

In A Prior Lifetime #17



November, 2006

Just when you thought it was safe again to peruse efanzines.com, there *it* is,
In A Prior Lifetime #17, the November, 2006, stfnal type of fanzine from the
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*This fanzine ~~still~~ supports Chris for TAFF. I don't care if the
race has been postponed this year. We've gotta get rid of him
sometime!*

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Bemused Natterings

My thoughts this time around revolve around the following question:

Whatever the heck happened to fannish chivalry?



You folks know what I mean, don't you? Time was, when you received someone's fanzine in the mail, you either sent that person your own zine in trade, or you wrote a letter of comment in return, maybe occasionally contributing articles, reviews, or artwork to the cause. This was the expectation of pubbing a zine, that this thing called "fannish courtesy" existed: you would usually get something or other in return from people. The time and

effort you put into producing your zine would result in a certain percentage of responses. Since I began pubbing this e-zine in the summer of 2003 – but especially since turning it into a monthly since December of '05 – I have noticed a definite trend *away* from fannish courtesy. That is, the number of zines I receive in trade via the mail box is a mere trickle, and most of the correspondence I receive is via e-mail, not delivered by the post offal.

Am I complaining? Well, maybe. Recently Greg Benford was in town for a public lecture he was giving at Texas A&M University. He and I, along with Naomi Fisher (who was likewise in town), discussed over drinks and dinner the notion that the electronic age has had an adverse effect on fannish chivalry: the previously mentioned tradition of responding with *something* if you got a zine in the mail. In other words, cyber-fans have substituted electronic forms of fannish contact for the old-fashioned version of sending locs, artwork, and printed fanzines through snail mail.

Recently I did some number crunching to see if cyber-fanac has indeed had an adverse effect on what can best be labeled Fannish Response Ratio (FRR): the percentage of return when you "pub yer ish" and get back letters-of-comment, artwork, and zines in trade. I have had an e-fanzines counter on my zines since August 17, 2006. The total number of visitors to my zines is now at 597 as of 9:00 AM this morning (19 November 2006). This means that in the last three months, my zines have been averaging approximately 200 visits a month. During that time-frame, I have received a total of 37 e-locs, 5 pieces of artwork, and 7 fanzines in the mail (these figures do include both of my

e-zines). Breaking this down even further, in response to when the 16th issue of *In A Prior Lifetime* hit the electronic newsstand, I received 9 e-locs and 2 zines in the mailbox out on the curb (I am counting John Hertz's *Vanamonde* as one, not the 5 issues of it he sent in the same envelope). Since then, I have also read a total of 21 fanzines on the Internet. Add all these up and you get a total of 32 responses, which makes an FRR of 16% (32/200).

If I take an old zine of mine that I have actual circulation figures for – let's take *This House* #13, which came out when I was at my most prolific period in the early 1980s – I can get a comparison of FRR's. That 13th issue had a print-run of 325, of which 311 were actually circulated (between handouts and mailings); it should be noted here that from 1979 to 1982, I even had my own bulk-mailing permit to cut domestic mailing costs, my circulation got so high. In response to that one issue, I got in return the following all via the mailbox: 23 locs, 5 pieces of artwork, and 22 fanzines in trade = 47 items. This means the FRR on *This House* #13 was 15% (47/311). This compares favorably to *IAPL* #16's FRR of 16%.

However, here is my question: can I consider fanzines posted to efanazines.com and fanac.org as "zines in trade"? If I don't, then the FRR on *IAPL* #16 drops to 8.5 % (17/200: 9 e-locs, 2 zines in the mail, and 6 e-zines (I subscribe to *MT Void*, which comes out bi-weekly)). So here's what I'm wondering: Do we now consider posting zines, updating webzines and personal websites, bloggings, LiveJournals, and the ilk part of fanac? After all, the vast majority of these activities do discuss science fiction, fantasy, and fan-related subject matter in some manner. By strict definition of what fan activity is, cyber-fanac is no different from a bunch of fen gathering twice a month in somebody's house or at a restaurant talking about the same things. It really *is* fanac, no questions asked.

The way I see it right now is that the old concept of "fannish courtesy" needs to be redefined. Speaking for myself, I really enjoy getting feedback directly from people via letters, e-mails, zines in the mail, posted to the web, and so forth. It is definitely a lot of fun. My conclusion is that I think people are getting a bit lazy in responding to those of us who produce fanzines of any form, hard copy or otherwise. I mean, come on people: how hard is it to fire off a quick e-mail saying what you think of our zines? Seems to me that bloggings and livejournalings are taking the place of sending an e-mail, but this is just my opinion. What say the rest of you?

Traditionally speaking, though, getting an FRR of 10% to 20% for an issue is normal. I learned this fact years ago. There will always be X-percentage of fans who will respond compared to the vast majority of fans who won't respond. It appears that Sturgeon's Law applies to Fannish Response Ratio: 10% of your

"Bemused Natterings" continued on page 24



Yeah, I know it may be a little late for Halloween, but a fine piece of writing from this gentleman knows no season.

It Wasn't the Cat

by Eric Mayer



During the Halloween season, when the last leaves of autumn skitter across frosty sidewalks with the sound of cat claws, I recall my one clammy brush with the supernatural. It happened on a weekend when my parents took my grandmother to visit relatives and left my grandfather in charge of my brother and me and my grandmother's fat black cat.

Todd and I were easy to feed. My grandfather cut a couple of sticks from the forsythia bush beside the house, carted us down cellar and opened the furnace door. We roasted hot dogs over the coals, all the while conjecturing cheerfully about what might be lurking in the dark coal bin, behind the boxes of earth where the dahlia roots were buried for winter.

Feeding the cat was another matter. After calling -- an exercise doomed to failure since my grandfather was not about to emulate my grandmother's high ululating chow call -- he shoved an opened tin of Puss N' Boots under a kitchen chair.

"The cat must have got out," he told us. "If he shows up he can eat." He preferred looking after his tomato plants. He always knew where to find them.

"Maybe something eat kitty," piped up Todd.

The expression on my grandfather's face became, as my grandmother would've said, "sour as pig swill."

"What would do that, here?"

"Don't know...something," said my brother, giving the final word a certain alarming twist.

My grandfather did not lack imagination. In later years, after he'd cleared the pigs and rabbits out of the barn and had some spare time in the evening, he'd often don his spectacles and launch himself into a book of flying instructions which, while not as current as they had been during the bi-plane era, were every bit as adventuresome.

No, what he was against was the febrile wool gathering that during his boyhood had been a prime cause of tuberculosis in obscure romantic poets. When he saw Todd threatened he nipped it quick as he'd pick a cut worm off a cabbage.

"My razor strop will something you," is how he put it.

Todd chose not to pursue his theory. The razor strop wasn't as mind-bendingly awful as what might be lurking in the coal bin, but it stung worse.

"Kitty just out," he agreed.

I was more than a little responsible for my brother's flights of imagination. Being five years older I felt I should take some part in his education. I decided to teach him useful words. My method was to lay a selection of everyday items on the table in front of us.

"Scissors," I said, pointing. "Apple ... orange ... banana ... bandanna (I was a tough taskmaster) ... amorphous horror."

Todd cast a bewildered look at the empty air I pointed at to indicate the essentially metaphysical position of the last item.

"Can't see."

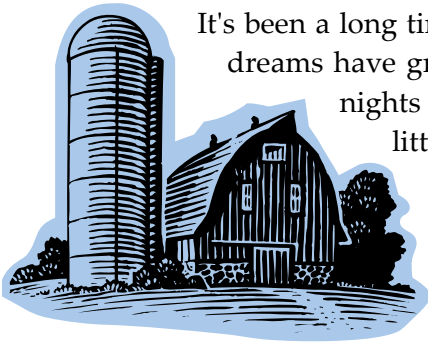
"Exactly," I said, giving the word a certain alarming twist.

After our basement cook-out, my grandfather marched us upstairs. The unfamiliar bed was high. More than high enough for something to have slithered underneath. But before we could check, the light was switched off and the room plunged into darkness.

As all children do, we spent our last moments of wakefulness waiting for sudden shrieks, eerie glows, disembodied voices and things that dropped off the ceiling smack into the middle of your bed. I generally slept with the covers pulled up over my head, snorkeling air through one partially exposed nostril, fingers clutched at the bed sheet in case something tried to pull it off.

In the strange dark of my grandparent's spare room our sensations were heightened. As we pressed our ears to the mattress, listening for telltale scratching from beneath the

bed, it struck me that it would be the perfect time for a favorite diversion -- recounting recent nightmares.



It's been a long time since I've had a nightmare worth remembering. My dreams have grown gray and mundane. But when I was younger my nights were filled with killer robots, werewolves and skull littered plains stretching endlessly into the distance beyond my closet door. This evening I chose to recount the "barn dream."

"It was dark," I began. "When I climbed the stairs I suddenly felt...another presence."

Todd's face floated in the dark like a gibbous moon. His eyes were round with fear. It took few words to call forth that consciousness of inexplicable horror shared by the young and submerged later in life beneath the paltry annoyances of reality.

I lowered my voice, doing my best to achieve a sepulcher tone. "Something waiting," I whispered "Something indescribably horrible. Waiting for me...behind the boxes piled in the corner."

I paused and the room filled with a terrible quiet. Then, from someplace in the darkness, all too near, there came a distinct, hideously loud THUMP.

There was a sudden rush of breath from my brother's side of the bed. When he spoke, Todd's voice was heavy with resignation. "There it is."

"And it isn't the cat," I added.

For a few seconds we both contemplated this mind numbing truth in mute terror. Then my brother regained his voice.

"A morpus horror!" he cried.

We both started shrieking.

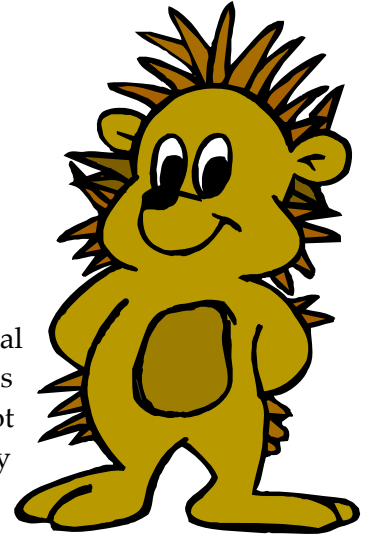
My grandfather came upstairs and cleared the air with his razor stop. Next morning the cat was nowhere to be seen, but the cat food had been eaten.

I'm glad I didn't see what ate it.

*Here's a reprint from not only one of my old zines, **Bangweulu** #3 (January, 1987), but actually first appeared in Lasfapa in September of 1982, and then ran in Marty Cantor's fanzine, **Holier Than Thou** #26. For some reason, I still consider this, er, piece one of my better fan-writing efforts, but your opinions are the ones that really matter. It was well received at the time, so let's see what kind of a reaction it gets this time around. The Teddy Harvia illustration is an original that ran with the article in **Bangweulu** #3. A word of warning: This article recounts a rather touchy medical issue I had, so it does get a bit graphic in spots, but without question, I can honestly now state that*

My problems are all behind me

by John Purcell



One thing that has always annoyed me about the medical profession is its habit of calling things by names that none of us ever use. They employ a completely different language -- I'm not even sure it's Latin, either -- in an attempt to confuse and annoy us mere English-speaking people. In reality, I suspect that most members of the medical field are prudes, or at least they try to speak as scientifically correct as possible. To them, everything possesses a scientific name: guts are called intestines; breasts are called mammary glands; a penis is known as a penis instead of schlong, dick, hose, or Peter; and a piece of shit is referred to as a stool.

This last one really confused me as a child. When I was six years old and our family doctor, William Jefferies, asked to see a stool sample of mine, I couldn't understand why he wanted to examine a piece of household furniture. He then explained to me - as politely as possible -- that he meant one of those nasty, smelly things you unload into the toilet. Grossed me out, he did. But, if that's what he wanted to do, well, then, fine. Let him. It ain't *my* nose.

Why they call it a stool is beyond me. After all, you can always step on a stool to reach something in the kitchen, hut you don't willingly step on a pile of shit every day. If anything, you go out of your way to *avoid* it. I guess calling it a stool is about the pleasantest term devised for an essentially rude bodily function.

It was one of those "stools" that did me in back in February of 1982. I remember it vividly, as if it happened only four and a half years ago.

Most of you, I am sure, have experienced at least once in your lifetime a morning when you're sitting on the throne, with this pressing urge to shit like you've never shit before, and suddenly it feels like you have a porcupine stuck up your ass. Your asshole explodes in pain as you grunt and groan, trying to ease this prickly thing out. Then, taking a deep breath, you fire away and blast it out, leaving yourself immensely relieved and you wipe the sweat off your brow. All turds that follow slip out easily into the bowl and that is usually that. You wipe and flush, feeling safe and somehow braver for the effort.

But on a frigid winter morning in February of 1982, it didn't end there for me. Just before flushing I noticed blood in the bowl. I freaked. Nothing like that had ever happened before. For the next three days I had perfectly normal shits-- no pain, that is, — but there was always blood in the bowl water. Concerned, I approached Dr. Jefferies and explained the problem. He said come on in and let's check it out. I did, he said, "Drop your pants, John," and then instructed me to bend over while he peered into my anus.

"Well, John," he said while I dressed, "you have a tear in the lining of your rectum. It might heal by itself, but I doubt it. Here's the name of a specialist I recommend you see." The thought of having surgery done on my butt seemed very ludicrous to me, however I didn't want to pass blood every time I went to the bathroom. So I set up an appointment to see Dr. Schottler,- a proctologist.

If you have never visited a proctologist, consider yourself fortunate. You do not want to do this. It turned out, Richard Schottler, MD, was a very nice man in his forties and quite professional. We talked over my problem, and then for the second time that week I was told to drop my pants --- and for purely medical reasons, too! (I would have felt better if another part of my anatomy was being personally inspected by a woman, but no such luck that week.) Turning around to ask the doctor a question, I stopped in horror. Schottler had washed his hands, donned surgical gloves, and was lubricating this "gun" with petroleum jelly. It had a pistol grip with a screw handle that opened and closed barrel-like metal jaws. I think it's called a speculum, and it looked like it could do some real damage. Instinctively, I grabbed my butt, knowing fully well what he was going to do with that, that.. *thing!*

"Okay, John," he said, brandishing the device like a weapon, "bend over the examining table and spread your legs." I did as commanded and gritted my teeth. His greasy fingers touched and probed my anus. . . and then I felt cold metal in my rump.

The next thing I knew my asshole was on fire. The pain blew straight through my body and exited from my mouth. "Aaiieecchhaawhoooooheeeeyyy!!!!" I screamed, clawing for the ceiling. If I could have reached the walls I surely would have climbed them. Schottler referred to it as "Exquisite pain." Hell, my entire *fanny* was throbbing! Waves

of pain shot through my buns like aftershocks. Eventually it subsided, and I calmly accepted his prognosis that minor surgery was needed to patch the hole in my rectal lining. Apparently, one of those hard, prickly stools tore the lining and left a nice-sized hole behind in my behind. Schottler scheduled me for surgery the following Monday, and suddenly I could physically envision my butt in a sling. He told me to check into admitting at Methodist Hospital at 4:30 in the morning (an ungodly time for anything, except convention partying), since I was due in Operating Room #2 at 8:30 AM. This made me feel a little better, knowing that it would be over relatively quickly.

Monday morning I did as instructed, which also meant wearing one of those god-awful hospital gowns that tie in the back. At 7:45 AM, a the prettiest nurse I have ever seen in my life came into my room. Schottler had already been in to tell me that since I was young and healthy he was going to put me completely under anesthesia. Fine by me; I didn't want to watch them carve up my butt. As part of prepping me for the operation, however, the area under construction had to be "clean." And that's why that lovely nurse showed up: her job was to give me an enema. How embarrassing. Hurt like hell at first, but it sure felt good to flush out the old system. Then at 8:20 they came to Take Me Away. I got onto a gurney, was wheeled onto an elevator, and then into O.R. 2.



Five people were in the room. I knew one was the anesthesiologist, and at least one other was a nurse. Who the other three were, I don't know. Probably interns getting a cheap thrill. All were clad in baby-blue gowns and masks. I felt as if I was about to die; they stared at me like vultures waiting to gorge themselves on my carcass. Christ, I was scared. Then Doc Schottler came in promptly at 8:30, and cracked a really bad and predictable joke about the "rear- end job" he and his "mechanics"

were about to do. Amused, I was not. Finally the dreaded moment came. They told me to lie still, injected something into my IV tube, and Schottler then said, "count backwards from 100." This has always baffled me. Why in the world do they always ask you to "Count backwards from 100" when they know damn well you're gonna be out cold in two seconds? It doesn't make any sense. At any rate, I started the countdown: "100...99...98..." Suddenly my arms felt like lead weights and my head separated from my shoulders. The room rotated backwards before my widening eyes, and my mouth felt like a worn-out overshoe as I attempted to say "Ghosh-whow!" — then lapsed into unconsciousness.

* * *

Bright lights burned my eyes. For an instant my ears didn't work. Then the post-operation room came into focus. A dozen occupied beds were set around the large room. A busy morning. It then dawned on me that I had survived. I lay there for maybe ten minutes before Schottler appeared. He told me everything went fine, that the graft was stitched neatly in place, and so on. It was the classic "good news, bad news" schtick: "The good news is the operation was a success. The bad news is you won't be able to take a crap for three days."

Which is exactly what happened. They wouldn't discharge me from the hospital until I had completed a "successful and normal bowel movement." Translation: taken a shit. They pumped me full of the worst hospital food imaginable (guaranteed to make you barf or shit), gave me muscle-relaxant drugs (for the pain), made me drink orange-flavored Metamucil (do you know how awful that tastes? I'd rather eat refried beans smothered with onions), and *still* I could not take a dump. Visions of the worst kind of hell ran through my mind, like being condemned to an eternity of not being able to empty my bowels. Spending the rest of my life like that, with fecal matter building and building inside, never to relieve myself. Christ, it was like one of H.P. Lovecraft's worst stories. The thought was unbearable.

Three days after the operation, though, I felt pressure building at the backdoor. With a whoop, I leaped out of bed and ran to the bathroom. Expectantly, I sat on the toilet waiting for the moment of my dreams. Then, painfully at first (my anus was still very tender from the operation), out came the initial plug. **plunk** It was like a dam bursting from under intense pressure. I must have sat there for forty minutes shitting like a demon. The stench was gut-wrenching, but I didn't care. God-almighty, but it felt so damn *good!*

I was so proud. The orderlies had to wear gas masks whenever they came into the room. The silk flowers sent by my coworkers were melting, and the wall-paper was peeling off in long strips. But I didn't care. I had taken a **SHIT** and that meant I could now go home.

All did not end there, though. For the next two weeks I could not sit on any kind of chair or couch without pain, no matter how cushioned they were. So, where-ever I went -- to the dinner table, a friend's house, a restaurant, and *work* - - - I had to bring along this twelve-inch diameter inflatable donut to sit on. Needless to say, I was the butt of many jokes. After I was able to throw the donut away, even the bad jokes died out. It was an incredible joy to proudly proclaim that my problems were now all behind me.

THE LIVING END



Dust from the Attic Redux

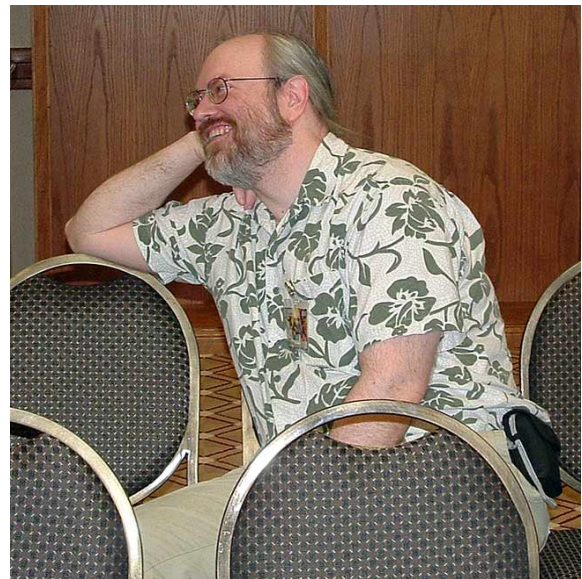
There have been so many wonderful things that I remember very, very well from my earlier years in fandom, but there are equally just as many that I forget. Here is one that predates my time in Minn-stf, but is probably one of the most important events in my entire lifetime.

It really wasn't a dark and stormy night. In all actuality, there may have even been a blizzard outside. See, way the heck back in January of 1970, I was a sophomore at St. Louis Park, Minnesota, Senior High School, and the new semester dawned bright and snowy. As always, I looked forward to this semester because it meant summer vacation was drawing nigh and the long school year would mercifully end, and I would again be playing in the Pony-Colt baseball league.

Lest you get the wrong idea, I was a decent student. Never earned straight A's, but I could have if I had really applied myself. Even so, my grades hovered around the B+ mark throughout my high school career. All I really needed was a spark to ignite the flames of my imagination. A couple teachers were able to do that, but I needed more of a catalytic jump-start.

Things started slowly that first day of school in January, 1970. All was going according to the usual scheme of things until fourth period – Mr. Anderson's 10th grade English class – rolled around. There was a new kid in class directly across the aisle from me. This is nothing new, since people moved to town all the time during the holiday break, plus it was the start of a new calendar year. But this kid was different. There was something distinctly odd about him that I liked, but I couldn't put a finger on what that was. Then I noticed something *really* weird about this kid: He was reading a Larry Niven book: *World of Ptavvs* (1968).

"That book any good?" I inquired.



My old sf fan buddy, Steve Glennon, at Minicon 41 (2006). Photo by David E. Romm

The New Kid blinked from behind large, black-rimmed glasses. “Yeah, it’s not as good as *Ringworld*, but it’s still a lot of fun,” he said.

“Groovy,” I said, then introduced myself, extending my right hand in the traditional human form of greeting. “My name is John Purcell.”

“Steve Glennon,” he said, shaking my hand. In the quick conversation we had before class started, he told me that his family had just moved to St. Louis Park from Wisconsin, and that he had a younger brother and sister. After class we exchanged phone numbers and addresses, promising to check out each other’s science fiction books and talk about them.

So began my friendship with Steve Glennon. A very prosaic beginning, to say the least. Steve also was in the marching band like me; he played the clarinet, and I played the French Horn, trumpet, and the occasional guitar parts needed during the concert season. Throughout the rest of our high school careers, Steve and I careened through St. Louis Park Senior High School, nearly inseparable like a pair of demented twisters with their funnels dangerously tangling and touching down in the same classroom. We did some pretty nutty things, which reveals the fannish nature we shared. During the poetry unit in 10th grade English, for example, we did a collaborative project for which we each wrote 25 haiku poems, binding them together under a cover labeled *50 Haiku for After-Dinner Kindling*. In truth, some of those haiku we wrote were pretty good and wound up in the school literary magazine that year, the *Mandala*.



I forget the name of our 11th grade English teacher, but that poor thing had us together in class for the entire year, and we did weird things like write book reviews and paper assignments using micro-mini handwriting, trying to cram the most possible legible wordage onto one side of a 3" X 5" index card. Steve held the record:

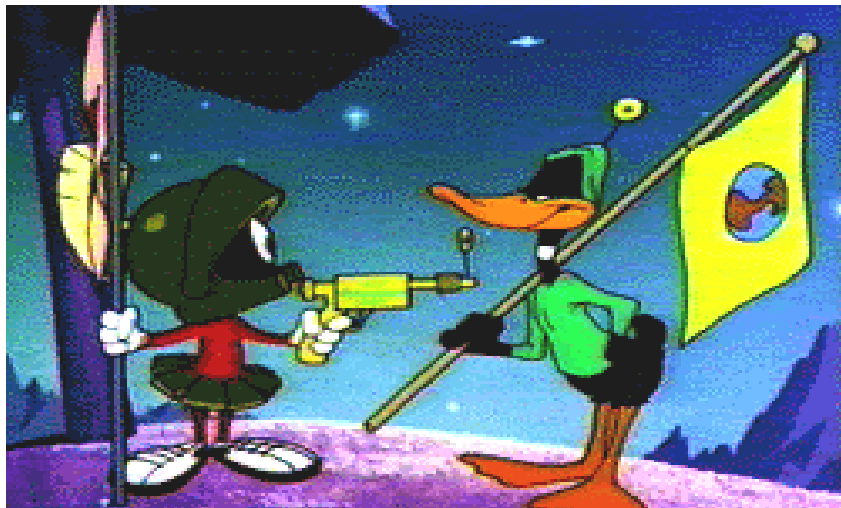
something like 425 words. Our poor teacher went cross-eyed, needed monthly exams with an optometrist, and still we assaulted her sensibilities with our particular brand of humor.

We played phonetic Scrabble™ and bughouse chess during study hall. After going to a Surf Belles show at the high school pool – this was the school’s synchronized swimming

team – we ran around on the roof of the school for about half an hour, confounding both of our fathers who couldn't find us to take us home. We didn't get in trouble with the school since nobody saw us up there, but our dads grounded each of us for a week, forbidding us to contact each other *OR ELSE!*

Yeah, we were quite the pair in high school. We graduated from Park High in 1972, but our slightly abated hi-jinks continued in college, even though I went off to Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota (250 miles northwest of the Twin Cities) on a music scholarship, while Steve stayed at home to attend the University of Minnesota, earning a degree in Electrical Engineering from there. We swapped cassette tapes, letters, phone calls, and so on via long distance. It was while I was a freshman at Concordia that Steve met Lee Pelton at the Shinders Bookstore on the corner of 6th Street and Hennepin Avenue in downtown Minneapolis in early 1973. As I've written in earlier installments in this column, that is how the three of us got together, learning of Minicon 7 being held over Easter weekend of 1973. When I came home for that Easter break, we attended, and the rest is, unfortunately, history.

Incidentally, my grades started going up, too, after I met Steve. Go figure. What was that I said about needing a catalyst? Think of us this way: Steve was salt, and I was peter. Put us together and **KABOOM!** A lovely little explosion, hm?



OH, it was a grand time in those days. We had a lot of fun, and over the years it continued. I haven't seen Steve since Minicon 27 of 1992, and some year I'm going to get myself back up there somehow for Minicon and see him again. Chances are we won't be as crazy as we were in our younger days, but it will still be a grand time.

So Minneapolis Fandom, take heed. The Glennon-Purcell team is not quite dead yet – it's merely pining for the fields.

fanzine reviews

Amateur Press Associations:

FAPA, Lasfapa, Minneapa, Azapa, Apa-L, E-apa, SNAPS, and all the rest of these fershlugginer things.

To quote the wonderful George Harrison song off his *Cloud Nine* album, “When We Was Fab” (1989), “Long time ago when grass was green”, I used to do the apa thing. Most of my readership should know what that term stands for. Unfortunately, there are people who view my zines at www.efanzines.com and don’t bother to send e-mails of comment – e-locs, or “ewoks”, if you want to be stfnal and silly about it – and that ilk may not know that “APA” stands for “Amateur Press Association.” In a nutshell, an apa is a group of people who write their own little, ol’ fanzines, print off x-number of copies, and ship them to an Official Editor (the OE), who then puts them all together in a bundle, and ships these bundles back out to all of the contributing individuals who can then read what everybody wrote. This process is then repeated on a regular basis, such as annually, quarterly, monthly, weekly (like Apa-L), or when-everly. Lots of people, both great and small, have participated in apas, which truthfully began in the late 19th century. Notables such as H.P. Lovecraft, August Derleth, Clark Ashton Smith, and oodles more were members of these Amateur Press Associations, and remained active in them even after becoming filthy professional writers. Obviously, apas were not always stfnal driven, but really were the first chances of amateur writers to hone their craft in any genre, besides making commentary on the writing efforts of its members.

APAs have long been a means of fans staying in contact with each other since literally day one of their creation. The National Amateur Press Association is the granddaddy APA of them all, dating all the way back to 1876. The United Amateur Press Association began in 1895, and a splinter group from UAPA formed the American Amateur Press Association in 1936. Interestingly enough, the first purely science fiction based apa didn’t begin until “organized” fandom had been around for a while.

FAPA is the oldest science fiction based apa, begun in 1937, if memory serves, as a means of collecting fanzines being published by all sorts of fans to distribute them in a reasonably organized fashion, and has now long had the connotation of being the graveyard of old and tired fans. I am happy to report that despite this reputation, FAPA is still going strong, and its contributors are some of the finest writers and folks in fandom. Some, in fact, have been in FAPA for a *very* long time. Jim Caughran, to give a current example of a FAPazine, earlier this summer posted to efanzines.com his *A Propos De Rien*, now at issue #275 (May, 2006). Even allowing for changes in publishing

frequency, to do that many issues of *anything*, be it genzine or apazine, it takes one helluva long time to get that high. It used to be highly desireable to join FAPA. At one point I was even a member, finally getting off the waiting list and into it just as I wandering out of active fanning in the early 80s due to burnout and simply losing interest in things fannish for a brief period of time.

Other apas I was once in were Lasfapa (Los Angeles Science Fiction Amateur Press Association), Azapa (Arizona Amateur Press Association), and Minneapa (Minneapolis Amateur Press Association). Of these, I believe only Lasfapa is still running. Marty Cantor was the OE when I was active, and may still be the OE. The late Mike Wood began Minneapa, and after his death, I think Dean Gahlon assumed the OE-ship. Recently I began doing the apa-thing again at the invitation of Arnie Katz, who is the OE of SNAPS, the Southern Nevada Amateur Press Society. I felt a little trepidation about this at first, but accepted his offer. (Past experience in some prior mentioned apas got a bit heated and became un-fun, if you know what I mean.) SNAPS is a member of that new breed, the e-apa.



Which brings me in a rather roundabout way to a question I am wondering: Are the old print apas becoming a dead creature? There are electronic apas out there - like E-Apa and SNAPS, obviously - but has Internet technology been ringing the death knell of apas for the better part of the 21st Century thus far? Have list-serves, blogs, chatrooms, instant messengering, and even e-zines taken the place of apas?

The evidence seems to support the idea that such is indeed the case. As I discussed in my editorial this issue, electronic fanzine fandom has cut into the response ratio of fan pubbing. Quite a few print apas have now gone the way of all flesh: of the ones that I personally know of - Azapa, Minneapa, and Stipple-Apa, all once hale and hearty apas - have been gone for many years. I am positive that many others have slipped into the twill-toned haze of time. In the meantime, there has been a huge growth of electronic correspondence - the aforementioned list-serves, blogs, chatrooms, instant messengering, websites, and e-zines - that serves fans with literally instantaneous contact with each other. News travels within minutes to fen all around the globe; when Bob Tucker died, word spread like wildfire. Within hours of Bob's passing, fans were crying, hugging, and smoothing in his memory at Arch-Con. I read this on trufen, an oracle of fannews, gossip, and assorted other goodies. For that matter, I learned of Jack Williamson's death via Chris Garcia's LiveJournal on November 14th (Jack passed away

on November 10th). So then a quick Google search brought me to Jack's obituary on not only SFWA's site, but also the websites of the *New York Times* and the Portales, NM newspaper. Once I got the basic info from Chris, in less than two minutes I had access to a lot of information about Jack Williamson's life and work.

So it appears that the Internet has blasted its informational superhighway into fandom's hearts and minds. In the old days of **gasp** the late 1970s, news like this would have taken a month's worth of phone calls, fanzines, letter writing, and such to gather up the same amount of information about someone's death.

However, it does appear that APA-L is trucking along just fine. So is FAPA, but I have actual contact with APA-L thanks to good, ol' fannish courtesy. Because he reads my zines on efanzines.com, once a month I receive in the mail an envelope from John Hertz that contains four or five weeks worth of his Apa-L zine, *Vanamonde*, in trade. The latest batch of zines are dated from December 20, 2005 to January 17, 2006. In case anybody is interested, *Vanamonde* #662 was produced for the APA-L distribution of #2122. Okay, so here's the math given these facts. A weekly apa with 2122 disties: that's 40.81 years worth of APA-L; John's zine has been appearing there for the past 12.73 years. These are impressive numbers. And this is only through January 17th of this year.

So what's the verdict? My original question was "Are the old print apas becoming a dead creature?" The answer appears to be a resounding "No!" There are enough apas still floating around to prove that they are alive and well. More and more are becoming electronic – even the venerable NAPA and AAPA both have host websites – which is to be expected, but by and large, I don't see paper apas dying out in the near future. I think there are enough traditionalists still bouncing off fandom's walls to keep the breed alive.

Also, they can be a lot of fun to join. I did enjoy my times in Minneapa, Azapa, and Lasfapa because so many of my fannish friends were in them, too. That's the bottom line as far as apas go. As with any kind of fanac, once it stops becoming fun then it's time to stop completely. Take a breather and come back later when the air's cleared. Sometimes personalities clash and words get said – naughty ones, too! – so people's feelings get trompled into the ground. For the most part, though, apas can be a lot of fun, and they are one form of fanac that's fairly easy to do. Give one a shot sometime.

other fanzines reviewed, received, and simply viewed - but enjoyed!

The Orphan Scrivener #41, Drink Tank #101-104, It Goes on the Shelf #28, Pixel #7-8, Prolapse #3, Print Zine # 4-6, Science Fiction in San Francisco #32-33, MT Void #1357-1361, Vegas Fandom Weekly #88, Some Fantastic #10, The Knarley Knews #120 (the 20th anniversary issue), Vanamonde #658-662, Visions of Paradise #109, Peregrine Nations #6.3, Orion #6, Busswarble #83.



from the hinterlands

Eric Mayer starts things off this issue with some interesting comments about Ted White's article in the last issue.

Great piece on Bob Tucker. I never met him but his *Neo Fan's Guide* was practically the first faanish thing I read and was definitely my fan bible. In the early seventies Bill Bowers printed a piece by me in *Outworlds* (I actually recall it - The Excoriator) and Bill put the names of the contributors on the cover. When the issue came and I saw my name beside Tucker's...well, such was my awe of the man I was thunderstruck. I've never felt a bigger writing thrill -- not from magazine bylines or even books -- than I felt at being on the same cover as Bob.

I agree with Ted White that the Hugos don't represent the views of what I know as fanzine fandom. From a "faanish" point of view they are pretty meaningless. However, they do represent the viewpoint of an important segment of sf fans, with sf fans being defined broadly as people who like sf. Those who vote on the Hugos, and have formed an opinion on the fan categories are really sf aficionados. They aren't casual consumers. They've opted to spend time and money to attend the Worldcon after all. Consider the artist and writer winners. Frank Wu and Dave Langford are both probably known to Hugo voters as much for their professional work as their fan work, but most sf fans, who simply buy new books by well known sf authors or go to sf movies would not be aware of either Frank or Dave's efforts. So the Hugo voters are much better informed about the sf field than the average consumer. They are not, sad to say, informed at all about fanzine fandom. (I very much like Frank Wu's fanzine work, by the way. Reminds me of fandom's pulp sf roots.) *{I do agree with you about Worldcon attendees being SF aficionados, but not fandom aficionados. There is a definite knowledge divide there. I tend to agree with Ted about eliminating the Fan Hugo categories, but let's be realistic: this is unlikely to happen, which Ted acknowledges. It certainly does seem that they have become quite meaningless to fanzine fandom.}*

By the way, I think Graham Charnock was recognized in the FAAN voting. Some one will correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe Philip K. Cartledge who received 10 points is Graham Charnock. If you add Graham's 4, to Philip's 10, the multi-talented Mr Charnock finished third in the FAANs a point behind Arnie Katz. *{This is entirely plausible. Fans have been know to use multiple pseudonyms in the past; witness Sam Moskowitz's fan article service, through which he wrote under scads of names all sorts of fan material. In the process, entire zines were probably written by Sam.}*

I didn't read Claire Brialey's comments in CHUNGA but as you characterize them (i.e. a friendly competition tends to make fans produce better material) I disagree. (Or at least am prepared to argue semantics) I think we've all been kind of socially inculcated (not to say brainwashed) with the idea that competition is a good thing and benefits us in various ways. But I don't think the idea always stands up to examination.

For example, we were talking about doing one's best. Competition doesn't necessarily lead to to doing one's best. Often, the result is quite the contrary. A competition presupposes (I think) some standard of evaluation, some measure of who wins and who loses. So to engage in a competition involves adopting one's efforts with an eye on some accepted standard, playing by the rules as it were. To do one's best, on the other hand, involves self evaluation, trying to meet one's own, internal standard. To the extent fandom is competitive it fosters adherence to generally accepted ideas of what good fanwriting is. Since my personal aesthetic is wildly different (I gather) than what seems to be the general faanish aesthetic, faanish competition would certainly not result in me doing my best. It might, of course, result in my adhering more closely to what Claire might consider good, and thus result in more "good" material.

ERIC

{Since fanac is totally voluntary, it makes sense to me that self-evaluation is inevitable. I don't mind setting standards for myself, mainly because I want to improve my fan writing. It's good exercise. Once again, the desires of the individual take center stage. If you like to read good material, you will probably try to produce good material. In my mind, this is only fair.}



Well, here's a new voice to this fanzine, but not to the larger community of fanzine fandom. Welcome to these pages our good friend from across the Pond, Claire Brialey!

9 November 2006

Thanks for sending us paper copies of *In a Prior Lifetime*. We do look on efanazines for it, along with *and furthermore...* but, as you said about *Chunga* in #16, there's something about having it arrive with a *plop* in an envelope that can't be beaten. Pleased

to see we're in agreement about *Chunga*, too, and indeed about the spur to excellence we can provide for one another. I agree with your take on writing as best as one can in fanzines, as compared to Eric Mayer's more relaxed approach that this is a hobby and therefore it's OK to slack. Eric's by no means alone in his views about this; I've discussed it with members of the *Plokta* Cabal, for instance, and I think they feel there's a point where effort replaces fun and where they therefore stop. But this is a hobby I care about so I want to take part in it as best I can – and that's one of the things I enjoy about it. *{This is pretty much how I feel about this hobby, too; sometimes I do want to ease up on some aspects of my fan writing, but for the most part I will give my efforts full attention. The way I look at it, it's only fair to my readership that I make this an enjoyable fanzine. When it stops being fun and more like work, that's when it's time to pack things in and take a break. My goal is to avoid feeling that way.}*

And that, of course, is why I feel so guilty about not having written to you before. I was angsty about the usual things I angst about in an article I was writing for *Banana Wings* and realised that the only solution was to pull my finger out and make contact with those of you who are beaver away producing frequent fanzines, rather than wishing I'd had the time to get on board at the beginning or that I had the time to catch up now. I know I've not been the engaged correspondent I want to be, as a fanzine reader and writer and editor; and now I'm compounding the error by being a poor correspondent in a different way. Because this is not a proper letter of comment; this is just the beginning of my mending my ways, and at least writing to say that I appreciate what you're doing and that I'm not going to wait until I have time to create the perfect hand-crafted letter to say that, because I now realise I am on the path paved with good intentions -- but that, having started here, I hope at least to be able to keep up a bit better and engage with the substance of what you're doing. *{Well, I am still going to treat this as a loc, so there!}*

I enjoyed reading your tributes to Bob Tucker alongside the *VFW* memorial; I've just written to Arnie Katz too, and I feel I need to mend my ways in another sense too, by not waiting until legendary fans have died to find out some of the most fascinating and valuable things about them.

Thanks for your very positive review of *BW* in #15, too. There will be another issue along very soon -- although not soon by your standards! Good to hear we're going to get to see you at Corflu, too. *{A lot of folks are telling me this. Man, I can't wait for that weekend to get here!}*

Personally, though, I feel I've seen enough pictures of women in their underwear now -- which does *not* mean I'm requesting pictures of women without their underwear...

Best wishes, and thanks again,

Claire

{So would you prefer seeing men in their underwear? This can easily be arranged, you know...}

*Another voice adding his two cents worth to the discussion is **Chris Garcia**, who made the following observations on **IAPL #16**:*

There are few who affected fandom the way that Bob Tucker did, and I doubt that we'll ever see his like again. There's something special about those who were around in the early days of fandom that we'll never be able to recapture. Could there ever be a person who has as much influence on fandom as Forry or Tucker or SaM? The stories we hear about these first fandom giants are hilarious and brilliant and some of them are even true. I just wish we didn't have to say goodbye to so many of them before I even have a chance to say thank you in person.

I'd always heard that Ted wanted to call the Fan Hugos Pongs, but I never really made the connection between Hoy Ping Pong to that. I'm not sure why, it was a pretty transparent transaction. It's not a bad idea, but the Hugo name meant something too. Without Gernsback, there'd be no fandom either. As I understand it, the San Francisco WorldCon had previously existing awards that the Little Men gave out every year. Maybe I'm remembering that wrong. Let's not restart the Frank Wu argument from 2004 though, Ted. There's something about receiving a Hugo that's appealing. I always read the World Almanac and they list all the Hugo winners. That'd be awesome! And you get the mother of all SF knick-knacks. It's a good thing I'll never to worry about that myself. *{And this comment is from the man who admits to taking Frank Wu's Hugo into the bathroom one night to fondle.}*

Randy's *{Byers}* article in the latest *Chunga* hit a nerve, since I have a friend who runs with the circle that suffered the shooting. It's a wonderful piece of writing. I sometimes think that Randy gets overlooked. He's my fave thing about *Chunga*. *{He is good, and another person I am looking forward to meeting at Quireflu.}*



I think I should make Kevin Standlee send you what he has of his fannish version of 1776.

CHRIS

{I would very much love to see Kevin's version of 1776. It is probably a most interesting take. How long is it? Has it been pubbed anywhere before?}

*Well, well! In the spirit of our mentor, Bob Tucker, here's a new voice to the lettercolumn, **Espana Sherrif**, who has been contributing a regular column to the fanzine **Science Fiction in San Francisco** for a few issues now. Let's give her a rousing welcome to these pages.*

This one's for Claire, folks!

I'm not really a loc'er, but here is a LOC anyway. I read the towel saga in #15 with delight, that poor thing had better fan cred that I could ever aspire to. If not for it's unfortunate demise (murder?) I would have nominated it for TAFF... especially now that Chris has proclaimed himself a future Demi-God! *{Chris is more like a demitasse of dense espresso.}*

I'm reading a lot about WorldCons past and present and viability of that institution. Opinions seem to vary pretty widely so I mostly stay out of the discussion except to say that I love it and will continue attending whenever I can. Nevertheless it is always interesting to read from Those Who Were There When, so thank you for the Ted White article.

You've locc'ed *SF/SF* so you probably know fanzines are a relatively new area for me, I am greatly enjoying my new interest and zines such as yours are the reason why.

Thanks, **ESPANA**

{Getting articles and locs from people who were around Fandom over 40 years ago is one of the added bonuses of being a fanzine fan. These are the people Who Know What Happened because they were there. People like Ted White, Robert Lichtman, Earl Kemp, and Arnie Katz are why I am having such a wonderful time this time around in fandom. Perhaps this is because I now have a much better appreciation for their staying power and personal experiences. However, I do thank you for your kind words, and I likewise enjoy your efforts in SF². Keep at it, and I look forward to meeting you someday.}

Lloyd Penney finally got around to loccking, and it is always worth the wait. This time he covers all sorts of territory, even recognizing another version of himself in the last issue.



A candid, unposed photo of Lloyd Penney.

We lost rich brown and Big-Hearted Howard, and now Tucker, and there's a few other folks we've lost all around the same time, and now Jack Williamson. I shudder to think who's next. An *annus horribilus*, to be sure. A sure sign that we are all getting older is that the familiar faces around us slowly but surely go away. But, with folks like Bob Tucker, they never really die as long as we continue to invoke their stories, their wit and wisdom, and their legend. *{Total agreement with you here, Lloyd. Ensuing generations are entrusted with the flame, and our efforts here will continue to keep the stories being told.}*

A Hugo Award would be very nice, as Ted White says. I know I wondered about those pointy rockets when I first read about them in those anthologies I read in my teens. I learned to respect

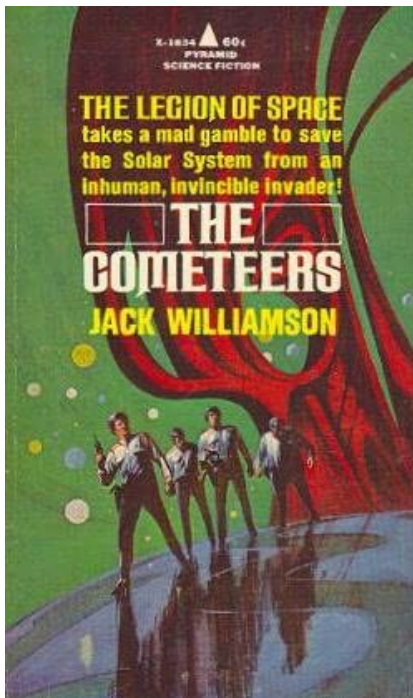
and admire them. But, that is a distant dream to win one. The FAAn Awards have proved to be a measure of our own community, and I am very pleased to have won a few. *{Congratulations, too! We'll see if you get to add to your collection in a couple months.}*

Slacking off? I do it all the time. I usually label it “recharging the creative batteries”, and put my feet up. Sometimes, I know I don’t put my best efforts into a letter, but time doesn’t allow for a better effort. Fatigue also allows me to whip out a loc, fire it off, and go to bed. All I can say is that my intentions are for the best, even if some of my locs are not. *{The time element is another factor nobody’s mentioned yet, at least not until you did. We do, it is true, cram our fanac into little windows of opportunity, and that can have a deleterious effect on quality.}*

Oh, wow, we’re going to be demi-gods? Only if there’s a good con suite and a decent retirement plan. Otherwise, no demi-godliness for me. I’d never live up to the billing, anyway. The embarrassment of being labeled as such would never be lived down. Would I have to wear laurel leaves and a toga, and sit in a peacock chair looking down on the peons? Forget it...

Would I stretch the truth about meeting Chris Garcia? Not at all, I stand behind the Colbert-style truthiness of my report. Chris is just hallucinating, that’s all.

“Floyd Pfennig”? I will now crawl into a small hole. If you get a performance of this fan opera, let me know...and I’ll try to be elsewhere that weekend. The Enchanted Worldcon, perhaps? Perhaps it’s a good thing that I cannot sing to save my life. I am certain that should this see print, I’ll write up a quick critique of it, and expect a performance at a Corflu or Ditto sometime along the way. Just don’t expect any of us to be filkers.



LLOYD

*{Well, I do plan on publishing **The Sound of Fanac** when it's finally completed some year. No guarantees as to when that will occur. Performances of this fannish musical – not an opera, thank Ghu – shall be the responsibility of the con committees and performers foolish enough to actually WANT to perform it! I likewise shudder at the thought. But wouldn't that be lovely? Hmmm?}*

I also heard from:

Gregory Benford, Leslie David, Steve Stiles.

Some Closing Thoughts

I am saddened by the news of Jack Williamson’s passing. In my LiveJournal entries, I have written

And so we lose another long-time writer and gentleman in the science fiction universe. One by one the bright stars that have burned for so long are winking out, which gives us pause to stop and remember them for the brightness and vision they have provided. We thank them for their gifts, and will always have their stories to continue to guide our way. The good news is that there are always younger stars being born. Long may their lights burn in the firmament of the science fiction universe.

"Bemused Natterings" Continued from page 4:

Oh, well. Contrary to what you folks may be thinking right now, I don't lie awake at night worrying about this sort of thing. It is just that sometimes I get to thinking along these lines and feel as if I'm missing out on something or other. It's a weird feeling.

A painting of a man with a halo, holding a large green snake. The man has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a red and purple garment. The snake is coiled around his arm and torso, with its head raised and tongue flicking out. The background is a mix of warm, abstract colors, suggesting a landscape or a celestial realm.

[illegible]

John Purcell