



CATCHPENNY GAZETTE

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CITIZENS BAND

The most fun I've had with a group of like-minded people outside of fandom was with a group of local CB Radio enthusiasts in 1976 through 1978. These weren't your stereotypical "10-4 good buddy" CBers. We had a "local channel" that we used every night for shooting the breeze, and we didn't take very kindly to the occasional yahoo who showed up just to cause trouble. Our interest wasn't where the "smokies" were, conversation, entertainment and companionship.

Over all we had about 30 people who were considered part of the "Channel 17" group although, like fandom, there was a smaller group of people who kept things going. And like fandom, it was a diverse and interesting group of folks. Ages ranged from early 20's to people well into their retirement years;

people who worked in offices, factories, were high-powered executives, farmers, school kids, and housewives.

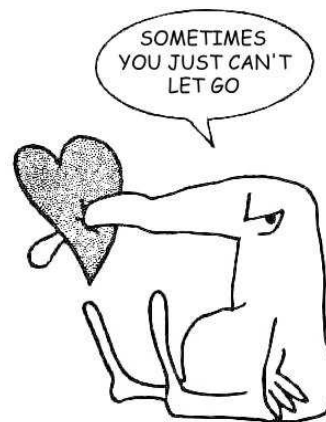
Like fandom, there was a die-hard group who wanted to talk about radios, antennas and signal strength (instead of sf, fanac, conventions, and mimeos); others couldn't care less about the technical aspects as long as they could get on the air and join the conversations. Some of the folks were "power users" (literally), running very high-end setups, with directional antennas and thousands of watts of power (instead of the *legal* 4 watts); some were barely able to figure out how to key the mike to talk. Everyone was welcome to join in though, as long as they could remain civil and fit in with the rest of the group. Surprisingly, very little trouble ever ensued.

A handful of us became good friends outside of talking on the radio, and nearly every weekend you'd find us at someone or other's house having a party, at one of which I learned that poker wasn't a game I was likely to ever become proficient at before losing everything I owned. We sponsored several large, more formal gatherings every few months which were always well-attended, even by people who talked on other channels; sort of like regional conventions in fandom.

I fit in the middle of the group of power-users. I had a "Super Scanner" antenna (an electronic cross between an omni-directional dipole and a highly directional beam antenna) on a tower at the legal height of 60 feet. All I could afford in the way of extra power was an ancient 20-watt tube linear amplifier. I had several radios (other than what was in my car), and my favorite was a little crystal controlled Radio Shack model. It used separate crystals to transmit and receive, and if you flopped the crystals you could talk on some out-of-band frequencies. I routinely talked to people in

South American doing that. Not the greatest idea in the world, since I was using a Civil Air Patrol frequency...

I lost track of the group when I moved to Florida in 1978, even more rapidly than I lost track of fans in the early 70s. And like fandom, most of those in the group were older than I, and I'm sure a number have passed on. I've tried to reconnect with some of the younger members, but have had an even harder time than when I first tried to "find" fandom again in the early 90s. ▣



Just My Type

My first real exposure to typesetting came in the mid-70s when I worked in the art department of a company that produced flexographic (rubber) and photopolymer (essentially plastic) printing plates for the food industry. Food packagers use these types of plates because they're relatively cheap and are good for millions of impressions. Prior to that I'd worked for an advertising agency; while I did some type specing, 99.9% of what we used was a font called Venus – primarily I think because the agency was called Venus.

At the platemaker, the art department spent a *lot* of time duplicating existing artwork, which meant we had to match typefaces. I

spent a *lot* of time poring over dozens of type specimen books, and became pretty proficient at identifying a type-face by just a few distinctive characteristics.

It was also my first experience with “cold” (photo) type instead of “hot” type (set in metal). The company (always an early adopter of new technologies in the field) had a Compugraphic Jr., which was a revolutionary machine at the time but seems laughable by today's standards. It was a true phototypesetter in that it used a photographic process to generate type. Clunky as all heck – each typeface (and each *size* of a face) had a separate negative filmstrip with all the characters on it

that was loaded onto a wheel, and a complicated series of gears that had to be changed for each strip. This was spun at high-speed, and as you typed a light shone through the strip at the right time and imprinted the characters on a special photographic paper.

After I left that company I didn't work in the graphic arts field for a few years. When I came back, I worked for a typesetter, and was surprised at the advances that had been made in the equipment. I was now using A&M equipment, and it was a giant leap ahead. The Compugraphic machine was primarily designed to set heads and display type; the A&M was just the opposite. Instead of having to diddle with strips and gears and pulleys, the A&M machine used a simple wheel that contained the characters – the computer in the machine manipulated different sizes and weights of a face. It was still a photographic process, but at least you could store your work on floppy disk for future use, unlike the Compugraphic I'd worked on previously.

After working for the typesetter for a couple of years, it was another 5 years before I returned to the graphic arts field; in fact, back to the same flexo platemaker. They were still using Compugraphic equipment, and once again, the technology had advanced. Now font information was stored on floppy instead of wheels or strips. Nevertheless, it was still a photo-mechanical process.

Probably the worst aspect of all these systems was that none of them had anything remotely resembling a WYSIWYG display – all the monochrome screen showed was the characters, words, and paragraphs that you were typing, with no formatting whatsoever.

Fortunately I was working mostly on a drafting board in all these situations, and was only the “back-up” typesetter. It amazed me, particularly at the platemaker, how good our typesetter was at knowing *exactly* what the output would look like without being able to see it onscreen. On the rare occasions I happened to catch a typo she'd made, I reminded

her that not long ago, Korean typesetters were flogged for each mistake. I dreaded the times she went on vacation or was off sick, because that meant I was *It – I* was the backup typesetter. (Well, I dreaded it because of that, and also because she was my girlfriend for 5 years and since I was the backup, *one* of us had to be there.) I'd often have to correct and run type 4 or 5 or even more times to get what was needed. This didn't particularly endear me to my employer, since each run cost money.

The last couple of years I was there we'd switched over to doing things 90% digitally, using a network of Mac Quadras (state-of-the-art at the time) and software like Quark, Freehand, and Pagemaker, all serving as the front end for a network of powerful Sun workstations running the Contex pre-press graphic arts software on a Unix operating system. It took her a while to adjust to that. She was so used to working it out in her head that I don't think she ever completely trusted a WYSIWYG display...

So, I've had both a personal and professional interest in typography for many years, and I've always tried to keep up with what's happening in the field by reading about typography and design.

At any rate, this is a terribly long and probably boring introduction to a very short review of a book I've been reading, *The Elements of Typographic Style* by Robert Bringhurst. Bringhurst is a Canadian typographer and book designer and is a writer of non-fiction and poetry. Perhaps because of that, it's one of the most interesting and entertaining books on typography I've read.

In a scant 250+ pages, the book covers the history and theory of typographic design and how type relates to page design, provides a basic style book for typographic use, and in a section titled "Prowling the Specimen Books" sets forth commentary on the most widely used typefaces. There's a second edition available that I haven't been able to get a hold of yet that adds and additional 96 pages and covers digital

type in more detail. However, all Bringhurst says about “hot” type applies equally well to the “cold” variety.

What I particularly appreciate is that Bringhurst has taken what *can* be a deadly-dull subject, and enlivened it with some really terrific writing. Some examples:

“Typography is the craft of endowing human language with a durable visual form, and thus with an independent existence. Its heartwood is calligraphy – the dance, on a tiny stage, of the living, speaking hand – and its roots reach into living soil, though its branches may be hung each year with new machines. So long as the root lives, typography remains a source of true delight, true knowledge, true surprise.”

“In a badly designed book, the letters mill and stand like starving horses in their field. In a book designed by rote, they sit like stale bread and mutton on the page.

In a well-made book, where designer, compositor and printer have all done their jobs, no matter how many thousands of lines and pages, the letters are alive. They dance in their seats. Sometimes they rise and dance in the margins and aisles.”

“The typographic terminology is telling. Isolated lines created when paragraphs begin on the last line of a page are known as *orphans*. They have no past, but they do have a future, and they trouble few typographers. The stub-ends left when paragraphs end on the first line of a page are called *widows*. They have a past but not a future, and they look foreshortened and forlorn. It is the custom to give them at least one additional line for company.”



epistles

Black words by you/blue words by me

FRANK LUNNEY Thanks for sending the first issue of your fanzine. I was even brave enough to open your attachment, and that's something in these days of killer viruses. But I remembered your name: as one of the two Daves (the Dave I remembered was Dave Gorman; the one I forgot was Dave Lewton).

If I hadn't opened it, I wouldn't have seen the totally unexpected mention of my name as the person second to you in that long-ago *Egoboo* poll...which I hadn't remembered at all. If I had come in first place I undoubtedly would have remembered...exactly the way you did.

Of course, I was exaggerating things just a little. I hadn't given it any thought for years until Robert

wrote me about credentials for joining FAPA. I do remember being surprised when John Berry told me how few people actually voted in that poll; then again, I don't suppose the circulation of *EgoBoo* was all that high to begin with. I don't think the circulation of *microcosm* was ever more than 50, and most issues probably went to no more than 30 people.

But you mention "think"ing that I gaffed shortly after that *Egoboo* poll when you did, but that's not quite true. I don't know if *BeABohema* had already been nominated for the Hugo by the time of that poll (it was on the ballot in '70, when the Worldcon was in Heidelberg). I eventually published 20 issues of *BAB*, then started another more fannish

fanzine entitled *Syndrome*...the fifth issue of which was published for me by Dan Steffan and Ted White as a part of their own Hugo-nominated fanzine, *Blat!*...the entire issue was laid out by Dan from material I had leftover from 1975 (when #4 was published) and the guys brought it out in...oh, when was it?...1998, maybe.

And while I wasn't really active in fandom, many good friends are fans.

Again, thanks for putting me on your distribution list. Arnie Katz has described me as perhaps fandom's most obvious freeloader, in that I get fanzines and somehow make lots of people feel so guilty about kicking me off their mailing list that I'm still receiving paper in the mail, tho for about 30 years now I've done nothing but be myself and hang out with folks at a convention every once in a while. (Dan & Ted did get me to write a World-con report, from San Francisco, entirely on pocsards...I didn't find that too hard to do.)

But I still love fanzines, so I'd love to stay on your distribution list.

CALVIN DEMMON The first fanzine I've ever seen in .pdf form, but I've been out of touch for a long time, too. As a .pdf it's really kind of a ghost or

mirage or something. A fantasm. I can't crinkle the paper, can't make checkmarks in the border (I don't have the full expensive Acrobat package, just the chintzy little free reader), and most of all I can't smell mimeo ink or ditto fluid or anything else except my own armpits, which you should be glad you're not smelling too.

Definitely!

I have much the same feelings about e-zines as you do. The ones I know I'll want to read in depth (and for me that generally means in a recumbent position) I print out, but even that's not quite the same, is it? The flip side is that for those of us on a somewhat limited budget, publishing an e-zine costs nothing. (Cheap at twice the price!)

It's very nicely made.

I was especially interested in your religious notes. After wandering around for years half-assed suicidal and not knowing even how to breathe, getting more and more desperate, I came back to Xtianity through the Episcopal Church myself in about 1973, and stayed happily until about 1979, when the church I was attending split catastrophically. I was on the vestry and the vestry split too and after a while my wife and I realized we couldn't

go there any more. We attended "nondenominational" churches then, but we also put all of our children in Catholic schools at one time or another, because we could see that those schools were just plain better than the public offerings. After pressing our noses up against the Catholic window from outside for a couple of decades, looking wistfully at the lights inside and hearing the music and smelling the incense whenever the door opened, we finally went in -- not easy for me, because I'd been thoroughly inoculated against Catholics as a Baptist child. In April 1999, following adult confirmation classes, we both joined up. I have a certificate right here on my wall to prove it, and a certain joy in my heart.

I have spent my fair share of time looking around at different churches. The main problem I have with my current parish is that, at 51, I'm considered one of the "youngsters" -- very few children or teenagers in the church. A few years ago I made the effort to attend some different churches; I'd come to have some worries that my then-and-current parish might literally die out. For me it's important to worship where I feel comfortable, where my theological beliefs and the church's mesh.

Unfortunately, I didn't find that elsewhere, so I'm staying put.

Thanks for the .pdfazine! I can't put it on the old fazine stack, but it's still not a bad thing.

LLOYD PENNEY Many thanks for Catchpenny Gazette 1. All these generations of fans have got to meet one another, and get together, and chat about those heady days. My entry into fazine fandom was in the early 80s, so there may be nothing or lots to talk about depending on what I can latch onto. It's worth the shot.

There's been a lot of people who have come back for their first look at fandom and fazines in anywhere between 10 and 40 years, and I think it's nostalgia or just curiosity driving them back for one last look inside the asylum. What's been your motive? There are certainly memories to make and then remember fondly. Myself, I'm more the second than the first these days, although there's still the odd chance to make more memories.

I suppose both nostalgia *and* curiosity are my reasons for wanting to reconnect with fandom. It was, for a time anyway, part and parcel of what I consider the Best Times of my life so far; generally between the ages of 15 and 25. While fandom

wasn't the only Good Thing going on then, it was a big part of my life for a couple of years. Deciding to get involved with fandom again (and in particular fanzine fandom) took me literally *years*; I made several half-hearted attempts before, but they never "took." I hope to be around for a long time.

I am also finding that a need for a religious anchor in your life is needed as the familiar aspects of your comfortable life either change or die or fade away. There is also the worry about a career that is regular and keeps an income coming in, and my own career is anything but regular. After about 20 years as an editor, proofreader, copyeditor and copywriter, more time has to be spent on how on earth I'll keep body and soul together after I've been told that my profession is becoming as modern as a cooper or wheelwright. This is where the creativeness in you comes on in strange combinations.

I've considered FAPA in the past, but I think I shall pass. My own thoughts turn to gafiation from time to time, having spent a fair number of the past 27 years in fandom, and about 16 of those with fanzines. The comfortable and accessible cocoon of local fandom is beckoning me back, and the lure is that of all the people you know, these are truly your friends who accept you for what you are, and who

love you. With my career in jeopardy, and my bank account shrinking at an accelerating rate, its appeal is strong, and I think within the next year, I shall abandon the idea of getting to future Worldcons and just relax at local parties and conventions.

Give Ritz and Ellie a skritch behind the ears for me, and please do keep future issues coming. I enjoy the conversations these zines provide. I may not have memories of fandom in the 60s and 70s, but I'd be happy to reflect upon them as someone who has likely heard those reminiscences before.

rich brown Thanks for sending CATCHPENNY GAZETTE; in only four pages, you succeed in recapturing much of the flavor of fanzines as they used-to was. I enjoyed it immensely; enough so that I'm thinking of getting a printer that actually works (as opposed to the one I have now, which doesn't) so I can have a paper copy.

Also heard from were Ned Brooks, Lee Gold, Jerry Kaufman

This issue was produced entirely with Microsoft Word (no mean feat!) and converted to PDF format using PDFCreator.