

In A Prior Lifetime #4

An electronic fanzine from
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As was done in eons past, this fanzine is available for expressed interest, or a bag of sunflower seeds.

This zine is also viewable at Bill Burns' site, www.efanzines.com
a very worthwhile site to visit.

Below: a view of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota (© 1992 NASA) looking to the southwest from a shuttle.



What has gone before...

Well, it has been a while since I put out the last installment of *In A Prior Lifetime*, and in that time, I've come to a few conclusions. One is that this has been a bittersweet experience in that I have enjoyed rekindling old friendships, getting reacquainted with buddies still floating around in my old stomping grounds of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. It has been fun touching base with these friends, but at the same time, I find myself missing fans and authors who have passed on since I was an active member of Minn-stf (the Minnesota Science Fiction Society, Inc.).

However, this electronic fanzine stuff sure makes it a lot easier to "pub my ish" when the urge strikes. It is also much more cost-effective than the old dead-tree version of fanzines, which I still enjoy reading. But if you go to www.efanzines.com, a service provided by Bill Burns, you will find that a lot of old-timers have been putting their ancient, crumbling work into pdf format and having Bill maintaining a site where these marvelous old zines can be viewed and enjoyed by a new and future generations of fans. I thoroughly urge one and all to peruse Bill's site. Once a month I like to browse the new zines that Bill has added. This is an invaluable service to support not only for the preservation of our fannish past, but to give new, younger fans an outlet to express themselves. Writing is a great way to do so.

Which brings me to the next section of this e-zine. . .

Dust from the Attic Redux

[editor's note: This is the second installment of my personal reflections of my long friendship with Lee Pelton (1947-1993). In my last issue, IAPL #3, I detailed how it all began back in those halcyon days of 1971 to 1973. That installment finished with the exposure of Lee, Steve Glennon, and myself to Minicon 7 (Easter weekend of 1973).]

In our last episode, we left our trio of intrepid voyagers embarking into a world that none of them knew what in the heck it was. Babes in a new land, Lee Pelton, Steve Glennon, and John Purcell attempted to fathom the depths of the madness surrounding them.

In short, they were swamped in a morass known as 

Well. . . maybe I exaggerate a little. But the intent is the same: None of us knew what we were getting involved with here. All we knew was that it looked like a lot of fun. No matter. We were hooked, and that was all there was to it.

It would be great if I could relate all of the zany goings-on of Minn-stf in that magically fannish year of 1973. Looking back, it is interesting to note that the three of us were exposed to fandom, especially in the hotbed of Minneapolis-St. Paul, in that particular year. For those of you who remember this, 1973 was the year that Minn-stf

had been bidding for to hold the World Science Fiction Convention. Well, to make a history lesson short, Toronto got the bid after the Minneapolis folk dropped their bid. However, in true fannish spirit, the club decided that they would continue to bid for the 1973 worldcon until they finally won the bid. It was into this kind of mentality that we fell into.



And yes, indeed, Virginia, it was a lot of fun.

I really don't remember any specific details, except for the uniqueness of there being two Minicons in 1973. Besides the Hyatt Lodge Minicon in the spring, there was also a smaller, one-day event held at the Minneapolis downtown public library where I had my first real chance to meet and talk with Clifford Simak and Gordon R. Dixon, among other authors. At the spring version I had met a couple *really* old-time authors besides Simak and Dickson: Carl Jacobi, Donald Wandrei. I'm not sure, but I do believe August Derleth and Lester Del Rey were also present. In any event, my primary reason for attending was to check out the huckster room for books to add to my collection. Steve and Lee had sort-of gotten me interested in comic book collecting, but I wasn't too terribly interested in that end of fandom, even though I had met a couple sf and comic fans at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota during my sophomore year: Barry Short from San Dimas, California, and Dan Ward from some Podunk town in the northern hinterlands of Minnesota. It was during these two years at Concordia – fall of '72 through May of '74 – that I also met Walter Carlson of Fargo, North Dakota, a long-time fan who had been to a couple Minicons by Easter of 1974. Those were a fun couple of years punctuated by book and comic runs with Barry and Dan, talking with Walter, and generally reading a lot of science fiction. My roommate, John Martin from Waseca, Minnesota, also read a lot of sf, but he wasn't a fan. It was also at this time that I was exposed to fanzine fandom. Along with Minicon membership came a subscription to Minn-stf's clubzine, *RUNE*, which at that time was being edited by Chuck Holst. (I think, even though the names Denny Lien and Scott Imes pop into my head as possible editors. The Fred Haskell Era of Rune was a year or so off yet.) I was quite surprised at how much I enjoyed reading that twill-tone rag, and discovered that I could *write* for it, too, by submitting book reviews. For the first time I was able to see my name in print, if I discount my high school's literary magazine *Mandala*, which ran a few poems of mine.

Back to Lee and Steve.

Barry Short, a three-year veteran of West Coast Comic conventions and a couple Southern California science fiction cons, came down to visit Minicon during Easter break of 1974, which was a lot of fun, because the four of us – Lee, Steve, Barry, and I – spent time in the film room, con suite, and actually attending **programming items** besides the

huckster room. It was much fun hanging with friends at a con, and learning a primary *raison d'être* for cons – maintaining fannish friendships. This was definitely a most-cool development, a lesson that still remains with me today even though I haven't attended a con since Easter of 1992.

It was during this formative period in our early fannish careers that the fandom bug seriously bit Lee Pelton. He and I used to talk about this in the late 80's, and we mutually agreed that fandom satisfied our desires for acceptance by a group – which neither of us had really enjoyed in high school, being basically loners despite our love of sports – and a certain amount of recognition for our efforts. Like me, Lee was a music buff, born and nurtured by a rock and roll generation, and I discovered that Lee had a fine singing voice. Myself, I had been playing guitar for a decade by the time I became immersed in fandom, and once in a while Lee and I would actually do the music thing, which I will explore more in future installments in this column. Anyway, science fiction fandom was a catalyst for Lee. He really got into the fan publishing thing after literally throwing himself head-first into the fannish pool: he had his own apartment, something like 3000 books, 1000+ record albums, and began regularly spending time at Minn-stf functions. In the process, Lee became a well-known figure in the local fannish scene, and I remember that he wrote quite a few book reviews for RENE besides beginning to attend cons outside of Minneapolis. Steve and I were busy with our collegiate affairs, so neither of us got into the club end of things. That aspect of my fannish career didn't take off until the summer of 1974 when I transferred from Concordia to the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis campus, to pursue my degree in English. And while there I met a lot of Minn-stfers who were students at the U, which is most *definitely* fodder for the next installment here.

In retrospect, I think that changing my major from Music to English was one of my more serious deficiencies in making decisions because I based this decision based on my growing interest in fandom. If I had stayed at Concordia, I would have remained as a music major and graduated with a BA in teaching music; by now, I would have been teaching for 27 years at some high school somewhere, probably directing that school's marching band and their jazz band. It's a tough call, but hindsight is 20/20, and I also know for a fact that the program at Concordia was designed to make me a professional trumpet player. But by 1974, my main love was the guitar and playing rock music. I was in a campus group called Marshall and the Doo-Wops (obviously a 50's band) that played for campus functions and even at a couple local venues. Before then I had played guitar in my high school's jazz band, which further cemented my penchant for blues-based riffs and jazz-rock music. Lee also had a deep abiding love for blues, and it was great fun listening to old lp's and 45's in his apartment and talking rock and roll music history. A few years later (late 70's) after he had joined Nate Bucklin, Kara Dalkey, and Reed Waller in Runestone – a band obviously composed of musically inclined Minn-stfers – Lee was envisioning a future group with him as lead singer, Nate on lead guitar, Reed on rhythm guitar and vocals, myself on bass and vocals, and trying to land a permanent drummer (which was always a problem for Runestone). I have to admit, that would have been a great line-up. Unfortunately, it was not meant to be.

However, as I look back thirty years from the end of 2004, I am glad that things turned out the way they did. Without question, those first two years in fandom with Lee Pelton formed a great friendship between us, made even better by Steve Glennon's presence. It is interesting to note how Steve basically stayed in the background, never seeking particular recognition for his efforts, which says a lot of his character. He was one of those solid-guys: quiet, unassuming, but extremely intelligent and witty. Steve will always be one of the funniest people I have ever known in my life, and I am grateful for our long friendship.

In the next installment of this column, my plan is to recall the development of Lee Pelton from a wild-eyed neofan to well-known fan editor of *RUNE*, with a little side-venture into what Minn-stf meetings were like in the mid-Seventies, to say nothing of Minicon memories.

from the hinterlands

A section devoted to communications pulled from the ether

Yes, indeed, this shall be my e-zine version of the loccol. I didn't receive much response to the last issue, so this won't take long. Even so, it was fun hearing from these people. It should be fairly obvious which are my comments. They'll be in font like this followed by my initials (jp).

ERIC MAYER caught up on the first issue, in which I espoused on a resident critter of our backyard:

That mole cricket made me shudder. Not exactly the cricket on the hearth. We get spiders the size of my palm. They'll give you a start too. A couple bumblebees got in this spring. We killed what we thought was the only one. Well, honestly, my wife killed it. I hate things that fly and sting. We were just breathing sighs of relief when a horrible, deafening drone filled the room and there, rising up slowly and then hovering in mid-air, was another enormous bee and all I could think of were the helicopters in APOCALYPSE NOW.

I most liked the Phyllis Eisenstein story. A book signing can be a proud and lonely thing.

Once I did a phone interview with Jane Yolen for a writing magazine (it was called Write! It was to be used in school English classes) Anyway she told some amazing stories. I just had to transcribe. A year later she was at a local bookstore to sign and I'd been so impressed I decided to take a book to be autographed, to meet her. I introduced myself and later I saw she'd signed "To a fellow scrivener" which I thought very gracious given the disparity in our writing accomplishments. (No kiss!) Anyway thanks for "taking me back" for a while.

Well, I am glad you enjoyed my bemused natterings. I will be interested in what you think of my more current installments of this zine. – jp

LLOYD PENNEY did a much better job on remaining current with this zine by commenting on topics raised from the summer of '04, which included the first installment of my reminiscences of Lee Pelton.

Many thanks for issue 3 of In A Prior Lifetime. I've had most of this summer off, but certainly not the way I've wanted to...unemployment sucks big time. However, it does allow for keeping relatively caught up with fanzines, which doesn't explain why there's a dozen or more e-zines on my desktop. Time to write and clean up.

Yvonne and I are cleaning up, too. We seem to be the stereotypical fannish packrats, but after a couple of bad years in our fannish careers, interests are changing, and things we couldn't bear to part with back then are happily out the door now. Two large boxes are set up...one for garbage and one for Sally Ann. After bearing the tonnage of our stuff for over five years now, we're sure the building will sway to the other side with the amount we're tossing.

I had always wanted to go to a Minicon...a few fans from Toronto went most years, but I never had the cash to go. I had to live on the stories brought back from these hallowed gatherings, but faunched to go. I accept the reality of never going now, but it would have been great to take part. (Same thing for Marcons, and Boskones, and more...never enough moolah to do all the things you want to do.)

Our current project is goes back to Yvonne's original interest, even before fandom, and that's space advocacy. She is the chairman of Canadian Space Summit 2004, to take place at the Ontario Science Centre on September 25. My job is publicity and on-site registration, and keeping the chairman sane at times.

I've noticed lately that even as I have fallen behind a bit with the fanzines I receive, I haven't received many. The paper zines I receive have tailed off to nearly nothing, and while I have a number of e-zines to tackle, they haven't been arriving either at my own address or at efanazines.com with their usual regularity. I'm a little concerned over this, but it could be that I've fallen off a number of mailing lists. Wouldn't be the first time. Anyway, time to go. I am hoping for that magic call that will get me the job I've worked hard to get, and if I'm going to get that call, it should come this week. Wish me luck, and see you next issue.

ERIC LINDSAY sent a brief comment on IAPL #3:

Thanks also for the memories of Lee Pelton, and your first Minicon. I'll be interested in seeing where you go with this. I don't think I ever attended a Minicon, but I did manage to visit Mpls and some of Mpls fandom a lot during the late '70s and on through the years.

Jean and I are actually on Day 52 of an around Australia car trip at the moment (so our internet contact is intermittent and tends to be very slow). We just reached Denham W.A. and watched the dolphins play (and splash the tourists) at Monkey Mia today. Rough drafts at <http://www.ericlindsay.com/sf/geg103.htm>

Well! I definitely will have to check that site out. I love to read about other people's trips. It definitely sounds like a great time. Hope you included pictures on that site. – jp

the infamous "I Also Heard From" list:

In reverse alphabetical order: R Lorraine Tutihasi, Garth Spencer, Arthur Hlavaty, Richard Geis. And that's all, folks.

Not much on natterings snatched from the nether-realm of the ethereal Internet. I heartily encourage the interchange of ideas and e-zines. Just like the old dead-tree fanzines, I enjoy hearing from people. Take care, and I hope to hear from you folks. – jp