

# In A Prior Lifetime #16



October, 2006

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*This issue is dedicated to the memory of Wilson Arthur "Bob" Tucker  
November 23, 1914 – October 6, 2006*

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**this fanzine supports christopher j. garcia for taff!**

### *Art credits:*

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to the tune of “Edelweiss”:

*Twonk's disease, Twonk's disease: every morning afflicts me; Twonk's disease, Twonk's disease: you attack every chance you see...*

# In Loving Memory

We are blessed.

We are blessed by the presence of people who have come to mean so much to this entity called Science Fiction Fandom. Perhaps no single person has come to mean more to fandom than Bob Tucker, who passed away on Friday, October 6, 2006, just seven weeks shy of his 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday. He was preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, Fern Delores Tucker, just this past June. Bob wasn't able to travel much in recent years due to his health, but he was still attending conventions well into his eighties, which is remarkable in its own right.



Over the course of the next few weeks, the facts and stories of this man's life are going to be recalled over and over again in fanzines and on websites too numerous to mention. This alone is a testimony to the love and affection that the science fiction community, both professional and fan, holds for Bob Tucker. This outpouring is not unexpected. Yes, indeed, we are surely blessed.

I refuse to use the past perfect tense in referring to the human blessing known as Bob Tucker. What he has meant to our little corner of this vast universe transcends time and space. This is literally true. Fans of all ages who have never met him, and those fans to come who will never meet him, are all direct descendents of that fannish seed Bob sowed way back when he created Hoy Ping Pong and began infusing fan writing with his particular brand of sly wit and

fannish sense of humor. Oh, there was a definite fannish sense of humor before Tucker, but it was his *style* that became so widely imitated, but was never quite the same. Fan writing that good wasn't just a natural gift – which, to be sure, Tucker had - but he *worked* at it. All good writers hone their craft, and great fan writing is no different.

Last week, Arnie Katz and I were e-mailing back and forth about our respective tribute issues, and Arnie described Bob as a transcendental figure. I have to agree. Tucker's writing, his fanzines, personality, charm, and genuine affection for fans defy any attempt to pigeonhole this man into just one era. Over the years he created a wealth of treasures for the rest of us to enjoy. There is little question that the fandom that we know and love was fathered by him. What he has left behind for us is nothing short of a miraculous treasure trove of accomplishments and memories.

Oh, yes, we are blessed by what Bob Tucker has left for us to remember him by. Use modern technology to explore just a small portion of his legacy. For example, there are quite a few pictures of a young Tucker on fanac.org; one of them is a shirtless "beefcake" photo of him typing away; you can also take a leisurely stroll through the photo archives of [www.midamericon.org](http://www.midamericon.org) to find even more pictures of him. Oh, and don't forget his official website. Plus other sites scattered all over the web. I have been re-reading Harry Warner, Jr.'s *A Wealth of Fable* for the umpteenth time, and the Tucker index references are many. In *All Our Yesterdays* there's a whole mess more, of course. I could naturally go on listing example after example, but it would take up too much space.

See, what I really want to do here is share with everyone is how my life was blessed by knowing Bob Tucker. And I don't exactly know where to begin. Maybe with a convention memory. I mean, after all, where else would I begin with a Tucker remembrance?

The most memorable of the many memories I have of being at a con with Bob Tucker comes from Byobcon V back in July of 1975. This was the series of regional conventions that Kansas City Fandom had been running as precursors to their successful bid for the worldcon of 1976. Byobcons were great, fannish fun, and the fifth in the series was held at the Hotel Muehlebach in conjunction with an SF Writer's Symposium at nearby Kansas State University, so there were some heavy hitters at the convention: besides Bob Tucker, Robert Bloch, James Gunn, Harlan Ellison, Phyllis and Alex Eisenstein, and other authors were featured at both events. This was the first out-of-state convention that Steve Glennon and I had driven to, almost missing



Jack Speer and Bob Tucker at Ditto 14 a.k.a. FanHistoriCon 11 (October 12-14, 2001), Bloomington, Illinois.



our turnoff from I-35, but Steve literally two-wheeled us at the last possible moment to make the exit.

On the first night I had somehow managed to be in one of the rooms in the consuite with a bunch of fans and Bob Tucker, who was leading us in a traditional “Smoothing” session. After going around the roomful of people a dozen times or so, Bob was informed that we had drained the last bottle of Jim Beam they had on stock; the concommittee member present in the con suite, Bill Fesselmeyer, promised to acquire more the following morning. Well, there we all sat, buzzed from the Beam, but not too badly. Dejectedly, I grabbed a nearby bag of Lays potato chips and started munching. Without thinking, I offered the bag to Bob, who was sitting on my left. He accepted the bag, paused, and then got that gleam in his eyes.



*Tucker at Byobcon V (July, 1975).*

If you have known Tucker for any length of time, you would swear that he was a six-foot tall imp. When he wanted to, Bob could get mischievously wicked at the drop of a hat. Or, as in this case, an empty bottle of Jim Beam. He took the bag of potato chips, grabbed a handful, stuffed them in his mouth, raised his right arm, and passed the bag to his left. The roomful of fans dutifully mimicked his gesture. Once the bag got back around to me, I grabbed my requisite handful of chips, and returned the bag to Bob, who then took the final remnants from it. In unison, on his command, that roomful of slightly drunk and potato chip chewing fans swept their arms in the classic motion while intoning

“LAAAAAAAAAYYYYSS”. Barely two seconds later, Fesselmeyer poked his head back in the room and asked very loudly, “What in the hell was *that*?!” While everyone laughed at Bill, one of the other fans present, Barney Neufeld, said, “That was fun! Let’s do it again!” At that point I made Tucker giggle and groan with my rejoinder, “Well, after all, you can’t smooooth just one!”

This was fun enough, but Tucker somehow learned that there was a stash of Beam in another party in the hotel, so off a platoon of us trooped. I swear, the remainder of that

night is mostly a blur in my memory, and I know for a fact that that night was the drunkest I have ever been in my life. How I managed to wander back to my hotel room, get the key in the door, and find my bed I will never know. But the next morning, fortified by a solid breakfast, half a pot of coffee, and a couple medicinal beers, I was raring to go at it again.

Then there was Minicon #17 in 1981 when Tucker taught me how to smoooooth without imbibing too much booze. It's a nifty trick, and it works to a certain extent. The problem is that you still take in small amounts, and over time, they add up to a rather powerful cumulative effect.

Not all of my fond memories of Bob Tucker involve heavy drinking, however. He gave me some excellent critical comments on a short story, "Julia in a Cube" (1975/76), I had written for the *Minnesota Technolog* SF short story contest. I still remember his comments – in a two-page, single-spaced letter – that were straightforward, not condescending in any way, and gave me solid tips to make it saleable; he even said that the basic idea and story line were good, but I needed to have my main character take action, to go beyond the character's own needs and ...Well, I don't want to give the story away. Earlier this year I rediscovered that story in my files, and saw that I had actually started working on Bob's suggested rewrites. It is only fitting that I now complete that story.

Without question, I have been blessed with many wonderful memories of not only being with Bob, but corresponding with him as well. When I received an issue of *Le Zombie* in the mail back in the late 70s, I couldn't believe my eyes. It was a treasured zine that was forever lost when my parents cleaned house in late 1984 before retiring to Sun City, Arizona. But I still remember receiving it, and that alone is treasure enough for me.

But it is inevitable that when any of us begin talking about our memories of Bob Tucker, they usually involve conventions. For example, I vividly remember MidAmeriCon and IguanaCon: at both worldcons he was constantly surrounded by legions of adoring fans. What always amazed me though was his ability to find the time – and memory capacity – for everyone. A good case in point is when I received an unexpected hug from him at Iggy, as if I was a cherished son. By then I had been going to Midwest cons for five years and had met Bob many times over, spending evenings talking, smoothing (but not as much as at Byobcon V; I had learned my lesson), or whatever. So when he recognized me in the lobby of the Phoenix Adams Hotel one afternoon, smiled, and gave me that hug – the first of many more I would receive from him over ensuing years – I was partly astonished, but mostly grateful. It felt like I was being welcomed home.

This brings me back to yet another convention memory, this time back to when Minicons still numbered in the single digits. Jim Young introduced Bob as that year's Fan Guest of Honor(1974), in the process saying that we fans are all Tucker's children. No truer words were ever spoken. By his hands, fannish generations have been nurtured, mentored, and guided, a process that will



*Kelly Freas and Bob Tucker at Minicon 8 (April 12-14, 1974).  
Photo copyright © 1974 by David Dyer-Bennett.*

continue for as long as we remember him. There is little doubt in my mind now that our mission is to carry on his work, to bring new fans into the fold, teaching them about the shared history of fandom, and to help them grow as fans and as human beings much in the way that Bob Tucker taught us how to grow.

This past year has seen the loss of some very important figures in fandom's storied history: Howard DeVore, Jim Baen, rich brown, Helen Wesson, Robert Leman, and now Bob Tucker. I don't know if 2006 will come to be labeled by future fan historians as something like The Year of Our Sorrow, but that is neither here nor there right now. The Year of the Jackpot in 1958 was one thing; the fans and pros lost that year were unexpected deaths of people who were young and prolific, some just really getting started on their fan and professional careers. This year – 2006 – is different. Core Fandom is aging, sometimes gracefully, sometimes stumbling along the way, but always blessed with the knowledge of the wonderful people who have left us and blessed those of us who remain with wonderful memories of our departed friends.

This is how I shall remember Bob Tucker, as someone whose memory transcends the traditional boundaries of time and place. I count my life blessed with memories of Wilson Arthur "Bob" Tucker, my friend and fannish father, and shall treasure them for the rest of my life. No doubt, all of us in Fandom who knew him will be doing the same. And this is, indeed, a blessing that each of us will humbly carry and happily share with other fans who will come after us.

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Thank you, Bob, for blessing our lives with your presence, and may God bless you.

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To tune of "the Lonely Goatherd": *Up in his room works the lonely faned: collate, staple, collate, staple, fold and stuff...*

# Dust from the Worldcon Redux

## Dust from the Worldcon Redux

### *Editor's note:*

*One of the recent discussions in my addendum zine, And Furthermore, was about the results of this year's Fan Hugo results, eventually singling out the eligibility criteria for these categories (see AF issues #15-17 for the whole discussion). Frank Wu, in the 16<sup>th</sup> issue's lettercolumn, gave some very good input about the fan artist category, and in response to Frank's loc and others, Ted White fired off a lengthy letter that addressed the nature of the whys and hows of the creation of two of the Fan Hugo Awards. What follows is mostly from that letter; additional comments came from ensuing e-mails that Ted and I exchanged to flesh these out into a full-blown article.*

## Ya Wanna Make Something Out of It?

*by Ted White*

I didn't create the fan Hugos, but I did create two out of three of them – the Fan Artist Hugo and the Fan Writer Hugo. I did so as co-chair of the 1967 Worldcon, NyCon3. I also made the Fan Guest of Honor an ongoing aspect of Worldcons. Ours was Bob Tucker.

My reasoning was this: The Worldcon was created by *fans* – not pros. The original purpose of the Worldcon (at a time when no tradition of conventions existed in fandom) was to bring together fans scattered widely over the continent whose normal means of communication were written words – in correspondence and fanzines. The Worldcon became the annual event for what amounted to a fannish “family reunion.” We were then fans of science fiction – but not of science fiction *writers*. That is, we didn't treat the pros as *stars*, to be worshiped. They were welcome to join us in our common appreciation for SF.

But over the years this shifted and changed. The second Chicon, in 1952, was a reflection of this change. It was the first Worldcon essentially organized by pros, for





*Hotel Biltmore, New York - September 2, 1956  
The 14<sup>th</sup> World Science Fiction Convention*

pros. This caused a great deal of controversy in fandom at the time, and that gave rise to the (humorous) term, "Dirty Pros" or "Dirty Ol' Pros," which was pretty freely bandied about. And the following year, in 1953, the Hugo

Awards were launched in Philadelphia. It's hard not to see them as a reflection of this new "professionalizing" of the Worldcon.

But the 1954 Worldcon, in San Francisco, did *not* award any Hugos. The awards were revived in 1955, at the Cleveland Worldcon, which introduced the Fanzine Hugo – the only fan Hugo among a half dozen pro categories. The first Fanzine Hugo went to *Fantasy Times*, a high-circulation (by subscription – no trades) newszine devoted to prozines and other pro news, written turgidly by James V. Taurasi under several transparent pseudonyms.

That was a bad omen. Since then, with only rare exceptions, the highest-circulation fanzines have won the Hugos. This is probably inevitable, given the reality of the Hugo voters – most of whom have never seen a fanzine.

But I digress. At NyCon3 we felt the need to balance the Hugos a bit more between the pros and the fans. We saw the Fanzine Hugo as a token Hugo for "those fans." We felt fanac deserved more recognition. Thus, the introduction of the Fan Writer and Fan Artist Hugos. They were ratified as ongoing categories at the NyCon3 business meeting.

However, we didn't want to call them "Hugo"s. We wanted to call the fan awards "Pong"s – after Bob Tucker's hoax creation of the '30s, Hoy Ping Pong. Hoy Ping Pong introduced the concept of fannishness to the prozine letter columns of the mid-'30s. I thought it a fitting honor to fandom's equivalent of Hugo Gernsback (keeping in mind that both honorees were still alive when the awards were named after them).

At that, certain fans – whose fanzines had been nominated that year – vociferously objected to calling the award they wanted to get anything other than a Hugo. I mean, they were up in arms. Now keep in mind that the Hugos' actual name was The Science

Fiction Achievement Awards, and we wanted to call the fan categories The Fan Achievement Awards. “Hugo” and “Pong” were nicknames – like “Oscar.”

But those fans who objected to “Pong” did so precisely because the name was fannish in connotation and unpretentious. Even if the physical award was an identical rocketship, *it wouldn't be a Hugo*. And it dawned on me that these fans had what I now call “Hugo Lust.” Only a Hugo would satisfy them – an award of any other name would not. They wanted the same award Robert Heinlein had gotten. They wanted to think of themselves as being on the same level as the professionals who got Hugos.

To me this is antithetical to fandom. We are in fandom for the love of it. We are “amateurs” in the truest sense. We are not motivated by greed. We do not seek to become rich from our fanac. And, I realized, we should not be motivated by awards either.

An award is nice to get. It implies a recognition of something we've done. But it puts the cart before the horse to conduct our fanac in a manner which is award-motivated. It is wrong to publish a fanzine *in order to win a Hugo (or a “Pong”)*. If you're in fandom solely to win awards, you're in the wrong place.

And so, over the years, I've come to realize that *all* the fan Hugos are wrong, to the extent that they foster an “the Award is All” mentality. And we get things like the silliness of Frank Wu versus Steve Stiles for the Fan Artist Hugo. Apples vs. oranges. Nice guy imitation-pro vs. nice guy long-time fan. And people take sides and *argue* over this award. How does this benefit fandom?

So I'm sorry I introduced those Fan Hugos. The Worldcon is now a three-ring, pro-worshipping circus, and the fan categories are the odd men out. If they ever belonged, they no longer do. Relatively few knowledgeable active fans join Worldcons now – either because they're turned off by what the Worldcon has become, or because they can't afford the outrageous membership fee (even a non-attending, “supporting” membership with Hugo voting rights costs around \$50). So the Hugos are voted by Worldcon members who have never read a fanzine and have no clue who most or all the nominees are. Who gave them the right to tell us who our best fan writer and fan artist is? Who gave them the right to tell us what our best fanzine is?



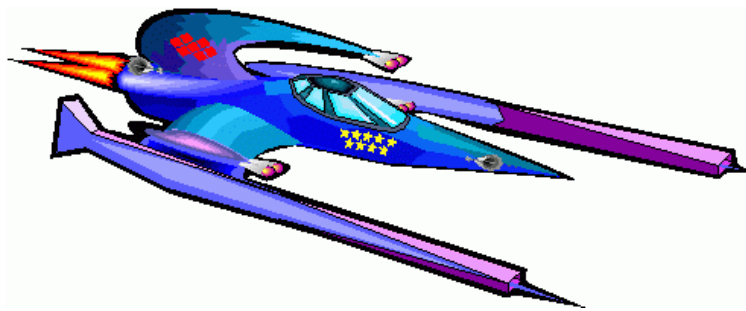
I'm reminded of the issue of *Lan's Lantern* that came out after that mediocre fanzine won a Hugo in 1986. Laskowski bragged about the Hugo on the cover! He bragged about it

in his self-congratulatory editorial. He was incredibly full of himself – because ignorant, ill-informed Worldcon attendees had given him a Hugo. It was a disgusting display and it exemplified to me everything that is wrong about Hugo Lust.

I wrote Lan a letter, taking him to task for that unseemly bragging. For my trouble I was demonized by Lan and his readers all threw rocks at me in subsequent issues, most of which he didn't send me. I had found previous issues remarkably dull, with scores of pages of unperceptive book, movie and TV reviews. "Sercon" in the worst sense, really.

This is how it seems to work: High circulation fanzines always win. They are usually the *only* fanzines most of the voters have seen -- those who've seen any at all. (Traditionally, the fan awards get about half the votes the pro awards get, meaning that a full 50% of the voters simply don't vote in the fan categories.) *Lan's Lantern* had a mailing list of approximately 1000 recipients. If you send out that many zines for x-amount of years, chances are you might very well build up a sizeable following of folks who would block-vote for you. Remember *ERB-dom*, edited by Camille Cazedessus, Jr., winning the best fanzine Hugo in 1966? That was the result of block voting by Burroughs fans.

Let me put this into a clearer and more personal perspective. I have a Fan Writer Hugo. *I or Amazing Stories* was nominated a half dozen or more times for the Best Prozine/Best Editor Hugo, but I/it never placed above 3rd. I value my Fan Writer Hugo because at the time it was awarded it was still meaningful and still going to good fan writers. But I never kidded myself that I was actually the best fan writer around at that time (1968). And I really thought until it was announced that it would go to Ruth Berman on the strength of the Star Trek vote.



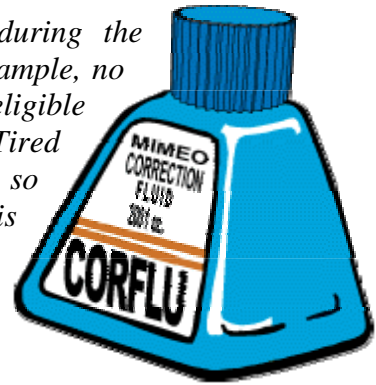
I got that Hugo primarily because I was ubiquitous in the fanzines published that year. I saturated them. The ones I didn't have a column or an article in, I had a long LoC in. I was arguing my point of view on *2001*, the

movie then, and I was writing both fannish and proish pieces. Although the award was theoretically for my fanwriting in 1967, and there was plenty of it and of equal quality that year, I really ramped up my output in 1968. I wasn't really cynically pumping for a Hugo -- my fanac has always been a reflection of my fannish drives -- but I was aware that it wouldn't hurt. However, most of that fanwriting appeared in low-circulation fanzines. I would suppose my highest-circulation appearances were my columns in *Yandro* and *Psychotic/SF Review/Alien Critic*. But I'd been doing the *Yandro* column since early in the decade, and I'd known Geis from the '50s.

But, and this is key, I'd value the award exactly as much if it was a "Pong."

Which is why we have the FAAn Awards. Created in 1975 by fanzine fans and bestowed at Corflu, the annual gathering of fanzine fans, The FAAns are peer-awards, which is good, but the voting base is so low (typically 35 to 50) that biases can creep in. Still, I think it's important that these awards no longer come as actual \*trophies\*. Consider this paragraph copy/pasted from the corflu.org website:

*Corflu attendees are regularly exhorted to vote during the convention. The process is less than scientific (for example, no one has ever produced a nigh-impossible full list of eligible zines, writers, and artists for a ballot, thus forcing Tired Old Fans to consult their memories about the fifty or so zines they received in the previous year). However, it is very good-spirited, and voters do sincerely wish to honor those whose work has given them pleasure in the previous twelve months.*



There is a bottom line to all this. What too many people forget is the most important part of fanac: it is supposed to be a **fun** hobby. And that is *exactly* what we need to remember, now more than ever.

**Ted White**



Tune should be obvious: *Loc every fanzine; send them through the mail; download every webzine til your eyesight fails...*

# fanzine reviews

**Lookee! A Hugo nominated and FAAn Award winning fanzine:**

*Chunga* #12 (June, 2006)

edited by Randy Byers, Andy Hooper, and Carl Juarez

editorial address: 1013 North 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
Seattle, WA 98103

faneds: send 3 copies of zine in trade  
available in PDF at [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com)

I am always pleased to see another issue of this fanzine available for downloading at [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com), one of my primary sources of zine viewing. However, as has been discussed in many a fanzine over the course of the last couple years, nothing can really replace the tactileness of

holding a full-fledged fanzine in your hands, especially when it plops itself in your mailbox. Our mailbox is out at the curb next to our driveway, so we can't hear it when zines do their customary, but intermittent, \*kerplunk\*. This is why I sometimes print out a hardcopy of a zine, so I can hold it in my hands, leave eye-tracks all over its pages, and make minimal marks in the margins next to comment hooks.

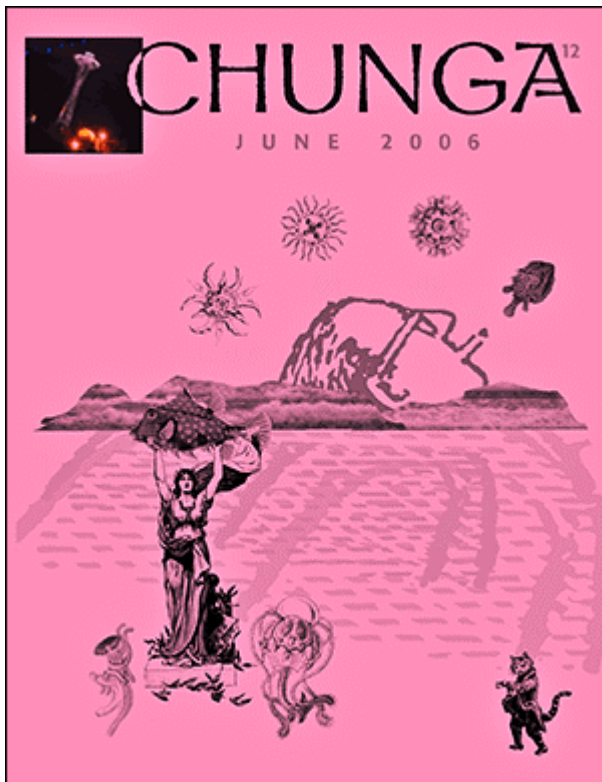
*Chunga* is one of those zines that is mainly available by the traditional methods of loc, request, interest, or contribution; after a time, an issue becomes available on-line, but this zine first goes out by mail. The June, 2006 issue of this zine wasn't available on [efanzines](http://efanzines.com) until September 19<sup>th</sup>, and while it was still wonderful to read – getting the full color-effect and all – I would much prefer getting this zine in the mail. It is hard to explain, but if I say that *Chunga* #12 is one of those zines that you need to hold to enjoy the zine to its fullest, would you faithful readers understand the sentiment? Most of you should know what I mean.

Claire Brialey's loc in this issue – beginning on page 20 - says it best: "At least once a year, it seems, you produce an issue of *Chunga* that's so good – that looks, reads and feels so much like what I think a fanzine should be like – that it almost makes me want to give up." Later in her loc Claire explains that she is *not* giving up, but explains that zines like *Chunga* spur other faneds on to produce better efforts. In her view – which I agree with – there is a friendly competition between fanzines that ends up with top quality material being produced. This is definitely A Good Thing, and explains why there is currently a wealth of fine zines appearing regularly, such as *Chunga*, *Banana Wings*, *Vegas Fandom Weekly*, *eI*, *Challenger*, *Some Fantastic*, and so on. We may indeed be in a period of fanzine renaissance, but I'm getting off track here.



Back to *Chunga* #12. There is an excellent balance between fannishness and seriousness in the contents. Some of the material is dated (the East-to-West TAFF candidate platforms, for example), but that fact does not remove any reading enjoyment: good stuff is good stuff, and that's all there is to it. Steve Stiles' final chapter of his 1968 (!) TAFF report, "The *Cutty Sark* Affair, or TAFF Report at Sea", and the reprint of Steve's Krazy Kat pastiche from *TAFF Terror Tales 3* is simply bloody brilliant fannish writing and art. Steve Stiles has long been a favorite fan artist of mine, and I drool at the possibility of acquiring his work for my zine. (Note to self: don't be afraid to ask him!) Another wonderful example of fine humorous fan writing is Graham Charnock's "American Sarco," which had me giggling by the time I barely got onto the second page. Wonderfully silly writing, and makes me wonder why Graham has been overlooked by the fanzine community for FAAn Awards. He is a very talented, witty writer, and I believe his work ranks up there with the likes of Daves Locke and Langford.

The serious material is not to be overlooked, either. Randy Byers raises some excellent points about how we Americans are raising our children, especially regarding "coming of age" in our society; his take-off point is the tragedy of the deaths of two teenaged girls at an all-night rave up party in Seattle last March. Andy Hooper contributes a fine article about our old friend, Nessie, plus there's the fabulous lettercolumn.



In short, like Claire says, this is one of those zines that challenges the rest of us to produce the best zines we can. I, for one, don't mind the challenge, but if I fall short, at least in the meantime I can enjoy the efforts of zines like *Chunga*. This is a highly recommended zine.

fannish typeth zineseth  
receiveth or vieweth

*Chunga* #12; *Drink Tank* # 98-100; *Pixel* #6; *Science Fiction in San Francisco* #30-31; *Vegas Fandom Weekly* #85-86; *MT Void* #1351-1356; *Nice Distinctions* #15; *eI* #28; *Steam Engine Time* #5; *Visions of Paradise* #106-107; *Halcyon Days* #106; *Corflu* *Quire Progress Report* #1; *Print Zine* #2-3; *Vanamonde* #653-65; *Bento* #18.

# From the Hinterlands

*Hello there, everyone. Not many responses to last issue, but some good material nonetheless. Leading off this issue – and sending in the actual first loc I received – is one of fandom's biggest baseball fans, ERIC MAYER, who thinks I should not have thrown in the towel, but waved it gloriously like the banner of my clan, and expounds upon the concept of "what in the heck is fun" to a fan:*

19 Sept. 2006

Loved the towel tale. However, it distresses me to think the towel is no more. Don't tell me you used it as a towel? You should've made a scarf out of it and worn it to conventions. Or worn it around your head. True, that might be unwise these days. I would've thought fans would want to view the towel, that you'd have been approached by congoers shouting, "Show me the towel!" You could've left it in your hotel room. You could have asked femmefans whether they cared to go up to your room to see your towel. Or fans could have been persuaded to dry their hands on the towel. By now you'd have a towel that half on fandom had touched. Someday fans yet unborn could have touched the towel that Harlan Ellison and Ted White touched. And when asked The Keeper of Towel would tell the awestruck neos all about John Purcell. Well, he was some guy with a towel.

On a more serious note, though -- fun. OK...being serious about fun...well, that's the way I am. But it's kind of fun to be serious about fun, isn't it? *{Absolutely! This is the only way to fly.}*

Like you, my aim in engaging in the occasional spot of fanac is to have fun, which, not surprisingly, is what I consider to be the best reason. A long time ago, when I was writing lots of fanzine articles, I admit I might have started taking it too seriously. For a few years I allowed Fandom to become my main creative outlet and that was a mistake. Creating stuff -- mostly by writing -- is very important to me and I find it is hard to have unadulterated fun when I'm engaging in something that I consider "important".

Of course much depends on how one defines "fun." To me, fun is stress free. So while I enjoy polishing a mystery novel it isn't strictly fun. I am aware that the novel needs to pass editorial muster, that I will be asking readers to pay for it and I don't want them to feel cheated, not to mention it will be reviewed. It is a fascinating task, a great challenge, all in all something maybe better than mere "fun" but hardly simply fun.

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"THOSE EARTHLINGS ARE A LITTLE WEIRD, THEY WON'T SHAKE YOUR HAND BUT THEY WILL LICK IT."

To me, running local road races was fun. I was slow as dirt but I didn't care. Running wasn't all that important to me. I had no expectation of doing it well (nor did anyone criticize me for not doing well or expect me to do well

I had fun for similar reasons when I programmed text adventure games. They were lousy but the fact that this ancient liberal arts major could do any programming, however crud (oops Freudian typo) was plenty.

So far as fun goes, Fandom presents a conundrum. I have fun reading zines and replying. As for articles though....The problem is, as soon as I consider writing an article -- well, writing is important to me. Worse, I am very much aware that my forte is doing what Mary and I do in our books and stories, and not anything that would fit in a fanzine. I can't do for a fanzine what I do best, because what I do best wouldn't be good in a fanzine. I can skirt this problem a little with Pixel because Dave wants the sort of thing I enjoy writing for my blog so he is satisfied even if his readers aren't!



Ah, but you might say, if you figure what you do best is fiction, why do you enjoy blog writing? Why is blog writing fun? Well, frankly, because there isn't any evaluation. People just take blogs or leave them and respond to them on their own merits. Whereas in fandom zines and articles and art are always being evaluated, judged and rated, albeit informally. Knowing that, I'm really reluctant to become too involved in fanwriting beyond loocking. If I'm going to do work that is judged, then I feel a need to do my best. It just wouldn't be fun.

That brings up the popular question of whether we should all put our best efforts into our fanac or whether, since it's supposed to be fun we are allowed to slack off a bit in our quest for perfection. I say the latter, but there are too many critics ready to hit us would-be slackers over the heads with the former viewpoint.

**Eric**

*{Your final paragraph asks an interesting question. Back in the day, I put a fair amount of effort into my fan writing, but didn't take it as seriously as I do now. I am now of the mind that if a fan writer is putting his thoughts and opinions out there for others to read, then that fan writer should take the time to make his or her effort the best that it can be. It is much like Claire Brialey said in her loc in Chunga #12: the unspoken friendly competition between fanzine fans tends to make its participants produce better material. There is no reason why quality should be sacrificed for the sake of fun. The weird thing about it all is that I find it's*

*FUN to write fannish material as best as I can, and I acknowledge that I have a long way to go in this regard.}*

*Well, that erstwhile energetic electronic e-publisher from the Eastern edge of the Pacific Ocean, CHRIS GARCIA, checks in as well, even though he's been swamped at work. Sounds like he needs a nice, overseas vacation to me:*

20 Sept. 2006

You and Dave Burton always seem to have the best covers. You know, when fannish historians look upon this age of eFandom in the future, they'll find that the three of us and Lloyd Penney and Arnie Katz were some form of demi-gods who cavorted and bowed on-line with art and funkiness unequalled. Either that or they'll completely ignore us. *{Demi-gods?!? Yeesh, I sure as heck hope not! However, I'd settle for going to a Demicon again.}*



Love your point about WorldCons and fun. I had a blast. I usually have a blast at cons. It almost always happens.

Towels have a long standing tradition in fandom. Douglas Adams was honoured at many cons with a day of towel-holding. BayCon, which took place maybe two weeks after his death (and about 8 weeks after I met him), saw dozens of people carrying towels in his memory. There's a photo somewhere of the main drag with about 30 people carrying different towels.

I love *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and have to find that Fan Art thingee. I must.

There's a tradition of Rashomoning that seems to have begun. One person writes their version of meeting me, like Lloyd did or Richard Lupoff in VFW, and I write the other side. It's an interesting bit. We'll have to do one when I come out to Austin for CorFlu. Of course, MINE will be the accurate one... *{We will definitely need a third – and fourth, maybe more – opinion on this one, I am sure. No matter what transpires, it should definitely be a fun time for all.}*

Anyone who attends academic or professional conferences that are on the dime of their company knows that there is, in fact, such a thing as a free lunch. And sometimes dinner, breakfast, snacks and booze. *{Back in February at that TCCTA conference I wrote up in IAPL #9, this was most certainly the case on Friday night; if I had stayed for the door-prize drawings, the first hour was free drinks at the cash bar!}*

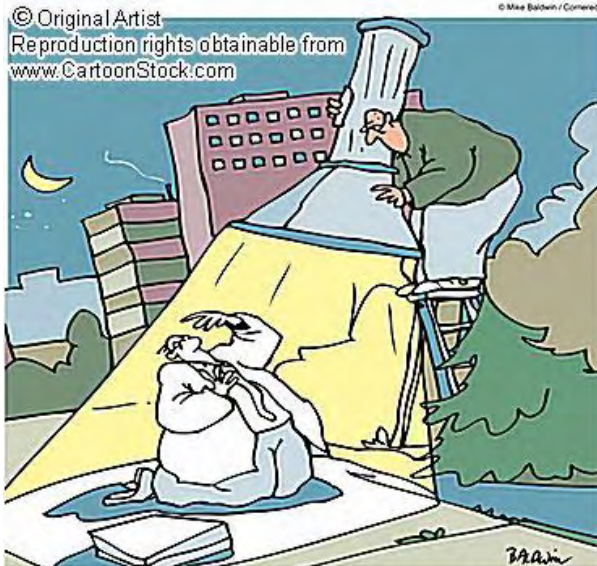
Nice to see Andy Trembley getting' his LoC on. We're all getting a wider layer of LetterHacks *{sic}* of late. It's nice to see.



I drew a moose fighting a bear with a shark for a head in the doodle space. The Moose won using a spinning back fist.

## Chris

*(Moose choreography by Christofer Garciayevskya. When in Norway, visit the beautiful fjords. A moose once bit my sister...)*



Many alien abductions just turn out to be some idiot with a huge flashlight.

*And finally, ROBERT SABELLA sent in a loc that got to me at the last minute.*

12 October 2006

Reading your "The towel goes stateside" sure does seem to raise the towel to the level of fannish legend. A towel that's been to more conventions than its owner (master? keeper?) must surely be unique in fannish annals.

So what was the proper fannish burial anyway? That phrase conjures up images of lots of imbibing during the ceremony. *{Bagpipes and liquor and fire. And then a lot more liquor. The naked ladies didn't*

*show up, so we had more liquor to make up for the difference.}*

Interesting op-ed versions of Lloyd Penney's meeting with Chris Garcia. Having known Lloyd a heckuva lot longer than I've known Chris, I have to stick by my friend's side and believe his version of the story. Not that I don't believe Canadians are capable of stretching the truth a bit occasionally.

Your "Not Worldcon Report" resembles my own as well. But it was good learning a bit about your non-fannish teaching life. Your workshops at Blinn College's main campus remind me of many in-service workshops I have attended during my time: good intentions marred by too much BS. Fortunately, the few grains of wheat buried beneath all the chaff make some of them worthwhile attending.

Good luck with the comps and dissertation. I abandoned my studies soon after earning my M.S. in math because I realized I had no desire to spend the rest of my life researching math when I really preferred to spend it writing science fiction. So now I am doing neither of the two, but frittering my time away writing fanzines and an occasional nonfiction book. I've toyed with the idea of going back to school after I retire and earning a phd in some non-math field, probably



history-related, but I really doubt I can summon up the motivation to carry it through. But the thought is still drifting somewhere in the back of my mind.

Keep up the good work. I enjoy your zines a lot, and now that I will not be mailing **VoP** to readers I am determined to be a better loccer. You can take that as a threat if you wish...

Bob

*{Threat well-taken, and I shall hold you to that threat. And I thank you for the well-wishes regarding my dissertation. Sometimes I find myself shaking my head in wonderment at what in the hell I have actually gotten myself into this time. In the long run, this will all be a worthwhile investment in time and money. Paying those student loans off will take an even LONGER investment in time. Oh, well.}*

### **i also heard from:**

Ross Chamberlain (who has a wonderful website for his artwork – see <http://rossworx.net> to see what I mean); Brad Foster; Arnie Katz; Mark Leeper; Guy H. Lillian III (who berated himself for not calling me when he was in town dropping off fanzines for the TAMU collection of Dr. Harold Hill – *not* the River City, Iowa Harold J. Hill, I must add); and R Laurraine Tutihasi.



"...I am captain Igsprx from the planet Tharnog...  
...er...hrm...take me to your toilet."

# Some Closing Thoughts

And so I come to the end of the sixteenth issue of *In A Prior Lifetime*. Given the lead article herein, the title of this zine has now taken on an entirely new meaning for me. Bob Tucker meant a lot to us, and I thank you people for letting me share my thoughts and experiences of Bob with all of you.

Plus, the eagle-eyed among you have probably wondered about the handful of linos interspersed throughout this issue. Well, back in January before classes resumed, I was rummaging through boxes in the garage, deciding what could be thrown out or given away, when I ran across a box that contained some old files of mine. Therein were some songs I had written something like 20 years ago, plus some short story ideas, and even a notebook that contained something I had begun in late 1979 and had fiddled with off and on for about a year: a fannish musical based extraordinarily loosely on *The Sound of Music*, which I had logically entitled *The Sound of Fanac*. Included in these old notes were song lyrics and titles like the title song, "The Lonely Faned," "Twonk's Disease," "Neo Going on Trufan," and so forth. The basic plot-line – now properly updated to reflect the changing nature of fandom – is this:

While attending a mythical worldcon held within the labyrinthine hallways of the Tucker Hotel, a wide-eyed neo femme-fan, Liselle Von Clapp, wanders the convention, learning much of the mysterious tales and ways of fanac. At the climactic moment of her quest – to become a well-known fan and achieve trufanness – Liselle is directed down a long, little-traveled hallway, to a small, cold room in which she meets the wizened, hunched figure of Floyd Pfennig, who concludes her education by singing the blockbuster number of the show, "Loc Every Fanzine."

I'm telling you, folks, it's gonna be a tear-jerker. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll kiss five bucks good-bye... Unfortunately for Core Fandom, I've begun working on this project again. No promises, mind you, but we'll see how long it takes me to finish this thing off – or if it finishes me off first.

So therefore, until next time, I remain tunelessly yours,

*John Purcell*