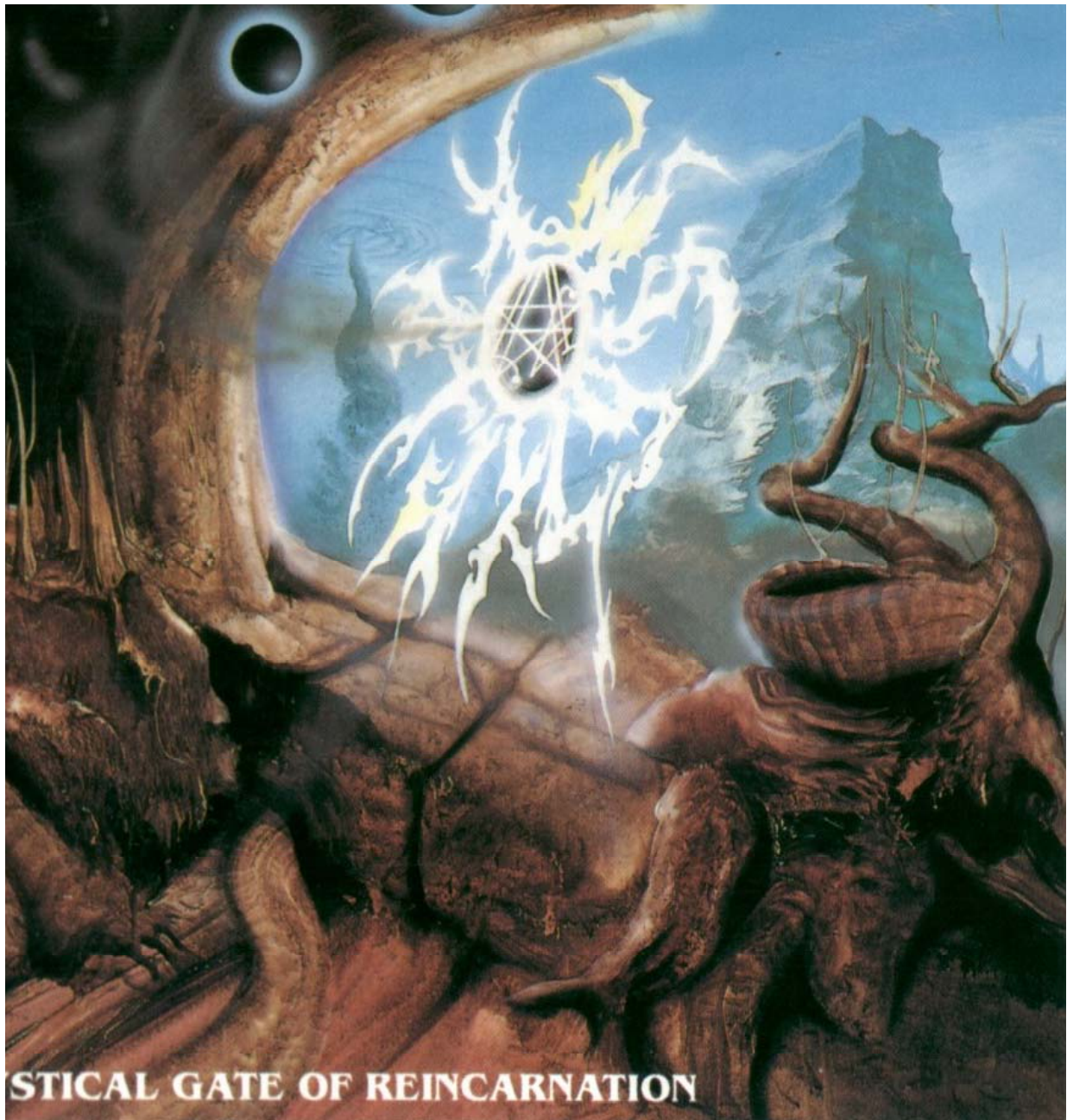


In A Prior Lifetime #18



December, 2006

The newest issue from the fevered, fertile, and febrile mind of none other than that faneditor from the Land that Time Forgot - otherwise known as SouthCentralEastern Texas – your friend, **John Purcell**, who continues to reside at the same address as before,
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Cover – [truemetal.org/metalwallpaper/ images/kataklysm.jpg](http://truemetal.org/metalwallpaper/images/kataklysm.jpg)

Image googled “Smart Ass” – 3; image googled “skaboarding” – 4;
www.cascadiacon.org/T3gen_03.jpg - 5; [www.madisonavenuejournal.com/ images/ img_5272.jpg](http://www.madisonavenuejournal.com/images/img_5272.jpg) – 6; “meteor” by Nicky, from www.fanartcentral.net -7; images
from clipartheaven.com - 9, 10; Frank Michael Lewecke = 11; clip art – 12,16,18, 22;
image googled “Hinterlands” – 15; Tom Capizzi – 19; book covers scanned by
John Purcell – 21, 22; photo of *moi* by Sema Pulak – 24.

bemused natterings

Valerie and I are raising a family of smart asses. I guess this is much better than raising a family of dumb asses, but this may be a dubious achievement of which to be proud. The fact remains that all three of our children have proven abilities of being first class smart asses.

The oldest of this triumvirate, Penny, is now 21, and proved her worth a little over a year ago when she and her boyfriend were washing our cars. One of them is our around-town beater, a 1990 Oldsmobile Cutlass. It ain't pretty, but it's paid for and it runs fairly dependently, too. What more could you ask for? At any rate, while Penny and Eric were washing the beater, the make and model words fell off the back end. I really don't know what made Penny think of it, but she went into my tool box in the garage and grabbed this tube of quick-steel molding clay. (You know the stuff: break off a hunk, blend the center stripe with the outer material, and the heat from your hands warms it up; once blended into a smooth gray, attach your two metal pieces together and in 20 minutes it sets up like steel. It works very well.) After removing two key letters from the make and model, she and Eric stuck the words back onto the car using this quick-steel stuff so that now on the back of that car it reads



Oldmobile Cut ass

It has been like that ever since.

Number Two child, the one recovering from October knee surgery, Josie, likewise has a quick wit. She is now 15, and becoming quite the social up-and-comer at A&M Consolidated High School. Her smart-assery is a direct result of learning how to cope with the social life of being a teenaged girl in the 21st Century and mixing it with her studies, sometimes blending them with very bizarre results.

Case in point, check out this latest conversation with her mother I overheard recently:

"So, Josie – you got a call today from Tyler."

"Oh, okay. I'll call him in a minute."

"Who's Tyler?"

Pause. "My boyfriend."

"I thought Kyle was your boyfriend."

"Oh, he's not my boyfriend anymore."

"He's not?"

"Naw, Kyle's old news."

"But just last week you said he was the man of your dreams, or something like that."

"Feh! He broke up with me."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Besides, Tyler's much nicer, and he's a pitcher on the baseball team."
(Josie is a student athletic trainer at A&M Consolidated High School.)

Pause. "Josie, this makes it something like five 'boyfriends' since Thanksgiving. That was just a few weeks ago!"

"Well, boys are easy to find, it's the men that I'm after!"

"Josie, you're turning into a little slut! You're going to have a bad reputation if you keep this up."

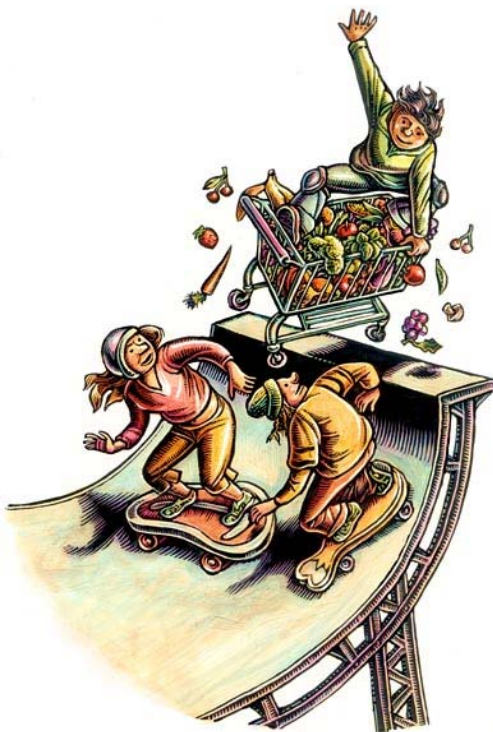
"I'm kidding." Laughing, Josie added, "Like I've always said, there are more fish in the sea, Horatio, than you can swing a dead cat at."

At that massively mixed metaphor, I cringed and kept my mouth shut.

As for the youngest of our brood, Daniel (11 years old), his brand of smart-assedness is in a class all by itself. Daniel's tendency is to quote movie lines with great effect. For instance, lately he's been all about skateboarding, and talking it up about getting sponsored, going pro, and so on. The kid dreams big, I have to say.

In any event, all he's been talking about is getting a new, personalized deck with his Christmas money. At a local skateboarding shop, Flying High Sports in Bryan, these can run anywhere from \$45 to \$75. I made the comment to Dan that that's a pretty steep price, and that he should spend his money more wisely; stretch it out, check on-line, do the e-Bay thing, and all.

Dan shook his head, his long brown hair flapping indignantly. "No, I know exactly what I want on my board. I've even drawn out the pattern for the deck. It's totally cool."



I looked at my son with a mixture of admiration and amusement. "You really think you can make it as a pro boarder like Tony Hawke and Bob Bergstrom?"

"Oh, yeah! I can already do manuals, ollies, cavemans, 360's, push offs, and I'm making up my own signature move. You hafta have that!"

"Riiggghht..." What scared me about all this was that the good ones had broken dozens of bones before getting to their level of expertise. Medical bills scrolled before my eyes. "Well, bud, we'll see how it goes."

"Don't think I can't do it, do ya?" Dan's defiant gaze was cute, and I couldn't help but smile in return.

"No, I really don't," I said.

With that, he intoned back at me in a wheeze-filled voice, "I find your lack of faith disturbing!"

I am telling you folks, sometimes I understand why my parents never told me about what my brother and I were like growing up. That old line "wait until you have kids of your own" certainly makes sense now!

"Why is it that a con always seems to come around when I don't have the money for it?"



Interview with a madman: Con Jose co-chairman, Kevin Standlee

A few weeks ago, Kevin Standlee sent in a loc that made some very interesting comments in response to Ted White's loc cum article in the 16th issue. The weird thing is, that loc was originally written the week after that issue appeared and I never received it, otherwise it would have appeared last issue. But Kevin raised some good points, and I thought that it would be an interesting counterpoint to get input on running a modern era World Convention from someone who has done such a crazy thing. Kevin Standlee was co-chair of Con Jose,

the 2002 World SF Convention, and I have heard some wonderful stories of how well that convention went.

Therefore, here's the original loc that he re-sent. Afterwards, I did an e-mail Q&A thing with Kevin to get an interview follow-up on it, besides giving him a chance to expand on his original comments. My questions will be in bold, brown text like this. - JP

-----Original Message-----

From: Standlee, Kevin

Sent: Sunday, October 22, 2006 9:11 PM

To: j_purcell54@yahoo.com

Subject: IAPL LOC: Ted White's Worldcon Comments

I find Ted White's complaints about the Worldcon and the Hugo Awards disappointing, if unsurprising. I would of course be biased in so many ways: I've co-Chaired a "modern" Worldcon (2002). I've administered the Hugo Awards several times. I was a copy-editor for a Hugo Award-winning fanzine (*Emerald City*). And I'm Chairman of the WSFS Mark Protection Committee, whose job it is to look after the service marks on "Hugo Award" and the other registered service marks -- and I'm sure the idea of registering service marks on the Awards (and "Worldcon," etc.) is just as disappointing to Ted as everything else that has changed about Worldcon since the one he ran.

It's funny in some ways, since the 1967 Worldcon was the first over-1,000-attendee Worldcon. It was the start of a chain of changes that led to the multi-ring circus the event has become today. But there is absolutely no doubt that the price has spiraled upward dramatically. The 1967 Worldcon cost \$3 -- roughly \$17 in today's money. That much money wouldn't even buy three hours of a modern-day Worldcon. But it still is, to many people, "the annual event for what amounted to a fannish 'family reunion,'" as he put it. It certainly is for me. And I do not consider "pros as stars, to be worshiped."

There are many reasons that Worldcon prices have spiraled upwards, but even the cost of a convention as low-key and small as Corflu is more than \$17. The costs associated with convention running have increased at several times the inflation rate. While I would be happy to be able to offer people a full five-day Worldcon for a lot less than we're charging people now, I mean by that something closer to the \$75 it cost me to attend my first Worldcon in 1984 -- which

would be about \$140 today. Going back and looking up the cost of conventions back then, I'm astonished that you could possibly hold a five-day Worldcon for so little money. I'd be fascinated in seeing a budget or detailed financial statement for that convention and comparing it to the detailed document such as we have for ConJosé. (Copy available upon request to me.) Our turnover (including art show gross) for the 2002 Worldcon was just under \$1 Million.

Incidentally, Ted probably knows this -- he uses the past tense -- but the official name of the Hugo Award is, and has been for many years now, "Hugo Award." We abandoned "Science Fiction Achievement Award" when it became clear that we'd never be able to get service mark protection for it. Even keeping other groups from establishing their own "Hugo Award" or "Worldcon" has proved to be a challenge over the years.

Anyway, while Worldcon has grown and expanded and changed since he ran one, I don't see that as a bad thing. Indeed, I expect it to keep changing and for the Worldcon in 2037 to be as different from ConJosé as CJ was from Nycon 3. I do, however, continue to expect to see it as my "fannish family reunion." I'm sorry that he feels so bitter about how the convention has changed. I hope I never reach that level of disappointment about Worldcon myself.

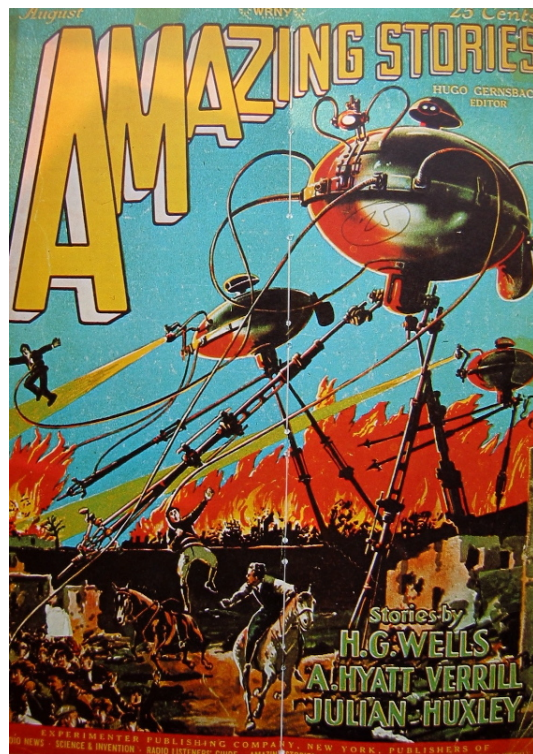
and now, the interview:

I am really just curious here, but I used to work on assorted committees for Minicons back in the 70s and 80s, at one point being a sub-department head of Operations (1984), which was exhausting yet satisfying in a masochistic way. Whatever possessed you to tackle co-chairing a World Convention? What's your convention-running pedigree?

It may be because my *first* convention was a Worldcon, and the biggest one of all at that: the first SF convention I ever attended was L.A.con II in 1984 in Anaheim. I was at that time a great fan of *Elfquest*, and there were large-scale celebrations of the completion of the [first] series taking place there. I lived north of Sacramento, and was just about to start college. (I turned 18 years old during the convention, and when my bus got back to Marysville, my grandmother picked me up and took me straight over to Yuba College for my first day of class. Oh, to have that much stamina again.) I rode a Greyhound bus overnight the length of California and bought my membership at the door. The convention was an intense, highly-formative experience for me. To some extent, I've spent the rest of my life "paying forward" the favor that WorldCon did for me there.

Believe it or not, the only other convention I've chaired was Bay Area ConStructions, the small conrunning convention that SFSFC has held from time to time. Outside of WorldCons, I was also vice-chair of a comic book show -- it's hard to call it a full-blown convention -- held in the shopping mall where I was assistant manager of a comic book store. But I've held a wide variety of other positions with WorldCons, Westercons, and local cons in the Bay Area (I ran the convention newsletters at BayCon and SiliCon for several years), up to being Deputy Chair of ConAdian, the 1994 Worldcon in Winnipeg.

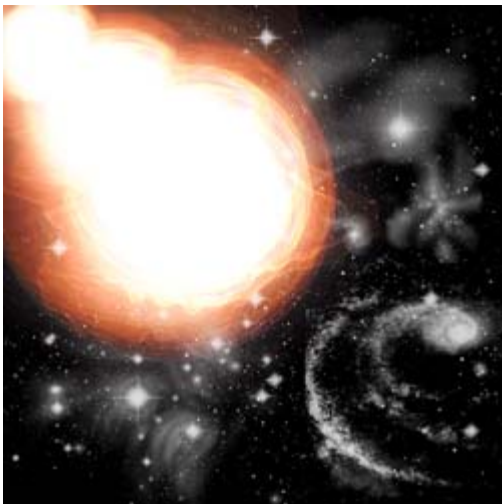
The year after L.A.con IV, I attended my first Westercon, in Sacramento. As I started attending these conventions, I found out about other conventions happening, some relatively close to me, such as Fantasticon in Redding, and Eclecticon in Sacramento. I jumped into attending these



enthusiastically. I also was attending a lot of comics-related shows and conventions in conjunction with the comic book store and its manager, Edward Luena, who was also an artist. And the *Elfquest* fandom led to me being introduced to the *MythAdventures* comic bookseries (same publisher) based on Robert Asprin's novels and originally drawn by Phil Foglio, whose artwork I knew because I'd been a big role-playing gamer in high school. That led to me running for 5 ½ years the official fan club for the series.

Meanwhile, I heard that Sacramento was bidding for a Westercon. Attending an organizational meeting, I jumped in with both feet by responding to a complaint that the bid didn't have enough money by pulling out a \$100 bill and saying, "Will this help?" (And \$100 was a LOT more money to a college student in the mid-1980s than it is to me now.) I got involved promoting the bid at conventions up and down the West Coast. We didn't win -- we lost to Vancouver in a very close race-- but I learned a whole lot of lessons about bidding.

By now I had transferred to California State University, Chico to complete my computer science degree, and there I met other fannish people through the local comic book store. Among my various interests was *Doctor Who*, and I ended up directing and playing the lead role in an amateur *Doctor Who* movie shot in Chico by my friend Rick Hallock. So I was getting involved in plenty of stuff.



The Westercon bid led to contact with the San Francisco in '93 WorldCon Bid. I started attending meetings, grew frustrated that there was nobody taking minutes, and found myself committee Secretary. That led to another round of traveling around promoting a bid. In 1989, I attended my second WorldCon (I'd been a member of every Worldcon since 1984). I've attended every WorldCon since then, even in years when I've missed Westercons, which are closer to me. I was one of the six members of the SF in '93 committee who traveled to The Hague, and I was in the back room counting ballots when ConFrancisco won the election. I was ConFrancisco's committee secretary and WSFS division manager.

Now I'm going to stop here because I've gone on too long. I could go on in this vein for many more paragraphs. The point I'm making is that while I've not been the chairman of many events, I've held positions of responsibility that are probably equivalent in complexity to chairing a smaller convention.

I guess it's because I started with a WorldCon -- I'd never even known the smaller local events existed until I went to a WorldCon -- that it's always been what I'd consider my "home." I know many people say that nobody should attend a WorldCon until they've "worked their way through the minors," but I disagree. WorldCon is what caught my attention, and it continues to be where my focus lies.

The WorldCon is a huge event, and I can't even imagine the responsibilities of co-chairing such a creature. Are you nuts?

I don't think so, although you're right that it was a huge responsibility. It adversely affected much of my life, including my getting a, well, not "bad," but "less good than usual" review at my job. And that's with a director who encouraged me to do the work because at least in theory it improves my skills as a manager. I have "Chief Operating Officer of a \$1 Million non-profit corporation" on my professional resume.

That's impressive. Speaking of numbers, it can be argued that it is merely a sign of the times that WorldCon costs have risen just like everything else in our society.

And much faster than mere inflation, too. I think one of the things coloring the opinions of people saying it should be like it was in the "good old days" was that they have difficulty feeling what inflation did to the costs. Like I said in my letter, I'm not sure what sort of convention you could organize for only \$17 per person. Maybe one afternoon in a community center; that's about it.

I will say right now that I myself am disappointed at the costs of WorldCon attendance. However, one gets what one pays for, which is how WorldCons have to be taken nowadays.

Agreed. And I don't think this happened overnight. WorldCons accumulated bits and pieces like a ship accumulating barnacles. Once something attaches itself to a WorldCon more than once (there have been occasional one-off things like Noreascon Four's First Night), it's difficult to get rid of it.

You mentioned that registering service marks on the Hugo Awards to be a disappointing change to WorldCons and the Hugos.

I don't remember exactly what I said, but I'm not disappointed for fannish reasons. Really, you *must* protect your service marks or someone else will come along and use them if they think it's in their best interest to do so.

By this do you mean that WorldCons have become too much of a "Business Event" and not as much of a fan-run event as they used to? It seems that the emphasis has definitely changed over the years.

No, I don't. And I don't think that WorldCons are significantly different in 2006 than they were in 1984 when I started attending them. Remember, L.A.con II is my standard of comparison. I was born in 1965. I've never attended a 500-person WorldCon. I have a difficult time conceiving of such a small event being a "World" convention.

WorldCons are still very much fan-run events, even as they grow to costing \$1 million. I'm not really sure what you mean by "Business Event," anyway. If you mean "You have to rent buildings and sign contracts and all that nasty business stuff," well, every science fiction convention larger than a dinner party has to do that.

So you still think of the World Convention as a "fannish 'family reunion' " despite its size.

Absolutely, although I prefer the analog of "Gathering of the Tribes." Fandom consists of a large number of related and overlapping groups. WorldCon is the time when all the tribes gather and get a chance to interact. Personally, if *Elfquest* fandom hadn't been there, I don't think I would have gone to Anaheim in 1984, and I wouldn't have learned about all of this other great stuff going on out there.

If someone has a narrow specialized focus with no interest whatsoever in anything else, then it's possible WorldCon isn't for you. On the other hand, WorldCon is one of the places where some narrow specialized interests are able to gather enough people with that interest. That is, people wouldn't be able to justify the travel expense for just that one thing, but if it's part of a bigger thing, they will go.

Don't you think that the size and costs are a deterrent for this to occur, that long-term fans will opt out for going to smaller, more budget-friendly regional conventions?

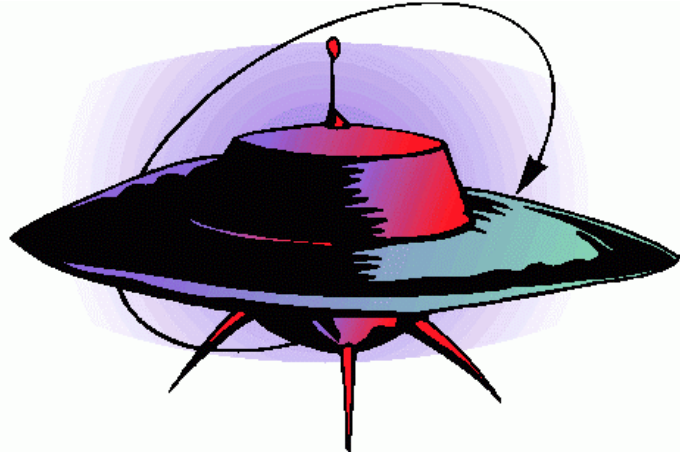
If this were the case, WorldCons would have shrunk away and disappeared long ago. People have been complaining about the horrible cost of WorldCon since before I was born, as I recall.

Not everyone is able or willing to spend the money to attend every WorldCon. But since the convention moves around, sometimes it will be a short travel distance, so the only cost is the membership. Then you get people saying that the membership is too expensive. Well, I don't like charging money for its own sake -- I'd love to be able to lower the membership cost. But if your personal entertainment and hobby budget for the year is "\$20 and bus fare downtown," then I'm

afraid WorldCon isn't for you. I don't mean to over-react here, but I've sat at tables at conventions where the people would tell me that they wouldn't spend *any* amount of money to join a convention, and that the only reason they were at the con was because they got in free for some reason or another, or that they were just ghosting it. Those folks are not reachable.

WorldCon attendance, after going through a major growth spurt in the 1980s, is actually pretty stable at around 5000 people. There's a core of perhaps 500-1000 people who attend all or most of them. Within that group you have the "only in America," "only in North America," "North America and Western Europe," and "If you hold it, I will come" subsets. The next attendance group is those people who live within one day's convenient travel distance. Finally, there are those people who can commute to the convention. Those last two groups are where most of the variability in attendance is, but it's a big variable.

I go to WorldCons because that is where I can find a lot of my friends. It's a small city that only exists five days a year or so. Sure, I can e-mail those people, but the only way to see them, talk to them in person, socialize, go out to dinner, and so forth is to go to that gathering where they will be. (That, by the way, is one of the reasons I go to SMOFCon, the annual conrunning convention; it's where I see a lot of my friends and socialize with them. Travel costs money to go to them as well; indeed, the main difference is that the convention membership is much cheaper, I spend less money on the hotel because it's only three days long, and I can meet more people. Otherwise, it's almost as much of a commitment as WorldCon.)



Okay. Let's change the topic a bit to get back to your response to Ted White's comments about the Hugo Awards back in my 16th issue. It seems to me that the subtext for the Hugos is still "Science Fiction Achievement Award." I take it that it is just easier to refer to them as the Hugos, given the plethora of other awards that are annually presented.

1. The official name of the Hugo Award is "Hugo Award." It hasn't been "Science Fiction Achievement Award" since WSFS abandoned trying to register it as a service mark. The US Patent and Trademark Office rejected the filing for SFAA as "too generic."
2. The Hugo Awards have always been for achievement in science fiction and fantasy. It says so right in the WSFS Constitution. In those years when I've had some influence on it, I've had that engraved on the trophies.
3. I don't think of science fiction and fantasy as separate things. They are on a spectrum of fiction, just like red and blue are both types of light.

WSFS has recognized that the profile of the Hugo Awards could be raised, and the WSFS Mark Protection Committee formed a working group this past year to work on things we could do along those lines, such as adopting an official Hugo Awards logo suitable for book covers and the like.

Without question, technology has changed fandom and fanac. What long-term effects do you think that technology - case in point, the Internet - will have on the WorldCon?

Well, e-mail, the world wide web, and tools such as Internet Relay Chat and VOIP have done a great deal to make it possible to make the WorldCon more "World" in nature. It used to be that, regardless of where the WorldCon was, the organizing committee needed for the most part to be local to the area where the convention was being held, due to constraints on communication. That no longer is the case. We can now draw on people all over the world and expect to be able

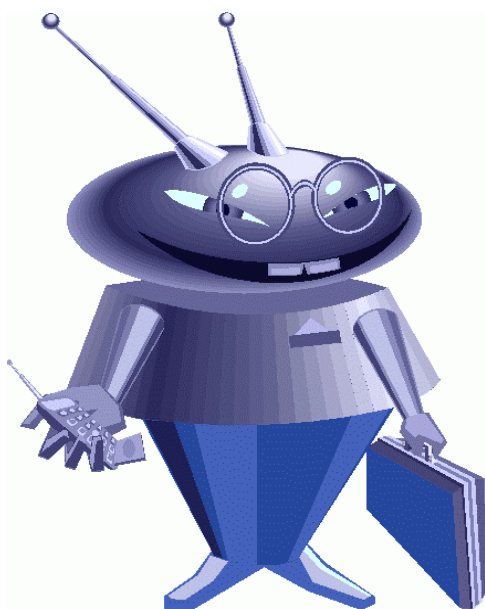
to rely upon them. Indeed, a person on the other side of the world who answers his/her e-mails promptly is in many ways more valuable than someone who lives a couple of blocks away but who doesn't have a computer.

For example, for Interaction, I ran the Events division (Hugos, Masquerade, etc.), and Ian Stockdale ran the Programming division. We both live in the San Francisco Bay Area (Fremont and Palo Alto, respectively). By necessity, our divisions had to work closely with each other, if for no other reason that we use shared technical resources. I only saw him in person once in the Bay Area during the planning process: I went to his house once during Programming Frenzy weekend. Oh, and both of us were in Glasgow for an all-hands all-weekend planning session. (We may have seen each other at conventions around the Bay Area during that time, but as I recall we did no Interaction work at those casual meetings.) Everything was done by e-mail and by regular IRC online meetings, plus one round-the-world conference call between people in Australia, the Bay Area, and the UK where we hashed out some issues with Tech Services -- the call being made economically possible by using the Skype VOIP system, so it cost almost nothing.

I expect the importance of convention publications (progress reports) to continue to decline, and the importance of convention web sites to continue to increase. Even now, I think a convention's web site is much more important than the occasional printed progress report, which is becoming increasingly obsolete. I don't see paper publications going away completely -- I like the idea of the WorldCon Souvenir Book being the "yearbook" of our community -- but they are declining in overall importance. I expect some Worldcon pretty soon will recognize this explicitly by having, instead of a "Publications" division, a "Communications & Marketing" division, with paper publications being departments within it.

I am expecting streaming videos, Webcams, bloggings, Instant Messengerings, and so on coming from Japan next summer.

Interaction was very close to being able to do a live streaming webcast of the Hugo Awards ceremony. We needed another few thousand pounds of funding. I couldn't stir up enough sponsorship -- I tried -- and the convention couldn't justify spending the money "on spec," especially given that our research suggested that fewer than a hundred people would have watched it. (And then there were issues like people complaining that "people who haven't paid are getting the benefit," which I realize is an issue even as I roll my eyes at narrow-minded parochial fans.) I think we'll see it eventually, though, and someday the costs may come down so low that we'll come to expect it as a given.



As fans get more technically savvy, and in an effort to cut costs even more, do you think there will there ever be a "Virtual" WorldCon?

Well, what do you mean by a "Virtual" WorldCon? Do you mean that there wouldn't be an in-person gathering, and that the entire convention -- panels, Hugo Awards Ceremony, WSFS business meeting, exhibits, art show, dealers' room, etc., would be online somehow?

Yes, in a way, this is what I'm getting at.

While this is pretty science fictional in concept, I don't see it happening anytime soon, if ever. While I spend a vast amount of time online in various ways like answering e-mail and following LiveJournal, I also see a great value in in-person gatherings, and I'll be very surprised if that value disappears.

But then again, I'm growing older myself, and there is a younger generation coming up behind me, and I

don't pretend to know how they feel. I have spent most of my time in fandom feeling like I was the youngest member of the current generation. I scoff at 'graying of fandom' worries, because I see that there are younger people behind me -- they don't necessarily share the precise tastes that I do, but I also don't necessarily share the tastes of the people older than me. That doesn't mean fandom is dying; it means it's changing, just as it always has been doing, and just as I hope it keeps continuing to do, because once it stops changing, that means the culture has died.

Fandom has been a wonderful, exhilarating, maddening, frustrating, rewarding experience for me. I want it to keep being that way for others for the indefinite future.

I whole-heartedly agree with you there. Will you be at Corflu in Austin?

Nope; my convention-attending schedule is seriously curtailed, because I plan to go to Nippon 2007, taking three weeks off to attend the convention and spend the following two weeks touring Japan, mostly by rail, with my wife. Even accounting for the air fare being "free" because I cashed about fifteen years' worth of frequent-flyer miles to buy two business-class tickets to Japan, the cost, both in money and time, is huge. (Indeed, the cost of the trip is so high that our memberships in the Worldcon itself are pretty much rounding errors.) So I've dropped a bunch of conventions from my plans. I didn't go to OryCon, for instance, and I'm really happy that Westercon is in the Bay Area so I don't have to fly to it.

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions, and I do hope to meet you someday. {There's a sign of the times, folks!}

And I thank you for the opportunity.

Kevin Standlee & John Purcell



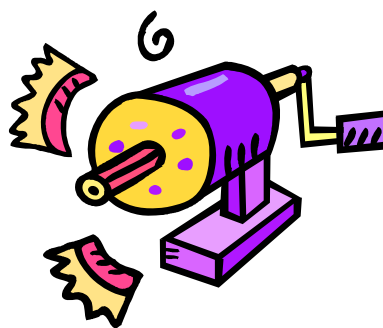
“Don’t know why...ain’t no warts in the sky.... froggy weather...”

from an old Tom Foster illo in an ancient issue of Rune

Очен Қарандаш

I have been number crunching on my fanac output of 2006, and the resulting figures are astonishing. I mean, Sweet Jesus, I put out a lot of stuff in these past twelve months!

Quite a few other faneditors – like Earl Kemp, Arnie Katz, and Chris Garcia – put out “end of the year indexes” to their zines and/or “best of” collections. I am not going to do that. Instead, I am merely going to point out just the facts, ma’am, and get on with the rest of this issue. So there.



fanzines

In A Prior Lifetime – 12 monthly issues, page total: 255

...and furthermore – 23 issues (so far, probably a 24th End of Year issue), page total: 143.

total pages of fanzines produced in 2006 = 398.

articles for other zines

“Doofus” – appeared in *Vegas Fandom Weekly* #74

“How I Found Fandom – Again” – appeared in *Vegas Fandom Weekly* #85

100-word article for *Drink Tank* #64

“Happy 100th Issue, Chris!” – appeared in *Drink Tank* #100

letters of comment

so far this year (as of 12/21/06): 163 (with maybe another half dozen by the end of the year)

SNAPS zines (the only apa I’m currently in)

Nukking Futz – 3 issues – page total: 9

Yup. I have been busy this year.

Next year will have to be different, I’m afraid, but out of necessity. I need to get ready for my preliminary exams for my Doctorate in Education (June, 2007 most likely date for the exams), and concentrating on my dissertation research. It will be nice, though, to have fanac available to keep me sane.

Even so, the amount of fanac that I produced in 2006 astonishes me, especially since I really don’t think that I was really that active. It makes me wonder how much I would have produced if I was single and not having to worry about family matters and such like that there. What the new year brings will be interesting, too. Stay tuned for the next episode.

Slip-sheeting away... slip-sheeting away;
You know the nearer the publication date the more you’re slip-sheeting away.

fanzone reviews

Under consideration: **Science-Fiction Five-Yearly #12**

Founder and editor emeritus: Lee Hoffman

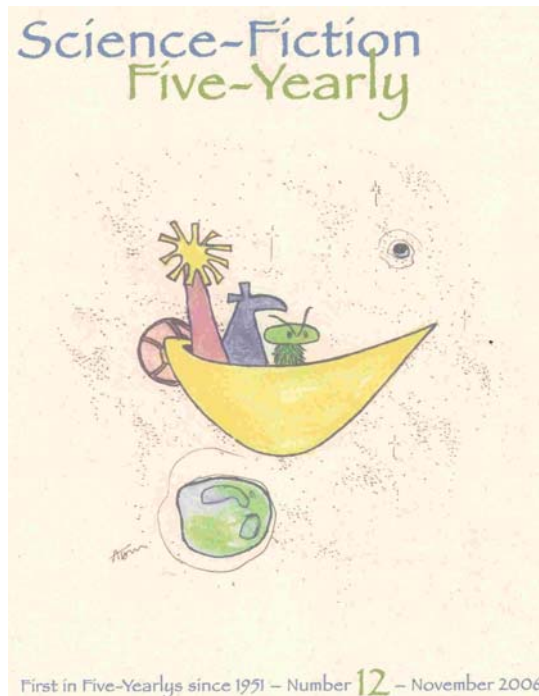
Actual editors: Randy Byers and Geri Sullivan

Editorial addresses: Geri = 37 Monson Road, Wales, MA 01081-9743

Randy = 1013 N. 36th Street, Seattle, WA 98103

E-mail: SFFY@toad-hall.com

available via trade, letter of comment, contribution



Oh, my heavens... What can I say about this legendary fanzine? Maybe if I start by saying "I really don't deserve getting this in the mail" that would get my thoughts moving in the right direction.

This is the way fanzines used to be done: mimeographed with TLC, but now with modern technology to aid the production, a faned can incorporate multicolored laser jet printing, photographs, and all sorts of other techniques that I am not familiar with. In an issue of *Pixel* a couple months ago, Ted White went into detail about zine reproduction methodology, which I found quite fascinating. Linking Ted's article to this issue is a natural connection, and reveals a lot about the people involved in bringing this zine to fruition.

A bit of history: Lee Hoffman began *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly* back in 1951, and the zine has been faithfully produced on schedule ever since at five year intervals. If you go to http://fanac.org/fanzines/SF_Five_Yearly/, you

can find an index to all prior issues of this zine that lists out all prior contributors. The people who have been involved with this zine over the years literally reads like a fannish "Who's Who" and is almost as much fun as reading the actual zine itself. A brief history about *SFFY* was posted to www.efanzines.com on December 9, 2006, and the knowledge really helps getting a "feel" about what this zine is all about.

But onto this particular issue. I shall start with the editors.

Geri Sullivan began co-editing *SFFY* in 1991, after being approached by rich brown at the 1990 Corflu to assume the helm with the ninth issue. Geri accepted, and with the able help of Jeff Schalles, they took on the aid of Andy Hooper (#10) and Terry Hughes (#11; Terry sadly died from a brain tumor while that issue was in final production). Randy Byers joined Geri for this, the 12th issue, and the result is yet another wonderful issue. Geri has a solid fannish pedigree, editing a fine genzine, *Idea*, for many years (the last issue - #12 - appeared in November, 2000), and Randy is one-third of the *Chunga* triumverate, a zine that makes annual appearances on Best Fanzine ballots for both Hugo and FAAn Awards. In these able hands, not much can go wrong.

And really, nothing did. The contributors to the 12th issue are many and varied, with returnees and new fannish voices since the last issue five years ago. (Have I mentioned that this zine comes out

every five years? Okay, good. I just want to make sure you all understand that.) Returnees include Ted White (with a fine piece of faan writing), Harlan Ellison (writing as Nalrah Nosille, keeping the serial “!Nissassa” going, now arguably the longest-running fanzine serial ever), John Hertz, Graham Charnock, rich brown, and Rich Coad. They are joined by the likes of Christina Lake, Kip Williams, Claire Brialey, Andy Hooper, and a raft of wonderful artists: ATom, Harry Bell, Ken Fletcher, Lee Hoffman, William Rotsler, Stu Shiffman, Dan Steffan, and Steve Stiles. The lettercolumn likewise gets into the act, too, with folks like Jim Caughran, Robert Lichtman, Dennis Lien, Eric Lindsay, and Timothy C. Marion writing in. It is really a wonderful cast of characters, as I sit and type out these names in awe.

Okay, names aside, the contents are fun, of course. There seems to be a “theme” of sorts, namely the task of tracking down contributors to get their material in for the next issue of *SFFY*. Ted White’s gumshoe private eye piece is well-written along this line, and rich brown’s “Recruiter” is a cautionary tale of what hyper-fanactivity can do to an individual. I really don’t know what to say about “!Nissassa” except maybe that it was written in a five-minute frenzy just to get the next installment in the zine. It had me shaking my head in wonderment, as in “WTF?” but that’s okay, I guess. The content may be confusing, but the intent is totally fannish.

There is even helpful information to be gleaned from thish. Graham Charnock provides example after example of pitfalls to avoid in his “How to Party”; Christina Lake wrote about a possible fannish family linkage to H.G. Wells, which would be quite cool if confirmed, which is exactly what her article was all about; and Claire Brialey regales us with her history of getting involved with fandom through the backdoor via *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* fandom. Geri Sullivan even gives us a Do-It-Yourself fanzine kit on the inside bacover, and I may just have to take her up on this offer. I mean, getting a Rotsler illo to use in my zine is an honor, and even the word list is going to come in handy. (Thank you, Dave Langford, for the listing.)

Ah, me. I could go on for a long, long time, but I really have to compliment the editors on the selection of artwork. Such fine stuph! It has been a long time since I’ve seen work by Stu Shiffman in a fanzine, and he hasn’t lost his touch. Steffan, Stiles, and Fletcher are without equal in fannish humor, and the timelessness of the artwork of Harry Bell, ATom (Arthur Thomson), Lee Hoffman, and William Rotsler is a marvelous link to the past.

This issue of *SFFY* probably best illustrates the styles and interests of fan writing from the 1950s to the present. Fifty-five years of fan history is here, and reading this issue is well worth the effort. At 56 pages, *SFFY* #12 is a shining example of how fanzines used to be done and the community of fandom that produced them. I applaud Geri and Randy for their efforts - and everybody else Geri thanks on page 54 for *their* help, as well. How large of a print-run thish has is an unknown, so if they have copies for the TAFF auction or sale at Corflu Quire, I urge you, gentle reader, to buy one. It will be well worth what-ever it costs.

Other fanzines viewed, received, and such:

Vegas Fandom Weekly - the 2nd annish; *Science Fiction in San Francisco* #34-36; *MT Void* # 1362-1365; *Drink Tank* #105-109; *Busswarble* #84; *Feline Mewsings* #26; *eI* #29; *A Propos de Rien* #277; *Hyperdrive* #4 (WTF: it’s all in Portuguese!); *Cargo Cult Books and Notions* (Nov-Dec, ’06); *The Orphan Scrivener* #42; *Alexiad* #5.6 (Dec, ’06); *TommyWorld* #76; *Pixel* #9.



*Letters from the
readership.
Huzzah!*

From the hinterlands

The format herein shall be similar to what I just begun doing in my addendum zine, ... and furthermore, showing who wrote what when. So, let's kick things off with a correction that was corrected shortly after the error was committed, submitted here by our favorite baseball fan from the east, Mr. Eric Mayer:

Date: Thu, 23 Nov 2006 23:43:53 -0500

From: Eric Mayer <maywrite2@epix.net>

To: j_purcell54@yahoo.com

Subject: IAPL 17

I'm sorry. I screwed up practically the first sentence of my article! "...my grandmother took my grandmother..." (should've been "my parents") I even spell checked but I guess I was fiddling and what I thought I had written was entrenched in my brain and I never saw what was on the screen! *{Well, I caught that the day after I had posted to www.efanzines.com, fixed the error to "my parents", and fired off the corrected version, which has been posted ever since.}*

Certainly doesn't look very good in the same issue where I advocate taking it a bit easy while doing fanac does it? However, the fact is, I am a crappy proofreader and I've let worse slip by me in professional manuscripts. I would never sell anything if I had to do it on the basis of my proofreading.

Still, I really have to apologize. I hope it's not the only thing anyone notices. *{It was the only one that I noticed, if that makes you feel any better.}*

I will add though, my typically lousy proofing aside, taking a relaxed approach isn't "slacking" as Claire puts it. I did not advocate slacking. I hope no one could read what I've written over the years for fanzines and think I was "slacking" or not giving it my full attention. I respect readers too much to try to pawn off anything that I don't feel is worthwhile. But I'm not sure, as a reader I want

or need to read nothing but articles people have sweat blood over either. Fandom is a hobby after all.

One place "relaxing" (as opposed to "slacking") comes in is choosing the complexity of what's undertaken or lack thereof. For example, I would not undertake anything as complex as a historical novel or a mystery short story for a fanzine. (As for example a long, involved convention report which might become as complicated to write as a short story) Writing the brief, straightforward pieces I write for blogs and fanzines is relaxing compared to writing a story or a novel. ***{It all depends on the individual. Zine-writing is definitely different from pro writing.}***

As to chivalry, if faanish chivalry relates to non-electronic communication than I won't be displaying the slightest degree of chivalry. When I dipped a toe back into fandom I promised myself the toe would remain entirely electronic. I don't read paper fanzines, let alone write snail mail letters. If it seems like an arbitrary line to draw, it is. But I felt I had to draw a line somewhere. In the distant past I became too deeply involved in Fandom and spent far too much time and energy on things faanish. Most hobbies, I think, are best enjoyed in moderation. When they become too important in one's scheme of things or begin to compete with other parts of one's life, they can cause problems. For me anyway.

However, I do agree that the praiseworthy faanish idea of "paying" for free zines by way of letter or trade does not seem to fit the ethos of the internet. Stuff on the internet is just there for the taking and I admit that I use lots of freeware and have never written a letter of comment or thanks to the programmers who put the programs up on their websites. So when you put a fanzine online at eFanzines, for instance, it becomes just another internet freebie as far as most people are concerned. ***{Sad to say, this is most likely why there are so many visitors to my zines –***



counter keeps rising – with little response. Most Internet viewers visit out of curiosity with no intention of contacting the fan editors posting their zines. “Internet freebies” is probably the best term for this anyone’s come up with yet for this phenomenon.}

Paper fanzines differed from fanzines available on the web in that they had a limited print run. If you kept receiving a zine and didn't respond you might be trimmed off the list. I used to get 30 plus LoCs on every issue of *Groggy* (circulation generally 60 to 70) because people knew I could only print a small number on my ditto machine and had no choice but to keep winnowing my mailing list.

There are lots of ways you could limit the availability of an e-zine. For instance, you could have it passworded, like eAPA with only "subscribers" receiving the password. However, that would probably irritate people since it runs counter to the usual ways of the internet. Also, I don't think there are nearly as many people interested in fanzines today, electronic or otherwise, so you'd likely end up with a minuscule list.

To be fair, maybe e-zines come cheaper because they are far easier and less expensive to produce! ***{This is what I think. No doubt in my mind, it is the ease and low expense that enables me to produce so quickly and drive people like you nuts.}***

You wonder whether people consider things like blogs and lists and such fanac? I do. Why not? However, I think there's a catch. A traditional paper zine, produced like a fanzine and sent only to fans, is pretty obviously a fanzine, and thus it can contain a lot of nonfaanish material and still seem like a fanzine. But a blog, say, made generally available is not, in itself, faanish and would have to pretty clearly contain fan material to make it feel faanish.

My blog doesn't contain faanish stuff and few of those who comment are fans so it doesn't give the impression of being faanish, even though David Burton reprints much of it in *Pixel* as a fanzine column. I guess, in that context, it works as fanac. By itself, no.

As for listservs -- I think they have largely replaced letter columns and letter column oriented zines. The fanzines that appeared most frequently and ran the most letters attracted even more

letters. They facilitated discussion best. A listserv appears continuously and runs as many letters as are sent, without limit. The "letters" appear instantly and can be responded to within hours or minutes. Listservs are the perfect letter columns. For me, they are too fast, however and downright overwhelming.

Even this LoC has overwhelmed me. I'd better shut up.

Eric

{You don't have to shut up yet. We enjoy reading your commentary; it is always thoughtful and sparks interesting responses. I am not an active participant on listservs and blogs; even my LiveJournal doesn't get used that often. Perhaps what cyber-fans consider "fannish" is what matters here. Dave Burton thinks highly of your writing, which may not be about things scientific, but the general tone and point of view of your writing is fannish, if that makes any sense.}

Ooohh.... Here's another frequent contributor to these pages:

Date: Thu, 23 Nov 2006 11:41:04 -0800

From: "Chris Garcia"
<garcia@computerhistory.org>

To: "John Purcell"
<j_purcell54@yahoo.com>

Real good ish, but since I'm at the Uncle's computer, I've gotta be brief with this portion of my LoC.

I probably get about 5% response on most of my zines, though a significant number get zero response. I don't really mind, I'd still do them without any response since most of my zines are for the purpose of keeping away boredom. I have to say, your zines always get a good look over from me and a lot of folks I know talk about IAPR and AF... on LJ and at BASFA. I could swear that both

Andy and Kevin said they were sending LoCs to the last issue. I'll have to browbeat them for that.

What's interesting is that zines are getting a lot more notice now in the BArea. It was very rare to hear about any zine other than Emerald City before last year, but now folks talk about the stuff that you put out, my zines, *Vegas Fandom Weekly* and various other zines. It's strange, I didn't expect that to happen.

Anyhoo, I must run and get ready to deal with family until it's time for LosCon. Various SNAPS folks (like Laurraine Tutihasi) will be there and Frank Wu and a couple of other good people. I'll be running the TAFF auction and doing a panel with folks like Mike Glycer! Should be good stuff.

I'll write more later.

Chris

{Well, you didn't write more later, but that's all right. With your productivity, I can let this slide for now.}

It is refreshing to hear that there is such an interest in fanzines by the BAreaans. It would be wonderful to see more zines, writers, and artists getting involved in fanzine fandom. We shall see what happens as time goes by.}



My heart goes out to Hope Leibowitz, who is at a definite disadvantage in this current age of cyber-fanac. Check out her electronic tale of woe:}

Date: Wed, 29 Nov 2006 10:05:01 -0500

To: John Purcell <j_purcell54@yahoo.com>

From: Hope Leibowitz <tiki@interlog.com>

Subject: Re: In a Prior Lifetime #17

Thanks John, but...

It is almost 2 million bytes. Do you know how long that would take me to download? (See bottom of e-mail.) I do not want to find out.

I have it set to allow (I forget exactly) around 500 k. That is more than enough for most posts I get, even when the smof list is very active.

Someday I will get a new computer. Real soon now. (Not)

{Then, in an e-mail dated November 30th, when I asked if she was coming down for Corflu, Hope replied with the following:}

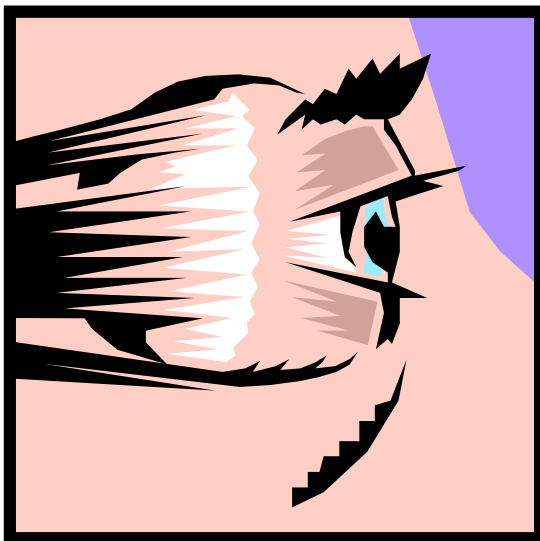
Yes. . . I just have to get my passport renewed before then. And book a (probably very expensive) flight. My passport expired in May. Or was it May, 2005? I've been traveling with it that way a lot, but that might not work next year. ***{Should I be publishing this information? Chances are, you'll have it renewed before then and you'll be fine.}***

I'm looking forward to seeing you and figuring out how well I know you. If I don't recognize you it will be amusing.

I'm worried about flights, as all the flights to Texas in the past were over \$600. I missed Corflu Ocho due to that, the first con I ever had a membership for and didn't go to.

- Hope

{Well, I am looking forward to seeing you. I thought that we first met at Iguacon back in 1978. If so, I am positive that we certainly don't look anywhere near the same. No matter. It shall be fun to get together and enjoy the company of our fellow fans.}



Hey! He's back and ready to loc 'n roll again. Here he is, our favorite frozen letterhack, Lloyd Penney!

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

To: "John Purcell" <j_purcell54@yahoo.com>

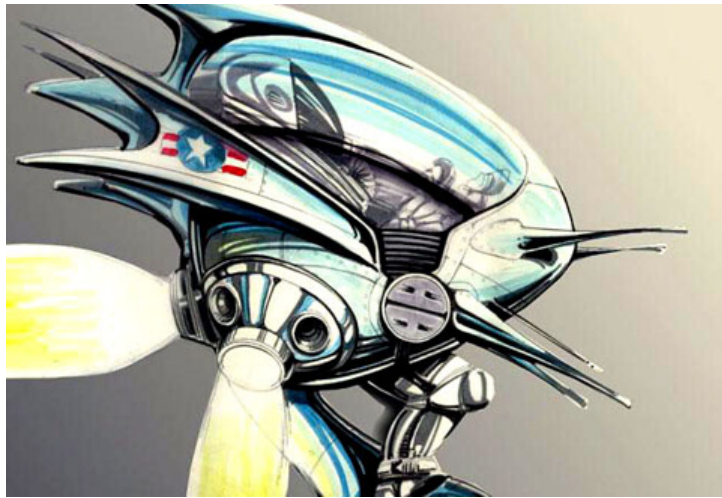
Subject: In A Prior Lifetime 17

Date: Wed, 20 Dec 2006 07:59:38 -0500

Hey, I'm back! The eye op seems to have been a complete success, I'm still healing, but I have the go-ahead from my ophthalmologist to get back to work and to hacking away, so I shall. Here are comments on IAPL 17.

We gotta find creative ways of getting rid of Chris Garcia if TAFF can't do the job (insert evil laugh here)... He's still got my TAFFish support, and who knows, by the time it comes around again, I might even vote, who knows?

Fannish chivalry ain't dead, but the knowledge around fannish traditions has to be taught and taught again. People can't follow these "rules" if they don't know about them. Most zines do list what the "usual" consists of, but... I think we need a small, downloadable zine explaining how to participate. Couldn't hurt, and could get us some more interesting people in here.



Bloggings and LJings may be fanac, but they often are simply put on the blog without real thought as to where they are directed. I find that simply making some comment like "Oh, yeah, I also received..." Part of the unspoken fannish courtesy, mostly because we didn't have to do it pre-blog, is that the response was sent to you. I could stick my locs on an LJ, but as far as I'm concerned, the sending of the zine is the opening of the conversation, and my e-loc, directly sent to you, is the rejoinder. E-mailing locs has been all good; saving money on paper, envelopes and postage, and getting my remarks to you in seconds rather than days. Aaaagh!, all of fandom is saying...more than one LP? One's more than enough! And, I'm sure Yvonne would agree.

Hallowe'en was a regular working night for me this year. There are lots of apartment buildings in my neighbourhood, but houses aren't far away, and I did see some kids in costume with pillowcases of goodies, but I really think it's become an adult event to shed a little exterior armour and go have some fun at a party. Wish there'd been a fannish Hallowe'en party in this city, hint, hint...

Ah, your medical story kinda overlaps mine, John...after being informed of my partially detached retina, my ophthalmologist (I type that long word easier and easier every time) told me what would have to happen. I responded by saying that I really, reeeeeeeally didn't want to know let alone experience all the gory details, and could you put me out entirely? No, was the reply, mostly because of my weight and the fact I take glucosamine-chondroitin supplements to keep my creaky joints from creaking. Actually, they did wind up putting me right out, but I woke up with the flash of lasers and the sensation of some kind of instrument...right in my eye. Hmmm, that's interesting, I thought, I said hello to the surgeons who I thought were around me, and indicated that things were starting to hurt a little. "Okay, we'll turn it up a little," was the response, and I drifted off again, but not before thanking them for their good work. When I regained consciousness... I was covered by warm cotton sheets, and the post-op nurse offered me an apple juice and a turkey sandwich...ah, manna. As of right now, there is a small air bubble in my right eye that is quickly being absorbed and replaced by freshly-made vitreous, and I have to wean myself of Prednisolone eye drops and Tylenol-3s, but otherwise, I should be seeing just fine in a couple of weeks.

APAs were fun...I was in three APAs, but they were all Canadian, and most people wouldn't have known about them. TAPA, APAplexy and The Final Frontier. Writing my zines for them was fun, but I guess I wanted a larger audience, and fanzines provided that for me. I have old copies of The New Moon Directory, which used to list APAs, and there were lots of them...I am not sure if this publication still exists, or even if needs to exist. So many APAs have passed away, but there are enough to them to keep the idea still viable.

Do I think that writing locs is work? Well, I have felt that way perhaps once or twice, and when I feel that way, I take a break, perhaps a week or so. Things will pile up, but I can say that about a lot of things in life. Once I have that break, and have the chance to recharge the mental batteries, it's fun again. I always want to provide a quality loc, but I do keep track of quantity, too. That one of the reasons why I archive my locs on an LJ.

John, I'm going to try to scrape up US\$20 and send it to Pat Virzi for Corflu Quire. I really wish I could go, but cash is scarce, especially after this little eye op, not being paid sick pay for a temp assignment, but I'd really like to be a part of things, even in the supporting membership sense. I wonder if anyone will do a Corflu online the way this time around? If so, let me know, and I will try to be there.

All done for the moment...the sun is just rising, and I'm already done here. Take care, and I have an ...and furthermore to comment on, too. That one's coming. See you then.

Lloyd

{SNAPS is actually a nice little apa – young at only 19 disties so far, so it's only just over a year and a half old – with lots of good people involved. We'll see how well I last with dissertation research and writing looming on the near horizon. ()}*

It's really too bad you can't afford attending Corflu. Supporting membership is the next best thing to being there, and you can get all the publications the con puts out. With Chris Garcia and myself being there, the question arises how many issues of our zines we'll crank out over that weekend! As for on-line chatting or streaming videos from Corflu, let's see what transpires. Trust me: you'll know!}

I also heard from these folks:

Ben Bova ("Glad to hear that you're going for your doctorate. Any tips? Stay calm!") *{Thank you!}*

Ned Brooks ("Hi John - Good to hear from you. Sue Phillips from the old SFPA crowd was just here and brought me 100 lbs of typewriters from a storage unit she's clearing out, including a rare Selectric with a cyber-link - the cable is 3/4-inch in diameter!") *{Old habits really do die hard, don't they?}*

Bruce Gillespie ("Many thanks for your comments... but you've got me puzzled. Until I look at my card index at the other end of the house, I cannot remember whether you are still receiving paper copies of my magazines, or whether you are commenting on the downloaded version (in which case, you see the *colour version*).

Or you might even be a subscriber. Whatever -- I'll put you down as a downloader if no other category fits, and will try to catch up with recent issues of your own zine.") *{I'm a downloadin' Internet freeloader.}*

Earl Kemp (Who sent notification that el #29 was posted to efanazines. Folks, you better go there and get this downloaded; this is the e-book publication of the Hugo Award winning "Who Killed Science Fiction?" from 1960. Fascinating reading.)

Mark Leeper ("thank you for reading and commenting" on MT Void) *{This is one of the zines that hides out in the www.fanac.org website. You can subscribe to it right now at the special Holiday rate of free!}*

Joseph Major ("As soon as I get home I will send you a copy of the issue of *Alexiad* with the article on my colonoscopy.") *{Oh, great... Now what have I started?}*

Will Shetterly (in response to an e-mail I sent telling him that Steve Brust didn't recognize me at first at Aggiecon 37) - "I suspect you'll be adding our names to that account. Amazing how we change. Important thing is it sounds like you're happy in Texas. We're looking forward to the con and improving our opinion of your state--too much driving across the panhandle, where we did find a couple of bits we like, but, overall, Too Much Flat." *{The key words regarding Texas in your comment are towards the end: "Too Much." The Hill Country near Austin is quite pretty.}*

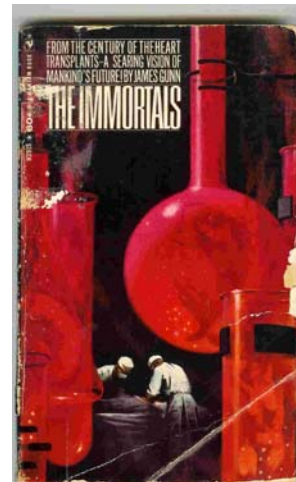
Peter Weston ("Ah, I suspected you were a foreigner! So what makes you the slightest bit interested in Birmingham fandom? Let me have your full address since my nextish will be 'paper only'. And I hope to meet you in Austin.") *{Done deal with the address – see page 2 of thish for it, just in case – and I'll see you there!}*

recent readings from the stack

This is not a book review column, but a brief listing of what I have been reading for enjoyment since the semester ended last week. If Ned Brooks can list recent acquisitions to his stash, I'm gonna counter with what I've recently read. Why the heck not?

Gunn, James. *The Immortals*. New York, NY: Bantam. 154 pp, 1962.

Lately I have been reading some older science fiction novels. Funny thing, most of them began as novellas or novelettes in the pro mags of the 50s, 60s and 70s. Nevertheless, they are a lot of fun to read, and I have been thoroughly enjoying them. Case in point, the book pictured here to the right.

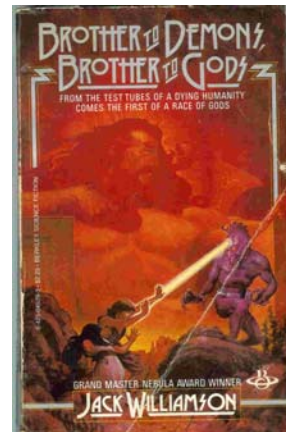


Back in July of 1975, I met James Gunn at Byobcon V, and enjoyed talking with him. So when I found this book at Carousel Paperbacks earlier this year, I remembered that con, bought the book, and finally got around to reading it. The basic plot-line revolves around genetic engineering and how medicine in the not-so-distant future will only be available to those who can afford it. Culled together from stories that first appeared in the pro magazines from 1955 to 1960, Gunn tells a tale that is both a prophetic warning about mankind's dangerous tendency to use medicine as a means of playing God, and is an entertaining read, too. I believe this was transmuted into a really abysmal made-for-TV movie that centered more on the chase aspect of the stories, than on the message that Gunn wants us to remember. Fancy that!

Williamson, Jack. *Brother to Demons, Brother to Gods*. New York, NY: Berkley. 193 pp, 1981.

Here's another acquisition from Carousel Paperbacks. Like the James Gunn book, this one likewise first appeared in pro-zines in bits and pieces, then assembled into novel format. In this case, though, they date from 1976 to 1979. My reason for reading this is obvious: Jack Williamson recently passed away at the age of 98.

In typical Williamson fashion, this story is set on a far future Earth, where genetic engineering has resulted in various "creations" that have fueled myths, legends, and prophecies. There is a grand

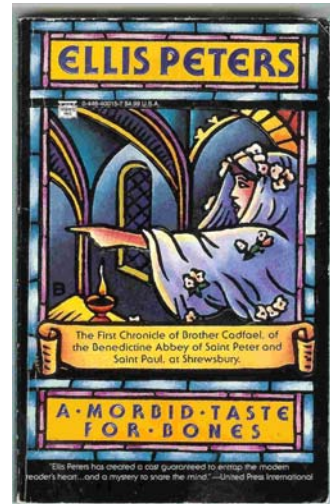


sweep to the story, replete with a youthful hero and heroine, which reminds of why I loved reading Jack Williamson's stories as a youth. This was fun to read once I got past the "Adam and Eve" premise: the first genetic scientists were named Adam and Eva Smithwick, and the seeds they planted when they made the first "trumen"... You get the idea. I gave this book a few chapters to get me hooked, and it did. Jack Williamson always tells an exciting story, and this one does, too, even if the story is predictable.

Peters, Ellis. *A Morbid Taste for Bones*. New York, NY: Mysterious Press. 197 pp, 1977.

This is the first full-length novel in the Brother Cadfael Chronicles, and most enjoyable it is! I have to admit that I have always loved a good mystery, probably because my father had an extensive collection of Agatha Christie, Ellery Queen, and Rex Stout paperbacks at home.

Brother Cadfael is a Benedictine Monk, coming to the order later in life after serving as a knight during the last of the Holy Crusades. He has seen much of the world, shunning its ways in favor of serving the Lord's calling. Peters has created a character of depth, compassion, keen insight, and very much interested in having truth and justice being served. This is a fictional character of an integrity that I have rarely encountered, which is probably the trait that endears Cadfael to Peters' legions of fans.



Historically accurate in setting – 12th Century Shrewsbury – language, and science, the Cadfael series (21 novels in all, plus one collection of novelettes) is very enjoyable for those who like a good period piece of historical mystery.

some closing thoughts

On November 25th, Valerie and I celebrated our 17th wedding anniversary. Okay, so it wasn't a big whoop-dee-doo family event, and we didn't do any big-ass celebratory dance or whatever, so we kind of non-celebrated it.



Besides, we may have something bigger to plan for in a year or two.

We do, in fact, know that two major events are coming up by the end of 2007 or early 2008: Valerie and Penny will both be completing their Bachelor of Arts Degrees in Criminal Justice over at Sam Houston State University (graduating in either December or May, respectively), and I will probably have my Doctorate in Education done by the end of 2008 as well. These are all good things.

Then on top of that, we are sniffing out hints that another major change is wafting on the breeze.

Penny is 21 years old. She has known her boyfriend, Eric, for four years now, and the two are quite the pair. They are the best of friends, claim that they are *NOT* boyfriend and girlfriend, they are *NOT* dating, and so on. However, Valerie has caught Penny perusing wedding websites in recent weeks, and whenever we pass the magazine racks at Wal-Mart, Target, or at a bookstore, Penny's eyes tend to wander over the wedding magazine covers.

These are warning signs, people. Penny's mind is slipping dangerously into a zone from which there may be no return.

So, as a service to not only my readers, but also to parents of daughters everywhere, I include the following 21st Century checklist of "our daughter is thinking marriage thoughts" warning signs. Any parent worth their salt should know these. Mention any or all of these in conversation with your daughter and take note of her reaction(s):

- Does your daughter race to answer the phone whenever it rings – beating her 15 year old sister to it by three lengths?
- Does your daughter smile uncontrollably when she talks to her boyfriend on the phone?
- Do your daughter and her boy-friend seem to talk on the phone – or in person, for that matter - in a monosyllabic, primitive jungle language that only lower primates might understand?
- Does your daughter's boyfriend even bother calling her on your regular house phone, preferring to use her cell phone instead?
- Do your daughter and her boyfriend have each other's numbers speed-dialed on their cell phones (this is a given nowadays), use Instant Messaging, and have each other's faces as backgrounds *and* screen savers on their computers?
- When you and your spouse talk about your daughter's boyfriend as a "possible" or "passable" future son-in-law, take note of the depth of the blush in her cheeks;
- The next time your daughter's boyfriend comes over to visit her, meet him at the door holding a fully-charged tazer: note his reaction;
- Ask her why she's bookmarked wedding websites on her laptop/home computer/etc.;
- Casually talk about china patterns and queen-sized silk bed sheet sets with your spouse in her presence;
- Fondly remember your honeymoon night, without omitting any details – but keep it clean! Remember she has young, tender, and – hopefully – virgin ears;
- Absently hum Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" while cleaning around the house;
- If you actually *own* a copy of Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" on either CD, cassette, vinyl, or even 8-track, play it as background music while cleaning around the house;
- Get your daughter a gift-subscription to Victoria's Secret lingerie catalog – *SOON!*;
- Start addressing your daughter's boyfriend as "son" and see what happens.
- If they both smile when you do this last suggestion, get a second mortgage on the house; you're gonna need the cash!

some more closing thoughts

This is really nuts.

I never would have attempted to produce a monthly fanzine back in the old days, even when I had access to a relatively inexpensive means of reproduction (my brother was head printer for Apache Corporation in downtown Minneapolis for nearly nine years beginning in 1977). The amount of work involved would have burned me out.

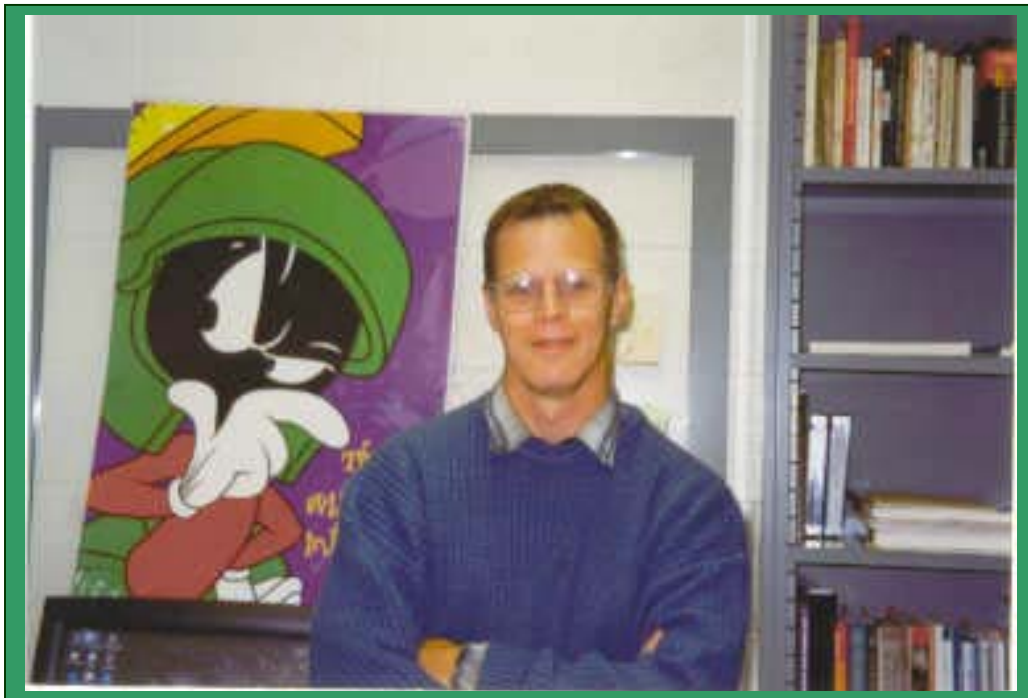
There is thus no doubt in my mind that the Internet and modern-day technology is making frequent pubbing possible. If I consider my output from 2006 and projecting what may happen in 2007, my mind does a brief reel and jig at the potential numbers. I am just at a loss for words when I think what might be.

In any event, this has been a very fun year of fanac for yours truly, and I hope all of you who have been reading my efforts have enjoyed it all as well. My thanks go out to Bill Burns for providing such a wonderful service by running www.efanzines.com and putting up with my efforts. You are a trooper, sir, and I hope to meet you soon. Other thanks go to these fine folks: Chris Garcia, my roommate at the upcoming Quireflu in Austin, Texas (I'll get back to you on the room info in a week or so, bud); Lloyd Penney, a faithful loccer true and true; Arnie Katz, who twisted my arm to get me back into apas again, namely SNAPS; and Earl Kemp, who has been an inspiration by producing *el*. And my wife, Valerie, who puts up with my hobby interest, and is a lot more fannish that she realizes.

And to the rest of you, loccers, writers, and artists all, have a Happy Holiday season, and I shall see some of you in a mere 49 days in Austin!

All the best,

John Purcell



"Where's the kaboom?"

There's supposed to be an earth-shattering kaboom!"