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Visions of Paradise #126

Contents

Out of the Depths.....	page 3
<i>40 years of fanpubbing</i>	
The Passing Scene.....	page 4
<i>February 2008</i>	
Listmania.....	page 6
<i>Best f&sf of the Year</i>	
Wondrous Stories	page 8
<i>To Outlive Eternity ... Galactic Empires</i>	
The In-Box.....	page 13
<i>Fanzines received</i>	
On the Lighter Side.....	page 14

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Out of the Depths

This year marks my 40th anniversary publishing a fanzine. Spurred on by Lin Carter's column "Our Man In Fandom" in **Worlds of IF**, I started my first fannish activity in the late 1960s. My first introduction was attending Nycon 3 in nearby New York City where I witnessed two shouting arguments: Harlan Ellison versus John J. Pierce over the merits of the "New Wave," and Lester del Rey versus Alexei Panshin over a prozine editor's right to alter a story in order to fill the issues of his zine.

Shortly afterwards I joined N3F and soon published the first four issues of my fanzine **Gradient**. In the early 70s I let that title lapse and started **Visions of Paradise** for APA-45, a group of "young turks," all of whom were born no earlier than January, 1945. After I attended Clarion West in 1972, there was a lapse of approximately one decade through the mid-80s when I abandoned all fannish activity in favor of writing science fiction, but eventually I wearied of having no social contact at all, so in 1986 I revived **Gradient** as a genzine and **VoP** for MisHap. Eventually I let **Gradient** fade away and combined both my faanish and sercon thoughts into **VoP**, which is why it has had a somewhat Jekyll-Hyde nature ever since.

*

Some thoughts...

Life would be boring without having at least one passionate interest. I am fortunate enough to have two: reading and writing.

If you read the newspaper, what portion do you enjoy the most? Guess which portion I prefer? The answer is at the end of this editorial.

About a decade ago Rutgers University declared it wished to be considered one of the premier institutions of higher learning in the country. In the past few years it has cut millions of dollars from educational programs while greatly increasing its sports expenditures. So how is this supposed to make it a better university?

Some of the people who entertain me include Richard Thompson, Chris de Burgh, Jack McDevitt, and Kim Stanley Robinson, none of whom are celebrities undergoing rehab.

I would much rather write a blog updating my thoughts and observations than join MySpace or Facebook and socialize. Sorry, that's just not my thing.

Two different former students told me recently that they actually read my blog. While it's nice to have a readership, it is even nicer that they contacted me. If the blog encourages people to stay in touch with me, the time spent on it is well worthwhile.

There was a royal Albanian Sabella family which was overthrown and driven out of the country, eventually settling in southern Italy. My father's parents were from a small Calabrian fishing village named *Porta Canon* which was primarily an Albanian-speaking region. Does this mean

my family is descended from Albanian royalty? Perhaps, but the fact that they were actually overthrown makes them a more desirable ancestry.

I keep a daily calendar on my desk at home so I can check the date for my journal and blog. In past years I have had *Jeopardy* and *Peanuts* calendars, but this year I have a Chinese language calendar, so each day I can learn a new Chinese word or phrase. *Zao(3) chen(2) hao(3)!*

Is it my imagination, or do people who are power-crazy tend to rise to supervisory positions moreso than people who are actually qualified?

Why do male teachers now have baby showers at school when I never had any when my sons were born twenty years ago? Cheated again!!!

The choice for president in the next election is actually becoming interesting: choice #1: experience and leadership but an admitted warmonger; choice #2: experience but questionable leadership; choice #3: leadership but questionable experience.

Answer to question: The comics, of course!!!

The Passing Scene

February 2008

The month began with an afternoon morning of freezing rain which made many roads slick. It took 90 minutes for us to get home from school because Route 10 was closed due to downed power lines, so everybody had to merge onto Route 46 (which we took because of fear that Route 80 might be dangerous with so many speeding trucks and frantic drivers on an icy road). Meanwhile, Sun Hee was riding with her friend's parents to New Hampshire for a weekend of snowboarding. She was so excited because it was the first time her parents ever let her do such a thing, but Jean and I were nervous about their long drive through a region which the Weather Channel labeled as icy. Fortunately, they had no problems along the way.

For the second consecutive Saturday, Jean and I went to a party. Following the PHS Staff party a week earlier, we went to our friend Kathy's surprise 50th birthday party. It has been an incredibly-quick 10 years since her 40th birthday party at a Chinese restaurant. This party was at her house, so her husband had to take her shopping, then stall so everybody could be hiding when they returned home. It was a fun night.

The Giants' victory in the Super-Bowl was a very exciting game. I don't normally watch the four-hour extravaganza since I have little interest in watching sports, preferring to read about it in the newspaper. But I wanted to see Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers in the halftime show and I ended up watching the entire second half. I was actually glad I did.

Fei Fei mailed the complete ms. of the Tibet book—whose tentative title is *Coming of Age in Tibet*—to the publisher who wished to read it. Hopefully they will like it.

*

We got all the way to mid-February before we had our first snow day. Based on a fairly dire weather report involving snow and freezing rain the night before, I was surprised when we awoke at 5:15am with no call from school about a delayed opening, fearing we needed to drive through slush and ice to get to school on time. However, the district website had the message *Delayed opening for all schools*, and the phone call followed a bit later. When I checked my email, I saw Sun Hee needed some help studying for a Calculus test in Jean's class later than day. After I showered and dressed, I helped her via IM for nearly an hour. Soon after we finished, the district website said *Schools closed*.

Since I did not anticipate having a free day, I had relatively few school chores to do other than write a Statistics test and one college recommendation. Instead I spent much of the morning editing a novelette and the afternoon reading and watching an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. I need more free days like that!

*

President's Day used to be the start of a week-long Winter Break, but this year it was condensed into a three-day weekend due to construction which forced the district's schools to open a week late in September and end a week early this upcoming June, basically taking away all our vacations except Christmas week. So I needed to squeeze all my school chores into three days, including grading three tests, updating the Math Team standings (which have been disastrous this year in spite of virtually our entire team returning intact after a statewide top ten finish last year ☺), preparing the rosters for next year's RMW classes, and begin working on the scattergram for the salary guides for this year's contract negotiations. The time available for writing and reading was minimal. Oh, well...

Jean and I started the weekend by going to Charlie Brown's for dinner Friday night. Besides their very good salad bar (with chopped chicken liver on delicious rye bread!), I had chicken breast and shrimp scampi, and Jean had steak and shrimp with mushrooms. Saturday I made homemade pizza (which is not very difficult with a bread machine for the dough and leftover "gravy" from last week's pasta) along with pasta fagioli (bean and pasta soup). We got a rare video at Blockbuster, at which time I found a Blockbuster gift card in my wallet, whose origin totally escaped me. Presumably it was a gift from a student, but not this year. I'm fortunate the card is still active.

*

This area has very hard water (which is indicated in the names of such local communities as Rockaway, Roxbury, and Mine Hill), and since all three of our houses have had wells and septic, the hard water causes havoc on our pipes. A few weeks ago we found a puddle on one of Fei Fei and Silvio's boxes of china which were sent from Italy after their wedding (and which they have no room for in their Princeton faculty housing). We never knew where the puddle came from and were confused when no more water appeared there after that one time.

Yesterday morning Jean found a very wet spot dripping from the ceiling of the basement near the water heater. We could not find its cause until she noticed a pinhole in the pipe leading from the

well into the house was shooting a thin rope of water onto the ceiling. She went to Ace Hardware to buy a clamp, but we could not stop the leak. Meanwhile, another pinhole sprung a few feet away, sending water onto a box of china (*aha* mystery solved!). Ace recommended a local plumber to Jean who came over shortly afterwards and spent 2½ hours replacing all the pipes from the well to the water conditioners. He was both good and nice, and he is preparing an estimate for replacing the water tank as well, which is also old and on its last legs, another victim of the hard water.

Wednesday is the *American Math Competition*, an annual contest which is very important for my students, since some top-tier college applications ask what score they got on that contest, and whether they qualified for the *American Invitational Math Exam*. Since I have from 3-10 students qualify for the AIME each year based on their AMC score, and both my juniors Li Li and Jiang have qualified their first two years, this contest is very important for them. However, I have not received the contest yet, and when I phoned the headquarters at University of Nebraska today, Monday, they had not received any purchase order from my school. When I went to the main office, there was no purchase order there, although David (my brother who is my co-advisor) and I have no doubt I submitted a request over 2 months ago. Obviously, somebody lost the request and the PO was never written! ☹

Because of the importance of this contest, I phoned U Nebraska again and registered using my own credit card at a cost of \$302. When I told the vice-principal, he said the Board of Education will never reimburse a credit card purchase. That's totally unfair since the failure to register was not my fault, and I plan to discuss it with the assistant superintendent who is my *Target Teach* co-teacher and a good friend, to see if she has any advice to help me get my money back. *sigh*

Listmania

A large number of sf sources post lists of their best science fiction and fantasy books at the end of each year, including websites such as *SF Site*, *Fantasy Magazine*, *Bookgasm*, *SFF World* (which had lists by several critics), *Fantasy Book Critic*, *Strange Horizons*, *Locus Online*, *Locus Magazine* (which also had several critics' lists), plus such award nominees as *BSFA*, *Nebulas*, and *Philip K. Dick Awards*.

Recently I logged the number of mentions of the favorite f&sf books for 07 on about 20 lists. Here are the books which received the most mentions, which constitutes a fairly good recommended reading list for 07:

Title	Author	Mentions
Brasyl	Ian McDonald	16
The Name of the Wind	Patrick Rothfuss	13
Thirteen	Richard K Morgan	11

Yiddish Policemen's Union	Michael Chabon	11
Acacia	David Anthony Durham	9
The Blade Itself	Joe Abercrombie	7
Red Seas Under Red Skies	Scott Lynch	6
The Prefect	Alastair Reynolds	6
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows	J.K. Rowling	6
Halting State	Charles Stross	6
Territory	Emma Bull	5
The Book of Joby	Mark J. Ferrari	5
Bright of the Sky	Kay Kenyon	5
The Terror	Dan Simmons	5
The Orphan's Tales: In the Cities of Coin & Spice	Catherynne M. Valente	5
Spook Country	William Gibson	4
In War Times	Kathleen Ann Goonan	4
Ysabel	Guy Gavriel Kay	4
The Dreaming Void	Peter F. Hamilton	4
Generation Loss	Elizabeth Hand	4
The New Moon's Arms	Nalo Hopkinson	4
Mainspring	Jay Lake	4
Cowboy Angels	Paul J. McAuley	4
The Last Colony	John Scalzi	4
Queen of Candescence	Karl Schroeder	4
Softspoken	Lucius Shepard	4
A Betrayal In Winter	Daniel Abraham	3
Ragamuffin	Tobias Buckell	3
Reaper's Gale	Steven Erikson	3
The Accidental Time Machine	Joe Haldeman	3
Endless Things	John Crowley	3

Daughter of Hounds	Caitlin R. Kiernan	3
The Execution Channel	Ken MacLeod	3
Shelter	Susan Palwick	3
Making Money	Terry Pratchett	3
Sixty Days and Counting	Kim Stanley Robinson	3
Axis	Robert Charles Wilson	3

Wondrous Stories

The collection **To Outlive Eternity** contains a handful of novellas and novelettes by one of science fiction's finest storytellers, Poul Anderson. The title novella, "To Outlive Eternity", was a two-part serial in **Galaxy** in the late 1960s, and I have not read it since then. Its novel expansion **Tau Zero** is my favorite Anderson novel, so I was anxious to reread the novella again.

The story is a scientific puzzle combined with a psychological thriller, the story of a colonizing spaceship which unavoidably passes through an area of galactic dust which damages it in such a way that it cannot decelerate. So instead of reaching its destination world in two subjective years (which are hundreds of objective years since the ship is traveling at close to the speed of light so that its onboard time frame stretches relative to the outside universe) it must seek a location outside the local family of galaxies where the ship's acceleration could be turned off and repairs made. This leads to the ship traveling so close to the speed of light that millennia pass in the blink of an eye.

The ship contains 50 crewmembers and scientists and deals primarily with the psychological trauma of first not knowing if they will ever be able to leave the ship, and secondly watching the entire history of the universe passing them by. The story is told from the point of view of Raymond, the ship's constable in charge of maintaining order. As others around him suffer emotional strains from the stress and questionable future, he undertakes the task of not only keeping order onboard, but also keeping everybody else as sane as possible.

Some of the scientific theory in the story eluded my non-scientific grasp, but that was my only complaint with this gripping character study. The story was fairly compressed, as several subjective years pass onboard in 80 pages, and it almost cries out for novel expansion. Perhaps I'll go back and reread **Tau Zero** as well. This novella was that good.

"No Truce With Kings" is a war story set in a future post-atomic war America which is subdivided into several feuding states. On the west coast a conservative government which wishes to keep the balkanized status quo is overthrown in a semi-legal maneuver by a radical group which wishes to wage war on bordering states and reunite the entire country. What results is a civil war as the conservatives fight back. A third group in the war are Espers, a monkish-like

sect which has supposedly developed psionic powers and which traditionally remain neutral politically, but they have offered help to the radicals since they consider a reunited future more to their liking. A wild card in all this is a hidden group of aliens who seem to be pulling all the strings in the war.

This is a good novella, but basically a war story which pales somewhat after the powerful “To Outlive Eternity.” It won a Hugo Award as Best Short Fiction 40+ years ago, beating out Roger Zelazny’s “A Rose For Ecclesiastes,” which I consider one of the finest short stories every written. This war story, no matter how well-written, is not better than that story.

I reviewed “The Big Rain” in **VoP** #124, but basically it is an adventure about the colonization of Venus whose main character is an Earth spy determined to overthrow the totalitarian state. Neither the characters nor the milieu are as well-developed as in “To Outlive Eternity” or the book’s concluding novella “After Doomsday,” with the story’s emphasis on plot rather than on the world and its people, but overall it was interesting reading.

The book’s concluding novella, “After Doomsday”, is second only to “To Outlive Eternity” in quality, with the story’s strength being its stunning variety of alien races and their environments. The story is set in a galaxy teeming with life forms, one of whom, the Monwaingi, has previously contacted Earth and begun providing scientific and commercial support to it. Several Earth groups have built spaceships which have begun exploring and doing commerce with other races. All of this is background to the return to Earth of one such ship which finds that massive explosions have destroyed all signs of human civilization on the planet and an array of assault weapons attempt to destroy any remaining Earth ships which return to the planet.

The main storyline is the attempts by two such Earth ships, one crewed by American males, the other by European females, to locate the perpetrators of Earth’s destruction, while also finding other survivors in an attempt to restart human civilization. There are three main alien races in the local galactic spiral, and the ships visit all of them, giving Anderson a chance to do his usual fine job of alien civilization-building. All of this is embedded in the mystery of which race destroyed Earth and which races can actually be considered allies of the few remaining humans.

One of the main characters Donnan becomes the *de facto* leader of the male humans after the ship’s captain cracks under the emotional trauma of the destruction of all human life on Earth and eventually dies. He serves much the same role as Reymond, the ship’s constable in charge of maintaining order in “To Outlive Eternity,” but there is much less emphasis on the trauma and emotional state of the survivors in “After Doomsday” than there was in the other novella. I feel the novella should have been expanded to novel-length to explore the characters more, making them as much the story’s emphasis as the mystery itself was. Still, Anderson’s galaxy and its alien inhabitants are very intriguing, worth reading the story for them alone. And the novella’s ending, the unraveling of the mystery of who destroyed Earth, while it is fairly apparent from early in the story, still manages to be both unexpected and startling when it actually takes place, leaving “After Doomsday” with one of the most chilling final lines of an sf story I have read in a long time.

“After Doomsday” is an underrated Anderson story. I wish he had set more stories in this

particular galaxy so he could have explored it further. Overall, **To Outlive Eternity** is an excellent collection of long fiction which is highly recommended, especially to anybody who has not read either “To Outlive Eternity” or “After Doomsday.”

*

In 1976, Brian W. Aldiss edited a two-volume compilation entitled **Galactic Empires**, featuring classic stories by authors such as Arthur C. Clarke, Poul Anderson, Isaac Asimov (the original “Foundation,” one of the prototype galactic empires), Cordwainer Smith, Clifford D. Simak, A.E. van Vogt, James Blish, and Harry Harrison. Galactic Empires have long been one of the staples of far-future sf, a sub-genre which I prefer to “space opera” since it does not carry with it all the baggage of warfare and fast-paced thrillers (which, admittedly, does not describe all space opera, but it is a much higher percentage of that sub-genre than galactic empire stories in general).

Now Gardner Dozois has published an SFBC collection of 6 original novellas under the same title **Galactic Empires**. Considering the high quality of other recent SFBC collections (including Robert Silverberg’s **Between Worlds** and Dozois’ own **One Million A.D.**) as well as the excellent authors included in this collection, I ordered it as soon as it was announced.

The first novella in the book is Peter Hamilton’s “The Demon Trap.” Hamilton writes very interesting sf mysteries, such as “Watching Trees Grow,” a PS Publishing chapbook which was reprinted in the excellent four-novella collection **Futures**. However, I was not as enamored by his hard-science story “Blessed By An Angel” in **The New Space Opera**.

Fortunately, “The Demon Trap” is another mystery involving a galactic Confederation dominated by a handful of rich families, and one world Merioneth which has been using terrorist tactics to force the Confederation to let it secede. A detective named Paula is investigating one of the terrorist attacks, and is determined to solve it even after Merioneth has achieved its goal of secession. Several subplots float through this mystery, including Paula’s own background connection with Merioneth, but Hamilton juggles the various elements well, as well as providing sufficient teasers about his Confederation to make me want to read more about it (which is apparently the setting of his massive *Night’s Dawn* trilogy).

I’ve never read a Neil Asher story before, but “Owner Space” is an interesting story about a ship filled with escapees from a repressive government called the Collective. The Collective, in addition to repressing and enslaving much of its own population, has been waging war with an alien race called the Grazen, whose powerful empire borders that of the Collective. So when the escapees find themselves on the border of the two empires, caught between two dangerous enemies, they suddenly receive a mysterious invitation from a third source hidden within an unexplored portion of space under the control of a mysterious “Owner” who was never been seen by humans.

Both the Collective ship pursuing them and a Grazen dreadnought follow the escapees to an amazingly Earthlike world inside Owner space, where all three groups encounter the mysterious Owner himself. The story’s climax is a scene out of either a wish fulfillment or a comic book, and while it is mostly satisfying, it does rob the story of any power it might have otherwise had.

My other minor complaint with the story is Asher's tendency to describe every technological aspect of the spaceships' functions whenever they operate. It's as if the driver of a car feels obligated to discuss pistons and crankshafts whenever a car tools down Route 80. Such descriptions might entertain a technogeek, but they were mostly irrelevant to the story itself.

Robert Reed's "The Man With the Golden Balloon" is one of his *Great Ship* stories, which are usually among his best stories. "The Remoras" is still my favorite Reed story ever, and this story features the same two main characters as that story, the rich immortal Quee Lee and her non-immortal lover Perri. At a party, they encounter a man who tells them rumors about a distant corner of the *great ship* which has never been mapped by the ship's captains' extensive surveying. Considering this a grand adventure, Quee Lee and Perri gather a small group of explorers to seek that hidden corner. They do find such an unexplored place, a cave hidden among a labyrinth of caves. In that cave they encounter a strange being who claims to be a representative of a galactic union which secretly controls galactic affairs without the knowledge of most of its inhabitants. He tells them a story about an Earthlike world which may or may not be true, but which becomes increasingly believable to Quee Lee and Perri as he tells it.

This is not one of Reed's major stories, but it is interesting and the story told by the unseen man never lags. However, I am not sure Reed achieved his main goal in the story, which seems to be instilling a sense of awe and wonder, and perhaps a bit of trepidation, that the world as we know it is only a facade lying over a secret world of which most people are unaware.

Alastair Reynolds' "The Six Directions of Space" begins as a tale of espionage as a secret agent from a huge galactic empire visits one of its outer worlds where the government's control is not as tight as it might like to be, so the agent falls into the clutches of a mostly-independent warlord who treats her more like an enemy than an ally.

The tale of espionage becomes a story of first contact from the point of view of a repressive totalitarian state and ultimately veers into a tale of parallel universes in which different groups have built galactic empires: Mongols in one, Moslems in another, Nestorian Christians in a third; but other universes have non-human empires whose brutality make the human ones almost acceptable. Overall, this is a fascinating look into the many-worlds which cries out for sequels.

Stephen Baxter's "The Seer and the Silverman" displays his usual bravado in a tale of the hostilities between the human Third Expansion and the aliens known as Ghosts, who more resemble floating eggs, on the precipice of intergalactic war. The story is set on the Reef, an artificial world built from spaceships somehow linked together, and which was independent until a self-proclaimed Commission for Historical Truths rose to power in human space mandating their belief that a galaxy not dominated by humans has no reason to survive.

The narrator is Donn, a young trader who serves as a liaison between Ghosts and humans. The story begins after a series of abductions have taken place on the Reef, which most humans assume were done by Ghosts. A Ghost ambassador comes to the Reef, accompanied by a virtual version of a long-dead human, telling Donn they need his help. Before he can protest he is abducted and ends up on a Ghost world living among other abductees—self-proclaimed "rats"—surviving by waging an underground war against their Ghost captors.

The theme of the novella is that the Ghosts are abducting humans to study them, because they do not understand humans any more than humans understand Ghosts. As the Ghosts are portrayed in the story, and in other Baxter works in which they appeared, they are so inhuman that they do not understand humans' instinctive need for expansion and control of the entire galaxy. While they are very advanced, likely far beyond humans, they seem totally unprepared for warfare so that fleeing is their only option against the Third Expansion if they are to survive as a race.

There are a few problems in the novella, such as one long section devoted to Donn and the Ghost ambassador babbling scientific theory to each other inside a giant sun on the verge of turning into a supernova, and Donn seems much too brilliant for a simple trader. Fortunately, neither of these flaws matter since Baxter, as usual, is primarily interested in the big picture and his story's philosophical implications more than the nuts and bolts which drive it.

The only story I could not finish was Ian McDonald's "The Tear," which on one hand offered some of McDonald's evocative writing and flurry of ideas, but on the other hand showed his occasional tendency to so overload the story with those ideas and writing that whatever point he was trying to make was mostly lost to me.

Overall, **Galactic Empires** was a worthwhile book with two superior stories (Reynolds and Baxter) and three mostly enjoyable ones (Hamilton, Asher, and Reed). I would recommend you wait for the paperback, except since it is a Science Fiction Book Club book that paperback might never be forthcoming. So wait for one of their *Buy 2 – Get One Free* online offers instead.



"Honey, do you remember on our tour of the Solar System you bought a raffle ticket from a man on Venus?"

The In-Box

Fanzines I have either received via postal mail or read online recently.

Alexiad / Lisa & Joseph Major / 1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, KY 404-40 / very regular reviewzine concerned with sf, nonfiction, horse racing and candy!

Argentus / Steven Silver / 707 Sapling Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015-3969 / available at shsilver@sfsite.com and <http://www.efanzines.com> / annual genzine.

Askance / John Purcell / available at <http://www.efanzines.com> / a good genzine.

Ben's Beat / Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave., Teaneck, NJ 07666 / personalzinewith an emphasis on plays and books.

Scratch Pad / Bruce Gillespie / <http://www.efanzines.com> / 59 Keele Street, Collingwood VIC 3066 / Bruce's ANZAPA personalzine

Celtic Seasons / Rita & Richard Shader / 2593 Chapparal Drive, Melbourne, FL 32934-8275 / fascinating glimpses at Scottish history and culture.

Challenger / Guy H. Lillian III / P.O. Box 53092, New Orleans, LA 70153-3092 /available at www.challzine.net / one of the finest genzines being published.

Chunga / Andy Hooper, Randy Byers, carl juarez / 1013 North 36th St., Seattle, WA 98103 / probably the most traditional fanzine currently being published.

The Drink Tank / Chris Garcia / available at <http://www.efanzines.com> / perhaps the most regular online personalzine.

File 770 / Mike Glycer / <http://www.efanzines.com> / 705 Valley View Ave., Monrovia, CA 01016 / fannish news and reviews.

For The Clerisy / Brant Kresovich / biggestfatporker@yahoo.com / available as an email attachment; chockful of interesting book reviews.

It Goes on the Shelf / Ned Brooks / 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA 30047-47 / book reviews.

The Knarley Knews / Henry Welch / 1525 16th Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-17 / available at <http://www.efanzines.com> and <http://people.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html> / very regular genzine.

Littlebrook / Jerry Kaufman and Susanne Tompkins / 3522 N.E. 123rd St., Seattle, WA / genzine

Lofgeornost / Fred Lerner / 81 Worcester Ave., White River Junction, VT 05001 / personalzine with a penchant for international travel.

Opuntia / Dale Speirs / Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2E7 / reviews, articles, and letters.

Peregrine Nations / Janine Stinson / <http://www.efanzines.com> / PO Box 248, Eastlake, MI 49626-0248 / last issue of a very good genzine

The Reluctant Famulus / Tom Sadler / 422 W. Maple Ave, Adrian, MI 49221-1627 / long-running genzine.

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin / R.B. Cleary / 470 Ridge Road, Birmingham, AL 356-2816 / clubzine with news, conreports and reviews.

Trial and Air / Michael W. Waite / 105 West Ainsworth, Ypsilanti, MI 48197-5336 / gorgeous genzine

Vanamonde / John Hertz / 236 S. Coronado St., No 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057 / two-page APazine with brief comments on a variety of topics.

Vegas Fandom Weekly / Arnie Katz / www.efanzine.com / online genzine.

The Lighter Side

Jokes sent to me by Robert Kennedy

An older couple were lying in bed one night. The husband was falling asleep but the wife was in a romantic mood and wanted to talk.

She said: "You Used to hold my hand when we were courting."

Wearily he reached across, held Her hand for a second and tried to get back to sleep. A few moments later she said, "Then you used to kiss me. "

Mildly irritated, he reached across, gave her a peck on the cheek and settled down to sleep. Thirty seconds later she said, "Then you used to bite my neck."

Angrily, he threw back the bed clothes and got out of bed. "Where are you going?" she asked. "To get my teeth!"

*

A three-year-old boy was examining his testicles while taking a bath "Mum", he asked "are these my brains?" "Not yet," replied his mother.

*

It's not too often that you hear a joke about blonde guys. So, in the spirit of both humor and fairness, we offer this: Two blonde guys were working for the city. One would dig a hole on a

lawn and the other would follow behind him and fill the hole in. They worked up one side of the street, then down the other, then moved on to the next street, working furiously all day without rest, one guy digging a hole, the other guy filling it in again. An onlooker was amazed at their hard work, but couldn't understand what they were doing. So he asked the hole-digger, "I'm impressed by the effort you two are putting into your work, but I don't get it -- why do you dig a hole, only to have your partner follow behind and fill it up again?"

The city worker wiped his brow and sighed, "Well, I suppose it probably looks odd because we're normally a three-man team. But today the guy who plants the trees called in sick."

*

A busload of politicians was traveling down a country road when the bus suddenly ran off the road and crashed into an old farmer's field. The old farmer heard the tragic crash so he rushed over to investigate. He then began digging a large grave to bury the politicians.

A few hours later, the local sheriff was driving past the farmer's field and noticed the bus wreck. He approached the old farmer and asked where all the politicians had gone. The old farmer explained that he'd gone ahead and buried all of them.

"Were they ALL dead?" asked the puzzled sheriff.

"Well, some of them said they weren't," said the old farmer, "but you know how them politicians lie."

*

A extremely wealthy, 70 year old guy returns from a vacation and shows up at the country club with an absolutely stunning, 25 year-old blonde. She clutches the guy's arm tightly and seems to hang on his every word. His buddies at the club are all astonished. At the very first chance, they corner him and demand, "So tell us where you found this hot girlfriend!"

The guy replies, "Girlfriend? She's my wife!"

Amazed, the friends ask. "How did you persuade her to marry you?"

"I lied about my age," the guy replies.

"Oh," they nod, knowingly. "Did you tell her you were only 50?"

"Heck no; I told her I was 90."