fan of fanzines, you'll find lots of friendly fen,
You'll have so much fun at Corflu, you'll wish that it would never
end!

Spoken ad-lib over tag ending:

(Never end, baby, never end! C'mon, let's go on up to the Con
Suite. I hear they've still got some booze up there... c'mon...)



Anniversaries: 2009

Joyeux Anniversaire

by Robert Sabella

*

For several years I did a column in Dick Geis' *Science Fiction Review* in which I highlighted important happenings in science fiction 10 years prior to the quarter the column was published. I enjoyed doing the column since the history of science fiction is important and should be remembered as much as possible by its participants and fans. So, with John Purcell's indulgence, I am reviving that column as an annual discussion of highlights which occurred in science fiction in multiples of ten years ago.

1869

Robert H. Davis was born March 23 in Brownsville, Nebraska. Who, you ask, was Robert H. Davis? He was the editor of *All-Story Weekly* who discovered such important fantasy and sf writers as Edgar Rice Burroughs (publishing both **Under the Moons of Mars** and **Tarzan of the Apes** in 1912), A. Merritt ("The Moon Pool"), Garrett P. Serviss (**The Second Deluge**), George Allan England (**Darkness and Dawn**), Ray Cummings (**The Girl in the Golden Atom**), Charles B. Stilson, J.U. Giesy, Max Brand, Homer Eon Flint, and Austin Hall.

1919

Murray Leinster published his first science fiction story "The Runaway Skyscraper" in *Argosy*, the leading general pulp fiction magazine of that era. This story is generally credited with being the first story involving an alternate dimension.

1929

In this year **Hugo Gernsback** lost control of *Amazing Stories* for financial reasons, after which he founded a second wave of magazines devoted exclusively to science fiction: *Air Wonder Stories*, *Science Wonder Stories*, *Science Wonder Quarterly*, *Scientific Detective*, and *Amazing Detective*.

1939

John W. Campbell, Jr. had become editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1937, and by 1939 he was developing his own "stable" of new authors whose importance to the science fiction field led to this era being generally known as the *Golden Age of Science Fiction*. Important authors who debuted in the pages of *Astounding* in 1939 included Robert A. Heinlein ("Lifeline"), Theodore Sturgeon ("Ether Breather"), and A.E. van Vogt ("Black Destroyer").

Also this year, Campbell founded a fantasy magazine *Unknown* to serve as a companion to *Astounding*. Although it only survived four years, being forced out of existence due to World War II paper shortages, it published many important fantasy stories, such as L. Sprague de

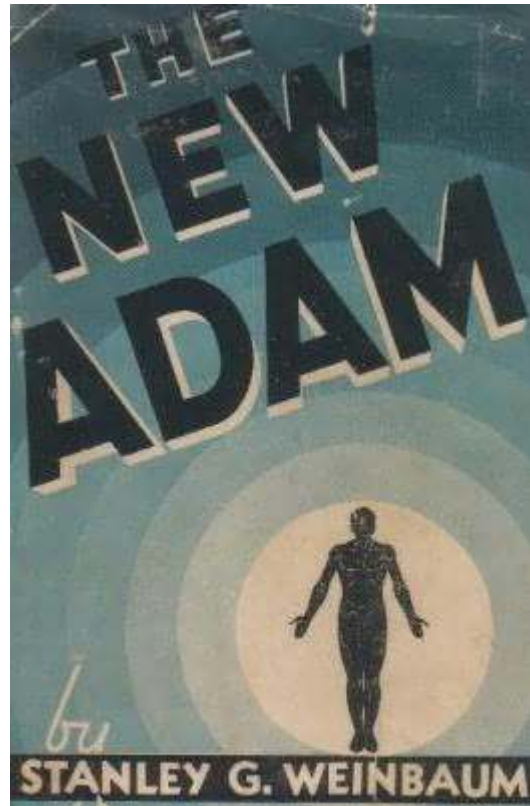
Camp's first novel **Lest Darkness Fall**, H. L. Gold's "Trouble With Water," Fritz Leiber's "Two Sought Adventure" (a tale of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser), and Theodore Sturgeon's "It."

Other important publications this year included debuts by Isaac Asimov ("Marooned on Vesta" in *Amazing Stories*) and Alfred Bester ("The Broken Axiom" in *Thrilling Wonder Stories*), as well as Stanley G. Weinbaum's **The New Adam**, and Clifford D. Simak's first novel **Cosmic Engineers** (serialized in *Astounding*).

Other important fantasy and science fiction magazines debuted this year, including *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* (which published from 1939 through 1953), *Fantastic Adventures* (1939–1953), *Planet Stories* (1939–1955), and *Startling Stories* (1939–1955).

This year August Derleth and Donald Wandrei founded specialty press Arkham House for the purpose of publishing the works of H.P. Lovecraft in book form.

The first World Science Fiction convention was held in New York City with Frank R. Paul as special guest. The convention was held amidst considerable controversy due to feuding between the two leading fan groups at that time.



1949

A major new magazine debuted this year with the title *Magazine of Fantasy*, soon to be expanded to *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Its first editors were Anthony Boucher and J. Francis McComas and in subsequent years its editors have included Avram Davidson, Edward R. Ferman, Kristina Kathryn Rusch and, currently, Gordon van Gelder. It has published most of the important writers in fantasy and science fiction, including such classic stories as "A Canticle for Leibowitz," by Walter M. Miller, Jr., "A Rose for Ecclesiastes," and "...And Call Me Conrad," by Roger Zelazny, "The Queen of Air and Darkness," by Poul Anderson, "Fondly Fahrenheit," by Alfred Bester, Zenna Henderson's *People* stories, and Robert Silverberg's "Lord Valentine's Castle."

Other magazines which debuted this year included *A. Merritt's Fantasy Magazine* (which, alas, only lasted 4 issues) and *Other Worlds* (1949–1957).

James Gunn was first published this year with "Communications" in *Startling Stories*. Other important publications included Hal Clement's first novel **Needle**, and Leigh Brackett's "The Secret of Sinharat" (in *Planet Stories*) and "The Sword of Rhiannon" (in *Thrilling Wonder Stories*).

The World Science Fiction Convention was held in Cincinnati with guests of honor Lloyd A. Eshbach (pro) and Ted Carnell (fan).

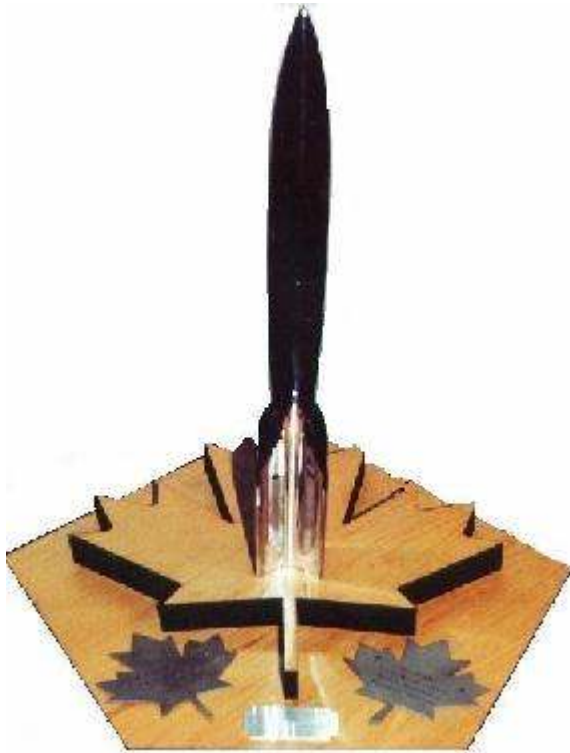
1959

New authors first published this year included Joanna Russ ("Nor Custom Stale" in *F&SF*) and Ben Bova (the novel **The Star Conquerors**). Other important publications included Kurt Vonnegut's **The Sirens of Titan**, Robert A. Heinlein's **Starship Troopers**, Daniel Keyes' "Flowers For Algernon," Alfred Bester's "The Pi Man," Robert A. Heinlein's "All You Zombies," (all in *F&SF*), and Clifford D. Simak's "A Death in the House" (in *Galaxy*).

The World Science Fiction Convention was held in Detroit with guests of honor Poul Anderson (pro) and John Berry (fan). The Hugo Awards for fiction were presented to James Blish

for novel **A Case of Conscience**, Clifford D. Simak for novelette "The Big Front Yard," and Robert Bloch for short story "That Hell-Bound Train," the first fantasy to win the award.

Galaxy purchased *Worlds of IF*, with H.L. Gold taking over the editorial reins (followed shortly thereafter by Frederik Pohl).



1969

The World Science Fiction Convention was held in St. Louis with guests of honor Jack Gaughan (pro) and Eddie Jones (fan). The Hugo Awards for fiction were presented to John Brunner for novel **Stand on Zanzibar**, Robert Silverberg for novella "Nightwings," Poul Anderson for novelette "The Sharing of Flesh," and Harlan Ellison for short story "The Beast That Shouted Love at the Heart of the World." The Dramatic Presentation award went to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and the Fan Hugoes went to fanzine *Science Fiction Review* (edited by Dick Geis), Fan Writer Harry Warner, Jr., and Fan Artist Vaughn Bodé.

The Nebula Awards were presented by the Science Fiction Writers of America to **Rite of Passage** by Alexei Panshin (Best Novel), "Dragonrider," by Anne McCaffrey (Best Novella), "Mother to the World," by Richard Wilson (Best Novelette), and "The Planners," by Kate Wilhelm (Best Short Story).

Joe Haldeman was first published this year with "Out of Phase" in *Galaxy*. Other important publications included **The Left Hand of Darkness**, by Ursula K Le Guin, **Ubik**, by Philip K. Dick, **Isle of the Dead**, by Roger Zelazny, **Jirel of Joiry**, by C. L. Moore, **Dune Messiah**, by Frank Herbert, **Slaughterhouse-Five: or the Children's Crusade**, by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., **The Phoenix and the Mirror**, by Avram Davidson, **Bug Jack Barron**, by Normal Spinrad, "A Boy and His Dog", Harlan Ellison (in **The Beast that Shouted Love at the Heart of the World**), "Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stone," by Samuel R. Delany (in *New Worlds*), and "The Last Flight of Dr. Ain," by James Tiptree, Jr. (in *Galaxy*).

1979

The World Science Fiction Convention was held in Brighton, England, with guests of honor Brian W. Aldiss and Fritz Leiber (pro), and Harry Bell (fan). The Hugo Awards for fiction were presented to Vonda N. McIntyre for novel **Dreamsnake**, John Varley novella "The Persistence of Vision," Poul Anderson novelette "Hunter's Moon," and C.J. Cherryh for short story "Cassandra." The Fan Hugoes went to fanzine *Science Fiction Review*, Fan Writer Bob Shaw, and Fan Artist Bill Rotsler.

The Nebula Awards were presented to **Dreamsnake**, by Vonda N. McIntyre (Best Novel), "The Persistence of Vision," by John Varley (Best Novella), "A Glow of Candles, a Unicorn's Eye," by Charles L. Grant (Best Novelette), and "Stone," by Edward Bryant (Best Short Story).

Important publications this year included **Tales of Neveryon**, by Samuel R. Delany, **Riverworld and Other Stories**, by Philip José Farmer, **Catacomb Years**, by Michael Bishop, **Titan**, by John Varley, **The Fountains of Paradise**, by Arthur C. Clarke, **Engine Summer**, by John Crowley, **On Wings of Song**, by Thomas M. Disch (in *F&SF*), and "Sandkings," by George R.R. Martin (in *Omn*).

1989

The World Science Fiction Convention was held in Boston, Massachusetts, with guests of honor Andre Norton and Ian & Betty Ballantine (pro), and The Stranger Club (fan). The fiction Hugo Awards were presented to C.J. Cherryh for novel **Cyteen**, Connie Willis for novella "The Last of the Winnebagos," George Alec Effinger for novelette "Schrodinger's Kitten," and Mike Resnick for short story "Kirinyaga." The Fan Hugo Awards went to fanzine *File 770* (edited by Mike Glycer), Fan Writer Dave Langford, and Fan Artists Brad Foster and Diana Gallagher Wu (in a tie vote).

The Nebula Awards for works were presented to **Falling Free**, by Lois McMaster Bujold (Best Novel), "The Last of the Winnebagos," by Connie Willis (Best Novella), "Schrodinger's Kitten," by George Alec Effinger (Best Novelette), and "Bible Stories for Adults, No. 17: The Deluge," by James Morrow (Best Short Story).

Important publications included **The Boat of a Million Years**, by Poul Anderson, **Escape From Kathmandu**, by Kim Stanley Robinson, **Hyperion**, by Dan Simmons, **Grass**, by Sherri S. Tepper, **A Fire in the Sun**, by George Alec Effinger and **The Satanic Verses**, by Salman Rushdie (which probably earned the most serious negative review of any book in history when the Ayatollah of Iran ordered a death sentence for its author).

1999

The World Science Fiction Convention was held in Melbourne, Australia, with guests of honor George Turner and Greg Benford (pro), and Bruce Gillespie (fan). The Hugo Awards for fiction were presented to Connie Willis for novel **To Say Nothing of the Dog**, Greg Egan for novella "Oceanic," Bruce Sterling for novelette "Taklamakan," and Michael Swanwick for short story "The Very Pulse of the Machine." The Fan Hugo Awards went to fanzine *Ansible* (edited by Dave Langford), Fan Writer Dave Langford, and Fan Artist Ian Gunn.



By this year there was considerable controversy over the Hugo voters' predilection for rewarding the same writers, pro and fan, year after year after year. For example, Connie Willis won her 5th Hugo Award in the past 7 years (her 7th overall, with 2 more to follow). Editor Gardner Dozois won his 11th Best Editor Hugo in the past 12 years (with 4 more to follow). Fan Writer Dave Langford won his 13th consecutive award for Best Fan Writer, and his zine *Ansible* won its 4th award (and Langford would win 11 more awards in the next decade). *Locus* won its 21st award as either Best Fanzine or Best Semi-Prozine (with 7 more awards in the next decade). Some fans felt that the Hugo Award were never meant to honor the same few winners every year, but that the awards should be spread around among all deserving nominees, while others felt that excellence deserved to be rewarded more than fairness.

(For what it matters, I agree with those who believe there should be "term limits" on categories such as Editor (Long Form and Short Form) / Artist (Pro and Fan) / Fanzine / Semi-Prozine / Fan Writer).

The Nebula Awards for works were presented to **Forever Peace** by Joe Haldeman (Best Novel), "Reading the Bones," by Sheila Finch (Best Novella), "Lost Girls," by Jane Yolen (Best Novelette), and "Thirteen Ways to Water," by Bruce Holland Rogers (Best Short Story).

Important publications included **Cryptonomicon**, by Neal Stephenson, **Forever Free**, by Joe Haldeman, **Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban**, by J. K. Rowling, and **The Martians**, by Kim Stanley Robinson.

- BOB SABELLA

FIGBY by Bill Fischer



MEANWHILE ...
ABOARD THE SLIGHTLY CHARRED,
PAPER PICNIC PLATE...



From the Hinterlands



*It seems totally appropriate to use a photo labeled "The hinterlands above Brisbane" for this issue's loccol, especially so since the first loc is from a reader in Australia, site of the 2010 WorldCon. Let's welcome to these pages the gentleman who produces the fine fanzine *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop*, Mr. Bill Wright!*



January 11, 2009
From: "William Wright"
<bilw@iprimus.com.au>

Dear John,

Ditmar alerted me to the fact that you had used his very first computer graphic using *Eon's Vue d'Esprit 4* for the cover of *Askance #12*. He created it in early 2004 when he discovered that *Correl* had discontinued supporting *Bryce*.

Ditmar has been producing covers for my fanzine *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop* since February 1997. The cover for the April 2004 was his first using *Vue d'Esprit*. It remains one of my favourites. As I said in the cover notes,

"The scene in the graphic is in the not-so-distant future. In a universe predominantly hostile to protoplasmic life, exploration and colonisation are done by proxy using

intelligent robots. The highest robotic types are, of course, humaniform. Whatever primitive emotions they have are almost entirely concerned with their love and respect for humans, living and past. That respect has been engendered in the main by rare personal contacts with humanity, but also by their absorption during fabrication of the entire deposit of recorded human experience. Included are the sacred books of Earth's major faiths, the universal declaration of human rights and inspirational texts by the four Shapers of robotic culture: **Eando Binder, Eric Frank Russell, Isaac Asimov** and, greatest of them all, **Hal Clement**.

"For centuries robots have toiled to line up ore-bearing asteroids in orbit around Earth's Moon, that being the most efficient way of ensuring that an endless supply of raw material is available for continued robotic service on the home planet. Like fireflies in the backdrop of infinity, refinery ships flit from rock to rock putting down and picking up their humaniform crew with their

quantum of ore. So precious is even the shape of Man that beams of light from the ship shine on each crew member during extra-vehicular activity so as not to deprive the ship's brain of even an umbra of the beatific vision.

"During one such EVA, R1278 discovers a rusty marker for a lode of iron ore. Something about its shape suggests the type of primitive microphone that human entertainers used in the Dawn Age. Recalling - and mourning - all the human beings he has known who have lived and died and died and died since his fabrication in 2071, R1278 pours out his grief and rage to the Universe in modulated waves of electromagnetic song that translate (in the words of a famous Ode by Percy Bysshe Shelley) as *profuse strains of unpremeditated art*. Thus he became known as The Skylark of Space"

Askance is an elegant zine. I am particularly impressed with your way of presenting the contents page. Ditmar has told me how to use Adobe Photoshop to do likewise, and I'll try it out in *IRS* Feb 09. Look for it on www.efanzines.com.

Regards from

Bill Wright

{Why, I thank you for the very kind words. Personally, I think your Interstellar Ramjet Scoop is a wonderful looking zine that even non-ANZAPA members can enjoy. And thank you so much for that lengthy quote; applying it to last ish's cover art makes the work that much more meaningful. Very cool.

{It should also be mentioned here that IRS is on my short-list of favorite zines.}

()

To maybe start a loccol trend, here's another missive from someone in another country. This time it's from a relatively closer locale, and a colder clime, come to think of it. (Did everybody enjoy the alliteration there? Good. I was hoping y'all did.)



January 11, 2009
From: "R GRAEME CAMERON"
<rgraeme@shaw.ca>

Hi John!

Beautiful cover by Ditmar. Always been a sucker for airships at sea. Something Freudian I suppose.

Fascinating debate between you and Arnie Katz: re quality VS crud. I've always been very reluctant to call ANY zine a crudzine. Often it's a case of a newbie who, if anything, needs advice and encouragement, or it's simply the best a faned can do given time constraints, lack of money, limited contacts, commitment to a frequent schedule no matter what & divers other reasons. For me, enthusiasm is what counts. As long as the faned enjoys pubbing his ish, and it shows, I am content.

Some moderns tend to dismiss early efforts, such as Leslie Croutch's *Light* of the 1940s & 1950s. Sure his humour was sometimes puerile, his artwork terrible, the layout as simple as could be, but as Harry Warner Jr. once wrote, "*Light* was the best of all possible crudzines... as comfortable as an old pair of shoes... I wish someone still produced something as scruffy and unassuming and genial as *Light*." And I concur.

To put it another way, I don't care what a zine looks like (tho, of course, I appreciate beautiful art & layout, etc.), what I concentrate on is content. What's it all about? I wouldn't throw away or dismiss an issue of *Light* for it's crude appearance, I'd devour it for glimpses of what it was like being a fan back then, how fans interacted, what they thought was important, & so forth. In short I see every fanzine as a reflection of its context, a capsule of a fannish moment frozen in time (very much like a shipwreck in fact). Zines are great for what they reveal, not for what they display.

Of course from an editorial technique perspective any and all zines can be critiqued and even savaged, but that's only one way of 'reading' a zine. The total worth of a zine is dependant on more than that.

What the editor & contributors say is more important than how it's reproduced. Always. If we forget that, we might wind up critiquing our way to extinction, and wouldn't that be a tragedy!

Myself, with *WCSFAzine* and *Space Cadet*, I have so very little time available when my mind is sharp and my mood is eager. Most of the time my warehouse job leaves me physically and mentally exhausted. Consequently, I can't afford to experiment much, as it is too time-consuming. So I work from a template of my own devising into which I pour the text as I write it. Art is added as an afterthought (though I generally pick something suitable in theme). I do the best I can with what I have. That's all I expect from any faned.

Askance #12 looks great by the way!

Changing subject, I have no idea which furry-porn-purveyor Taral was writing about. But then I generally don't spend much time in the dealer's room since I never seem to have any spare cash. I assume the "major West Coast Con" is V-CON, but I don't actually know. It may well be that the local Furrries, some of whom help run V-CON, know 'Kermit' far too well and are glad to be rid of him, but that he's one of those internalized problems unique to a given fannish group about which other groups are mercifully ignorant. Fascinating character study all the same.

Lloyd Penney's TALES FROM THE CONVENTIONS article on the perils of roomies is a useful means of quashing all such tendencies. I have on occasion shared without any problems, but nothing beats having a room where, if suddenly tired or overwhelmed, you can go off for a quiet hour or two to recover. Granted, that's not what conventions are for, but I find as I get older (57 & counting) a private escape pod...err...space is increasingly important. Recharges the batteries as it were.

The loc column is loads of fun. Learned what a webzine is and where to apply to Trufen. Entertaining and practical!

There are very few regular loccers out there. Despite my two-zine publishing schedule,

I've made a New Years resolution to become a mini-loc-hack. No intention of competing with Lloyd, but his comment that he's still enjoying writing locs no matter he's been doing it for 25 years sounds like something worth doing! So I'm going to give it a try as a new hobby. (This is the 4th loc I've done so far this year.)

Cheers! **The Graeme**
(faned of *Space Cadet* & *WCSFAzine*).

{Appearance does indeed matter in a fanzine, I doth believe, and helps establish a zine's personality. This can be either a good or bad thing. Like you say, a person can only do "the best [you] can with what [you] have." Indeed, I really don't expect anything more than that from any faned, but it really does help in terms of readability when one can put more time and effort into their production. We are in agreement about our time-management skills when it comes down to putting out a fanzine. Still, I try to do the best I can given the time I have. It is a vicious cycle, but for the most part I have been pleased with the results and am enjoying the comments and material I receive in return.}

()

Oh, boy. Here comes that rapid-zine-firing dynamo from the Bay Area, none other than my favorite Corflu roomie, the Reverend Christopher J. Garcia:



January 7, 2009

From: "Chris Garcia"

<garcia@computerhistory.org>

Well, well, well, another *Askance*. I've been bad, I don't think I've LoCed the last two. It's a shame because they've both been good issues. I'll start to get back on track with this one, OK?

I love Ditmar's art. I think he's one of the best artists we've got and in recent months, we've seen an explosion of his work around these parts. Guy Lillian and I had a nice conversation about him at WorldCon this year. The dirigible that's flying looks an awful lot like the one that is touring the

BArea skies in recent months. I'm a big mark for Airships, and the seaship below is really cool. I wonder which would win in a fight...

That's a nice little capsule on Forry you did. I like the flowchart feel of Bemused Natterings. I might have to steal that concept for one of my own zines. Oh, who am I kidding? I could never pull it off!

I really like *The Knarley Knews*, and that's part of why I was so happy to have Henry moving out this way. It's the kind of zine that I enjoy, lots of content that I wouldn't normally see presented in a fun way with art and an interesting layout. I certainly wouldn't lump it into the realm of crudzines (I do put many issues of *Drink Tank* in that category, personally) but it's not what the 'mainstream' of fanzines of the moment have been doing of late. That's probably not the right way to put it either. I see *TKK* as closer to something like *Alexiad* from Joe Major than anything else out there. They both have strong writing and they both have exceptional lettercols. **{Agreed.}**

And I can't wait 'til you join FAPA. I'm currently working on my new FAPazine, *Antiquarian*.

[Movie} remakes started in the 1900s when people started making longer versions of the shorts they made in the 1890s. Even *The Great Train Robbery* is a remake of an earlier piece. It's incredible to think that anyone would remake *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, but excepting film and Sci-Fi geeks, the original version hasn't held up nearly as well. On the other hand, *2001* has held up. The sad thing is that the films that don't really hold up get remade and tend to fail. I'd love to see someone tackle *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* again, for the 10th time. It's a film that screams for a 21st Century remake. *The Time Machine* certainly doesn't work for modern audiences, and the remake was so bad I totally forgot about it until two moments ago.

You know, I've heard portions of the story Taral tells before, I think, from artist friends at Further Confusion. That first part was very

familiar... I did run "Somewhere on the FurryMUCK" in *Drink Tank*. Interesting how things all seem to tie together.

And we've got another story from another Canadian who has to assign aliases to people. I've got similar stories of sharing a room myself...from both sides of the couch, as it were.

I love *Alexiad*, as I've said, and this was the best issue of *Chunga* in ages. Great content, great art, the always-brilliant lay-out; it all just hit with the furious genius of three Northwestern mad men!

I love *Last Call*; it's a Tim Powers book, so of course I love it, and I'd go so far as to say that it's the best of his latter year works. There was a period of brilliance from Tim in the 1980s and then a slight lull leading up to *Last Call*, *Earthquake Weather*, *Expiration Date*, and so on. I like his first period the best, specifically *The Anubis Gates* and *The Drawing of Dark*, though his later books are admittedly a little easier for most of the crowd to get into. I am very happy that I've gotten to talk to Tim a few times at cons, largely at BayCon and LosCon. He's a really nice dude.

Nice Figby. That's one of my all-time favourite effects!

Must run off and make the world safe for Computer History!

Chris

{Okay... But is the world safe from YOU?}

[It would be great to see what someone could do with 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea nowadays, given the film-making technology. The result could be very good, or it could be on the quality of the Brandon Frasier version of Journey to the Center of the Earth. That movie disappointed me. Fun visuals, but that was about it.]

()

Shifting gears – and also about 2,100 miles or so eastward of Mountain View,

California – it is now time to hear from Lee Anne Lavell:



January 12, 2009
Lee Anne Lavell
"leelavell@comcast.net"

Whew! *Askance* was really early this time. Aren't vacations nice! At any rate the issue appeared at a very opportune time. I had just completed the first Harry Potter book. A friend of mine, who is really into the series, gave me the first six books for Christmas so I sort of feel obligated to read them right away, despite the fact that I still have this huge backlog of unread books left over from my eye-problem days. I must confess, though, that I have thoroughly enjoyed the first one in the series.

Your experiments in graphics are interesting and for the most part successful. Experimentation can be a lot of fun! **{Then you'll find this issue commentable, I hope.}**

Still More Bemused Natterings: Concerning remakes and sequels, there have been some very successful ones. Witness, for instance, the John Carpenter remake of *The Thing*, which was far closer to the original source. I found *Aliens* much better than *Alien*, as is *Return to Oz* compared to *The Wizard of Oz*. I believe that one of the reasons for a lot of the remakes stems from the fact that the studios think what it would have been like if they had had all those CG that we can do now, and then they get carried away.

As far as sequels go, the film industry has afflicted us with them from the start of the talkie era. Consider the many *Frankenstein*, *Dracula* and *Wolf Man* series, which culminated with *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (plus *Dracula* and the *Wolf Man*), one of my very favorite horror comedies, a beautiful satire of that whole group of films. Later on we got another group of films featuring those horror icons and then, following that there were the interminable Halloween, Jason and Freddy Krueger films.

The much earlier Mummy films (which featured one remake and then sequels to that) are currently into another set of remake/series. Although *The Invisible Man* (and its sequels) has not been remade per se, *The Hollow Man* certainly retained the thesis that the side effect of invisibility is madness. Oh, incidentally, Abbott and Costello managed to meet the Mummy and the Invisible Man as well, although not as successfully in my opinion.

I guess that what I am saying is that sequels and remakes have been endemic in films virtually from the beginning. We just have to get used to it. I just hope they get off the kick that CG is everything pretty soon.

Only the Names...: There's not much I can comment on here. No "hooks" so to speak. I read it. I enjoyed it. That's it.

Penny for Your Thoughts: I really enjoyed Lloyd's reviews this time. While I appreciated some of his earlier reviews of more obscure zines, it was nice to see him tackle in depth a couple of the better known ones (at least to me). I do somewhat (at least in my case) disagree with the assessment of *Alexiad's* format. The content is indeed excellent but the dense, small print, even on the computer screen, wears out my eyes quickly so I have read it in fits and spurts. But that's me and my eyes, and I suppose it wouldn't bother others like it does me.

Figby: I love *Figby* but I do have one glitch concerning it. I personally print out *Askance* (sans the con notices). Now, I don't know whether it is my computer or my printer or my eyes or whatever, but *Figby* usually prints out so light it is almost unreadable and I have to go back to the computer screen to pick it up. **{So I have noticed each issue, and keep refining the panels. I think this time I got it down pretty good.}**

From the Hinterlands: I see that the "F" is back. David Burton used to call me "eagle eyes" because I would say things like "How come two paragraphs in column 2 on page xx is in a smaller font than the rest?" Sorry about that.

Curt Phillips: Thanks for the kind words. As for moving away from the typer, not quite, as long as someone is interested in my drivel. However, you must understand that I am a spree writer. Since I do have a column in *Time and Again* (as long as Dave Locke wants it), my obligation is first to that (sometimes I have a column or two in reserve from one of my sprees in case I hit a blank mind stage). Also, I mull a lot.

Robert Sabella: I feel very guilty about not LoCing *VoP*. I do read and enjoy it very much. It's just that there are not many hooks to comment on. *VoP* is not only interesting but a beautiful zine as well!



And while I'm on the lack of LoCs nowadays, I shall proffer some other ideas to up the count.

- 1) List LoCers on the contents page (Egoboo!).

Some zines already do this. 2) Do away with the WAHF category. Instead do one of two things (or both): print a short excerpt from the letter, maybe just a paragraph or sentence, or paraphrase the letter ("X says he disagrees with Y," or "Z loved the cover." etc.) Again things like this are now being done but not consistently and not really highlighted but instead buried in the WAHF list. Anyway, something besides Lloyd Penny's dreaded WAHF listing. ***{Some good ideas, some which I've tried before and may do so again.}***

Regarding his comment on the cross-over of alternate history sf to straight history, let me give you my thoughts on what exactly sf is.

I think of sf as a blank canvas, just like the artists with brushes and paints face. On it the sf writer can place alternate history, space opera, mysteries, love stories, techy fiction, satire, allegory and all the other forms of sf, just as the painter can do portraits, landscapes, seascapes, still lifes and all the various forms and styles of

modern art. As these latter will still remain paintings, so the various subjects of sf may fit other categories but will remain sf as well.

Ace Doubles – Ah, yes—Ace Doubles. Do you realize what troubles they present when you are attempting to place a large collection of them in alphabetical order!

Lloyd Penny: "don't you wish there were neofans like <The Three Davids> these days?" You know, Lloyd, I suspect that there are. You and all the other fans just need to recognize them and mentor them. This could be done on a personal basis as well as at clubs and/or conventions. Is there ever an open thing at conventions that have seminars on desktop publishing, fan writing, illustrating etc.?

Eric Mayer: Ah yes, Fredric Brown. I remember once I was sick in bed with a "reading cold" (Sometimes when I have a bad cold and if it doesn't settle around my eyes I will go into a reading jag, often with one author or subject). This particular time the jag centered on Fredric Brown. It is amazing what one notices when one reads a lot of things by the same author. It was then that I discovered Brown's penchant for plugging his own stories within other works of his. Incidentally, have you read all his Ed and Am Hunter mysteries or *Here Comes a Candle?* I also love *The Screaming Mimi* (which was made into a movie starring Anita Ekberg, Philip Carey and Gypsy Rose Lee).

Unfortunately, buying David Burton a fancy new computer wouldn't do a bit of good, at least right now. He is completely into paper paper paper. Right now his creative efforts are going into designing and then having printed his church's weekly bulletin.

Those Were the Days My Friend: I also have Googled my name as well as my maiden name, "Tremper." I found out a few interesting things. Apparently the Tremper family is originally Dutch. They first settled on the east coast where there is even a Tremper Mountain (or is it Mount Tremper?). Some of the family went north to around the Minnesota area and others south to Kentucky and thereabouts. (My father was from southern Indiana, just across the river

from Kentucky,) There seem to be an inordinate amount of pedants among the Trempers, with lots of scholarly books, often of a religious nature, to their credit.

It was through Googling my name that I discovered that Dave Burton was active again. He had mentioned Jim and me in *Catchpenny Gazette*. I also found that sometime back in the nineties *File 770* had done a survey of fans to find out who had influenced them and someone had listed me. I still wonder who who who?

Looking forward with great anticipation to the Annish.

Cheers...**Lee Anne Lavell**

{Slowly and not-so-surely I have been acquiring Ace Doubles again. This is only when I get out to the used bookstores in town, which is not very often. By what criteria do you shelve them? Alphabetical last name order? For example, you have the Ace Double of "Trouble With Tycho" by Cliff Simak and "Return to Yesterday" by A. Bertram Chandler. Do you shelve it by Chandler? I would. Then you could group them by blue spine on top, or white spine on top, THEN go alphabetically by last name of the authors... my head hurts....}

()

Yippee-skippee, the baseball exhibition season has begun, which means Eric Mayer and I will very soon be e-mailing each other quite often about his Yankees and my Twins. Batter up!



January 10, 2009
From: "Eric Mayer"
<maywrite2@epix.net>

I guess I'm a little late and a bit brief this ish. It may be that winter's wearing me down, or perhaps it's the deadlines I've been racing and then too, as I mentioned last time, I am realizing that although there are people in fandom with whom I enjoy being in touch, there's really no way I can actually participate in any meaningful way in fandom

as it is constituted these days. Well, a loc here and there.

One aspect of fandom that grows tiresome is the penchant of some fans for trying to define fandom to fit their own tastes. Consider Arnie's four elements of a "good" zine. The first three points are nothing more than subjective opinions, plain and simple. I'm sure you and I or you and Arnie or Arnie and I could all disagree on what is "well" written or what is "appealing" in editorial presence, or whether the graphic design "works" with the content of not (or whether it enthuses us). As to whether the content is relevant and enjoyable to Fandom...well, I suppose you could measure that by taking a poll of Fandom, provided anyone could agree on what "Fandom" is. So really, Arnie is simply offering a personal opinion, which is of interest as such, but in no way do those elements constitute any sort of useable measuring stick.

People portraying (or perhaps mistaking) their subjective opinions for objective facts results in a lot of fruitless discussion, in my opinion.

What makes a "good" fanzine depends entirely on each editor and reader in question.

What do I like to see in a fanzine? Mostly, personality. I enjoy an idiosyncratic fanzine, a fanzine that seems to be a projection of the editor and of what the editor thinks a fanzine should be. If the editor manages to project enthusiasm for whatever he or she happens to be doing, all the better. I am not generally fond of fanzines that give me the impression that they aim to adhere to some sort of standards laid down by people other than the editor. Even if an editor's desire is to produce a fanzine in the "classic" style, say, I usually can't get too excited about it. Commercial writing has to fit this or that niche, fulfill particular requirements for a particular market. I don't need or want that from a fanzine.

Others no doubt have their own likes and dislikes, which are just as valid for them as mine are for me. It's fun to trade opinions. Arguing about subjective tastes is not so much fun.

As you know, I do enjoy *Askance*. I like to see you having fun. The graphics are fun. The table of contents is striking.

I liked the Figby too. What if spaceships really did run on strings? Great concept.

So I feel like maybe I should just get this note off to you and resume fading away like an old hecto print.

Best,

Eric

{Every so often I get to feeling a little groggy myself...

{But seriously folks, I think that most people who enjoy fanzines – and fandom, to extend this point to a larger extent – do so on their own terms. Sure, there are many convergences of opinions, but being a science fiction fan (or a fan of anything, for that matter) is largely a matter of personal opinion. It is all subjective, and for that reason alone it becomes an exercise in futility to “define” such amorphous terms like “fan,” “well-written,” and/or the ultimate biggie, “fannishness.” It is all relative to one’s personal experience, which in turn fuels the fun factor of being a fan. So there.}

()

Now it’s time to take a sharp left from upstate New York to cross the northern border into the Canadian Province of Ontario. There we will find an example of the rare genus loc-writerious prolificus, otherwise known as Lloyd Penney:



January 21, 2009

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

Thank you for *Askance 12*...a mighty big zine. As said in another loc, if fanzines are dead, it’s a pretty lively corpse. Time for

more commentary, starting in the next paragraph.

I cannot pretend to be as analytic as you are, John, when it comes to fanzine reviews. Based on comments made about my first attempts to write reviews, I try to point things about the publication that caught my eye, and then to attempt to qualify why I like the zine, or why I don’t like it. There are few zines I don’t like, and I don’t have the temperament for a KTF review, and that’s a good thing.

I don’t get to many movies, and when I do, I want to see something that sounds fresh and original. Sometimes, the remake improves on the original, but not often. And nothing beats Hugh “Hand Me The Script” Marlowe. I did not see the remake with Keanu Reeves, and I don’t really want to. Leave us with our fond memories of a great movie.

Taral’s article made me smile, because I know Kermit Duntz, or the person he’s writing about, anyway. I knew this guy when he would purchase dealers’ tables from me with our local con, but when his residence was in NYC. Not long after the last time he bought a table, I spotted him in the Toronto subway, and I had to wonder if he had a good twin. I haven’t seen Kermit :-) in some time, so thanks to Taral’s investigative work, I now know The Rest of The Story. I remember he snuck in to our local anime con one year, grabbed a vacant table near the back door of the hotel, and sold his spoozy CDs until either he sold out or was caught by con management. I don’t know what small town Taral refers to when he writes Bumpkin’s Falls (I could guess), but I have been to Penetanguishene, and that’s the correct spelling. No, not at the prison, but Penetang (we all short-form it) is a nice, little town in an isolated area by the shores of Georgian Bay in Lake Huron . Kermit has done me no wrong, and owes me no money, but based on his behaviour and quirks, I won’t miss him.

The local...ten locs this time, which shows just what begging in print can do. *{Hey, if it works...}* Curt Phillips must have a lot of extra room at his home to store e-zine

printouts; I couldn't possibly do that. I have 20+ Bankers' Boxes of zines, and if I ever printed out the 1+GB of e-zine files I have saved, I'd probably need another 20 boxes. I might burn them onto a CD, or even copy them onto a thumb drive. In my own small apartment, I'd rather have a thumb drive than 20 more boxes. I plan to recommend Greg Benford as a guest at our local con for the future...

I am pleased that Tom Sadler has put *The Reluctant Famulus* online on eFanzines.com. I used to get it in the mail, but I know how expensive it is to mail anything as large as a 60-page fanzine anywhere, especially to a foreign country. I've missed about 10 or more issues, but I have quickly responded to the four issues now on the website. It's good to get back in touch.

Dave Locke is right, a loc is no longer currency to issue as payment for the next issue, but is just something you voluntarily do for the zines you receive. I think we all need is the occasional reminder that in fanzines, indeed any fannish activity, you get more out of it when you participate, when you are active instead of passive. Gentle hint, readers...

Used bookstores...their numbers dwindle every year. The one closest to me is moving to another location. Not only will it allow them to move into a slightly larger store, but also sort their inventory, which wound up scattered everywhere. This is the only used bookstore I know of that is actually thriving. Part of the experience of hunting through a used bookstore is the adventure of never knowing what you'll find, combined with that musty smell that I actually like.

To Greg Benford...I know you've got business to attend to, conventions and conferences to go to, books to write, but haven't you ever wanted to produce a fanzine again? Time to indulge that fan at heart. Even if it's only a one-shot, think you'd like to do it again? (Don't worry. I pester Rob Sawyer the same way.)

The idea of a super-fanzine, with lots of editors, and lots of comments...yeah, I

thought that was an apa, too. Maybe we need to set up a Zine of the Month Club? I admit I like seeing my by-line in newspapers, so I guess I like seeing my name in a locol or toc. John's got the webzine definition...in a webzine, I never really know if I've read the whole thing or not. A webzine is really just a website, and the links on the main page connect to the various parts of the zine.

Now I see why the ISDC we met at was at the Crowne Plaza in Dallas ...they seem quite used to hosting science fiction conventions. If you get to ApolloCon, pester Kim Kofmel to bring us down for 2010! That may be the only way we'll ever be able to return to Texas.

Done a little self-Googleing, I see, and finding other John Purcells. I've done it, too, and found only two other Lloyd Penneys online. One is the vice-president of the Liquor Control Board of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the other runs a motorcycle club in Whitby, Ontario, east of Toronto. I've also found another Lloyd Penney on Facebook, but he hasn't responded to friending notices.

Finally, page 44. Give me a deadline for the next issue, and I will see what I can do re: fanzine reviews. Robert Sabella says that *VoP* hasn't been reviewed by anyone, so I might take that as a challenge. I might look at some of the fannish but non-fanzinish stuff that appears sometimes on eFanzines.com. I'm running out of titles to work on. Take care, and see you nextish. Anyone who reads this zine coming to Montreal for Worldcon?

Yours, **Lloyd Penney.**

{I am sure there are a great number of people who read this zine that will be attending Anticipation. The problem is that the vast majority of on-line readers is silent. By the way, I hope the fanzine lounge you're running at the Montreal WorldCon goes well.

{I caught that Paul Harvey reference you slipped into your loc. He passed away last week at the age of 90. There was a

*time I used to listen to his short radio show. He was always entertaining, and sometimes thought-provoking. * Thank for you for the zine reviews; they arrived just in time!}*

()

So let's stay north of the border for another loc. This time it's our good friend – and very prolific contributor – Taral Wayne, who has one of his own Convention Tales to tell:



January 7, 2009

From: "Taral Wayne"
<saara@netscape.ca>

Lloyd's story about his room-mates -- literally mates -- reminds me muchly of a story that happened back in 1975 when I was chairman of FanFair III. It was such a long time ago that most of the details are lost to memory, but I do recall a scene just as comic as the -- excuse the expression -- climax of Lloyd's story. I think we must have given a fan I'll call Keith (I don't recall his full name) the job of looking after the con suite. Otherwise I don't know how he came by a room key. During a period when the suite was closed, something came up, and I led a party of people to let them in with my own key. The lights were off when we filed in, and there were at least a half dozen of us, maybe more. Whatever we wanted was in the other room. When I snapped up the light switch, there was Keith and a lady friend *in flagrant delecto* on the couch, pretty much as Lloyd described in his sequel. You couldn't have imagined a half dozen bigger grins behind me, of course

It only goes to show that no plot is new under the sun, or even under 100 Watt incandescent bulbs.

Taral Wayne

*{We're changing over to the fluorescent bulbs in order to conserve energy. * Such a convention "tail" has never happened to me, but I have long heard of these encounters. This Shall Happen from time to time.}*

()

Here we go: another faneditor – he of Alexiad fame – felt moved enough by the last issue to write in, covering basically pretty much everything published. I am not complaining, just stating the facts, ma'am.



January 15, 2009

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More Bemused Natterings: That's a debate I don't feel like getting into.

Still More Bemused Natterings: Part of the reason for sequels without end can be seen in the rise of corporate ownership. Film companies once were owned by people who made films and wanted to make films. Now they're divisions of corporations managed to maximize the bottom line. The easiest way to do this is to stay with a sure thing.

Granted, the unrestrained reign of the creative auteur was not without its problems. A creative director with a proven track record was allowed to do as he pleased and the result was "Heaven's Gate". When you realize that Cimino went to Oxford to shoot the graduation-from-Harvard scene because the Harvard campus didn't look Harvadesque enough, you get an idea of how creative he was.

You say, "the current mass mindset desires to be literally 'blown away' for entertainment." This is as much for the export market as anything else. Translating Gort's and Klaatu's observations is difficult and may not be possible, but everyone, no matter what language or culture, gets an explosion.



They're remaking *The Prisoner*. (And Patrick McGooohan died the other day, though I hope the two events weren't related.)

"Only the Names Are Changed . . . to Protect the Guilty": Oh no! Claude Degler with a computer!

"Tales from the Convention": It's an inescapable result of two married (or at least paired-off) couples attempting to share quarters. When I was young and, er, alone, I could share a room with sixteen other fans. Can't do that now.

Penney for Your Thoughts: I emailed the page-owner at Fanzines.com but never got a reply. And I've been fiddling with reworking the .pdf version to landscape mode so it can be read on a screen.

Thank you, Lloyd.

Fanzines received: Ah yes, I read Tom Swift, Jr., forty-five years ago. Agh.

From the Hinterlands: Curt Phillips: The Earl Kemp article really ought to be read in sequence with Earl's "Heinlein Happens", the lurid and gruesome tale of his interaction with the other Big Name Guest at ChiCon III. The interesting thing about the reaction to it was that the Heinlein groupies dismissed Earl out of hand, while those who had been RAH's contemporaries believed Earl. Says something about devotion, doesn't it?

Robert Sabella: I don't find Guy Lillian intimidating. Exuberant, but that can be said of a great many faneds these days, including the omni-productive Chris Garcia, who seems to have acquired all the hair Guy lost.

I'm not sure I'm such a reliable source for AH. I have disliked almost every Sidewise Award winner, for example.

Lloyd Penney: A lot of cons have been suffering from decline. The problem with Midwestcon is that it comes right upside various family responsibilities, for example.

Gregory Benford: I was in Heinlein's presence twice at MidAmeriCon. The first time was at the Blood Donor's Party, where I must have been the only attendee who didn't get one of the special pins the Heinleins gave out to all the donors. The second time, I ran into him by accident, laying down the law to two young women who were wondering why women couldn't be in the Mobile Infantry, since the power suits got rid of the usual reason for women not being in the front line. Fortunately, Heinlein did not live to see Verhoven's movie.

Mark Plummer: I haven't been bothered by the new reduced *Banana Wings*. In some ways it's easier to read. The current exemplar of odd sized is of course Dale Speirs's *Opuntia*.

Those Were the Days, My Friend: I've done that too, with less interesting results. Nevertheless, I have discovered that I am a bank vice president in Pennsylvania, a driver of a murderer in New Orleans, a Canadian bridge champion, a New York student who committed suicide . . . Variety is the spice of life.

Namarie,

the very singular **Joseph T Major**

{Whatever do you mean by prefixing your name like that? You have me wondering mightily at some hidden meaning.}

{I was at MidAmeriCon, but did not donate blood during the con – my blood alcohol level was probably way too high, unless a wino was getting the IV – so we missed out meeting there. That really was a fun con – at least what I can remember of it.}

Well, y'know it's always good to get a loc from Dave Locke...



January 25, 2009
From: "Dave Locke"
<chimera@flashmail.com>

Always good to download and settle back with a new *Askance*, and I enjoyed your graphic experimentations in this most recent one. Looks good, John!

I guess I should be more amazed than I am that Arnie Katz thinks the *Knarley Knews* is a crudzine. I would tend to agree with you that it "is a good genzine and enjoyable on its own level". I wish I had as many LoCs as I found in the latest *TKK*...**{Boy, do I agree with you there! Maybe it's because Henry snail mails his zine first before posting it on his website. I may have to try that trick some year.}**

I view how someone else's zine works this way: If they're happy with what they do, and other fans are, also, then anything else is a natural byproduct of review and criticism and the annual popularity contest (which all, by rights, should in theory ultimately serve to modestly help upgrade the overall quality), and in a distant third for attention if those two ... uh ... happy factors are in place. And let's cast a statue in bronze to honor Diversity. Fanzines coming from all over. Good finds are everywhere. The sky's the limit. Throw the canary another seed.

Arnie notes the four elements a good zine should have:

1. Is the fanzine well-written?
2. Does it have an appealing editorial presence?
3. Does the graphic design work with the content and also promote reader enthusiasm?
4. Is the content enjoyable and relevant to Fandom?

#4 is the troublemaker, as it can be interpreted differently based on how "relevant" is perceived. If an editor wants to offer their zine as a free forum for fan writers to ply their word-whipping skills, then some items might not seem "relevant to Fandom" in the minds of some. At worst, some might feel that a fanzine's material should be *about* fandom, which reminds me of a particular quote from Kurt Vonnegut: "I think it can be tremendously refreshing if a creator of literature has something on his mind other than the history of literature so far. Literature

should not disappear up its own asshole, so to speak."

I have a lot of agreement with you about movie remakes. Will Smith's *I Am Legend* didn't hold a candle to either of its predecessors. The remake of *Planet of the Apes* I tried twice to watch, and couldn't get through it either time. On the other hand, as much as I like 1951's *The Thing from Another World*, Carpenter's 1982 *The Thing* remake is one of my top favorite movies. In general, remakes generally don't work out, but there are exceptions. To focus on *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, we're dealing with some iffy middle ground. I re-watched the original just a week before seeing the remake.

So long as you understand, early on, that the remake is attempting to infuriate you with how stupid people with suits (and kids without brains or discipline) can easily be, then you'll see that it sets up Klaatu's initial mission for him. He came with a purpose, the way he's received and subsequently treated shows that there's validity to that purpose, and it takes glimpses of humanity in individuals to make him see that there's another side to the story.

I liked the original movie, though in this day and age there are too many crudities to it. Today my regard for it is mostly based on nostalgia. The remake is actually better in a great number of ways, though not enough better to call it a great SF movie. It is, however, worth seeing. If you watch SF movies with the hope of finding the occasionally decent one -- or, if you're lucky, the less occasionally great one -- then see this. It's not great, but it's definitely a watcher.

That's a rather ugly tale which Taral elaborated on. It's not about anyone I know, or have even heard of (the less I have to do with anything concerning furry fandom, the better), and after a short bit I starting skimming. On the other hand, he knew he was writing an ugly tale.

Amusing tale by Lloyd about his and Yvonne's convention roommate problem. Only twice did I share a room at a convention, the DC in '63 Worldcon and the '76 Phoenix Leprecon 2, and while

Some interesting items listed this time around, with some interesting guests lined up over the next six months. The cons I plan to be at are Aggiecon 40, ApolloCon 2009, and FenCon VI. If anybody reading this plans to be at those cons, look me up; I will be out and about. I would love to get to Conestoga since Frank Wu, who contributed front and back covers to Askance #5, shall be their Toastmaster.

So there are lots of fun things going on, not all of them really pertaining to "science fiction", but do fall under the aegis of science fiction in a marginal sense. If that makes any sense at all...

[Chimaeracon 2009](#)

South Texas Gaming, Scifi, Anime & More Fest
March 6-8, 2009

Crossroads Convention Center (South corner of Crossroads Mall)
4522 Fredericksburg Rd. (SW of I-10/Loop 410 interchange)
Balcones Heights, TX

San Antonio, TX area

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

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

Game Titles: TBA

Features:

Special Guest(s); Costume/Cosplay Contest; Anime Room; Game

Demonstrations; Vendors; Artist Alley; Door Prizes and more to come!

Charity: TBA

[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](#)

Revelcon 2009

[AggieCon 40](#)

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

March 26-29, 2009

Texas A&M Memorial Student Center

College Station, Texas

Author GOH: Todd McCaffrey

Artist GoH: Kristen Perry

Guests: Marc Gunn, Darlene Bolesny, James Grant & Mel Hynes, Jayme Blaschke, Katharine Kimbriel, Martin Whitmore, Tom Knowles, Steven Brust, Robert Stikmanz, Kerry Tolan, and more!

Other items of note: Dealer's Room, lots of gaming (LARP, tabletop, computer), *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, video room, art show, cosplay contest, Iron Artist Competition, Super Smash Brothers Brawl Tournament, and more fun stuff. Brought to you by Cepheid Variable

[Anime Matsuri](#)

Anime con

April 10-12, 2009

Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel
and Convention Center

1601 Lake Robbins Drive

The Woodlands, Texas 77380

Greater Houston, Texas

metropolitan area

Panels, Gaming, Anime Theaters,
Dealer Room, Artist Alley, Contests,
Club AM (the ultimate anime
dance/rave), and more!



[InstaCon 8](#)

The Best Little Con about ConRunning in Texas

April 18-19, 2009

Crowne Plaza Houston Suites

9090 Southwest Freeway

Houston, Texas 77074

Sponsored by ALAMO, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

[Delta H Con](#)

Gaming & anime con

April 24-26, 2009

University of Houston Main Campus

UC Center

4800 Calhoun Rd.

Houston, Texas 77004

Dealers Room, Artist's Alley, Art Auction, Art Show, Anime&DVD Screening Room, Anime Music Video (AMV) Contest (Rules), CosPlay [Graciously put on by Anime No Kai of UH], Manga Reading Room, Live Action Role Playing events (LARP's), Speaker Panels, Workshops, Bubble Room (Kid geared area), Collectable Card Games, PC Game Room, Role Playing events (RPG's), Terrain or Miniature Games (Mini's), & Board Games.

[Conestoga 13](#)

Oklahoma's largest literary science fiction & fantasy con

April 24-26, 2009

Radisson Tulsa

10918 E. 41st Street

Tulsa, OK 74146

Guest of Honor: Robin Hobb

Artist Guest of Honor: Real Musgrave

Fan Guest of Honor: Diana Bailey

Toastmaster: Frank Wu

Featuring: Art Show, Panel Discussions, Writers Conference, Dealers Room, Short Film Contest, Gaming, Fangs Fur & Fey Mini-Con, Friday night concert, Filksinging, Author Readings, Masquerade, Charity Auction, Panels, Podcasts, and the inexplicably popular Penguin Playhouse Theatre! Of course, this is only some of the many activities and events we have planned.

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

One-day (1 PM-4 PM) annual fundraiser for Starbase Houston

April 26, 2009 (Postponed from Sept. 2008 by Hurricane Ike!)

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.



[Cape!](#)

Free Comic and Pop-culture

Expo!

May 2, 2009

CAPE is a completely free 3-day event hosting over 80 guests including the most celebrated comic book artists and writers in the industry.

Dallas, Texas area

[A-Kon 20](#)

The Southwest's Largest Anime Convention

Anime, comics, cosplay, media, & gaming convention

May 29-31, 2009

(Metroplex area/ downtown Dallas)

Dealers Room, Guests, Seminars & Workshops, Multiple Video Rooms, Gaming & Tournaments, Premier Film Showings, Art Show & Auction, Autographs, Banquet, Costume Contest, Goodie Bags&Freebies, and Musical Concert

A-Kon is the oldest continually running, anime-based convention in N. America.

[SoonerCon 2009:](#)
["Slideways in Time"](#)

Science Fiction, Fantasy, Gaming
Con

June 5-7, 2009

Oklahoma City, OK area

GOH: Eric Flint

Author Guest: Selina Rosen

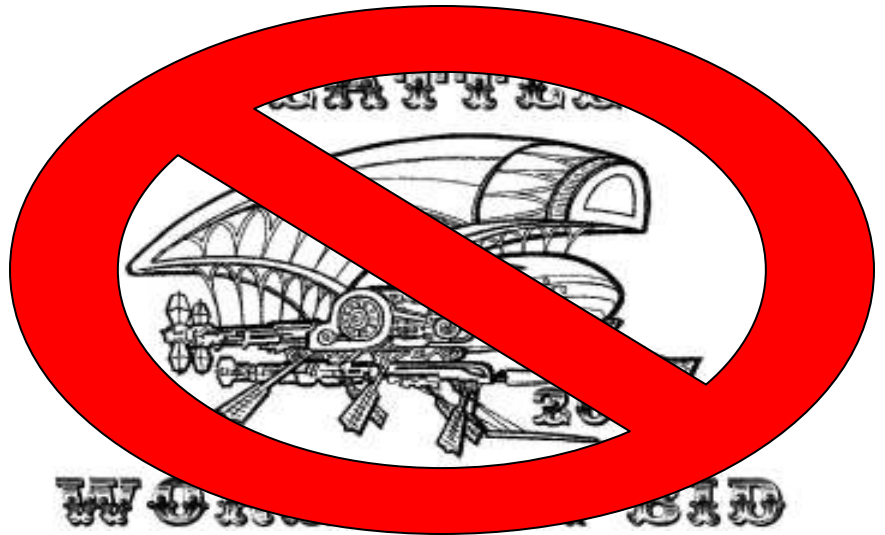
4th year of the SoonerCon revival

This incarnation of SoonerCon is
deliberately designed to celebrate

all aspects of fandom. We don't
intend to have a solely "books" or

"TV" or "art" emphasis. The
emphasis is on FUN. Events

include: Film Festival, Art Show, Gaming, Cosplay and Masquerade. Charity. Panel and
Workshops. Video Rooms.



[Bayou Wars XVII](#)

Wargaming con

(Presumably June 2009)

(greater New Orleans area)

Diverse gaming experiences, sponsored tournaments, and special Guest seminars and panels.

[ApolloCon 2009](#)

Houston's Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Conference

June 26-28, 2009

Houston, TX area

GOH: Wil McCarthy

Artist GOH: Pat Rawlings

Music GOH: Amy McNally

Fan GOH: Al Jackson

Celebrating speculative fiction in Houston and the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon
landing.

Panels, Art Show, Masquerade, Dealers Room, Gaming (including LARP), Filking, Book
Exchanges, Short Film Contest, Media Room. Writer's Workshop.

Sponsored by the Houston Science Fiction Association, a 501(c)(3) organization.



[Tokyo in Tulsa](#)

Anime con

July 10-12, 2009

DoubleTree Downtown
and the Tulsa Convention Center

Tulsa, OK area

Con centered around Japanese Anime and Culture. We are also
highlighting gaming (both video and tabletop), webcomics, writers, and popular culture. Otaku
everywhere and of every persuasion will find something to do and be excited about! Tokyo In
Tulsa is about coming together, having fun and celebrating our common interests. Will have AMV,
cosplay, hall cosplay, etc.

[Babelcon 2009](#)

General science fiction, fantasy, & horror con

July 17-19, 2009

Cook Hotel & Alumni Center

3838 Lakeshore Rd.

(next to the lake on the LSU campus)

Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Anime fans will be glad to hear BabelCon has plans to expand their anime track to include several guests, Cosplay contest, and lots more panel discussions, instead of primarily showing videos. Plus we're working on a Horror track, an Author's track, and the Scinema Film Festival (various categories). This will be in addition to the Kids track, Indoor Ren Fair track, Sci-Fi track, Fantasy track, Science track, Paranormal track, and Games track (video and tabletop) from previous years.

BabelCon is a presentation of the Science and Engineering Education Foundation, a non-profit organization that is dedicated to Science education, using Science Fiction media to create interest. A large percentage of BabelCon's shows, panel discussions, demonstrations, and other presentations are related to Science and History.

[AniMix 2009](#)

Where Anime and Gamers Unite

July 17-19, 2009

Plaza Hotel and Conference Center

1721 E Central Texas Expressway

Killeen, TX 76549

(Killeen / Central Texas area)

Dealers Room, Artist Alley, Art Auction, Anime Music Video competition, and more! Above all the typical things that conventions have, we will have AniMix's original Final Fantasy VIII ball. So, bring your best FF costumes and show off during the ball. Also we will have video game Tournaments, table top gaming, new anime screeners, video game demos and lots of workshops and panels.

[MechaCon V](#)

Anime con

July 24-26, 2009

Hilton Lafayette

1521 West Pinhook Road

Lafayette, LA 70503-3158

"[O]ffers anime and mecha fans of Louisiana and neighboring states a chance to gather in a warm and friendly setting to learn more about the culture of Japan and to share in the experience that is the anime fan culture."

Cosplay, Contests, Gaming, Video Rooms, Panels, Dealers Room, Artist Alley, formal/semi-formal dinner, and more!

[Lazy Dragon Con](#)

A Science Fiction / Fantasy Themed Party Con

NOTE: "Unfortunately, we are not looking at having one for 2009 at this time, but will let you know if something changes. Feel free to see what went on at the first two. Pictures from LDC 2008 will be added as time allows." [From Web site]

(Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex Area)

There will be Guests, Merchants, Artists, Gaming, Parties, Socializing, Contests, Women's Fun
Jell Wrestling, a Video Room and Much More!
Also supporting the Breast Cancer Research Foundation

[Houston U-Con](#)

Comic Books, Gaming, & Collectors one-day con.

August 1, 2009

Northwest Community Unitarian Universalist Church (NWCUUC)

5920 Hwy 6 North

Houston, TX 77084

(Bear Creek area / northwest Harris County)

(Greater Houston metropolitan area)

The convention will primarily be Comic Books and Gaming but there is sure to be some Anime,
Manga, Sci-Fi/Fantasy and Goth vendors and guests.

[Anticipation, the 67th WorldCon](#)

August 6-10, 2009

Palais des Congrès de Montréal

Montreal, Canada

Guest of Honour: Neil Gaiman

Invitee d'honneur: Elisabeth Vonarburg

Fan Guest of Honour: Taral Wayne

Editor Guest of Honour: David Hartwell

Publisher Guest of Honour: Tom Doherty

Master of Ceremonies: Julie Czerneda

Five days of programming on hundreds of topics from books to media, from art to costuming,
from movies to television to anime, from science fiction to science fact, as well as an art show,
masquerades, the Hugo Awards ceremony, dealer's rooms, and much more!

[ArmadilloCon 31](#)

Literary Science Fiction Convention.

August 14-16, 2009

Doubletree Hotel North

6505 N. IH-35

Austin, TX 78752

Austin, Texas area

GOH: Scott Lynch

Artist GOH: Stephan Martinere

Editor GOH: Chris Roberson

Fan GOH: Karen Meschke

Special Guest: Joan Vinge

Toastmaster: Scott A. Cupp

Panels, Art Show, Gaming, Charity, Full Day Writer's Workshop, Dealer's Room, and more!

ArmadilloCon is a literary science fiction convention held annually in Austin, with several hundred
attendees. The primary focus of ArmadilloCon is literary science fiction, but that's not all we do --
we also pay attention to art, animation, science, media, and gaming. Every year, dozens of
professional writers, artists and editors attend the convention. Sometimes they come to make
deals, but more often they come to have fun!

Sponsored by the Fandom Association of Central Texas, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization



[Bubonicon 41](#)

Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention

August 28-30, 2009

Sheraton (NOTE: Same hotel as last year)

Albuquerque, New Mexico area

GOH: Michael Cassutt

Toastmistress: Carrie Vaughn

Guest Artist: Peri Charlifou

Panels, Art Show, Dealers Room, Gaming, Auctions, Film Screenings, Readings, Autographs, Filking, Science Talk, Costume Contest, Green Slimes, Audience Participation Events, and more!

Each year, proceeds from Bubonicon go to worthy causes. In 2006, proceeds from Bubonicon 38 benefited the Roadrunner Food Bank, the Children's Hospital of New Mexico and the Williamson Science Fiction Library at Eastern New Mexico University.

[San Japan 2.X](#)

Japanese Anime and Culture Convention

(Presumably August 2009)

San Antonio, TX

Dealer's Room, Multiple Panel Rooms, Video/Table Gaming, Artist Alley, 24 Hour Video Room. 2 viewing rooms, gaming (both live action and computer) industry panels, and more. Further, trying to emphasize as a cultural convention, we will be bringing you panels, performances, and demonstrations of Martial Arts, Tea Ceremonies, Kabuki, Traditional Japanese games, and more! Come see what it's really all about!

[AtsuiCon 2](#)

Anime con

(Presumably August 2009)

Houston, TX area

AtsuiCon Cosplay, Anime Music Video Contest, Arcade Tournaments, Art Show & Auction, Hentai Art Show, Concert, Ero Genki Adult Cosplay, DJ Laen's Tokio Dance Contest, Card Dueling Tournaments, Panels/Meet & Greet, Hentai Fest, Dealers' Room, & more!

[AnimeFest 2009](#)

Convention and Association for fans of Anime, Music, Manga, and Japanese Pop Culture

(Presumably August 2009)

(Dallas, Texas [downtown Dallas] area)

Japanese Guests, Voice Actors, Manga/Comic Artists, Dealer Room, 24hr Video Theaters, J-Pop, Gaming, Art Show & Auction, Panel Discussions, Autograph Sessions, Film/Video Premieres

[FenCon VI](#)

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

September 18-20, 2009

Crowne Plaza Hotel

North Dallas/Addison

14315 Midway Road

Addison, TX 75001

(Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex area)

GOH: Lois McMaster Bujold

Music GOH: Carla Ulbrich
Artist GOH: Kurt Miller
Fen GOH: Warren Buff
Toastmaster: Paul Cornell
Special Guest: Keith R.A. DeCandido
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.

[Realms Con](#)

5th Annual Anime Festival
(Presumably September 2009)

Corpus Christi, TX

Anime Dating Game, AMV (Anime Music Video), Anime Jeopardy, Cosplay, Dead or Alive Volleyball Tournament, The Katamari, Movie Rooms, Panels, Pool Party, Rave, Scavenger Hunt, Table Top Tournaments, Video Game Tournaments, Workshops, and SO MUCH MORE!!!

[ProtoCon 11](#)

Gaming con
(Presumably September 2009)

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!



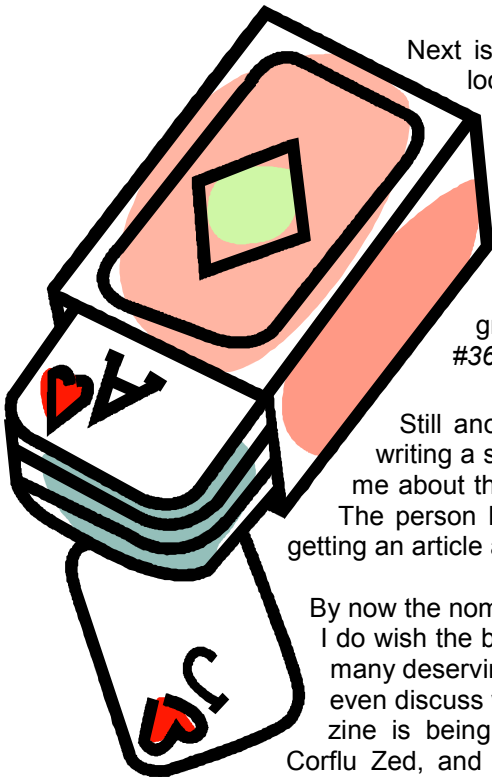
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"No way Derek!
Buy your own Spock ears."

What's Next

One of the things I was hoping to write for this issue will be in the 14th issue. That is the article about the unsanctioned Hearts Tournament that will take place during FenCon VI in September this year. (Hearts, for those not in the know, is a card game in which players try to avoid gaining points.) This event is an example of what can happen when somebody – namely, me – opens their big mouth and says something innocuous like, “Say, Warren; when I see you at Fencon, care to help me hone my Hearts playing skills?” on the Southern Fandom Classic listserv. Before I could say, “No trump, rebel scum!”, all sorts of fen were chiming in with “Count me in” or “I’ll play”, eventually leading the discussion into how Hearts Tournaments are a staple at DeepSouthCons, complete with rules and everything. *Holy crap, what have I gotten myself into?* I mused in the listserv. So I saved an estimated 85% of the entries labeled “Hearts at DSC” in hopes of turning them into something resembling an article for the second annish of *Askance*. Alas, I didn’t have enough time to do so. Therefore, I shall endeavour to get it done for the next issue.



Next issue will have yet another Aggiecon report from your local convention reporter, so here’s yet another advance warning about the goings-on there. It looks like it is going to be another fun time, which is always A Good Thing. (God bless Biff Demmon for getting us started on capitalization for effect.)

Lloyd Penney has also sent in yet another installment of his series “Tales From the Convention”; others in this grouping of articles have appeared in *OSFS Statement #361* and *BCSFazine #427*. Plus more are forth-coming.

Still another submission is coming from Steven Silver, who is writing a series of articles on Silent Movie Stars. Steven e-mailed me about these, and I have no idea which profile I will be pubbing. The person I asked for was Mabel Normand, but I would not mind getting an article about Roscoe Arbuckle or Harold Lloyd, either.

By now the nominating deadline for the Hugo Awards has passed, and I do wish the best for everyone who makes the short list. There are so many deserving fans and pros out there that I truly feel unworthy to even discuss who should be nominated or not. Not only that, but this zine is being pubbed, posted, and post-marked the week before Corflu Zed, and I wish I could be there, damn it all to hell! do hope everyone there has a good time. Look for me yukking it up in the virtual consuite lounge.

So that’s a wrap, gang. Have a great spring, keep those cards, letters, articles, and artwork (covers! I need covers!) coming in. See you in May!

John Purcell

Appearing now on Channel Z.....

Quite by accident I discovered something on our local cable channel 8, and writing about it would be the perfect ending piece for this issue, which began with Dr. Albert Jackson's article about Apollo 8. It makes me wonder if anybody else watches this, too:

I am an early riser. This is partly because of job duties – teaching High School Dual Credit English classes that begin at 7:30 AM sharp Monday through Thursday mornings – and domestic needs, so my day usually starts at 5:00 AM. That's early. The truth is, I really don't mind. I have my coffee, two slices of whole wheat toast lightly buttered, and watch the news, then catch the daily forecast on the Weather Channel. Sometimes I do a little channel surfing before checking e-mails; quite often a few of my students have sent messages to me at god-awful hours of the night asking questions about the papers they are writing, which also happen to be due later that day.

At any rate, after the e-mail check comes my daily 20-30 minute exercise regimen: 5 minutes of stretching, 5+ minutes of resistance band work, followed by 10 minutes of assorted abdominal-aerobic routines, then 5 more minutes of stretching and cool down. By then it's 6:00 AM, which is the time to get Daniel up for school. While he's having breakfast and all, I hit the shower.

But during the last week of February (in 2009, that is, for those of you who are anal about this kind of information), I found something quite interesting while channel surfing one morning. Local cable channel 8 – known as the CW network in the evening – now broadcasts NASA-TV segments from 5:00 to 6:00 AM. Most of the segments are pre-recorded reports on various projects that NASA is working on and following, but lately they've been doing live feeds (or taped feeds, most likely) from the International Space Station.



Now, that struck me as kind of really cool and scientific. There I am, in my pj's and Marvin the Martian slippers, sipping coffee while watching live video from the ISS floating in orbit something like 162 miles or so above planet Earth. Every so often I flip to channel 53 (the Weather Channel) to get updates and animated satellite images of Texas, which even from space is large and boring. By 7:30 AM I am teaching, which on Tuesday and Thursday means I am on campus in room E-205A broadcasting a lesson to my Dual Credit Distance Ed class 43 miles north of campus at Bremond High School. There are days when I wonder if there will come a year when I – or more than likely some future teacher – will be teaching the ultimate Distance Education class by broadcasting their lessons – with PowerPoint, video, smart screens, and document cameras, or whatever technology available by then – to students in an orbiting classroom on a much larger and permanent space station, or even to a lunar colony.

It is a bit mind-boggling to think of this possibility. Those days may not be very far off, especially since we have the technological capability of doing so Right Now.

What a concept. Things like this remind me that I still have that ol' "ghosh-whow, boy-oh-boy" sensawondah in me. And to be honest, I hope I never lose it.

