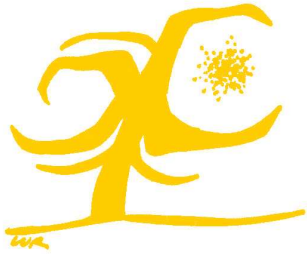


Time and Again 6





Time and Again 6

October 2008

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Diabologic Tales Out Of School

Editorial by

Dave Locke

By the late '50s the 1941 disparaging term "*space opera*" had migrated all the way to Indian Lake Central School in upstate NYok and lodged in the brain of our high school english teacher, who misused it as an all-purpose substitute term for "*science fiction*". I was 14 or 15 at the time, and in the process of jaunting around science fiction to find out where the Good Stuph



was. I knew it wasn't in anything which could be legitimately labeled as space opera.

I loaned her Ted Sturgeon's *More Than Human* and Alfred Bester's *The Demolished Man* and never heard "space opera" pass her lips again. Plus I created another fan of the Good Stuff in the genre, and someone to talk to about books in general.

After graduating high school in '62 it was immediately "call me Jane" and I visited her and her husband Doc (then retired doctor for the town, but always "Doc") a number of times before leaving NYok in '68, and then once in the '70s and once in the '80s. We corresponded until the late '80s, by which point she and Doc were living with their daughter in Baltimore and neither were in good health. By that time she knew more about science fiction than I ever will.

Another of the books I loaned her early-on was Wilson "Bob" Tucker's *The Long Loud Silence*, which I described as my favorite within the genre. Her comment was "I can see why." Too bad I didn't know back then that Bob was the originator of the term "*space opera*"...

Today, of course, that are a lot of fans who really dig the thud and blunder of the "*space opera*" subgenre. Oh yeah, it's still around, but the aficionados will reach back to the earlier stuff to satisfy their jones on this.

Arnie and Joyce Katz can speak much better about Charles Burbee in the 1980s, as it was into their Nevada area that he moved back then. In the '70s he lived in the Los Angeles area and I can tell you that he was a generally unhappy man. Once you got past his initial "*fanning by intimidation*" shtick/facade he was a kick to talk to and a really nice guy. He'd show up at too many larger parties dead-drunk from the git-go, but finally appeared to be getting away from that as the decade wore on, and at

smaller fan gatherings he felt comfortable enough to deal with the hooch in moderation. As several femmes confided, he had an open marriage and in the '70s he tumbled across the free love of the '60s.

He was a man to carry a grudge forever and ever, and the mere mention of the name of a certain friend of mine would cause him to go on and on in corro or in person to me about some piddly-ass little thing that had occurred in the '40s somewhere, and to contact people to make sure the guy wasn't scheduled to show up at their party before he'd consider going.

He showed up at a rather large party at Lon Atkins' place one time so drunk the person who drove him there had to help him out of the car and to the party, at which point he spent the evening desperately trying to avoid the fan I'm talking about who had also shown up. When this fan approached him, Charlie was pleasant enough (Lon and I were waiting to step in if there was an explosion), and by the time the evening was over Charlie was hugging him. Later I asked him whathell that was all about and he told me "*Ah, I probably got it wrong in the '40s; I was drinking at the time. Really nice guy, isn't he?*"

He was a mass of contradictions but he was one helluva fanwriter and a great fellow to have in one of the groups I was hanging out with. You could rarely get a reading on what he thought about you even while you were talking with him (he rarely spoke well about the people who weren't present, which always made you wonder), except that he'd call or write and suggest getting together in the first place. He seemed lonely even in a crowd of people sometimes.

And that's about all I know about Charlie Burbee. Except that nobody called him "Chuck"...

Both Burb and the fan he initially wanted to avoid are gone now.

The friend I mentioned just up above was Cyrus Banning Condra, one of the nicest guys and best fanwriters I've ever tumbled across. He didn't write much. I believe only two articles, and his second one came only as the result of years of plying, wheedling, and cajoling on my part. Apparently Cy decided to come through with it just so he wouldn't have to stand and brace himself for my working it into whatever conversation was at hand.

Cy was someone I could listen to all evening. He'd gift people with marvelous books which would open up entirely new areas for reading. I have three of them on a shelf near me. *McSorley's Wonderful Saloon*, by Joseph Mitchell. *Low Man On A Totem Pole*, by H. Allen Smith. And my favorite, *Joe, The Wounded Tennis Player*, by Morton Thompson (with an intro by Robert Benchley and pic-

tures by Virgil Partch). I could talk for the length of several windows about how odd but neat a party at Cy's place would turn out to be, but the most interesting thing about Cy was his cleverness and his wit.

I recall one woman who was introduced to me at a party and she immediately said "if you're going to make a joke about my last name, it better be good". Yeah, it doesn't take long before you've heard them all...

However, I was about 30 before I'd heard them all. At a Los Angeles Petard Meeting in the early-to-mid '70s I was noting the above story to Cy Condra, who suggested he could make a joke on my name which I hadn't heard before, and in fact he could do it with my complete name and not just my last. The whole N/i/n/e/ /Y/a/r/d/s/ "Dave Locke", in other words. By the next Petard Meeting.

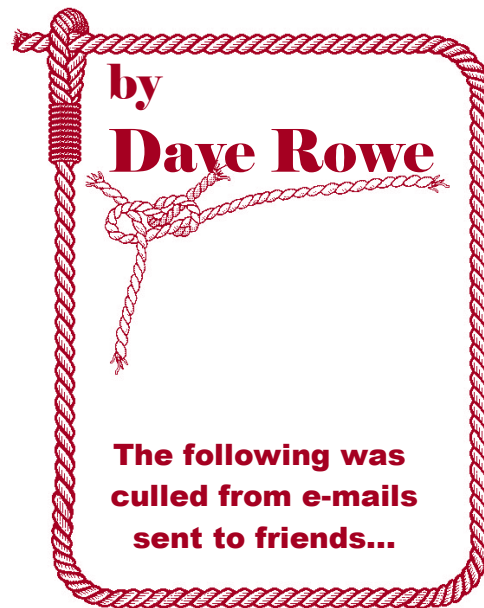
I accepted the challenge, and lost.

Cy: "What do birds of a feather do together?"



Mud In Your Eye

The Magnificent Plan Seven From Outer Space



Nearly sixty years ago *Galaxy Science Fiction Magazine* ran an ad stating "...a western transplanted to some alien and impossible planet. If that is your idea of science fiction, you're welcome to it! YOU'LL NEVER FIND IT IN GALAXY!" Yet there we were on June 1st this very year of 2008, filming a space-western.

Was only personally involved with that last day of shooting. That day Carolyn (who was handling the catering/"craft services") was running late so she sent me on ahead to warn/explain/create-a-diversion.

I was the first one at the location. Twenty minutes

later Carolyn finally arrived. She was the second. Within minutes the rest of the crew and cast appeared, probably because of the allure of food. With the crew came writer/director Bill, whose first words were "So let's eat."

PANIC STATIONS! Carolyn had thought that a noon-day start meant snacks for a couple of hours or so and THEN a meal.

Suddenly there were ravenous, starving young actors with dry mouths, cavernous stomachs and empty plates advancing towards the food tables.

Carolyn and I opened the food and utensil containers as

if they were ammo boxes and we were under a surprise attack.

The food tables were rearranged almost as quickly as a cannonball strike would have done but our efforts were a lot more pleasing both in aesthetics and epicure.

The ravenous, starving, young actors were augmented with ravenous, starving, young crew members and then ravenous, starving, old us.

Once the appetites were placated we got down to the business of making a movie.

Which is mainly 'Hurry up and wait'. In fact, before the day was over one extra/helper complained that she didn't have enough to do.

So we lounged around in the chairs while the most active people got on with the majority of the work. They were the camera-woman, sound-man, director and three professional actors.

Bill as director was 180 degrees away from the joker who directed the December cave movie. Bill was almost constantly joking, complimenting and explaining what was needed so everyone knew what was expected of them.

As a result, Bill got what he wanted.

Mia Caporale as an actress had body language down to a tee. During one emotional scene as her character cradled her rifle and tried to come to terms with several killings, she had real tears trickling down her cheeks. Which was a little short of a miracle as Bill and the crew were ribbing her with comments like "Happiness is a warm gun" and "A girl loves her gun."

Jim Wolford Hardin had to act out one scene over and over again to facilitate different camera angles but sounded absolutely natural in every shot. We all know this goes on when making a movie but it was still wondrous to

actually see it.

The commitment some people have to independent film making is flabbergasting. It has been said that Lloyd Kaufman will go anywhere at almost anytime to help with any indie movie for nothing more than paid travel and board. He'd been at a L.A. promotion on the Thursday, then flew via Phoenix and Salt Lake City to Indianapolis on the Friday night. Saturday morning at 8:30am he was acting on the set of the movie only to catch an afternoon flight out to stay at home in N.Y. for one night then off to Iowa to help with another film.

Some call that dedication. Critics call it fanaticism. Whereas the psychiatric therapy community, being in the know, simply refer to it as raving psychotic.

The shoot itself was at the Franklin College Student Building. Robert Wise studied at F.C. and went on to direct *The Day The Earth Stood Still* and *Tribute To A Bad Man*. As this project was a space-western, perhaps Bill was hoping some of the magic would rub off while praying that it wouldn't be the 'magic' of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*.

Thus the Commons area became a metro-transit carriage, a bedroom, a living room, a spaceport terminal and a shower. It should be admitted that that was in part because of blue and green screens (Bill has some "equity" in a Toronto CGI studio) but also out of sheer ingenuity.

Take for instance that the Commons had wooden tables that were either cylindrical or cubic so when we came to the bedroom scene a few blankets were fitted over an inflated Lilo, three of the cube tables were lined up at the bed's top-end to form a headboard and the camera was placed to show nothing outside the bed's perimeter. Voila! One bedroom.

Another ingenuity was the camera-dolly. A 12ft x 4ft oblong of 4" PVC pipes formed the rails, the platform ran on skateboard rollers and the camera-mount was kept firm and in place on the board by sandbags.

Light, easily dismantled and practical.

An American College Football player managed to walk smack into it despite all 12ft stretching in front of him. Which only reinforced a popular opinion regarding American Footballers' mentality.

Uningenuous were some of the outside shots that had the same brickwork for a senator's building on Earth and a metro-transit station on Ganymede. It's probably too much to expect the audience to ignore that. By the way, that's Jupiter's Ganymede not Dr. Who's.

Having read the script (which was competently written) the only big question was why was it a space-western? There was absolutely no need for any cowboy elements or props in the story and their inclusion only caused the whole to reach a "Kitsch" reading on the Stupid-o-meter.

Another point that was bothering was that the script had at least five similarities to an old Raquel Welch western *Hannie Caulder* (Why does "old Raquel Welch" have the ring of an oxymoron about it? After all she's in her later sixties now) and the similarities were pretty blatant because I've never seen that movie.

If the movie had been film noir or straight Sci-fi adventure the connotations would have been masked but there we were with stetson hats and a log cabin which only magnified the similarities.

Sure enough, at the shoot Bill was overheard saying that the movie was based around *Hannie Caulder*.

And what was my part in putting science fiction back seventy years?

Let's go back a couple of weeks before the filming. Bill had told Carolyn that he needed my haggard features for the movie so my neck remained unshaven for over a week, my hair unwashed for two and I stayed up late most nights. If Bill wanted haggard he'd get haggard.

At the shoot I was given a bio-hazard suit (which in the heat of the day became a private sauna) and marched up and downstairs with four other bods.

The Monday after I phoned Bill to warn him that I may have looked into the camera in one shot and in another the suit was open revealing a 1980 London Underground T-shirt. Bill said not to worry, all he used was the back of my head!

Well, to Hades with Hollywood.

I'm going back to reading SF. Real SF.

By the bye, I did find out why the movie is a space-western: Bill wanted to make a western but the film co-op voted for a SF movie however Bill was writing the script so...



How We Survived The Dreaded Power Surge



by June Moffatt

On Thursday, August 21, we had a power surge that blew out a lamp bulb, fried the lamp's wiring and damaged our DSL modem and its power supply. This was in spite of the large Surge Protector that our son Bob had installed. I dialed the number of Verizon Tech Support, and embarked on a frustrating journey through their Voice Mail and various human beings. I "talked" to one woman whom I could barely hear, but I would swear she was speaking Spanish. "No comprendo! Yo no hablo al Español!" was my contribution to the exchange. Finally, I got a man with a nice clear voice, who took down the information I had to give. He then switched me over to someone who couldn't hear me, so I had to bellow into the phone to give her the information she needed. The next day, the new modem arrived by UPS. It is a Model 6100F, replacing the old

Model 6100.

It took close to an hour on the phone with our son Bob (who lives in Los Gatos, California) to determine that the old modem and its power supply were totally unusable. I replaced it with the new modem and the new power supply and we proceeded to try to convince the system that yes, it belonged there. Extended sessions with IP addresses and passwords ensued. Finally, we seemed to have gone as far as we could go. A cheerful on-screen message told us that the new modem was ready for use, which was an out-and-out lie. Bob said that, if he were here, he could no doubt get it going, but *that* was Highly Impractical. He advised me to call Joe Zeff, who was once a Tech Support Critter at Earthlink, before his job got outsourced to India.

I then called Joe, who lives nearby and is a fellow-LASFSian. He was very helpful, and the computer had apparently rested sufficiently in the interval to give me a new and different screen to work with. We followed the instructions, and got to a point where it told us that the installation was “25% complete”. It seemed to freeze there, and I told Joe that I would call him back later. A couple of hours later, it was still at 25% complete. I called Joe back and he suggested rebooting the computer. After the reboot, I noticed a new icon on the desktop, which has since disappeared: Continue Loading New Program, or words to that effect. So I clicked on it, and it led me through the installation for the new modem, including some programs that took about half-an-hour to download. So now we have Web access again! *Whew*

I promptly sent e-mails to Bob and to Joe, saying “It works! It works!”

The first time I tried to get into Firefox on Gulliver, I got a new screen, requiring me to sign in and give a password. I told it to “remember” the sign-in, which it has done. The top half-dozen of the webmail messages are then displayed, and clicking on any of them takes me into the Verizon webmail page. When I tried clicking on a second message, I got an Error Report advising me to contact Verizon Tech Support. (Not if I can help it! Fortunately, it was a temporary glitch.)

Interestingly enough, I don’t have to go through that on Macavity. (In case you’re wondering, we have two computers. The older one runs Windows 98 and was named “Gulliver” for the many travels it’s had between Downey and Los Gatos. Macavity is relatively new, runs Windows XP and was named after the Mystery Cat.)

A parallel problem was the lamp which had suffered in

the Power Surge. Our main Den lamp is a torchiere-type, with a frosted glass shade. We use a 200-watt bulb in it, which lights the Den quite nicely, thank you. A trip to a repair shop was definitely in the cards. Meanwhile, we needed light in Len’s Den. Another torchiere lamp with a solid metal shade was moved in from the Library and proved very inadequate indeed. I thought of replacing its bulb with a more powerful one, but one look disabused me of that idea. I don’t know what kind of bulb it is, but I do know I’ve never seen one like it! We then tried A Nordinary Lamp with a 75-watt bulb, which shed light on our keyboards (better than nothing).

The next morning, we took the lamp down to Folsom Electric in Bellflower. It doesn’t really fit in the back seat, so we lowered the rear window and let it stick out a few inches. Charles, our favorite clerk at Folsom, came out to the car and fetched it in. He examined it, and said that it looked as if the socket were burnt out. We said fine, just fix it.

A day passed.

We came home from running errands to find a message from Charles on our answering machine. The dimmer switch had also been burnt out, and it would be \$50 to replace it. Did we want them to go ahead with the work? Len growled something about buying a new lamp and having it delivered. I hauled out our Penney’s catalog and checked the prices of new lamps of that general type. The cheapest was \$150. We called Folsom and told them to go ahead. They said the lamp would be ready after four o’clock that day.

So we picked it up, brought it home and Len’s Den is now lit properly!



MUCH NO THINGS ABOUT ADO

Mulligatawny



by Lee Anne Lavell

The first part of this edition of my column is to be a word of explanation as to what has been going on in my life the past few months. Ignore it if you wish.

In the late winter I had a TIA. For the uninitiated, TIA stands for transient ischemic attack. People often refer to this as a mini-stroke, which it is not. It simply means that for some reason the brain is momentarily briefly deprived of oxygen. Not nice. It manifested itself to me as double vision, which lasted for a couple of hours and scared me half to death. Of course, it was off to emergency where they did blood tests and a CT scan (“No stroke,” I was told. “No brain tumor.”) I was then told to see my regular

doctor, and also the last eye doctor I had seen (which happened to be the one who had done my cataract surgery a few months earlier). My eye doctor said my eyes were coming along normally, and that I should be able to update my glasses in mid-summer. My regular physician referred me to get an MRA, which I had never heard of but which turns out to be a specialized MRI for the neck arteries. OK. That turned out to be clear. However (there always has to be a “however”), the blood tests showed that I had very high cholesterol and was very borderline diabetic. My doctor told me to lose twenty pounds and come back in six months for a check. He was pretty sure I was

diabetic. I immediately went on an under one thousand calorie a day diet (not very healthy but quite effective). After four months I had lost thirty-five pounds so I made my appointment early. New blood tests showed normal cholesterol and normal glucose, so no diabetes. As a by-product my blood pressure was so good he took me off one of my blood pressure medication. One bad thing did come out of all this doctor stuff. I had become quite inactive. Far too inactive. So I asked my doctor to refer me to physical therapy to help get me back into shape. That's what I have been doing recently. There they discovered that my sense of balance is way off. I was not even aware of this. I'm not sure when it started. I suppose it could be a result of the TIA, but I am more inclined to think it has something to do with my eyes, when my depth perception was so far off and I generally walked with my head looking at my feet to make sure I was not going to trip over anything. I also walked in a kind of spraddled position to make sure I wouldn't fall. So now I am doing muscle exercises and balance exercises. To cap all this off, a few days ago I "threw" my back, so now I have exercises for that. In the midst of all this I have been caught up in the Olympics and Primary and political convention thing. It seems like it has been a very busy spring and summer. Then I suddenly realized...I've got a deadline for *Time and Again* and I haven't even started anything. Help! So I've decided to do some "entertainment" stuff.

The new season of *Heroes* will be starting soon. When it first started I didn't watch any of it but I read so much about it that I decided there was a good chance I would

like it so I bought the DVD set of the first season. My, my, but I was right. I fell in love with it. As far as I am concerned, it is the first successful attempt to adapt a comic book to television or movies, and they did it in reverse. I don't think that this has been brought out enough. All other attempts at doing comics in the visual (as opposed to print) media have been to either adapt an already published comic/graphic novel or to create a new character and put it on the screen. The first I have generally found lacking because they seemed too confined to what the visuals of the comic presented, and the second because they simply did not have either the visuals or pacing of a comic. In *Heroes* we have a story presented with both the pacing and visuals of a comic without being confined by an already presented, and therefore confining, publication. I have yet to watch the second season, which, from what I have read, was disappointing. I hope not, but if it is, I suspect that much of that is due to the writers' strike. I shall find out soon. I have the new set in hand.

Onward to, uh, *Independence Day*, a film that I feel has been unjustly ignored for its quality, simply because it was such a blockbuster box-office success. Yeah, it was a great action, special effects, disaster movie, but there was much more to it if one looks at it carefully. On the science fiction level it takes apart, often with great humor, countless films that came before it. There are shots after shots that have been done before, just restaged with panache. The characters too seem very familiar, the evil government hiding the downed UFO for instance. And it is hard to take very seriously a hero with a laptop that con-

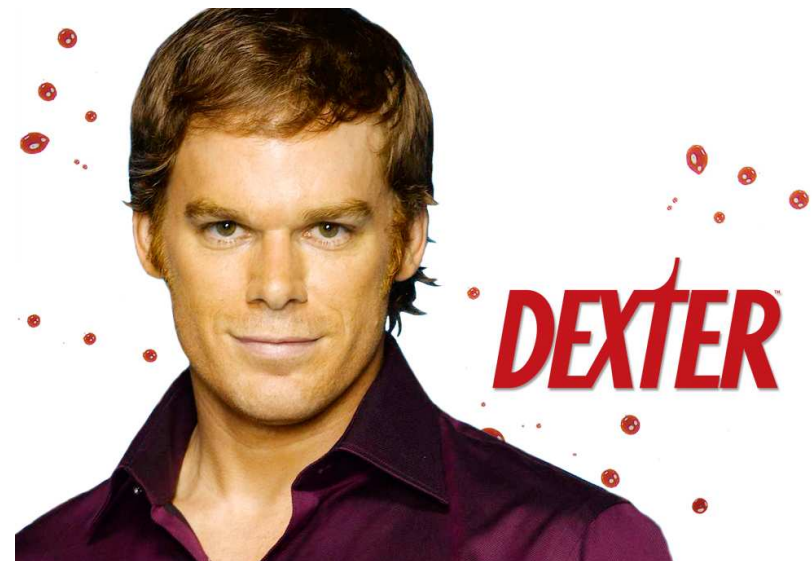
tains Hal, and greets him with “Good morning, Dave.” But, really, most of the characters go further back than the cheesy sci-fi movie. They are the stereotypes of the World War II movie, especially the character played by Randy Quaid, the outsider, comic relief, the one who, in the end, gives his life to save the day (or in this case, world).

Even the Independence Day speech has its history: go back to Winston Churchill (“We will fight them in the...”), Shakespeare’s Henry V before Agincourt, or Elizabeth I before the Spanish Armada, to mention a few. There is a tremendous amount of history imbedded in *Independence Day*. Think about it if you watch it again.

And finally, I wish to write about *Dexter*. I am referring to both the books by Jeff Lindsay and to the Showtime television series. I first became acquainted with the latter. The two seasons that had been aired to date were showing on OnDemand (for “free” if one subscribes to Showtime, which I do) so, having heard a bit about it I thought I would drop in on an episode just to see what it was like. After all, a series with a likeable serial killer seemed rather imaginative and unique. Well, I got thoroughly sucked in. The acting is great. Michael C. Hall, who plays Dexter Morgan, is superb. He is likable, endearing, funny and horrifying all at the same time. I immediately ordered the books, wondering how well the television series stuck to the original. To say I was not disappointed is an understatement. I was delighted. The first book, *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* stays fairly close to the TV series (or perhaps I should say vice versa) and certainly the

character of Dexter is the same as is the humor in the midst of gore. The second book, *Dearly Devoted Dexter* is different from the TV series, but again the characters in the TV series remain true to the characters in the books. The third book in the series, *Dexter in the Dark* is a whole new ball game. I am only about a quarter through this one so far and things have gotten really weird. I have no idea what the third season of the TV series is going to be like. Both should be really interesting. At any rate, to those of you who have not come across the *Dexter* series, both book and TV, I highly recommend them and encourage one and all to go out and sample them. (The TV series, both seasons One and Two are now out on DVD.)

So now I have gotten my obligatory column in, having had to suffer a tooth removal in the midst of writing it. I hope it doesn’t disappoint too much.



The Curse Of The Atomic Piles

by Dave Locke

reprinted from
Mike Glycer's *Prehensile* #12, 8/74

I was in West Covina trying to locate one of those difficult to find places where they sell such things as replacement seats for shopworn kitchen chairs. I had gone from place to place, following up referral after referral, until finally: "Oh, yes, there's this place where that's all they sell. Go up this street and turn left at the light. Turn right at the next block, take the first alley on your left, and turn right at the second street you come to. It's right next to the used-book store, just past the dirty movie place."

I passed up the dirty movie, but got the replacement seats and then stopped at the used-book store. That's where I found *Curse Of The Atomic Piles*, by Henry Orvis Roide, which had been published by a now-defunct paperback company in 1954. There was only the one copy, not that I was particularly looking to find another one. But no



true science fiction reader could pass up a book with the title of *Curse Of The Atomic Piles*.

I read the book over the course of the next three weeks. It took me so long because I do most of my reading at the breakfast table (the one where the chairs had gotten the new seats), and I kept falling asleep in my corn flakes.

One day, a week or two after finishing the book, I came home from work and found my son watching the early

show on channel 5. *TV Guide* said that he was watching *Son Of Godzilla*, but that wasn't true. I'd seen that one before, and that wasn't what was playing. It was *Curse Of The Atomic Piles*, or whatever they called it when they made a movie of it.

Except for some of the dialog, they followed the book quite closely. As the value of the book was solely with the dialog, this was a shame.

The plot concerned an atomic scientist who wanted to take over the world, and he planned to do this by exposing people to his atomic piles and turning them into his private army of zombies. While watching the movie I grabbed the book and started making some comparisons. As I had already missed ten or fifteen minutes of the movie, and as the difference between the dialog of the book and movie did not immediately strike my attention, unfortunately I missed jotting down a few choice comparisons. However, I did manage to capture quite a few, and here are some of the better ones.

SCENE: The police and the National Guard have just employed karate tactics against a band of a dozen or so zombies. Why they bothered to do this, especially after .45s and machine guns had proved ineffective against the zombies, is a question which I will pass over at this time. It should be noted, however, that there was something missing in the karate class that these people attended. As a policeman or National Guardsman would confront a zombie, you would see the zombie stand perfectly still while a torrential rain of blows was bestowed upon his body. The problem, though, occurred after the man from the Official Forces suddenly realized that he was wasting his time. He would stand there, totally amazed at the fact that karate

had not succeeded where machine guns had failed, and allow the zombie to make a backhanded roundhouse swing which would knock him twenty or thirty feet out of camera range.

The dialog, back at the station after the fight was over and the zombies had gotten away, went like this:

MOVIE: "What I don't understand, sir, is how these zombies were created. How do you make a zombie?"

The Police Commander, scratching his chin, said, "I think it has something to do with those cursed atomic piles."

BOOK: Chandler slammed his fist onto the desk. "I don't get it," he shouted. "Where the hell are these zombies coming from?"

The Commander looked up at him and then got to his feet, pushing the chair back to his desk. The room was quiet, and ears waited for his words to fall. He had no answers.

"I don't know, Chandler," he said, his voice hushed. He started around the desk.

Chandler grabbed him by the arm. The two men came face to face, and all eyes watched them from the background.

"How the hell do you make a zombie?" Chandler screamed.

The room was silent.

The Commander pulled away from him. Their faces were flushed with rage and impotence, and the commander jerkily walked to the door.

As his hand touched the knob he turned back to Chandler.

"Get her to stand still," he said, and then he walked out.

SCENE: The hero finally stumbles into the lair of the mad, evil scientist who doesn't notice him at first because he is too busy treating his piles. The hero watches sparks of atomic energy strike a policeman, who is being held captive between two zombies. As the sparks flicker about the body of the policeman, he suddenly goes limp and starts hulking. I think hulking is the correct word for a zombie's stance.

Suddenly the hero dashes across the room toward a large, impressive-looking switch. Obviously a master switch of some sort. Obviously something worth throwing. The hero, however, is spotted by a stray zombie or two and is himself thrown all about the room. He is remarkably resilient, though, for he continues to bounce back and head for the switch. Finally he makes it.

He throws the switch. Smoke starts pouring out of the scientist's piles. The zombies turn back into real people again.

The dialog:

MOVIE: "No, NO! You've ruined my piles!" shouts the mad scientist, obviously distraught.

"Yes, and I've ruined you, too, together with your insane plot to take over the world."

Sirens suddenly become louder as the police race toward the mad scientist's lair.

"You're going to jail for a long, long time. Let's go."

BOOK: Eveleou fell to his knees as the atomic piles disintegrated around him. He screamed at Walker as the machine of destruction was itself destroyed.

"No, NO! Damn you! You've ruined it. My piles are falling apart!"

With the rumble of atomic destruction in the back-

ground, Walker went over to the man and stood above him. He no longer seemed sinister; on his knees, weeping like a child.

He lifted the scientist to his feet.

"Would you like me to call a doctor?" he asked, his voice calm.

SCENE: The police rush into the building, just as the hero and the mad scientist are coming out. The building is in flames.

MOVIE: Police: "What happened here?"

Hero: "The atomic piles are destroyed. They are no longer a menace. The world is safe, and thank God so are those poor zombies."

BOOK: The Lieutenant ran up to them as they left the burning building.

"What happened here?" he shouted, above the roar of the flames.

Walker looked at Eveleou, who was still hanging onto his shoulder for support. He turned back to the Lieutenant.

"His piles will no longer bother us," he said, and then the three of them walked away from the burning, collapsing building.

SCENE: The end of the story. The hero is with his girl, gazing into the heavens.

MOVIE: The girl gazes dreamily at the hero, and asks of him: "I know I'm just a dumb little thing, but what are atomic piles?"

The hero answers: "Something that I'm not really sure God intended mankind to have. I can only hope that they never fall into the wrong hands again."

BOOK: Nancy turned to Walker, putting her hand on his arm. He stirred slightly, and then smiled at her. A funny little wrinkle crossed his brow.

"John," she said, snuggling against his side, "there's all this talk, and there's still something I don't know."

He waited for her, until finally she spoke again.

"What are atomic piles?" she asked, her eyes twinkling with amusement.

Walker stood up and went to the window where he could look out at the nighttime world. People and machines were moving in the darkness. Moving happily, returning to the old pace. He shook his head, as if to throw off the weight that he had been carrying for so long. And then he turned to her, and went back to her, and took her in his arms.

"They're the worst kind," he said to her, and then he kissed her.

If you ever run across this book, in a little second-hand bookstore in West Covina, or anywhere else, by all means pick it up. Then carefully put it back down again. If you don't run across it, however, don't strain yourself looking for it.

Afterward

If the title of this piece rings a distant bell, it's because there was a short bit about *Curse Of The Atomic Piles* in last issue's editorial. This article from 1974 is my original shtick on the title. The bit in the last editorial was proba-

bly written sometime in the 80s, found undated in a notebook, and was my second use of the title. Yes, there was a third. Probably within the last decade, but it wasn't another written exercise. It happened in meatspace. You know, in the real world, such as it is.

I was indulging in a room party at one of those Midwestcons which all seem to blurge together. It was a two-room party, actually. I was in one room, talking to a now unremembered fan. A nice fellow but someone I encountered only at some Midwestcons. He was stationed in the doorway between the two rooms. Joe Haldeman was one of the folks in the other room. Everyone was talking with somebody or somebodies.

I have no idea what steered me on this course, unless it was simply because I felt our particular conversation needed some sprucing up, but I began describing the story *Curse Of The Atomic Piles* to the fellow, who began looking a bit more aghast as the story wore on. Finally I mentioned that Joe Haldeman had written it.

This was too much for the fan to bear. He immediately turned toward the other room and hollered something like "Joe! Dave Locke says you wrote a story called *Curse Of The Atomic Piles!*"

This isn't verbatim, but it's close. Joe pulled his conversation away from the chat session at hand and responded: "Yes. That may be one of the best things I've done!"

I don't know as the beans were ever spilled on this, but if not then I imagine that fan still has a residual aghast-quotient concerning the matter. Of course, sometimes I feel guilty about it.

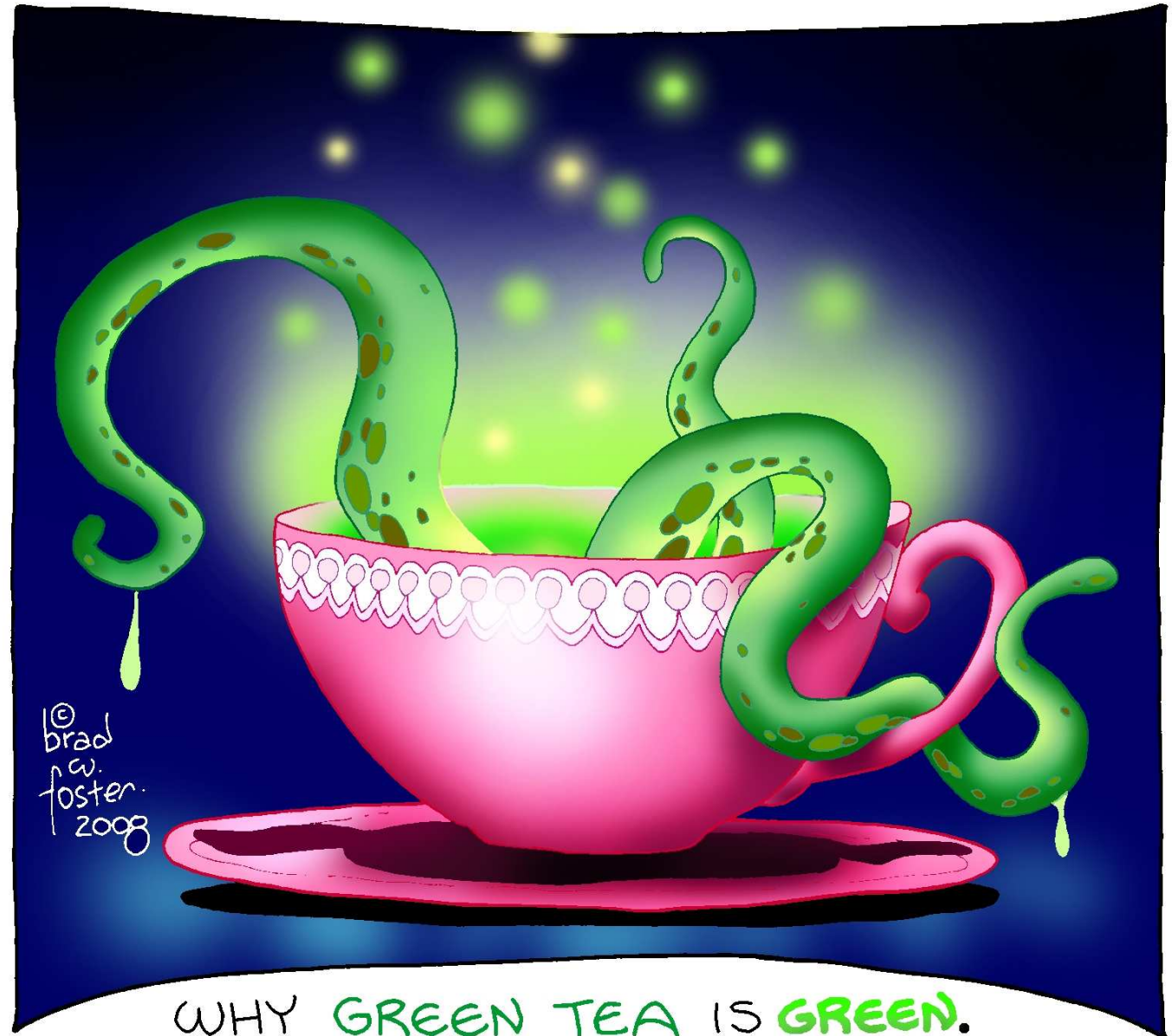


*Notes
From
Byzantium*

Something Else

by Eric Mayer

I thought I'd try something different this time. Cobble together some unrelated bits and pieces, express an opinion or two on fandom. You know, a real column. A column like they used to write for fanzines back in the Golden Age (i.e. when I discovered fandom) and maybe still do, which I'd know if only I read the right fanzines. The few columns I've attempted over the years have, like *Notes From Byzantium*, usually been nothing more than a series of personal essays and articles des-



ignated as a regular feature. That was true of my local newspaper feature "Changes" in the early seventies and

“*Crab Nebula*” which I filled with vignettes of Brooklyn living for Donn Brazier’s *Title*. Even the 99 word installments of “99” on the back page of Edd Vick’s mini-zine *Fantoons* were articles, albeit very concise ones. I did venture into opining in the mid-eighties for Marty Cantor’s *No Award*. Unfortunately, insiders found “*Notes From the Outside*” about as enjoyable as accounting for TAFF votes. I can’t say I blame them, in retrospect. Those columns were really extended articles on a single topic and who wants to read more than 25 words about accounting?

WHY A COLUMN?

While agonizing over what a “real” column might look like, it occurred to me to wonder where the name “column” originated. I could have looked it up but that would be boring, time consuming and maybe difficult. So I decided on the fun alternative to research and one particularly suited to a science fiction fanzine -- speculation. I immediately thought of the columns of Greek temples. (And, no, I’m not sure whether I was thinking of Doric, Ionic or Corinthian, I’m just speculating here.) Columns are what held those structures up. Thousands of years later Greece still bristles with ancient columns, though the temples themselves have mostly crumbled away along with the deities they served.

Were “columns” in publications given that name because they too support the whole structure? Articles, illustrations and editorials come and go, but as long as the regular columns remain, the temple of a fanzine still stands in homage to the great Ghu. This very column has survived the editor who requested it as well as the original

fanzine name and still *Time & Again* stands against the ravages of time, again.

Not that the column I wrote for the *Dallas Post* in my youth supported the newspaper. The paste-up person would regularly chop out bits to make room for late arriving ads. Out came the exacto knife. Off came the last two inches of wax-backed paper bearing my immortal words. Into the space left at the base of the column went an advertisement. The *Post* was supported by ads for Nulton Funeral Home.

THAT LOATHSOME LIQUID FROM BETELGEUSE

A web advertisement just caught my eye. “Lose 25 pounds in 20 days with green tea.” I didn’t investigate. I don’t need to lose 20 pounds. Pity, because green tea would certainly do the trick for me. A cup of that loathsome liquid and I’d instantly bring up anything I’d eaten. Green tea and I are cat and dog. We don’t get along.

I’m not sure why the taste and odor of green tea revolts me. I love regular tea and various tea varieties. What is better than Earl Grey? I’ve always been a tea addict. For years I never sat down without a cup of tea with a slice of lemon close at hand and never stood up without tea stains on my sweater. The top of my refrigerator and my kitchen window sills were always crowded with polar bears, lions, rabbits and all the other porcelain figurines they put in the big boxes of Red Rose.

It was Red Rose that fueled my fanac during the seventies and early eighties. Whether I was writing a LoC or an

article, lacerating a ditto master with my ancient manual typer, or taking pen to bristol board, tea was there. I went through several bottles of white-out just hiding the tea stains on my drawings. I must have owned at least twenty porcelain monkeys thanks to my fanzine *Groggy* alone. But there's something just plain wrong about green tea. It's as if it were something...else...something pretending to be tea but not getting it quite right. I think they drink it in the Betelgeuse system.

As far as I know I was simply born hating green tea. There's no history between us that I recall. I didn't drink green tea with the great love of my life before she set off on the Titanic. No one ever tried to drown me in a vat of the stuff. I just don't like it, and I don't have any intention of trying to. You can't teach an old dog to like cats.

TIME DELAY

As I write this, it is 3:13, September 2, 2008. The temperature outside is in the eighties. Inside the fan is purring. I am hot and bothered and in a hurry to meet Dave's deadline. Even though I'm in a rush, I know I might not see my words in electronic print until the furnace has come on and there will be snow on the ground before I read any responses, unless Dave maintains his current Garcia-esque schedule in which case I might see his LoCs before the last autumn leaves fall. If I were to type this into my web journal, on the other hand, I could disseminate it instantly by clicking on the publish button and probably have responses within minutes.

Wasn't that what I always wished for when I was doing a fanzine -- instant publication and response? Months

seemed to crawl by as I awaited LoCs on *Groggy* though I usually heard from Harry Warner and Buck Coulson within a week. Why bother with fanzines today?

For one thing it is nice to be part of something, to have one's words appear, not in isolation, but along with other good work, accompanied by terrific illustrations. (Thanks Brad!)

Even so, I find I am aware, as I never was before, of the time delay between writing and reading. A little bit of that feeling of talking directly to the reader has vanished because of the comparison with the far more direct nature of Internet communications. I'm reminded of Bob Shaw's slow glass, where the light which has entered the pane may not emerge from the other side for years. I suppose fanzines are slow blogs.

NEFFERS GO HOME

The guardians of Core Fandom have recently been unrelenting in their efforts to protect us from the evil forces of the N3F, which is understandable considering that the shadowy organization has dozens of members (perhaps as many as three dozen!) and a website. (FanDominion.com sounds a lot like Fan Domination don't you think?) And they hate Our Way of Life. If you have to ask what is "Our Way of Life", you are probably one of them. Remind me not to LoC your fanzine and to slander you after you're dead. Aside from just being so very annoying we simply can't ignore them and have to stamp our little feet in anger (which is most deleterious to Our Way of Life, I'm sure you will agree, and if not you don't have the right attitude) the N3F has, by all accounts (which is to say this

one) started a secret crudzine program. The only reason we've been spared the horror of crudzines exploding all over us is that they're appointing a committee to set up an election to choose who will be vice president in charge of uploading the files to eFanzines. Well, actually that was the obligatory N3F joke. For all I know hideously dittoed zines filled with bad attitudes are being lofted into cyberspace as I write. We're all targets. You may never have produced a crudzine but it doesn't mean there isn't one with your name on it. That's why I salute the efforts of those who take time from their busy fanac to remind us at the least provocation of the ever lurking danger presented by this nefarious network. Remember, be on the look-out for anyone who isn't one of us. Time's running short. I hear the N3F is on the verge of obtaining hecto inks.

SPLASHDOWN

I can see that this old fashioned type column thing isn't as easy as it looked. It's not the sort of thing I'm accustomed to writing. I'm not even sure how to end it. But since we're running out of space (O.K., since *T&A* is an ezine, that's a lie but I need some excuse) I'd better wrap things up. At least I've got through the whole column without once relating a story about my childhood, like how I used to get out my crayons and draw a control panel on a cardboard box and pretend my bedroom closet was a space capsule....oh bugger....



PURE QUILL bwf



The way this works is that your words appear in black, and my words in [blue](#). The email address here is [<time3again at gmail dot com>](mailto:time3again@gmail.com). After much thought I've decided to not pub the addresses of those writing in, if only to be more careful than usual in guarding against spambot harvesting. So long as I know you as a member of the community (for a value of "the community" which equals *Us*), If you need a contact address just write and ask for it.

Gregory Benford ▣ **8/17/08**

I should confess that I've been enjoying T&A (surely you chose the title for that acronym?) without commenting.

Actually no. I chose the title because of my fondness for the Finney novel (and, on a lesser level, the Simak novel), but the acronym might have helped push the title to the top of my short list of possible zine names. You know, maybe...

Loved the Purcell piece on nearly dying. When such happened to me in the 1980s I got even with God by writing a short story about it, & so got paid repeatedly for the experience. Didn't cover the medical bills for a burst appendix, though.

Fave line: "I'll never get tired of watching Patricia Neil practically soil her knickers while she tries to remember

what it was she was supposed to say to Gort."

Yes!

Yes, indeed. Curt's column had more than its share of good lines.

June Moffatt ▣ **9/6/08**

Please tell Curt for me that I asked Charlie Jackson about projectors at WorldCons, he says that they're not used any more. However, they are definitely used at Cinecon!

I guess there are always folks who favor the old technology in one field or another, having worked their way through the learning curve.

Keep up the good work!

Lloyd Penney ▣ **31 Aug 2008**

One last LoC before August runs out, and it goes to you, and to *Time and Again* 5. (*Pixel* 19, but you're making the transition...) With luck, something intelligent will appear below. If not, feel free to use it to take up column-inches.

There's a Canfield I don't think I've seen before. I think I've seen her before at a room party, though...

That's the cover I had lying all around the living room during a collation session in 1974 when I lived in the LArea. Gathered in the living room were two little kids, a neighbor's minister, and several cops eyeballing Canfield's excellent work. This is because a neighbor managed to shoot himself and then crawl across the street for my help, and I had no time to make the place presentable for unexpected company.

Something like *Popcorn Dialog*, I might have expected to see in *Plokta*. Add a few Stu Shiffmans here and there for illustration, and it would be complete. I can't go to a con near Procyon, so I'll just wait for the Virtual Con Suite feed. How many years would the feed take to get back to Earth? 11.4 years? Can we connect Langford's *Ansible* into the circuit for instant transmission?

I'm still working on that matter transmitter I've been trying to create for the last fifty years. That might help.

A local fan used to work here as a projectionist, and he'd have full rein of the theatre after hours. We saw one of the new Trek movies the day of release, but at 12:01am, and we were his guests. Still got those NASA films?

Ah...*"Ed Cox Doodle Here"* is fanspeak for "This Space Left Intentionally Blank". And into the Fancyclopedia it goes...

That Brad Foster illo...yeah, that's a clear helmet around Elvis' head. If this were any other kind of publication, that might have been considered a halo. Eric, who says you can't chew on typewriters? It's the only way to moisten the ribbon. Besides, they're very high in iron.

Brad learned while researching that any Elvis painting on velvet is called a "velvis". There you go, a genuine factoid.

Dave, I am working on this LoC on Word 2000. Any problems there? There has to be better programmes than Word, but it's what I've got, and with my luck in computers, I'd disconnect it, and not be able to install anything else.

Well, everybody has RTF. You're actually using RTF in your Word2K document, though you've given it a DOC extension. So I haven't had a problem.

Air travel has become ridiculously expensive, and we do have some travel coming up, Montréal in October, and Montréal and Florida in 2009. For our October trip, we will be taking the train, via rail from Toronto the Friday of the convention. We've done this before in the past, and the train is not only relaxing, but very convenient. It will also be the test to see how comfortably we get to Worldcon next year.

Slave driver, hm? C'mon, Dave, *thwACK!* move them hamsters, yeeHAW! Move 'em out, get pubbin'...

Hello, Lee...I full agree with you about appearance and readability in fanzines. Part of my own training in journalism was publication design. If I was to pub my own ish, and I am thinking about it, I'd want something that is pleasant to look at as well as read. That's part of the art of producing your own publication that just doesn't carry over into blogs and e-journals. However, it's still possible in an e-zine.

I'm sure that Lee will find this comment interesting as well as puzzling. Mainly because it appears to be a comment on the column she did two issues before the one you've been commenting on. That's okay. A little timebinding keeps us on our toes...

Wish I could say more about the local, but my eyes hurt, which usually means I've spent too much time awake today. A six-hour nap sounds good right about now, so I will fire this off, and say my thanks, and the slave-driver says get on with the next one. Yes, I am greedy. G'night...

Jim Williams ▣ **4 Sep 2008**

"- look at all the trouble I got into with this universal solvent." Got my monitor a little wet while reading your editorial.

And now the A-V equipment has advanced beyond 16mm projectors for most people. We seldom ride in our cars listening to 8-track tapes or audiotapes. Mimeos have usually been replaced with plain-bond copiers and web-sites and digital productions. What used to be just a typewriter now has a reach capacity beyond something wrapped around the platen. All this change and recent enough that people can still write about it. Enjoyable

piece by Curt Phillips.

I imagine Dave Rowe has inked a note to "avoid getting involved in movies" just in case. And has the note under a magnet on his refrigerator. Nice writeup on the experience.

I thought those two Fredric Brown novels (*The Mind Thing* and *The Deep End*) were better than Lee Lavell seems to have found them. Didn't think them poorly plotted in comparison to his other novels. "Great fun" they were but not forgettable in terms of logic. I'm thankful that apparently I wasn't swift enough to spot things which would fight with my willing suspension of disbelief. Lets me enjoy a greater range of stories.

Very nice velvis artwork by Brad Foster. Not that I'm into paintings of Elvis on velvet but this was quite a looker of a piece of art. Could have been your cover, but the Grant Canfield cover with the lovely wench climbing up the troll's naked body was a delight.

Must ask June Moffatt how she could get lost on her way home when everyone knows that everything in Los Angeles is only an hour away. Maybe that means an hour of direct driving.

I shall make myself useful and note that in *Martians, Go Home* Mike Deckinger is correct in a literal sense that "fuck you, Mack" doesn't appear in the text. The worse actual word used was "screw". But Robert Lichtman is correct in a figurative sense because "____ you, Mack" appeared three times. And thanks to the both of them for moving me to reread this wonderful old novel.

Eric Mayer ▣ **21 Aug 08**

Great cover by Grant Canfield. Is he still around? I thought I remembered it. Not the squat demon guy. The

lady. And then I see it was from 1974. Wow. Must be a pretty good cover if I remembered it from 34 years ago. Before I was even born. She's still in pretty good shape for an older dame. Judging by the scant evidence, her little buddy doesn't seem all that interested in her. Must not like humans.

I don't think Grant is still around, though I recall some mention of him in recent years. Anyone know his current status?

I enjoyed Lee Anne Lavell's guilty pleasures. I should try to think what mine might be. I've certainly had some over the years. I recall renting a movie years ago. Hank Williams: *The Show He Never Gave* starring Sneezy Waters. I loved it and found it entertaining and touching. Then I read some reviews. Hoo boy....was my taste ever bad, according to the critics. Somehow I missed out on *Dinosaurus*. I think I would've enjoyed that but I would have been ten so it hardly would count as a guilty pleasure. My friends and I were particularly fond of *Reptilicus* -- a rampaging dinosaur who, we thought, was less cartoonish than *Godzilla*. There was still a movie theater down the street. Admission was 14 cents. We used to see movies like *Reptilicus* and *Moby Dick*. *Moby Dick* was pretty boring and stupid compared to *Reptilicus* and looked a lot more fake than *Reptilicus* as well. If the so-called great white whale swam to New York City and trashed the Empire State Building it might've been more interesting. All in all it turned out to be the most disappointing monster movie I ever saw, which, actually isn't what Lee Anne was writing about. More like a guilty displeasure.

Another terrific article from Curt Phillips. When I was in

school I had a Super 8 movie camera and projector and even an editor. Not that any amount of cutting and splicing could save the movies I made. But I never moved up to real AV equipment like Curt did. Must be a little stressful to show a movie to a room full of people who expect everything to be in focus, and assume the film won't break, particularly when they've paid to see the show. When I cajoled family and friends into watching my home movies I suspect they were hoping the projector would jam, forever. Once in a great while we were shown a film in the school auditorium but never films you wanted to see. I'm sure it was a worthy movie but teenagers don't want to sit on bleachers and watch Friendly Persuasion.

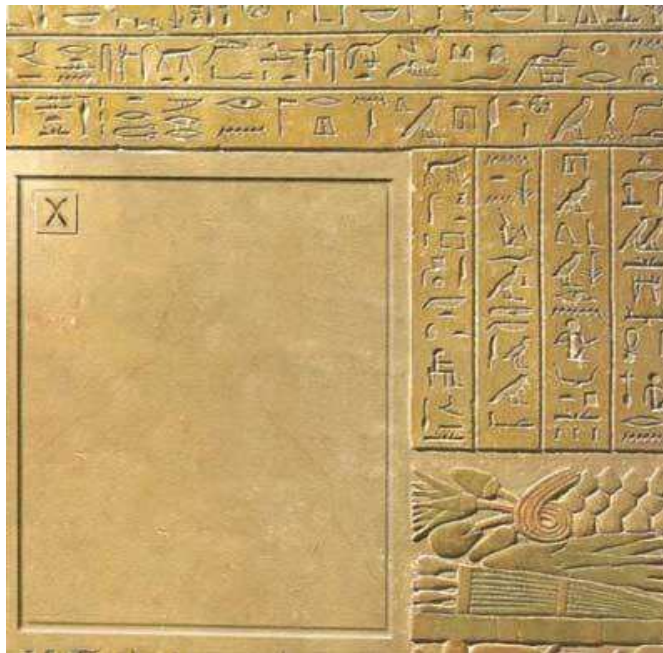
You seem to have a movie theme this issue, although I suspect Dave Rowe's amusing account of filming the movie is more entertaining than the actual movie would be. I'm not sure how escaping a mine full of burning lithium qualifies as science fiction. Having been reminded of my own "movie making" back in my Super 8 days, I recall that when my friends and I made our films we naturally went in for special effects. Like Dave's filmmakers, we knew how exciting a good fire can be. We had a painted cardboard set and when we needed a conflagration for the big finale we just doused the set with lighter fluid and tossed a match at it. Didn't leave much room for reshooting. And it did create a problem with animating our clay figures. We'd shoot a few frames, blow the flames out, reposition the figures (which were gradually melting), squirt more lighter fluid etc. The result wasn't *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*.

June Moffat's story about getting lost was "enjoyable" in an "I'm glad it wasn't me" way. I was flummoxed once when a map I got off the Internet told me to turn onto highway A from route B. I would've needed a winged vehicle be-

cause although the routes crossed on the map, the map didn't reveal that route B was on an overpass with no exits for miles and miles. It is always a real problem, too, when you drift away from the highways and find yourself in mazes of streets. That's happened to me too.

I can recall the Midwestcon in Kentucky where a group of us drove around looking for a particular restaurant. MapQuest did not correctly show it as being directly across from the hotel we were staying at. I remember switching to a different Net map site right after that incident.

Well, I am slighting your own contributions, Dave. The explanation of the Ed Cox doodle was the sort of "fan history" I enjoy -- a humorous look at an amusing aspect of our strange little world. (Not some tedious ax grinding pur-



porting to be the unvarnished truth about people no longer alive to defend themselves.) If you did that in an electronic zine it'd be kind of like using an

alt tag without the photo. Maybe that's an idea - just describe all the fantastic illos.

Your editorial was funny and beyond that, it pretty much finished the transformation of *Pixel* into *Time & Again* (and the cover was in no way a *Pixel* cover either). Clearly this is the new Dave in charge. Which is fine. Now Dave Burton can come back and resume *Pixel*.

And most everything looks a bit different again this issue. I'm beginning to feel the Bill Bowers' curse (*change it, do it different, make them wonder who's editing it this issue*) reaching out to me from the ether. I wish he'd stop that.

Dave is off into other things, and I have the suspicion that he won't be back into what we call fandom. On the other hand (see it here?) the only thing I can say with any certainty is that his website <<http://david-burton.org/>> is the place to go for updates on what trouble he's getting into these days. And, also, that I would love to see him come back because, simply put, I miss seeing his (type) face around.

I have to say that the *Backtalking the Book* quotes from Joanna Russ are a perfect example of why I stopped reading science fiction. "...ran away on glass feet in which he could see the frightened convulsing of her organs." Say what? She must have a hard time finding shoes that fit. I'm just an idiot. I like to read sentences that convey some actual meaning. Oh well, I've gone on long enough. Now I shall creep away on my little glass feet.

That was a good example of why I pretty much dropped SF, too. Though I've read a few things in the genre over

the past 3 or 4 decades, most of what I've read hasn't convinced me that I should jump back into it.

Alex Yudenitsch ▣ **15 Sep 08**

"*Diabologic*": Is this supposed to be an editorial? How/why (I don't think that anything written by 'The Editor' is, automatically, an 'Editorial'...)? It felt like an article, to me (though a fun one)!

Hey! Just short bits strung together. I've frequently done that over the past 47 years in editorials and columns, so it must be legitimate by now...

The juxtaposition of Curt Phillips' and Dave Rowe's articles is the result of *the Editor* editing, and enhanced both -- and the reader's experience of them (though they are quite different in tone and subject).

So far you're one of two who has professed to notice, which did serve to make me smile.

For me, the most interesting article was Eric Mayer's "*Notes From Byzantium: Fitted for Fanzines*", enhanced by an intriguing Brad Foster illo (congrats to Brad on his Hugo!), which makes sense when you read the text.

And I had gotten the same ideas as Lee Anne Lavell from "*The Jet Propelled Couch*" in Robert Lindner's "*The Fifty-Minute Hour*": I thought about Burroughs' Mars/Barsoom, though I didn't go so far as trying to confirm that idea through further analysis, but it surely makes sense -- and it's still a piece which many fans (of anything, including SF) should read to get a wider perspective.

The 'production values' are, as usual, nice and clean.

You're definitely 'back in the saddle'...

In other matters, here's a curious titbit on *NewSci* (which you've probably already seen):

"Necrophilia has also been observed in ground squirrels and frogs, and seems to be moderately common in mallards. It is often referred to as "Davian behaviour", in reference to a ribald limerick about a necrophiliac miner called Dave."

So, I went looking in Wikipedia:

"Davian behavior is a scientific term of art referring to copulation with a dead conspecific. It was first observed in ground squirrels and was named after an old limerick ("There was an old miner named Dave/ Who kept a dead whore in his cave/ You have to admit/ He hadn't much wit/ But look at the money he saved!"). Davian behavior has since been observed and published in birds and anurans. This behavior also occurs in humans, and the fact that there are laws against it, assumes that it must be controlled. Such laws are typically titled 'abuse of a corpse'."

Just thought you might like to know (and the "scientific term of art" label is a new one for me)...

Of all the things to be named after...

John Purcell ▣ **20 Sep 08**

Geez, Dave, I have no idea when you're pubbing the sixth issue - you could easily be working on it at the same time I'm writing this LoC - so that this can make it to you, but wotthehell: now that I've started it, I might as well finish it.

It's the day after the deadline, which means of course

that I'm waiting for a couple of things. And, probably, might not get them... As opposed to the lastish, which was published the day after the deadline. But, while I'm waiting, your letter goes in.

Great issue, cover to cover. Your "*Diabologic*" had me giggling all the way through; it very much reminds me of those "*Thog's Masterclass*" tidbits that Dave Langford puts in *Ansible*. By all means, produce more of these. I really enjoyed them.

Curt Phillips' article reminded me of when Lee Pelton, Steve Glennon, and I were the film committee of a few Minicons back in the late 70s. We deliberately sought out some of the cheesiest SF&F films - plus cartoons and shorts, like "*Terror of Tiny Town*" and "*Bambi's Revenge*" - to put on a film program that people could either heckle to death, retch at, or run screaming from the film room to save their sanity. (As if they had any to begin with; after all, I am talking about science fiction fans here.) It was grand fun, and forms a large base of my favorite Minicon memories. I wrote about them as part of my Lee Pelton memorial series of articles in *In a Prior Lifetime* back in 2004-2006. But Curt's article was fine stuff. It is also good to see him following in the footsteps of Bob Tucker, who likewise was a movie-house projectionist for a time. A fine tradition to uphold.

The theme of your fifth issue was certainly solid: after Curt's, you followed with Dave Rowe's account of making a film - talk about underground movies! - and Lee Anne Lavell delves into movies as well. This is very nicely done, Dave. My guilty pleasure is digging through those \$1 DVD bins at Walmart and Target and seeing what wretched sci-fi and fantasy or adventure flicks I can dredge up. So far I

have uncovered some real *ahem* gems: The Roger Corman 2-movie DVD is suitably gawd-awful - "*She-Monsters of Shark Reef*" and "*Creature from the Haunted Sea*" - and I couldn't believe it when I found Vincent Price's version of "*The Last Man on Earth*" doubled up with one of Bela Lugosi's last films, "*The Devil's Messenger*". And all this for a buck per DVD, too. No complaints here.

I was quite taken with *Creature From The Haunted Sea* and the Vincent Price version of *The Last Man On Earth*. The former quite funny, and the latter perhaps the best of the *I Am Legend* film renditions.

Many, many thanks for reprinting your article about the true story behind the "*Ed Cox Doodle*" lino. Hard to believe you wrote that back in July of 1975. Don't that just take you back, Dave? I hadn't even pubbed my first zine yet, only been in fandom for two years at that time. A great article, and a rather appropriate Internet-appropriated illo to go with it at the end. I liked that touch a lot.

33 years, and it seems like just yesterday I wrote it. Obviously I either do a lot of timebinding or, like Billy Pilgrim, I'm unstuck in time. Or maybe both.

Eric Mayer's "*Fitted for Fanzines*" was interesting, with one of Brad Foster's best pieces of art yet! Love that guy's work, and I can't wait to meet him at FenCon V in two weeks. But back to Eric. I think what got me into fanzines was something way more insidious. Since I began my fanish career in Minneapolis, there were times that Minn-stf meetings were also collating parties for either *Rune* or *Minneapa*. If I was at a meeting when collatio was being

performed, I would naturally help out, glancing at some of the contributions along the way. Of course, if *Rune* had just been assembled, I would receive a complimentary copy, grab a beer, plunk myself in a chair and start reading. It wasn't long before I began writing the occasional LoC and book review (Fred Haskell asked me for some of these, so he's the original person to blame for corralling me into writing for zines) for *Rune*. Eventually, I started putting out my own zine, *This House*, in 1976, and have never really looked back since.

I even went so far as to buy a mimeograph at a Goodwill store in St. Paul for \$20 in 1977. I got it working (sort of) and produced a couple really terrible zines, then sold it for \$10 to Erik Biever, who knew a lot more about mimeos than I did. (Erik eventually, by 1982, I think, became a co-editor of *Rune*, a zine which has since died. I am one person who misses that clubzine a great deal.) When my brother became the head printer at his company in downtown Minneapolis in 1978, well... I began my pubbing career in earnest. All I had to do was buy my own paper, clean up after myself, give Rick a case of beer, and he'd help me run it off. Some of those covers wound up being offset, and *This House* became a decent little zine. It didn't set the world on fire, but I had fun producing it off and on until 1989, when the 15th and last issue appeared.

June Moffat reminds of when I went to LASFS meetings a handful of times while living in LA back in 1985. I never got lost going home from a meeting, though; it helped living in Tarzana, which was not too far away from the clubhouse. Interesting meetings, I should add. Very different from Minn-stf.

It doesn't surprise me that some folks recounted their surgical horror stories in the loccol; it seems my account

of near-death sparked some dormant memory cells back to life. Lee Anne Lavell's comment that my "case sounds like it would a good episode for *Discovery Health's 'Mystery Diagnosis'* or *'Medical Incredible'*" makes me wonder if Doctor Condoleon ever wrote up my case and published it somewhere because to this day I feel like I'm a footnote in some medical journal.

A great issue, Dave. Many thanks.

